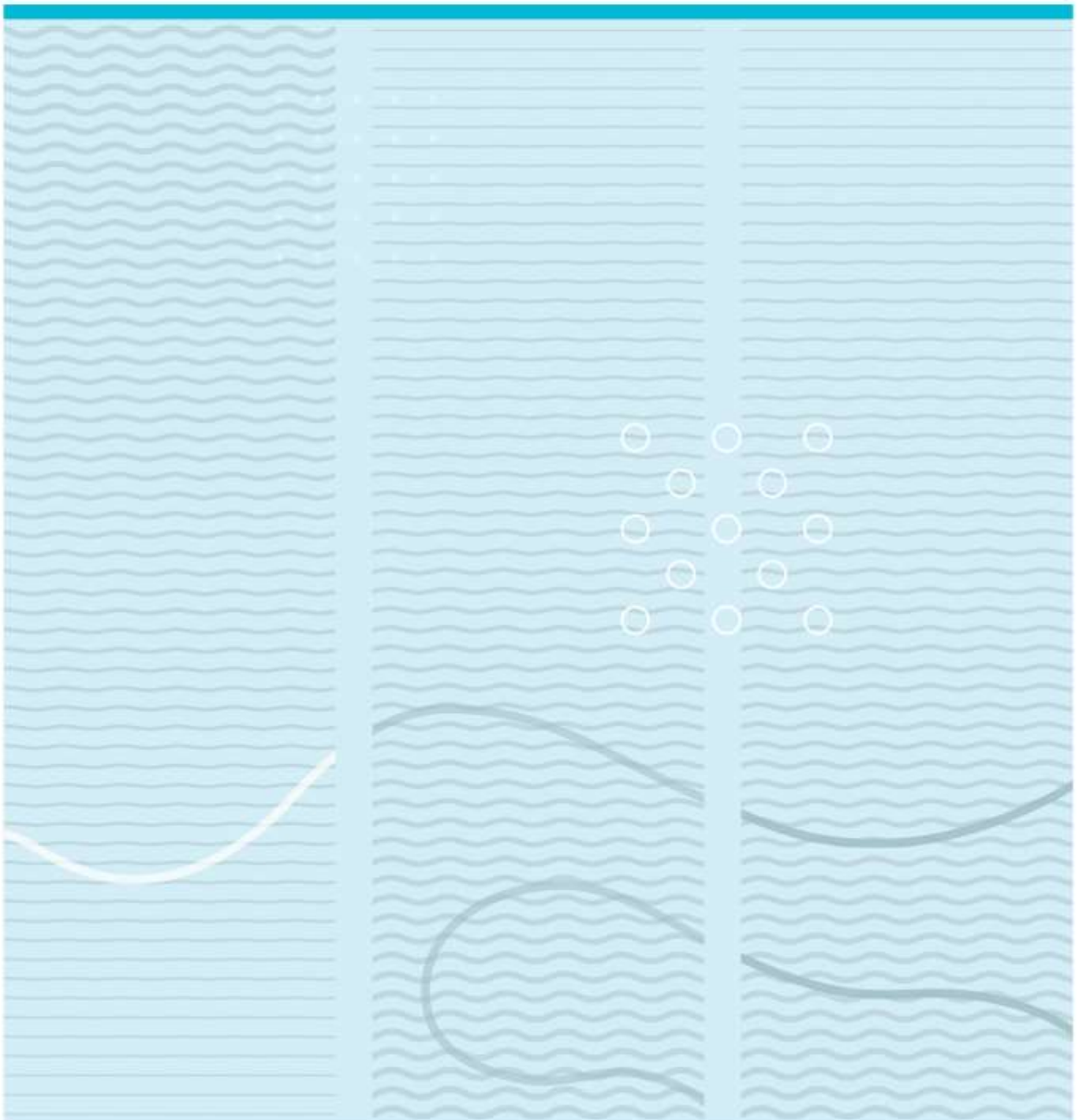


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Participatory Parity of Ethnic Minority Families and Their Relations with Norwegian Child Welfare Services

Recognition, Multiculturalism, and a Hierarchy of Knowledge



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This thesis is worth 45 study points.

Abstract

Public discourse, international demonstrations, and human rights monitoring mechanisms have expressed concern over the relationship between ethnic minority families and Norwegian child welfare services (CWS). This thesis explores the ability of ethnic minority parents to participate on par in the realms of child welfare, familial life, and within the community, considering the current relations of ethnic minority parents and CWS. The study is framed considering theories of social justice, recognition, multiculturalism, and a hierarchy of knowledge. A theoretical thematic analysis was applied to semi-structured interviews with ethnic minority parents and child welfare practitioners to generate themes relating to participatory parity and (mis)recognition. The generated themes and sub-themes: knowledge hierarchy, expectations, cultural superiority, Norwegian way not the only way, and intersecting identities provide insights to the present dynamics between ethnic minority parents and CWS in the municipality of Drammen. Based on these findings, I argue the current relationship continues to perpetuate the disproportionality of ethnic minorities in the child welfare system and appears to demand one-way cultural adaptation on behalf of the parents. Even when individual practitioners are concerned about the positive experiences of ethnic minority families within the CWS, inequitable outcomes continue to be reproduced. Using participatory parity as a measuring standard, the child welfare system reproduces cultural hierarchies; becoming the same is described as the price for equal respect. Critical theories of recognition, participatory parity, multiculturalism, hierarchy of knowledge, and intercultural dialogue provide insights for moving forward.

Key words: Ethnic minority families, child welfare services, recognition, social justice, multiculturalism, hierarchy of knowledge

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introductory Context

The migrant population – persons born abroad to two foreign-born parents – residing in Norway, as of 1 January 2018, comprises 14.1% of the population (“Immigrants”, Statistics Norway, 2018). Every Norwegian municipality has residents who are persons with a migrant background, however, the largest population of migrants and Norwegian-born to migrant parents is in Oslo, which constitute 31% of the total population; Drammen also has high proportions of residents with a migrant background, where migrants and Norwegian-born to migrant parents comprise 29% of the population (“14 per cent”, Statistics Norway, 2018; “Immigrants”, Statistics Norway, 2017). Allertsen and Kalve (2006), Johansson (2010), and Kalve and Dyrhaug (2011) (as cited in Hollekim, Anderssen, & Daniel, 2016) have recorded that as the migrant population in Norway has increased, there also has been “a rapid and disproportionate increase in the number of immigrant children receiving child welfare and protective measures” (p. 53; Ministry of Justice and Public Security et al., 2018, p. 93). In 2012, 32.5 per 1,000 children between 0-22 received help from Norwegian child welfare services (CWS): 32.0 per 1,000 were children with no migrant background, 76.3 per 1,000 were children who are migrants, and 50.4 per 1,000 were Norwegian-born children with migrant parents (Dyrhaug & Sky, 2015, p. 5).

The public discourse around the CWS interactions with and interventions in migrant families has revolved, in part, around the breadth of children’s rights not being “properly valued and ensured, such as ignoring cultural rights related to, for example, identity and freedom of religion” (Hollekim et al., 2016, p. 55). An excerpt from Bergens Tidende 21 May 2012 (as cited in Hollekim et al., 2016, p. 55) illustrates part of the dialogue occurring in Norway:

Norwegian Immigrant Forum is critical of the fact that minority children are placed in foster homes which culturally and language-wise are very different to the home from which the child is removed. When children are unable to make themselves understood in their mother tongue [or] cannot eat the food they are used to or celebrate traditional festival days, it becomes very problematic... Children lose their background, religion, and ethnicity.

The research of Hollekim, Anderssen, and Daniel (2016) – in analyzing public discourses around migrant families and Norwegian CWS – indicates across their data, “cultural rights have been less of a focus or may have had a subordinate status” in Norwegian CWS decisions (p. 55). The need for more multicultural foster homes was widely argued along with the value of increasing efforts to consider the multicultural identity of children taken into care (Hollekim et al., 2016, p. 55).

Outside of Norway, there has also been discussion around Norwegian CWS work with ethnic minority families. On 16 April 2016, individuals demonstrated in twenty countries “to show their solidarity with a Romanian couple who lost custody of their children while living in Norway” (Hennum, 2017, p. 319)¹. Mistrust between ethnic minority/migrant families and Norwegian CWS has been a subject present in both Norwegian media and abroad. The discussions and demonstrations illustrate that the relationship between ethnic minority families and Norwegian CWS is a subject of public interest. In addition, the relationship between ethnic minority families and Norwegian CWS has received attention from human rights monitoring mechanisms.

International concern has been expressed about Norwegian child protection and ethnic discrimination by human rights mechanisms – including the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights², the Human Rights Committee³, the Committee on the Rights of the Child⁴, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination [CERD]⁵, and the Human Rights Council during the Universal Periodic Review⁶. International and national mechanisms ensure human rights and the rights of the child regardless of ethnicity⁷; however, through the current

¹ The Bodnariu case. For further information in Norwegian, see:

<https://www.bt.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/InKjA/Barnevern-demonstrasjoner-i-20-land>

² See *Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Norway*. (Report No. E/C.12/NOR/CO/5).

³ See *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant*. (Report No. CCPR/C/NOR/CO/6) and *Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Norway*. (Report No. CCPR/C/NOR/CO/7).

⁴ See *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 44 of the Convention* (Report No. CRC/C/NOR/CO/4) and *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 44 of the Convention* (Report No. CRC/C/NOR/5-6).

⁵ See *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention*. (Report No. CERD/C/NOR/CO/19-20).

⁶ See *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Norway*. (Report No. A/HRC/27/3) and *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Period Review: Norway. Addendum*. (Report No. A/HRC/27/3/Add.1).

⁷ For example, *Article 2.1* of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989): “States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child’s or his or her parent’s or legal guardian’s race, color, sex,

system, the public discourse, rights ensuring mechanisms, and current research suggest the needs of ethnic minority families do not appear to adequately be met. This, as well as the migrant population in Norway and the disproportionality of migrant children in the child welfare system, provide context informing my research focus and questions. Through the lenses of Fraser's theories of recognition and social justice, Modood's multicultural theories of two-way integration and equality, and knowledge hierarchy and dialogue inspired by Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed further inspire my research focus and questions; I hope to examine how ethnic minority parents and CWS adapt to one another, and the way these relations impact the participation of ethnic minority parents within child welfare, familial life, and the community. My data consists of semi-structured interviews with ethnic minority parents and child welfare practitioners in the municipality of Drammen; I then discuss the themes brought forward by interview data considering theories of recognition, multiculturalism, knowledge hierarchies, and dialogue – allowing for accommodation of different group identities and norms, recognition, and social justice. Current research generally focuses on interviewing ethnic minority parents *or* child welfare practitioners; by bringing their voices together, I hope to encourage a dialogue expressed by Freire⁸. With further dialogue and suggestions for institutional adaptation come the potential for a more effective child welfare system that better meets the needs of Norway's multicultural communities when examined by theories of recognition and social justice.

1.2 Research Questions and the Purpose of the Research

The multicultural environment in Norway, the disproportionality of ethnic minority children in the child welfare system, the criticism from international human rights monitoring mechanisms, and the public attention surrounding the relationship between ethnic minority families and Norwegian CWS provide the context from which I ask my research questions. Assuming that part of the demonstrations originate from (mis)recognition⁹ and part of the demand or claims call for parity of participation¹⁰, my primary research question is as follows:

language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status".

⁸ See Section 3.3: *Hierarchy of Knowledge and Dialogue*.

⁹ See Section 1.3: *Definitions* and Section 3.1: *Recognition and Social Justice*.

¹⁰ Definition provided in Section 1.3: *Definitions*.

How do the existing relations between ethnic minority families and Norwegian child welfare services practitioners affect the participatory parity of ethnic minority families in the spheres of child welfare, familial life, and within the community?

In order to support the analysis of the thesis and answer the proposed research question, the following sub-questions are included in the analysis:

- I. In what ways, if any, do ethnic minority families in Norway adapt familial life due to considerations relating to Norwegian child welfare services? Do ethnic minority parents' perceptions of Norwegian parenting culture affect the way that they adapt to parenting in Norway and their actions within the community?
- II. In what ways, if any, do Norwegian child welfare services practitioners adapt their day-to-day work to meet the needs of ethnic minority families? Do child welfare practitioners' perceptions of ethnic minorities affect the way that Norwegian child welfare services operates with ethnic minority families on a day-to-day basis?

The purpose of my research is to examine how ethnic minority families and Norwegian CWS are described as adapting to one another, and how this affects the participatory parity of ethnic minority families in the spheres of child welfare, familial life, and within the community. These questions are relevant as a disproportionate amount of migrant families in Norway are referred to CWS and issues of cultural respect in child welfare, ethnic discrimination by employees of CWS, a lower standard of child welfare assistance for children from ethnic minorities, and cases regarding children's ethnic, religious, and cultural rights in Norway have been brought to the attention of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the European Court of Human Rights¹¹ (U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2010; U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2017). I understand the lower standard of child welfare assistance for children from ethnic minority families to be related to issues of equality, equity, recognition, and social justice; therefore, academic understandings will be employed to inform my research. Considering international human rights law, the question of migrant parents' and child welfare practitioners' perceptions of Norwegian CWS in light of theories of recognition, social justice, and multiculturalism become of particular relevance.

¹¹ See *Abdi Ibrahim v. Norway*, 2016; *A.S. v. Norway*, 2016, *Hernehult v. Norway*, 2016; and *Jansen v. Norway*, 2016.

The following objectives of the research – in light of the research questions and purpose – include:

- To explore the ability of ethnic minorities to participate on par in social life – in child welfare, familial life, and within the community – in the specific context of Norway.
- To develop an understanding of how mutual adaptations and perceptions promote or hinder the participatory parity of ethnic minority families.

Before continuing, however, it is important to define key terms that will be used through the remainder of the thesis.

1.3 Definitions

Prior to examining existing literature and theory, it is important to define key terms:

Child welfare services: CWS will be used as the terminology to describe the child protection system, or rather “the statutory system that aims to find, investigate and protect children at risk of being abused or neglected” (Pösö, Skivenes, & Hestbæk, 2014, p. 477).

Participatory parity: *Participatory parity* is a phrase coined by Nancy Fraser, which concerns individuals ability to participate “on a par with others in social life” (Fraser, 2007, p. 315; Fraser, 2008b, p. 29; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 290; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 38). Fraser also uses participatory parity as an evaluative standard to distinguish justified and unjustified claims for recognition (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 38). I will use Fraser’s understanding of participatory parity as a tool to examine the ways ethnic minority families and CWS relate to each other, and how that affects the participation of ethnic minority families in society in the spheres of child welfare, familial life, and within the community.

Culture: The concept of culture that will be used here is – in part – the informed way that we “make sense of or interpret the world”; with similar interpretations of the world, individuals can create a “shared culture of meanings” (Hall, 2013, p. 4). These shared meanings, then are represented and exchanged through shared ‘language’ used in a broad sense – including through visual images, body language, music, and fashion (Hall, 2013, p. 4). In this way, culture is linked to meaning through systems by which we link and relate concepts – creating a shared meaning of concepts – and through arranged languages to represent those concepts (Hall, 2013, p. 5). It is also important to remember that culture is dynamic where it is constantly adapting (Korbin, 2002, p. 638). Thus, culture is learned, shared, and an “interpretive force

that guides interactions among people” where children are involved in the shaping and reinterpretation of culture; it is experienced differently by different group members and both interpretation and interaction are fluid (Korbin, 2002, p. 638).

Ethnicity: Ethnicity is ‘the bearer of culture’ as it describes “aspects of our heritage that provides us with a mother tongue and that shapes our values, our worldview, our family structure, our rituals, the foods we eat, our mating behavior, our music – in short, much of our daily lives” (Dalton, 2012, p. 16). In this way, ethnicity refers to different dimensions of identity that involve group membership including social components such as common ancestry, tribe, or nation and cultural components such as common religion and language. Culture and ethnicity, therefore, are complexly intertwined and dynamic.

Ethnic Minority: I use the term ‘ethnic minority’ families, rather than migrant families, as this encompasses a broader group including migrant families, families from a migrant background, refugees, asylum seekers, and national minorities. The language of ethnic minorities has been adopted by human rights mechanisms¹² and there has been a shift toward recognizing the relevance of minority rights for migrant communities “by states and international mechanisms” (Berry, 2017, p. 7). In addition, the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality *Action plan to promote equality and prevent ethnic discrimination 2009-2012* describes ethnic minorities in Norway as encompassing three main groups: immigrants and people born in Norway of immigrant parents; the Sami; and national minorities including Jews, *Kvens*¹³, Roma, Romani, and *skogfinner*¹⁴ (p. 6-7). I understand ‘ethnic’ to denote ethnicity as the bearer of culture, an aspect of relevance to migrants to Norway. Although it is debated in Europe on whether the term ‘minority’ should include migrants – as the language of minorities is more associated with a certain set of rights and groups with a longstanding or permanent presence within the state – I include migrants, individuals with a migrant background, refugees, asylum seekers, and national minorities in my definition as migrants face many of the challenges of minorities (Berry, 2017, p. 7). There are times where I use the term migrant rather than ethnic minority,

¹² For example, the Committee on the Rights of the Child notes concern that “child welfare assistance for children from ethnic minorities is of a much lower standard and that 10 per cent of children from immigrant backgrounds have experienced threats or violence due to their cultural background” links the concepts of ethnic minorities and immigrant backgrounds (p. 14). See *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 44 of the Convention*. (Report No. CRC/C/NOR/4). Another example is the Human Rights Committee including persons of an immigrant background in addressing discrimination against national or ethnic origin. See *Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Norway*. (Report No. CCPR/C/NOR/CO/7).

¹³ Persons of Finnish descent.

¹⁴ Forest Finns.

and this will refer specifically to those who are born abroad with two foreign-born parents, who now reside in Norway. In data gathered by Statistics Norway – and presented here – the term ‘migrant background’ includes both migrants and Norwegian-born children to migrant parents as their research is conducted considering migration rather than ethnicity.

While there is no internationally agreed upon definition of minorities, it is implied that migrants are also included under the category of ‘minorities’ by the United Nations, through their use of the term ‘new’ minorities (United Nations, 2010, p. 4-5). For example, the United Nations publication *Minority rights: International standards and guidance for implementation* states:

In practice, under international law, certain minority rights have been made applicable to recently arrived migrants who share an ethnic, religious or linguistic identity. This treatment is to be rooted in the customary international law principle of non-discrimination, which is fundamental international law and is reflected in all human rights instruments and documents. (United Nations, 2010, p. 5)

Furthermore, I find the language of ethnic minority in application to migrants, to be less problematic than the “generation” terminology previously adopted in Norway. As Rumbaut (2004) mentions, the expression “second-generation immigrants” is “technically an oxymoron, inasmuch as persons born in a [particular country] cannot also be immigrants to [that country]” (Clark-Kazak, 2012, p. 4; Rumbaut, 2004, p. 1165). Statistics Norway has also been criticized on their categorization of migrants, by including “Norwegian-born to immigrant parents” in the statistics on migrants – despite the fact that they have not migrated themselves (Andreassen, Dzamarija, & Slaastad, 2014, p. 12).

Considering the language of minorities adopted by international human rights mechanisms, that migrants often face the same challenges of ethnic minorities and rights activists are promoting a minority rights framework for settled migrants, that the United Nations has implied migrants are included in minority rights as ‘new’ minorities, and the oxymoronic nature of “generation” terminology has culminated in the broad definition of ethnic minorities employed in my research. In addition, other Norwegian researchers have adopted the language of “ethnic minorities” when referring to migrants¹⁵.

¹⁵ See Fylkesnes, Iversen, Bjørknes, & Nygren (2015); Fylkesnes, Iversen, & Nygren (2017); Križ, & Skivenes (2010).

Multiculturalism: Multiculturalism will be used as a recognition of the cultural plurality of society and that, in this case, there may be a need for more than a single template for CWS interactions with families – which includes consideration of cultural identity. Ideas of two-way integration and equality will be informed by Modood's theories of multiculturalism.

Integration: Modood's (2013) understanding of integration will be employed:

This [integration] is where processes of social interaction are seen as two-way, and where members of the majority community as well as immigrants and ethnic minorities are required to do something; so the latter cannot alone be blamed for failing (or not trying) to integrate. The established society is the site of institutions... in which integration has to take place, and they accordingly must take the lead. (p. 44)

This theory of integration is used as inspiration for my research sub-questions, on how ethnic minority families and CWS relate to one another – a two-way interaction. As Norway is the established society, I use multiculturalism's understanding of integration to mean that Norwegian CWS should be the first to adapt to ethnic minorities, while ethnic minority families must also adapt to the host society. This provides a basis to then examine how the adaptations described by ethnic minority parents and child welfare practitioners in the municipality of Drammen affects the ability for ethnic minority parents to participate on par in their social interactions in the areas of child welfare, familial life, and within the community.

Equality: A lower standard of assistance is a noted concern of the Committee on the Rights of the Child relating to service delivery of Norwegian CWS to ethnic minority families (U.N. CRC, 2010, p. 14). From this, the rights of the child – regardless of ethnicity – become an issue in the forefront. On the same note, egalitarianism is a strong theme within the welfare state. Therefore, issues of equality and how to achieve equitable outcomes in a multicultural community come into focus. I will use equality with a multicultural lens, emphasizing that equal treatment does not always create equitable outcomes. The equitable outcomes, in this case, will be the ability for ethnic minority families to participate on par in society in the realms of child welfare, familial life, and within the community.

Recognition: My understandings of recognition are informed by Fraser, where recognition designates a reciprocal relationship between individuals who see themselves as equal, but different, with the goal of recognition being a "difference-friendly world, where assimilation to majority or dominant cultural norms is no longer the price of equal respect" (Fraser, 2001, p. 21; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 7). In this way, recognition can be used as a claim, contested in

public spheres as a *folk paradigms of justice* (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 11). Folk paradigms of justice assume “the causes of and remedies for injustice” (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 11). Therefore, in my case, recognition is a claim that can be used by ethnic minority parents when there is not a reciprocal relationship between them and child welfare practitioners where they are respected as equals, but difference and their culture is also acknowledged; this is one of the causes of injustice claimed by some of the movements against Norwegian CWS¹⁶.

Social justice: My conception of social justice will also be informed by Fraser, where social justice is multi-dimensional, including spheres of redistribution, recognition, and in her more recent works, representation. The normative core of Fraser’s multi-dimensional conception of justice is parity of participation, where, “according to this norm, justice requires social arrangements that permit all (adult) members of society to interact with one another as peers” (Fraser, 2008b, p. 16; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 277; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 36). Overcoming injustice, then, “means dismantling institutionalized obstacles” that are barriers to participatory parity (Fraser, 2008b, p. 16; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 277).

1.4 Methodology

To answer my research question – how the relationship between ethnic minority families and CWS affects the participatory parity of ethnic minority parents in child welfare, familial life, and within the community – I have conducted semi-structured interviews with ethnic minority parents and with child welfare practitioners in the municipality of Drammen. I chose to confine my research to one municipality as each municipality has the autonomy to determine the structure of their CWS. Drammen was an appropriate choice as it is one of the most multicultural municipalities in Norway and this is where I have the largest social network; the presence of the University College of Southeast Norway in the municipality of Drammen made it easier to find participants than in other municipalities. I conducted six interviews – three with ethnic minority parents and three with child welfare practitioners. The analysis of the semi-structured interviews employs thematic analysis where I use patterns within the data to generate themes. The project was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data. My methodology will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 4: *Methodology*.

¹⁶ This is linked to suspicion and fear of discrimination of immigrants within Child Welfare Services. For relating information see: <https://blogs.prio.org/2015/06/the-child-welfare-services-in-norway-and-migration/>. For more on discrimination see Section 2.6: *Cultural Competency and Anti-Discrimination*.

1.5 Thesis Structure

The thesis is divided into six main chapters with the goal of illuminating and building on the present knowledge base of the relationship between ethnic minority families and Norwegian CWS, and the way these relations affect the participatory parity of ethnic minority families in child welfare, familial life, and within the community. *Chapter one* provides an introductory context, presents the research questions and the purpose of the research, defines key terms and concepts, and briefly presents the methodology to acquaint and prepare the reader for the following chapters. *Chapter two* examines the history of child protection in the legal framework within Norway; this is followed by a discussion and analysis of relevant literature that has been developed under themes of egalitarianism in the Nordic welfare state; child welfare's external influences; the disproportionality of ethnic minorities within the child welfare system and the power of CWS; cultural competency and anti-discrimination; and will conclude with ethnic minority perspectives and understandings of equality. *Chapter three* will present a theoretical framework to provide deeper understanding of recognition and social justice, multiculturalism, and a hierarchy of knowledge and dialogue; emphasis will be given to recognition as the main theory guiding my research. *Chapter four* examines methodology, presenting my methodological approach, participant recruitment, data collection, data analysis, ethical principles, positionality, and limitations. My findings and analysis will be presented in one chapter – *chapter five* – highlighting two main themes and three sub-themes regarding the participatory parity of ethnic minority parents, as well as highlighting nuances across the data set and the specific relevance to the research questions. *Chapter six* concludes the thesis and provides recommendations for future research.

2 Literature Review

International critiques relating to issues of cultural respect in child welfare, ethnic discrimination in employees of CWS, a lower standard of child welfare assistance for children from ethnic minorities¹⁷ present the question of how to better serve ethnic minority families who come into contact within the Norwegian child welfare system. Existing literature further informs the relationship between ethnic minorities and CWS in the Norwegian context.

The concern from the Committee on the Rights of the Child relating to the lower standard of child welfare assistance for children from ethnic minorities presents a question relating to the association between ethnic minority families and CWS – beyond the question of how to achieve equitable levels of service delivery for both ethnic majority and ethnic minority families who come into contact with Norwegian CWS are the complexities of fear, perception of not belonging, and suppression of rights, among other concerns. The main themes of the literature review highlight many areas beginning with the historical development of and current legal framework in Norway and how to understand equitable levels of service delivery in the Norwegian context with the Nordic Welfare State understanding of egalitarianism; this will be followed by a more specific understanding of Nordic social work and CWS; international research will provide further understandings of the role of CWS, disproportionality in the child welfare system, power relations in CWS, and cultural competency and anti-discrimination that help to develop an international perspective on service delivery; this will then be followed by a review of literature on ethnic minority perspectives and conclude with returning to the theme of equality and equity in hoping to develop a foundational base on which to understand the standard of child welfare assistance that children from ethnic minority families receive.

2.1 Norwegian Child Protection: Historical Development and Current Legal Framework

The first laws relating to child protection in Norway were developed in 1896 (Pösö, Skivenes, & Hestbæk, 2014, p. 478). Norway has been noted as “the first country to grant children born outside of wedlock inheritance rights (1915), to ban corporal punishment (1972)

¹⁷ See *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 44 on the Convention*. (Report No. CRC/C/NOR/CO/4 and *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under 44 on the Convention*. (Report No. CRC/C/NOR/5-6).

and to create a child's ombudsman" (Hennum, 2017, p. 323; Picot, 2014, p. 691). Three laws relating to child protection are prominent in considering major reforms – the Act of the Treatment of Neglected Children in 1896 (*Vergerådsloven*), the Child Welfare Act of 1953 (*Lov om barnevern*), and the Child Welfare Act of 1992 (*Lov om barneverntjenester*) (Picot, 2014, p. 691). Pösö, Skivenes, & Hestbæk (2014) argue that while the legislation has continued to change since 1896, "the overall approach to child protection has not changed" (p. 478).

Picot (2014), however, maps some of the prominent changes of Norwegian child protection legislation by using a genealogical approach inspired by Foucault. In 1896, the act was significant in "the emergence of new responsibilities for the state with regard to children", emphasizing the role of children's upbringing to fight criminality and thereby justifying placing children in out-of-home care, primarily in reformatories (Hennum, 2017, p. 323; Picot, 2014, p. 693). The reforms in 1953 resulted in a Child Welfare Act that focused on two main elements – prevention and family support, underpinning the Nordic focus on prevention in CWS today (Picot, 2014, p. 695). The 1992 Child Welfare Act implemented many important changes – specifically, in the status of the child emphasizing children as 'separate individuals with legally guaranteed rights', affirming 'the primacy of the best interests of the child' and granting 'children above twelve years of age the right to be heard' (Hennum, 2017, p. 323; Picot, 2014, p. 697).

When considering the national context of CWS in Norway today, there are several institutional structures, legislation, and policies important to mention. There are three bodies which are responsible for CWS – the municipality (*barneverntjenesten*), County Social Welfare Boards (*Fylkesnemndene for barnevern og sosiale saker*), and the Ministry of Children and Equality (*Barne- og likestillingsdepartementet*). Unique in regard to international standards, the municipalities are the primary organizers and providers of social services within the welfare system (Blomberg et al., 2011, p. 30; Christiansen & Anderssen, 2010, p. 32). **Figure 1** provides an organizational map of CWS in the municipality of Drammen:

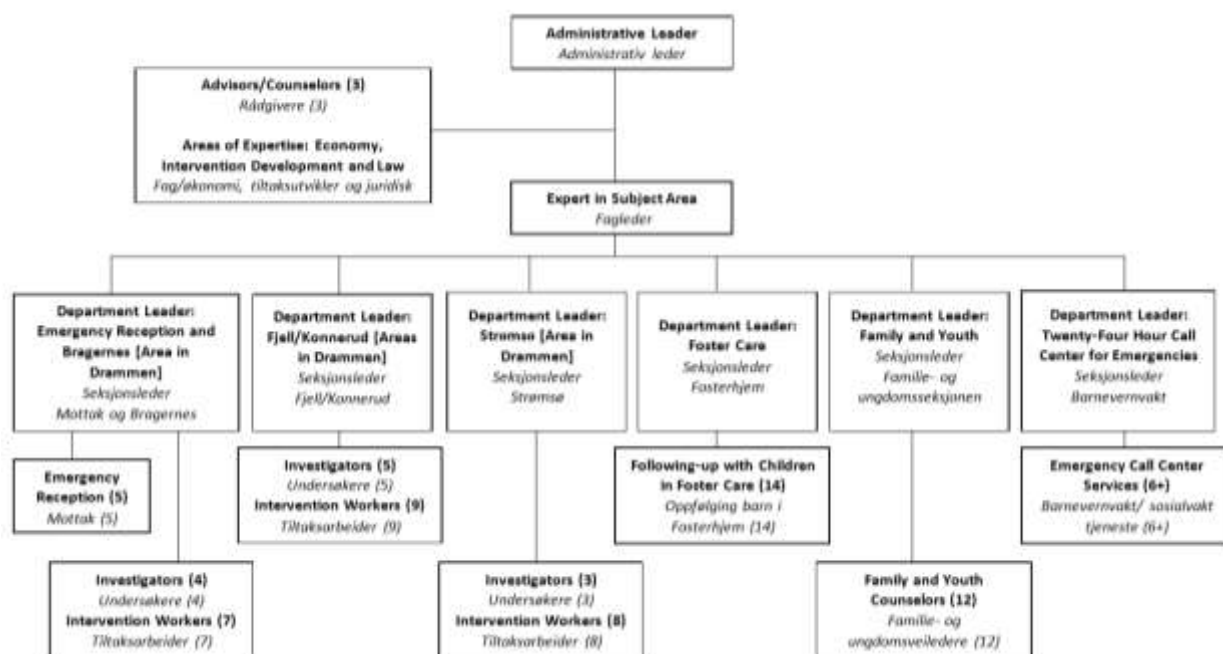


Figure 1 An organizational map of child welfare services in the municipality of Drammen, adapted from an organizational map provided by Drammen child welfare services. Translation from Norwegian by the author.

The municipality as the primary organizer and provide of welfare services can create a tension between local responsibility and the universal character of child welfare policy, as people can be treated differently depending on the municipality within which they reside (Blomberg et al., 2011, p. 31; Pösö, Skivenes, & Hestbæk, 2014, p. 483). In addition, more than half of the municipalities have fewer than 5,000 inhabitants and typically no more than three employees in the local CWS, requiring social workers to have many roles (Christiansen & Anderssen, 2010, p. 32). If children are to be placed outside of the home against the wishes of the parent(s), a proposal must be brought before the County Social Welfare Board (Christiansen & Anderssen, 2010, p. 32). **Figure 2** maps the work process of CWS in Norway. The orange color highlights the path where a case is closed without intervention by CWS; blue highlights the voluntary route of consenting to services; green denotes the involuntary route, requiring the court and legal intervention.

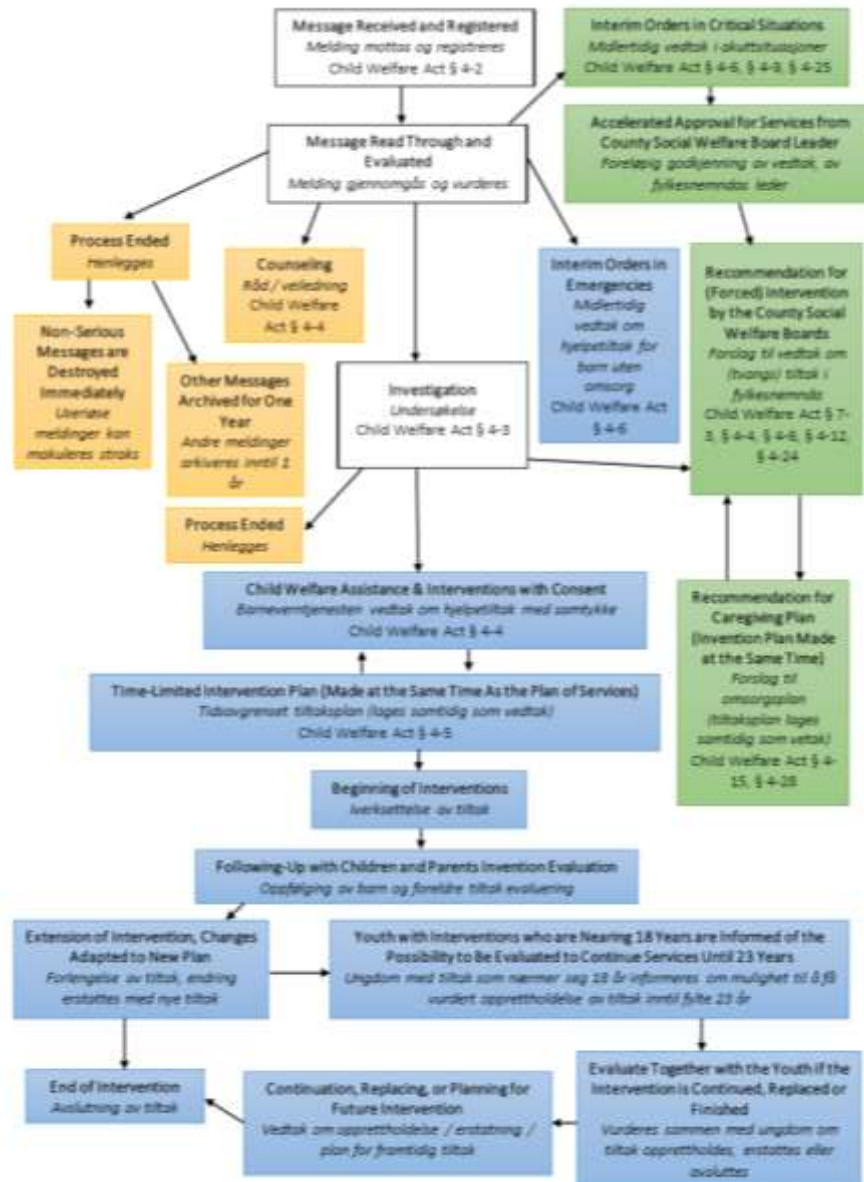


Figure 2 Flowchart of the work process at child welfare services, adapted from a flowchart provided by Kongsberg child welfare services. Translation from Norwegian by the author.

At a national level, the primary responsibility of the Ministry of Children and Equality in child welfare is to support service delivery through legislation, policy design, and administration. In the national context of strengthening children's rights, Norway also has an office of an ombudsman of children whose role is to "ensure that the needs and interests of children were safeguarded at all levels in society" as an independent monitoring body for children's rights (Björk Eydal & Kröger, 2011, p. 12; Hennum, 2017, p. 323). Considering my research question, these structures are crucial in developing the context and understanding the roles and responsibilities of different institutions.

The Nordic countries have been described as the first countries to modernize family legislation (Björk Eydal & Kröger, 2011, p. 26; Hennum, 2017, p. 323). In terms of an international context, Nordic social work is focused on a preventative ‘family service orientation’ to child welfare; a majority of the referrals are based on a general concern while a small fraction concern abuse and/or physical neglect (Blomberg et al., 2011; Christiansen & Anderssen, 2010, p. 32; Pösö, Skivenes, & Hestbæk, 2014, p. 479; Studsrød et al., 2014). This, in part, is reflective of the legislation which stresses the importance of early intervention and support to families (Blomberg et al., 2011, p. 35; Studsrød et al., 2014, p. 312). This preventative approach to social work has not come without criticism, with one critic suggesting that while Nordic countries may prevent problems from escalating, the high rate of families’ recidivism in being referred multiple times to CWS suggests perhaps the problems are not *solved* through this approach (Blomberg et al. 2011, p. 43). Most of the referrals received by CWS in Norway come from mandated reporters (78%) – the police, schools, health care, child welfare, et cetera – while the second highest source for referrals is the client him or herself (Blomberg et al., 2011, p. 37-38; Studsrød et al., 2014, p. 317). The investigations of referrals primarily lead to non-compulsory services – financial support, home visits, counseling (Studsrød, 2014, p. 313). “Approximately 80% of families consent to the services provided [by Norwegian CWS], although many families experience that their opportunity to reject interventions is limited” (Studsrød, Willumsen, & Ellingsen, 2014 as cited in Fylkesnes, Iversen, & Nygren, 2017, p. 2). The non-compulsory services, or services carried out with consent of the family, are a result of the supportive nature of the ‘prevention policy’ (Pösö, Skivenes, & Hestbæk, 2014, p. 478).

As mentioned in Section 1.1: *Introductory Context*, there has been international concern expressed about Norwegian child welfare protection by human rights mechanisms – including the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination [CERD], and the Human Rights Council during the Universal Periodic Review. Norway has been under two cycles of Universal Periodic Review by the United Nations Human Rights Council, the most recent in 2014. Despite the preventative approach, there was still concern expressed by countries about enough support being offered for families, including Egypt’s recommendation to Norway to “provide, in accordance with its obligations under International Human Rights Law, the widest possible protection and support for the family, as

the natural and fundamental unit of society” an appeal to Article 10.1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESR)¹⁸ (Human Rights Council, 2014a, p. 17; United Nations General Assembly [UNGA], 1966).

In addition to receiving attention from United Nations monitoring mechanisms, Norway has also been brought to the attention of the European Court for Human Rights regarding ethnic minority families and CWS. Norway has six pending applications and two recent judgments at the European Court of Human Rights regarding childcare proceedings in respect to the applicants’ children; of particular interest is *Abdi Ibrahim v. Norway* (2016) whose case has been communicated to the Court. The applicant is a Somali national and a Muslim, whose child was taken into public services and later adopted by a Christian family; in this, the applicant complains of a violation of the right to family life¹⁹ and the right to religion²⁰ (*Abdi Ibrahim v. Norway*, 2016). The Court’s response to the communicated case will set a precedent and could impact Norwegian CWS policy.

2.2 Egalitarianism and Equality-as-Sameness in the Nordic Welfare State

The nuances of the Nordic welfare state provide an important context in which the realm of child welfare operates. Despite a guarantee of equal treatment under the law and the egalitarian nature of Norway, social differences exist in considering the disproportionality of ethnic minorities interacting with the child welfare system; some academics would argue that these social differences exist, paradoxically, because of the egalitarian nature of Norway. This illustrates the importance of the question of the parity of participation of ethnic minority families in child welfare, familial life, and within the community in Norway.

One of the potential reasons for the social differences contributing to the disproportionality of ethnic minority families in the child welfare system could be the context

¹⁸ ICESR Article 10.1 “The widest possible protection and assistance should be accorded to the family, which is the natural and fundamental group unit of society, particularly for its establishment and while it is responsible for the care and education of dependent children. Marriage must be entered into with the free consent of the intending spouses”.

¹⁹ European Convention on Human Rights Article 8.1 “Everyone has the right to respect for his private life and family life, his home and his correspondence”.

²⁰ European Convention on Human Rights Article 9.1 “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance”.

of the egalitarian nature of the Nordic welfare state. Marianne Gullestad is one of the more influential authors in Norway on this topic, and despite criticism, has been cited in many works regarding egalitarianism in Norway. Gullestad (2002) argues that equality conceived as sameness “underpins a growing ethnification of national identity” (p. 45). Partially inspired by the work of Alexis de Tocqueville, Gullestad argues the tendency in Nordic countries for people to feel equal is to have a feeling they are “more or less the same” (2002, p. 46). One key element is the Norwegian word *likhet*, a central concept which is often translated as equality; the word can also be interpreted as “‘likeness’, ‘similarity’, ‘identity’, or ‘sameness’... implying that social actors must consider themselves as more or less the same in order to feel of equal value” (Gullestad, 2002, p. 46). This leads to what Gullestad coins as *imagined sameness*, where individuals’ emphasize commonalities and down-play differences to confirm and recognize one another’s equality or sameness (Gullestad, 2002, p. 47). Therefore, Gullestad argues that:

‘Immigrants’ are asked to ‘become Norwegian’, at the same time as it is tacitly assumed that this is something they can never really achieve. ‘They’ are often criticized without much corresponding consideration of ‘our’ knowledge of ‘their’ traditions, or ‘our’ ability and willingness to reflect critically upon ‘our’ own. ‘We’ (‘Norwegians’), are thus considered more advanced and hierarchically superior to ‘them’. (Gullestad, 2002, p. 59)

Gullestad does not come without critics. Halvard Vike (2013) disagrees with Gullestad in that she confines egalitarianism to the home, community, and nature, while he argues that egalitarianism is also a “by-product of formalized relational forms” including the state and public life (Bendixsen, Bente Bringsslid, & Vike, 2018, p. 158, 207). Ida Erstad (2018) contends that more than ethnification of national identity, sameness-oriented egalitarianism may have the unintended consequence of racialization (Bendixsen, Bente, Bringsslid, & Vike, 2018, p. 205). Despite these critiques, however, Gullestad’s understandings of egalitarianism in Norway, when extended to the realm of child welfare, help to inform the disproportionality of ethnic minorities in the Norwegian child welfare system. If equality-as-sameness can be applied in child welfare, familial life, and community interactions in Norway, difference could be an impediment to the participatory parity of ethnic minority families and reinforce institutionalized cultural hierarchies in parenting and familial life. Fylkesnes, Iversen, & Nygren (2017) discuss the presence of a hierarchy of knowledge in Norwegian CWS, where child welfare practitioners have a universalistic perspective of children’s needs suggesting a ‘correct’

way of parenting, and ethnic minority parents' knowledge informed by age, experience, and cultural views may not be valued; in this, child welfare practitioners are seen as the experts with the knowledge of the 'right' way to parent, and this cultural hierarchy of knowledge can be used to construct ethnic minority parents as deficient (p. 5).

Furthermore, egalitarianism in the context of the Nordic welfare state has an important element of redistribution, where when understood as a political project, egalitarianism can be viewed "as an aspect of institutional structures and forms of redistributive policy" (Bendixsen, Bente Bringslid, & Vike, 2018, p. 6). These two elements and understandings of egalitarianism in the Nordic context – equality-as-sameness and redistributive policy – are crucial in considering social justice in Norway from Fraser's perspective; equality-as-sameness relating more to the sphere of recognition, and egalitarianism as an aspect of redistributive policy relating more to the sphere of redistribution. Thus, it could be argued that within the Nordic context, social justice through redistribution is quite strong, while social justice through recognition is a continuing struggle.

In considering egalitarianism in the welfare state, some question the plausibility of continuing the welfare state as a political project in the era of migration. "An important issue is *whether cultural differences can be recognized without also weakening social cohesion and the welfare state community*, which, accordingly, is predicated upon common values as the glue of society" (Bendixsen, Bente Bringslid, & Vike, 2018, p. 22²¹). This concern – social cohesion in the welfare state in the era of migration – is echoed in the Official Norwegian Report NOU 2017:2 *Integration and trust*; "Equality as a social fact and as a normative ideal can be challenging for people with other cultural backgrounds where such values are less well entrenched. At the same time, elements of the majority can be concerned about the erosion of egalitarian values due to society's increasing cultural heterogeneity" (Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2017, p. 2). Simone Abram (2018) argues this perceived social cohesion, however, is imagined, as only certain foreigners are considered to be ethnically different; Scandinavians, she argues, have a history of crossing borders and intermarrying and "these other white Scandinavians are easily incorporated into the Norwegian national family" while "those who maintain an element of ethnic difference, be they Sami or Pakistani" are considered to be more difficult to include (Bendixsen, Bente Bringslid, & Vike, 2018, p. 96). Egalitarianism

²¹ Emphasis added by author.

as redistribution in the welfare state, Abram (2018) and Vike (2018) argue, is not the result of social cohesion and an egalitarian loving people, but rather through intense conflict, inequality, strikes, and negotiating disagreements (Bendixsen, Bente Bringslid, & Vike, 2018, p. 98-99, p. 114).

With non-European migration beginning in the late 1960s, Nordic welfare states have, in general, sought to “prevent social and economic marginalization, and to secure some form of cultural diversity” (Bendixsen, Bente Bringslid, & Vike, 2018, p. 22). However, the willingness to conform often can become a pre-condition to being recognized as equal:

All three Scandinavian countries have developed extensive policies aimed at monitoring and governing the majority population, especially in the domain of family life (and child rearing in particular)... Egalitarian ideals serve as important points of reference for such policies... In areas of migration and integration, policies pursued in the name of egalitarianism are becoming increasingly ambiguous: migrants face policies that are supposed to grant equal access to the welfare state, and the same time as they are expected to become “the same” as prototypical Norwegians (that is, in accepting... specific forms of parenting...) in order to be recognized as equal. One obvious problem is that willingness to conform is often the criterion for access. (Bendixsen, Bente Bringslid, & Vike, 2018, p. 25)

The problem of conformity²² and access is related to the society’s perception of the value of societal diversity. The Pew Research Center has collected data suggesting that the “majority of Europeans do not see the value of increased societal diversity” viewing migrants, rather, as a cultural threat (Berry, 2017, p. 6). Therefore, *imagined sameness* – as referred to by Gullestad – or *alikeness* – as referred to by Jöhncke, can be used as a prerequisite and egalitarianism can be “viewed as dependent on whether non-Western immigrants are seen to preform according to standards of normality”, which could result in one of the consequences of egalitarianism in the Nordic context being the contribution to ‘exclusionary mechanisms’ (Bendixsen, Bente Bringslid, & Vike, 2018, p. 26, 181-182; Jöhncke, 2011). Difference, therefore, is problematized in welfare services (Eastmond, 2011, p. 290). This is reinforced by research on Norwegian CWS, where ethnic minority parents described a lack of knowledge of

²² Statistics Norway records that in 2017, 49% of Norwegians ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree on the whole’ that “immigrants should make an effort to become as similar to Norwegians as possible”. Retrieved from the Statistics Norway website: <https://www.ssb.no/en/innvhold/>

Norwegian norms – including parenting and bureaucratic norms – as a barrier to their ability to participate within CWS (Fylkesnes, Iversen, & Nygren, 2017, p. 3). When examining egalitarianism with diverse populations in an institutional setting Erstad (2018) contends that “families are not given the information they need to be included as the *same*” reinforcing Gullestad’s notion that while migrant families are asked to become like the majority population, there is an assumption this is something they cannot achieve (Bendixsen, Bente Bringslid, & Vike, 2018, p. 213). In these cases, even families which wish to adapt to Norwegian parenting norms may lack the knowledge and guidance required to do so, even after interactions with Norwegian CWS; this further makes equality-as-sameness out of reach for many ethnic minority families. In tension with equality-as-sameness are rights granted by International Human Rights Law, including Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)²³ and Article 1.1²⁴ and 4.2²⁵ of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992) where minorities have a right to enjoy their culture, and States shall protect minorities, encourage conditions for the promotion of their identity, and take measures to create conditions favorable to minorities to express their characteristics and develop their culture (United Nations General Assembly [UNGA] 1966; UNGA 1992).

Monica Five Aarset (2018) criticizes Gullestad and the “tendency in society to explain social differences by pointing to ethnicity and culture instead of socioeconomic factors” despite the continued presence of economic inequality for ethnic minorities in Norway (Bendixsen, Bente Bringslid, & Vike, 2018, p. 298-299). Despite economic status and poverty being one potential causal factor in interaction with the child welfare system my research will focus on recognition as, in the understanding of Fraser (2004), redistribution and recognition are “two analytically distinct dimensions of justice” (p. 1115). While both redistribution and recognition are two central areas of subordination, Fraser admits that they “do not map neatly onto each

²³ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Article 27 “In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language”.

²⁴ Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities Article 1.1 “States shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity”.

²⁵ Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities Article 4.2 “States shall take measures to create favorable conditions to enable persons belonging to minorities to express their characteristics and to develop their culture, language, religion, traditions and customs, except where specific practices are in violation of national law and contrary to international standards”.

other” despite interacting casually; therefore, I choose to focus on recognition as I see this as the current largest struggle facing ethnic minority families in interactions with Norwegian CWS. My focus on recognition is not to belittle the significance of redistribution and, I hope through use of Fraser as a prominent theorist, to be clear about the importance of both redistribution and recognition in achieving social justice, despite my primary focus on recognition.

This is not to say that goals of egalitarianism or equality-as-sameness come from a negative place. Križ and Skivenes (2010) argue that concepts such as ‘assimilationist’, ‘ethnocentric’ and ‘universalist’ attitudes relating to ethnic minority families in the Norwegian and English child welfare systems need to be re-conceptualized, as they omit “the existence of a (Norwegian) child perspective that understands ethnic minority children’s rights and social integration as equal opportunity, and social mobility – not simply as assimilation and ethnocentric values” (p. 15). However, despite the intentions of the system, the outcomes can continue to reproduce inequalitarian outcomes including disproportionality in the child welfare system and economic inequalities – misrecognition and maldistribution. This point will be reiterated and elaborated²⁶.

The Nordic welfare state and issues of egalitarianism provide a crucial backdrop to the discussion to the relationship between ethnic minority parents and Norwegian CWS, and how that affects the participatory parity of ethnic minority families in child welfare, familial life, and within the community. As CWS is influenced by the social context and operates with a state mandate²⁷ equality-as-sameness could influence the approach, expectations, and practice of CWS. From the broader context of the Nordic welfare state, the next section examines CWS and outside influences – to further inform the context within which my research takes place.

2.3 Child Welfare and Outside Influences

Relating both to egalitarianism in the Nordic welfare state and CWS, child welfare systems and practitioners must be understood within context they operate in as they are influenced by society – they are not neutral, impartial actors. The work of child welfare has many influences including a state mandate, a political and cultural context, attitudes which feed into policies, and normative views (Björk Eydal & Kröger, 2011, p. 11; Christiansen & Anderssen, 2010, p. 31; Fitzsimmons, 1997, p. 153; Pemberton, 1999, p. 167; Risley-Curtiss & Heffernan,

²⁶ See Section 2.4: *Disproportionality in the Child Welfare System* and Section 3.1: *Recognition and Social Justice*.

²⁷ See Section 2.3: *Child Welfare and Outside Influences*

2003, p. 401; Zavirsek, 2001). Legislation, including that pertaining to child welfare, is influenced by outside factors including norms of the society which, in turn, influence the child welfare system and work of practitioners (Björk Eydal & Kröger, 2011, p. 11; Zavirsek, 2001, p. 172). In addition, legislation also structures family life, which then makes “certain family forms and lifestyles easier to realize than others” (Björk Eydal & Kröger, 2011, p. 11).

Professional discretion “plays a key role in social workers’ risk assessments” (Berrick, Peckover, Pösö, & Skivenes, 2015 as cited in Fylkenes, Iversen, & Nygren, 2017, p. 2). Professional discretion has changed over time, in relation to historical, political and cultural contexts, which are “typically taken for granted and viewed as universal or neutral by professionals” – what Picot (2014) describes as *hegemonic knowledge regimes* – which dominate child welfare in Norway through different points in history (Fylkenes, Iversen, & Nygren, 2017, p. 2; Picot, 2014, p. 699). The role of professional discretion is particularly important, as services are provided at the local level; “municipalities are the key agents in providing child protection services” (Pösö, Skivenes, & Hestbæk, 2014, p. 479). Due to this local nature of implementation, I conducted my interviews in one municipality, Drammen. These outside influences – the state mandate, political and cultural context, and normative views – coupled with local implementation and professional discretion largely impact the assessments conducted by Norwegian CWS. Therefore, the question of how, if at all, child welfare practitioners adapt their day-to-day work to ethnic minority families becomes relevant.

Therefore, issues of cultural competency are needed beyond individual social workers and should also address the child welfare system. The Ministry of Children and Equality goals to promote cultural competency in child welfare included increasing the number of employees with minority backgrounds in child welfare, requiring more minority perspectives in child welfare education, and increasing the use and skills of interpreters in CWS (Ministry of Children and Equality, 2009, p. 46). While these goals are generally respected in social work practice as improving cultural competency, a bottom-up perspective examining ethnic minority parents’ ability to participate in social life as peers may have different insights to developing a more culturally competent system. This is an approach advocated by Freire (2005), allowing individuals of oppression to express their truth in participating in dialogue; not by merely speaking for them. While the government has good intentions and these initiatives may be a step in the right direction, it’s important to hear the voices of ethnic minority parents to see what they perceive are ways to better enhance parity relating to child welfare. By including

both the voices of ethnic minority parents and child welfare practitioners in attempts for a dialogue, perhaps, if heard and implemented into institutions and structures, these voices could provide a foundation for policy recommendations that increase the participatory parity of ethnic minority families, creating a better system for all residents in Norway. In addition, including the voices of ethnic minority parents and practitioners complies with international legal obligations, promoting human rights, multiculturalism, and participatory parity. It is because child welfare is state mandated that the system should continue evolving at a macro level to meet the needs of families who are coming into their care, including the multicultural environment it is operating within today. Better serving families and children of diverse cultures helps fulfill obligations to human rights²⁸ and the rights of the child²⁹.

2.4 Disproportionality in the Child Welfare System

Disproportionality of ethnic minorities in child welfare is an international phenomenon. Pemberton (1999) suggests this, in part, can be contributed to a general lack of understanding of what an average family life looks like for an ethnic minority (p. 170). In addition, typical referrals to CWS in Norway are based on general concern about the child's living conditions while only a minority of referrals concern abuse and neglect (Blomberg et al., 2011, p. 42). Taking into consideration Pemberton's suggestion of disproportionality, in part, being influenced by a lack of understanding of cultural norms and the fact that most referrals in Norway deal with general concern, cultural misunderstandings could be a contributing factor to the disproportionality of ethnic minorities in the Norwegian context.

After referrals, however, children with a migrant background still experience disproportionality within the Norwegian system. While 76% of children placed outside of the home had no migrant background, children with a migrant background were placed outside of the home 2.7 times as often as children without a migrant background (Dyrhaug & Sky, 2015, p. 5). During the most recent Universal Periodic Review, Turkey recommended Norway "review

²⁸ See International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Article 27 "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language."

²⁹ See Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 30 "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to process and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language".

the practices concerning the removal of children from their families by the child welfare service, in the light of the best interest of the child and take necessary measures to maintain the special bond of the child with his/her cultural, ethnic and religious identity, after removal from the family” (Human Rights Council, 2014a, p. 23). Of migrant children, refugee children were 3.7 times as likely to interact with CWS than children who came to Norway for family reunification (Dyrhaug & Sky, 2015, p. 34). The 7,331 migrants between 0-22 years who received services from Norwegian CWS in 2012 came from 140 different countries; however, the largest five groups of children receiving services by country in 2012, in absolute numbers, were from Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Poland, and Russia (Dyrhaug & Sky, 2015, p. 20).

This disproportionality relates to the research questions in a couple of ways: one link lies in the child welfare referrals as 78% of referrals to child welfare are by mandated reporters based on general concerns where misunderstandings relating to culture could compose a fraction of these concerns; a second link lays in the child welfare practitioners assessments after receiving those referrals – how the child welfare practitioner operates with ethnic minority families in their day-to-day work largely influences the participatory parity of ethnic minority families in child welfare, in familial life, and within the community. In addition, research has identified potential barriers in service provision relating to ethnic minority populations – including, but not limited to – cultural gaps, language barriers, distrust, and bureaucratic structures (Bø, 2014; Kriz & Skivenes, 2015; Skivenes, Barn, Kriz, & Pösö, 2014 as cited in Fylkesnes, Iversen, & Nygren, 2017, p. 2). Each of these aspects are potential barriers in interactions between ethnic minority families and CWS, affecting the ability of ethnic minority parents to participate on par within the Norwegian system.

2.5 Power of the Child Protection System

Social workers are in a position of power and sometimes – whether deliberately or unconsciously – can display cultural superiority in their work with clients from other cultures (Christiansen & Anderssen, 2010, p. 32; Fitzsimmons, 1997; Piña & Canty-Swapp, 2015, p. 109; Zavirsek, 2001, p. 180). How does research suggest this power manifests itself in the Norwegian context? Hennum (2011) describes the power of CWS in document writing and how this reinforces ruling definitions of normality. In the examination of documents, Hennum (2011) argues exclusion is prominent as many of the documents disqualify children and their families from areas of social life by reinforcing norms of cultural consensus on familial life and

parenting; despite cases being vastly different, Hennum also describes the similarities of the excluding deviant childhoods. In this way, the power CWS – in trying to help – can also hurt, by reaffirming dominant norms and values, creating a cultural hierarchy (Hennum, 2011). In other research, Hennum (2014) describes potential pitfalls of child-centered practice, where ideas about welfare and best interests of the child are developed primarily by the majority, middle-class and children who do not fit these ideals can be negatively affected (p. 442). In these ways, CWS operates as an influencer – one that has power which, even when intended for good, can potentially create harm for children and families who do not fit dominant notions of familial life and parenthood. This is a factor when considering ethnic minority families, who may not ascribe to dominant notions, and is important when considering the adaptations ethnic minority parents make and their ability to participate in child welfare, familial life, and within the community.

2.6 Cultural Competency and Anti-Discrimination

Cultural competency. Cultural gaps in systems – and between practitioners and clients – contribute to misunderstandings and can “prevent effective social work intervention”; as a response, a focus has developed on cultural competency and a culturally sensitive approach within social work (Williams & Soydan, 2005, p. 901; Williams, 2006, p. 210; Zvirsek, 2001, p. 185). However, approaches to cultural competence have created a great deal of controversy, with a wide range of approaches and little empirical evidence (Williams & Soydan, 2005, p. 904; Williams, 2006, p. 209-210). Part of clarifying cultural competency is through exploring it within a school of thought – as I choose a critical theoretical lens, I will provide a brief summary of cultural competence as understood through critical theory.

Engagement with culture requires “engagement with the historical, political, and economic structures that have contributed to formulations of ethnic identity, group status, and opportunities for individuals”; in this way, the target of intervention is discrimination and “all types of intercultural domination that result in decreased opportunities and internalized oppression of individuals in marginalized groups” (Williams, 2006, p. 213). In practice, this requires culturally competent work to conceptualize how inequity influences current problems and the “capacity to seek help” (Williams, 2006, p. 213). However, cultural competent practice through a critical lens is not solely preoccupied with the deficits of oppression and marginalization, but also focuses on the strengths associated with group membership

(Williams, 2006, p. 213). This approach encourages practices on multiple levels including consciousness raising to help individuals identify the historical, social, and political processes shaping their experiences; empowerment practices to support clients make positive changes and use system resources; group processes to foster support and help individuals link personal experience to social inequalities; and challenging institutions to increase participation and decision making by groups who are oppressed or marginalized to help better meet the needs of the population (Williams, 2006, p. 213-214). Therefore, through a critical lens, cultural competence “is determined by our ability to foster positive cultural identity, empower individuals and groups to negotiate oppressive social structures, and promote social change by altering institutional processes that contribute to marginalization” with the goal of long-term changes (Williams, 2006, p. 214).

Challenges identified by Norwegian practitioners working with ethnic minority families include “minority parents’ perceptions on children’s needs and child-rearing” and well as “parents’ lack of understanding of the child welfare system” (Križ & Skivenes, 2010, p. 3-4). Child welfare practitioners, then, operate as “cultural instructors”, instructing ethnic minority parents on “Norwegian values and the Norwegian welfare system”; this differs from child welfare practitioners in England who focus on anti-oppressive ways and protecting children from physical abuse (Križ & Skivenes, 2010, p. 4). Križ & Skivenes (2010) indicate the existence of institutional racism within Norwegian CWS, as “social workers do not have access to the resources, including the additional time involved in dealing with interpretation and ‘the extra dimensions’ of dealing with cultural difference to communicate with ethnic minority families in a way that would not disadvantage them” advocating for more time for social workers to work with ethnic minority families (p. 17). It is possible, however, that more time will not solve structural disadvantages. Piña and Canty-Swapp’s (2015) findings from the United States indicate “service providers’ conversations about their work with culturally diverse clients revealed their goals of achieving multiculturalism were being subverted by legacies of assimilation pressures in their work. While agency staff wanted to accept and value their diverse clients, they at times consciously and unconsciously perpetuated assimilationist agendas” (p. 109). By conceptualizing their work as helping clients “fit-in” to institutions in the United States, practitioners acted as cultural instructors – what research indicates to be happening in Norway – and promoted universalistic and assimilationist service to the detriment of clients (Piña & Canty-Swapp, 2015, p. 109-110). Piña and Canty-Swapp (2015) and

Fitzsimmons (1997) conclude universal approaches and assimilation as it relates to social service delivery is a reflection of “larger trends in society”; this could be applicable in the Norwegian context, considering the promotion of equality-as-sameness, universalistic understandings of children’s needs, and the outside influences affecting the field of child welfare³⁰.

Despite agreement on the importance of cultural competency in the field, Williams and Soydan’s (2005) findings suggest a “child’s ethnic affiliation evokes little significant response by social workers confirming a largely universalist approach” compatible with the work of Fylkesnes, Iversen, and Nygren’s (2017) findings of a universalistic understanding of children’s needs by child welfare practitioners in Norway³¹ (Williams & Soydan, 2005, p. 901, 909). A universalistic approach (also described as a color-blind approach) can endorse misguided notions of equality and “resonates with the wider assimilationist ambitions of many Western liberal welfare regimes”; this approach is compatible with Gullestad’s notions of ‘equality-as-sameness’ and faces some of the same paradoxical challenges of “equality” creating inequalities (Williams & Soydan, 2005, p. 903). Under this approach, it is assumed ethnic minorities are adequately accommodated under mainstream universal interventions and “specialist provision is unnecessary, ineffective and may even do them a disservice” (Longres, 1997, p. 23; Williams & Soydan, 2005, p. 903). Norwegian law, when compared to English law, is widely color and culture-blind and “the procedures followed by social workers... did not include any recommendation on working with minority service users”, further suggesting the universalistic approach taken in the Norwegian system (Križ & Skivenes, 2010, p. 5). However, the presence of the disproportionality of ethnic minorities in the child welfare demonstrates how universalist child welfare practice in Norway has a “disproportionate impact on particular groups”, which the United Nations marks as a potential sign of indirect discrimination (United Nations, 2010, p. 8). In this light, the effectiveness of the universalistic approach should be questioned, and practices promoting cultural competence should be examined, considered within the context, and reevaluated.

Lack of cultural competency in Norwegian child welfare is a concern brought forward by international human rights monitoring mechanisms including the Committee on the Rights

³⁰ See Section 2.2: *Egalitarianism and Equality-as-Sameness in the Nordic Welfare State* and Section 2.3: *Child Welfare and Outside Influences*.

³¹ See Section 2.2: *Egalitarianism and Equality-as-Sameness in the Nordic Welfare State*.

of the Child. Under the topic of abuse and neglect in the concluding observations to Norway in 2010, the Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended Norway “ensure that adequate and appropriate assistance is provided to children and their families in all areas of the country, taking into account respect for other cultures” (U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child [U.N. CRC], 2010, p. 8). Furthermore, the Committee noted concern “that child welfare assistance for children from ethnic minorities is of a much lower standard” and recommended Norway make “every effort to ensure that children from ethnic minority backgrounds... have equal access to all children’s rights” (U.N. CRC, 2010, p. 14). In Norway’s most recent report to the Committee, they included that research has been conducted on ethnic discrimination against children in Norway³² indicating that “staff in institutions such as... child welfare services require greater knowledge and awareness of the significance of ethnic differences” (U.N. CRC, 2017, p. 6). In this same report, the Ministry of Children and Equality included a paragraph on respect for other cultures, under the topic of children deprived of their family environment; in this, they acknowledge that “proper account must also be taken of the child’s religious, cultural and linguistic background” and that the legislative committee have “considered adjustments” due to increased globalization (U.N. CRC, 2017, p. 19). The Ombudsman for Child in Norway (2017) also indicates the presence of ethnic discrimination against children in Norway and calls for further knowledge about “the scope and causes” (p. 14).

It is not only universalist approaches that arouse concern in academic literature. Concern is also expressed for overly culturally relativist practices; while universalistic practices “impose one set of cultural beliefs and practices as preferable and therefore reproduce patterns of domination and oppression”, overly culturally relativist practice can result in “judgements of humane treatment of children... [being] suspended in the name of cultural rights” which could be “used to justify a lesser standard of care for some children” (Webb, 2009, p. 309; Williams & Soydan, 2005, p. 902-903). This can create a dilemma in child welfare

³² See also The Ombudsman for Children in Norway (2017) *The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child supplementary report – Norway: NHRI report to Norway’s fifth and sixth periodic report to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Available at: <http://barneombudet.no/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/The-Ombudsman-for-Children-in-Norway-Supplementary-Report-to-UN-2017.pdf>.

The original report by Midtbøen and Lidén (2015) *Discrimination against Sami, national minorities and immigrants in Norway [Diskriminering av samer, nasjonale minoriteter og innvandrere i Norge]* is available here (Norwegian only): https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/2440432/ISF-rapport_2015_1_v3_endret.pdf

where “children have rights that the state needs to protect, while parents have the right to determine how to raise their children, and define what is best for them. Social workers... routinely negotiate this dilemma in their work” (Križ & Skivenes, 2010, p. 5). Webb (2009) describes how focus on difference can create further inequality, division, or separatism and Williams and Soydan (2005) and Devore (1997) question whether a focus on cultural explanations distract from significant structural factors such as poverty, unemployment, gender, social class, sexual orientation, marginalization and exclusion, concerns that Fraser also expresses herself with identity politics (Fraser, 2000, p. 108-110; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 87; Fraser et al., 2003, p. 3, 83-84). Fraser contends today’s struggles for recognition in the form of identity politics “often serve not to promote respectful interaction within increasingly multicultural contexts, but to drastically simplify and reify group identities. They tend, rather, to encourage separatism, intolerance and chauvinism, patriarchalism and authoritarianism” (Fraser et al., 2008, p. 130).

When approached correctly, however, Fraser contends that struggles for recognition of culture are legitimate and necessary (Fraser et al., 2008, p. 130). This is an area where justice as participatory parity plays a valuable role – practices that promote parity are justified³³ (Fraser, 2001, p. 32; Fraser, 2007, p. 309; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 140; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 38). Fraser’s work is an appropriate theoretical choice in considering cultural competency as the norm of participatory parity applies to structural factors including poverty and unemployment (more related to maldistribution) and marginalization and exclusion (more related to misrecognition) (Fraser, 1997, p. 13; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 12, 35; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 14). She goes beyond other recognition theorists by placing participatory parity at the core, highlighting institutional hierarchies and structures responsible for reproducing injustice (Fraser, 2008b, p. 60). Therefore, as the importance of cultural competency is widely agreed upon in the literature as necessary, but skills needed for cultural competent practice are not clearly defined, participatory parity provides a standard by which cultural diversity is recognized, individuals are respected within their culture – giving space for children to have different culture than their parents, and for culture to be dynamic – and where the voice of the individual can be heard, while taking into account structural factors (Fraser et al., 2008, p. 133). As the focus on sameness in the Nordic Welfare State has not appeared to reduce disparities

³³ See Section 3.1: *Recognition and Social Justice*.

in this area, perhaps a different approach to difference should be examined and considered. In the words of Bouventura de Sousa Santos (2003) “we have the right to be equal when our difference makes us inferior; and we have the right to be different when our equality jeopardizes our identity. This entails the need for an equality that acknowledges differences and a difference that does not produce, promote, or reproduce inequalities” (p. 458³⁴; Santos, 2002, p. 57).

As mentioned earlier³⁵, the Norwegian government has presented goals to promote cultural competency in child welfare (Ministry of Children and Equality, 2009). They also, in response to concerns brought forward by the Universal Periodic Review in 2014, have made the statement that due regard for a child’s background should be considered when placed outside of the home; however, “this can be a challenge in the case of children with minority backgrounds. It is an important priority for the Government to recruit more foster families with different ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Norway is also taking other measures to strengthen cultural expertise in the child welfare service.” (Human Rights Council, 2014b, p. 7). Norway’s response indicates steps are being taken to improve cultural competency in child welfare, acknowledging the State also views the relationship between ethnic minority families and CWS to be an area for improvement.

Public authorities in Norway have expressed the following challenges³⁶: lack of cultural competence and multicultural understanding; need for greater awareness of own attitudes and discrimination; language barriers; and too little knowledge about the rights of minorities (Ministry of Children and Equality, 2009, p. 88). In addition, the Directorate of Integration and Diversity [IMDi] report 5-2008 findings indicate one of four CWS practitioners “believe that interpreters are used too rarely” (Ministry of Children and Equality, 2009, p. 89). These are indicators that adaptations may be required to enhance participatory parity, which explicitly links to the day-to-day adaptations child welfare practitioners make when working with ethnic minority families.

Anti-Discrimination. Discrimination in Norway is a widely expressed concern by the international community, both in general³⁷ and in the field of child welfare. The Committee on

³⁴ Free translation from Portuguese. Original: “Temos o direito a ser iguais quando a diferença nos inferioriza; temos o direito a ser diferentes quando a igualdade nos descaracteriza” (Santos, 2003, p. 458).

³⁵ See Section 2.3: *Child Welfare and Outside Influences*.

³⁶ Directorate of Integration and Diversity [IMDi] report 7/2006.

³⁷ In addition to the concerns brought forward in the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Human Rights Committee, and Human Rights

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has recommended that Norway “intensify its efforts, including through the adoption of a new action plan to prevent ethnic discrimination and promote equality, as well as prevent and combat discrimination against persons with an immigrant background”; the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has urged Norway “to consult regularly with the groups and communities concerned [migrants, persons from a migrant background, asylum-seekers and refugees] and take measures to address the discrimination they face” (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2013, p. 3; Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination [CERD], 2011, p. 3). In addition, the Human Rights Committee has expressed concerns relating to the presence of hate speech (Human Rights Committee, 2011, p. 3). During the Universal Period Review, several states – Bahrain, Cuba, Iran, Honduras, Mexico, Nigeria, Poland, Greece, Guatemala, Russia, Uzbekistan, China, Algeria, Austria, Rwanda, Venezuela, Vietnam, Turkey, Canada, Turkmenistan, Finland, Argentina, Israel, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Tunisia, Philippines, and Sudan – expressed concern for ethnic discrimination in Norway, the need to continue to reduce discrimination, and to promote diversity in society (Human Rights Council, 2014). Jordan, Bahrain, and Uzbekistan provided recommendations specifically concerning discrimination against children belonging to minorities including ethnic, immigrants, Roma, and indigenous people while Macedonia encouraged Norway to “continue strengthening the provisions guaranteeing human rights to persons belonging to ethnic minorities” (Human Rights Council, 2014, p. 20, p. 24). This concern about discrimination is not absent from the realm of child welfare, further addressing a need for continued improvement of cultural competency.

There are obligations relating to these concerns. In the Convention on the Rights of the Child, State parties have an obligation to “take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child’s parents, legal guardians, or family members” (UNGA, 1989). Furthermore Article 8 discusses the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations³⁸ (UNGA, 1989). In relation to

Council, the United States Department of State – in their *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017* – also identifies that “discrimination against immigrants, including asylum seekers and irregular migrants, and ethnic minorities remained a problem” in Norway. Available at: <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277447.pdf>

³⁸ Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 8.1: “States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference”.

the right of thought, conscience, and religion, Article 14 grants children the right to respect³⁹, as well as states that state parties shall respect the rights of the parent “to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her rights in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child”⁴⁰ with the only limitations of expression of religion or beliefs as necessary in order to protect “public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others”⁴¹ (UNGA, 1989). Article 1.1. of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights⁴² and Article 2.1 of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities⁴³ ensure the right to cultural development, without interference or “any form of discrimination” (UNGA, 1966; UNGA, 1992).

At the national level, it is the responsibility of the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs to address issues related to equality and non-discrimination connected to ethnicity, religion, and belief (CERD, 2017, p. 3). The Directorate has coordinated activities including the Forum on Ethnic Discrimination, organized public meetings with migrant organizations and representatives from national minorities, and commissioned research about migrants in Norway; their research has demonstrated that “immigrants in Norway experience discrimination in most areas of society” (CERD, 2017, p. 3). The Directorate has also commissioned research to review County Social Welfare Board cases “to see if care order assessments differ when ethnic minorities are involved” (CERD, 2017, p. 25). This is relevant as County Social Welfare Boards make determinations on cases relating to removal of children from the home and children of a migrant background are 2.7 times as likely as children without a migrant background to be placed outside of the home⁴⁴ (Dyrhaug & Sky, 2015, p. 5). Furthermore, the Directorate has drafted a strategy for improving trust between ethnic minority families and CWS for 2016-2021 (*Handlingsplan for å bedre tillit mellom etniske*

³⁹ Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 14.1: “States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion”.

⁴⁰ Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 14.2.

⁴¹ Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 14.3.

⁴² International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Article 1.1 “All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development”.

⁴³ Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities Article 2.1 “Persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (hereinafter referred to as persons belonging to minorities) have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, and to use their own language, in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination”.

⁴⁴ See Section 2.4: *Disproportionality in the Child Welfare System*.

minoritetsmiljøer og barnevern)⁴⁵ (CERD, 2017, p. 25). These strategies show, in part, the prominence of the issue of discrimination against migrant families, the occurrence of discrimination within the sector of child welfare, and societal influences in child welfare; while the Norwegian government is taking actions to promote anti-discrimination, it continues to be an issue generating international concern – important when considering human rights, cultural competency, and the participatory parity of ethnic minority families in Norway.

2.7 Ethnic Minority Perspectives

Research regarding parent perspectives on experiences with Norwegian CWS has been discussed in light of recognition, social justice, participatory parity, and a social constructive perspective, among others (Fylkesnes, Iversen, & Nygren, 2017; Fylkesnes, Iversen, Bjørknes, & Nygren, 2015; Studsrød, Willumsen, & Ellingsen, 2014, p. 313). While positive and negative experiences, trust and distrust were described, one common theme is a fear of CWS (Fylkesnes et al., 2015, p. 81; Studsrød et al., 2014, p. 315). This fear was associated with perceptions of CWS and was categorized into themes including CWS primarily separating children and parents, CWS not having a dialogue with parents, and that CWS discriminates against ethnic minority families (Fylkesnes et al., 2015, p. 81). When considering the dynamic between ethnic minorities and CWS, this fear is an important consideration to keep in mind.

Fear of discrimination against ethnic minority families in CWS presents a theme that has been addressed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child as well as the Norwegian government. The Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality (2009) published an action plan to promote equality and prevent ethnic discrimination, dedicating a section to CWS. The action plan addresses increasing cultural competency in CWS to “give children and young people with minority backgrounds more adapted services” and “help the child welfare services avoid making mistakes that result in direct and indirect discrimination” (Ministry of Children and Equality, 2009, p. 46). However, discrimination in Norway continues to generate international concern⁴⁶, and could have some legitimacy as a fear for ethnic minority families living in Norway.

⁴⁵ Available (Norwegian only) at: https://www.bufdir.no/global/Handlingsplan_for_a_bedre_tillit_mellom_barnevern_og_etniske_minoritetsmiljøer_2016_2021.pdf

⁴⁶ See Section 2.6: *Cultural Competency and Anti-Discrimination*.

Another theme in literature from the perspective of ethnic minority parents is *hierarchy of knowledge*, where Norwegian culture and Norwegian CWS are presented as the “right way” and homeland practices or minority cultural practices are seen as the “wrong way” (Fylkesnes, Iversen, & Nygren, 2017, p. 4). Ethnic minority parents that have had interactions with CWS describe this narrative in two parallel ways – some parents describe thinking themselves that Norwegian culture and Norwegian CWS promote practices more in touch with children than their homeland culture and that these normative practices are better than the “wrong” ones used at home; other parents describe feeling Norwegian CWS practitioners think their ways of parenting are superior, not valuing the knowledge parents have from their home country or culture (Fitzsimmons, 1997, p. 155; Fylkesnes, Iversen, & Nygren, 2017, p. 4). Similarly, “lacking a Norwegian normative set of knowledge and skills challenged the parents’ opportunity to participate” (Fylkesnes, Iversen, & Nygren, 2017, p. 1).

2.8 Equality: Sameness and Difference

Achieving equality or equitable outcomes is a theme present in literature on migration, ethnic minorities, multiculturalism, recognition, and social justice. There are disagreements, however, on whether multiculturalism “fosters or undermines equality” and tensions that migration brings to the welfare state (Bendixsen, Bente Bringslid, & Vike, 2018, p. 23. One Official Norwegian Report describes the tension:

If the Norwegian welfare state can itself be seen as... part of the social glue, issues arise when new, large groups of people with no background knowledge of the basic social norms of the country, immigrate and settle here. If they are seen as representatives of cultural differences, have specific needs and/or face social marginalization, they can also contribute to challenging both the function of the welfare state and the basis for the legitimacy of the common good. (Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2017, p. 8-9)

Egalitarianism in the welfare state context⁴⁷ can result in inegalitarian consequences for migrants; this perspective from the state demonstrates the perceived threat of migrants affecting the ability of the welfare state to function (Bendixsen, Bente Bringslid, & Vike, 2018, p. 9).

⁴⁷ See Section 2.2: *Egalitarianism and Equality-as-Sameness in the Nordic Welfare State*.

To achieve an emancipatory multiculturalism, Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2002) argues “people have the right to be equal whenever difference makes them inferior, but they also have the right to be different whenever equality jeopardizes their identity” (p. 57). This is compatible with Fraser’s (2003) approach that justice requires *misrecognitions* to be addressed (p. 45).

In cases where misrecognition involves denying the common humanity of some participants, the remedy is universalist recognition... Where, in contrast, misrecognition involved denying some participants’ distinctiveness, the remedy could be recognition of specificity... In every case, the remedy should be tailored to the harm. (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 45-46)

Therefore, justified claims are those that promote participatory parity (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 46). Achieving participatory parity recognizes needs are not the same in every context; in some cases, groups may need to be “unburdened of excessive ascribed or constructed distinctiveness”, while at other times the solution may address “underacknowledged distinctiveness” (Fraser et al., 2008, p. 136-137; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 47).

It is crucial in this approach, however, to not be swept into a reductionist vision of culture – as warned by Norwegian anthropologist Wikan (1999) – by assuming culture is static, or children have the same culture as their parents (p. 58). Culture is dynamic and complex. My purpose is not to recreate an image of individuals – specifically of ethnic minorities and immigrants – as completely bound by their culture. Rather, in the view of multiculturalism, recognition, and social justice I hope to examine what space for difference exists, and how this affects the ability for ethnic minorities to participate in child welfare, familial life, and within the community. Is conditional belonging based on sameness the path to participatory parity and respect? Or is there room for difference in the day-to-day operations of CWS?

It is impossible for a polity to become neutral between all cultures; however, this does not diminish the importance of equality, or allow equality to become “secondary to majority precedence” (Modood, 2014, p. 309). While CWS should be aware of the dangers of cultural relativism in practice – highlighted by Zavirsek (2001) including allowing severe abuses to continue to occur because it is seen as culturally normative – there is a general understanding that culturally competent social work practice accounts for difference (Pemberton, 1999, p. 167). This provides a foundation to understanding how to uphold international granted rights

through the Convention on the Rights of the Child of the best interest of the child⁴⁸, continuity in upbringing⁴⁹, and the right to enjoy his/her own culture⁵⁰. A culturally competent CWS provides potential for these rights to be better upheld; however, it requires acknowledgment that ethnic minority children, with diverse cultural backgrounds, may have extra considerations in determining what best suits the child's needs. Of course, CWS is there to protect children and families and further uphold the best interest of the child; however, learning what is important to ethnic minority families interacting with CWS, promoting dialogue, and improving policies to further respect cultural differences – in line with theories of recognition, multiculturalism, and social justice – may ultimately improve services to enhance participatory parity.

2.9 Summary

A legal framework for child protection in Norway began in 1896; this legal framework has been developed with a preventative focus within the context of the Nordic welfare state. Equality-as-sameness and conforming to group norms, as argued by some Norwegian researchers, form the price for equal respect. When extended to child welfare – and coupled with a universalistic approach taken by Norwegian CWS – ethnic minority families end up interacting at disproportional rates than the majority population. This, as well as discrimination against ethnic minorities, has created international attention and concern by human rights monitoring mechanisms. In addressing the issue of equality, an emancipatory multiculturalism offers “people have the right to be equal whenever difference makes them inferior, but they also have the right to be different whenever equality jeopardizes their identity” (Santos, 2002, p. 57). Theories of recognition and social justice, multiculturalism, and a hierarchy of knowledge and dialogue – that will be presented in the following chapter – will continue to build on these themes and provide a theoretical framework that will guide analysis of my data.

⁴⁸ Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 3.1 “In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration”.

⁴⁹ To be considered when the child is placed outside of the home. Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 20.3 “Such care could include, inter alia, foster placement, kafalah of Islamic law, adoption or if necessary placement in suitable institutions for the care of children. When considering solutions, due regard shall be paid to the desirability of continuity in a child's upbringing and to the child's ethnic, religious and linguistic background”.

⁵⁰ Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 30 “In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language”.

3 Theoretical Framework

Recognition, social justice, multiculturalism, hierarchy of knowledge, and dialogue provide further insights around ethnic minority families and Norwegian CWS. Recognition and social justice offer participatory parity, a guiding concept influencing my research questions. Through Fraser's conceptions, both recognition and redistribution – centered around the norm of participatory parity – are necessary for social justice. Multiculturalism adds to Fraser's theories on recognition and social justice, through understandings of two-way integration and equality. From this perspective, both the host society and migrants are expected to adapt, with institutions being the ones who should take the lead. Equality from a multicultural perspective means recognizing similarity when difference produces inequalities, and recognizing difference when similarity produces inequalities – compatible with Fraser's theories on social justice. Freire offers insights on hierarchy of knowledge and dialogue, adding dimensions when considered with Fraser's theories. A hierarchy of knowledge is present in existing literature around ethnic minority families' interactions with CWS; this compliments Fraser's institutionalized cultural hierarchies that manifest in misrecognition. Finally, Freire provides conditions for intercultural dialogue; Fraser also advocates for dialogue, followed by institutional change.

These theories provide useful understandings on the topic of ethnic minority families and CWS when combined. Claims for recognition have been formulated as replacing former claims for egalitarian redistribution, capturing the focus of the political arena today in a variety of ways, including “energized movements for international human rights, which seek to promote both universal respect for shared humanity and esteem for cultural distinctiveness” (Fraser, 1997, p. 2, 129, 173-187; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 8; Fraser & Naples, 2004, p. 1111; Modood, 2013, p. 2). The movements making claims for recognition – and displacing claims for redistribution, as argued by Fraser – are the same movements that Modood (2013) uses to explain the emergence of the term ‘multiculturalism’ (p. 2). A politics of “being true to one's nature or heritage and seeking with others of the same kind public recognition for one's collectivity” (Modood, 2013, p. 2). In this way, both Fraser and theories of multiculturalism are influenced by Hegelian thought, in theories of recognition; Freire too, is influenced by Hegelian thought in theories of solidarity with the oppressed (Fraser, 2008b, p. 105; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 131; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 10.; Freire, 2005, p. 49-50). While Fraser's use of recognition

and the norm of participatory parity will primarily inform my research, multiculturalism, a hierarchy of knowledge, and dialogue add insights to Fraser's work – insights which prove relevant in understanding the dynamics between ethnic minority families and Norwegian CWS.

3.1 Recognition and Social Justice

Fraser's understanding of recognition will be used as the core of my theoretical framework. I begin by outlining recognition as a philosophical and political term, speak to justifying claims to recognition, distinguish recognition from identity politics, and describe a two-dimensional theory of justice and two-dimensionally subordinated groups. I end with a discussion of critical voices to Fraser's conception of recognition and defend my focus on recognition and its relevance to my research questions.

Before discussing recognition as a philosophical and political term, I would like to orient Fraser's theory of recognition within a critical school of thought; she is largely influenced by the critical perspectives of poststructuralism, feminism, and the Frankfurt School (Fraser & Naples, 2004, p. 1104). She conceptualizes recognition as a buzz word, one central to today's society and our understanding of "struggles over identity and difference" (Fraser, 2008b, p. 106-107; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 1; Fraser & Naples, 2004, p. 1111). As defined in Section 1.3: *Definitions*, recognition as an ideal is a reciprocal relationship between two individuals, both respected as peers, despite difference. When misrecognition occurs, therefore, it can be used in social spheres as a claim, as one of the causes of injustice (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 11). This foundation provides a base for the discussion of recognition as a philosophical and political term.

A philosophical and political term. Recognition is both philosophical and political – philosophical, in that it is a "normative paradigm developed by political theorists and moral philosophers"; and political as it encompasses "families of claims raised by political actors and social movements in the public sphere" (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 9). While it is important to acknowledge the philosophical aspects of recognition, my work will focus on recognition as a political term as ethnic minority families appear to be misrecognized and have a justified claim to recognition as being advocated by popular social movements and human rights mechanisms.

As a philosophical term, recognition stems from the phenomenology of consciousness within Hegelian philosophy where recognition expresses an ideal reciprocal relationship "between subjects in which each sees the other as its equal and also as separate from it"

(Fraser, 2008b, p. 105; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 131; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 10). In recent years, however, recognition theory has been elaborated on by neo-Hegelian philosophers including Charles Taylor and Axel Honneth (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 10). As a philosophical term, recognition is usually associated more with “ethics”, as opposed to redistribution which is generally associated with “morality”; in this way, recognition is often understood as promoting self-realization and the good life (Fraser, 2001, p. 23; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 10).

While recognition as a philosophical term is important to acknowledge, I would like to focus on recognition as a political term. In Section 1.3: *Definitions*, recognition is defined as a political term within folk paradigms of justice, where misrecognition is seen as a cause of injustice. Misrecognition occurs when individuals are “prevented from interacting on terms of parity by institutionalized hierarchies of cultural value that deny them the requisite standing” (Fraser, 2008b, p. 60). In the case of ethnic minority families’ interactions with Norwegian CWS then, I presuppose misrecognition – take the disproportionality of ethnic minorities in the child welfare system, or the concern of international human rights mechanisms of lack of cultural respect – as a cause of injustice. How does one, then, distinguish justified and unjustified claims to recognition?

Justifying claims to recognition. For Fraser, the evaluative standard for justifying claims to recognition is participatory parity (Fraser, 2001, p. 32; Fraser, 2007, p. 309; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 140; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 38). Therefore, recognition claimants must demonstrate how ‘institutionalized patterns of cultural value’ deny them conditions to participate on par (Fraser, 2001, p. 32-33; Fraser, 2007, p. 309; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 38; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 6, 134-135). In this way, misrecognition is understood as being “relayed through institutions and practices that regulate social interaction according to norms that impede parity” and cannot be solved solely through eliminating prejudice; therefore, child welfare practitioners can work to eliminate prejudice and continue to relay misrecognition through institutionalized cultural hierarchies within Norwegian CWS (Fraser et al., 2008, p. 86). From the literature review, it appears equality-as-sameness⁵¹, hierarchy of knowledge in the child welfare system⁵², hegemonic knowledge regimes dominating the field of child welfare⁵³

⁵¹ See Section 2.2: *Egalitarianism and Equality-as-Sameness in the Nordic Welfare State*.

⁵² See Section 2.2: *Egalitarianism and Equality-as-Sameness in the Nordic Welfare State* and Section 2.7: *Ethnic Minority Perspectives*.

⁵³ See Section 2.3: *Child Welfare and Outside Influences*.

– coupled with the power of child welfare practitioners⁵⁴ and the disproportionality of ethnic minorities in the child welfare system⁵⁵ – may perpetuate ‘institutionalized patterns of cultural value’ that hinder the participation of ethnic minority families in child welfare, familial life, and within the community. Therefore, if participatory parity truly is lacking, ethnic minority families have a justified claim to recognition.

These claims, however, can only be justified when the claimants can demonstrate: (1) the “institutionalization of majority cultural norms denies them participatory parity”, and (2) the “practices whose recognition they seek do not themselves deny participatory parity – to some group members as well as to nonmembers” (Fraser, 2007, p. 309; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 41). In this, ethnic minority families have justified claims to recognition if they are being denied participation by the institutionalization of majority cultural norms in child welfare, and if the practices they wish to gain recognition for do not deny participatory parity to others – such as in the cases of abuse and neglect. Therefore, Norwegian CWS should intervene in cases where abuse and neglect of the child is present; however, intervention should not be solely based on deviance from Norwegian norms – there should be room for difference while providing equal respect. The theoretical framework of recognition with participatory parity as an evaluative standard is appropriate in accommodating this claim.

Furthermore, the case of ethnic minority families and Norwegian CWS is one of evaluating justified claims in – sometimes – conflicting schemes of value. In today’s context:

It is hardly possible to regard society as culturally homogeneous, bounded whole, in which recognition claims can be adjudicated ethically, by appeal to a single shared value horizon. Rather, we must evaluate claims across divergent value horizons, no single one of which can reasonably claim to trump all the others. (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 223)

Therefore, Fraser’s theory of recognition requires more than “live-and-let-live” but should include criteria for resolving conflicts and dilemmas (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 223). In this, there are a “plurality of reasonable views of the good life”, as she centralizes the equal autonomy and moral worth of human beings (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 228-229). Participatory parity, she argues, can operate as a criterion to resolve conflicts across differing value horizons; furthermore, participatory parity should be applied through “democratic

⁵⁴ See Section 2.5: *Power of the Child Protection System*.

⁵⁵ See Section 2.4: *Disproportionality in the Child Welfare System*.

processes of public debate” both dialogically and discursively (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 43). Therefore, it is not solely the responsibility of the minority who is being misrecognized, or the majority, but a two-way process of discussion and adaptation. This is compatible with a two-way integration that multiculturalism promotes, providing space for difference in cultural and parenting practices, and allowing Norwegian CWS the opportunity to intervene in cases of abuse and neglect. Through deliberation, both minorities and the majority should be able to discuss as peers – as the same, but different – with equal respect. Thus, my thesis may function as a contribution to the public debate about institutionalized patterns of cultural value in Norwegian CWS and whether it impedes the parity of participation for ethnic minority parents.

Fraser’s theory of recognition – based on the norm of participatory parity – is also compatible to human rights; in starting with social equality as the basis for assessing claims, Fraser assumes “that varieties of recognition politics that fail to respect human rights are unacceptable even if they promote social equality” (Fraser, 1997, p. 12; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 12-13). Therefore, challenges and tensions to human rights presented in the literature review also come to the forefront. Recognition may have the potential to better the participatory parity of ethnic minority families in Norway – compatible with both social mobility and human rights.

Contrasted to identity politics. Section 2.8: *Equality: Sameness and Difference* suggests sometimes the solution for recognition may be to further acknowledge distinctiveness, while other times to deconstruct excessive distinctiveness (Fraser et al., 2008, p. 85). This is part of the disagreement that Fraser has with identity politics, where recognition is typically understood as “aimed at affirming a given group identity” (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 87; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 3). Identity politics focus on the affirmation of group identities, Fraser argues, “reifies identities, encourages separatisms, and masks intragroup domination” as well as displacing struggles against maldistribution (Fraser, 2000, p. 108-110; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 87; Fraser et al., 2003, p. 3, 83-84). By identity politics stressing “the need to elaborate and display an authentic, self-affirming and self-generating collective identity” individual members are pressured to conform to a “given group culture” (Fraser et al., 2008, p. 133). Therefore, there is no space for cultural dissidence, experimentation, and cultural criticism, imposing “a single, drastically simplified group identity that denies the complexity of people’s lives, the multiplicity of their identifications and the cross-pulls of their various affiliations” (Fraser et al., 2008, p. 133).

Rather, misrecognition should be treated as status subordination, where sometimes affirmation of group identities is the solution, but other times the solution is the deconstruction of distinctiveness (Fraser, 2000, p. 113; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 87; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 3, 83-84). By treating recognition as social status, “what requires recognition is not a group-specific identity, but the status of individual group members as full partners in social interaction”, providing space for the dynamic nature of culture and not making assumptions that, for example, a child’s culture is the same as his or her parents’ or that a migrant’s culture is unchanged from life in his or her home country (Fraser, 2001, p. 24-25; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 134). While the identity model, she consents, contains insights to the effects of racism sexism, colonialization and cultural imperialism she argues it is still problematic (Fraser et al., 2008, p. 131-132). Potential solutions, rather, should be based on the norm of parity of participation, to establish the “misrecognized party as a full member of society, capable of participating on a par with the rest” (Fraser et al., 2008, p. 134). In this way, Fraser hopes to replace identity politics with a politics “aimed at deinstitutionalizing unjust value hierarchies” (Fraser et al., 2008, p. 82).

A two-dimensional theory of justice. Recognition is not alone in Fraser’s understanding of social justice; rather, it is part of a two-dimensional theory of justice where “neither recognition nor distribution can be overlooked” (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 2). She integrates the relationship between recognition and redistribution through perspectival dualism, where justice entails both claims to recognition and redistribution “without reducing either type to the other” (Fraser, 2007, p. 310; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 3). Philosophically, recognition and redistribution seem paradoxical, as each is “likely to be rejected by proponents of the other” (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 10). However, Fraser reconciles their seemingly contradictory nature by viewing recognition and redistribution as folk paradigms of justice⁵⁶ integrated through perspectival dualism, with a single normative standard – participatory parity – making both recognition and redistribution distinct perspectives and crucial elements of social justice (Fraser, 1997, p. 13; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 12, 35; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 14).

In her more recent works, Fraser has included representation as a third dimension of justice (Fraser et al., 2008, p. 7). Fraser describes how two-dimensional understandings of justice no longer go far enough, as the territory of the state can no longer be assumed as the

⁵⁶ See Section 1.3: *Definitions*.

frame, necessitating a third political dimension to her theory (Fraser 2007, p. 313; Fraser, 2008a, p. 404; Fraser, 2008b, p. 6, 17, 59; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 278). This third dimension of injustice occurs when individuals are “impeded from full participation by decision rules that deny them equal voice in public deliberations and democratic decision-making”, constituting political injustice or misrepresentation (Fraser, 2008b, p. 60). The political relating to representation is meant to be understood in a specific ‘constitutive’ sense, “which concerns the scope of the state’s jurisdiction and the decision rules by which it structures contestation” (Fraser, 2008b, p. 17; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 278).

When it comes to representation, migrants have low voting turnouts in Norway – while “total voting turnouts were 59 percent and 51 percent respectively in the 2003 and 2007 local elections”, for migrants these rates were 25 percent and 28 percent (Morad, 2014, p. 3-4). In addition, migrants have a low rate of political representation in the parliament; composing 5.2% of the population – proportionally what would be 9 seats among 169 parliament representatives – there has only been three representatives in parliament with a migrant background in Norwegian National election history (Bergh and Bjørklund, 2010 as cited in Morad, 2014, p. 25). In this way, ethnic minorities are underrepresented within the Norwegian legal system, which impacts the legislation by which Norwegian CWS operates.

Two-dimensionally subordinated groups. When a group suffers “both maldistribution and misrecognition in forms where neither of these injustices is an indirect effect of the other, but where both are primary and co-original” then it can be classified as a two-dimensionally subordinated group (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 19). In these cases, “neither a politics of redistribution alone nor a politics of recognition alone will suffice” (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 19). While migrants are often treated as a homogenous group, “migrants frequently face obstacles to inclusion on the basis of a number of intersecting identities, including race, religion and gender” (Berry, 2017, p. 7). Fraser’s two-dimensional theory of social justice considers intersecting identities – acknowledging that, for example, gender and “race” are “not nearly cordoned off from one another. Rather, all these axes of subordination intersect one another in ways that affect everyone’s interests and identities. No one is a member of only one such collectivity...” (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 26; Olson, 2008, p. 39-40). These intersecting identities can impact the subordination of various groups.

Ethnic minorities, I argue, are a two-dimensionally subordinated group in Norway, experiencing both misrecognition and maldistribution. Poverty rates for migrants, according

to Statistics Norway Reports 40/2013, stabilize over the first five years of residence in Norway – to around 12-20% for migrants from Asia, Africa, and South America, around 5-10% for migrants from Eastern Europe, and around 3-5% for migrants from Western Europe (Bhuller & Brandsås, 2013). In the period 2011-2013, 36% of migrant children belonged to households with low-incomes; this compares to 5% of children without an immigrant background (Dzamarija, 2016, p. 101). Therefore, children of a migrant background account for 53% of all children in low-income families (CERD, 2017, p. 8)⁵⁷. These statistics are indicative that ethnic minority families are suffering maldistribution in Norway, in addition to misrecognition – in this case, in CWS.

These spheres are not completely independent. Financial issues, including poverty and low-income households, can be a source of strain on the family and can result in referrals to Norwegian CWS. As ethnic minority families have relatively high poverty rates and low-income households, maldistribution could be affecting issues of (mis)recognition. This too is compatible with Fraser's two-dimensional theory of social justice, as "virtually all real-world axes of subordination can be treated as two-dimensional" while not to the same degree (Fraser, 1997, p. 12, 15; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 25; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 13, 16). However, two-dimensional subordination requires some independent attention both to recognition and redistribution. I would like to explicitly acknowledge maldistribution overlaps with misrecognition in the case of CWS interactions with ethnic minority families – there has been research demonstrating that socio-economic factors contribute to migrant families interactions with Norwegian CWS; however, even when controlling for socio-economic status, children with a migrant background are still disproportionally overrepresented in Norwegian CWS (Berg et al., 2017, p. 114). Therefore, despite redistribution being a crucial aspect to social justice and ethnic minority families experiencing two-dimensional subordination, my thesis provides independent attention to misrecognition in the case of child welfare.

It is valuable to ask: who are the subjects of justice? The state is becoming less plausible as the "sole container, arena, and regulator of social justice"; therefore, Fraser suggests that conflicts must be framed at the appropriate level – which she argues, should be determined by

⁵⁷ In addition, the Human Rights Committee – in the *Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Norway*. (Report No. CCPR/C/NOR/CO/7) – notes its concern that "in 2016, the unemployment rate among persons of immigrant backgrounds was 11.2%, almost three times higher than the general unemployment rate of 4.2%" and recommends the State party "ensure equal treatment for everyone in its territory, regardless of a person's national or ethnic origin" (p. 2).

the all-subjected principle (Fraser, 2008a, p. 411; Fraser, 2008b, p. 96; Fraser, 2010, p. 292-293; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 92). The all-subjected principle claims “all who are jointly subjected to a given governance structure have moral standing as subjects of justice in relation to it” (Fraser, 2008a, p. 411; Fraser, 2008b, p. 96; Fraser, 2010, p. 292-293). The mandate of Norwegian CWS applies to all children who reside in Norway, regardless of their background, residency status or citizenship⁵⁸; therefore, as migrants are subjected to the structure of Norwegian CWS, Fraser’s theory appropriately covers migrants as subjects of justice, deserving of participatory parity.

Applicability of Fraser’s theories in social work practice. Webb (2010) describes social work as an example of Fraser’s theory in practice, noting recognition and redistribution as inter-dependent and crucial aspects of injustice (p. 2365). While Honneth’s theory of recognition has been more widely promoted in social work, Garrett (2010) suggests Fraser provides “a more convincing articulation of recognition” that is compatible with the accounts of the “multifaceted nature of oppression and subjugation present in the discourse of social work”; however, he critiques what he considers to be an insufficient amount of attention given to the role of the neo-liberal state (p. 1517-1520, 1523-1524). Hölshcer (2014) and I, however, contend that Fraser’s model sufficiently considers the neo-liberal state and its role in “causing and perpetuating human suffering” in her original and expanded work (p. 24). Garrett (2010) further contends recognition theorists focus too much on micro-level encounters, not focusing enough on the macro-level, structural, and institutional misrecognition – a concern Fraser expresses herself with identity politics (p. 1530). As mentioned in Section 2.3: *Child Welfare and Outside Influences*, social work is state mandated and, in this way, is not an independent entity from the state. Furthermore, the multifaceted frame of social justice and norm of parity of participation pair with the social work aspirations of involving individuals receiving services, providing a new theoretical framework through which to further, and hopefully achieve, expanded involvement (Davies, Gray, & Webb, 2014, p. 119).

Recognition as the focus. Considering the disproportionality of ethnic minority children in CWS – even when controlling for socio-economic status; issues of cultural respect in child

⁵⁸ See Child Welfare Act (1992) Section 1-2 “The provisions of the Act regarding services and measures apply to all persons staying in this kingdom”. Available at: <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/049114cce0254e56b7017637e04ddf88/the-norwegian-child-welfare-act.pdf>. See also The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs website: https://www.bufdir.no/en/English_start_page/Child_welfare_services_for_children_with_a_minority_background/

welfare, ethnic discrimination by employees of CWS, and concern for a lower standard of child welfare assistance for children from ethnic minorities expressed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child⁵⁹; and cases brought before the European Court of Human Rights⁶⁰, in light of current research, drive my focus on recognition. The context of egalitarianism in the Nordic welfare state and equality-as-sameness⁶¹ partially inform institutionalized patterns of cultural value within Norwegian CWS, impacting the participatory parity of minority families in child welfare, familial life, and within the community. In analyzing my semi-structured interviews, recognition – with the foundation of participatory parity – provides a useful theoretical framework to guide analysis and interpret data. Beginning with a folk paradigm of justice, I assume misrecognition is a cause of injustice and – with my research question – seek to understand how it impedes the participatory parity of ethnic minority families. This framework is being utilized within a larger context of a resurgence of the “politics of status” (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 89).

Critiques of Fraser’s theory. Many prominent theorists have engaged directly with Fraser, including Axel Honneth, Richard Rorty, Judith Butler, and Iris Young; however, I would like to highlight critiques of Honneth and Rorty. Honneth (2003) begins his theory of recognition with a conceptualization of the good life – as opposed to Fraser’s starting point of equal moral worth – and describes social experiences of injustice not as impeding participatory parity, but rather humiliation, institutional expression of social disrespect, or “unjustified relations of recognition” (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 114, 134). One area where Honneth argues Fraser’s theory as lacking is the normative idealism of examples of social groups declaring cultural recognition; there are some groups, such as neo-Nazis, who are a cultural group demanding recognition that should not be granted participatory parity (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 121). Fraser reconciles this by illustrating how the claims of groups, such as neo-Nazis, to recognition are not justified as the practices whose recognition they seek deny participatory parity to some group members and nonmembers⁶² (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 41). Furthermore, Honneth relates all disagreements back to recognition within three spheres – love, legal equality, and the merit principle – while Fraser’s theory has a two-dimensional framework, with recognition

⁵⁹ See Section 1.2: *Research Questions and the Purpose of the Research* and Section 2.6: *Cultural Competency and Anti-Discrimination*.

⁶⁰ See Section 1.2: *Research Questions and the Purpose of the Research* and Section 2.1: *Norwegian Child Protection: Historical Development and Current Legal Framework*.

⁶¹ See Section 2.2: *Egalitarianism and Equality-as-Sameness in the Nordic Welfare State*.

⁶² See earlier in Section 3.1: *Recognition and Social Justice* “Justifying claims to recognition”.

encompassing only one sphere (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 138-143, 155). I find Fraser's theory to be more appropriate for the Norwegian context of ethnic minority families' relations with CWS, as literature suggests ethnic minorities experience a lack of participatory parity in the realms of recognition, redistribution, and representation. All residents – regardless of citizenship – are included in Fraser's more recent work, through the all-subjected principle (Fraser, 2008a, p. 411; Fraser, 2008b, p. 96; Fraser, 2010, p. 292-293). As participatory parity becomes central – considering the corner expressed by the public sphere, international demonstrations, and human rights monitoring mechanisms – my research question comes into focus. Rorty questions the usefulness of cultural recognition, emphasizing common humanity and eliminating prejudice (Fraser et al., 2008, p. 77). Fraser finds this approach insufficient, as it does not have a goal of participatory parity, with individuals engaging in social life as peers with equal respect (Fraser et al., 2008, p. 84). These theorists, and others who have criticized Fraser, bring relevant considerations and contributions, as well as highlight weaknesses in her framework. For the case of ethnic minority families' relations with Norwegian CWS, however, I find her theory on recognition as a distinct element of social justice with the norm of participatory parity to provide valuable insights.

3.2 Multiculturalism, Two-Way Integration, and Equality

Piña and Canty-Swapp (2015) describe multiculturalism as a response emerging as a critique to assimilation, emphasizing an appreciation “of our individual differences” (p. 90). Multiculturalism couples well with recognition and minority rights, which ensure “respect for distinctive identities while ensuring that any differential treatment towards groups or persons belonging to such groups does not mask discriminatory practices and policies” (United Nations, 2010, p. 8).

Two-way integration. Modood's (2013) understanding of multiculturalism is compatible with social work theory and provides another tool for understanding child welfare with ethnic minority families. Integration is a two-way process where mutual adaptation of ethnic minorities and members of the majority community is required for successful integration; as institutions are where integration take place, they must take the lead (Berry, 2017, p. 8-9; Modood, 2013, p. 44). Therefore, mechanisms responsible for CWS should lead in creating a space where different group identities and norms are respected while ethnic minorities, in turn, also have responsibility for adapting. As child welfare practitioners represent the day-to-day

operations of the child protection system, their insights on adaptations will be valuable. This two-way understanding of integration is compatible with practice listening to the individuals who receive services, where the state would provide an arena for ethnic minorities to try to learn how best to develop services compatible with differing cultures and lifestyles (Pemberton, 1999, p. 172). In addition, it could be a tool to remedy misrecognition within the child welfare system and enhance the participatory parity of ethnic minority families in child welfare, familial life, and within the community.

Modood (2013) argues as each group is distinctive, integration cannot consist of a single template; therefore, there can be accommodations allowing for differing cultural and religious practices to fit into existing majoritarian ways of doing things (Modood, 2013, p. 44-45). This suggests “an accommodative form of integration which would allow group-based racialized, ethnic, cultural and religious identities and practices to be recognized and supported in the public space” which is “justified by an extended concept of equality, not just equal dignity but also equal respect” (Modood, 2013, p. 56-57). Integration through equality from a multicultural perspective requires anti-discrimination and the public sphere accommodating the presence of different group identities and norms (Modood, 2013, p. 150).

Equality. Multiculturalism argues theory of human nature should account for both the natural and cultural elements of human beings; all human beings share “a common human identity but in a culturally mediated manner” (Parekh, 2006, p. 239). When taking into account both the natural and cultural identity of human beings, equality cannot be grounded in human uniformity as humans are both similar and different (Parekh, 2006, p. 239). “Equal rights do not mean identical rights, for individuals with different cultural backgrounds and needs might require different rights to enjoy equality in respect of whatever happens to be the content of their rights” (Parekh, 2006, p. 240). Modood (2013) appeals to a similar notion of equality within multiculturalism when he speaks of equal dignity, the ‘natural’ identity and the appeal to people’s humanity and of equal respect, the ‘cultural’ identity based “on an understanding of difference” (p. 47). In the case of child welfare, differentiated services have been understood to provide the best results in service delivery; as the children and families receiving services from CWS are not a homogenous group, a homogenous approach to those receiving services will yield ineffective results (Follesø & Mevik, 2011, p. 102; Studsrød, 2014, p. 318). Santos (2002) echoes these concerns in a call for progressive multiculturalism, which requires “a balanced a mutually reinforcing relationship between global competence and local legitimacy”

to promote an emancipatory human rights (p. 44). In this way, instead of “resorting to false universalisms”, human rights should rely on “mutually intelligible” local meanings and interpretations – a link between human rights and multiculturalism (p. 47).

3.3 Hierarchy of Knowledge and Dialogue

While the work of Paulo Freire does not couple perfectly with Fraser’s theory of social justice – as he focuses more pedagogy and on dialogue being transformative in itself – his work provides valuable insights into a hierarchy of knowledge and dialogue. Freire describes how the criteria of knowledge imposed upon the oppressed is the ‘conventional’ criteria (Freire, 2005, p. 63). This understanding coincides with the work of Fylkesnes, Iversen, and Nygren (2017) whose data suggested that minority parents’ knowledge was not valued by practitioners, as child welfare practitioners are guided by a set of universalistic understandings of children’s needs (p. 5). The criteria of the knowledge in the case of Norwegian CWS then, is expert knowledge based on universalistic perspective of children’s needs – portraying the “right way” being linked to CWS and the “the wrong way” being linked to practices in the homeland – disregarding the knowledge that parents have gained through their experiences and knowledge they have of their child(ren)’s needs (Fylkesnes, Iversen, & Nygren, 2017, p. 4). Furthermore, the oppressed are regarded as the ‘pathology’ of the healthy society, where they must be integrated and incorporated into the healthy society; however, Freire contends the oppressed are not “marginals” living “outside” of society, but rather, they have always been “inside” society (Freire, 2005, p. 74). Therefore, the solution is not to integrate them into a structure of oppression, but to transform the structure; this is compatible with Fraser’s understanding of the need to dismantle institutionalized hierarchies that perpetuate cultural status hierarchies (Freire, 2005, p. 74).

Freire’s understanding of intercultural dialogue can lend further insights to Fraser’s theory of recognition and social justice. Compatible with participatory parity, Freire argues saying the true word is the right of everyone, not merely the privilege of a few persons (Freire, 2005, p. 88). Those denied the right to “speak their world” must reclaim the right and “prevent the continuation of... dehumanizing aggression” (Freire, 2005, p. 88). This could be understood from the perspective of Fraser as claims-making to recognition within a folk paradigm of justice. Contra Fraser, Freire outlines five necessities to dialogue – love, humility, faith, hope, and critical thinking (Freire, 2005, p. 90-92). While this differs from Fraser’s focus on radical equal

moral worth, respect, and participatory parity, I believe these aspects have similarities in the goals of the environment which dialogue should occur and that the two approaches are compatible. The foundation of love, humility, and faith logically produce mutual trust (Freire, 2005, p. 91). Hope is necessary, as individuals need to expect that something will come of their efforts – that the encounter will not be “empty and sterile, bureaucratic and tedious” (Freire, 2005, p. 91-92). Finally, critical thinking provides an arena where reality becomes a transformative process as opposed to a “static entity” (Freire, 2005, p. 92). This dialogue is important in child welfare, where research has suggested the importance of social workers – especially those who have a different cultural or ethnic background than the individuals they are working with – to genuinely listen and hear what they are being told, being willing to operate in different ways led by the community (Pemberton, 1999, p. 178; Studsrød et al., 2014, p. 312).

While Freire views dialogue as transformative, Fraser advocates for both dialogical and institutional features, where the transformative aspect necessarily needs to be reflected within institutions with binding resolutions for substantial, lasting change (Fraser, 2008b, p. 68-69, 96; Freire, 2005, p. 88-89). Furthermore, an essential aspect Freire suggests is the importance of the oppressed as individuals, representing themselves, playing a key role in the transformative process; a space to reflect on their own situation and the world, not having that being reflected for them by others (Freire, 2005, p. 126). Fraser, too, parallels Freire’s descriptions of oppression and dialogue in her description of hegemony as an intersection between power, inequality, and discourse (Fraser, 1997, p. 154). She describes hegemony as a process where “cultural authority is negotiated and contested”, presupposing a plurality of discourses of unequal authority (Fraser, 1997, p. 154).

3.4 Summary

Social justice is comprised of three spheres – recognition, redistribution, and representation – where the common norm of parity of participation makes them commensurable. Misrecognition occurs when there are institutionalized cultural hierarchies that impede the parity of participation of some actors in social life. In considering current literature, it appears that ethnic minority parents may have barriers to parity of participation in the realms of child welfare, familial life, and within the community. Multiculturalism adds to the insights of recognition, offering ideas of a two-way integration where both ethnic minority

parents and CWS are required to adapt – inspiring my research sub-questions – and that equality, in some cases, may mean recognizing difference. Freire builds on these themes by offering insights on knowledge hierarchies and intercultural dialogue. A hierarchy of knowledge has been addressed in previous literature on ethnic minority families and Norwegian CWS and provides additional insights on institutional cultural hierarchies; Freire’s understanding of intercultural dialogue provides the conditions, when supplemented with Fraser, for structural change to occur. These theories will be used to inform the analysis and provide meaning to the data set.

4 Methodology

My research questions – how the existing relations between ethnic minority parents and CWS affects the participatory parity of ethnic minority families within child welfare, familial life and within the community; the ways that ethnic minority parents and child welfare practitioners adapt to one another; and how perceptions affect their adaptations – drive the selection of my methodology. In this chapter I will provide an overview of my methodological approach – including my epistemological foundation; recruitment of participants; collection and analysis of data; ethnic principals; and my positionality and limitations.

To answer my research questions, I employed qualitative research methods in data collection using semi-structured interviews that lasted between half an hour and two hours. Semi-structured interviews have been the primary form of data collection used to research related topics⁶³. Analytical frameworks of related research, however, have varied employing content analysis, narrative analysis, meaning-interpretation procedure and thematic analysis⁶⁴. While each of these methods have similarities and could be options for my analysis, I employ thematic analysis.

4.1 Epistemological Foundation

The epistemological foundation for my research is interpretivism. Therefore, I am taking a broader approach to what is knowledge than the positivist tradition, which is appropriate with my use of semi-structured interviews. I am interested in understanding the relationship between ethnic minority families and CWS and the impact it has on participatory parity as opposed to explaining and generalizing, which is more aligned with the positivist tradition. This selection is based on my desire to provide more specific information about ethnic minority parents' concerns, preferences, barriers and needs (Follesø & Mevik, 2011, p. 109). The positivist tradition would not be as effective in answering my research questions as I am not seeking to generalize behavior or establish a relationship between two variables as the topics I am investigating are multifaceted, creating difficulty in isolating variables (Follesø & Mevik, 2011, p. 108).

⁶³ See Berg et al., 2017, p. 30; Fylkesnes et al., 2015; Fylkesnes, Iversen & Nygren, 2017; and Križ & Skivenes, 2010.

⁶⁴ See Christiansen & Anderssen, 2010, p. 33; Fylkesnes et al., 2015, p. 81; Fylkesnes, Iversen & Nygren, 2017; Hydén, 2011, p. 135; and Studsrød, Willumsen & Ellingsen, 2014, p. 314.

4.2 Participant Recruitment

Purposive sampling was employed in my research, where participants are sampled in a strategic way “that is relevant to the research questions being posed” (Bryman, 2012, p. 418). As I was interested in interviewing individuals who are parents with an ethnic minority background and have knowledge of and/or experience with CWS and child welfare practitioners, purposive, non-probability sampling was appropriate.

To recruit the minority parents, I used my social network through the Introduction Center, a municipality organized Norwegian language and social studies educational center for migrants. I had four criteria for recruiting ethnic minority parents: they were parents, they were ethnic minorities, they lived in the municipality of Drammen, and they were comfortable being interviewed and speaking in English. I interviewed three parents at the location of their choice, two at the University College of Southeast Norway and one in a café. One of the participants had heard about my research and contacted me via e-mail to ask to participate in the study; that participant was not interested in disclosing from where he or she had heard about my research. The parents had a variety of level of experiences with CWS – one had no personal experience, one had worked as a translator in some cases, and the other had personal interactions with CWS. Although it was not my intention, all the parents had tertiary education, which – I believe – developed their skills in information gathering, an advantage they were able to utilize to enhance their own participatory parity in Norway, impacting and changing what they may perceive as barriers to participation. All the parents were migrants themselves, despite having differing reasons and modes of migrating; the parents had lived in Norway for a period between three and eight years. One of the migrants had a Norwegian spouse, which he or she described impacting his or her view on Norwegian CWS. The participants had between one and two children, ranging from two to six years old. All the parents signed a voluntary consent form and checked an additional box allowing me to disclose the personal information of their municipality of residence, country of birth, and religion. The countries of birth included Nigeria, Eritrea, and Russia. The parents identified themselves having varying religions including Orthodox Christian, Muslim, and Christian and described varying degrees of influence religion has their parenting.

To recruit child welfare practitioners, I contacted Drammen municipality directly. One of the leaders at CWS provided e-mails of practitioners to contact. I had two criteria for recruiting child welfare practitioners: they are child welfare practitioners in the municipality of

Drammen and they are comfortable being interviewed and speaking in English. I interviewed three child welfare practitioners. Two of the practitioners were migrants to Norway and the other practitioner had lived in several countries spanning three continents with experience of being a migrant his or herself. I think the practitioners' experiences with migration was an important influence on their thoughts and worldviews relating to this topic. All the practitioners were fluent in at least two languages. Each of the practitioners signed a voluntary consent form and checked an additional box allowing me to disclose the personal information of their municipality of employment, country of birth, and religion. The countries of birth included Norway, Portugal, and Nigeria. The practitioners identified themselves having varying religions including Catholic, none, and Christian.

My original plan included twelve interviews based in two municipalities – three parents and three practitioners at each municipality – and to compare the results between the municipalities. I hoped to compare Drammen with a more rural area, to see if there were differences described relating to participatory parity within a city or rural setting. I contacted three different rural municipalities over a series of three months to try to recruit participants; however, I was unable to find enough participants in any of the municipalities. After becoming discouraged about the lack of response from the other municipalities and the limitation of time restraints, I then decided to focus on the sample I currently have – three minority parents and three practitioners in Drammen. I focused on keeping participants within the same municipality as the implementation of CWS mandate occurs at the local level and varies from municipality to municipality.

One critique of my research could be lack of a child's perspective. By interviewing ethnic minority parents, I am inherently taking a parent/family perspective; this can present tensions as it is not always congruent with the views of the child. It is important to note under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Norwegian legislation children are given the opportunity to “express themselves before decisions are made in cases concerning them” (Follesø & Mevik, 2011, p. 103; United Nations General Assembly [UNGA], 1989). Further research should be conducted expanding the scope to include the views of ethnic minority children.

4.3 Data Collection

Qualitative, semi-structured interviews were utilized for data collection. As someone who conducted research in Norway and is not fluent in the Norwegian language, interviews were conducted in English. I considered utilizing an interpreter for the interviews to increase the range of individuals who could participate; however, this possibility was limited due to a lack of resources – operating without funding and a limited time frame. Furthermore, as this is a sensitive topic, the use of a translator would complicate the confidentiality of the participants.

Semi-structured interviews were employed as there were several topics covered in the interviews where I wanted the interviewees to have space within the topics to share their knowledge of or experiences with CWS. This provided an opportunity for the interviewees to expand on topics themselves and allowed for me as the interviewer to ask further questions that were not reflected in the interview guide (Bryman, 2012, p. 471). In this way, I was able to examine some of the knowledge of or experiences with CWS in more depth to help develop themes.

I originally considered using critical discourse analysis (CDA) in policy documents, as an approach to analyzing the potential barriers to participatory parity of ethnic minority families in their relationship with CWS; however, I opted for interviews to gain more personal insights from those that are influenced – an approach supported by Freire and the pedagogy of the oppressed. This provides space for individuals to speak for themselves, rather than having their voice expressed for them by policy documents and researchers. In addition, by interviewing both ethnic minority families and child welfare practitioners I hope to contribute to the current dialogue surrounding CWS in hopes of future structural or institutional change. Another concern I had relating to CDA as the method of analysis when applied to interviews was that the interviews were not conducted in any of the participants' first language, making it difficult to critically analyze the discourse. My choice of thematic analysis allows more interpretative space to use the surrounding context in trying to understand what they were trying to convey than the focus on discourse generally allows. Despite my choice to focus on thematic analysis and identifying themes relating to this area, CDA is another potential tool for analysis that could be explored and is underutilized in research surrounding this topic.

4.4 Data Analysis

Content analysis is applicable to many different forms of information, across theoretical and epistemological perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78, 82; Bryman, Stephens, & A Campo, 1996 as cited in Bryman, 2012, p. 290). Text is coded and organized in terms of themes to highlight patterns of main concepts brought forward by interviewees (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). I chose to code the data in terms of themes as I conducted the analysis on transcriptions of semi-structured interviews which are not conducted in the interviewees first language; this allows for more a more interpretive approach to be applied in coding, which is appropriate as interviewees may not be able to as explicitly express themselves, making a discourse analysis or manifest coding difficult (Bryman, 2012, p. 297). Thematic analysis is one appropriate method for the research questions as I am interested in thematic patterns mentioned that impact participatory parity in child welfare, familial life, and within the community.

As a qualitative researcher, I hope to be transparent about the methodological process I took, explicitly expressing decisions made throughout the research process (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79-82; Bryan, 2012, p. 289). Braun & Clarke (2006) argue thematic analysis can be used as an essentialist or realist method, a constructionist method, or a contextualist method situated between “the two poles of essentialism and constructionism” (p. 82). I conduct the analysis through a contextualist lens – acknowledging the ways individuals interpret and make meaning of their experiences and the ways in which the larger social context makes an impression on those meanings – which is compatible within critical theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82; Mjøset, p. 41). Fraser’s theories of social justice consider both the individuals and the influence of the larger social environment, making this an appropriate approach.

I used the six-phase guideline highlighted by Braun and Clarke (2006) to guide the thematic analysis – (1) familiarizing yourself with your data; (2) generating initial codes; (3) searching for themes; (4) reviewing themes; (5) defining and naming themes; and (6) producing the report (p. 86-87). It is important to note that analysis is not a linear process, but a recursive process requiring movement back and forth between the phases, making adjustments as needed (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86-87). A data set is “identified by a particular analytic interest in some topic in the data, and the data set then becomes all instances in the corpus where that topic is referred”; as I am interested in studying participatory parity and adaptations of minority families and Norwegian CWS, my data set consists “of all instances across the entire

data corpus that had some relevance to” participatory parity and adaptations (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79)

In phase one – familiarizing yourself with the data – I created orthographic transcripts of the interviews, producing a verbatim account of “all verbal utterances”; I then compared the transcripts against the original audio recording for accordance (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88). I coded the data manually to account for nuances in language, as the interviews were not conducted in the interviewees’ first language and Norwegian words were integrated throughout many interviews. During this phase, I coded for twenty-six different data items relating to the relationship between ethnic minority parents and CWS. These initial data extracts with codes can be examined in Annex 5: *Data Extracts with Codes Applied*.

Phase three consists of searching for themes. Therefore, it is important to denote what constitutes a theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). I define a theme by its repetitive nature across the interviews in the data set; in this way, I hope to represent an accurate picture of the prevalence of a theme across the interviews. If there is a topic prevalent throughout an individual interview, but not necessarily throughout the data set, this topic will be mentioned, but not as a theme. Furthermore, the ‘keyness’ of themes was determined by whether it “captured something important” in relation to the participatory parity and recognition of ethnic minority parents in child welfare, familial life, and within the community (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). I began this process by organizing the data extracts by the twenty-six different data items⁶⁵ and searching for prevalence of a topic throughout the interviews. I take a semantic approach, identifying themes that are explicit meanings of the data, rather than a more interpretative, latent approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). Through the semantic approach, I organize patterns of the data set into themes, after providing an interpretation – an attempt to theorize the significance of the patterns, meanings, and implications with relation to previous literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84).

Relating to the ‘keyness’ of themes, I used a theoretical thematic analysis rather than an inductive thematic analysis. A theoretical thematic analysis is “driven by the researcher’s theoretical or analytic interest in the area, and is thus more explicitly analyst driven” where I coded for a specific research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84, 88-89). In this way, a more detailed analysis of participatory parity is the focus, by specifically coding with the research

⁶⁵ See Annex 6: *Searching for Themes*.

question in mind. This method is appropriate, as I am interested in the different ways participatory parity and recognition play out across the data. Figures 3 through 6 illustrate the development of my thematic maps⁶⁶.

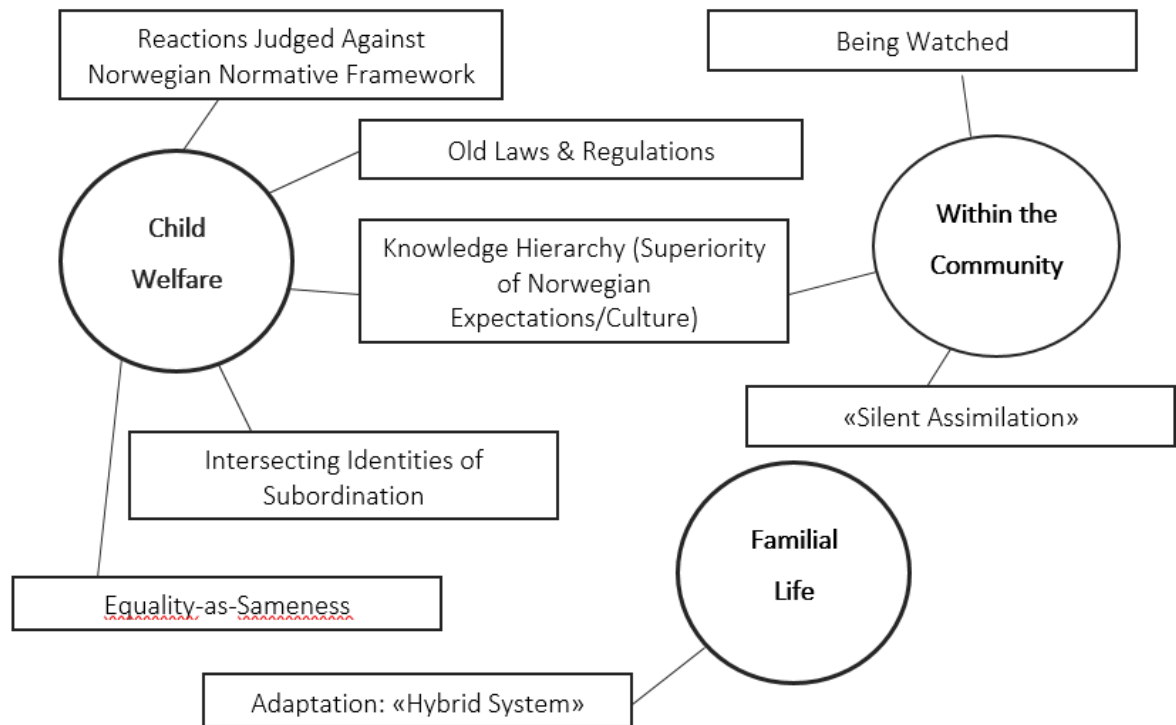


Figure 3 Initial thematic map, highlighting eight main themes.

In phase four I reviewed and refined the themes. First, I reviewed the themes for their internal coherence, determining the necessity to combine some themes and drop others⁶⁷. A revised thematic map is highlighted in **Figure 4**.

⁶⁶ See Annex 7: Collection of Candidate Themes and Sub-Themes.

⁶⁷ See Annex 8: Reviewing Themes.

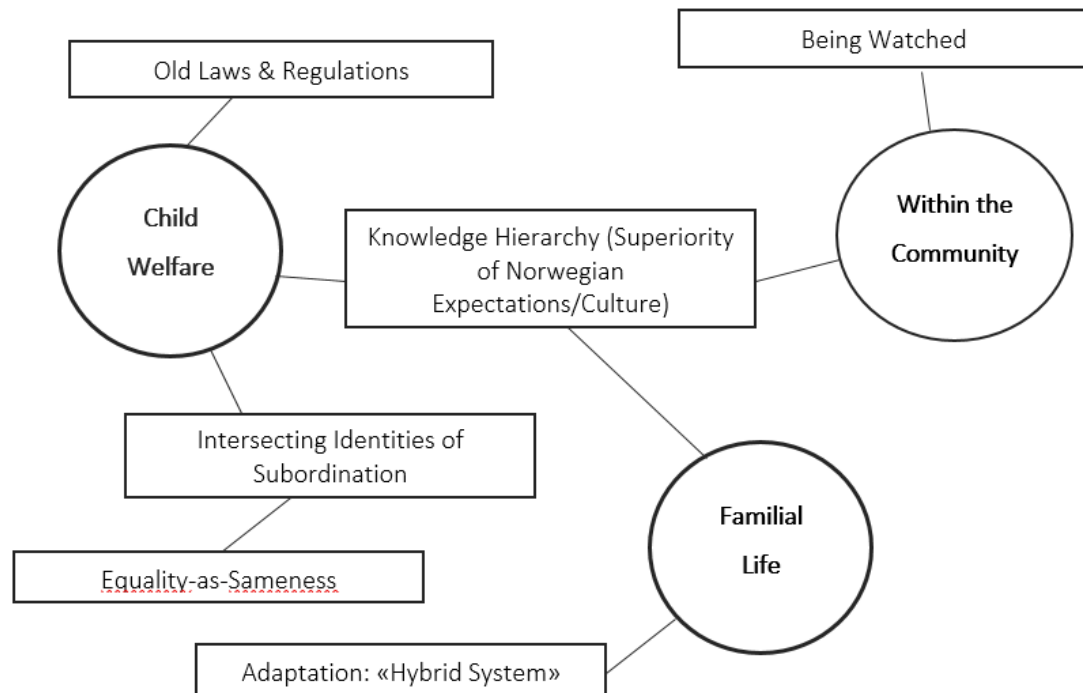


Figure 4 Developed thematic map highlighting six main themes.

I continued to review and revise, with a developed thematic map in **Figure 5**.

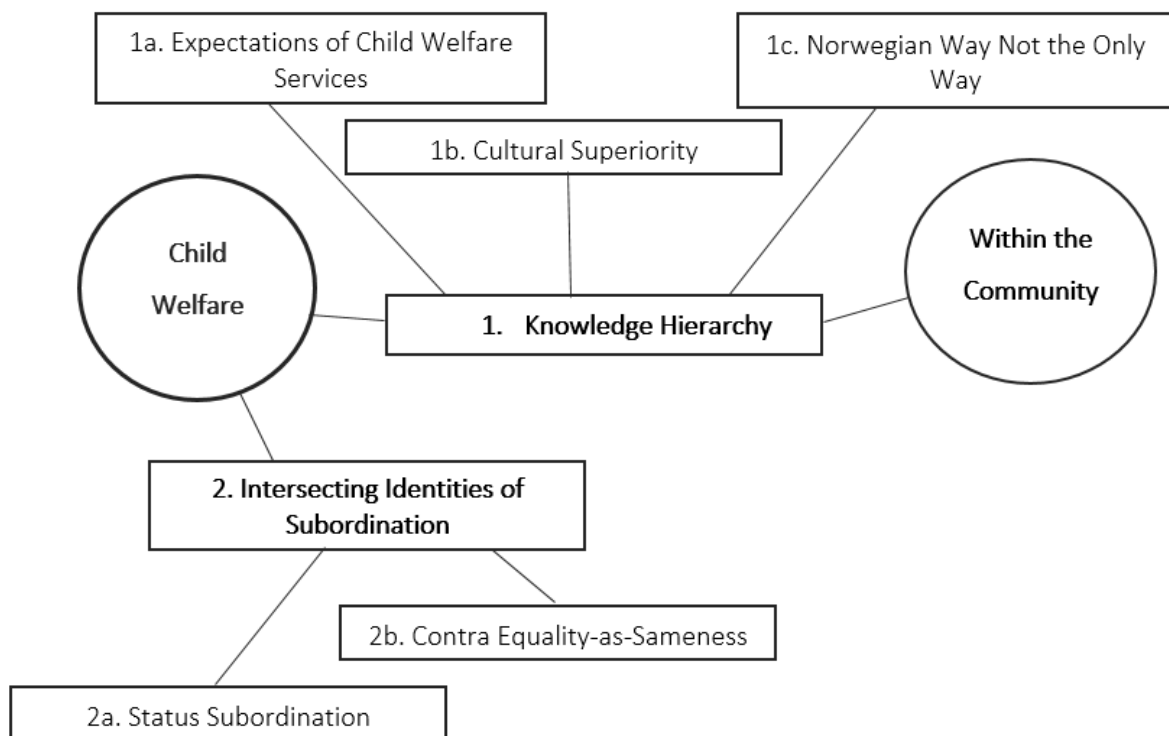


Figure 5 Developed thematic map highlighting two main themes, organized in terms of social sphere.

Phase four continuing with a refining of the themes⁶⁸. Phase five consists of defining and naming the names; the final names are included in **Figure 6**. Finally phase six consists of producing the report, selecting the examples, and presenting the analysis⁶⁹.

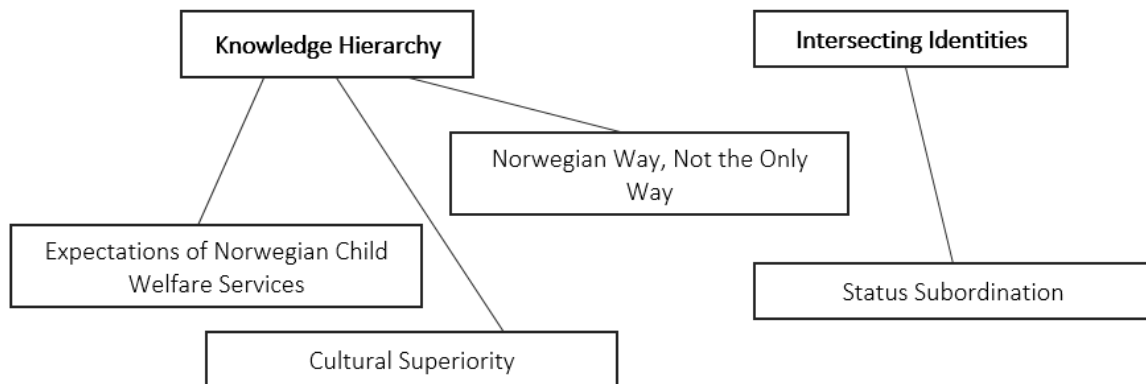


Figure 6 Final thematic map, showing two main themes.

Thematic analysis has been criticized for its wide use, and lack of agreement on how to conduct the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Furthermore, it is often used without being explicitly claimed as a method of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 80). To address these criticisms, I aim to be transparent about my process.

In addition, I assume in my research questions that the relationship between ethnic minority families and CWS has an impact on the participatory parity of ethnic minority families. In this way, there is an assumption that misrecognition and structural cultural hierarchy may exist within the Norwegian system, considering current literature⁷⁰. Starting with this assumption could largely impact the analysis process. As I conducted a theoretical thematic analysis with a particular research question in mind, it is possible I miss other themes than when coding with a different approach and set of assumptions.

4.5 Ethical Principles and Tensions

Although it is impossible to provide an exhaustive account of the ethical principles and tensions relating to my research, I hope to provide a critical reflection of some ethical principles

⁶⁸ See Annex 9: *Refining Themes*.

⁶⁹ See Chapter 5: *Data Findings & Analysis*.

⁷⁰ See Chapter 2: *Literature Review*.

I believe are central to my topic, especially relating to conducting research with ethnic minorities and child welfare. Informed consent – using clear language to inform clients of the purpose of the research, risks of participants, and right to refuse or withdraw consent; privacy and confidentiality – in maintaining the guidelines of confidentiality given to research participants within the letter for consent and presented at the beginning of the interviews; and cultural awareness and social diversity – being aware of culture and attempting to understand oppression with respect to intersecting identities – are among common issues relating to qualitative research (Bryman, 2012, p. 138-140; National Association of Social Workers, 2017). These are key ethnical areas that were considered throughout my research; however, I would like to address some of the issues and tensions of researching ethnic minorities and child welfare specifically.

Ethnic minorities and ‘othering’. Despite placing ethnic minorities into one group in my research, my purpose is not to give the illusion ethnic minorities are a homogeneous group, or to perpetuate the ‘othering’ of ethnic minorities in Norway. Although my intention is not to oversimplify or generalize the experience of ethnic minorities – in my hope to analyze commonalities in struggles that ethnic minorities may experience relating to participatory parity – there is the risk that my research groups ethnic minorities into one homogeneous unit. This is a danger the Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees guidelines remind the importance of when researching vulnerable groups – being cautious “about using classifications or designations that give rise to unreasonable generalization, and which in practice result in the stigmatization of particular social groups” (“Guidelines, 2016). This warning is also expressed in anti-racist research methodologies, where the production and perpetuation of the ‘other’ remain central in knowledge production (Wahab, 2005, p. 42).

Boushel (2000, as cited in Hughes, 2005, p. 207) poses questions for researchers to carefully consider when conducting research on minoritized groups including: ‘who is likely to benefit from the research’ and ‘what will be the advantages and disadvantages of the research for both the dominant and oppressed groups’. These advantages and disadvantages prove difficult to navigate in practice and are not always explicitly anticipated. While I hope for a result of identifying issues around participatory parity that can be improved to better both the lives of ethnic minority parents and child welfare practitioners, my research does not come without disadvantages. For example, one disadvantage for ethnic minorities includes the risk of portraying them as a homogenous group or perpetuating fear of the child welfare system.

Considering disadvantages for the dominant group, practitioner 3 brought forward a disadvantage I had not explicitly considered before the interviews; she describes how the negative views of CWS perpetuated by the media take a toll on the individuals who “apply for jobs here, who want to work here, and who work in the services”. By focusing on participatory parity – and specifically institutionalized cultural hierarchies that result in misrecognition – I may cast CWS in a more negative light, perpetuating negative connotations and fear of the child welfare system in Norway. I do not mean for this research to be anti-CWS, but rather, offer insights on how the current relationship between ethnic minorities and CWS may impede participatory parity, to encourage dialogue, and promote the mobilization for change to enhance parity of participation and social justice for ethnic minority families in Norway.

While my intention is to foster intercultural dialogue and a space for individuals to speak their own truth, as the researcher I also play a role in orchestrating the voices of my participants and am positioned and partial in the research; the researcher, in this way, has the final voice (Wahab, 2005, p. 43). Aware of this ethical tension, I aim to provide accurate representations of the participants articulations, work to be transparent throughout the analysis process, and attempt to highlight the main thematic issues relating to participatory parity of ethnic minority families in Norway that occur across throughout the data set – to avoid reifying one or two instances into a theme that are “actually idiosyncratic” (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 95).

Child welfare and sensitive issues. In researching sensitive issues, including child welfare, it is important for researchers to consider ethical issues throughout the entire research process and “safeguard the rights of participants in the research, consider the representations of individuals and groups in the data, and anticipate potential consequences... more thoroughly than in other types of research” (Walsh, 2005, p. 68-69). Ethnic minority parents may have strong feelings or reactions relating to CWS, including fear, frustration, anger, and sadness (Walsh, 2005, p. 69). When interviewing child welfare practitioners, the confidentiality of the individuals they work with is central.

The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees guidelines also remind the researcher of the ethical importance of respecting public administration (“Guidelines”, 2016). The guidelines stress the importance of public institutions making themselves as available to researchers as possible, while acknowledging there may be restricted access to researchers occasionally. Drammen CWS was happy to participate in the research and provide an

organizational map⁷¹, while also still emphasizing the confidentiality of individuals with whom they work and protecting their identifying information.

Other ethical issues. My research was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data. As I indicated I will publish data about country of birth and religious beliefs, the Norwegian Centre for Research Data recommended I gain explicit consent from each participant to publish their personal data. This is something we discussed at the beginning of the interviews and participants checked a box explicitly consenting to the publication of this personal data before signing the consent form. The Centre's feedback also emphasized the confidentiality of practitioners, prohibiting them from sharing any information that may directly or indirectly identify a client, which all the practitioners were acutely aware of.

4.6 Positionality

In this research, I am both an insider and an outsider, although I primarily fall into the category of an outsider. As a migrant in Norway, I could be regarded as an insider to ethnic minorities with whom I am conducting interviews; I am not Norwegian, have experience adapting to the country, and may be viewed as more open to critical perspectives. However, I could also be regarded as an outsider to ethnic minorities other than my own. I am also an outsider as I do not have children nor experience as a parent. To practitioners, I could also be considered an insider and an outsider. As I have experience in the field of child welfare, I could be viewed as an insider as I have a general knowledge of child welfare in other countries⁷² and many of the same principles, themes, and tensions of the work are visible in Norway. However, I am relatively new to the Norwegian context and Norway is unique in its child welfare system – although comparable to other Nordic countries. This can be viewed as an advantage – as those I am interviewing are more likely to explain things in further detail, assuming I am unfamiliar with the context – and as a disadvantage – as I may be unfamiliar with important insights and considerations in the Norwegian context. Furthermore, I attempted to be mindful of the power I have as a researcher and tried to avoid leading questions, misrepresenting participants, and be thorough in explaining confidentiality, the ability for participants to pass on any questions, and the ability to withdraw from the research at any time.

⁷¹ See **Figure 1** in Section 2.1: *Norwegian Child Protection: Historical Development and Current Legal Framework*.

⁷² Primarily the United States and Ethiopia.

Another important aspect of my positionality is the context in which I grew up. Growing up in the United States has influenced my understanding of multiculturalism and culturally competent practice. In the United States, notions of multiculturalism are broadly supported and cultural competent social work practice has been widely theorized with approaches such as Cultural Awareness, the Process Stage Approach in Minority Treatment, and Ethnic-Sensitive Social Work practice; however, “at a European level, such theorizing has been thin on the ground, although several writers have promoted these concerns” (Williams & Soydan, 2005, p. 904).

4.7 Summary

In conducting my research, semi-structured interviews with ethnic minority parents and child welfare practitioners were utilized. Braun & Clark’s (2006) six step guidelines to conducting thematic analysis were employed. I utilized a theoretical thematic analysis, coding for a specific research question during the analysis; two main themes were identified relating to participatory parity of ethnic minority parents in child welfare, familial life, and within the community. These themes will be discussed in the following chapter on findings and analysis.

5 Data Findings & Analysis

As the thematic analysis was conducted theoretically, the themes highlight areas where misrecognition of ethnic minority families may occur within Norwegian CWS. Two main themes – knowledge hierarchy and intersecting identities – were identified. The theme of knowledge hierarchy can be broken down into three sub-themes: expectations of CWS, cultural superiority, and the Norwegian way, not the only way. Intersecting identities consisted of descriptions of status subordination⁷³. These themes illustrate the described institutionalized hierarchies of cultural value⁷⁴ that deny ethnic minority parents the requisite standing with Norwegian CWS.

While other areas impeding participatory parity were discussed – including economics (maldistribution), lack of clear information, the discretion of case workers, fear of CWS, myths relating to CWS, lack of a social network, and language – and many of these areas were prevalent across the data set, they will not be analyzed in terms of themes, as they were described at an individual level rather than institutionalized hierarchies of cultural value. As institutionalized hierarchies inform my understanding of participatory parity relating to (mis)recognition, these areas were not considered ‘key’ as I conducted a theoretical thematic analysis considering my research question and my theoretical framework. However, these other barriers and nuances in the data set will be addressed in Section 5.3: *Nuances Across the Data Set*.

5.1 Theme One: Knowledge Hierarchy

5.1.1 Expectations of Child Welfare Services

Picot (2014) describes how families are disproportionality subjected to control of the child welfare system in Norway; these families are those the law considers ‘deviant’ (p. 691). “This understanding of deviance changes through time depending on the knowledge base underpinning the law. With a child-centric perspective grounded in developmental psychological and attachment theory, the pathway leading to the assessment of a family as deviant in Norwegian society is shorter than ever” (Picot, 2014, p. 691). The result can be the

⁷³ For more on (mis)recognition as status subordination, see Section 3.1: *Recognition and Social Justice*.

⁷⁴ As described by Fraser et al. (2008).

pathology of cultural differences. One sub-theme identified across practitioners' interviews was how their expectations for families are set on a Norwegian normative framework, where cultural differences can sometimes result in assessing an ethnic minority family as deviant; this could be considered in tension with Article 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child⁷⁵. However, it is important to note that each of the practitioners expressed their concern about expectations being built on a Norwegian normative framework, noting the importance in space for cultural difference and someone to guide parents through Norwegian expectations and norms to make the Norwegian normative framework more accessible.

Expectations of practitioners resulting in cultural difference in parenting to be assessed as deviance – and potentially pathologizing ethnic minority families – is portrayed through several anecdotes throughout the interviews:

I had a colleague who – I mean, it's just even as basic as this – I had a colleague once make a comment that he did a home visit and during his home visit, he just thought that house was kind of disgusting. But when he described the disgusting, it wasn't that the house was unclean or unkept or anything, but to him it had a very strong, pungent smell. But when you actually started asking him questions – and, well, what was the smell? I mean, this was an ethnic minority family, and basically, this was a family that comes from somewhere where in their cooking, versus ours, they use a lot of garlic, they use a lot of spices, and they also come from an area that because of their skin and haircuts and everything, they don't wash maybe every single day. Because where we want to wash it out, they want to wash the oil in. So it just becomes a difference, but you have to have the understanding that, okay, well, yeah this house wasn't unkept, it wasn't unclean, it wasn't disgusting. Yeah, it smelt different than what we are used to, but that doesn't mean that was really an issue. (Practitioner 1)

This could relate to Pemberton's (1999) suggestion that a general lack of understanding of what an average family life looks like for an ethnic minority could contribute to disproportionality (p. 170). The expectations CWS has when making assessments extend beyond the home, but also include developmental milestones which are influenced by culture. For example, practitioner 3 describes how in some cultures, ten-month-old children are still seen as babies, being carried

⁷⁵ Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 30 "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language".

around; however, in Norwegian culture, there are developmental milestones expecting the children to crawl.

Here [in Norway] it starts much more earlier, you are free to go around, even as a child. Whereas other cultures, you know, they carry the baby until they are like ten months old. They are rarely on the floor. But it is not because they can't crawl, but just because you have to carry them, you still see them as a baby. But here, ten months already they are expected to follow this, and to do that, do that. So it is – for me it is very interesting to see the difference because of my background. I'm like yeah, but those kids that weren't able to crawl at ten months and all that – they are still doing fine. It is just a matter of what culture, or society you belong to really. (Practitioner 3)

Expectations revolve around care for the home and developmental milestones for children and extend to day-to-day practices. For example, practitioner 3 also describes how “some people prefer to sit on the ground when they eat”, and this is difference that CWS must “try to accept”. These rights to enjoy culture are supported in international human rights law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights⁷⁶ and the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities⁷⁷.

However, it can be difficult to adapt when those expectations are built on the Norwegian norm. These expectations can challenge participatory parity of ethnic minority families as they are set up around the Norwegian family, without much space to accommodate for difference. At an individual level, this accommodation for difference could potentially be more difficult for practitioners without experience as migrants, especially when understood through the work of Gullestad (2002); if equality or the price of equal respect is sameness and individuals must “consider themselves as more or less the same in order to feel of equal value”, it could potentially influence practitioners who see primarily difference in their assessments. Like the ‘disgusting’ home visit, ethnic minority families may be given negative connotations when they deviate from a Norwegian normative framework (p. 46).

⁷⁶ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Article 27 “In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language”.

⁷⁷ Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities Article 4.2 “States shall take measures to create favorable conditions to enable persons belonging to minorities to express their characteristics and to develop their culture, language, religion, traditions and customs, except where specific practices are in violation of national law and contrary to international standards”.

And I think that's what makes it extra hard when we encounter these families because the expectations are set on the average, the norm, right? Which is the Norwegian family. And then all the sort of things that we expect to see – but with an immigrant family, we really cannot expect to see the same and expect them to meet the same level when they enter our door, because the starting points are completely different. (Practitioner 1)

If the expectations of practitioners are the same for both ethnic minority families and Norwegian families, this could adhere with Gullestad's (2002) assessment that migrants are asked to 'become Norwegian' while it is also assumed this is "something they can never really achieve" (p. 59). In this case – as sameness in expectations may be reproducing misrecognition – the solution may be the affirmation of group identities, or rather, the "right to be different when our equality jeopardizes our identity" (Fraser, 2000, p. 113; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 87; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 3, 83-84; Santos, 2002, p. 57).

The need for difference to be accommodated is clearly discussed within the sub-theme of expectations. However, having someone to guide ethnic minority parents through a Norwegian normative framework was also discussed by both practitioners and parents:

One place where we could be helpful – or someone needs to be more helpful with these families – is even what sort of is expected of them in the Norwegian society. So when they send their kids to barnehage [pre-school] or to school, what are some – I mean, who takes the time to teach them what is expected so they don't end up sort of misguidedly in a negative connotation with the school or the barnehage [pre-school] because they're not providing the proper lunchbox according to our tradition and our norms, or the proper winter gear, or how they can overcome their kids attending birthday parties, or extracurricular activities and things like that. I mean, there's small things, you know, perhaps that someone could positively be like a guidance thing. Definitely some of the things that you have to look at and explore. I've seen lots of families that, you know, some of the complaints, concerns come in the form of the lunchboxes and that thing... (Practitioner 1)

This is compatible with the research of Fylkesnes, Iversen, and Nygren (2017) who – throughout the narratives of ethnic minority parents interacting with Norwegian CWS – describe "a notion of lacking a Norwegian normative set of knowledge and skills regarding both parenting norms (how to parent) and bureaucratic norms (how to be a client) as they

encountered CWS” as themes (p. 3). The issue of families not having access to a Norwegian normative framework and the expectations it holds is also a concern brought up by Ida Erstad (2018) within the realm of health care. Her results question if room for and accommodation of diversity prevents families from getting information needed “to be included as the *same*”⁷⁸ (Bendixsen, Bente Bringslid, & Vike, 2018, p. 213). Parent 3 echoes this concern within CWS, mentioning that “Norwegian norms are not described intensively” which, he argues, can result in some parents not having the knowledge they need regarding norms in parenting and the consequences of certain parenting behaviors that can result in the loss of custody of one’s children in Norway. This is a paradoxical aspect and potential area of contention within egalitarianism and equality; while the accommodation of and room for difference is expressed throughout the interviews, both parents and practitioners contend ethnic minority parents should also be given information about Norwegian norms – like Erstad (2018) contests in the realm of healthcare – to be the same. Erstad (2018) describes this as the “two-sided” nature of egalitarianism where egalitarianism is “deeply contradictory” with inegalitarianism as the “enduring potential of egalitarianism’s other side” (Bendixsen, Bente Bringslid, & Vike, 2018, p. 217). So long as there is practically an ‘equality-as-sameness’ mentality, individuals who are different will be treated as deviant despite the validity of their claims to recognition⁷⁹ and social justice. However, without dialogue around space for and accommodation of difference in regulations and legislation, ethnic minority parents could continue to feel what parent 3 describes as “silent assimilation”; in this case, individuals who conform are offered more opportunities and possibilities for personal development. This will be addressed further in Section 5.1.2: *Cultural Superiority*.

These expectations – within the home, development of children, day-to-day practices, and Norwegian norms – are discussed as themes primarily throughout the practitioner’s interviews. Practitioner 3 describes how her background as a migrant and employee of CWS allow her to see clearly that there are different methods of raising a child, depending on where one comes from:

I, for one, I see – and again because of my background – I see that what it terms of expectations, there are lots of expectations like how much a child should do at home as opposed to how much a parent should do, right? Who is responsible for that. Me as a

⁷⁸ Original emphasis.

⁷⁹ See Section 3.1: *Recognition and Social Justice*.

child, I had responsibility for picking up the younger ones at school, the kindergarten, you know, all of the time. But here, I mean, it is not really a child's duty, it's a parental duty to try and pick up the child... so that there is a clear cut – how do I put it – roles here for what a child does as opposed to what a parent should do. So that is different. And for me, working where I do today, I see that and it is very clear really. There are different ways of bringing up a child, depending on where you come from. (Practitioner 3)

Despite concern expressed by the practitioners about these expectations and their individual attempt to accept and accommodate for difference, misrecognition is “relayed through institutions and practices that regulate social interaction according to norms that impede parity” – therefore, their individual concern or eliminating prejudice is not enough of a solution within itself (Fraser et al., 2008, p. 86). Therefore, recognition through distinction addressing the institutionalized hierarchies of cultural value surrounding expectations may have the potential to better the participatory parity of ethnic minority families in Norway – compatible with both social mobility and human rights⁸⁰.

5.1.2 Cultural Superiority

The issue of cultural superiority – or the promotion of Norwegian norms as morally superior – was also expressed as a challenge to the participatory parity of ethnic minority families in the spheres of child welfare and within the community. Both ethnic minority parents and child welfare practitioners expressed the notion of cultural superiority within a knowledge hierarchy. For example, parent 1 describes the notion of cultural superiority as a barrier to cultural competence and understanding within CWS:

Before you can understand culture and appreciate culture, you have to get off your moral high horse. You have to stop thinking I'm the best, the civilized, and everyone coming in, you know, here needs to be civilized. You need to get off that. If you don't do that, there is no way of understanding; you are only going to condemn other cultures, telling them what they are doing is wrong. There is no perfect culture, there is no perfect system. I've always learned from other cultures, use common sense to find, you know, what is good, what is bad in a place. They can learn from cultures, they can learn from

⁸⁰ For example, see International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination Article 2.

other systems. If you don't understand a people, a culture, you get in there and you think something is wrong with them when nothing is wrong. (Parent 1)

Parent 1, in describing how individuals may assume that something is wrong with others without cultural humility and understanding is addressed by Freire's (2005) description of how the oppressed can be pathologized, thereby pressured to integrate and be incorporated into 'healthy society' (p. 74). In this way, the structure of CWS could be perceived as a mechanism attempting to decrease difference – or deviance from normative understandings of parenting – and promoting equality-as-sameness. To Freire, this would demonstrate the need for this 'structure of oppression' to be transformed to truly promote equality in outcome.

Piña & Canty-Swapp (2015) discuss how despite practitioners hopes of providing more culturally competent, anti-discriminatory, or multiculturally friendly practice, they were faced with "legacies of assimilation pressures in their work"; acceptance and valuing of diverse clients as an individual was not enough, resulting in a perpetuation of conscious and unconscious assimilationist agendas (p. 109). Fitzsimmons (1997) describes ideas, when presented as supreme, "infers that other ideas are inferior" and a profession's service "based on the supremacy of its ideas acts to preserve the culture's belief in its superiority" (p. 154).

This does not mean that individual practitioners... personally seek dominion over clients who hold ideas deviant to the culture's quintessential beliefs. To the contrary, the professional sees himself or herself as specially equipped to provide compassionate, helpful, and necessary service. The purpose of the practitioner's interventions is to alleviate suffering and promote well-being. But from a metacultural view, this intent and purpose is a manifestation of the profession's function in the culture at large. The practitioner is an instrument in a profession that preserves core cultural beliefs. By assuming expertise over the problems in clients' lives, this intervening authority is often experienced as biased, corrective, and coercive. (Fitzsimmons, 1997, p. 154-155)

Cultural hierarchy is reinforced by the practices of CWS – as expressed earlier – but also through laws and regulations. Coupled with Picot's (2014) analysis of *hegemonic knowledge regimes*, dominating child welfare legislation in Norway throughout different points in history, there are insights to the structural cultural hierarchy reinforced in Norwegian child welfare legislation today (p. 699) Practitioner 1 expressed frustration with the outdated nature of the current laws and regulations and the concern that they are not appropriate for the current Norwegian society:

I think our laws and regulations in Norway are old – they don't fit the families of today, the problems that we see today and they certainly do not fit other cultures and other contexts, other than the ethnic Norwegian. I think we need a whole revamp of our laws, our regulations, even how the system functions in these families. (Practitioner 1)

The lack of accommodation for other cultures and contexts in Norwegian legislation is not only expressed by practitioners, but also by parents. Parent 3 describes the relationship between Norwegian legislation and cultural nuances this way:

How many working in barnevernet [CWS] are aware of difference in other cultures? I think that barnevernet [CWS] – what they should do is have rules, regulations, and they have the extra power to interpret articles as they wish. What does it mean that children should be protected? They follow these rules. But in these rules, people should understand cultural nuances. These nuances cannot be put into the rules, because they have these regulations and there would be contradictions. But in some situations that are not very serious, cultural nuances should be considered. (Parent 3)

In this way, both ethnic minority parents and child welfare practitioners saw the need for the accommodation of difference in Norwegian legislation – or the ability to accommodate cultural nuances through a more fluid interpretation of the legislation – and that this need was not being accommodated by the current system. In accordance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination Article 2.1(c), Norway should “take effective measures to review governmental, national and local policies, and to amend... any laws and regulations which have the effect of creating or perpetuating racial discrimination wherever it exists”⁸¹ (UNGA, 1965).

Furthermore, practitioner 1 describes how a lack of understanding of cultural context can perpetuate cultural superiority within CWS, as cases are most often examined through the Norwegian cultural lens; this can create misunderstandings relating to difference and expectations or assessing that – as parent 1 describes – something is “wrong” with others when it is not.

⁸¹ “Racial discrimination”, as defined in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination Article 1.1 “shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, cultural or any other field of public life”.

It's sort of like the system is sort of bound to fail these families in some ways. And because we miss that cultural context part, when some of the things are said we could react very negatively, because we're looking at this through our own lenses of being ethnic Norwegians and this is how I grew up, this is what was expected of me, this is how a family works, you know, but you can't do that when you work with these families because they didn't grow up like you, they didn't have the same start, the same context as when you do things. (Practitioner 1)

A hierarchy of knowledge and promotion of cultural superiority was also discussed within the context of the community in general. Parent 1 uses an anecdote of a friend traveling with two young children on the bus, with one child throwing a tantrum to describe how this operates in practice. A Norwegian woman, observing the scene, intervenes to tell the ethnic minority parent how to parent properly. Parent 1 concludes with the observation that:

Because people sometimes, they interject into your problems and they tell you how to live your life and give you instructions because they think you don't have it, you don't know what to do. It's where you're coming from. They think you've got it backward, you need to be instructed, or civilized so to say. (Parent 1)

This is observed also in interviews by parents 2 and 3 who describe the feeling of “being watched” by society.

As described by Gullestad (2003, 2006), “the idea of Norway as originally ethnically, culturally and socially homogenous is still widespread and influences ideas of what is “natural””; therefore, these understandings of what is “natural” have placed migrants as conceptual opposites to “Norwegian”, and “Norwegianness” promoting the idea that Norwegians are “more advanced and hierarchically superior to ‘them’” (as cited in Bendixsen, Bente Bringslid, & Vike, 2018, p. 297; Gullestad, 2002, p. 59). Cultural superiority is not only addressed in CWS – as a barrier to cultural understanding perpetuated by Norwegian laws and regulations and examining cases through a cultural lens – and within the community, where individuals have interjected themselves to instruct ethnic minority parents on proper parenting; parent 3 describes how, in general, the perceptions of Norway as homogeneous requires some form of assimilation on behalf of ethnic minority parents.

Norway is not a multicultural country yet – it is a multicultural country in the making. Here it is a homogenous society in perception. They have the perception of one culture

and you have to in some way assimilate. Other cultures are not yet seen as developed.

(Parent 3)

He elaborates on this theme in more detail:

Here in Norway, people tell you that in Norway, we do it this way. It means that it is an assimilative system, even though in the regulation they take care of different cultures; but in practice, if you don't do it the Norwegian way, then you are the loser. It is silent assimilation. Because in nuances, small cultural differences – for example, if you take a child playing football with a hijab or swimming with a burkini or now also the hijab of children at school – some political parties are trying to ban this one. Saying children are being oppressed with hijab, the rhetoric is that this doesn't belong here. What are we going to do? In institutions, it is assimilative. They have these rules, the rules are being set by those people, they are the majority... If you are assimilated, you have more opportunities. If a woman takes off her hijab, people will applause and think she is free. Those who keep their own values and cultures don't have the same support, resources, as those who are assimilated. If you do it the Norwegian way, you will succeed. (Parent 3)

These excerpts from parent 3 express the assimilative nature in Norway, stemming from the perceptions of a homogeneous society. Contra to the multicultural ideal of two-way integration – with the host society being the first to adapt – within the community ethnic minority parents have felt pressure to assimilate, a one-way process of adaptation. The pressure to conform for equality, with the expectation they will ever be able to achieve 'sameness' (Gullestad, 2002). To be functional, a two-way approach to integration requires the public sphere accommodating the presence of different group identities and norms (Modood, 2013, p. 150). Despite the described account for different cultures taken in general regulations in Norway, in practice parents have described the necessity of adapting to Norwegian middle-class norms for acceptance; this is compatible with other research on welfare and sameness in Norway, where "migrants face policies that are supposed to grant equal access to the welfare state, and the same time as they are expected to become "the same" as prototypical Norwegians (that is, in accepting... specific forms of parenting...) in order to be recognized as equal", creating the problem of "willingness to conform" as a "criterion for access" (Bendixsen, Bente Bringslid, & Vike, 2018 p. 25).

5.1.3 Norwegian Way, Not the Only Way

The Norwegian way is not the only way in the world, they [CWS] should accept this too.
(Parent 2)

The importance of an open mind for child welfare practitioners was repeatedly expressed by both ethnic minority parents and child welfare practitioners; furthermore, all the practitioners interviewed described attempting to meet ethnic minority clients in a way that accounts for cultural nuances, meeting individuals with respect. Practitioner 1 describes the importance of not getting “stuck” in one’s own lens and understanding of the world:

Don’t get stuck in your own perspective. Don’t get stuck in your paradigm. And when I say ‘open mind’, be open that perhaps how you were raised or how you are raising your children isn’t necessarily the only way or the best way; that there actually can be other ways that are just as good and just as effective, even if it looks different and perhaps even scary because it is different than you yourself have experienced... And then you have to just be willing to not quickly judge or make a judgment or decision about a family before you sort of taken the time to also learn those nuances in their culture and their perspective. (Practitioner 1)

Practitioner 3 also describes how difference does not inherently mean that something is wrong and how other cultures can be “just as good” and “just as effective”:

I think if we understand that not everyone who lives here is Norwegian because with other cultures can also function in this society and can actually raise their kids up here too. But the challenge remains that we, as social workers, also have to try to understand that even if it is not Norwegian, or as long as they don’t do the same as we do, doesn’t mean it is wrong. (Practitioner 3)

Similar to the findings of Piña and Canty-Swapp (2015), the desire to value, promote, and support cultural differences at the level of the individual practitioner may not be enough when policies and procedures “continue to reinforce an assimilation model”, which can likely perpetuate pathologizing of those not reflecting Norwegian, middle-class normative identities (p. 110). Furthermore, this supports the *conditional belonging* notion suggested by Monica Five Aarset (2018), where ‘successful integration’ is becoming “more like the Norwegian educated middle-class” and sameness is emphasized to see each other as equal (Bendixsen, Bente Bringslid, & Vike, 2018, p. 292-293). Again, these understandings are compatible with Freire (2005) who describes how the oppressed can be regarded as the ‘pathology’ of healthy

society, where the remedy is seen as integration and incorporation; however, the solution is rather to transform the structure of oppression⁸² (p. 74).

These similarities in the analysis of the sub-themes can be explained through the overarching theme of a knowledge hierarchy throughout expectations, cultural superiority, and the “Norwegian way, not the only way”. The trend of the Norwegian way not being the only proper way to parent or understand the world is a common thread through the expectations and notions of cultural superiority found within CWS and within the community. Both ethnic minority parents and child welfare practitioners described the value of diverse ways of life that can also exist and function within Norwegian society.

5.2 Theme Two: Intersecting Identities

Institutionalized hierarchies of cultural value were discussed in the interviews not only in terms of knowledge hierarchies, but also relating to intersecting identities. All of the parents described their migrant status as an area of status subordination; parents 1 and 3 described how being a migrant father is another aspect of their identity which can result in subordination; and parent 3 describes how – in addition to being a migrant father – that his Muslim faith also may create a third dimension of status subordination. Considered within Fraser’s theory on recognition, intersecting identities – including gender and “race” – are “not nearly cordoned off from one another. Rather, all these axes of subordination intersect in ways that affect everyone’s interests and identities. No one is a member of only one such collectivity...” (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 26; Olson, 2008, p. 39-40). Therefore, politics of recognition arises across intersecting differentiations (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 26; Olson, 2008, p. 39-40).

The following excerpts describe the nature of ethnic minority interactions with CWS as starting under “bigger suspicion”:

An immigrant family are from the start under bigger suspicion than Norwegian families. They [CWS] give more attention to immigrants. And that probably because of, probably we have common propaganda, you know. In Russia, they show these horrible pictures about barnevernet [CWS] that just picks up kids but here in the news I can read that Russia reduced penalty for home violence, of course it is common impression of each other. And since they read this huge article that Russia doesn’t punish for home violence

⁸² See Section 3.3: *Hierarchy of Knowledge and Dialogue*.

and with some scary numbers, they can think that home violence is normal in Russian families, right? They should check them more careful then since they live in Norway and raise kids here. So, yeah, they [immigrant families] have more attention, as I have heard.

(Parent 2)

This can come in tension with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, where any distinction based on “race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin” which has the effect of impairing the enjoyment or exercise of human rights on an equal footing constitutes “racial discrimination”⁸³ (UNGA, 1965). Parent 3 adds that CWS does not consider the background of migrants who have come from war settings enough, also highlighting challenges relating to varying levels of educational attainment:

Not everything barnevernet [CWS] does is bad, but with immigrants – people who have come from war – here, barnevernet [CWS] is unfair and does not consider their situation. They cannot group together people who are university graduates and people who are illiterate and treat them the same. (Parent 3)

Furthermore, the role of being a migrant father was also discussed by parents 1 and 3. As men who are migrants, they perceive they system can be targeted toward them:

Well, they have this gender equality in Norway, for goodness sake, that means if they hear other countries in Africa their women end up being harassed by the system, like men are by barnevernet [CWS] in Norway. I’m not saying it is intentional, but yes. The men are the victims in a way of this incompetent system. So, if there was a country somewhere where women get at the wrong end of the stick of an incompetent system, Norway as a country would be out having outreaches, NGOs to help those women, you know. So the mystery of gender equality in Norway, what do they do? Don’t they hear the stories? Don’t they read? Do they think it’s sufficient, it’s okay, because men who are immigrants get more, the rough end of the deal. So that’s why I think, I believe it, and I say it clearly, this country is full of hypocrisy. (Parent 1)

Parent 1 also describes that when CWS was investigating his case, they found him – as a migrant father – a “scapegoat”, someone to blame without considering loopholes in the narrative, emphasizing only possibilities that would place him at fault. Parent 3 describes how focus on the rights of children and women is good; however, it can result in misunderstandings:

⁸³ International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination Article 1.1.

Rights of the child and the woman – the law is always on their side. It is good, but it can sometimes split families and create misunderstanding. (Parent 3)

International literature suggests fathers perceive discrimination in their interactions with the child welfare system (Coady, Hoy & Cameron, 2013). In addition, men – whether consciously or unconsciously – are often excluded from international research on CWS and, when mentioned, a largely described in a negative light; the role of gender is an area that should continue to be explored, “given the highly gendered nature of parenting norms” (Cameron, Coady & Hoy, 2014; Risley-Curtiss & Heffernan, 2003; Storhaug, 2013; Storhaug & Øien, 2012; Ylvisaker et al., 2015 as cited in Fylkesnes, Iversen, & Nygren, 2017, p. 7). In addition, research on CWS cross-cultural work with fathers is virtually non-existent (Strug & Wilmore-Schaeffer, 2003, p. 507).

Furthermore, parent 3 mentions how his identity as a Muslim migrant father may make him “an easy target” for CWS:

Maybe because we are immigrants – and in addition, I am a Muslim – so I have to be extra careful because I might be an easy target. There is a general perception that immigrants mistreat their children and bring their cultures. In some cases, it could be true, but not all of them. (Parent 3)

Literature from the United States indicates that “religious parents have tended to be perceived as authoritarian in their approach to parenting, demanding obedience from their children in line with the requirements of their particular faith”; however, in studies of Christian families in the United States, no association between religiosity and authoritarian parenting was indicated (Gunnoe et al., 1999 as cited in Horwath & Lees, 2010, p. 89). Horwath and Lees (2010) suggest that “it appears that religious beliefs alone are unlikely to influence parenting style” (p. 89). Strabac, Aalberg and Marko’s (2014) analysis of attitudes toward Muslim immigrants indicates there is little difference between rates of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes in Norway; however, I was unable to find any literature relating to religiosity and parenting styles, or perceptions of religiosity of parenting styles in the European context (p. 109). Furthermore, there is little English literature regarding Norwegian attitudes toward or perceptions of Islam or Muslims.

Practitioner 3 describes how ethnic minority families are faced with many additional challenges; these additional challenges could be one aspect surrounding the disproportionality of ethnic minority families within the system.

I think it is something that also runs through what we've talked about, is just that they're [immigrant families are] faced with challenges – not just one, but many challenges really. Which makes them at-risk, it places them at-risk, not just the kids, but the parents too. (Practitioner 3)

Intersecting identities are relevant to the participatory parity of ethnic minority families in Norway, as misrecognition occurs through status subordination (Fraser, 2000, p. 113; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 87; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 3, 83-84). The ethnic minority parents describe starting under larger suspect, identity as being men or Muslims potentially affecting CWS' perception, not enough consideration given to the background of migrants who come from war, and the difference of educational attainment and literacy necessitating difference in approach. Each of these aspects can constitute a claim of misrecognition as status subordination; however, the solution will vary between these – sometimes the solution may be affirmation of these identities, while other times the solution may be deconstruction of distinctiveness (Fraser, 2000, p. 113; Fraser & Honneth, 2003, p. 87; Fraser et al., 2008, p. 3, 83-84). Therefore, the misrecognition of these intersecting identities should be addressed through dialogue⁸⁴ and solutions that enhance participatory parity should be considered for change.

5.3 Nuances Across the Data Set

Other barriers relating to participation. Other barriers to parity of participation that do not meet the demand for justified claims to recognition were discussed – including economics (maldistribution), lack of clear information, myths relating to CWS, fear of CWS, the discretion of case workers, lack of a social network, and language. Each of these areas is supported by existing literature as relevant areas to be addressed in improving the interactions between ethnic minorities and CWS; however, they do not necessarily constitute as (mis)recognition, reinforcing institutionalized hierarchies of cultural value.

Economics, or maldistribution, can be understood as another dimension of social justice – distinct from but overlapping with recognition⁸⁵. The role of economics was addressed in four of the six interviews – by both parents and practitioners. Two of the ethnic minority parents addressed CWS as a positive effort to address maldistribution. Parent 2 described –

⁸⁴ See Section 3.3: *Hierarchy of Knowledge and Dialogue*.

⁸⁵ See Section 3.1: *Recognition and Social Justice*.

despite having an “uncomfortable feeling” about CWS herself – that she has read about the positive assistance CWS can offer when experiencing financial struggles. Echoing parent 2, parent 3 discusses the positive role CWS has played in assisting parents he has met experiencing economic problems; however, despite this positive assistance, he described fear as hindering many ethnic minority families from reaching out to CWS as they have negative connotations associated with child welfare and are worried they will “create a case and take my kids”. Welfare services as mechanisms to assist in redistribution efforts are explored by Webb (2010), but CWS as a mechanism in addressing maldistribution is an area that could be further explored in research. Practitioners described economics, or maldistribution, as a stress factor that can impact the relationships between individuals within the family, emphasizing the challenges ethnic minorities face when finding employment which can exacerbate financial hardship. Practitioner 3 described when working with migrant families that if they “had everything in place – which I know can take years really – if everything was in place and all that, then perhaps one would have avoided the whole of things, really [in interactions with CWS]”. The role of economics is an essential element considering ethnic minority families’ interactions with CWS.

Lack of information was another barrier addressed in all the interviews. This is consistent with the “scandal” of poor information described by Fylkesnes, Iversen, & Nygren (2017). Lack of information addressed included lack of information provided about CWS when coming to Norway or before interactions with the system, the importance of CWS providing clear, precise information about what is happening throughout a case, and the hidden nature of information in Norway. Parent 3 describes how he knows families who have “lost their children because they don’t have access to the information” and many parents do not know what the consequences of their behavior could be; “the system here is not doing so much in informing those people in a very detailed way”. Parents described the need for an informational campaign about CWS, and that the information should be provided in diverse and creative ways so regardless of language or literacy abilities, individuals can access information. Drammen CWS has tried to increase access to information by providing presentations at the Introduction Center – a municipality center to learn Norwegian language and social studies – which is followed by a question and answer period to try to create an arena for information and dialogue. These efforts provide a start in filling the gap on a lack of information; however, of the ethnic minority parents interviewed, none received information through these means.

Other ethnic minority parents, international forums, and the media were the primary informers of CWS, which were described as continuing to perpetuate myths, rumors, and fear.

Myths around CWS, fear, discretion of practitioners, lack of social network and language were also addressed throughout the interviews. Myths and fear were often discussed in conjunction with one another, with the media seen as a source for perpetuating negative perceptions and myths only telling one side or aspect of the situation. Fear was expressed in all of the interviews – by both parents and practitioners – who discussed fear as a barrier to effective collaboration. While a majority of case referrals are received by mandated reporters (78%), the next highest source for referrals is the client him or herself (Blomberg et al., 2011, p. 37-38; Studsrød et al., 2014, p. 317). However, both parents and practitioners described how even when CWS could provide helpful assistance for ethnic minority families, fear that they will lose custody of their children prevents many parents from reaching out to CWS themselves. The amount of discretion practitioners have in conducting their work and making interpretations and assessments was also a thread through the interviews. As practitioner 1 describes:

In child welfare work, it's not black and white, it's just shades of gray that we work in, so it is really on the individual to... use their common sense in their interpretation of what's being said to them. But then, if you're lacking the cultural context which things are presented or said, you could lose a lot and quite significant – for both good and bad.
(Parent 1)

I believe the emphasis on the amount of discretion on the individual case worker also impacted the specific recommendation in four of the interviews for practitioners to approach cases considering ethnic minority families with an open mind. Two other barriers that were emphasized in practitioner interviews included a lack of social network for many ethnic minority families and the language barrier or difficulties using translators.

Inconsistencies across the data set. Concern over the lack of objectivity of CWS was a prevalent topic throughout the interview of parent 1. This parent had experience with CWS himself and had negative connotations associated with his experience. In his case – during the police investigation – the police accused CWS of leading the child to say what they wanted for to say; in the police report they used the word Norwegian word “*forlede*”. Then, when the case was presented before the court, this information was left out by the *sakkyndig* or case expert. This, among the rest of his interactions with CWS, have led him to wonder if CWS is “over

zealous to help children” and begins to ignore case facts or objectivity, claiming “that it is justified because it is for a good cause – protecting children”. He emphasizes he does not expect them to come in and take a side, but to “be objective” and “do an objective, neutral job”. As this concern was prevalent throughout his interview, but not across the data set, I find it important to mention as a potential area for further investigation.

Parent 1 also describes his concern about the localization of CWS and whether international standards can be maintained; this is an area noted in academia which speaks to the unique nature of localized welfare systems when considering international standards (Blomberg et al., 2011, p. 30; Christiansen & Anderssen, 2010, p. 32). Localization of CWS considering international standards should continue to be explored.

5.4 Research Questions

The identified themes and sub-themes help to answer the primary research question which guided the study:

How do the existing relations between ethnic minority families and Norwegian child welfare services practitioners affect the participatory parity of ethnic minority families in the spheres of child welfare, familial life, and within the community?

A hierarchy of knowledge and intersecting identities are key themes when considering institutionalized hierarchies of cultural value in the relationship between ethnic minority parents and Norwegian CWS, providing insight on participatory parity and misrecognition. The view of the Norwegian way as *the* way in both expectations and cultural superiority affect the participatory parity of ethnic minority families operating within the sphere of child welfare.

Considering the expectations of CWS, the current relations do not, in practice, appear to provide space for difference as an institution but rather utilize the judgement of practitioners, which can result in misunderstandings, such as the case of the “disgusting” home visit; it appears it is upon the individual case worker to make judgments regarding room for difference, a challenge to being able to participate on par with Norwegians within child welfare. This supports the notion of the key role of professional discretion in assessments (Berrick, Peckover, Pösö, & Skivenes, 2015 as cited in Fylkenes, Iversen, & Nygren, 2017, p. 2)⁸⁶. Affecting each of the spheres – in child welfare, familial life, and within the community – there is no clear

⁸⁶ See Section 2.3: *Child Welfare and Outside Influences*.

expectations on the Norwegian normative framework, so individuals stand with a lack of knowledge regarding expectations⁸⁷. This can result in complaints to CWS over everyday practices such as “they’re not providing the proper lunchbox according to our tradition and our norms” (Practitioner 1). A lack of understanding of Norwegian norms can act as a barrier to participating on par in social life.

The notion of cultural superiority – in practice, regulations, and legislation – within CWS and within the community is another dynamic impeding the ability of ethnic minority parents to participate on par in social life. Whether real or perceived, parents expressed concern that individuals working within CWS need to “stop thinking I’m the best, the civilized, and everyone coming in [to Norway]... needs to be civilized” (Parent 1). Child welfare practitioners also expressed concern for lack of accommodation for other cultures and contexts and the importance of cultural competence and cross-cultural understanding; the interviewed practitioners experiences as migrants could be one factor affecting their acknowledgment of the importance of these areas. Parents concern of practitioners feeling morally superior with Norwegian norms and practitioners concern that current rules and regulations do not account for cultural difference impact the ability of ethnic minority parents to participate on par in the arena of child welfare. Both areas were described as generating mistrust, impeding the desire of families to reach out to CWS themselves when in need of assistance, and impacting their relationship if they do interact. Furthermore, the notion of cultural superiority was also described as a barrier within the community, where ethnic minority families are approached about their parenting or felt to be observed more carefully whenever a child appears to be unsatisfied; parent 1 and 3 associate this with the notion that other cultures are not seen as developed and some individuals may think ethnic minorities need to “be civilized”. This can perpetuate stereotypes about ethnic minorities being inferior parents, impacting status subordination and their ability to participate within the community as peers. Their relationship within the community is also affected by assimilatory pressures, encouraging the Norwegian way as the proper way – in line with the notions of equality-as-sameness and conformity for access⁸⁸ (Bendixsen, Bente Bringslid, & Vike, 2018, p. 25; Gullestad, 2002). While all the parents discussed making adaptations and compromises within parenting, familial life, and within the

⁸⁷ This also occurs as a prevalent theme in Fylkesnes, Iversen & Nygren (2017).

⁸⁸ See Section 2.2: *Egalitarianism and Equality-as-Sameness in the Nordic Welfare State*.

community, they also emphasized these adaptations should not be forced, compatible with a two-way notion of integration advocated by multiculturalism (Modood, 2013).

A sub-theme running throughout the previous two sub-themes is the Norwegian way, not the only way. Both ethnic minority parents and child welfare practitioners expressed the validity of other ways of raising children and functioning within Norwegian society, of valuing cultural difference. While the 'Norwegian way' appears to be assimilative in nature – acting as a barrier to participatory parity – the acknowledgment of 'not the only way' by both parents and practitioners positively affects the participatory parity of ethnic minority parents. This sub-theme shows the positive role of individual mentality on the parity of participation of ethnic minority parents in social life. However, the child welfare system as an institution was not always viewed as promoting this notion of the Norwegian way not being the only way demonstrating the need for deinstitutionalizing cultural hierarchies which impede parity of participation (Fraser et al., 2008, p. 82).

Finally, the intersecting identities of ethnic minority parents play a role in the existing relations between parents and CWS, affecting participatory parity in child welfare, familial life, and within the community. Ethnic minority parents feel as though they are targeted by CWS, beginning under “bigger suspicion than Norwegian families”, and that the background of migrant families who come from war is not considered enough (Parent 2, Parent 3). By treating everyone as the same in the distribution of information, those who are illiterate can be 'left behind' and not get proper information about their case (Parent 3). Furthermore, the general perception that migrants mistreat their children affects the way that ethnic minority parents navigate through familial life and interactions within the community.

The sub-questions helped provide information on the context relating to the current relations between ethnic minority parents and CWS. These sub-questions provide insight to the themes, although the themes do not directly answer the questions.

In what ways, if any, do ethnic minority families in Norway adapt familial life due to considerations relating to Norwegian child welfare services? Do ethnic minority parents' perceptions of Norwegian parenting culture affect the way that they adapt to parenting in Norway and their actions within the community?

All of the parents described adapting familial life due to considerations relating to CWS and/or perceptions of parenting culture in Norway. Each of the parents described coming from a more hierarchical culture than is present in Norway, and since arriving in Norway trying to

listen more to the child, giving the child space to make independent decisions. Parent 3 discusses how “here [in Norway] they [ethnic minority parents] have to change, have to listen to children. Here, there is two-way communication. Communicating with the child is something good”. This is something that parent 2 also described throughout her interview:

In Russia, it is absolutely strict relationships of power and parents; parents decisions are not discussed with the kids. This is the decision and you should follow this. There is no discussion and no complaining. Here, since they're discussing and try to make a common solution with the kids... this I actually like better, but I still think here it is maybe too free.
(Parent 3)

The rights of the child – especially how much credibility and weight should be given to what a child says⁸⁹ – was discussed as a common tension by both parents and practitioners.

Parents, and practitioners, also discussed how sometimes the reason parents adapt is from fear of CWS; “you do things because you are afraid of the system. In one way, it is good, but in another way, you do things because you are afraid” (Parent 3). However, they also emphasized that this process of adaptation should occur naturally and that “eventually with time there will be a new hybrid system” (Parent 1).

Two of the parents described that Norwegian parenting norms were difficult to envision, so these did not play as large of a role in the ways they adapt parenting; however, fear of CWS operated as driving factor to adapt parenting to the local environment. This is an important consideration relating to the existing relations between ethnic minority parents and CWS when answering my main research question; fear as one driving factor for change could affect the participatory parity of ethnic minority parents. Fear driving change also adds a dimension to the themes of knowledge hierarchy and intersecting identities, providing a better understanding of existing relations.

Relating to a fear was a concern of “being watched” in the community – almost as a form of ‘espionage’ (Parent 3) – and the larger suspicion of ethnic minorities maltreating children motivating individuals within the community to intervene on how to parent. While this “being watched” was not described as changing any specific actions within the community, it impacts the way one operates and communicates within the environment in which one lives.

⁸⁹ Associated with Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 12.1, “State Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child”.

In spirit of two-way adaptation to promote integration encouraged by multiculturalism, it is important to also ask how practitioners are adapting their work and how their perceptions affect practice:

In what ways if any, do Norwegian child welfare services practitioners adapt their day-to-day work to meet the needs of ethnic minority families? Do child welfare practitioners' perceptions of ethnic minorities affect the way that Norwegian child welfare services operates with ethnic minority families on a day-to-day basis?

The primary consideration practitioners described in their approach with ethnic minority families was coming into interactions with an open mind. All the practitioners indicated they considered that ethnic minorities in general – and migrants in particular – can experience additional challenges which make them ‘at-risk’ compared to the general population. However, their understanding of the role of culture was influential in working with parents. Practitioner 2 emphasized the common humanity and shared principles of all individuals – while acknowledging that culture played some kind of role – and downplayed the influence of culture, describing parenting in a more individual sense. This was a different approach than practitioner 1 and 3, who ascribed a larger role to culture on understandings and practices relating to parenting.

While individual practitioners described taking additional considerations into account during their day-to-day work, there were no systematic changes described that ensured accommodation of difference. Therefore, more weight is given to the individual practitioner to take the additional time to learn about the family, the places they are from, the families’ culture, and to communicate; however, the practitioners described frustration on time limitations in working with cases, in that they often cannot invest the additional amount of time they desire to better serve ethnic minority families. This reflects the amount of discretion provided to the individual case worker⁹⁰, which is a gap inadequately covered by Fraser’s theory of recognition. However, the disproportionality of ethnic minority families within the child welfare system presents the question of the need of systemic change to better meet the needs of families interacting with the child welfare system today.

⁹⁰ See Section 2.3: *Child Welfare and Outside Influences*.

5.5 Summary

Knowledge hierarchies – in the expectations of CWS, cultural superiority, and the Norwegian way, not the only way – and intersecting identities of ethnic minority parents were the themes identified from the theoretical thematic analysis. The analysis was conducted with the primary research question of how the relations between ethnic minority families and child welfare practitioners affect the participatory parity of ethnic minority families in child welfare, familial life, and within the community. Understanding aspects around participatory parity – and areas of justified claims to misrecognition – can provide insights to future research and, hopefully, encourage further dialogue that can motivate change so conformity is no longer the price for equal respect.

6 Conclusions

The main research question hoped to explore participatory parity of ethnic minority parents in child welfare, familial life, and within the community, considering the current relations of ethnic minority parents and CWS. In hope of contributing to the dialogue between ethnic minority parents and child welfare practitioners on the topic, both perspectives of parents and practitioners were included. The study was framed considering theories of social justice, recognition, multiculturalism, and a hierarchy of knowledge to guide the analysis and provide insights to the discussion. A theoretical thematic analysis was applied to generate themes relating to both the research question and (mis)recognition. A primary objective was to identify areas within recognition where participatory parity was discussed; these are relevant considering the large amount of international critique and issues of human rights and multiculturalism.

The themes and sub-themes: knowledge hierarchy, expectations, cultural superiority, Norwegian way not the only way, and intersecting identities provide insights to the present dynamics between ethnic minority parents and CWS in the municipality of Drammen. Despite being a city with a high percentage of the population having a migrant background, and the presence of child welfare practitioners with a migrant background in the child welfare system, I argue there is room for development. The current relationship continues to perpetuate the disproportionality of ethnic minorities in the child welfare system and appears to demand one-way cultural adaptation. Even when individual practitioners are concerned about the positive experiences of ethnic minority families within the child welfare system, inequitable outcomes continue to be reproduced. Using the standard of participatory parity relating to recognition, the child welfare system reproduces cultural hierarchies; becoming the same is described as the price for equal respect. Using critical theories of recognition, participatory parity, multiculturalism, hierarchy of knowledge, and intercultural dialogue provide insights for moving forward. An arena for dialogue was identified as necessary; but dialogue is not enough to ensure institutional and systematic change. In the spirit of multiculturalism, a two-way adaptation by both ethnic minority families and CWS is necessary for equality and integration. This institutional change should spawn as a result of dialogue to meet the needs of both ethnic minority parents and child welfare practitioners, where each party is allowed to speak their own truth (Freire, 2005).

Furthermore, the issue of the human rights comes to the forefront. Continuing to enhance and meet the needs of ethnic minority families within the child welfare system can address critiques of human rights monitoring mechanisms including the Committee on Economic and Cultural Rights, the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and the Human Rights Council. Ensuring cultural rights of ethnic minorities, taking anti-discriminatory measures, and ensuring the rights of all children regardless of ethnicity not only improves the situation for ethnic minorities in Norway but for Norwegian society as a whole. Taking further initiatives to address the legitimate claims for recognition presented by ethnic minorities can, hopefully, enhance the participatory parity of ethnic minorities, address the public concerns and protest, and better meet the human rights guaranteed to all those residing in Norway⁹¹.

With these considerations in place, I recommend intercultural dialogue, based on Freire's (2005) conditions. An arena for dialogue should be created, where individuals speak for themselves, instead of solely top-down initiatives that appear to be occurring today. This dialogue needs to take place where there is plausibility for structural and institutional change; only this way can institutionalized cultural hierarchies begin to be addressed. Furthermore, research should continue to examine these areas as well as others that may be a barrier for ethnic minorities to participate on par in social life in Norway.

⁹¹ Consider the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination Article 2.1(c) "Each State Party shall take effective measures to review governmental, national and local policies, and to amend, rescind or nullify any laws and regulations which have the effect of creating or perpetuating racial discrimination wherever it exists" and Article 2.1(d) "Each State Party shall prohibit and bring to an end, by all appropriate means, including legislation as required by circumstances, racial discrimination by any persons, group or organization".

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Annexes

Annex 1: Letter of Consent – Ethnic Minority Parents

Request for participation in research project

"Child Welfare Services as a means of integration? Comparing kommune child welfare practice with ethnic minority families"

Background and Purpose

The purpose of my research is to answer the research question of whether Child Welfare Services is perceived as a tool for integration. This question is relevant as a disproportionate amount of immigrant families in Norway are referred to Child Welfare Services and questions about the quality of Child Welfare Services for ethnic minority families in Norway has been brought to the attention of international bodies including the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the European Court of Human Rights. Child welfare legislation is common throughout Norway; however, municipalities have the responsibility of implementation. In answering the question, I will consider the perspective of both child welfare practitioners and ethnic minorities who live in Norway, considering and comparing practice in two different municipalities. The purpose of my research is to examine concerns of international bodies at a local level, compare child welfare practice with ethnic minority families in two different municipalities, and link social work practice both with the policy and the structural/cultural domain. The project is part of a Master of Science in Human Rights and Multiculturalism at the University College of Southeast Norway, campus Drammen.

The individuals that have been selected to interview based off of the criteria that they are (1) parents, (2) ethnic minorities, (3) live in one of two municipalities in Norway, and (4) are comfortable being interviewed and speaking in English.

What does participation in the project imply?

The main features of the project will include interviews of approximately one hour with parents who are ethnic minorities. Questions will concern how culture appears in parenting in Norway, perceptions of Norwegian values, perception of the child welfare system in relation to ethnic minority families, and knowledge of experiences of ethnic minorities with child welfare services. Data will be collected via notes and audio recordings.

What will happen to the information about you?

All personal data will be treated confidentially. The only individuals who will have access to your data are the student, Alyssa Marie Veliquette, and her supervisor, Gabriela Mezzanotti. Personal data information will be stored on an external hard drive apart from the rest of the data and a scrambling key will be utilized. Personal data and recordings will be stored on an external hard drive that is locked in a safe place. Data will be protected from unauthorized access by using encrypted passwords to protect the files.

The publication could include information regarding your kommune of residence, country of birth, ethnicity, and religion. This information could potentially make you recognizable. This information will only be included in the publication with your explicit consent by checking the box at the bottom of the form.

The project is scheduled for completion by June 2018. Once the project is completed, data will be anonymized and will be deleted six to eight weeks after the deadline of June 2018.

Voluntary participation

It is voluntary to participate in the project, and you can at any time choose to withdraw your consent without stating any reason. If you decide to withdraw, all your personal data will be made anonymous. Although the research topic is related to Child Welfare Services, whether you decide to participate or not will not have any consequences for relations with Child Welfare Services.

If you would like to participate or if you have any questions concerning the project, please contact Alyssa Marie Veliquette (+47 922 73 326) or her supervisor Gabriela Mezzanotti (+47 484 07 402).

The study has been notified to the Data Protection Official for Research, NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

Consent for participation in the study

I have received information about the project and am willing to participate.

(Signed by participant, date)

☐ I agree to participate in the interview.

☐ I agree that my personal information (kommune of residence, country of birth, ethnicity, religion) may be published/saved after project completion.

Annex 2: Letter of Consent – Child Welfare Practitioners

Request for participation in research project

"Child Welfare Services as a means of integration? Comparing kommune child welfare practice with ethnic minority families"

Background and Purpose

The purpose of my research is to answer the research question of whether Child Welfare Services is perceived as a tool for integration. This question is relevant as a disproportionate amount of immigrant families in Norway are referred to Child Welfare Services and questions about the quality of Child Welfare Services for ethnic minority families in Norway has been brought to the attention of international bodies including the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the European Court of Human Rights. Child welfare legislation is common throughout Norway; however, municipalities have the responsibility of implementation. In answering the question, I will consider the perspective of both child welfare practitioners and ethnic minorities who live in Norway, considering and comparing practice in two different municipalities. The purpose of my research is to examine concerns of international bodies at a local level, compare child welfare practice with ethnic minority families in two different municipalities, and link social work practice both with the policy and the structural/cultural domain. The project is part of a Master of Science in Human Rights and Multiculturalism at the University College of Southeast Norway, campus Drammen.

The individuals that have been selected to interview based off of the criteria that they are (1) are child welfare practitioners in one of two municipalities in Norway, and (2) are comfortable being interviewed and speaking in English.

What does participation in the project imply?

The main features of the project will include interviews of approximately one hour with individuals who are child welfare practitioners. Questions will concern how culture appears in parenting in Norway, perceptions of Norwegian values, perception of the child welfare system in relation to ethnic minority families, and knowledge of experiences of ethnic minorities with child welfare services. Data will be collected via notes and audio recordings.

What will happen to the information about you?

All personal data will be treated confidentially. The only individuals who will have access to your data are the student, Alyssa Marie Veliquette, and her supervisor, Gabriela Mezzanotti. Personal data information will be stored on an external hard drive apart from the rest of the data and a scrambling key will be utilized. Personal data and recordings will be stored on an external hard drive that is locked in a safe place. Data will be protected from unauthorized access by using encrypted passwords to protect the files.

The publication could include information regarding your kommune of residence, country of birth, ethnicity, and religion. This information could make potentially make you recognizable.

This information will only be included in the publication with your explicit consent by checking the box at the bottom of the form.

The project is scheduled for completion by June 2018. Once the project is completed, data will be anonymized and will be deleted six to eight weeks after the deadline of June 2018.

Voluntary participation

It is voluntary to participate in the project, and you can at any time choose to withdraw your consent without stating any reason. If you decide to withdraw, all your personal data will be made anonymous.

If you would like to participate or if you have any questions concerning the project, please contact Alyssa Marie Veliquette (+47 922 73 326) or her supervisor Gabriela Mezzanotti (+47 484 07 402).

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Consent for participation in the study

I have received information about the project and am willing to participate.

(Signed by participant, date)

☐ I agree to participate in the interview.

☐ I agree that my personal information (kommune of residence, country of birth, ethnicity, religion) may be published/saved after project completion.

Annex 3: Interview Guide – Ethnic Minority Parents

Demographic Information

Kommune of residence

Country of origin

Ethnicity

Religion

Length of time lived in Norway

Parenting & Culture

What language is spoken at home?

How does culture appear in parenting?

Do you try to bring Norwegian culture into your home? How so?

Do you try to keep your traditions here? How so?

How do you imagine a Norwegian family? What is different? Practices in raising children?

Prompting words:

- Good parent: Home county
- Good parent: Norway
- Change of parenting – Norway
- Changes in family life

Child Welfare Services:

How do you perceive the child welfare system?

Would you go there if you had problems?

Prompting words:

- Barnevernet
- Information about barnevernet
- Knowledge of or experience with barnevernet
- Barnevernet and cultural differences
- Most important thing(s) for barnevernet to remember when working with people from other cultures
- Changes to barnevernet
- Integration
- Exclusion
- Final thoughts

Annex 4: Interview Guide – Child Welfare Practitioners

Demographic Information

Kommune of residence

Ethnicity

Religion

Can you speak another language?

Have you ever lived outside of Norway?

Parenting & Culture

How do you see culture appearing in parenting in ethnic minority families?

What do you imagine is different between Norwegian families and ethnic minority families in Norway?

What are Norwegian values that you think might not be respected?

Prompting words:

- Good parent
- Ethnic minority parenting
- Changes in parenting in ethnic minorities

Child Welfare Services

How do you perceive the child welfare system in relation to ethnic minority families?

Prompting words:

- Distribution of knowledge about barnevernet to ethnic minority families
- Experiences with ethnic minority families
- Barnevernet and cultural differences
- Most important thing(s) for barnevernet to remember when working with people from other cultures
- Changes to barnevernet
- Integration
- Exclusion

Do you have knowledge of/experience navigating international human rights law?

Do you have any information regarding how Norway has been critiqued? Do you pay attention to this while you are working?

- Final thoughts

Annex 5: Data Extracts with Codes Applied

PARENT 1	
Data extract	Coded for
“The way that you are raised up will determine the way that you relate to others, your children included. Of course when you, you can try to adapt to, kind of embed other cultures, but it takes quite some time to really let go of old things and bring in new things. So culture affects the way you do parenting”	3 Integration of culture in familial life 4 Parent adaptation familial life
“If you come from a different place and suddenly you are cut off from everything you have known, everything you have grown-up with, you are going to be a misfit – you know – you are going to end up like the bird, the bat, which in my culture we say is neither a bird or another animal which belongs neither here nor there, but it is kind of in-between. So you to get something new from your new environment or culture, you need to something new, but it is not possible or realistic to be cut off from everything that has made you what you are and take up new things. So yes, it is important to bring something into your home, and eventually with time there will be a new hybrid system, you know, from your home and your new place. But it takes time. It shouldn’t be forced, it will come naturally. It comes from your home and your new place, as long as your practices are safe, it’s legal, and it does not contradict common sense”	1 Participatory parity within familial life & within the community 2 Integration of culture in familial life 4 Parent adaptation familial life 5 Parent adaptation within the community
“I grew up with a grandma who was very nice, who was very good, but sometimes she sat boundaries for everyone. And we expect children to stick to those boundaries. Not in a very strict way that takes away the joy of living from them, but in a way that helps them grow up into mature adults and responsible human beings”	3 Integration of culture in familial life
“From my experience understanding Norway, it is actually not completely [homogenous] uniform society, you know. There are big differences between Oslo, for instance, and the farm in Tromsø or Bergen – they have this attitude, this different behavior. So I can’t really say. To describe a Norwegian family”	6 Perceptions of Norwegian parenting culture
“I think for some Norwegians, for instance, if a child starts misbehaving and they are not able to control their child they might decide to organize what I call a “conference” to tell the child not to do what the child is doing. Okay, of course they need to explain things to the child. But sometimes children do not understand, so you have to tell them “this is wrong, don’t do that”, so if they don’t understand what you’re trying to say, it doesn’t meant that they should disobey you. They should still obey the social boundaries of the parents who have their best interest at heart. I would say most parents have the best interest of their child at heart”	6 Perceptions of Norwegian parenting culture
“I would say most parents have the best interest of their child at heart. So I say this because a friend of mine was in Bergen, I think, someone experienced with tow children and tried to get	1 Participatory parity – within the community

<p>them in the bus, but one of the children was crying on the floor and she was telling the child “we have to go now, I’m begging” and the child refused, he wanted something, I don’t know what. So at that point, she was desperate and just pulled the child into the bus while the child was protesting. And this Norwegian woman just saw her and rushed towards her to give some instructions and guidance on her child, and she got angry and told her to get lost. Because people sometimes, they interject into your problems and they tell you how to live your life and give you instructions because they think you don’t have it, you don’t know what to do. <i>It’s where you’re coming from. They think you’ve got it backward, you need to be instructed, or civilized so to say</i>”</p>	<p>12 Knowledge hierarchy</p>
<p>“What I have noticed is not to take it to heart if I send a message to someone who is a good friend and they do not respond, even when they should be responding. I just realized why it happens, people don’t always respond, they want to stay a bit away sometimes from you so that is something that I have kind of adapted to. Because it is strange, you know, because close friends stick together and they interact, and they always are there for each other. Here it is something different”</p>	<p>5 Parent adaptation within the community</p> <p>21 Social network</p>
<p>[What makes a good parent back home] “A good parent should always have a listening ear and try to understand their [the child’s] needs and what they are saying. And something that I also think is important is that a good parent should have time to be a child with their children, to play with them at their own level. If that means playing on the carpet or the floor with them, it’s at their level”</p>	<p>13 Listening to the child</p>
<p>“There are differences, of course, in how we approach parenting between back home and here. Or, at least, people pretend to have a way of doing things, which we don’t really know. I was shocked when we were having a conversation with my colleagues, a Norwegian said that he gives his children, his daughters, time outs when they misbehave. So with that we were surprised, how do you do that? He said, okay, tell them to go sit on the staircase away from the tv, away from the others so that they are kind of cut off from the rest. And we were all surprised, looking at him. So, I’m not sure that other people would appreciate that here in Norway. It is something he feels is important, so he does that. So even in Norway, there are differences in parenting. But of course, I think there is a difference between what is promoted as the ideal thing and what we do back home. I don’t believe that people from their heart accept or believe everything that they say openly, that are projected in the press, the media, or in official documents”</p>	<p>6 Perceptions of Norwegian parenting culture</p>
<p>[How do you perceive the child welfare system in Norway] “It is pure crap. First, I was disappointed recently to find out that the child welfare is kind of localized. I believe in localized</p>	<p>14 Feelings around child welfare services</p>

government, but still there should be uniformity in the system, even if it is localized”	15 Uniformity in the child welfare system
“Beyond that, I think it is a bunch – from what I have experienced – it is just crap. Incompetent. People who are poorly trained, or simply not trained enough, or not trained at all, or who have just made up their minds on what they believe – then why are they pretending that they are doing an investigation?”	14 Feelings around child welfare services 16 Objectivity – or lack of
“Of course each <i>kommune</i> [municipality] can always control their welfare, the project of child welfare, their administration, but then there would be a guideline, you know, an international standard. If someone comes in and says “this child has gone through this” you start by, you know, following some standards. That is the reason why we have standards all over the world, just to make sure that you follow them. Because people, you know, we have different feelings, different inclinations, sentiments, and these standards are meant to push away the sentiments and the feelings, and make us be objective. Yes, it is better when there is some uniformity, not some kind of strong control from the top, but some guidelines, some way of doing things that should constrain them into doing things objectively, which is not only good for people who have been falsely accused, it is also good for finding out the truth, you know, when something has gone wrong”	15 Uniformity in the child welfare system 16 Objectivity – or lack of
“They already mind up their mind on what they believe in their research, so they... started with a theory and then tried to fix their hypothesis, so this will happen. If you are brought up in this system and somebody like <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] wouldn’t do any better than this narrow-minded, stereotypical way of doing things. <i>And somehow, they might claim that it is justified because it is for a good cause – protecting children – so that makes it justified.</i> But to me, there is no difference of who is at <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] – who does not think broadly, just rushes to this conclusion because of their mindset and ends up putting an innocent man in trouble, cutting them off from their children and just putting them in jail – there is no difference between that and a hard core racist from the deep south of the United States who decides to put a black guy in jail for talking to a white girl in the 60s or something like that and then manipulates some things to put them in jail. You know, there is no difference. One is hateful, <i>the other one is over zealous to help children, so to say, and starts to ignore common sense</i> ”	1 Participatory parity – child welfare 12 Knowledge hierarchy 14 Feelings around child welfare services 16 Objectivity – or lack of 17 An open mind
“The problem is this: social scientists in Norway, they are a bunch of mafia who simply have defined, you know, their own world and they have built castles in the air. And they are unwilling to subject what they think, the curricula, to international standards... People have taken time over years to	12 Knowledge hierarchy 14 Feelings around child welfare services

study, to go through things, so they can't just simply reinvent a new world here, a new world that is completely contrary with what the rest of the world is saying or doing. They can't just do that. They just, you know, need to have people trained, properly trained, exposed, equipped, you know, go for event, go to conferences, interact with others, open their mind and see how best. It's not a crime if you are in a case to say "oh, I think it is beyond me. It's too big for me. My own sentiments involved...". Ask for help"	16 Objectivity – or lack of 17 An open mind
"Actually, in my own situation the police investigation had a very strong accusation. They accused <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] of putting words in the mouth of my daughter. They used the word " <i>forlede</i> ", so <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] led the child to say what they wanted her to say. And that shouldn't happen in the 21 st century, in a country such as Norway that can afford every facilities, everything to make <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] function effectively. That shouldn't be the case, but unfortunately it is. And from my experience, nobody cares, nobody cares to make any reform in this direction"	14 Feelings around child welfare services
"Before you can understand culture and appreciate culture, you have to get off your moral high horse. You have to stop thinking I'm the best, the civilized, and everyone coming in, you know, here needs to be civilized. You need to get off that. If you don't do that, there is no way of understanding; you are only going to condemn other cultures, telling them what they are doing is wrong. There is no perfect culture, there is no perfect system. I've always learned from other cultures, use common sense to find, you know, what is good, what is bad in a place. They can learn from cultures, they can learn from other systems. If you don't understand a people, a culture, you get in there and you think something is wrong with them when nothing is wrong"	1 Participatory parity – child welfare 12 Knowledge hierarchy 20 Cross-cultural understanding
"... A professor in international politics and one day, I listened to him and he said something really important. He said, before ever he starts to study any people, he begins with the language, and without understanding the language, you can never understand fully a culture or the people. Of course, that is not practical, it's not practical understanding language which means that whatever you do outside will be limited as far as understanding people is concerned"	20 Cross-cultural understanding
"Unfortunately in Norway, there is no active discourse, no vigorous debates. That's what I used to think it was in Norway – it isn't. It isn't vigorous, active debates. If something comes from the official source, press, or government, it becomes like a law"	9 Dialogue
"In the situations when things are not so clear, I would recommend to stay with friends because <i>barnevernet</i> [child	4 Parent adaptation familial life

welfare services] is there to generate business for themselves... If they have no case, they have no job, they will get laid off eventually. So they need to make cases. So I wouldn't recommend <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services], I would recommend starting with friends because no other organization is going to come in objectively and try to help. There might be some organizations; I wouldn't recommend them. Not when there is no clear lines on issues"	14 Feelings around child welfare services 16 Objectivity – or lack of 21 Social network
"I get angry when I think about them, so I, I don't want to deal with those people again. As long as, I only deal with them as much as necessary. So in my life, whatever I do, I want to avoid them, because, first of all I'll tell you one of the reasons I get angry. Initially I thought they were neutral... until I realized that I have been blindsided without knowing anything going on"	2 Parent adaptation child welfare 14 Feelings around child welfare services 16 Objectivity – or lack of
"You expect them to be careful in their investigation, to be cautious, to have some doubt, to try to look at it in other ways. They wouldn't do that. Even when there are stories that have loopholes"	16 Objectivity – or lack of 17 An open mind
"So they just focused on me because they saw me as a scapegoat, someone to look after, someone to build a case on, and they have not, in any way, said anything that would express, you know, doubt on the mother"	16 Objectivity – or lack of 18 Intersecting identities
"I have seen so much unwillingness to ask questions, open their minds, to do, you know, to look at this objectively"	14 Feelings around child welfare services 16 Objectivity – or lack of 17 An open mind
"This so-called ' <i>sakkyndig</i> ', whoever she pretends she is, never, never referred to this case [the police reports]. She didn't even include the police report and the tests, so you start to see how they could have missed something... She didn't do that. Because those things would not support her agenda"	16 Objectivity – or lack of
"The whole system seems to be like a corrupt system. And what is the reason? A lot of things are there – stereotypes are there, people not just being 'switched on', not being competent enough in the system, in the eyes in the land of the blind – we have a saying, a common saying in Nigeria, which I think is worldwide, "in the land of the blind, a one-eyed man is king"... They are thinking in just one straight, narrow way"	1 Participatory parity 14 Feelings around child welfare services 17 An open mind 20 Cross-cultural understanding
"First of all, she [the ' <i>sakkyndig</i> '] claimed that my ex accused me of [accusation A], and so that was her focus. And then she went to the court and said it could be [accusation B]. So she added another dimension to it. Okay, that is okay to add another dimension. It is okay to add the options, add all the	16 Objectivity – or lack of 17 An open mind

options. So what did she say? She added the options which were fit for that job to start with and she was so biased that she couldn't even think broad enough... Let's take it at face value. There could be multiple things causing similar results. So why focus on two things that make me look bad?"	
"My concern is, I am not saying that they should come in and take my side. Come in and be objective. Do an objective, neutral job. Of course, it is a tough business, it is a tough business to handle"	16 Objectivity – or lack of
"Time will tell if what they [child welfare services] are doing is right or not. Already there is kind of a backlash against <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] in Norway, even with Norwegians against themselves. Some of them don't have any regard for <i>barnevernet</i> . Even someone told me that, he said if you complain about <i>barnevernet</i> , who are you going to complain to?"	23 Lack of accountability
"Well, they have this gender equality in Norway, for goodness sake, that means if they hear other countries in Africa their women end up being harassed by the system, like men are by <i>barnevernet</i> in Norway. I'm not saying it is intentional, but yes. The men are the victims in a way of this incompetent system. So, if there was a country somewhere where women get at the wrong end of the stick of an incompetent system, Norway as a country would be out having outreaches, NGOs to help those women, you know. So the mystery of gender equality in Norway, what do they do? Don't they hear the stories? Don't they read? Do they think it's sufficient, it's okay, because men who are immigrants get more, the rough end of the deal. So that's why I think, I believe it, and I say it clearly, this country is full of hypocrisy"	1 Participatory parity 12 Knowledge hierarchy 14 Feelings around the child welfare system 18 Intersecting identities
"In Norway, information is hidden actually in general, so if you don't know where to ask, how to ask, you might miss some information that you need to get things done. But <i>barnevernet</i> , they should be obliged to provide clear, precise information about what is happening, state what is going on, and so on and so forth. Which I don't think they are doing, at least from my experience"	1 Participatory parity 24 Lack of information
"They [child welfare services] should simply empty their minds [when working with people from other cultures or backgrounds]. They should empty their minds of prejudice, bias, and base things on facts, things that you can see. Of course, they are there to protect children... They should come with an open mind, a road mind"	11 Individual impact – not just structural factors 17 An open mind 20 Cross-cultural understanding
"They shouldn't put someone who is not qualified on the case. If they do that, they should simply ask for help, and put someone new because it is a serious business. Seriously, they should invest every possible time and resource on that... They	1 Participatory parity – child welfare 17 An open mind

shouldn't just take up cases that they couldn't handle, couldn't understand. And they should come with an open mind when they do this"	20 Cross-cultural understanding
"The threshold for suing <i>barnevernet</i> or any of these groups is just too low, in a way. They will always claims that they are out fighting for children, you know"	23 Lack of accountability
"Even if they try to work better with people from different cultures, I mean the effort may not be sufficient... So, I haven't noticed if there is anything in <i>barnevernet</i> , I haven't noticed and I think people involved are not interested [in adapting to work better with ethnic minority/migrant families]. They have their paycheck, they have their job, and they are immune more or less. It would take a lot of wrong doing for them to be chastised"	7 Adaptations of child welfare services 20 Cross-cultural understanding 23 Lack of accountability
"They should be held accountable, and given the proper training they need to be effective to do their job"	20 Cross-cultural understanding 23 Lack of accountability
"We like to talk about gender equality, gender balance in Norway; I would also say they should be ethnic balance in their cases. All of the people involved should have – and it doesn't mean that they should have someone from every ethnic group, that might not be realistic – but they should take some steps in what they see and what they hear may be things that mean nothing. And I'm not saying – if something is bad, it's bad. If something is bad, there is nothing to argue. But sometimes, you think what is happening is not right, but it helps to see it from another perspective. For instance, Norwegians have this tradition of putting their children out in the snow to play – now someone might see that as torture somewhere, yeah?... They should try to understand somethings, some sentiments, what things mean"	20 Cross-cultural understanding
[Despite international critique...] "nothing changes with the system in Norway... Norway, as a country, as a state, is nationalistic as any other country... They have their own branch of nationalism here in Norway, and that is what makes them immune to outside criticism"	7 Adaptations (or lack of) of child welfare services 12 Knowledge hierarchy
"You [should] start by being neutral. That is how you start. Okay, so that is my position. Who should have, who should they [the courts] listen to more? The police, who have a structure, or <i>barnevernet</i> who doesn't have anything, who is not listening to the rest of the world"	14 Feelings around child welfare services 16 Objectivity – or lack of

Parent 1 Summary:

- Parent 1, in their interactions with Child Welfare Services, view the **lack of objectivity** and **neutrality** as a central issue in affecting his participatory parity. The lack of objectivity and neutrality directed him as a subject – as a father and an ethnic minority. His concern is that an investigation should be investigating all of the

possible solutions, and, when lack of evidence presents itself, that other options should be explored instead of continuing to pursue the same course. When serious accusations are brought up to Child Welfare Services, he hopes that these would be investigated thoroughly, considering all of the possibilities. From his perspective, a lack of neutrality has unfairly impeded his parity of participation in the his case by continuing to treat him as a suspect, despite loopholes, lack of evidence, and a police report concluding that Child Welfare Services has led his daughter in making the statements that she did.

- This lack of objectivity and lack of neutrality was not a pattern across the data set, but was prevalent throughout this data item; therefore, I believe that it is of importance to mention.

PARENT 2	
Data extract	Coded for
“... So the health system is a bit different here because I gave birth in Russia, so the first three months I was there. Even from what I experienced from these three months, in Russia it is very focused on the child’s health, so every week I got a visit from the doctor at home, checking the child and everything, measuring weight, and so on. And I had to visit all the specialists, I mean, literally all – it was the eye doctor, the surgery doctor, when the check the bones, they made an ultrasound of his head and brain and all, everything inside, they check his heart. So we got massage and plenty of different things. So I was occupied almost everyday checking something. And here [in Norway], it was control like once a month, once in two months I think before one year, and then only two years we were invited for control and doctors are more relaxed. Because in Russia, it is like the rule, everyone tell you on the TV and everything at once you feel something wrong, you start sneezing or whatever, go to the doctor at once because it is better to prevent, to start from the right stage to fix. And that is what I am used to”	5 Parent adaptation within the community
“We speak English with my husband because that is we got used to, since we met, but I’m learning Norwegian. It is still hard to switch to Norwegian at hoe because I’m not so good yet... but with my son I speak Russian because I want him to speak Russian. I think it will be useful when he grows. The more languages he knows the better. And he has Russian family. We communicate almost everyday, we speak with my parents on Skype”	3 Integration of culture in familial life 4 Parent adaptation familial life
“Here it is more relaxed. But that is actually nice because I think that it fits me better. I’m not exactly one hundred percent as relaxed as Norwegian parents – once we took a flight and he was half a year old, and there was around the same age girl siting next to us and they let her crawl a little bit between the seats – I still cannot imagine that I would do so, but in general it is more relaxed”	4 Parent adaptation familial life 6 Perceptions of Norwegian parenting culture affecting adaptations

<p>“There is less checking, I would not say less control, but kids are allowed to do more, because as I understand here there is the concept that kids should have the childhood. And actually, all of us did this in childhood and when my mom is shocked and holding her heart and I’m telling her, but I was eating snow in my childhood, I actually did [laughs] whether she controlled me or not, so maybe there is no point fighting in this way”</p>	<p>4 Parent adaptation familial life</p> <p>6 Perceptions of Norwegian parenting culture affecting adaptations</p>
<p>“I think I’m a bit more focused on developing, not only games but also, of course through games, I do not put my two year old son and teach the colors [laughs]. I don’t do so, I don’t force him, but through the games I try to choose games that can develop him with different colors, different geometrical figures and so on and he loves it. Like letters, numbers. And when I talk with the kindergarten teacher I think, they told me that he knows. Because he started explaining in the kindergarten... Since they are a little surprised that he knows this, I make my conclusion that probably they are not so focused on starting to teach at this early age. I still don’t know if it is important or not, but it is again the way that I got used to”</p>	<p>3 Integration of culture in familial life</p>
<p>“But in some way, I truly believe that I am trying to find this perfect middle between Norwegian relaxed way and Russian maybe too stressed”</p>	<p>4 Parent adaptation familial life</p> <p>6 Perceptions of Norwegian parenting culture affect adaptations</p>
<p>“Of course we celebrate holidays, Russian holidays and Norwegian holidays as well. So my kid is quite happy to have two Christmases... It is nice... Of course, since I speak only Russian to him, and when I am at home I put on Russian cartoons, for example, for him to save the language. It is, of course, Russian lullabies and singing, but nothing so different”</p>	<p>3 Integration of culture in familial life</p>
<p>“In Russia it is absolutely strict relationships of power and parents, parents decisions are not discussed with the kids. This is the decision and you should follow this. There is no discussion and no complaining. Here, since they’re discussing and trying to make a common solution with the kids it is still a little – I’m trying – but sometimes it is hard to accept because to discuss with a 2.5 year old child, I try to explain to him a lot, but if he wants. And we have the discussion everyday now for 1.5 years an hour before going to bed that he should go to bed “<i>Nei, [name of son] leke, og mama leke</i>” [laughs]. But I am trying to find the solution. I am trying to make a choice without choices, because when he starts complaining about the hat, I give him two hats to choose from – similar – not a summer hat and a winter hat, but two winter hats and then he is choosing one and that is his choice. But sometimes, it is a little harder since I got used to more strict relations with the parents. But,</p>	<p>4 Parent adaptation familial life</p> <p>6 Perceptions of Norwegian parenting culture affect adaptations</p> <p>13 Listening to the child</p>

no. This I actually like better, but I still think here it is maybe too free. Because sometimes kids are... less concentrated, less responsible”	
<p>“I feel a little more stressed here [in Norway] with the system control, because I know, I heard a lot about this <i>barnevern</i> child support from Russia because they had some TV shows and I’ve heard some stories from my immigrant friends here, but most of the stories end up good, so it was just – but anyway, I would be really stressed, with checking, for example, I wouldn’t like, because of all these stories. And since I know a little how it works, I feel that I’m watched around from society, and that is a little stressful too. I put my boy in the car seat and he is complaining because he wants to go to the playground and I just brought him from there, and shouting and kicking of course and I still try to lock the belt and people around almost look inside to see what I am doing with my child. What can I do? It’s just, so, that is a bit stressful. Because you never know who will complain and who will see your reason. I believe that they have nothing to suspect, but who knows, people are different and they can have different opinions, because of this and that is stressful”</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity – within the community</p> <p>14 Feelings around child welfare services</p> <p>19 Fear & myths</p> <p>25 Being watched</p>
<p>“I feel a fear, but that is the way I saw this, for example, in Russia there was a couple of TV shows about <i>barnevernet</i> with these horrible pictures of how they pick up the child and children screaming and mothers crying, so it is quite stressful pictures, and that is the picture which stuck in my head. So I actually was afraid of moving here. I saw these nightmares before the flight even, that they will pick up my child almost when I just leave the airport. It was horrible.</p> <p>But, my husband truly believes that nothing bad can ever happen because they are just doing their job and they are meant to be, to support actually, families to help families. So, for two years here I communicate with a lot of parents who had experience, because I did not have any experience with <i>barnevernet</i> myself, but I heard some stories from people who did. And, uh, it makes me a little more calm because some stories – some stories are scary and they might be a mistake, you never know because you don’t know the second part, but it is scary – but most of the stories in some way they even helped a lot. That was they are meant to do”</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity – within the community</p> <p>14 Feelings around child welfare services</p> <p>19 Fear & myths</p>
<p>“As I understand, you should, and I agree with this, you should not use your own rules, live by your own rules if you live in another society. That society has different rules and you have to accept it. You have to become a part of it. And sometime it is hard, but that is what you should do. But you should be open and clear for Norwegians to see, now the big difference”</p>	<p>2 Parent adaptation child welfare</p> <p>4 Parent adaptation familial life</p>

	5 Parent adaptation within the community
<p>"I still have this uncomfortable feeling about <i>barnevernet</i>. But people say it, more and more often I hear on international forums that some people actually recommend to do so [going to child welfare services with familial problems]... At least this advice, I heard, not from my situation, but for others I've read on forums, and that makes me a little more calm also. That it is not only this scary picture, that it has another side and that it is actually meant to be a support and that you can get support there"</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity – child welfare</p> <p>14 Feelings around child welfare services</p> <p>26 Maldistribution</p>
<p>"In Russia we have this child support, but their cases, you never know them. You never communicate with them if you're living a normal life... Here [in Norway] they are powerful to everyone; every person can be under suspicion and can be checked, that makes me feel uncomfortable of course. Because why should they check me? I'm a normal person. And sometimes I hear these strange reasons that they are checking. Like, somebody texted that a child has probably bad teeth because he drinks milk in the evening... It is strange reasons and that makes me uncomfortable because I don't know what people can think and I always should think about what people can think about it"</p>	<p>14 Feelings around child welfare services</p> <p>19 Fear & myths</p> <p>25 Being watched</p>
<p>[Are there other ways that you've gotten information about <i>barnevernet</i>?] "We got commercial in our mail about this foster families they're called. So you can apply to be this foster parent and how much does it cost to have an adopted child at home, because they're paying for support. But I think that is the only"</p>	<p>24 Lack of information</p>
<p>"An immigrant family are from the start under bigger suspicion than Norwegian families. They give more attention to immigrants. And that probably because of, probably we have common propaganda, you know. In Russia, they show these horrible pictures about <i>barnevernet</i> that just picks up kids but here in the news I can read that Russia reduced penalty for home violence, of course it is common impression of each other. And since they read this huge article that Russia doesn't punish for home violence and with some scary numbers, they can think that home violence is normal in Russian families, right? They should check them more careful then since they live in Norway and raise kids here. So, yeah, they [immigrant families] have more attention, as I have heard"</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity – child welfare</p> <p>18 Intersecting identities</p>
<p>"The mentality and cultural traditions are different from country to country. And, um, it is not always meant in violence, it can be just different traditions. For example, in Russia, it is more respect to adults. And, for example, my parents would expect that from their grandson, you know. And it doesn't mean that it is bad or good, it's just different. You can't expect everyone to become Norwegian suddenly once they cross the border. They still have their background and their traditions.</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity</p> <p>5 Parent adaptation within the community</p> <p>12 Knowledge hierarchy</p> <p>17 An open mind</p>

And I know that some families from Africa it is not allowed for kids to look straight in the eyes of adults and it is only with showing respect. So here, it would create problems for them because Norwegians would expect that this kid is abused and that is why this kid cannot look into the eyes. And that would involve <i>barnevernet</i> . And that's why I think that the people who work in <i>barnevernet</i> should learn this differences. Because it is not always a good enough reason stress a child with picking him up and stress parents and ruin families. If you think about what is better for the child, then follow this route. The Norwegian way is not the only way in the world, they should accept this too"	20 Cross-cultural understanding
"In Oslo there is one lawyer with Russian background, but she moved here I think when she was in school, so she graduated lawyer here and she works with <i>barnevernet</i> cases and she makes some seminars for Russian parents and Russian embassy to talk more about the system to calm down, to explain more about how you should react. Because we are, maybe our mentality, more emotional than Norwegians and when somebody blames you with something wrong and you know that you did not do so, Russians can react very emotional, like "how dare you, I would never do so to my child" and that is not normal reaction in Norway and that would create even more problems with in working authority. Because, you know, in Russia it is okay, everyone would understand, but here most likely they will not because they do not get used to such reactions"	1 Participatory parity – child welfare 2 Parent adaptation child welfare 20 Cross-cultural understanding 24 Lack of information – Norwegian normative framework
"To learn more about cultural difference. Try to look to the world a little more wider"	17 An open mind 20 Cross-cultural understanding

Parent 2 Summary:

- Parent 2, in what she has heard about Child Welfare Services – was initially very afraid and still is uncomfortable with Child Welfare Services; however, since moving to Norway she has heard more positive things which has made her calmer and more positively oriented toward Child Welfare Services. She emphasizes trying to adapt to Norwegian society and navigating finding a perfect middle way of combining the positive aspects of Norwegian and Russian culture.

PARENT 3	
Data extract	Coded for
[Being a good parent in Norway] "Have to be careful of the law. Must understand and follow the law. The law is very strict. Not every immigrant understands what the law says. Many do not have knowledge about they law – they cannot read, they lack	1 Participatory parity – child welfare, familial life, within the community

information. They get general information in the reception centers, but Norwegian norms are not described intensively”	4 Parent adaptation familial life 24 Lack of information
[Changes in parenting since arriving in Norway] “I have to also follow the system here – in perception and practice. I have to understand the laws – and what is right and wrong according to the law. There is no negotiation here. I have changed and have to compromise many things”	1 Participatory parity – child welfare, familial life 4 Parent adaptation familial life
“Practices [in parenting] have also changed. Some are positive and some are not positive. For example, in our culture we are a group oriented society. Family is very important. Parents have a special position, they have to be respected. Families deserve respect. The hierarchy is different. Usually, children are not allowed to criticize families, for example... Here they have to change, have to listen to children. Here, there is two-way communication. Communicating with the child is something good. But also, the negative thing is that children have unlimited rights in Norway so that immigrant families get scared from the laws – because they are immigrants and if they do something they might be targeted from <i>barnevernet</i> . There is extreme fear from <i>barnevernet</i> – it could be real or imaginary, but almost every family shares this perception. This might also affect the relationship between children and their families because the parents know their child is not behaving in a proper way, but they are afraid to correct them. The <i>barnevernet</i> listens to the child and takes the child without any hesitation... Child are perceived as never lying. True, but in what context... Children might lie to get what they want. Families are very afraid of <i>barnevernet</i> . They feel that their children will be taken one day. The school, the kindergarten, they follow the children very well. They ask for details for what has happened and construct – almost a form of espionage”	1 Participatory parity 2 Parent adaptation child welfare 4 Parent adaptation familial life 13 Listening to the child 14 Feelings around child welfare services 19 Fear & myths 22 Collectivism 25 Being watched
“When I talk to my child, I must first check what the law says. I must check and behave according to the values here in Norway. In many ways the principles in <i>barnevernet</i> in theory are good, but in practice they can target different communities. It is very institutionalized”	1 Participatory parity (& disproportionality) 2 Parent adaptation child welfare 4 Parent adaptation familial life 12 Knowledge hierarchy
“How can you prove that <i>barnevernet</i> is unfair? They are very powerful. They can exaggerate a small mistake and you cannot protest”	23 Lack of accountability
“Maybe because we are immigrants – and in addition, I am a Muslim – so I have to be extra careful because I might be an	1 Participatory parity

easy target. There is a general perception that immigrants mistreat their children and bring their cultures. In some cases, it could be true, but not all of them”	18 Intersecting identities
“Norway is not a multicultural country yet – it is a multicultural country in the making. Here it is a homogenous society in perception. They have the perception of one culture and you have to in some way assimilate. Other cultures are not yet seen as developed”	1 Participatory parity (equality as sameness) 12 Knowledge hierarchy
“I know also some families who have lost their children because they don’t have access to the information – what is right and what is wrong. It could be their ignorance to the law, their background – because there is no warning... In some cases, of course you have to intervene. But in some cases, you have to give warning to some families. Warning is very important... Parents who come from war areas might need warning and help, not just getting their kids taken away. Many families do not know the consequences of their behavior, especially those who have a difficult background – illiterate, for example. Some of these families have lost their children because they don’t understand the consequences. The system here is not doing so much in informing those people in a very detailed way. Educating parents – not late, but early. Telling them immediately when they come to Norway. They do not understand just once, need in a repetitive way. People do not understand the details of the law”	1 Participatory parity 24 Lack of information
“Most of the information that you get [about Child Welfare Services] from people on the outside, that are traumatized by this system. People talk to each other about stories that <i>barnevernet</i> has taken their children. I had to check on my own and see that <i>barnevernet</i> also helps. They can help and intervene, not only take away. How many immigrants understand this positive part of <i>barnevernet</i> ? They have the impression that they take away kids, and are traumatized”	1 Participatory parity 19 Fear & myths 24 Lack of information
“I think the Norwegian government should invest on a project to tell, educate, and inform families more. Not only once, but must contribute more. They have to map also why people behave in the way that they are behaving – people think what they are doing is right. The system must talk to them that the values are different... So they have to invest more – especially on people who need that information. Illiterate people, for example, information should be given to them with a translator”	1 Participatory parity 7 Adaptations of child welfare services 24 Lack of information
“Rights of the child and the woman – the law is always on their side. It is good, but it can sometimes split families and create misunderstanding”	18 Intersecting identities
“ <i>Barnevernet</i> is missing this point [taking culture into account] totally. Those working in <i>barnevernet</i> and kindergartens – I don’t know how many of them understand multicultural	1 Participatory parity – child welfare

theories. How many working in <i>barnevernet</i> are aware of difference in other cultures? I think that <i>barnevernet</i> – what they should do is have rules, regulations, and they have the extra power to interpret articles as they wish. What does it mean that children should be protected? They follow these rules. But in these rules, people should understand cultural nuances. These nuances cannot be put into the rules, because they have these regulations and there would be contradictions. But in some situations that are not very serious, cultural nuances should be considered”	7 Adaptations of child welfare services 20 Cross-cultural understanding
“One can sometimes consider <i>barnevernet</i> as an institution that has workers and is a business. It is ran by the state. But there are some interest groups in it also – people work, and they need cases; foster families are paid money for taking care of the child... It is very difficult. They have a benefit on making cases, because when a case comes they have to work on it and bring more jobs and projects to people and the institution must run. There are also interest groups here. Less consideration is given to families and more consideration is given to children and to the institution. They always try to defend the rights of the child and they are powerful – they have institutional power”	14 Feelings around child welfare services 16 Objectivity – or lack of
“You do things because you are afraid of the system. In one way, it is good, but in another way, you do things because you are afraid. Even in activities, families have to contribute or take part in activities – swimming, football. It is good for the kids, but in some families, there is pressure that the kid does not have enough activities. Maybe <i>barnevernet</i> can help you, but people don’t want this because it could lead to further investigation... Many immigrant families actually think to travel or to change from Norway because of <i>barnevernet</i> , when they get their passport... One reason could be for work or education, but one thing is that <i>barnevernet</i> is very scary”	2 Parent adaptation child welfare 4 Parent adaptation familial life 14 Feelings around child welfare services 19 Fear & myths
“I have a friend who was a single father with children. He was going to school, he was a student. The money from working and going to school was not enough to care for the children in terms of activities. So he had no money, and he went to <i>barnevernet</i> and said he did not have enough money to cover the activities and they have taken his case and have helped him. They have many activities helping single mom or single dad or have economic problems... The problem is that problem have this negative image and even if they need help they don’t talk to <i>barnevernet</i> because it is perceived as something dangerous, because maybe they will create a case and take my kids. Not everything <i>barnevernet</i> does is bad, but with immigrants – people who have come from war – here, <i>barnevernet</i> is unfair and does not consider their situation. They cannot group together people who are university	1 Participatory parity – child welfare 14 Feelings around child welfare services 18 Intersecting identities 19 Fear & myths 20 Cross-cultural understanding (different treatment for equitable outcomes)

graduates and people who are illiterate and treat them the same”	26 Maldistribution
“Here in Norway, people tell you that in Norway, we do it this way. It means that it is an assimilative system, even though in the regulation they take care of different cultures; but in practice, if you don’t do it the Norwegian way, then you are the loser. It is silent assimilation. Because in nuances, small cultural differences – for example, if you take a child playing football with a hijab or swimming with a burkini or now also the hijab of children at school – some political parties are trying to ban this one. Saying children are being oppressed with hijab, the rhetoric is that this doesn’t belong here. What are we going to do? In institutions, it is assimilative. They have these rules, the rules are being set by those people, they are the majority... If you are assimilated, you have more opportunities. If a woman takes off her hajib, people will applause and think she is free. Those who keep their own values and cultures don’t have the same support, resources, as those who are assimilated. If you do it the Norwegian way, you will succeed”	1 Participatory parity (equality as sameness) 2 Parent adaptation child welfare 4 Parent adaptation familial life 5 Parent adaptation within the community 12 Knowledge hierarchy 20 Cross-cultural understanding

Parent 3 Summary:

- Parent 3 emphasizes the importance of understanding the law, a lack of knowledge that migrant families have regarding Child Welfare Services, the law, and a Norwegian normative framework, the fear that migrant families have of Child Welfare Services – whether it is founded or unfounded – and the power that Child Welfare Services has as an institution. He suggests that a greater access to information and an interpretative aspect of the law to consider cultural nuances would improve the relationship between ethnic minority parents and Child Welfare Services.

PRACTITIONER 1	
Data extract	Coded for
“Well, first of all, most immigrant families don’t have a big social network. Right? They are more isolated than your typical Norwegian family. Norwegians, we don’t move, migrate as much. So you know, we – I mean my family is a great example, except for me whose been everywhere – but my kind of core family and extended family, we have all grown up in just three towns around here. And so, the migration hasn’t happened for Norwegians. So they [Norwegians] usually have a bigger social network that they can rely on and tap into for help when things get difficult, while an immigrant family won’t have that and they are usually connected with other immigrant families who are also struggling, sort of with the same thing of lack of a social network to kind of be their safety net. So of course that impacts things”	1 Participatory parity 21 Social network
“Then you have, obviously, the language. The language barrier is huge. Some of our new immigrants are actually quite well educated and have a lot give and offer, but because of the	1 Participatory parity

language thing, and because of just the overall sort of stigmatism that exists in our society, it's hard for them to actually realize and get a chance to realize their potential in what they have, compared to what they've done before, and I think sometimes that will cause an issue – just a stress factor, you know”	
“Economic factors, you know, the different in the financial aspect would – usually – between the ethnic Norwegian family and an immigrant family is huge. And we all know that economic stress impacts a family and how they end up treating their children, how they are able to meet their children’s needs”	1 Participatory parity 26 Maldistribution
“Here you have a Norwegian family – stable finances, they know the language, they know where they belong, they have a huge social network, they have a stability, they don’t have the exposure to all of the traumas – and then here you have an immigrant family that lacks access to jobs, financial issues, lots of traumas, no social network. I mean, they don’t even have the initial same starting points really. No. And I think that’s what makes it extra hard when we encounter these families because the expectations are set on the average, the norm, right? Which is the Norwegian family. And then all the sort of things that we expect to see – but with an immigrant family, we really cannot expect to see the same and expect them to meet the same level when they enter our door, because the starting points are completely different”	1 Participatory parity (equality as sameness) 21 Social network 26 Maldistribution
“In general I would have to say that immigrant families – or people that I have dealt with from African countries anyways – they are much better at trying to take care of their own. Taking care of their own families... They don’t necessarily make decisions individually, as people. So I think they have a hard time looking at how we have our families built where we’re – it’s like, well this is our core family and the mom or the dad make the decisions and they don’t have to ask or take into consideration their elders”	22 Collectivism
“I mean, of course everyone’s going to change because you’ll have to adapt at some point. Even if you don’t fully integrate or adapt, you’re still going to adapt to some degree. If it is out of fear that you’re going to get in trouble, or whatever, you’re going to make some changes. So of course you’re going to see some change”	2 Parent adaptation child welfare 3 Parent adaptation familial life 19 Fear & myths
“I think they’re [ethnic minority parents are] really, really good at using – you know, they have a small social network, but if they happen to have some of their family or have connected, I think that they’re much better at reaching out in their community and in their family to get support in the situation that they might find themselves in, then maybe an ethnic	21 Social network

Norwegian who kind of wants to keep everything within the four walls, so to speak, of their house"	
"As someone who has worked in child welfare in other countries and coming to Norway, I'm actually a bit disappointed with the system that we have – and specifically when it comes to our work with ethnic minorities. I think that at some levels they're trying to give the education and resources needed for someone to expand their knowledge of different cultures. But it's really behind the times, and it's, we're lacking people's understanding I think of where people come from and what they bring with them – for good or bad – when they enter of offices. I think we could do a much better job"	20 Cross-cultural understanding
"It's hard because when you meet with an immigrant family, most of the time you have to have an interpreter – unless the family knows, speaks English. But even with that... child protective services uses so much professional language And it's professional language in a way that's – it's kind of like a present that you wrap and pack it in with lots of packing so it won't break – and what we do is that we use our professional language to pack in things and so that happens even like our words in what we try to convey, so then I think that how we speak and how we present things it gets lost – literally lost – in the translation. And then, you know, some of that happens back"	1 Participatory parity
"Some of the things that are said by the immigrant family to us – unless you actually have sort of the background or specific knowledge of, just culturally, the cultural part – you could lose so much when you make your interpretation. Because in child welfare work, it's not black and white, it's just shades of gray that we work in, so it is really on the individual to sort of use their common sense in their interpretation of what's being said to them. But then, if you're lacking the cultural context which things are presented or said, you could lose a lot and quite significant – for both good and bad"	1 Participatory parity 11 Individual impact 20 Cross-cultural understanding
"The Norwegian workers are way – like I said – too kind; we pack in our words professionally and we try to give advice, but it's all so packed in that the meaning gets lost. And then we have expectations of them to meet our expectations, but they didn't really get the expectations to begin with because we use such high professional language and packed it in – and then, through an interpreter. So it's sort of like the system is sort of bound to fail these families in some ways. And because we miss that cultural context part, when some of the things are said we could react very negatively, because we're looking at this through our own lenses of being ethnic Norwegians and this is how I grew up, this is what was expected of me, this is how a family works, you know, but you can't do that when you work with these families because they didn't grow up like you, they	1 Participatory parity – child welfare 8 Perceptions and practice 20 Cross-cultural understanding

<p>didn't have the same start, the same context as when you do things. And then when you add up not being direct enough, it's not good"</p>	
<p>"I think our laws and regulations in Norway are old – they don't fit the families of today, the problems that we see today and they certainly do not fit other cultures and other contexts, other than the ethnic Norwegian. I think we need a whole revamp of our laws, our regulations, even how the system functions in these families"</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity – child welfare</p> <p>7 Adaptations of Child Welfare Services</p>
<p>"I try to figure out, okay, where is it that they're from? And once I know kind of the country or the area, I will – if I don't know it already – try to figure out the basics of it because I know that there is going to be things that I'm going to miss if I don't. It's just inevitable.</p> <p>I had a colleague who – I mean, it's just even as basic as this – I had a colleague once make a comment that he did a home visit and during his home visit, he just thought that house was kind of disgusting. But when he described the disgusting, it wasn't that the house was unclean or unkept or anything, but to him it had a very strong, pungent smell. But when you actually started asking him questions – and, well, what was the smell? I mean, this was an ethnic minority family, and basically, this was a family that comes from somewhere where in their cooking, versus ours, they use a lot of garlic, they use a lot of spices, and they also come from an area that because of their skin and haircuts and everything, they don't wash maybe every single day. Because where we want to wash it out, they want to wash the oil in. So it just becomes a difference, but you have to have the understanding that, okay, well, yeah this house wasn't unkept, it wasn't unclean, it wasn't disgusting. Yeah, it smelt different than what we are used to, but that doesn't mean that was really an issue"</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity – child welfare</p> <p>7 Adaptations of Child Welfare Services</p> <p>8 Perceptions and practice</p> <p>11 Individual impact</p> <p>20 Cross-cultural understanding</p>
<p>[Considerations when working with ethnic minority families] "Going and finding someone that knows the area where people are from that can give you some kind of cultural information. I think it is important for us to find workers that have knowledge and use them in the areas where they have the knowledge. And the going in with an open mind"</p>	<p>7 Adaptations Child Welfare Services</p> <p>11 Individual impact</p> <p>17 An open mind</p> <p>20 Cross-cultural understanding</p>
<p>"As far as interpretation goes – that one is so hard because it just depends on who you get [as an interpreter]. When you don't speak the language, it's not that easy for you to do a control check on things. If things get lost, literally lost, in translation – because they do – I just think you have to move at a slower pace with these families and have a lower expectation.</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity – child welfare (difference in treatment, equitable outcome)</p>

<p>Not because you don't think that they can... present a change, but they can't meet that if you're expectations are the same as an ethnic Norwegian because they're not standing on the same foundation. Of course it's going to take a lot more for them. So, you just have to move slow, but that's not easy because we're literally overworked, we have too much, and we have deadlines, and I think that's what I'm saying is the way we do things, the laws and regulations, the whole system actually needs to change to adapt to the families that we actually see today and the problems... So the whole system actually needs to change"</p>	<p>7 Adaptations of Child Welfare Services</p> <p>14 Feelings around child welfare services</p>
<p>"One thing that they do here which I really like is that we have this Introduction Center where they do Norwegian classes... We go in any new class and we do a half day presentation of Child Welfare Services and what happens. And then we sit down with the different groups, and if they have specific questions for us then they can sit and actually ask there – which I think is a good thing, to try to dispel also the myths the other way, that we're out there searching for children or, you know, going to all the neighbors and everything like that. Try to dispel some of those myths and rumors. So I do like that they at least do that outreach, so maybe they won't be totally scared of us, and the other way around when we meet"</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity – child welfare services</p> <p>7 Adaptations Child Welfare Services</p> <p>9 Dialogue</p> <p>14 Feelings around child welfare services</p> <p>19 Fear & myths</p> <p>20 Cross-cultural understanding</p> <p>24 (Contra) Lack of information</p>
<p>"It comes down to how we as individuals meet the families. So, you know, if me and five other colleagues can go out to the Introduction Center, and we can have that, but if... they see more of their children maybe placed in care or feel like they get placed in care, we're not going to be able to bridge that gap that is happening. And, again, sometimes I think also, they always know – immigrant families always know other families, who know other families within their own minority group who have had children removed – and again, there's the different. Their community is so small, while the ethnic Norwegian's community is much larger and then the ethnic Norwegian's are going to be close-lipped about it, while they're not. So it becomes an issue where the myths are able to kind of stay alive"</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity – child welfare (disproportionality)</p> <p>11 Individual impact</p> <p>19 Fear & myths</p>
<p>"When you have to use a translator, it is not just the quality of the translator, but it's also the availability of one. So sometimes our work can see – inconsistent is maybe not the word – but, I think the minority families might feel or experience from their point of view that we will change things a lot on them. But a lot</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity – child welfare</p> <p>7 Adaptations child welfare services</p>

<p>of times those changes come, like changing the meetings, or whatever, come because we are dependent on a translator. And sometimes, for just a lack of availability of translators. Sometimes having a phone translator isn't optimal or the best, depending on what you're talking about, what you need to convey, because our verbal language is just a small part of who we are. It's the nonverbal clues can give you equal amount of information, and that gets totally lost when you have a translator. And the translator too can translate more wrong if they're not actually present, because then again, they're not tapping into those nonverbal cues. So I think the families can maybe see, experience, or feel a higher level of frustration around our system because we are dependent on translators and sometimes, you know, the translator is sick. Okay, do you go ahead and have the meeting and try to get through it somehow, or do you then cancel it and reschedule to a time where there is an available translator again? And I see how that can be very frustrating from the other side, and, with all those changes too I think grows a misconception also of a minority family on us child welfare workers, you know, that we're constantly changing things and that we want them to fail. Which is actually not the case. Most every I say – nine out of ten people who work in this field – if families could actually just see behind the scenes how much we actually root for them to be able to make the change so they can have a positive and good, healthy relationship with their child, I think they all would be quite shocked. But they don't see that part when the changes come; I think they can look at it as suspicious that those changes happen"</p>	
<p>"I've heard so many families now tell me that even when they were in the refugee camps, or wherever they were, that before even coming to Norway how they – once they knew or how they were provided information about how terrible our child welfare system is and how we're just out to get their children and how they have to be scared and how they have to do this, this and not this, this, this, and this. So some work, I think, is outside even the <i>kommune's</i> [municipality's] sort of ability – that it actually has to go more on the national level and even go out to those workers who go out into these camps even from the start of their journeys... because if already have that before they even arrive in this county, and then they meets lots of people, you know, because imagine an immigration center. Raising your child in an immigration center, it's not a natural environment to raise your child at all. So in some ways, I think <i>barnevernet</i> gets involved a lot, even in the immigration center early on, because the parents from the journey that they come and then they're having to raise and live in an unnatural environment, and then, things can get viewed – I think – a bit</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity – child welfare</p> <p>7 Adaptations child welfare services</p> <p>19 Fear & myths</p> <p>24 Lack of information</p>

<p>wrongly. So then you keep adding on the misconception – so I don’t really know what the solution is. I just think it has to be at a higher level than just at the <i>kommune</i> level. I think we can do better, more outreach, but I also think that it actually has to come higher and sometimes even before they actually start their journey”</p>	
<p>[Things to keep in mind when working with people from other cultures] “An open mind. Yeah, open mind. Don’t get stuck in your own perspective. Don’t get stuck in your paradigm. And when I say ‘open mind’, be open that perhaps how you were raised or how you are raising your children isn’t necessarily the only way or the best way; that there actually can be other ways that are just as good and just as effective, even if it looks different and perhaps even scary because it is different than you yourself have experienced. So just, you have to have an open mind and not be judgmental. And then you have to just be willing to not quickly judge or make a judgment or decision about a family before you sort of taken the time to also learn those nuances in their culture and their perspective. And you know, keep in mind what was their journey, what has happened along the path to come here, what does daily life look like – think about all these other things, like the network, their finances, what are the stress factors, what are the positives”</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity</p> <p>7 Adaptations child welfare services</p> <p>8 Perception and practice</p> <p>11 Individual impact</p> <p>16 Objectivity (not be quick to make a judgment or decision...)</p> <p>17 An open mind</p> <p>20 Cross-cultural understanding</p> <p>21 Social network</p> <p>26 Maldistribution</p>
<p>“You have to go in with a mindset that even in the worst of things – even in the worst we can do to our children or to other human beings – that a human being sits across from you being an ethnic Norwegian or a minority, there is always, always going to be something positive about them. And not to lose that perspective. Because if you lose that perspective, then how can you expect to see a change or get a change out of people, if all you see is the negative and the differences. So it kind of goes back to having a very open mind I guess”</p>	<p>11 Individual impact</p> <p>17 An open mind</p> <p>20 Cross-cultural understanding</p>
<p>“Norway is very good and focused on children’s rights... but on the other hand, you know, I always kind of laugh because in some aspects I also think we’re too kind here. We’re called <i>barnevern</i>, but in some ways I almost think we become <i>foreldrevern</i>, so parental rights are so incredibly strong here. And it’s good, but sometimes we kind of talk out of both sides of our mouth”</p>	<p>10 Contradictions</p> <p>14 Feelings around child welfare services</p>
<p>“I think the thing that I – from my perspective – that I find hard navigating for anyone working with families is that when you talk about children’s rights, we should be a lot more coordinated, just as a whole, when it comes to services we</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity – child welfare</p>

<p>offer kids. We're very much fragmented in where our services for children lie, and there's no coordination between all those parts. And because that happens, I think sometimes a child misses out that doesn't have their rights or their needs met because of that fragmentation within the system. So, conceptually, yes on paper, we do a very good job of speaking children's rights, but I think that somehow gets a little lost in practice because the system isn't coordinated enough to actually provide the backup for it. And that is one of my biggest frustrations between here and let's say the US, where the US the child's protective services is a lot more rules and laws and regulated – and it is here too – but there it is a lot more formalized, while here it is more individualized. So here it is individual, pretty much from <i>kommune</i> to <i>kommune</i>, and you can even find it within [Drammen <i>kommune</i>] because we're like three different teams here, and how we do things here on my team, they could actually be doing something different, and we're still the same <i>kommune</i>. But they might be providing the services differently, even though at the get-go we're tasked to do the same job. But I didn't see that as much in the US because it's a lot more formalized down at this level"</p>	<p>14 Feelings around child welfare services</p> <p>15 Uniformity in the child welfare system</p>
<p>[Barriers in the child welfare system] "Well of course, one, because they have already these myths are rumors and being scared. They fact that they have to have interpreters, speak through interpreters – that's a big barrier compared to an ethnic Norwegian family where you don't have that... Some of these families are families that anything having to do with governmental people is very scary thing for them because of their own experiences of where they come from, so those are barriers"</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity – child welfare</p> <p>8 Perceptions and practice</p> <p>19 Fear & myths</p>
<p>[Barriers in the child welfare system] "One place where we could be helpful – or someone needs to be more helpful with these families – is even what sort of is expected of them in the Norwegian society. So when they send their kids to <i>barnehage</i> or to school, what are some – I mean, who takes the time to teach them what is expected to they don't end up sort of misguidedly in a negative connotation with the school or the <i>barnehage</i> because they're not providing the proper lunchbox according to our tradition and our norms, or the proper winter gear, or how they can overcome their kids attending birthday parties, or extracurricular activities and things like that. I mean, there's small things, you know, perhaps that someone could positively be like a guidance thing. Definitely some of the things that you have to look at and explore. I've seen lots of families that, you know, some of the complaints, concerns come in the form of the lunchboxes and that thing... Everything from the interpretation to expectations. What if you're from a country where being on time means you're half an hour late? But that's</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity</p> <p>24 Lack of information (Norwegian normative framework)</p>

a norm for you. But yet, here, that might be counted against you; well, they didn't show up for their appointment. Well they showed up, but they didn't show up, they can't pick up the phone as easily and say, "hey, I need to change" or send you a text message saying, you know, "little Johnny is sick so can I reschedule my appointment?". I mean, those are all barriers – they are simple barriers, but they're still barriers"	
"I think minority families would perhaps find it easier to interact and deal with us if we had a system that was the same everywhere. That just because you live in this community and then you move and something is different – I think if we were more the same I think it would be easier for everyone"	15 Uniformity in the child welfare system

Practitioner 1 Summary:

- Practitioner 1 emphasizes the social network and language to be barriers for ethnic minority families (among other barriers), the impact of myths and fear in interactions with the system, and the system as a whole as an area in need of reform considering today's problems and the individuals that interact with Child Welfare Services today.

PRACTITIONER 2	
Data extract	Coded for
"They way I understand, I don't have such huge different culture. I want to see people, if they are from Norway, if they are from USA – it doesn't matter for me. I want to understand people. I do understand they have culture, they also have their way to do parenthood, so, I just see that. I don't have groups "these ethnics", "those ones from that culture". But each one [individual], each family. That's the way I see people; not in groups, culture groups, but how they are everyday. Not with a stamp"	7 Child welfare services adaptations 8 Perceptions and practice 10 Contradictions
"Yes, they have difference [between ethnic minority families and Norwegian families] because of the culture. They have traditions than the Norwegian and other have traditions, so it could be different. And how do they live here in Norway. And what they have been through in the other countries, that have war or different kinds of religion. Yes, they are different. And the way they <i>oppdrag</i> or do parenthood, it should be different. Yes. But the principles, the most are the same. Wherever you come from, the principles are the same. I do believe in that, so that is why I don't have groups of people"	8 Perceptions and practice 10 Contradictions (emphasis on sameness rather than difference)
"I believe the values are the same. I believe so. The differences I've experienced in other countries and the problems are almost the same. But the values are the same. So just, when you get knowing to the people [once you get to know the people], if you will be blind with the problems people have with raising the child, I don't think it's really culture. We will be a little bit blind and say, it's culture, that is why they do that, but we go deeper, we can see the values, and the values – I believe	10 Contradictions (Wikan – Norwegian anthropologist) 20 Cross-cultural understanding

– are almost the same in all human kind... But these <i>som</i> are <i>ikke</i> the same values, that is not because they are Norwegian, or they from Africa, Kenya, or if they are from Colombia, but because they have different values. But not because of culture. That's what I believe"	
[Adaptations in parenting] "Some people try to do different things. Because Norway, we may say that, it is an advanced country – can we say that? I don't mean that it is right or wrong, but it's how we developed. So maybe some families from other countries want to learn a little bit about Norwegian way, how do they raise children. And they live here, it's a little bit different, because culture is also environment. So are things that you must do in Norway, and you don't in other countries, because of the environment. And you belong to society, so you almost – <i>nødvendig</i> – you must [it is necessary] do the same as the other ones. So that's maybe why they learn to do the same with their children as the Norwegian because they live here. Because I believe if Norwegian people, if they lived in another country, maybe they learn with families in those countries. So it's like an exchange"	1 Participatory parity (necessity of adaptation) 4 Parent adaptation familial life 10 Contradictions
[Anything child welfare services does differently or take into consideration when working with these families] "Yes, it is a bit different. We are seventy people here, so different points of view. There are people, maybe, will be a little bit blind of culture and they want to say – no, it's culture, so they must do as we Norwegian and other ones who say we must respect their culture, so that is why we must do different. So it will be different ways of working, all of us. And other people try to have a balance between respecting the culture of the other ones, and maybe you can learn about Norwegian parenthood, so maybe it is the best for your children. So it's a little, different people work with different ways. But I believe here in Drammen, most are open mind, try to do open mind, because we have a lot of people from other countries. So it opens our mind to understand the other cultures. I believe so. Also, some of us who work here, they are, I don't know how many of us who are from other <i>land</i> [countries] and can have this discussion with the others to help and see other points of view, and also respect. But it's a little up to <i>hver for seg</i> each one to understand or to respect the others"	1 Participatory parity – child welfare 7 Adaptations child welfare services 8 Perceptions and practice 11 Individual impact 12 Knowledge hierarchy 17 An open mind 20 Cross-cultural understanding
[Having colleagues from different places helpful in doing work] "It is a little more color. And we can – it's both ways. For me, I'm not a Norwegian, I can learn with them why do they do what they do. And also, the other way. That they can hear from me or the other colleagues that come from other countries. So it is very rich that can have the best from different countries, not the worst, but the best from several countries"	20 Cross-cultural understanding

<p>“I try to understand and see the people who are in front of me and try to respect them and see the body language, and if I see that they are uncomfortable – maybe because I know in my mind that I didn’t realize – I try to ask them and try to understand them. If they no defense but it is my culture, I try to understand. Will you be kind and [try to help] me understand what is going on? But I believe that I’ve been long in my country with my culture, so it’s <i>veldig påvirket</i> [very influenced] of what is going on the TV and what is going on, so we have those ideas. So I used to ask myself – but not always I can – he’s a Muslim, he’s a bad guy? No. And if I have in my mind and it is not clear [in the subconscious], if I see that they’re uncomfortable; okay, can you tell me what is going on? Can you tell me did I not understand or respect? So that’s why. But we have sometimes deep in our heads, the bad ideas, bad thoughts about people [subconscious bias influenced by the media]”</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity – child welfare</p> <p>7 Adaptations of child welfare services</p> <p>8 Perceptions and practice</p> <p>11 Individual impact</p> <p>20 Cross-cultural understanding</p>
<p>[Use of translators] “It’s not the best. It is hard, so that is why some talk about body language; it is very, very important. You see, you understand much. But it is not the same. Sometimes we want to go deep in your feelings, in your principles and your values and it is not so easy to understand each other. But when we use translators. But when we can [speak] the same language and even if it’s not that clear, we can understand, because it is close communication. It’s not our mother language, but if there’s a translator in the room, it will be not so deep. Especially when I work as a family <i>veileder</i> – it’s a kind of family counselor – so you go deep and sometimes go deep in an interview or conversation and if there’s a translator in the same room it is not the same. It is very, very hard. And sometimes they [translators] do not have the knowledge to translate all of the details that we need to understand. So, yes. But it is better than nothing”</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity – child welfare</p>
<p>“We here in Drammen, we try to have meetings with the different communities so they know what we are doing here because, yes, some people are afraid of what is going on with <i>barnevernet</i> because they take the children and so on, so it is a process we do here to have meetings with the different culture communities so they can ask us and they can have the information. Yes, we know that there are many things we must do, but we did start that process and it is really good process that we start so that people can see that we are not so bad. But we do that with the different communities in Drammen and it is very, very important that they see our faces and they can ask questions, so if they come here they won’t be terrified”</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity – child welfare</p> <p>7 Adaptations child welfare services</p> <p>9 Dialogue</p> <p>19 Fear & myths</p> <p>20 Cross-cultural understanding</p> <p>24 Lack of information</p>

<p>[Myths or rumors] “Maybe because some of them have been in situations that were not clear or they were not satisfied. Because it is our job. It is hard for families to understand why and what are we doing. Yes. And the bad news goes faster than the good news. That’s why we want to do those meetings. But not that we change our way of working. And there are so many people that come here and when it is the end of the process, they are satisfied, they think there was a good job, that we did work with them. Not for them, but with them. It’s changing. I believe that it is changing. I see in my experience, nice faces, smiling faces after a while. But I can understand that to some people it is hard. A father or a mother, when we say “you are not able to take care of your children” – it is not easy to accept that. So I understand that. But it is our job to work with them and to help them see that I cannot, so no one help me in the situation, but it is our job. But I do believe that we are changing that, I do”</p>	<p>9 Dialogue</p> <p>14 Feelings around child welfare services</p> <p>19 Fear & myths</p> <p>24 Lack of information</p>
<p>“Respect. Okay, there are a lot of things. But respect, I think it is the best word, or one of the best words. And here what they say. It is in the respect. Respect is hear what you say, so it is one part of this”</p>	<p>20 Cross-cultural understanding</p>
<p>“We must go sometimes go to the <i>grunn</i>, what’s the main job or why we do that job. Because of the Convention [on the Rights of the Child]. There is a law and the Convention. And so when sometimes we miss why we do, we must come to the principles of the Convention and the Norwegian <i>barne lov</i>, <i>barnevern lov</i>. We can’t miss that way of working”</p>	<p>14 Feelings around child welfare services</p> <p>24 Lack of information (in response to going back to the law)</p>
<p>“The most impact that we develop, those who work here, they don’t become closed with other cultures. That we open our minds. This is one of the important things. And respect each other. But it doesn’t matter the culture, because it can be Norwegian people. We must have respect. So it is open your mind, but keep the Convention in your mind, keep the law in your mind, and hear what the people say. Because we have a lot to learn with them. So I think that is one of the most important things... Try to learn everyday about the others and about yourself; yes, that is very important. Keep your mind open, but what is in yourself? Why do you become irritated with whatever; what is in the other culture that you don’t understand? Try to be curious. It is very important to be curious, to understand. Try to be clear when you say okay, but it is the best for your child. Why is it the best for your child?... So try to have a conversation that we understand together what is the best to the children”</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity – child welfare</p> <p>11 Individual impact</p> <p>17 An open mind</p> <p>20 Cross-cultural understanding</p>

Practitioner 2 Summary:

- Practitioner 2 emphasizes the sameness of individuals and the importance of approaching others with respect and an open mind. She brings a more cosmopolitan

perspective into the picture, emphasizing shared principles and values; the individual is emphasized where groups and culture are downplayed, as in, culture is seen as important, but not a reason for determining behavior.

PRACTITIONER 3	
Data extract	Coded for
<p>"I'm also an immigrant myself and you see that the way that I perceive parenting is also from my background too. And, it's like you said, the way I'm thinking is not like it is here [in Norway] before most cultures – mine included – are more collective, so it is not just mom and dad as parents, not just two people who are responsible for the child, it is all the aunts, uncles, and every other person, but here it is just the mom and dad... So it is different, it is different really in terms of who does what"</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity</p> <p>8 Perceptions and practice</p> <p>22 Collectivism</p>
<p>"I, for one, I see – and again because of my background – I see that what it terms of expectations, there are lots of expectations like how much a child should do at home as opposed to how much a parent should do, right? Who is responsible for that. Me as a child, I had responsibility for picking up the younger ones at school, the kindergarten, you know, all of the time. But here, I mean, it is not really a child's duty, it's a parental duty to try and pick up the child... so that there is a clear cut – how do I put it – roles here for what a child does as opposed to what a parent should do. So that is different. And for me, working where I do today, I see that and it is very clear really. There are different ways of bringing up a child, depending on where you come from"</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity (normative Norwegian framework; roles of parents versus children)</p> <p>20 Cross-cultural understanding</p>
<p>[Tensions in values] "There are lots of values – I wouldn't really say 'Norwegian values' – but more like, a thing as in rights of the child; how much do we have to listen to a child really. Because here, because of where I work too, everything a child says, we have to listen to a child first, you know. But again, if you come from somewhere else, there is so much disagreement as to what a child tells and sees – how much credibility one has to attach to things like that really. So there is a huge difference. But here we have the child's rights that is like, top most, so what the child says comes first and then we consider other things too. But, you know, when you belong to a collective society, it is not really the child who decides that much, it's really more mommy and daddy and everyone else, except the child so when you from that to this, it is a bit confusing for lots of kids really. That is my opinion"</p>	<p>13 Listening to the child</p> <p>22 Collectivism</p>

<p>“The immigrant families, when they come here they are facing a lot of problems really. First there is the employment market, and then there is this fear for the child protective services really – you know, people are really afraid of us before they come to us really. But actually, I’ve been here for two and a half years now, and I’ve seen that with time people actually come to understand what we are trying to get them to understand with parenting... Like I said, people know or they’ve heard a lot about us and they come here very scared. So that much of the time you spend, like trying to make them understand, to calm down, to that level where you can actually work and interact properly with them without being, how do I put it? Without being very, uh, trying to dominate over them, because if you like at it there, the parents know their children better than we do, yeah? But when we get to a mutual understanding and we try to make a change – and like I said that the cases I have, some of the cases, I’ve actually seen that when you start they’re not too sure, and there is so much skepticism, but with time they kind of understand that okay, this is what you’ve been trying to make me understand because, like, what I tell the families, especially the parents is that what we have back home, it is collectivism – or whatever – works very fine there, but here when the child grows up here with that kind of attitude or orientation it might cause problems. So that is what I talk about. That is what I preach really when I have a parent who, like immigrant families because the point is not to change to accept Norwegian values, but to make small changes to that the kids who grow up here can function in society. Because you can’t think collectivism if you want to live here. So that is what I try to talk about when I talk to the parents”</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity</p> <p>19 Fear & myths</p> <p>22 Collectivism</p> <p>26 Maldistribution</p>
<p>“Here we’ve actually been lots to the introduction center where they have, I know my colleagues have been there to hold some kind of lectures about how we work and what we do... We’ve [also] had small groups here where we hold lectures for them, and we’ve also been there too to give lectures to talk to them about what we do... We’re trying to reach out. But the media is also there. But again, we have lots of success stories really”</p>	<p>7 Adaptations child welfare</p> <p>9 Dialogue</p> <p>24 Lack of information</p>
<p>“But you know, there is so much fear, people are skeptic before they come, and people are angry. People come here, you come here because someone doesn’t, or thinks of you as a very bad parent. So you come prepared to convince them. But sometimes it’s not really the case, you know. Just can be some kind of misunderstanding. And most of the times, when we start talking we kind of understand, okay, yeah, it is just a misunderstanding really”</p>	<p>19 Fear & myths</p>
<p>“The media is also responsible here [for myths and rumors]. Because it is only when – like from my own experience really –</p>	<p>9 Dialogue</p>

<p>it is only when there is something negative when you have a lot of people coming up and writing and telling stories really. What they don't – there is so much focus on the negative, people's negative experiences – and that is what sells, anyway. But those positive stories, we don't get to hear of them really. And we can't because of the nature of the job, we have to be very confidential with people's privacy here, so we can't go out and be talking about things that we know... I think that there are people – as in we, social workers, who work in the system – who have come out and actually started talking about what we've seen. And we are just human beings really, you know, so I think we should start coming out and talking more about how we experience families, and how the media stories and the negativism, what it also does to people who apply for jobs here, who want to work here, who work in the services. So we should come out and talk more about it"</p>	<p>14 Feelings around child welfare services</p> <p>19 Fear & myths</p>
<p>"Like I said, we try to go and talk to minority groups. So we go out and talk to them and we invite them here and hold lectures for them really. And I've also heard from a couple of the families that I've followed up with over the years, where they came, before I got them they came in very, very skeptical, and at the end even, it's not as bad as I thought it was, really. It's not that bad really... And it got me thinking, what did you really hear about us?"</p>	<p>7 Adaptations child welfare services</p> <p>9 Dialogue</p> <p>19 Fear & myths</p>
<p>"There was one mom that told me that, you know, when she goes into the door there and people see her and start thinking "oh, they are going to take your kid very soon" you know, like all that. Well at the end of the day, we didn't do that. And it kind of made her realize that we do more than taking the child, which is the general belief of many people really. So we do other things. We actually give counseling, we help with other small things too, like trying to find the right body, or person, or organization to help them, you know, depending on the kind of problem. So we do more than taking custody of people's children really. But it is just that, when people come in and are afraid already, then you just know, you have to be very patient and you have to spend up to like a year trying to convince them before they actually see that we all want the same thing. We want what is best for the child – you want what is best for the child and so do I"</p>	<p>14 Feelings around child welfare services</p> <p>19 Fear & myths</p>
<p>"I know that it is tough to be an immigrant in Norway, and especially for those immigrants who had a lot, who've kind of lost what they have back home and just came here like that, really. I didn't go through that, so I don't know it is, but I've heard; and I've also seen that it is very challenging really. So that when they come in here, and again, I think that maybe this is someone that ought to be at work, but it actually struggling to get a job, and maybe someone with kids too who really don't</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity</p> <p>7 Adaptations child welfare services</p> <p>8 Perceptions and practice</p>

<p>have enough, they can't really participate in other kinds of activities just because of the economic situation, other things.</p> <p>And then the language – and like – maybe the other things, like perhaps you would have been able to, or she would have been able to express herself better if she spoke better Norwegian or good English, you know.</p> <p>Even with a translator, we use translators too, but again, there is something, you miss something a lot really when things are translated because we talk for like an hour and sometimes you don't really get the whole picture really. But it is good to use a translator, but it is just that sometimes I feel like you miss some other small things really, because when you translate it, you might not be in the same way that it's been told... You lose the essence there. But you know, I consider that.</p> <p>I also consider the fact that they think because I sit here that I know it all, or already judge them as not being good parents, or like that, you know, so there are other things that I am also thinking about.</p> <p>I'm also thinking about their background too. That maybe if they come from societies where it is accepted to maybe hit the child, because – not because you want to hurt the child, but because you're trying to raise them some kind of corrective, a corrective function – if they come from that kind of society and maybe they do the same thing to their child really, and I'm thinking maybe they're doing the same thing that has been done to them...</p> <p>So I think that it is very challenging because there are lots of things to consider really... And again, I'm thinking that if people are afraid of you, or afraid of the system, so that they try to maybe withhold information, which I think is normal too – you don't go opening up to people you don't know, you don't know what the information may be used for later. But with time, you open up"</p>	<p>12 Knowledge hierarchy</p> <p>19 Fear & myths</p> <p>20 Cross-cultural understanding</p> <p>26 Maldistribution</p>
<p>"I think if we understand that not everyone who lives here is Norwegian because with other cultures can also function in this society and can actually raise their kids up here too. But the challenge remains that we, as social workers, also have to try to understand that even if it is not Norwegian, or as long as they don't do the same as we do, doesn't mean it is wrong. Not everyone sits at the table when they eat. Some people sit on the ground when they eat; some people prefer to sit on the ground when they eat. Some people, it is not very common to show affection for the child in other ways, but here it is shown</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity</p> <p>12 Knowledge hierarchy</p> <p>20 Cross-cultural understanding</p> <p>22 Collectivism</p>

<p>in another way – but you know, I think we have to try to accept the difference really, and then, there will always be difference really. But again, like I said, because we – you know, like I told you earlier – to function in the society, there are some certain things that the kids, as in our kids really, the immigrant family kids who don’t – I feel like they have to – when the parents know how to help the kids to be able to function in society, it will be very, very good for them later on because it is not like the same society that the parents grew up in. It is a different society that is very demanding. It is who you are, it is you – it is very individualistic. So it is not collective, so you don’t go around depending or waiting for people; you have to set your own boundaries. You have to try out things – you have to be independent really. That is that it is. But it is not like that in other societies where, the setting is mom and dad who, you know, and then later on they let you go; here it starts much more earlier, you are free to go around, even as a child. Whereas other cultures, you know, they carry the baby until they are like ten months old. They are rarely on the floor. But it is not because they can’t crawl, but just because you have to carry them, you still see them as a baby. But here, ten months already they are expected to follow this, and to do that, do that. So it is – for me it is very interesting to see the difference because of my background. I’m like yeah, but those kids that weren’t able to crawl at ten months and all that – they are still doing fine. It is just a matter of what culture, or society you belong to really”</p>	
<p>“Some of the families are parents we have here... really, usually they prefer not to have translators. They would rather try to speak Norwegian themselves. But sometimes you use the telephone translator which works very well. We understand that it is a very, very small community. And then when people come in here and we talk about all that, they don’t like for others to know what has been discussed here really, which is also understandable. So the telephone translator is what we use most of the time here, and it is because we see that some parents, they prefer that. Others want to try themselves”</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity</p>
<p>“Then the thing with the translator, like I said earlier, you know like you talk for three or four minutes really, and then when it is translated it is just like a short, short sentence. And sometimes you’re like, for me, I’m not really satisfied with the response really. And then sometimes when you say something and then it has been translated in just, like, a sentence and you’re like, did he or she really get everything? But I find out that works really, is that depending on the time, when I have time I try myself, because I notice that most of the parents here who go to the norskkurs or have been, most of them speak actually very good Norwegian really. But it depends on how much one has to do.</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity</p>

When I have less to do, I just sit down and just take time and I make sure they understand why I'm trying to talk about"	
"I think that the fact that I have a job here should also attest [to ways that Child Welfare Services is adapting to be more multicultural friendly] to that, because it just shows that there is starting to be acceptance that others – there are other Norwegians who aren't, I won't say "ethnic" but other cultures really. So that is the reason why I have my job today, because it has become some kind of acceptance for the fact that, yeah, it is starting to become very, very multicultural here in Norway and especially here in Drammen too. And then again, not just me, but several of my colleagues too who have minority backgrounds. And I see that when we talk about cases here too, we try to talk about the cultural differences too. And also when we look for placement homes too, we try to see if there is any way we can match up with the background of the child, really... I think that is very good"	1 Participatory parity – child welfare 7 Adaptations child welfare services 20 Cross-cultural understanding
"What I know is that we can, again, we are bounded by the confidentiality statement that we sign really, so we can't really go out and talk too much about things. But what I would like – what I said before – if we can have an arena where we can kind of have some kind of dialogue with immigrant families, so they can actually see that we are also human beings"	9 Dialogue
"We all want the same thing: we want what is best for the child, really, and then the parents right? And I am here because I represent this body, really, but the parents – whatever job I'm going to do in the family, I have to do in collaboration with them. But when they meet me and they come in and they are already very, very skeptical and afraid, then there is a mismatch really, so then I have to use the time... to try to build the trust... which I think is very understandable because they've heard stories, and they've seen things that make them, or are giving them that kind of conclusion which is normal too"	19 Fear & myths
"Immigrant families, they're facing a lot of challenges really, a lot of challenges. And sometimes, when you tackle one, they you actually, it reflects on the others really. But the way the community is now, the society is now... going to work – as in having a job to go to – that is part of who you are as a person. If you don't have a job, and again, if you have a job too, again the kids or the children will look up to you really... So maybe if people actually, those immigrant families had everything in place – which I know can take years really – if everything was in place and all that, then perhaps one would have avoided the whole of things, really. So going to the source, which I have come to realize is not just economic, there are other things that people have been trailing with problems and haven't gotten help, you know. And knowing when to [get help] is the greatest challenge really"	1 Participatory parity 26 Maldistribution

<p>“But for me here, it is the child that is my main concern, not the parents, but we have to cooperate, we have to do whatever we want to do in collaboration with the parents, but the child or children are the main focus here. But if it is a parent who is struggling... I have to... try to help in everything because it is better for them there, it will reflect on the child. So that is the way we think. If the parents are fine, the children will be fine too. So when they’re not okay, when they are tired or frustrated or sick or not being able to – maybe depressed – so the children will always suffer from it. So sometimes it is the source, when we are able to handle or tackle the source, it might help out really what we see in brining up the child”</p>	<p>10 Contradictions - (foreldrevern)</p>
<p>“There is this other thing too, I think is the social network. They have a very limited social network and sometimes, you know, it could just be the key. So that is a challenge... The part with the social network is the greatest difference you find because it is something when you can just call your mom, brother, your auntie to help you pick up your child when you are running late from work, or looking for somewhere where the kids can go for the weekend, for example, you know? Or someone that can just come by and help you do one or two things when you are not feeling fine. So that is a difference”</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity 21 Social network</p>
<p>“The fact that they also have very limited access to information too. They don’t really – all that I think is different, it’s very different for them really”</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity 24 Lack of information</p>
<p>“We have to listen to the child. The child has got to participate in every decision that concerns him or her. So that we have to talk to them. We have to find out what their needs are first, and then discuss with their parents. It is the child who is the main, um, how do you put it – user here. And then, we know that the family is also part of the child’s life, so they also have to function too. So even though the child is our main user, we still have to collaborate with the parents too... So we talk to them [the children] on a regular basis to find out, how they think about their situation really. So we talk to them regularly and we listen to what they have to say before we consult with the parents”</p>	<p>13 Listening to the child</p>
<p>“I think it is something that also runs through what we’ve talked about, is just that they’re [immigrant families are] faced with challenges – not just one, but many challenges really. Which makes them at-risk, it places them at-risk, not just the kids, but the parents too... If they’ve been through lots of struggles already, we don’t know where they are coming from, what they’ve been through – if they have some kind of traumas and all of that – it can be very challenging to work with them. And then coupled with the fact that there is no trust... Trust is an important factor here, because when working with them, immigrant families – trust – because everyone knows someone</p>	<p>1 Participatory parity</p>

who knows someone that has – if you put it like that – had their kid taken really. But you just have to build trust really”	
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Practitioner 3 Summary:

- Practitioner 3 discusses the role of the media in spreading myths, rumors, and fear of child welfare services. She emphasizes trust as an important factor to develop to begin working with ethnic minority families and that ethnic minority families are faced with many challenges and barriers including economy and language, among others.

Codes:

1. Participatory parity – child welfare, familial life, within the community
2. Parent adaptation child welfare
3. Integration of culture in familial life
4. Parent adaptation familial life
5. Parent adaptation within the community
6. Perceptions of Norwegian parenting culture affect adaptations and actions within the community?
7. Adaptations Child Welfare Services – practitioner day-to-day adaptations
8. Perceptions of ethnic minorities affect they way they practice?
9. Dialogue
10. Contradictions
11. Individual impact – not just structural factors
12. Knowledge hierarchy
13. Listening to the child
14. Feelings around child welfare services
15. Uniformity in the child welfare system
16. Objectivity – or lack of
17. An open mind
18. Intersecting identities
19. Fear & myths
20. Cross-cultural understanding
21. Social network
22. Collectivism
23. Lack of accountability for child welfare services’ actions
24. Lack of information
25. Being watched
26. Maldistribution

Annex 6: Searching for Themes

1 Participatory parity – child welfare, familial	PARENT 1: “If you come from a different place and suddenly you are cut off from everything you have known, everything you have grown-up with, you are going to be a misfit – you know – you are going to end up like the bird, the bat, which in my culture
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<p>life, within the community</p>	<p>we say is neither a bird or another animal which belongs neither here nor there, but it is kind of in-between. So you to get something new from your new environment or culture, you need to something new, but it is not possible or realistic to be cut off from everything that has made you what you are and take up new things. So yes, it is important to bring something into your home, and eventually with time there will be a new hybrid system, you know, from your home and your new place. But it takes time. It shouldn't be forced, it will come naturally. It comes from your home and your new place, as long as your practices are safe, it's legal, and it does not contradict common sense"</p> <p>"I would say most parents have the best interest of their child at heart. So I say this because a friend of mine was in Bergen, I think, someone experienced with two children and tried to get them in the bus, but one of the children was crying on the floor and she was telling the child "we have to go now, I'm begging" and the child refused, he wanted something, I don't know what. So at that point, she was desperate and just pulled the child into the bus while the child was protesting. And this Norwegian woman just saw her and rushed towards her to give some instructions and guidance on her child, and she got angry and told her to get lost. Because people sometimes, they interject into your problems and they tell you how to live your life and give you instructions because they think you don't have it, you don't know what to do. <i>It's where you're coming from. They think you've got it backward, you need to be instructed, or civilized so to say"</i></p> <p>"They already mind up their mind on what they believe in their research, so they... started with a theory and then tried to fix their hypothesis, so this will happen. If you are brought up in this system and somebody like <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] wouldn't do any better than this narrow-minded, stereotypical way of doing things. <i>And somehow, they might claim that it is justified because it is for a good cause – protecting children – so that makes it justified.</i> But to me, there is no difference of who is at <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] – who does not think broadly, just rushes to this conclusion because of their mindset and ends up putting an innocent man in trouble, cutting them off from their children and just putting them in jail – there is no difference between that and a hard core racist from the deep south of the United States who decides to put a black guy in jail for talking to a white girl in the 60s or something like that and then manipulates some things to put them in jail. You know, there is no difference. One is hateful, <i>the other one is over zealous to help children, so to say, and starts to ignore common sense"</i></p> <p>"Before you can understand culture and appreciate culture, you have to get off your moral high horse. You have to stop thinking I'm the best, the civilized, and everyone coming in, you know, here needs to be civilized. You need to get off that. If you don't do that, there is no way of understanding; you are only going to condemn other cultures, telling them what they are doing is wrong. There is no perfect culture, there is no perfect system. I've always learned from other cultures, use common sense to find, you know, what is good, what is bad in a place. They can learn from cultures, they can learn from other systems. If you don't understand a people, a culture, you get in there and you think something is wrong with them when nothing is wrong"</p>
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"The whole system seems to be like a corrupt system. And what is the reason? A lot of things are there – stereotypes are there, people not just being 'switched on', not being competent enough in the system, in the eyes in the land of the blind – we have a saying, a common saying in Nigeria, which I think is worldwide, "in the land of the blind, a one-eyed man is king"... They are thinking in just one straight, narrow way"

"Well, they have this gender equality in Norway, for goodness sake, that means if they hear other countries in Africa their women end up being harassed by the system, like men are by *barnevernet* in Norway. I'm not saying it is intentional, but yes. The men are the victims in a way of this incompetent system. So, if there was a country somewhere where women get at the wrong end of the stick of an incompetent system, Norway as a country would be out having outreaches, NGOs to help those women, you know. So the mystery of gender equality in Norway, what do they do? Don't they hear the stories? Don't they read? Do they think it's sufficient, it's okay, because men who are immigrants get more, the rough end of the deal. So that's why I think, I believe it, and I say it clearly, this country is full of hypocrisy"

"In Norway, information is hidden actually in general, so if you don't know where to ask, how to ask, you might miss some information that you need to get things done. But *barnevernet*, they should be obliged to provide clear, precise information about what is happening, state what is going on, and so on and so forth. Which I don't think they are doing, at least from my experience"

"They shouldn't put someone who is not qualified on the case. If they do that, they should simply ask for help, and put someone new because it is a serious business. Seriously, they should invest every possible time and resource on that... They shouldn't just take up cases that they couldn't handle, couldn't understand. And they should come with an open mind when they do this"

PARENT 2:

"I feel a little more stressed here [in Norway] with the system control, because I know, I heard a lot about this *barnevern* child support from Russia because they had some TV shows and I've heard some stories from my immigrant friends here, but most of the stories end up good, so it was just – but anyway, I would be really stressed, with checking, for example, I wouldn't like, because of all these stories. And since I know a little how it works, I feel that I'm watched around from society, and that is a little stressful too. I put my boy in the car seat and he is complaining because he wants to go to the playground and I just brought him from there, and shouting and kicking of course and I still try to lock the belt and people around almost look inside to see what I am doing with my child. What can I do? It's just, so, that is a bit stressful. Because you never know who will complain and who will see your reason. I believe that they have nothing to suspect, but who knows, people are different and they can have different opinions, because of this and that is stressful"

"I feel a fear, but that is the way I saw this, for example, in Russia there was a couple of TV shows about *barnevernet* with these horrible pictures of how they pick up the child and children screaming and mothers crying, so it is quite stressful pictures, and that is the picture which stuck in my head. So I actually

	<p>was afraid of moving here. I saw these nightmares before the flight even, that they will pick up my child almost when I just leave the airport. It was horrible.</p> <p>But, my husband truly believes that nothing bad can ever happen because they are just doing their job and they are meant to be, to support actually, families to help families. So, for two years here I communicate with a lot of parents who had experience, because I did not have any experience with <i>barnevernet</i> myself, but I heard some stories from people who did. And, uh, it makes me a little more calm because some stories – some stories are scary and they might be a mistake, you never know because you don’t know the second part, but it is scary – but most of the stories in some way they even helped a lot. That was they are meant to do”</p> <p>“I still have this uncomfortable feeling about <i>barnevernet</i>. But people say it, more and more often I hear on international forums that some people actually recommend to do so [going to child welfare services with familial problems]... At least this advice, I heard, not from my situation, but for others I’ve read on forums, and that makes me a little more calm also. That it is not only this scary picture, that it has another side and that it is actually meant to be a support and that you can get support there”</p> <p>“An immigrant family are from the start under bigger suspicion than Norwegian families. They give more attention to immigrants. And that probably because of, probably we have common propaganda, you know. In Russia, they show these horrible pictures about <i>barnevernet</i> that just picks up kids but here in the news I can read that Russia reduced penalty for home violence, of course it is common impression of each other. And since they read this huge article that Russia doesn’t punish for home violence and with some scary numbers, they can think that home violence is normal in Russian families, right? They should check them more careful then since they live in Norway and raise kids here. So, yeah, they [immigrant families] have more attention, as I have heard”</p> <p>“The mentality and cultural traditions are different from country to country. And, um, it is not always meant in violence, it can be just different traditions. For example, in Russia, it is more respect to adults. And, for example, my parents would expect that from their grandson, you know. And it doesn’t mean that it is bad or good, it’s just different. You can’t expect everyone to become Norwegian suddenly once they cross the border. They still have their background and their traditions. And I know that some families from Africa it is not allowed for kids to look straight in the eyes of adults and it is only with showing respect. So here, it would create problems for them because Norwegians would expect that this kid is abused and that is why this kid cannot look into the eyes. And that would involve <i>barnevernet</i>. And that’s why I think that the people who work in <i>barnevernet</i> should learn this differences. Because it is not always a good enough reason stress a child with picking him up and stress parents and ruin families. If you think about what is better for the child, then follow this route. The Norwegian way is not the only way in the world, they should accept this too”</p> <p>“In Oslo there is one lawyer with Russian background, but she moved here I think when she was in school, so she graduated lawyer here and she works with <i>barnevernet</i> cases and she makes some seminars for Russian parents and Russian embassy to talk more about the system to calm down, to explain more about how you should react. Because we are, maybe our mentality, more emotional than Norwegians and when somebody blames you with something wrong and</p>
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you know that you did not do so, Russians can react very emotional, like “how dare you, I would never do so to my child” and that is not normal reaction in Norway and that would create even more problems with in working authority. Because, you know, in Russia it is okay, everyone would understand, but here most likely they will not because they do not get used to such reactions”

PARENT 3:

[Being a good parent in Norway] “Have to be careful of the law. Must understand and follow the law. The law is very strict. Not every immigrant understands what the law says. Many do not have knowledge about they law – they cannot read, they lack information. They get general information in the reception centers, but Norwegian norms are not described intensively”

[Changes in parenting since arriving in Norway] “I have to also follow the system here – in perception and practice. I have to understand the laws – and what is right and wrong according to the law. There is no negotiation here. I have changed and have to compromise many things”

“Practices [in parenting] have also changed. Some are positive and some are not positive. For example, in our culture we are a group oriented society. Family is very important. Parents have a special position, they have to be respected. Families deserve respect. The hierarchy is different. Usually, children are not allowed to criticize families, for example... Here they have to change, have to listen to children. Here, there is two-way communication. Communicating with the child is something good. But also, the negative thing is that children have unlimited rights in Norway so that immigrant families get scared from the laws – because they are immigrants and if they do something they might be targeted from *barnevernet*. There is extreme fear from *barnevernet* – it could be real or imaginary, but almost every family shares this perception. This might also affect the relationship between children and their families because the parents know their child is not behaving in a proper way, but they are afraid to correct them. The *barnevernet* listens to the child and takes the child without any hesitation... Child are perceived as never lying. True, but in what context... Children might lie to get what they want. Families are very afraid of *barnevernet*. They feel that their children will be taken one day. The school, the kindergarten, they follow the children very well. They ask for details for what has happened and construct – almost a form of espionage”

“When I talk to my child, I must first check what the law says. I must check and behave according to the values here in Norway. In many ways the principles in *barnevernet* in theory are good, but in practice they can target different communities. It is very institutionalized” AND DISPROPTIONALITY

“Maybe because we are immigrants – and in addition, I am a Muslim – so I have to be extra careful because I might be an easy target. There is a general perception that immigrants mistreat their children and bring their cultures. In some cases, it could be true, but not all of them”

“Norway is not a multicultural country yet – it is a multicultural country in the making. Here it is a homogenous society in perception. They have the perception of one culture and you have to in some way assimilate. Other cultures are not yet seen as developed”

"I know also some families who have lost their children because they don't have access to the information – what is right and what is wrong. It could be their ignorance to the law, their background – because there is no warning... In some cases, of course you have to intervene. But in some cases, you have to give warning to some families. Warning is very important... Parents who come from war areas might need warning and help, not just getting their kids taken away. Many families do not know the consequences of their behavior, especially those who have a difficult background – illiterate, for example. Some of these families have lost their children because they don't understand the consequences. The system here is not doing so much in informing those people in a very detailed way. Educating parents – not late, but early. Telling them immediately when they come to Norway. They do not understand just once, need in a repetitive way. People do not understand the details of the law"

"Most of the information that you get [about Child Welfare Services] from people on the outside, that are traumatized by this system. People talk to each other about stories that *barnevernet* has taken their children. I had to check on my own and see that *barnevernet* also helps. They can help and intervene, not only take away. How many immigrants understand this positive part of *barnevernet*? They have the impression that they take away kids, and are traumatized"

"I think the Norwegian government should invest on a project to tell, educate, and inform families more. Not only once, but must contribute more. They have to map also why people behave in the way that they are behaving – people think what they are doing is right. The system must talk to them that the values are different... So they have to invest more – especially on people who need that information. Illiterate people, for example, information should be given to them with a translator"

"*Barnevernet* is missing this point [taking culture into account] totally. Those working in *barnevernet* and kindergartens – I don't know how many of them understand multicultural theories. How many working in *barnevernet* are aware of difference in other cultures? I think that *barnevernet* – what they should do is have rules, regulations, and they have the extra power to interpret articles as they wish. What does it mean that children should be protected? They follow these rules. But in these rules, people should understand cultural nuances. These nuances cannot be put into the rules, because they have these regulations and there would be contradictions. But in some situations that are not very serious, cultural nuances should be considered"

"I have a friend who was a single father with children. He was going to school, he was a student. The money from working and going to school was not enough to care for the children in terms of activities. So he had no money, and he went to *barnevernet* and said he did not have enough money to cover the activities and they have taken his case and have helped him. They have many activities helping single mom or single dad or have economic problems... The problem is that problem have this negative image and even if they need help they don't talk to *barnevernet* because it is perceived as something dangerous, because maybe they will create a case and take my kids. Not everything *barnevernet* does is bad, but with immigrants – people who have come from war – here, *barnevernet* is unfair and does not consider their situation. They cannot group together people

who are university graduates and people who are illiterate and treat them the same”

“Here in Norway, people tell you that in Norway, we do it this way. It means that it is an assimilative system, even though in the regulation they take care of different cultures; but in practice, if you don’t do it the Norwegian way, then you are the loser. It is silent assimilation. Because in nuances, small cultural differences – for example, if you take a child playing football with a hijab or swimming with a burkini or now also the hijab of children at school – some political parties are trying to ban this one. Saying children are being oppressed with hijab, the rhetoric is that this doesn’t belong here. What are we going to do? In institutions, it is assimilative. They have these rules, the rules are being set by those people, they are the majority... If you are assimilated, you have more opportunities. If a woman takes off her hajib, people will applause and think she is free. Those who keep their own values and cultures don’t have the same support, resources, as those who are assimilated. If you do it the Norwegian way, you will succeed”

PRACTITIONER 1:

“Well, first of all, most immigrant families don’t have a big social network. Right? They are more isolated than your typical Norwegian family. Norwegians, we don’t move, migrate as much. So you know, we – I mean my family is a great example, except for me whose been everywhere – but my kind of core family and extended family, we have all grown up in just three towns around here. And so, the migration hasn’t happened for Norwegians. So they [Norwegians] usually have a bigger social network that they can rely on and tap into for help when things get difficult, while an immigrant family won’t have that and they are usually connected with other immigrant families who are also struggling, sort of with the same thing of lack of a social network to kind of be their safety net. So of course that impacts things”

“Then you have, obviously, the language. The language barrier is huge. Some of our new immigrants are actually quite well educated and have a lot give and offer, but because of the language thing, and because of just the overall sort of stigmatism that exists in our society, it’s hard for them to actually realize and get a chance to realize their potential in what they have, compared to what they’ve done before, and I think sometimes that will cause an issue – just a stress factor, you know”

“Economic factors, you know, the different in the financial aspect would – usually – between the ethnic Norwegian family and an immigrant family is huge. And we all know that economic stress impacts a family and how they end up treating their children, how they are able to meet their children’s needs”

“Here you have a Norwegian family – stable finances, they know the language, they know where they belong, they have a huge social network, they have a stability, they don’t have the exposure to all of the traumas – and then here you have an immigrant family that lacks access to jobs, financial issues, lots of traumas, no social network. I mean, they don’t even have the initial same starting points really. No. And I think that’s what makes it extra hard when we encounter these families because the expectations are set on the average, the norm, right? Which is the Norwegian family. And then all the sort of things that we expect to

	<p>see – but with an immigrant family, we really cannot expect to see the same and expect them to meet the same level when they enter our door, because the starting points are completely different”</p> <p>“It’s hard because when you meet with an immigrant family, most of the time you have to have an interpreter – unless the family knows, speaks English. But even with that... child protective services uses so much professional language And it’s professional language in a way that’s – it’s kind of like a present that you wrap and pack it in with lots of packing so it won’t break – and what we do is that we use our professional language to pack in things and so that happens even like our words in what we try to convey, so then I think that how we speak and how we present things it gets lost – literally lost – in the translation. And then, you know, some of that happens back”</p> <p>“Some of the things that are said by the immigrant family to us – unless you actually have sort of the background or specific knowledge of, just culturally, the cultural part – you could lose so much when you make your interpretation. Because in child welfare work, it’s not black and white, it’s just shades of gray that we work in, so it is really on the individual to sort of use their common sense in their interpretation of what’s being said to them. But then, if you’re lacking the cultural context which things are presented or said, you could lose a lot and quite significant – for both good and bad”</p> <p>“The Norwegian workers are way – like I said – too kind; we pack in our words professionally and we try to give advice, but it’s all so packed in that the meaning gets lost. And then we have expectations of them to meet our expectations, but they didn’t really get the expectations to begin with because we use such high professional language and packed it in – and then, through an interpreter. So it’s sort of like the system is sort of bound to fail these families in some ways. And because we miss that cultural context part, when some of the things are said we could react very negatively, because we’re looking at this through our own lenses of being ethnic Norwegians and this is how I grew up, this is what was expected of me, this is how a family works, you know, but you can’t do that when you work with these families because they didn’t grow up like you, they didn’t have the same start, the same context as when you do things. And then when you add up not being direct enough, it’s not good”</p> <p>“I think our laws and regulations in Norway are old – they don’t fit the families of today, the problems that we see today and they certainly do not fit other cultures and other contexts, other than the ethnic Norwegian. I think we need a whole revamp of our laws, our regulations, even how the system functions in these families”</p> <p>“I try to figure out, okay, where is it that they’re from? And once I know kind of the country or the area, I will – if I don’t know it already – try to figure out the basics of it because I know that there is going to be things that I’m going to miss if I don’t. It’s just inevitable.</p> <p>I had a colleague who – I mean, it’s just even as basic as this – I had a colleague once make a comment that he did a home visit and during his home visit, he just thought that house was kind of disgusting. But when he described the disgusting, it wasn’t that the house was unclean or unkept or anything, but to him it had a very strong, pungent smell. But when you actually started asking him questions –</p>
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and, well, what was the smell? I mean, this was an ethnic minority family, and basically, this was a family that comes from somewhere where in their cooking, versus ours, they use a lot of garlic, they use a lot of spices, and they also come from an area that because of their skin and haircuts and everything, they don't wash maybe every single day. Because where we want to wash it out, they want to wash the oil in. So it just becomes a difference, but you have to have the understanding that, okay, well, yeah this house wasn't unkept, it wasn't unclean, it wasn't disgusting. Yeah, it smelt different than what we are used to, but that doesn't mean that was really an issue"

"As far as interpretation goes – that one is so hard because it just depends on who you get [as an interpreter]. When you don't speak the language, it's not that easy for you to do a control check on things. If things get lost, literally lost, in translation – because they do – I just think you have to move at a slower pace with these families and have a lower expectation. Not because you don't think that they can... present a change, but they can't meet that if you're expectations are the same as an ethnic Norwegian because they're not standing on the same foundation. Of course it's going to take a lot more for them. So, you just have to move slow, but that's not easy because we're literally overworked, we have too much, and we have deadlines, and I think that's what I'm saying is the way we do things, the laws and regulations, the whole system actually needs to change to adapt to the families that we actually see today and the problems... So the whole system actually needs to change"

"One thing that they do here which I really like is that we have this Introduction Center where they do Norwegian classes... We go in any new class and we do a half day presentation of Child Welfare Services and what happens. And then we sit down with the different groups, and if they have specific questions for us then they can sit and actually ask there – which I think is a good thing, to try to dispel also the myths the other way, that we're out there searching for children or, you know, going to all the neighbors and everything like that. Try to dispel some of those myths and rumors. So I do like that they at least do that outreach, so maybe they won't be totally scared of us, and the other way around when we meet"

It comes down to how we as individuals meet the families. So, you know, if me and five other colleagues can go out to the Introduction Center, and we can have that, but if... they see more of their children maybe placed in care or feel like they get placed in care, we're not going to be able to bridge that gap that is happening. And, again, sometimes I think also, they always know – immigrant families always know other families, who know other families within their own minority group who have had children removed – and again, there's the different. Their community is so small, while the ethnic Norwegian's community is much larger and then the ethnic Norwegian's are going to be close-lipped about it, while they're not. So it becomes an issue where the myths are able to kind of stay alive" DISPROPORTIONALITY

"When you have to use a translator, it is not just the quality of the translator, but it's also the availability of one. So sometimes our work can see – inconsistent is maybe not the word – but, I think the minority families might feel or experience from their point of view that we will change things a lot on them. But a lot of times those changes come, like changing the meetings, or whatever, come

because we are dependent on a translator. And sometimes, for just a lack of availability of translators. Sometimes having a phone translator isn't optimal or the best, depending on what you're talking about, what you need to convey, because our verbal language is just a small part of who we are. It's the nonverbal clues can give you equal amount of information, and that gets totally lost when you have a translator. And the translator too can translate more wrong if they're not actually present, because then again, they're not tapping into those nonverbal cues. So I think the families can maybe see, experience, or feel a higher level of frustration around our system because we are dependent on translators and sometimes, you know, the translator is sick. Okay, do you go ahead and have the meeting and try to get through it somehow, or do you then cancel it and reschedule to a time where there is an available translator again? And I see how that can be very frustrating from the other side, and, with all those changes too I think grows a misconception also of a minority family on us child welfare workers, you know, that we're constantly changing things and that we want them to fail. Which is actually not the case. Most every I say – nine out of ten people who work in this field – if families could actually just see behind the scenes how much we actually root for them to be able to make the change so they can have a positive and good, healthy relationship with their child, I think they all would be quite shocked. But they don't see that part when the changes come; I think they can look at it as suspicious that those changes happen"

"I've heard so many families now tell me that even when they were in the refugee camps, or wherever they were, that before even coming to Norway how they – once they knew or how they were provided information about how terrible our child welfare system is and how we're just out to get their children and how they have to be scared and how they have to do this, this and not this, this, this, and this. So some work, I think, is outside even the *kommune's* [municipality's] sort of ability – that it actually has to go more on the national level and even go out to those workers who go out into these camps even from the start of their journeys... because if already have that before they even arrive in this county, and then they meets lots of people, you know, because imagine an immigration center. Raising your child in an immigration center, it's not a natural environment to raise your child at all. So in some ways, I think *barnevernet* gets involved a lot, even in the immigration center early on, because the parents from the journey that they come and then they're having to raise and live in an unnatural environment, and then, things can get viewed – I think – a bit wrongly. So then you keep adding on the misconception – so I don't really know what the solution is. I just think it has to be at a higher level than just at the *kommune* level. I think we can do better, more outreach, but I also think that it actually has to come higher and sometimes even before they actually start their journey"

[Things to keep in mind when working with people from other cultures] "An open mind. Yeah, open mind. Don't get stuck in your own perspective. Don't get stuck in your paradigm. And when I say 'open mind', be open that perhaps how you were raised or how you are raising your children isn't necessarily the only way or the best way; that there actually can be other ways that are just as good and just as effective, even if it looks different and perhaps even scary because it is different than you yourself have experienced. So just, you have to have an open mind and not be judgmental. And then you have to just be willing to not quickly judge or make a judgment or decision about a family before you sort of taken the time to also learn those nuances in their culture and their perspective. And you

	<p>know, keep in mind what was their journey, what has happened along the path to come here, what does daily life look like – think about all these other things, like the network, their finances, what are the stress factors, what are the positives”</p> <p>“I think the thing that I – from my perspective – that I find hard navigating for anyone working with families is that when you talk about children’s rights, we should be a lot more coordinated, just as a whole, when it comes to services we offer kids. We’re very much fragmented in where our services for children lie, and there’s no coordination between all those parts. And because that happens, I think sometimes a child misses out that doesn’t have their rights or their needs met because of that fragmentation within the system. So, conceptually, yes on paper, we do a very good job of speaking children’s rights, but I think that somehow gets a little lost in practice because the system isn’t coordinated enough to actually provide the backup for it. And that is one of my biggest frustrations between here and let’s say the US, where the US the child’s protective services is a lot more rules and laws and regulated – and it is here too – but there it is a lot more formalized, while here it is more individualized. So here it is individual, pretty much from <i>kommune</i> to <i>kommune</i>, and you can even find it within [Drammen <i>kommune</i>] because we’re like three different teams here, and how we do things here on my team, they could actually be doing something different, and we’re still the same <i>kommune</i>. But they might be providing the services differently, even though at the get-go we’re tasked to do the same job. But I didn’t see that as much in the US because it’s a lot more formalized down at this level”</p> <p>[Barriers in the child welfare system] “Well of course, one, because they have already these myths are rumors and being scared. They fact that they have to have interpreters, speak through interpreters – that’s a big barrier compared to an ethnic Norwegian family where you don’t have that... Some of these families are families that anything having to do with governmental people is very scary thing for them because of their own experiences of where they come from, so those are barriers”</p> <p>[Barriers in the child welfare system] “One place where we could be helpful – or someone needs to be more helpful with these families – is even what sort of is expected of them in the Norwegian society. So when they send their kids to <i>barnehage</i> or to school, what are some – I mean, who takes the time to teach them what is expected to they don’t end up sort of misguided in a negative connotation with the school or the <i>barnehage</i> because they’re not providing the proper lunchbox according to our tradition and our norms, or the proper winter gear, or how they can overcome their kids attending birthday parties, or extracurricular activities and things like that. I mean, there’s small things, you know, perhaps that someone could positively be like a guidance thing. Definitely some of the things that you have to look at and explore. I’ve seen lots of families that, you know, some of the complaints, concerns come in the form of the lunchboxes and that thing... Everything from the interpretation to expectations. What if you’re from a country where being on time means you’re half an hour late? But that’s a norm for you. But yet, here, that might be counted against you; well, they didn’t show up for their appointment. Well they showed up, but they didn’t show up, they can’t pick up the phone as easily and say, “hey, I need to change” or send you a text message saying, you know, “little Johnny is sick so can</p>
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I reschedule my appointment?”. I mean, those are all barriers – they are simple barriers, but they’re still barriers”

PRACTITIONER 2:

[Anything child welfare services does differently or take into consideration when working with these families] “Yes, it is a bit different. We are seventy people here, so different points of view. There are people, maybe, will be a little bit blind of culture and they want to say – no, it’s culture, so they must do as we Norwegian and other ones who say we must respect their culture, so that is why we must do different. So it will be different ways of working, all of us. And other people try to have a balance between respecting the culture of the other ones, and maybe you can learn about Norwegian parenthood, so maybe it is the best for your children. So it’s a little, different people work with different ways. But I believe here in Drammen, most are open mind, try to do open mind, because we have a lot of people from other countries. So it opens our mind to understand the other cultures. I believe so.

Also, some of us who work here, they are, I don’t know how many of us who are from other *land* [countries] and can have this discussion with the others to help and see other points of view, and also respect. But it’s a little up to *hver for seg* each one to understand or to respect the others”

“I try to understand and see the people who are in front of me and try to respect them and see the body language, and if I see that they are uncomfortable – maybe because I know in my mind that I didn’t realize – I try to ask them and try to understand them. If they no defense but it is my culture, I try to understand. Will you be kind and [try to help] me understand what is going on? But I believe that I’ve been long in my country with my culture, so it’s *veldig påvirket* [very influenced] of what is going on the TV and what is going on, so we have those ideas. So I used to ask myself – but not always I can – he’s a Muslim, he’s a bad guy? No. And if I have in my mind and it is not clear [in the subconscious], if I see that they’re uncomfortable; okay, can you tell me what is going on? Can you tell me did I not understand or respect? So that’s why. But we have sometimes deep in our heads, the bad ideas, bad thoughts about people [subconscious bias influenced by the media]”

[Use of translators] “It’s not the best. It is hard, so that is why some talk about body language; it is very, very important. You see, you understand much. But it is not the same. Sometimes we want to go deep in your feelings, in your principles and your values and it is not so easy to understand each other. But when we use translators. But when we can [speak] the same language and even if it’s not that clear, we can understand, because it is close communication. It’s not our mother language, but if there’s a translator in the room, it will be not so deep. Especially when I work as a family *veileder* – it’s a kind of family counselor – so you go deep and sometimes go deep in an interview or conversation and if there’s a translator in the same room it is not the same. It is very, very hard. And sometimes they [translators] do not have the knowledge to translate all of the details that we need to understand. So, yes. But it is better than nothing”

“We here in Drammen, we try to have meetings with the different communities so they know what we are doing here because, yes, some people are afraid of what is going on with *barnevernet* because they take the children and so on, so it

is a process we do here to have meetings with the different culture communities so they can ask us and they can have the information. Yes, we know that there are many things we must do, but we did start that process and it is really good process that we start so that people can see that we are not so bad. But we do that with the different communities in Drammen and it is very, very important that they see our faces and they can ask questions, so if they come here they won't be terrified"

"The most impact that we develop, those who work here, they don't become closed with other cultures. That we open our minds. This is one of the important things. And respect each other. But it doesn't matter the culture, because it can be Norwegian people. We must have respect. So it is open your mind, but keep the Convention in your mind, keep the law in your mind, and hear what the people say. Because we have a lot to learn with them. So I think that is one of the most important things... Try to learn everyday about the others and about yourself; yes, that is very important. Keep your mind open, but what is n yourself? Why do you become irritated with whatever; what is in the other culture that you don't understand? Try to be curious. It is very important to be curious, to understand. Try to be clear when you say okay, but it is the best for your child. Why is it the best for your child?... So try to have a conversation that we understand together what is the best to the children"

PRACTITIONER 3:

"I'm also an immigrant myself and you see that the way that I perceive parenting is also from my background too. And, it's like you said, the way I'm thinking is not like it is here [in Norway] before most cultures – mine included – are more collective, so it is not just mom and dad as parents, not just two people who are responsible for the child, it is all the aunties, uncles, and every other person, but here it is just the mom and dad... So it is different, it is different really in terms of who does what"

"I, for one, I see – and again because of my background – I see that what it terms of expectations, there are lots of expectations like how much a child should do at home as opposed to how much a parent should do, right? Who is responsible for that. Me as a child, I had responsibility for picking up the younger ones at school, the kindergarten, you know, all of the time. But here, I mean, it is not really a child's duty, it's a parental duty to try and pick up the child... so that there is a clear cut – how do I put it – roles here for what a child does as opposed to what a parent should do. So that is different. And for me, working where I do today, I see that and it is very clear really. There are different ways of bringing up a child, depending on where you come from"

"The immigrant families, when they come here they are facing a lot of problems really. First there is the employment market, and then there is this fear for the child protective services really – you know, people are really afraid of us before they come to us really. But actually, I've been here for two and a half years now, and I've seen that with time people actually come to understand what we are trying to get them to understand with parenting... Like I said, people know or they've heard a lot about us and they come here very scared. So that much of the time you spend, like trying to make them understand, to calm down, to that level where you can actually work and interact properly with them without being, how do I put it? Without being very, uh, trying to dominate over them, because if

you like at it there, the parents know their children better than we do, yeah? But when we get to a mutual understanding and we try to make a change – and like I said that the cases I have, some of the cases, I’ve actually seen that when you start they’re not too sure, and there is so much skepticism, but with time they kind of understand that okay, this is what you’ve been trying to make me understand because, like, what I tell the families, especially the parents is that what we have back home, it is collectivism – or whatever – works very fine there, but here when the child grows up here with that kind of attitude or orientation it might cause problems. So that is what I talk about. That is what I preach really when I have a parent who, like immigrant families because **the point is not to change to accept Norwegian values, but to make small changes to that the kids who grow up here can function in society**. Because you can’t think collectivism if you want to live here. So that is what I try to talk about when I talk to the parents”

“I know that it is tough to be an immigrant in Norway, and especially for those immigrants who had a lot, who’ve kind of lost what they have back home and just came here like that, really. I didn’t go through that, so I don’t know it is, but I’ve heard; and I’ve also seen that it is very challenging really. So that when they come in here, and again, I think that maybe this is someone that ought to be at work, but it actually struggling to get a job, and maybe someone with kids too who really don’t have enough, they can’t really participate in other kinds of activities just because of the economic situation, other things.

And then the language – and like – maybe the other things, like perhaps you would have been able to, or she would have been able to express herself better if she spoke better Norwegian or good English, you know.

Even with a translator, we use translators too, but again, there is something, you miss something a lot really when things are translated because we talk for like an hour and sometimes you don’t really get the whole picture really. But it is good to use a translator, but it is just that sometimes I feel like you miss some other small things really, because when you translate it, you might not be in the same way that it’s been told... You lose the essence there. But you know, I consider that.

I also consider the fact that they think because I sit here that I know it all, or already judge them as not being good parents, or like that, you know, so there are other things that I am also thinking about.

I’m also thinking about their background too. That maybe if they come from societies where it is accepted to maybe hit the child, because – not because you want to hurt the child, but because you’re trying to raise them some kind of corrective, a corrective function – if they come from that kind of society and maybe they do the same thing to their child really, and I’m thinking maybe they’re doing the same thing that has been done to them...

So I think that it is very challenging because there are lots of things to consider really... And again, I’m thinking that if people are afraid of you, or afraid of the system, so that they try to maybe withhold information, which I think is normal too – you don’t go opening up to people you don’t know, you don’t know what the information may be used for later. But with time, you open up”

"I think if we understand that not everyone who lives here is Norwegian because with other cultures can also function in this society and can actually raise their kids up here too. But the challenge remains that we, as social workers, also have to try to understand that even if it is not Norwegian, or as long as they don't do the same as we do, doesn't mean it is wrong. Not everyone sits at the table when they eat. Some people sit on the ground when they eat; some people prefer to sit on the ground when they eat. Some people, it is not very common to show affection for the child in other ways, but here it is shown in another way – but you know, I think we have to try to accept the difference really, and then, there will always be difference really. But again, like I said, because we – you know, like I told you earlier – to function in the society, there are some certain things that the kids, as in our kids really, the immigrant family kids who don't – I feel like they have to – when the parents know how to help the kids to be able to function in society, it will be very, very good for them later on because it is not like the same society that the parents grew up in. It is a different society that is very demanding. It is who you are, it is you – it is very individualistic. So it is not collective, so you don't go around depending or waiting for people; you have to set your own boundaries. You have to try out things – you have to be independent really. That is that it is. But it is not like that in other societies where, the setting is mom and dad who, you know, and then later on they let you go; here it starts much more earlier, you are free to go around, even as a child. Whereas other cultures, you know, they carry the baby until they are like ten months old. They are rarely on the floor. But it is not because they can't crawl, but just because you have to carry them, you still see them as a baby. But here, ten months already they are expected to follow this, and to do that, do that. So it is – for me it is very interesting to see the difference because of my background. I'm like yeah, but those kids that weren't able to crawl at ten months and all that – they are still doing fine. It is just a matter of what culture, or society you belong to really"

"Some of the families are parents we have here... really, usually they prefer not to have translators. They would rather try to speak Norwegian themselves. But sometimes you use the telephone translator which works very well. We understand that it is a very, very small community. And then when people come in here and we talk about all that, they don't like for others to know what has been discussed here really, which is also understandable. So the telephone translator is what we use most of the time here, and it is because we see that some parents, they prefer that. Others want to try themselves"

"Then the thing with the translator, like I said earlier, you know like you talk for three or four minutes really, and then when it is translated it is just like a short, short sentence. And sometimes you're like, for me, I'm not really satisfied with the response really. And then sometimes when you say something and then it has been translated in just, like, a sentence and you're like, did he or she really get everything? But I find out that works really, is that depending on the time, when I have time I try myself, because I notice that most of the parents here who go to the *norskkurs* or have been, most of them speak actually very good Norwegian really. But it depends on how much one has to do. When I have less to do, I just sit down and just take time and I make sure they understand why I'm trying to talk about"

	<p>"I think that the fact that I have a job here should also attest [to ways that Child Welfare Services is adapting to be more multicultural friendly] to that, because it just shows that there is starting to be acceptance that others – there are other Norwegians who aren't, I won't say "ethnic" but other cultures really. So that is the reason why I have my job today, because it has become some kind of acceptance for the fact that, yeah, it is starting to become very, very multicultural here in Norway and especially here in Drammen too. And then again, not just me, but several of my colleagues too who have minority backgrounds. And I see that when we talk about cases here too, we try to talk about the cultural differences too. And also when we look for placement homes too, we try to see if there is any way we can match up with the background of the child, really... I think that is very good"</p> <p>"Immigrant families, they're facing a lot of challenges really, a lot of challenges. And sometimes, when you tackle one, they you actually, it reflects on the others really. But the way the community is now, the society is now... going to work – as in having a job to go to – that is part of who you are as a person. If you don't have a job, and again, if you have a job too, again the kids or the children will look up to you really... So maybe if people actually, those immigrant families had everything in place – which I know can take years really – if everything was in place and all that, then perhaps one would have avoided the whole of things, really. So going to the source, which I have come to realize is not just economic, there are other things that people have been trailing with problems and haven't gotten help, you know. And knowing when to [get help] is the greatest challenge really"</p> <p>"There is this other thing too, I think is the social network. They have a very limited social network and sometimes, you know, it could just be the key. So that is a challenge... The part with the social network is the greatest difference you find because it is something when you can just call your mom, brother, your auntie to help you pick up your child when you are running late from work, or looking for somewhere where the kids can go for the weekend, for example, you know? Or someone that can just come by and help you do one or two things when you are not feeling fine. So that is a difference"</p> <p>"The fact that they also have very limited access to information too. They don't really – all that I think is different, it's very different for them really"</p> <p>"I think it is something that also runs through what we've talked about, is just that they're [immigrant families are] faced with challenges – not just one, but many challenges really. Which makes them at-risk, it places them at-risk, not just the kids, but the parents too... If they've been through lots of struggles already, we don't know where they are coming from, what they've been through – if they have some kind of traumas and all of that – it can be very challenging to work with them. And then coupled with the fact that there is no trust... Trust is an important factor here, because when working with them, immigrant families – trust – because everyone knows someone who knows someone that has – if you put it like that – had their kid taken really. But you just have to build trust really"</p>
2 Parent adaptation child welfare	<p>PARENT 1:</p> <p>"If you come from a different place and suddenly you are cut off from everything you have known, everything you have grown-up with, you are going to be a misfit – you know – you are going to end up like the bird, the bat, which in my culture</p>

we say is neither a bird or another animal which belongs neither here nor there, but it is kind of in-between. So you to get something new from your new environment or culture, you need to something new, but it is not possible or realistic to be cut off from everything that has made you what you are and take up new things. So yes, it is important to bring something into your home, and eventually with time there will be a new hybrid system, you know, from your home and your new place. But it takes time. It shouldn't be forced, it will come naturally. It comes from your home and your new place, as long as your practices are safe, it's legal, and it does not contradict common sense"

"I get angry when I think about them, so I, I don't want to deal with those people again. As long as, I only deal with them as much as necessary. So in my life, whatever I do, I want to avoid them, because, first of all I'll tell you one of the reasons I get angry. Initially I thought they were neutral... until I realized that I have been blindsided without knowing anything going on"

PARENT 2:

"As I understand, you should, and I agree with this, you should not use your own rules, live by your own rules if you live in another society. That society has different rules and you have to accept it. You have to become a part of it. And sometime it is hard, but that is what you should do. But you should be open and clear for Norwegians to see, now the big difference"

"In Oslo there is one lawyer with Russian background, but she moved here I think when she was in school, so she graduated lawyer here and she works with *barnevernet* cases and she makes some seminars for Russian parents and Russian embassy to talk more about the system to calm down, to explain more about how you should react. Because we are, maybe our mentality, more emotional than Norwegians and when somebody blames you with something wrong and you know that you did not do so, Russians can react very emotional, like "how dare you, I would never do so to my child" and that is not normal reaction in Norway and that would create even more problems with in working authority. Because, you know, in Russia it is okay, everyone would understand, but here most likely they will not because they do not get used to such reactions"

PARENT 3:

"Practices [in parenting] have also changed. Some are positive and some are not positive. For example, in our culture we are a group oriented society. Family is very important. Parents have a special position, they have to be respected. Families deserve respect. The hierarchy is different. Usually, children are not allowed to criticize families, for example... Here they have to change, have to listen to children. Here, there is two-way communication. Communicating with the child is something good. But also, the negative thing is that children have unlimited rights in Norway so that immigrant families get scared from the laws – because they are immigrants and if they do something they might be targeted from *barnevernet*. There is extreme fear from *barnevernet* – it could be real or imaginary, but almost every family shares this perception. This might also affect the relationship between children and their families because the parents know their child is not behaving in a proper way, but they are afraid to correct them. The *barnevernet* listens to the child and takes the child without any hesitation... Child are perceived as never lying. True, but in what context... Children might lie to get what they want. Families are very afraid of *barnevernet*. They feel that

	<p>their children will be taken one day. The school, the kindergarten, they follow the children very well. They ask for details for what has happened and construct – almost a form of espionage”</p> <p>“When I talk to my child, I must first check what the law says. I must check and behave according to the values here in Norway. In many ways the principles in <i>barnevernet</i> in theory are good, but in practice they can target different communities. It is very institutionalized”</p> <p>“You do things because you are afraid of the system. In one way, it is good, but in another way, you do things because you are afraid. Even in activities, families have to contribute or take part in activities – swimming, football. It is good for the kids, but in some families, there is pressure that the kid does not have enough activities. Maybe <i>barnevernet</i> can help you, but people don’t want this because it could lead to further investigation... Many immigrant families actually think to travel or to change from Norway because of <i>barnevernet</i>, when they get their passport... One reason could be for work or education, but one thing is that <i>barnevernet</i> is very scary”</p> <p>“Here in Norway, people tell you that in Norway, we do it this way. It means that it is an assimilative system, even though in the regulation they take care of different cultures; but in practice, if you don’t do it the Norwegian way, then you are the loser. It is silent assimilation. Because in nuances, small cultural differences – for example, if you take a child playing football with a hijab or swimming with a burkini or now also the hijab of children at school – some political parties are trying to ban this one. Saying children are being oppressed with hijab, the rhetoric is that this doesn’t belong here. What are we going to do? In institutions, it is assimilative. They have these rules, the rules are being set by those people, they are the majority... If you are assimilated, you have more opportunities. If a woman takes off her hajib, people will applause and think she is free. Those who keep their own values and cultures don’t have the same support, resources, as those who are assimilated. If you do it the Norwegian way, you will succeed”</p> <p>PRACTITIONER 1:</p> <p>“I mean, of course everyone’s going to change because you’ll have to adapt at some point. Even if you don’t fully integrate or adapt, you’re still going to adapt to some degree. If it is out of fear that you’re going to get in trouble, or whatever, you’re going to make some changes. So of course you’re going to see some change”</p>
3 Integration of culture in familial life	<p>PARENT 1:</p> <p>“The way that you are raised up will determine the way that you relate to others, your children included. Of course when you, you can try to adapt to, kind of embed other cultures, but it takes quite some time to really let go of old things and bring in new things. So culture affects the way you do parenting”</p> <p>“I grew up with a grandma who was very nice, who was very good, but sometimes she sat boundaries for everyone. And we expect children to stick to those boundaries. Not in a very strict way that takes away the joy of living from them, but in a way that helps them grow up into mature adults and responsible human beings”</p>

	<p>PARENT 2:</p> <p>"We speak English with my husband because that is we got used to, since we met, but I'm learning Norwegian. It is still hard to switch to Norwegian at hoe because I'm not so good yet... but with my son I speak Russian because I want him to speak Russian. I think it will be useful when he grows. The more languages he knows the better. And he has Russian family. We communicate almost everyday, we speak with my parents on Skype"</p> <p>"I think I'm a bit more focused on developing, not only games but also, of course through games, I do not put my two year old son and teach the colors [laughs]. I don't do so, I don't force him, but through the games I try to choose games that can develop him with different colors, different geometrical figures and so on and he loves it. Like letters, numbers. And when I talk with the kindergarten teacher I think, they told me that he knows. Because he started explaining in the kindergarten... Since they are a little surprised that he knows this, I make my conclusion that probably they are not so focused on starting to teach at this early age. I still don't know if it is important or not, but it is again the way that I got used to"</p> <p>"Of course we celebrate holidays, Russian holidays and Norwegian holidays as well. So my kid is quite happy to have two Christmases... It is nice... Of course, since I speak only Russian to him, and when I am at home I put on Russian cartoons, for example, for him to save the language. It is, of course, Russian lullabies and singing, but nothing so different"</p> <p>PRACITIONER 1:</p> <p>"I mean, of course everyone's going to change because you'll have to adapt at some point. Even if you don't fully integrate or adapt, you're still going to adapt to some degree. If it is out of fear that you're going to get in trouble, or whatever, you're going to make some changes. So of course you're going to see some change"</p>
4 Parent adaptation familial life	<p>PARENT 1:</p> <p>"The way that you are raised up will determine the way that you relate to others, your children included. Of course when you, you can try to adapt to, kind of embed other cultures, but it takes quite some time to really let go of old things and bring in new things. So culture affects the way you do parenting"</p> <p>"If you come from a different place and suddenly you are cut off from everything you have known, everything you have grown-up with, you are going to be a misfit – you know – you are going to end up like the bird, the bat, which in my culture we say is neither a bird or another animal which belongs neither here nor there, but it is kind of in-between. So you to get something new from your new environment or culture, you need to something new, but it is not possible or realistic to be cut off from everything that has made you what you are and take up new things. So yes, it is important to bring something into your home, and eventually with time there will be a new hybrid system, you know, from your home and your new place. But it takes time. It shouldn't be forced, it will come naturally. It comes from your home and your new place, as long as your practices are safe, it's legal, and it does not contradict common sense"</p> <p>"In the situations when things are not so clear, I would recommend to stay with friends because <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] is there to generate business"</p>

for themselves... If they have no case, they have no job, they will get laid off eventually. So they need to make cases. So I wouldn't recommend *barnevernet* [child welfare services], I would recommend starting with friends because no other organization is going to come in objectively and try to help. There might be some organizations; I wouldn't recommend them. Not when there is no clear lines on issues"

PARENT 2:

"We speak English with my husband because that is we got used to, since we met, but I'm learning Norwegian. It is still hard to switch to Norwegian at home because I'm not so good yet... but with my son I speak Russian because I want him to speak Russian. I think it will be useful when he grows. The more languages he knows the better. And he has Russian family. We communicate almost everyday, we speak with my parents on Skype"

"Here it is more relaxed. But that is actually nice because I think that it fits me better. I'm not exactly one hundred percent as relaxed as Norwegian parents – once we took a flight and he was half a year old, and there was around the same age girl sitting next to us and they let her crawl a little bit between the seats – I still cannot imagine that I would do so, but in general it is more relaxed"

"There is less checking, I would not say less control, but kids are allowed to do more, because as I understand here there is the concept that kids should have the childhood. And actually, all of us did this in childhood and when my mom is shocked and holding her heart and I'm telling her, but I was eating snow in my childhood, I actually did [laughs] whether she controlled me or not, so maybe there is no point fighting in this way"

"But in some way, I truly believe that I am trying to find this perfect middle between Norwegian relaxed way and Russian maybe too stressed"

"In Russia it is absolutely strict relationships of power and parents, parents decisions are not discussed with the kids. This is the decision and you should follow this. There is no discussion and no complaining. Here, since they're discussing and trying to make a common solution with the kids it is still a little – I'm trying – but sometimes it is hard to accept because to discuss with a 2.5 year old child, I try to explain to him a lot, but if he wants. And we have the discussion everyday now for 1.5 years an hour before going to bed that he should go to bed "*Nei, [name of son] leke, og mama leke*" [laughs]. But I am trying to find the solution. I am trying to make a choice without choices, because when he starts complaining about the hat, I give him two hats to choose from – similar – not a summer hat and a winter hat, but two winter hats and then he is choosing one and that is his choice. But sometimes, it is a little harder since I got used to more strict relations with the parents. But, no. This I actually like better, but I still think here it is maybe too free. Because sometimes kids are... less concentrated, less responsible"

"As I understand, you should, and I agree with this, you should not use your own rules, live by your own rules if you live in another society. That society has different rules and you have to accept it. You have to become a part of it. And sometime it is hard, but that is what you should do. But you should be open and clear for Norwegians to see, now the big difference"

PARENT 3:

[Being a good parent in Norway] “Have to be careful of the law. Must understand and follow the law. The law is very strict. Not every immigrant understands what the law says. Many do not have knowledge about the law – they cannot read, they lack information. They get general information in the reception centers, but Norwegian norms are not described intensively”

[Changes in parenting since arriving in Norway] “I have to also follow the system here – in perception and practice. I have to understand the laws – and what is right and wrong according to the law. There is no negotiation here. I have changed and have to compromise many things”

“Practices [in parenting] have also changed. Some are positive and some are not positive. For example, in our culture we are a group oriented society. Family is very important. Parents have a special position, they have to be respected. Families deserve respect. The hierarchy is different. Usually, children are not allowed to criticize families, for example... Here they have to change, have to listen to children. Here, there is two-way communication. Communicating with the child is something good. But also, the negative thing is that children have unlimited rights in Norway so that immigrant families get scared from the laws – because they are immigrants and if they do something they might be targeted from *barnevernet*. There is extreme fear from *barnevernet* – it could be real or imaginary, but almost every family shares this perception. This might also affect the relationship between children and their families because the parents know their child is not behaving in a proper way, but they are afraid to correct them. The *barnevernet* listens to the child and takes the child without any hesitation... Child are perceived as never lying. True, but in what context... Children might lie to get what they want. Families are very afraid of *barnevernet*. They feel that their children will be taken one day. The school, the kindergarten, they follow the children very well. They ask for details for what has happened and construct – almost a form of espionage”

“When I talk to my child, I must first check what the law says. I must check and behave according to the values here in Norway. In many ways the principles in *barnevernet* in theory are good, but in practice they can target different communities. It is very institutionalized”

“You do things because you are afraid of the system. In one way, it is good, but in another way, you do things because you are afraid. Even in activities, families have to contribute or take part in activities – swimming, football. It is good for the kids, but in some families, there is pressure that the kid does not have enough activities. Maybe *barnevernet* can help you, but people don’t want this because it could lead to further investigation... Many immigrant families actually think to travel or to change from Norway because of *barnevernet*, when they get their passport... One reason could be for work or education, but one thing is that *barnevernet* is very scary”

“Here in Norway, people tell you that in Norway, we do it this way. It means that it is an assimilative system, even though in the regulation they take care of different cultures; but in practice, if you don’t do it the Norwegian way, then you are the loser. It is silent assimilation. Because in nuances, small cultural

	<p>differences – for example, if you take a child playing football with a hijab or swimming with a burkini or now also the hijab of children at school – some political parties are trying to ban this one. Saying children are being oppressed with hijab, the rhetoric is that this doesn't belong here. What are we going to do? In institutions, it is assimilative. They have these rules, the rules are being set by those people, they are the majority... If you are assimilated, you have more opportunities. If a woman takes off her hajib, people will applause and think she is free. Those who keep their own values and cultures don't have the same support, resources, as those who are assimilated. If you do it the Norwegian way, you will succeed"</p> <p>PRACTITIONER 2: [Adaptations in parenting] "Some people try to do different things. Because Norway, we may say that, it is an advanced country – can we say that? I don't mean that it is right or wrong, but it's how we developed. So maybe some families from other countries want to learn a little bit about Norwegian way, how do they raise children. And they live here, it's a little bit different, because culture is also environment. So are things that you must do in Norway, and you don't in other countries, because of the environment. And you belong to society, so you almost – <i>nødvendig</i> – you must [it is necessary] do the same as the other ones. So that's maybe why they learn to do the same with their children as the Norwegian because they live here. Because I believe if Norwegian people, if they lived in another country, maybe they learn with families in those countries. So it's like an exchange"</p>
5 Parent adaptation within the community	<p>PARENT 1: "If you come from a different place and suddenly you are cut off from everything you have known, everything you have grown-up with, you are going to be a misfit – you know – you are going to end up like the bird, the bat, which in my culture we say is neither a bird or another animal which belongs neither here nor there, but it is kind of in-between. So you to get something new from your new environment or culture, you need to something new, but it is not possible or realistic to be cut off from everything that has made you what you are and take up new things. So yes, it is important to bring something into your home, and eventually with time there will be a new hybrid system, you know, from your home and your new place. But it takes time. It shouldn't be forced, it will come naturally. It comes from your home and your new place, as long as your practices are safe, it's legal, and it does not contradict common sense"</p> <p>"What I have noticed is not to take it to heart if I send a message to someone who is a good friend and they do not respond, even when they should be responding. I just realized why it happens, people don't always respond, they want to stay a bit away sometimes from you so that is something that I have kind of adapted to. Because it is strange, you know, because close friends stick together and they interact, and they always are there for each other. Here it is something different"</p> <p>PARENT 2: "... So the health system is a bit different here because I gave birth in Russia, so the first three months I was there. Even from what I experienced from these three months, in Russia it is very focused on the child's health, so every week I got a visit from the doctor at home, checking the child and everything, measuring weight, and so on. And I had to visit all the specialists, I mean, literally all – it was</p>

	<p>the eye doctor, the surgery doctor, when the check the bones, they made an ultrasound of his head and brain and all, everything inside, they check his heart. So we got massage and plenty of different things. So I was occupied almost everyday checking something. And here [in Norway], it was control like once a month, once in two months I think before one year, and then only two years we were invited for control and doctors are more relaxed. Because in Russia, it is like the rule, everyone tell you on the TV and everything at once you feel something wrong, you start sneezing or whatever, go to the doctor at once because it is better to prevent, to start from the right stage to fix. And that is what I am used to”</p> <p>“As I understand, you should, and I agree with this, you should not use your own rules, live by your own rules if you live in another society. That society has different rules and you have to accept it. You have to become a part of it. And sometime it is hard, but that is what you should do. But you should be open and clear for Norwegians to see, now the big difference”</p> <p>“The mentality and cultural traditions are different from country to country. And, um, it is not always meant in violence, it can be just different traditions. For example, in Russia, it is more respect to adults. And, for example, my parents would expect that from their grandson, you know. And it doesn’t mean that it is bad or good, it’s just different. You can’t expect everyone to become Norwegian suddenly once they cross the border. They still have their background and their traditions. And I know that some families from Africa it is not allowed for kids to look straight in the eyes of adults and it is only with showing respect. So here, it would create problems for them because Norwegians would expect that this kid is abused and that is why this kid cannot look into the eyes. And that would involve <i>barnevernet</i>. And that’s why I think that the people who work in <i>barnevernet</i> should learn this differences. Because it is not always a good enough reason stress a child with picking him up and stress parents and ruin families. If you think about what is better for the child, then follow this route. The Norwegian way is not the only way in the world, they should accept this too”</p> <p>PARENT 3:</p> <p>“Here in Norway, people tell you that in Norway, we do it this way. It means that it is an assimilative system, even though in the regulation they take care of different cultures; but in practice, if you don’t do it the Norwegian way, then you are the loser. It is silent assimilation. Because in nuances, small cultural differences – for example, if you take a child playing football with a hijab or swimming with a burkini or now also the hijab of children at school – some political parties are trying to ban this one. Saying children are being oppressed with hijab, the rhetoric is that this doesn’t belong here. What are we going to do? In institutions, it is assimilative. They have these rules, the rules are being set by those people, they are the majority... If you are assimilated, you have more opportunities. If a woman takes off her hajib, people will applause and think she is free. Those who keep their own values and cultures don’t have the same support, resources, as those who are assimilated. If you do it the Norwegian way, you will succeed”</p>
6 Perceptions of Norwegian parenting culture	<p>PARENT 1:</p> <p>“From my experience understanding Norway, it is actually not completely [homogenous] uniform society, you know. There are big differences between</p>

affecting adaptations	<p>Oslo, for instance, and the farm in Tromsø or Bergen – they have this attitude, this different behavior. So I can't really say. To describe a Norwegian family"</p> <p>"I think for some Norwegians, for instance, if a child starts misbehaving and they are not able to control their child they might decide to organize what I call a "conference" to tell the child not to do what the child is doing. Okay, of course they need to explain things to the child. But sometimes children do not understand, so you have to tell them "this is wrong, don't do that", so if they don't understand what you're trying to say, it doesn't mean that they should disobey you. They should still obey the social boundaries of the parents who have their best interest at heart. I would say most parents have the best interest of their child at heart"</p> <p>"There are differences, of course, in how we approach parenting between back home and here. Or, at least, people pretend to have a way of doing things, which we don't really know. I was shocked when we were having a conversation with my colleagues, a Norwegian said that he gives his children, his daughters, time outs when they misbehave. So with that we were surprised, how do you do that? He said, okay, tell them to go sit on the staircase away from the tv, away from the others so that they are kind of cut off from the rest. And we were all surprised, looking at him. So, I'm not sure that other people would appreciate that here in Norway. It is something he feels is important, so he does that. So even in Norway, there are differences in parenting. But of course, I think there is a difference between what is promoted as the ideal thing and what we do back home. I don't believe that people from their heart accept or believe everything that they say openly, that are projected in the press, the media, or in official documents"</p> <p>PARENT 2:</p> <p>"Here it is more relaxed. But that is actually nice because I think that it fits me better. I'm not exactly one hundred percent as relaxed as Norwegian parents – once we took a flight and he was half a year old, and there was around the same age girl sitting next to us and they let her crawl a little bit between the seats – I still cannot imagine that I would do so, but in general it is more relaxed"</p> <p>"There is less checking, I would not say less control, but kids are allowed to do more, because as I understand here there is the concept that kids should have the childhood. And actually, all of us did this in childhood and when my mom is shocked and holding her heart and I'm telling her, but I was eating snow in my childhood, I actually did [laughs] whether she controlled me or not, so maybe there is no point fighting in this way"</p> <p>"But in some way, I truly believe that I am trying to find this perfect middle between Norwegian relaxed way and Russian maybe too stressed"</p> <p>"In Russia it is absolutely strict relationships of power and parents, parents decisions are not discussed with the kids. This is the decision and you should follow this. There is no discussion and no complaining. Here, since they're discussing and trying to make a common solution with the kids it is still a little – I'm trying – but sometimes it is hard to accept because to discuss with a 2.5 year old child, I try to explain to him a lot, but if he wants. And we have the discussion everyday now for 1.5 years an hour before going to bed that he should go to bed</p>
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	<p>“<i>Nei, [name of son] leke, og mama leke</i>” [laughs]. But I am trying to find the solution. I am trying to make a choice without choices, because when he starts complaining about the hat, I give him two hats to choose from – similar – not a summer hat and a winter hat, but two winter hats and then he is choosing one and that is his choice. But sometimes, it is a little harder since I got used to more strict relations with the parents. But, no. This I actually like better, but I still think here it is maybe too free. Because sometimes kids are... less concentrated, less responsible”</p>
7 Adaptations child welfare services – practitioner vs. system	<p>PARENT 1: “Even if they try to work better with people from different cultures, I mean the effort may not be sufficient... So, I haven’t noticed if there is anything in <i>barnevernet</i>, I haven’t noticed and I think people involved are not interested [in adapting to work better with ethnic minority/migrant families]. They have their paycheck, they have their job, and they are immune more or less. It would take a lot of wrong doing for them to be chastised”</p> <p>[Despite international critique...] “nothing changes with the system in Norway... Norway, as a country, as a state, is nationalistic as any other country... They have their own branch of nationalism here in Norway, and that is what makes them immune to outside criticism”</p> <p>PARENT 3: “I think the Norwegian government should invest on a project to tell, educate, and inform families more. Not only once, but must contribute more. They have to map also why people behave in the way that they are behaving – people think what they are doing is right. The system must talk to them that the values are different... So they have to invest more – especially on people who need that information. Illiterate people, for example, information should be given to them with a translator”</p> <p>“<i>Barnevernet</i> is missing this point [taking culture into account] totally. Those working in <i>barnevernet</i> and kindergartens – I don’t know how many of them understand multicultural theories. How many working in <i>barnevernet</i> are aware of difference in other cultures? I think that <i>barnevernet</i> – what they should do is have rules, regulations, and they have the extra power to interpret articles as they wish. What does it mean that children should be protected? They follow these rules. But in these rules, people should understand cultural nuances. These nuances cannot be put into the rules, because they have these regulations and there would be contradictions. But in some situations that are not very serious, cultural nuances should be considered”</p> <p>PRACTITIONER 1: “I think our laws and regulations in Norway are old – they don’t fit the families of today, the problems that we see today and they certainly do not fit other cultures and other contexts, other than the ethnic Norwegian. I think we need a whole revamp of our laws, our regulations, even how the system functions in these families”</p> <p>“I try to figure out, okay, where is it that they’re from? And once I know kind of the country or the area, I will – if I don’t know it already – try to figure out the</p>

	<p>basics of it because I know that there is going to be things that I'm going to miss if I don't. It's just inevitable.</p> <p>I had a colleague who – I mean, it's just even as basic as this – I had a colleague once make a comment that he did a home visit and during his home visit, he just thought that house was kind of disgusting. But when he described the disgusting, it wasn't that the house was unclean or unkept or anything, but to him it had a very strong, pungent smell. But when you actually started asking him questions – and, well, what was the smell? I mean, this was an ethnic minority family, and basically, this was a family that comes from somewhere where in their cooking, versus ours, they use a lot of garlic, they use a lot of spices, and they also come from an area that because of their skin and haircuts and everything, they don't wash maybe every single day. Because where we want to wash it out, they want to wash the oil in. So it just becomes a difference, but you have to have the understanding that, okay, well, yeah this house wasn't unkept, it wasn't unclean, it wasn't disgusting. Yeah, it smelt different than what we are used to, but that doesn't mean that was really an issue"</p> <p>[Considerations when working with ethnic minority families] "Going and finding someone that knows the area where people are from that can give you some kind of cultural information. I think it is important for us to find workers that have knowledge and use them in the areas where they have the knowledge. And the going in with an open mind"</p> <p>"As far as interpretation goes – that one is so hard because it just depends on who you get [as an interpreter]. When you don't speak the language, it's not that easy for you to do a control check on things. If things get lost, literally lost, in translation – because they do – I just think you have to move at a slower pace with these families and have a lower expectation. Not because you don't think that they can... present a change, but they can't meet that if you're expectations are the same as an ethnic Norwegian because they're not standing on the same foundation. Of course it's going to take a lot more for them. So, you just have to move slow, but that's not easy because we're literally overworked, we have too much, and we have deadlines, and I think that's what I'm saying is the way we do things, the laws and regulations, the whole system actually needs to change to adapt to the families that we actually see today and the problems... So the whole system actually needs to change"</p> <p>"One thing that they do here which I really like is that we have this Introduction Center where they do Norwegian classes... We go in any new class and we do a half day presentation of Child Welfare Services and what happens. And then we sit down with the different groups, and if they have specific questions for us then they can sit and actually ask there – which I think is a good thing, to try to dispel also the myths the other way, that we're out there searching for children or, you know, going to all the neighbors and everything like that. Try to dispel some of those myths and rumors. So I do like that they at least do that outreach, so maybe they won't be totally scared of us, and the other way around when we meet"</p> <p>"When you have to use a translator, it is not just the quality of the translator, but it's also the availability of one. So sometimes our work can see – inconsistent is maybe not the word – but, I think the minority families might feel or experience from their point of view that we will change things a lot on them. But a lot of</p>
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times those changes come, like changing the meetings, or whatever, come because we are dependent on a translator. And sometimes, for just a lack of availability of translators. Sometimes having a phone translator isn't optimal or the best, depending on what you're talking about, what you need to convey, because our verbal language is just a small part of who we are. It's the nonverbal clues can give you equal amount of information, and that gets totally lost when you have a translator. And the translator too can translate more wrong if they're not actually present, because then again, they're not tapping into those nonverbal cues. So I think the families can maybe see, experience, or feel a higher level of frustration around our system because we are dependent on translators and sometimes, you know, the translator is sick. Okay, do you go ahead and have the meeting and try to get through it somehow, or do you then cancel it and reschedule to a time where there is an available translator again? And I see how that can be very frustrating from the other side, and, with all those changes too I think grows a misconception also of a minority family on us child welfare workers, you know, that we're constantly changing things and that we want them to fail. Which is actually not the case. Most every I say – nine out of ten people who work in this field – if families could actually just see behind the scenes how much we actually root for them to be able to make the change so they can have a positive and good, healthy relationship with their child, I think they all would be quite shocked. But they don't see that part when the changes come; I think they can look at it as suspicious that those changes happen"

"I've heard so many families now tell me that even when they were in the refugee camps, or wherever they were, that before even coming to Norway how they – once they knew or how they were provided information about how terrible our child welfare system is and how we're just out to get their children and how they have to be scared and how they have to do this, this and not this, this, this, and this. So some work, I think, is outside even the *kommune's* [municipality's] sort of ability – that it actually has to go more on the national level and even go out to those workers who go out into these camps even from the start of their journeys... because if already have that before they even arrive in this county, and then they meets lots of people, you know, because imagine an immigration center. Raising your child in an immigration center, it's not a natural environment to raise your child at all. So in some ways, I think *barnevernet* gets involved a lot, even in the immigration center early on, because the parents from the journey that they come and then they're having to raise and live in an unnatural environment, and then, things can get viewed – I think – a bit wrongly. So then you keep adding on the misconception – so I don't really know what the solution is. I just think it has to be at a higher level than just at the *kommune* level. I think we can do better, more outreach, but I also think that it actually has to come higher and sometimes even before they actually start their journey"

[Things to keep in mind when working with people from other cultures] "An open mind. Yeah, open mind. Don't get stuck in your own perspective. Don't get stuck in your paradigm. And when I say 'open mind', be open that perhaps how you were raised or how you are raising your children isn't necessarily the only way or the best way; that there actually can be other ways that are just as good and just as effective, even if it looks different and perhaps even scary because it is different than you yourself have experienced. So just, you have to have an open mind and not be judgmental. And then you have to just be willing to not quickly judge or make a judgment or decision about a family before you sort of taken the

time to also learn those nuances in their culture and their perspective. And you know, keep in mind what was their journey, what has happened along the path to come here, what does daily life look like – think about all these other things, like the network, their finances, what are the stress factors, what are the positives”

PRACTITIONER2:

“They way I understand, I don’t have such huge different culture. I want to see people, if they are from Norway, if they are from USA – it doesn’t matter for me. I want to understand people. I do understand they have culture, they also have their way to do parenthood, so, I just see that. I don’t have groups “these ethnics”, “those ones from that culture”. But each one [individual], each family. That’s the way I see people; not in groups, culture groups, but how they are everyday. Not with a stamp”

[Anything child welfare services does differently or take into consideration when working with these families] “Yes, it is a bit different. We are seventy people here, so different points of view. There are people, maybe, will be a little bit blind of culture and they want to say – no, it’s culture, so they must do as we Norwegian and other ones who say we must respect their culture, so that is why we must do different. So it will be different ways of working, all of us. And other people try to have a balance between respecting the culture of the other ones, and maybe you can learn about Norwegian parenthood, so maybe it is the best for your children. So it’s a little, different people work with different ways. But I believe here in Drammen, most are open mind, try to do open mind, because we have a lot of people from other countries. So it opens our mind to understand the other cultures. I believe so.

Also, some of us who work here, they are, I don’t know how many of us who are from other *land* [countries] and can have this discussion with the others to help and see other points of view, and also respect. But it’s a little up to *hver for seg* each one to understand or to respect the others”

“I try to understand and see the people who are in front of me and try to respect them and see the body language, and if I see that they are uncomfortable – maybe because I know in my mind that I didn’t realize – I try to ask them and try to understand them. If they no defense but it is my culture, I try to understand. Will you be kind and [try to help] me understand what is going on? But I believe that I’ve been long in my country with my culture, so it’s *veldig påvirket* [very influenced] of what is going on the TV and what is going on, so we have those ideas. So I used to ask myself – but not always I can – he’s a Muslim, he’s a bad guy? No. And if I have in my mind and it is not clear [in the subconscious], if I see that they’re uncomfortable; okay, can you tell me what is going on? Can you tell me did I not understand or respect? So that’s why. But we have sometimes deep in our heads, the bad ideas, bad thoughts about people [subconscious bias influenced by the media]”

“We here in Drammen, we try to have meetings with the different communities so they know what we are doing here because, yes, some people are afraid of what is going on with *barnevernet* because they take the children and so on, so it is a process we do here to have meetings with the different culture communities so they can ask us and they can have the information. Yes, we know that there

are many things we must do, but we did start that process and it is really good process that we start so that people can see that we are not so bad. But we do that with the different communities in Drammen and it is very, very important that they see our faces and they can ask questions, so if they come here they won't be terrified"

PRACTITIONER3:

"Here we've actually been lots to the introduction center where they have, I know my colleagues have been there to hold some kind of lectures about how we work and what we do... We've [also] had small groups here where we hold lectures for them, and we've also been there too to give lectures to talk to them about what we do... We're trying to reach out. But the media is also there. But again, we have lots of success stories really"

"Like I said, we try to go and talk to minority groups. So we go out and talk to them and we invite them here and hold lectures for them really. And I've also heard from a couple of the families that I've followed up with over the years, where they came, before I got them they came in very, very skeptical, and at the end even, it's not as bad as I thought it was, really. It's not that bad really... And it got me thinking, what did you really hear about us?"

"I know that it is tough to be an immigrant in Norway, and especially for those immigrants who had a lot, who've kind of lost what they have back home and just came here like that, really. I didn't go through that, so I don't know it is, but I've heard; and I've also seen that it is very challenging really. So that when they come in here, and again, I think that maybe this is someone that ought to be at work, but it actually struggling to get a job, and maybe someone with kids too who really don't have enough, they can't really participate in other kinds of activities just because of the economic situation, other things.

And then the language – and like – maybe the other things, like perhaps you would have been able to, or she would have been able to express herself better if she spoke better Norwegian or good English, you know.

Even with a translator, we use translators too, but again, there is something, you miss something a lot really when things are translated because we talk for like an hour and sometimes you don't really get the whole picture really. But it is good to use a translator, but it is just that sometimes I feel like you miss some other small things really, because when you translate it, you might not be in the same way that it's been told... You lose the essence there. But you know, I consider that.

I also consider the fact that they think because I sit here that I know it all, or already judge them as not being good parents, or like that, you know, so there are other things that I am also thinking about.

I'm also thinking about their background too. That maybe if they come from societies where it is accepted to maybe hit the child, because – not because you want to hurt the child, but because you're trying to raise them some kind of corrective, a corrective function – if they come from that kind of society and

	<p>maybe they do the same thing to their child really, and I'm thinking maybe they're doing the same thing that has been done to them...</p> <p>So I think that it is very challenging because there are lots of things to consider really... And again, I'm thinking that if people are afraid of you, or afraid of the system, so that they try to maybe withhold information, which I think is normal too – you don't go opening up to people you don't know, you don't know what the information may be used for later. But with time, you open up"</p> <p>"I think that the fact that I have a job here should also attest [to ways that Child Welfare Services is adapting to be more multicultural friendly] to that, because it just shows that there is starting to be acceptance that others – there are other Norwegians who aren't, I won't say "ethnic" but other cultures really. So that is the reason why I have my job today, because it has become some kind of acceptance for the fact that, yeah, it is starting to become very, very multicultural here in Norway and especially here in Drammen too. And then again, not just me, but several of my colleagues too who have minority backgrounds. And I see that when we talk about cases here too, we try to talk about the cultural differences too. And also when we look for placement homes too, we try to see if there is any way we can match up with the background of the child, really... I think that is very good"</p>
8 Perceptions of ethnic minorities affecting practice	<p>PRACTITIONER 1:</p> <p>"The Norwegian workers are way – like I said – too kind; we pack in our words professionally and we try to give advice, but it's all so packed in that the meaning gets lots. And then we have expectations of them to meet our expectations, but they didn't really get the expectations to begin with because we use such high professional language and packed it in – and then, through an interpreter. So it's sort of like the system is sort of bound to fail these families in some ways. And because we miss that cultural context part, when some of the things are said we could react very negatively, because we're looking at this through our own lenses of being ethnic Norwegians and this is how I grew up, this is what was expected of me, this is how a family works, you know, but you can't do that when you work with these families because they didn't grow up like you, they didn't have the same start, the same context as when you do things. And then when you add up not being direct enough, it's not good"</p> <p>"I try to figure out, okay, where is it that they're from? And once I know kind of the country or the area, I will – if I don't know it already – try to figure out the basics of it because I know that there is going to be things that I'm going to miss if I don't. It's just inevitable.</p> <p>I had a colleague who – I mean, it's just even as basic as this – I had a colleague once make a comment that he did a home visit and during his home visit, he just thought that house was kind of disgusting. But when he described the disgusting, it wasn't that the house was unclean or unkept or anything, but to him it had a very strong, pungent smell. But when you actually started asking him questions – and, well, what was the smell? I mean, this was an ethnic minority family, and basically, this was a family that comes from somewhere where in their cooking, versus ours, they use a lot of garlic, they use a lot of spices, and they also come from an area that because of their skin and haircuts and everything, they don't wash maybe every single day. Because where we want to wash it out, they want to wash the oil in. So it just becomes a difference, but you have to have the understanding that, okay, well, yeah this house wasn't unkept, it wasn't unclean,</p>

it wasn't disgusting. Yeah, it smelt different than what we are used to, but that doesn't mean that was really an issue"

[Things to keep in mind when working with people from other cultures] "An open mind. Yeah, open mind. Don't get stuck in your own perspective. Don't get stuck in your paradigm. And when I say 'open mind', be open that perhaps how you were raised or how you are raising your children isn't necessarily the only way or the best way; that there actually can be other ways that are just as good and just as effective, even if it looks different and perhaps even scary because it is different than you yourself have experienced. So just, you have to have an open mind and not be judgmental. And then you have to just be willing to not quickly judge or make a judgment or decision about a family before you sort of taken the time to also learn those nuances in their culture and their perspective. And you know, keep in mind what was their journey, what has happened along the path to come here, what does daily life look like – think about all these other things, like the network, their finances, what are the stress factors, what are the positives"

[Barriers in the child welfare system] "Well of course, one, because they have already these myths are rumors and being scared. They fact that they have to have interpreters, speak through interpreters – that's a big barrier compared to an ethnic Norwegian family where you don't have that... Some of these families are families that anything having to do with governmental people is very scary thing for them because of their own experiences of where they come from, so those are barriers"

PRACTITIONER 2:

"They way I understand, I don't have such huge different culture. I want to see people, if they are from Norway, if they are from USA – it doesn't matter for me. I want to understand people. I do understand they have culture, they also have their way to do parenthood, so, I just see that. I don't have groups "these ethnics", "those ones from that culture". But each one [individual], each family. That's the way I see people; not in groups, culture groups, but how they are everyday. Not with a stamp"

"Yes, they have difference [between ethnic minority families and Norwegian families] because of the culture. They have traditions than the Norwegian and other have traditions, so it could be different. And how do they live here in Norway. And what they have been through in the other countries, that have war or different kinds of religion. Yes, they are different. And the way they *oppdrag* or do parenthood, it should be different. Yes. But the principles, the most are the same. Wherever you come from, the principles are the same. I do believe in that, so that is why I don't have groups of people"

[Anything child welfare services does differently or take into consideration when working with these families] "Yes, it is a bit different. We are seventy people here, so different points of view. There are people, maybe, will be a little bit blind of culture and they want to say – no, it's culture, so they must do as we Norwegian and other ones who say we must respect their culture, so that is why we must do different. So it will be different ways of working, all of us. And other people try to have a balance between respecting the culture of the other ones, and maybe you can learn about Norwegian parenthood, so maybe it is the best

for your children. So it's a little, different people work with different ways. But I believe here in Drammen, most are open mind, try to do open mind, because we have a lot of people from other countries. So it opens our mind to understand the other cultures. I believe so.

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"I try to understand and see the people who are in front of me and try to respect them and see the body language, and if I see that they are uncomfortable – maybe because I know in my mind that I didn't realize – I try to ask them and try to understand them. If they no defense but it is my culture, I try to understand. Will you be kind and [try to help] me understand what is going on? But I believe that I've been long in my country with my culture, so it's *veldig påvirket* [very influenced] of what is going on the TV and what is going on, so we have those ideas. So I used to ask myself – but not always I can – he's a Muslim, he's a bad guy? No. And if I have in my mind and it is not clear [in the subconscious], if I see that they're uncomfortable; okay, can you tell me what is going on? Can you tell me did I not understand or respect? So that's why. But we have sometimes deep in our heads, the bad ideas, bad thoughts about people [subconscious bias influenced by the media]"

PRACTITIONER3:

"I'm also an immigrant myself and you see that the way that I perceive parenting is also from my background too. And, it's like you said, the way I'm thinking is not like it is here [in Norway] before most cultures – mine included – are more collective, so it is not just mom and dad as parents, not just two people who are responsible for the child, it is all the aunties, uncles, and every other person, but here it is just the mom and dad... So it is different, it is different really in terms of who does what"

"I know that it is tough to be an immigrant in Norway, and especially for those immigrants who had a lot, who've kind of lost what they have back home and just came here like that, really. I didn't go through that, so I don't know it is, but I've heard; and I've also seen that it is very challenging really. So that when they come in here, and again, I think that maybe this is someone that ought to be at work, but it actually struggling to get a job, and maybe someone with kids too who really don't have enough, they can't really participate in other kinds of activities just because of the economic situation, other things.

And then the language – and like – maybe the other things, like perhaps you would have been able to, or she would have been able to express herself better if she spoke better Norwegian or good English, you know.

Even with a translator, we use translators too, but again, there is something, you miss something a lot really when things are translated because we talk for like an hour and sometimes you don't really get the whole picture really. But it is good to use a translator, but it is just that sometimes I feel like you miss some other small things really, because when you translate it, you might not be in the same

	<p>way that it's been told... You lose the essence there. But you know, I consider that.</p> <p>I also consider the fact that they think because I sit here that I know it all, or already judge them as not being good parents, or like that, you know, so there are other things that I am also thinking about.</p> <p>I'm also thinking about their background too. That maybe if they come from societies where it is accepted to maybe hit the child, because – not because you want to hurt the child, but because you're trying to raise them some kind of corrective, a corrective function – if they come from that kind of society and maybe they do the same thing to their child really, and I'm thinking maybe they're doing the same thing that has been done to them...</p> <p>So I think that it is very challenging because there are lots of things to consider really... And again, I'm thinking that if people are afraid of you, or afraid of the system, so that they try to maybe withhold information, which I think is normal too – you don't go opening up to people you don't know, you don't know what the information may be used for later. But with time, you open up"</p>
9 Dialogue	<p>PARENT 1: "Unfortunately in Norway, there is no active discourse, no vigorous debates. That's what I used to think it was in Norway – it isn't. It isn't vigorous, active debates. If something comes from the official source, press, or government, it becomes like a law"</p> <p>PRACTITIONER 1: "One thing that they do here which I really like is that we have this Introduction Center where they do Norwegian classes... We go in any new class and we do a half day presentation of Child Welfare Services and what happens. And then we sit down with the different groups, and if they have specific questions for us then they can sit and actually ask there – which I think is a good thing, to try to dispel also the myths the other way, that we're out there searching for children or, you know, going to all the neighbors and everything like that. Try to dispel some of those myths and rumors. So I do like that they at least do that outreach, so maybe they won't be totally scared of us, and the other way around when we meet"</p> <p>PRACTITIONER 2: "We here in Drammen, we try to have meetings with the different communities so they know what we are doing here because, yes, some people are afraid of what is going on with <i>barnevernet</i> because they take the children and so on, so it is a process we do here to have meetings with the different culture communities so they can ask us and they can have the information. Yes, we know that there are many things we must do, but we did start that process and it is really good process that we start so that people can see that we are not so bad. But we do that with the different communities in Drammen and it is very, very important that they see our faces and they can ask questions, so if they come here they won't be terrified"</p> <p>[Myths or rumors] "Maybe because some of them have been in situations that were not clear or they were not satisfied. Because it is our job. It is hard for families to understand why and what are we doing. Yes. And the bad news goes faster than the good news. That's why we want to do those meetings. But not</p>

	<p>that we change our way of working. And there are so many people that come here and when it is the end of the process, they are satisfied, they think there was a good job, that we did work with them. Not for them, but with them. It's changing. I believe that it is changing. I see in my experience, nice faces, smiling faces after a while. But I can understand that to some people it is hard. A father or a mother, when we say "you are not able to take care of your children" – it is not easy to accept that. So I understand that. But it is our job to work with them and to help them see that I cannot, so no one help me in the situation, but it is our job. But I do believe that we are changing that, I do"</p> <p>PRACTITIONER3:</p> <p>"Here we've actually been lots to the introduction center where they have, I know my colleagues have been there to hold some kind of lectures about how we work and what we do... We've [also] had small groups here where we hold lectures for them, and we've also been there too to give lectures to talk to them about what we do... We're trying to reach out. But the media is also there. But again, we have lots of success stories really"</p> <p>"The media is also responsible here [for myths and rumors]. Because it is only when – like from my own experience really – it is only when there is something negative when you have a lot of people coming up and writing and telling stories really. What they don't – there is so much focus on the negative, people's negative experiences – and that is what sells, anyway. But those positive stories, we don't get to hear of them really. And we can't because of the nature of the job, we have to be very confidential with people's privacy here, so we can't go out and be talking about things that we know... I think that there are people – as in we, social workers, who work in the system – who have come out and actually started talking about what we've seen. And we are just human beings really, you know, so I think we should start coming out and talking more about how we experience families, and how the media stories and the negativism, what it also does to people who apply for jobs here, who want to work here, who work in the services. So we should come out and talk more about it"</p> <p>"Like I said, we try to go and talk to minority groups. So we go out and talk to them and we invite them here and hold lectures for them really. And I've also heard from a couple of the families that I've followed up with over the years, where they came, before I got them they came in very, very skeptical, and at the end even, it's not as bad as I thought it was, really. It's not that bad really... And it got me thinking, what did you really hear about us?"</p> <p>"What I know is that we can, again, we are bounded by the confidentiality statement that we sign really, so we can't really go out and talk too much about things. But what I would like – what I said before – if we can have an arena where we can kind of have some kind of dialogue with immigrant families, so they can actually see that we are also human beings"</p>
10 Contradictions	<p>PRACTITIONER1:</p> <p>"Norway is very good and focused on children's rights... but on the other hand, you know, I always kind of laugh because in some aspects I also think we're too kind here. We're called <i>barnevern</i>, but in some ways I almost think we become <i>foreldrevern</i>, so parental rights are so incredibly strong here. And it's good, but sometimes we kind of talk out of both sides of our mouth"</p>

	<p>PRACTITIONER 2:</p> <p>“They way I understand, I don’t have such huge different culture. I want to see people, if they are from Norway, if they are from USA – it doesn’t matter for me. I want to understand people. I do understand they have culture, they also have their way to do parenthood, so, I just see that. I don’t have groups “these ethnics”, “those ones from that culture”. But each one [individual], each family. That’s the way I see people; not in groups, culture groups, but how they are everyday. Not with a stamp”</p> <p>“Yes, they have difference [between ethnic minority families and Norwegian families] because of the culture. They have traditions than the Norwegian and other have traditions, so it could be different. And how do they live here in Norway. And what they have been through in the other countries, that have war or different kinds of religion. Yes, they are different. And the way they <i>oppdrag</i> or do parenthood, it should be different. Yes. But the principles, the most are the same. Wherever you come from, the principles are the same. I do believe in that, so that is why I don’t have groups of people”</p> <p>“I believe the values are the same. I believe so. The differences I’ve experienced in other countries and the problems are almost the same. But the values are the same. So just, when you get knowing to the people [once you get to know the people], if you will be blind with the problems people have with raising the child, I don’t think it’s really culture. We will be a little bit blind and say, it’s culture, that is why they do that, but we go deeper, we can see the values, and the values – I believe – are almost the same in all human kind... But these <i>som</i> are <i>ikke</i> the same values, that is not because they are Norwegian, or they from Africa, Kenya, or if they are from Colombia, but because they have different values. But not because of culture. That’s what I believe” (WIKAN)</p>
<p>11 Individual impact – not just structural factors</p>	<p>PARENT 1:</p> <p>“They [child welfare services] should simply empty their minds [when working with people from other cultures or backgrounds]. They should empty their minds of prejudice, bias, and base things on facts, things that you can see. Of course, they are there to protect children... They should come with an open mind, a road mind”</p> <p>PRACTITIONER 1:</p> <p>“Some of the things that are said by the immigrant family to us – unless you actually have sort of the background or specific knowledge of, just culturally, the cultural part – you could loose so much when you make your interpretation. Because in child welfare work, it’s not black and white, it’s just shades of gray that we work in, so it is really on the individual to sort of use their common sense in their interpretation of what’s being said to them. But then, if you’re lacking the cultural context which things are presented or said, you could lose a lot and quite significant – for both good and bad”</p> <p>“I try to figure out, okay, where is it that they’re from? And once I know kind of the country or the area, I will – if I don’t know it already – try to figure out the basics of it because I know that there is going to be things that I’m going to miss if I don’t. It’s just inevitable.</p> <p>I had a colleague who – I mean, it’s just even as basic as this – I had a colleague once make a comment that he did a home visit and during his home visit, he just</p>

thought that house was kind of disgusting. But when he described the disgusting, it wasn't that the house was unclean or unkept or anything, but to him it had a very strong, pungent smell. But when you actually started asking him questions – and, well, what was the smell? I mean, this was an ethnic minority family, and basically, this was a family that comes from somewhere where in their cooking, versus ours, they use a lot of garlic, they use a lot of spices, and they also come from an area that because of their skin and haircuts and everything, they don't wash maybe every single day. Because where we want to wash it out, they want to wash the oil in. So it just becomes a difference, but you have to have the understanding that, okay, well, yeah this house wasn't unkept, it wasn't unclean, it wasn't disgusting. Yeah, it smelt different than what we are used to, but that doesn't mean that was really an issue"

[Considerations when working with ethnic minority families] "Going and finding someone that knows the area where people are from that can give you some kind of cultural information. I think it is important for us to find workers that have knowledge and use them in the areas where they have the knowledge. And the going in with an open mind"

"It comes down to how we as individuals meet the families. So, you know, if me and five other colleagues can go out to the Introduction Center, and we can have that, but if... they see more of their children maybe placed in care or feel like they get placed in care, we're not going to be able to bridge that gap that is happening. And, again, sometimes I think also, they always know – immigrant families always know other families, who know other families within their own minority group who have had children removed – and again, there's the different. Their community is so small, while the ethnic Norwegian's community is much larger and then the ethnic Norwegian's are going to be close-lipped about it, while they're not. So it becomes an issue where the myths are able to kind of stay alive"

[Things to keep in mind when working with people from other cultures] "An open mind. Yeah, open mind. Don't get stuck in your own perspective. Don't get stuck in your paradigm. And when I say 'open mind', be open that perhaps how you were raised or how you are raising your children isn't necessarily the only way or the best way; that there actually can be other ways that are just as good and just as effective, even if it looks different and perhaps even scary because it is different than you yourself have experienced. So just, you have to have an open mind and not be judgmental. And then you have to just be willing to not quickly judge or make a judgment or decision about a family before you sort of taken the time to also learn those nuances in their culture and their perspective. And you know, keep in mind what was their journey, what has happened along the path to come here, what does daily life look like – think about all these other things, like the network, their finances, what are the stress factors, what are the positives"

"You have to go in with a mindset that even in the worst of things – even in the worst we can do to our children or to other human beings – that a human being sits across from you being an ethnic Norwegian or a minority, there is always, always going to be something positive about them. And not to lose that perspective. Because if you lose that perspective, then how can you expect to

see a change or get a change out of people, if all you see if the negative and the differences. So it kind of goes back to having a very open mind I guess”

PRACTITIONER 2:

[Anything child welfare services does differently or take into consideration when working with these families] “Yes, it is a bit different. We are seventy people here, so different points of view. There are people, maybe, will be a little bit blind of culture and they want to say – no, it’s culture, so they must do as we Norwegian and other ones who say we must respect their culture, so that is why we must do different. So it will be different ways of working, all of us. And other people try to have a balance between respecting the culture of the other ones, and maybe you can learn about Norwegian parenthood, so maybe it is the best for your children. So it’s a little, different people work with different ways. But I believe here in Drammen, most are open mind, try to do open mind, because we have a lot of people from other countries. So it opens our mind to understand the other cultures. I believe so.

Also, some of us who work here, they are, I don’t know how many of us who are from other *land* [countries] and can have this discussion with the others to help and see other points of view, and also respect. But it’s a little up to *hver for seg* each one to understand or to respect the others”

“I try to understand and see the people who are in front of me and try to respect them and see the body language, and if I see that they are uncomfortable – maybe because I know in my mind that I didn’t realize – I try to ask them and try to understand them. If they no defense but it is my culture, I try to understand. Will you be kind and [try to help] me understand what is going on? But I believe that I’ve been long in my country with my culture, so it’s *veldig påvirket* [very influenced] of what is going on the TV and what is going on, so we have those ideas. So I used to ask myself – but not always I can – he’s a Muslim, he’s a bad guy? No. And if I have in my mind and it is not clear [in the subconscious], if I see that they’re uncomfortable; okay, can you tell me what is going on? Can you tell me did I not understand or respect? So that’s why. But we have sometimes deep in our heads, the bad ideas, bad thoughts about people [subconscious bias influenced by the media]”

“The most impact that we develop, those who work here, they don’t become closed with other cultures. That we open our minds. This is one of the important things. And respect each other. But it doesn’t matter the culture, because it can be Norwegian people. We must have respect. So it is open your mind, but keep the Convention in your mind, keep the law in your mind, and hear what the people say. Because we have a lot to learn with them. So I think that is one of the most important things... Try to learn everyday about the others and about yourself; yes, that is very important. Keep your mind open, but what is n yourself? Why do you become irritated with whatever; what is in the other culture that you don’t understand? Try to be curious. It is very important to be curious, to understand. Try to be clear when you say okay, but it is the best for your child. Why is it the best for your child?... So try to have a conversation that we understand together what is the best to the children”

12 Knowledge hierarchy	<p>PARENT 1:</p> <p>"I would say most parents have the best interest of their child at heart. So I say this because a friend of mine was in Bergen, I think, someone experienced with tow children and tried to get them in the bus, but one of the children was crying on the floor and she was telling the child "we have to go now, I'm begging" and the child refused, he wanted something, I don't know what. So at that point, she was desperate and just pulled the child into the bus while the child was protesting. And this Norwegian woman just saw her and rushed towards her to give some instructions and guidance on her child, and she got angry and told her to get lost. Because people sometimes, they interject into your problems and they tell you how to live your life and give you instructions because they think you don't have it, you don't know what to do. <i>It's where you're coming from. They think you've got it backward, you need to be instructed, or civilized so to say</i>"</p> <p>"They already mind up their mind on what they believe in their research, so they... started with a theory and then tried to fix their hypothesis, so this will happen. If you are brought up in this system and somebody like <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] wouldn't do any better than this narrow-minded, stereotypical way of doing things. <i>And somehow, they might claim that it is justified because it is for a good cause – protecting children – so that makes it justified.</i> But to me, there is no difference of who is at <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] – who does not think broadly, just rushes to this conclusion because of their mindset and ends up putting an innocent man in trouble, cutting them off from their children and just putting them in jail – there is no difference between that and a hard core racist from the deep south of the United States who decides to put a black guy in jail for talking to a white girl in the 60s or something like that and then manipulates some things to put them in jail. You know, there is no difference. One is hateful, <i>the other one is over zealous to help children, so to say, and starts to ignore common sense</i>"</p> <p>"The problem is this: social scientists in Norway, they are a bunch of mafia who simply have defined, you know, their own world and they have built castles in the air. And they are unwilling to subject what they think, the curricula, to international standards... People have taken time over years to study, to go through things, so they can't just simply reinvent a new world here, a new world that is completely contrary with what the rest of the world is saying or doing. They can't just do that. They just, you know, need to have people trained, properly trained, exposed, equipped, you know, go for event, go to conferences, interact with others, open their mind and see how best. It's not a crime if you are in a case to say "oh, I think it is beyond me. It's too big for me. My own sentiments involved...". Ask for help"</p> <p>"Before you can understand culture and appreciate culture, you have to get off your moral high horse. You have to stop thinking I'm the best, the civilized, and everyone coming in, you know, here needs to be civilized. You need to get off that. If you don't do that, there is no way of understanding; you are only going to condemn other cultures, telling them what they are doing is wrong. There is no perfect culture, there is no perfect system. I've always learned from other cultures, use common sense to find, you know, what is good, what is bad in a place. They can learn from cultures, they can learn from other systems. If you</p>
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don't understand a people, a culture, you get in there and you think something is wrong with them when nothing is wrong"

"Well, they have this gender equality in Norway, for goodness sake, that means if they hear other countries in Africa their women end up being harassed by the system, like men are by *barnevernet* in Norway. I'm not saying it is intentional, but yes. The men are the victims in a way of this incompetent system. So, if there was a country somewhere where women get at the wrong end of the stick of an incompetent system, Norway as a country would be out having outreaches, NGOs to help those women, you know. So the mystery of gender equality in Norway, what do they do? Don't they hear the stories? Don't they read? Do they think it's sufficient, it's okay, because men who are immigrants get more, the rough end of the deal. So that's why I think, I believe it, and I say it clearly, this country is full of hypocrisy"

[Despite international critique...] "nothing changes with the system in Norway... Norway, as a country, as a state, is nationalistic as any other country... They have their own branch of nationalism here in Norway, and that is what makes them immune to outside criticism"

PARENT 2:

"The mentality and cultural traditions are different from country to country. And, um, it is not always meant in violence, it can be just different traditions. For example, in Russia, it is more respect to adults. And, for example, my parents would expect that from their grandson, you know. And it doesn't mean that it is bad or good, it's just different. You can't expect everyone to become Norwegian suddenly once they cross the border. They still have their background and their traditions. And I know that some families from Africa it is not allowed for kids to look straight in the eyes of adults and it is only with showing respect. So here, it would create problems for them because Norwegians would expect that this kid is abused and that is why this kid cannot look into the eyes. And that would involve *barnevernet*. And that's why I think that the people who work in *barnevernet* should learn this differences. Because it is not always a good enough reason stress a child with picking him up and stress parents and ruin families. If you think about what is better for the child, then follow this route. The Norwegian way is not the only way in the world, they should accept this too"

PARENT 3:

"When I talk to my child, I must first check what the law says. I must check and behave according to the values here in Norway. In many ways the principles in *barnevernet* in theory are good, but in practice they can target different communities. It is very institutionalized"

"Norway is not a multicultural country yet – it is a multicultural country in the making. Here it is a homogenous society in perception. They have the perception of one culture and you have to in some way assimilate. Other cultures are not yet seen as developed"

"Here in Norway, people tell you that in Norway, we do it this way. It means that it is an assimilative system, even though in the regulation they take care of different cultures; but in practice, if you don't do it the Norwegian way, then you are the loser. It is silent assimilation. Because in nuances, small cultural

differences – for example, if you take a child playing football with a hijab or swimming with a burkini or now also the hijab of children at school – some political parties are trying to ban this one. Saying children are being oppressed with hijab, the rhetoric is that this doesn't belong here. What are we going to do? In institutions, it is assimilative. They have these rules, the rules are being set by those people, they are the majority... If you are assimilated, you have more opportunities. If a woman takes off her hajib, people will applause and think she is free. Those who keep their own values and cultures don't have the same support, resources, as those who are assimilated. If you do it the Norwegian way, you will succeed"

PRACTITIONER 2:

[Anything child welfare services does differently or take into consideration when working with these families] "Yes, it is a bit different. We are seventy people here, so different points of view. There are people, maybe, will be a little bit blind of culture and they want to say – no, it's culture, so they must do as we Norwegian and other ones who say we must respect their culture, so that is why we must do different. So it will be different ways of working, all of us. And other people try to have a balance between respecting the culture of the other ones, and maybe you can learn about Norwegian parenthood, so maybe it is the best for your children. So it's a little, different people work with different ways. But I believe here in Drammen, most are open mind, try to do open mind, because we have a lot of people from other countries. So it opens our mind to understand the other cultures. I believe so.

Also, some of us who work here, they are, I don't know how many of us who are from other *land* [countries] and can have this discussion with the others to help and see other points of view, and also respect. But it's a little up to *hver for seg* each one to understand or to respect the others"

PRACTITIONER 3:

"I know that it is tough to be an immigrant in Norway, and especially for those immigrants who had a lot, who've kind of lost what they have back home and just came here like that, really. I didn't go through that, so I don't know it is, but I've heard; and I've also seen that it is very challenging really. So that when they come in here, and again, I think that maybe this is someone that ought to be at work, but it actually struggling to get a job, and maybe someone with kids too who really don't have enough, they can't really participate in other kinds of activities just because of the economic situation, other things.

And then the language – and like – maybe the other things, like perhaps you would have been able to, or she would have been able to express herself better if she spoke better Norwegian or good English, you know.

Even with a translator, we use translators too, but again, there is something, you miss something a lot really when things are translated because we talk for like an hour and sometimes you don't really get the whole picture really. But it is good to use a translator, but it is just that sometimes I feel like you miss some other small things really, because when you translate it, you might not be in the same way that it's been told... You lose the essence there. But you know, I consider that.

	<p>I also consider the fact that they think because I sit here that I know it all, or already judge them as not being good parents, or like that, you know, so there are other things that I am also thinking about.</p> <p>I'm also thinking about their background too. That maybe if they come from societies where it is accepted to maybe hit the child, because – not because you want to hurt the child, but because you're trying to raise them some kind of corrective, a corrective function – if they come from that kind of society and maybe they do the same thing to their child really, and I'm thinking maybe they're doing the same thing that has been done to them...</p> <p>So I think that it is very challenging because there are lots of things to consider really... And again, I'm thinking that if people are afraid of you, or afraid of the system, so that they try to maybe withhold information, which I think is normal too – you don't go opening up to people you don't know, you don't know what the information may be used for later. But with time, you open up"</p> <p>"I think if we understand that not everyone who lives here is Norwegian because with other cultures can also function in this society and can actually raise their kids up here too. But the challenge remains that we, as social workers, also have to try to understand that even if it is not Norwegian, or as long as they don't do the same as we do, doesn't mean it is wrong. Not everyone sits at the table when they eat. Some people sit on the ground when they eat; some people prefer to sit on the ground when they eat. Some people, it is not very common to show affection for the child in other ways, but here it is shown in another way – but you know, I think we have to try to accept the difference really, and then, there will always be difference really. But again, like I said, because we – you know, like I told you earlier – to function in the society, there are some certain things that the kids, as in our kids really, the immigrant family kids who don't – I feel like they have to – when the parents know how to help the kids to be able to function in society, it will be very, very good for them later on because it is not like the same society that the parents grew up in. It is a different society that is very demanding. It is who you are, it is you – it is very individualistic. So it is not collective, so you don't go around depending or waiting for people; you have to set your own boundaries. You have to try out things – you have to be independent really. That is that it is. But it is not like that in other societies where, the setting is mom and dad who, you know, and then later on they let you go; here it starts much more earlier, you are free to go around, even as a child. Whereas other cultures, you know, they carry the baby until they are like ten months old. They are rarely on the floor. But it is not because they can't crawl, but just because you have to carry them, you still see them as a baby. But here, ten months already they are expected to follow this, and to do that, do that. So it is – for me it is very interesting to see the difference because of my background. I'm like yeah, but those kids that weren't able to crawl at ten months and all that – they are still doing fine. It is just a matter of what culture, or society you belong to really"</p>
13 Listening to the child	<p>PARENT 1: [What makes a good parent back home] "A good parent should always have a listening ear and try to understand their [the child's] needs and what they are saying. Ad something that I also think is important is that a good parent should have time to be a child with their children, to play with them at their own level. If that means playing on the carpet or the floor with them, it's at their level"</p>

PARENT 2:

"In Russia it is absolutely strict relationships of power and parents, parents decisions are not discussed with the kids. This is the decision and you should follow this. There is no discussion and no complaining. Here, since they're discussing and trying to make a common solution with the kids it is still a little – I'm trying – but sometimes it is hard to accept because to discuss with a 2.5 year old child, I try to explain to him a lot, but if he wants. And we have the discussion everyday now for 1.5 years an hour before going to bed that he should go to bed "Nei, [name of son] *leke, og mama leke*" [laughs]. But I am trying to find the solution. I am trying to make a choice without choices, because when he starts complaining about the hat, I give him two hats to choose from – similar – not a summer hat and a winter hat, but two winter hats and then he is choosing one and that is his choice. But sometimes, it is a little harder since I got used to more strict relations with the parents. But, no. This I actually like better, but I still think here it is maybe too free. Because sometimes kids are... less concentrated, less responsible"

PARENT 3:

"Practices [in parenting] have also changed. Some are positive and some are not positive. For example, in our culture we are a group oriented society. Family is very important. Parents have a special position, they have to be respected. Families deserve respect. The hierarchy is different. Usually, children are not allowed to criticize families, for example... Here they have to change, have to listen to children. Here, there is two-way communication. Communicating with the child is something good. But also, the negative thing is that children have unlimited rights in Norway so that immigrant families get scared from the laws – because they are immigrants and if they do something they might be targeted from *barnevernet*. There is extreme fear from *barnevernet* – it could be real or imaginary, but almost every family shares this perception. This might also affect the relationship between children and their families because the parents know their child is not behaving in a proper way, but they are afraid to correct them. The *barnevernet* listens to the child and takes the child without any hesitation... Child are perceived as never lying. True, but in what context... Children might lie to get what they want. Families are very afraid of *barnevernet*. They feel that their children will be taken one day. The school, the kindergarten, they follow the children very well. They ask for details for what has happened and construct – almost a form of espionage"

PRACTITIONER 3:

[Tensions in values] "There are lots of values – I wouldn't really say 'Norwegian values' – but more like, a thing as in rights of the child; how much do we have to listen to a child really. Because here, because of where I work too, everything a child says, we have to listen to a child first, you know. But again, if you come from somewhere else, there is so much disagreement as to what a child tells and sees – how much credibility one has to attach to things like that really. So there is a huge difference. But here we have the child's rights that is like, top most, so what the child says comes first and then we consider other things too. But, you know, when you belong to a collective society, it is not really the child who decides that much, it's really more mommy and daddy and everyone else, except the child so when you from that to this, it is a bit confusing for lots of kids really. That is my opinion"

	<p>"We have to listen to the child. The child has got to participate in every decision that concerns him or her. So that we have to talk to them. We have to find out what their needs are first, and then discuss with their parents. It is the child who is the main, um, how do you put it – user here. And then, we know that the family is also part of the child's life, so they also have to function too. So even though the child is our main user, we still have to collaborate with the parents too... So we talk to them [the children] on a regular basis to find out, how they think about their situation really. So we talk to them regularly and we listen to what they have to say before we consult with the parents"</p>
14 Feelings around child welfare services – negative connotations	<p>PARENT 1: [How do you perceive the child welfare system in Norway] "It is pure crap. First, I was disappointed recently to find out that the child welfare is kind of localized. I believe in localized government, but still there should be uniformity in the system, even if it is localized"</p> <p>"Beyond that, I think it is a bunch – from what I have experienced – it is just crap. Incompetent. People who are poorly trained, or simply not trained enough, or not trained at all, or who have just made up their minds on what they believe – then why are they pretending that they are doing an investigation?"</p> <p>"They already mind up their mind on what they believe in their research, so they... started with a theory and then tried to fix their hypothesis, so this will happen. If you are brought up in this system and somebody like <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] wouldn't do any better than this narrow-minded, stereotypical way of doing things. <i>And somehow, they might claim that it is justified because it is for a good cause – protecting children – so that makes it justified.</i> But to me, there is no difference of who is at <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] – who does not think broadly, just rushes to this conclusion because of their mindset and ends up putting an innocent man in trouble, cutting them off from their children and just putting them in jail – there is no difference between that and a hard core racist from the deep south of the United States who decides to put a black guy in jail for talking to a white girl in the 60s or something like that and then manipulates some things to put them in jail. You know, there is no difference. One is hateful, <i>the other one is over zealous to help children, so to say, and starts to ignore common sense</i>"</p> <p>"The problem is this: social scientists in Norway, they are a bunch of mafia who simply have defined, you know, their own world and they have built castles in the air. And they are unwilling to subject what they think, the curricula, to international standards... People have taken time over years to study, to go through things, so they can't just simply reinvent a new world here, a new world that is completely contrary with what the rest of the world is saying or doing. They can't just do that. They just, you know, need to have people trained, properly trained, exposed, equipped, you know, go for event, go to conferences, interact with others, open their mind and see how best. It's not a crime if you are in a case to say "oh, I think it is beyond me. It's too big for me. My own sentiments involved...". Ask for help"</p> <p>"Actually, in my own situation the police investigation had a very strong accusation. They accused <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] of putting words in the mouth of my daughter. They used the word "<i>forlede</i>", so <i>barnevernet</i> [child</p>

	<p>welfare services] led the child to say what they wanted her to say. And that shouldn't happen in the 21st century, in a country such as Norway that can afford every facilities, everything to make <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] function effectively. That shouldn't be the case, but unfortunately it is. And from my experience, nobody cares, nobody cares to make any reform in this direction"</p> <p>"In the situations when things are not so clear, I would recommend to stay with friends because <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] is there to generate business for themselves... If they have no case, they have no job, they will get laid off eventually. So they need to make cases. So I wouldn't recommend <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services], I would recommend starting with friends because no other organization is going to come in objectively and try to help. There might be some organizations; I wouldn't recommend them. Not when there is no clear lines on issues"</p> <p>"I get angry when I think about them, so I, I don't want to deal with those people again. As long as, I only deal with them as much as necessary. So in my life, whatever I do, I want to avoid them, because, first of all I'll tell you one of the reasons I get angry. Initially I thought they were neutral... until I realized that I have been blindsided without knowing anything going on"</p> <p>"I have seen so much unwillingness to ask questions, open their minds, to do, you know, to look at this objectively"</p> <p>"The whole system seems to be like a corrupt system. And what is the reason? A lot of things are there – stereotypes are there, people not just being 'switched on', not being competent enough in the system, in the eyes in the land of the blind – we have a saying, a common saying in Nigeria, which I think is worldwide, "in the land of the blind, a one-eyed man is king"... They are thinking in just one straight, narrow way"</p> <p>"Well, they have this gender equality in Norway, for goodness sake, that means if they hear other countries in Africa their women end up being harassed by the system, like men are by <i>barnevernet</i> in Norway. I'm not saying it is intentional, but yes. The men are the victims in a way of this incompetent system. So, if there was a country somewhere where women get at the wrong end of the stick of an incompetent system, Norway as a country would be out having outreaches, NGOs to help those women, you know. So the mystery of gender equality in Norway, what do they do? Don't they hear the stories? Don't they read? Do they think it's sufficient, it's okay, because men who are immigrants get more, the rough end of the deal. So that's why I think, I believe it, and I say it clearly, this country is full of hypocrisy"</p> <p>"You [should] start by being neutral. That is how you start. Okay, so that is my position. Who should have, who should they [the courts] listen to more? The police, who have a structure, or <i>barnevernet</i> who doesn't have anything, who is not listening to the rest of the world"</p> <p>PARENT 2:</p> <p>"I feel a little more stressed here [in Norway] with the system control, because I know, I heard a lot about this <i>barnevern</i> child support from Russia because they had some TV shows and I've heard some stories from my immigrant friends here,</p>
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	<p>but most of the stories end up good, so it was just – but anyway, I would be really stressed, with checking, for example, I wouldn't like, because of all these stories. And since I know a little how it works, I feel that I'm watched around from society, and that is a little stressful too. I put my boy in the car seat and he is complaining because he wants to go to the playground and I just brought him from there, and shouting and kicking of course and I still try to lock the belt and people around almost look inside to see what I am doing with my child. What can I do? It's just, so, that is a bit stressful. Because you never know who will complain and who will see your reason. I believe that they have nothing to suspect, but who knows, people are different and they can have different opinions, because of this and that is stressful"</p> <p>"I feel a fear, but that is the way I saw this, for example, in Russia there was a couple of TV shows about <i>barnevernet</i> with these horrible pictures of how they pick up the child and children screaming and mothers crying, so it is quite stressful pictures, and that is the picture which stuck in my head. So I actually was afraid of moving here. I saw these nightmares before the flight even, that they will pick up my child almost when I just leave the airport. It was horrible.</p> <p>But, my husband truly believes that nothing bad can ever happen because they are just doing their job and they are meant to be, to support actually, families to help families. So, for two years here I communicate with a lot of parents who had experience, because I did not have any experience with <i>barnevernet</i> myself, but I heard some stories from people who did. And, uh, it makes me a little more calm because some stories – some stories are scary and they might be a mistake, you never know because you don't know the second part, but it is scary – but most of the stories in some way they even helped a lot. That was they are meant to do"</p> <p>"I still have this uncomfortable feeling about <i>barnevernet</i>. But people say it, more and more often I hear on international forums that some people actually recommend to do so [going to child welfare services with familial problems]. At least this advice, I heard, not from my situation, but for others I've read on forums, and that makes me a little more calm also. That it is not only this scary picture, that it has another side and that it is actually meant to be a support and that you can get support there"</p> <p>"In Russia we have this child support, but their cases, you never know them. You never communicate with them if you're living a normal life... Here [in Norway] they are powerful to everyone; every person can be under suspicion and can be checked, that makes me feel uncomfortable of course. Because why should they check me? I'm a normal person. And sometimes I hear these strange reasons that they are checking. Like, somebody texted that a child has probably bad teeth because he drinks milk in the evening... It is strange reasons and that makes me uncomfortable because I don't know what people can think and I always should think about what people can think about it"</p> <p>PARENT 3:</p> <p>"Practices [in parenting] have also changed. Some are positive and some are not positive. For example, in our culture we are a group oriented society. Family is very important. Parents have a special position, they have to be respected. Families deserve respect. The hierarchy is different. Usually, children are not allowed to criticize families, for example... Here they have to change, have to</p>
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“One can sometimes consider *barnevernet* as an institution that has workers and is a business. It is ran by the state. But there are some interest groups in it also – people work, and they need cases; foster families are paid money for taking care of the child... It is very difficult. They have a benefit on making cases, because when a case comes they have to work on it and bring more jobs and projects to people and the institution must run. There are also interest groups here. Less consideration is given to families and more consideration is given to children and to the institution. They always try to defend the rights of the child and they are powerful – they have institutional power”

“You do things because you are afraid of the system. In one way, it is good, but in another way, you do things because you are afraid. Even in activities, families have to contribute or take part in activities – swimming, football. It is good for the kids, but in some families, there is pressure that the kid does not have enough activities. Maybe *barnevernet* can help you, but people don’t want this because it could lead to further investigation... Many immigrant families actually think to travel or to change from Norway because of *barnevernet*, when they get their passport... One reason could be for work or education, but one thing is that *barnevernet* is very scary”

“I have a friend who was a single father with children. He was going to school, he was a student. The money from working and going to school was not enough to care for the children in terms of activities. So he had no money, and he went to *barnevernet* and said he did not have enough money to cover the activities and they have taken his case and have helped him. They have many activities helping single mom or single dad or have economic problems... The problem is that problem have this negative image and even if they need help they don’t talk to *barnevernet* because it is perceived as something dangerous, because maybe they will create a case and take my kids. Not everything *barnevernet* does is bad, but with immigrants – people who have come from war – here, *barnevernet* is unfair and does not consider their situation. They cannot group together people who are university graduates and people who are illiterate and treat them the same”

PRACTITIONER 1:

“As far as interpretation goes – that one is so hard because it just depends on who you get [as an interpreter]. When you don’t speak the language, it’s not that

easy for you to do a control check on things. If things get lost, literally lost, in translation – because they do – I just think you have to move at a slower pace with these families and have a lower expectation. Not because you don't think that they can... present a change, but they can't meet that if you're expectations are the same as an ethnic Norwegian because they're not standing on the same foundation. Of course it's going to take a lot more for them. So, you just have to move slow, but that's not easy because we're literally overworked, we have too much, and we have deadlines, and I think that's what I'm saying is the way we do things, the laws and regulations, the whole system actually needs to change to adapt to the families that we actually see today and the problems... So the whole system actually needs to change"

"One thing that they do here which I really like is that we have this Introduction Center where they do Norwegian classes... We go in any new class and we do a half day presentation of Child Welfare Services and what happens. And then we sit down with the different groups, and if they have specific questions for us then they can sit and actually ask there – which I think is a good thing, to try to dispel also the myths the other way, that we're out there searching for children or, you know, going to all the neighbors and everything like that. Try to dispel some of those myths and rumors. So I do like that they at least do that outreach, so maybe they won't be totally scared of us, and the other way around when we meet"

PRACTITIONER 2:

[Myths or rumors] "Maybe because some of them have been in situations that were not clear or they were not satisfied. Because it is our job. It is hard for families to understand why and what are we doing. Yes. And the bad news goes faster than the good news. That's why we want to do those meetings. But not that we change our way of working. And there are so many people that come here and when it is the end of the process, they are satisfied, they think there was a good job, that we did work with them. Not for them, but with them. It's changing. I believe that it is changing. I see in my experience, nice faces, smiling faces after a while. But I can understand that to some people it is hard. A father or a mother, when we say "you are not able to take care of your children" – it is not easy to accept that. So I understand that. But it is our job to work with them and to help them see that I cannot, so no one help me in the situation, but it is our job. But I do believe that we are changing that, I do"

"We must go sometimes go to the *grunn*, what's the main job or why we do that job. Because of the Convention [on the Rights of the Child]. There is a law and the Convention. And so when sometimes we miss why we do, we must come to the principles of the Convention and the Norwegian *barnelov*, *barnevernetlov*. We can't miss that way of working"

PRACTITIONER 3:

"The media is also responsible here [for myths and rumors]. Because it is only when – like from my own experience really – it is only when there is something negative when you have a lot of people coming up and writing and telling stories really. What they don't – there is so much focus on the negative, people's negative experiences – and that is what sells, anyway. But those positive stories, we don't get to hear of them really. And we can't because of the nature of the job, we have to be very confidential with people's privacy here, so we can't go

	<p>out and be talking about things that we know... I think that there are people – as in we, social workers, who work in the system – who have come out and actually started talking about what we’ve seen. And we are just human beings really, you know, so I think we should start coming out and talking more about how we experience families, and how the media stories and the negativism, what it also does to people who apply for jobs here, who want to work here, who work in the services. So we should come out and talk more about it”</p> <p>“There was one mom that told me that, you know, when she goes into the door there and people see her and start thinking “oh, they are going to take your kid very soon” you know, like all that. Well at the end of the day, we didn’t do that. And it kind of made her realize that we do more than taking the child, which is the general belief of many people really. So we do other things. We actually give counseling, we help with other small things too, like trying to find the right body, or person, or organization to help them, you know, depending on the kind of problem. So we do more than taking custody of people’s children really. But it is just that, when people come in and are afraid already, then you just know, you have to be very patient and you have to spend up to like a year trying to convince them before they actually see that we all want the same thing. We want what is best for the child – you want what is best for the child and so do I”</p>
15 Uniformity within the child welfare system	<p>PARENT 1: [How do you perceive the child welfare system in Norway] “It is pure crap. First, I was disappointed recently to find out that the child welfare is kind of localized. I believe in localized government, but still there should be uniformity in the system, even if it is localized”</p> <p>“Of course each <i>kommune</i> [municipality] can always control their welfare, the project of child welfare, their administration, but then there would be a guideline, you know, an international standard. If someone comes in and says “this child has gone through this” you start by, you know, following some standards. That is the reason why we have standards all over the world, just to make sure that you follow them. Because people, you know, we have different feelings, different inclinations, sentiments, and these standards are meant to push away the sentiments and the feelings, and make us be objective. Yes, it is better when there is some uniformity, not some kind of strong control from the top, but some guidelines, some way of doing things that should constrain them into doing things objectively, which is not only good for people who have been falsely accused, it is also good for finding out the truth, you know, when something has gone wrong”</p> <p>PRACTITIONER 1: “I think the thing that I – from my perspective – that I find hard navigating for anyone working with families is that when you talk about children’s rights, we should be a lot more coordinated, just as a whole, when it comes to services we offer kids. We’re very much fragmented in where our services for children lie, and there’s no coordination between all those parts. And because that happens, I think sometimes a child misses out that doesn’t have their rights or their needs met because of that fragmentation within the system. So, conceptually, yes on paper, we do a very good job of speaking children’s rights, but I think that somehow gets a little lost in practice because the system isn’t coordinated enough to actually provide the backup for it. And that is one of my biggest frustrations between here and let’s say the US, where the US the child’s</p>

	<p>protective services is a lot more rules and laws and regulated – and it is here too – but there it is a lot more formalized, while here it is more individualized. So here it is individual, pretty much from <i>kommune</i> to <i>kommune</i>, and you can even find it within [Drammen <i>kommune</i>] because we’re like three different teams here, and how we do things here on my team, they could actually be doing something different, and we’re still the same <i>kommune</i>. But they might be providing the services differently, even though at the get-go we’re tasked to do the same job. But I didn’t see that as much in the US because it’s a lot more formalized down at this level”</p> <p>“I think minority families would perhaps find it easier to interact and deal with us if we had a system that was the same everywhere. That just because you live in this community and then you move and something is different – I think if we were more the same I think it would be easier for everyone”</p>
16 Objectivity – or lack of	<p>PARENT 1:</p> <p>“Beyond that, I think it is a bunch – from what I have experienced – it is just crap. Incompetent. People who are poorly trained, or simply not trained enough, or not trained at all, or who have just made up their minds on what they believe – then why are they pretending that they are doing an investigation?”</p> <p>“Of course each <i>kommune</i> [municipality] can always control their welfare, the project of child welfare, their administration, but then there would be a guideline, you know, an international standard. If someone comes in and says “this child has gone through this” you start by, you know, following some standards. That is the reason why we have standards all over the world, just to make sure that you follow them. Because people, you know, we have different feelings, different inclinations, sentiments, and these standards are meant to push away the sentiments and the feelings, and make us be objective. Yes, it is better when there is some uniformity, not some kind of strong control from the top, but some guidelines, some way of doing things that should constrain them into doing things objectively, which is not only good for people who have been falsely accused, it is also good for finding out the truth, you know, when something has gone wrong”</p> <p>“They already mind up their mind on what they believe in their research, so they... started with a theory and then tried to fix their hypothesis, so this will happen. If you are brought up in this system and somebody like <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] wouldn’t do any better than this narrow-minded, stereotypical way of doing things. <i>And somehow, they might claim that it is justified because it is for a good cause – protecting children – so that makes it justified.</i> But to me, there is no difference of who is at <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] – who does not think broadly, just rushes to this conclusion because of their mindset and ends up putting an innocent man in trouble, cutting them off from their children and just putting them in jail – there is no difference between that and a hard core racist from the deep south of the United States who decides to put a black guy in jail for talking to a white girl in the 60s or something like that and then manipulates some things to put them in jail. You know, there is no difference. One is hateful, <i>the other one is over zealous to help children, so to say, and starts to ignore common sense</i>”</p> <p>“The problem is this: social scientists in Norway, they are a bunch of mafia who simply have defined, you know, their own world and they have built castles in the</p>

	<p>air. And they are unwilling to subject what they think, the curricula, to international standards... People have taken time over years to study, to go through things, so they can't just simply reinvent a new world here, a new world that is completely contrary with what the rest of the world is saying or doing. They can't just do that. They just, you know, need to have people trained, properly trained, exposed, equipped, you know, go for event, go to conferences, interact with others, open their mind and see how best. It's not a crime if you are in a case to say "oh, I think it is beyond me. It's too big for me. My own sentiments involved...". Ask for help"</p> <p>"In the situations when things are not so clear, I would recommend to stay with friends because <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] is there to generate business for themselves... If they have no case, they have no job, they will get laid off eventually. So they need to make cases. So I wouldn't recommend <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services], I would recommend starting with friends because no other organization is going to come in objectively and try to help. There might be some organizations; I wouldn't recommend them. Not when there is no clear lines on issues"</p> <p>"I get angry when I think about them, so I, I don't want to deal with those people again. As long as, I only deal with them as much as necessary. So in my life, whatever I do, I want to avoid them, because, first of all I'll tell you one of the reasons I get angry. Initially I thought they were neutral... until I realized that I have been blindsided without knowing anything going on"</p> <p>"You expect them to be careful in their investigation, to be cautious, to have some doubt, to try to look at it in other ways. They wouldn't do that. Even when there are stories that have loopholes"</p> <p>"So they just focused on me because they saw me as a scapegoat, someone to look after, someone to build a case on, and they have not, in any way, said anything that would express, you know, doubt on the mother"</p> <p>"I have seen so much unwillingness to ask questions, open their minds, to do, you know, to look at this objectively"</p> <p>"This so-called '<i>sakkyndig</i>', whoever she pretends she is, never, never referred to this case [the police reports]. She didn't even include the police report and the tests, so you start to see how they could have missed something... She didn't do that. Because those things would not support her agenda"</p> <p>"First of all, she [the '<i>sakkyndig</i>'] claimed that my ex accused me of [accusation A], and so that was her focus. And then she went to the court and said it could be [accusation B]. So she added another dimension to it. Okay, that is okay to add another dimension. It is okay to add the options, add all the options. So what did she say? She added the options which were fit for that job to start with and she was so biased that she couldn't even think broad enough... Let's take it at face value. There could be multiple things causing similar results. So why focus on two things that make me look bad?"</p>
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	<p>“My concern is, I am not saying that they should come in and take my side. Come in and be objective. Do an objective, neutral job. Of course, it is a tough business, it is a tough business to handle”</p> <p>“You [should] start by being neutral. That is how you start. Okay, so that is my position. Who should have, who should they [the courts] listen to more? The police, who have a structure, or barnevernet who doesn’t have anything, who is not listening to the rest of the world”</p> <p>PARENT 3: “One can sometimes consider <i>barnevernet</i> as an institution that has workers and is a business. It is ran by the state. But there are some interest groups in it also – people work, and they need cases; foster families are paid money for taking care of the child... It is very difficult. They have a benefit on making cases, because when a case comes they have to work on it and bring more jobs and projects to people and the institution must run. There are also interest groups here. Less consideration is given to families and more consideration is given to children and to the institution. They always try to defend the rights of the child and they are powerful – they have institutional power”</p> <p>PRACTITIONER 1: [Things to keep in mind when working with people from other cultures] “An open mind. Yeah, open mind. Don’t get stuck in your own perspective. Don’t get stuck in your paradigm. And when I say ‘open mind’, be open that perhaps how you were raised or how you are raising your children isn’t necessarily the only way or the best way; that there actually can be other ways that are just as good and just as effective, even if it looks different and perhaps even scary because it is different than you yourself have experienced. So just, you have to have an open mind and not be judgmental. And then you have to just be willing to not quickly judge or make a judgment or decision about a family before you sort of taken the time to also learn those nuances in their culture and their perspective. And you know, keep in mind what was their journey, what has happened along the path to come here, what does daily life look like – think about all these other things, like the network, their finances, what are the stress factors, what are the positives”</p>
17 An open mind	<p>PARENT 1: “‘They already mind up their mind on what they believe in their research, so they... started with a theory and then tried to fix their hypothesis, so this will happen. If you are brought up in this system and somebody like <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] wouldn’t do any better than this narrow-minded, stereotypical way of doing things. <i>And somehow, they might claim that it is justified because it is for a good cause – protecting children – so that makes it justified.</i> But to me, there is no difference of who is at <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] – who does not think broadly, just rushes to this conclusion because of their mindset and ends up putting an innocent man in trouble, cutting them off from their children and just putting them in jail – there is no difference between that and a hard core racist from the deep south of the United States who decides to put a black guy in jail for talking to a white girl in the 60s or something like that and then manipulates some things to put them in jail. You know, there is no difference. One is hateful, <i>the other one is over zealous to help children, so to say, and starts to ignore common sense</i>”</p>

	<p>“The problem is this: social scientists in Norway, they are a bunch of mafia who simply have defined, you know, their own world and they have built castles in the air. And they are unwilling to subject what they think, the curricula, to international standards... People have taken time over years to study, to go through things, so they can’t just simply reinvent a new world here, a new world that is completely contrary with what the rest of the world is saying or doing. They can’t just do that. They just, you know, need to have people trained, properly trained, exposed, equipped, you know, go for event, go to conferences, interact with others, open their mind and see how best. It’s not a crime if you are in a case to say “oh, I think it is beyond me. It’s too big for me. My own sentiments involved...”. Ask for help”</p> <p>“I have seen so much unwillingness to ask questions, open their minds, to do, you know, to look at this objectively”</p> <p>“The whole system seems to be like a corrupt system. And what is the reason? A lot of things are there – stereotypes are there, people not just being ‘switched on’, not being competent enough in the system, in the eyes in the land of the blind – we have a saying, a common saying in Nigeria, which I think is worldwide, “in the land of the blind, a one-eyed man is king”... They are thinking in just one straight, narrow way”</p> <p>“First of all, she [the ‘<i>sakkyndig</i>’] claimed that my ex accused me of [accusation A], and so that was her focus. And then she went to the court and said it could be [accusation B]. So she added another dimension to it. Okay, that is okay to add another dimension. It is okay to add the options, add all the options. So what did she say? She added the options which were fit for that job to start with and she was so biased that she couldn’t even think broad enough... Let’s take it at face value. There could be multiple things causing similar results. So why focus on two things that make me look bad?”</p> <p>“They [child welfare services] should simply empty their minds [when working with people from other cultures or backgrounds]. They should empty their minds of prejudice, bias, and base things on facts, things that you can see. Of course, they are there to protect children... They should come with an open mind, a road mind”</p> <p>“They shouldn’t put someone who is not qualified on the case. If they do that, they should simply ask for help, and put someone new because it is a serious business. Seriously, they should invest every possible time and resource on that... They shouldn’t just take up cases that they couldn’t handle, couldn’t understand. And they should come with an open mind when they do this”</p> <p>PARENT 2:</p> <p>“The mentality and cultural traditions are different from country to country. And, um, it is not always meant in violence, it can be just different traditions. For example, in Russia, it is more respect to adults. And, for example, my parents would expect that from their grandson, you know. And it doesn’t mean that it is bad or good, it’s just different. You can’t expect everyone to become Norwegian suddenly once they cross the border. They still have their background and their traditions. And I know that some families from Africa it is not allowed for kids to look straight in the eyes of adults and it is only with showing respect. So here, it</p>
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would create problems for them because Norwegians would expect that this kid is abused and that is why this kid cannot look into the eyes. And that would involve *barnevernet*. And that's why I think that the people who work in *barnevernet* should learn this differences. Because it is not always a good enough reason stress a child with picking him up and stress parents and ruin families. If you think about what is better for the child, then follow this route. The Norwegian way is not the only way in the world, they should accept this too"

"To learn more about cultural difference. Try to look to the world a little more wider"

PRACTITIONER 1:

[Considerations when working with ethnic minority families] "Going and finding someone that knows the area where people are from that can give you some kind of cultural information. I think it is important for us to find workers that have knowledge and use them in the areas where they have the knowledge. And the going in with an open mind"

[Things to keep in mind when working with people from other cultures] "An open mind. Yeah, open mind. Don't get stuck in your own perspective. Don't get stuck in your paradigm. And when I say 'open mind', be open that perhaps how you were raised or how you are raising your children isn't necessarily the only way or the best way; that there actually can be other ways that are just as good and just as effective, even if it looks different and perhaps even scary because it is different than you yourself have experienced. So just, you have to have an open mind and not be judgmental. And then you have to just be willing to not quickly judge or make a judgment or decision about a family before you sort of taken the time to also learn those nuances in their culture and their perspective. And you know, keep in mind what was their journey, what has happened along the path to come here, what does daily life look like – think about all these other things, like the network, their finances, what are the stress factors, what are the positives"

"You have to go in with a mindset that even in the worst of things – even in the worst we can do to our children or to other human beings – that a human being sits across from you being an ethnic Norwegian or a minority, there is always, always going to be something positive about them. And not to lose that perspective. Because if you lose that perspective, then how can you expect to see a change or get a change out of people, if all you see is the negative and the differences. So it kind of goes back to having a very open mind I guess"

PRACTITIONER 2:

[Anything child welfare services does differently or take into consideration when working with these families] "Yes, it is a bit different. We are seventy people here, so different points of view. There are people, maybe, will be a little bit blind of culture and they want to say – no, it's culture, so they must do as we Norwegian and other ones who say we must respect their culture, so that is why we must do different. So it will be different ways of working, all of us. And other people try to have a balance between respecting the culture of the other ones, and maybe you can learn about Norwegian parenthood, so maybe it is the best for your children. So it's a little, different people work with different ways. But I believe here in Drammen, most are open mind, try to do open mind, because we

	<p>have a lot of people from other countries. So it opens our mind to understand the other cultures. I believe so.</p> <p>Also, some of us who work here, they are, I don't know how many of us who are from other <i>land</i> [countries] and can have this discussion with the others to help and see other points of view, and also respect. But it's a little up to <i>hver for seg</i> each one to understand or to respect the others"</p> <p>"The most impact that we develop, those who work here, they don't become closed with other cultures. That we open our minds. This is one of the important things. And respect each other. But it doesn't matter the culture, because it can be Norwegian people. We must have respect. So it is open your mind, but keep the Convention in your mind, keep the law in your mind, and hear what the people say. Because we have a lot to learn with them. So I think that is one of the most important things... Try to learn everyday about the others and about yourself; yes, that is very important. Keep your mind open, but what is n yourself? Why do you become irritated with whatever; what is in the other culture that you don't understand? Try to be curious. It is very important to be curious, to understand. Try to be clear when you say okay, but it is the best for your child. Why is it the best for your child?... So try to have a conversation that we understand together what is the best to the children"</p>
18 Intersecting identities	<p>PARENT 1:</p> <p>"So they just focused on me because they saw me as a scapegoat, someone to look after, someone to build a case on, and they have not, in any way, said anything that would express, you know, doubt on the mother"</p> <p>"Well, they have this gender equality in Norway, for goodness sake, that means if they hear other countries in Africa their women end up being harassed by the system, like men are by <i>barnevernet</i> in Norway. I'm not saying it is intentional, but yes. The men are the victims in a way of this incompetent system. So, if there was a country somewhere where women get at the wrong end of the stick of an incompetent system, Norway as a country would be out having outreaches, NGOs to help those women, you know. So the mystery of gender equality in Norway, what do they do? Don't they hear the stories? Don't they read? Do they think it's sufficient, it's okay, because men who are immigrants get more, the rough end of the deal. So that's why I think, I believe it, and I say it clearly, this country is full of hypocrisy"</p> <p>PARENT 2:</p> <p>"An immigrant family are from the start under bigger suspicion than Norwegian families. They give more attention to immigrants. And that probably because of, probably we have common propaganda, you know. In Russia, they show these horrible pictures about <i>barnevernet</i> that just picks up kids but here in the news I can read that Russia reduced penalty for home violence, of course it is common impression of each other. And since they read this huge article that Russia doesn't punish for home violence and with some scary numbers, they can think that home violence is normal in Russian families, right? They should check them more careful then since they live in Norway and raise kids here. So, yeah, they [immigrant families] have more attention, as I have heard"</p> <p>PARENT 3:</p> <p>"Maybe because we are immigrants – and in addition, I am a Muslim – so I have to be extra careful because I might be an easy target. There is a general</p>

	<p>perception that immigrants mistreat their children and bring their cultures. In some cases, it could be true, but not all of them”</p> <p>“Rights of the child and the woman – the law is always on their side. It is good, but it can sometimes split families and create misunderstanding”</p> <p>“I have a friend who was a single father with children. He was going to school, he was a student. The money from working and going to school was not enough to care for the children in terms of activities. So he had no money, and he went to <i>barnevernet</i> and said he did not have enough money to cover the activities and they have taken his case and have helped him. They have many activities helping single mom or single dad or have economic problems... The problem is that problem have this negative image and even if they need help they don’t talk to <i>barnevernet</i> because it is perceived as something dangerous, because maybe they will create a case and take my kids. Not everything <i>barnevernet</i> does is bad, but with immigrants – people who have come from war – here, <i>barnevernet</i> is unfair and does not consider their situation. They cannot group together people who are university graduates and people who are illiterate and treat them the same”</p>
19 Fear & myths	<p>PARENT 2:</p> <p>“I feel a little more stressed here [in Norway] with the system control, because I know, I heard a lot about this <i>barnevern</i> child support from Russia because they had some TV shows and I’ve heard some stories from my immigrant friends here, but most of the stories end up good, so it was just – but anyway, I would be really stressed, with checking, for example, I wouldn’t like, because of all these stories. And since I know a little how it works, I feel that I’m watched around from society, and that is a little stressful too. I put my boy in the car seat and he is complaining because he wants to go to the playground and I just brought him from there, and shouting and kicking of course and I still try to lock the belt and people around almost look inside to see what I am doing with my child. What can I do? It’s just, so, that is a bit stressful. Because you never know who will complain and who will see your reason. I believe that they have nothing to suspect, but who knows, people are different and they can have different opinions, because of this and that is stressful”</p> <p>“I feel a fear, but that is the way I saw this, for example, in Russia there was a couple of TV shows about <i>barnevernet</i> with these horrible pictures of how they pick up the child and children screaming and mothers crying, so it is quite stressful pictures, and that is the picture which stuck in my head. So I actually was afraid of moving here. I saw these nightmares before the flight even, that they will pick up my child almost when I just leave the airport. It was horrible.</p> <p>But, my husband truly believes that nothing bad can ever happen because they are just doing their job and they are meant to be, to support actually, families to help families. So, for two years here I communicate with a lot of parents who had experience, because I did not have any experience with <i>barnevernet</i> myself, but I heard some stories from people who did. And, uh, it makes me a little more calm because some stories – some stories are scary and they might be a mistake, you never know because you don’t know the second part, but it is scary – but most of the stories in some way they even helped a lot. That was they are meant to do”</p>

"In Russia we have this child support, but their cases, you never know them. You never communicate with them if you're living a normal life... Here [in Norway] they are powerful to everyone; every person can be under suspicion and can be checked, that makes me feel uncomfortable of course. Because why should they check me? I'm a normal person. And sometimes I hear these strange reasons that they are checking. Like, somebody texted that a child has probably bad teeth because he drinks milk in the evening... It is strange reasons and that makes me uncomfortable because I don't know what people can think and I always should think about what people can think about it"

PARENT 3:

"Practices [in parenting] have also changed. Some are positive and some are not positive. For example, in our culture we are a group oriented society. Family is very important. Parents have a special position, they have to be respected. Families deserve respect. The hierarchy is different. Usually, children are not allowed to criticize families, for example... Here they have to change, have to listen to children. Here, there is two-way communication. Communicating with the child is something good. But also, the negative thing is that children have unlimited rights in Norway so that immigrant families get scared from the laws – because they are immigrants and if they do something they might be targeted from *barnevernet*. There is extreme fear from *barnevernet* – it could be real or imaginary, but almost every family shares this perception. This might also affect the relationship between children and their families because the parents know their child is not behaving in a proper way, but they are afraid to correct them. The *barnevernet* listens to the child and takes the child without any hesitation... Child are perceived as never lying. True, but in what context... Children might lie to get what they want. Families are very afraid of *barnevernet*. They feel that their children will be taken one day. The school, the kindergarten, they follow the children very well. They ask for details for what has happened and construct – almost a form of espionage"

"Most of the information that you get [about Child Welfare Services] from people on the outside, that are traumatized by this system. People talk to each other about stories that *barnevernet* has taken their children. I had to check on my own and see that *barnevernet* also helps. They can help and intervene, not only take away. How many immigrants understand this positive part of *barnevernet*? They have the impression that they take away kids, and are traumatized"

"You do things because you are afraid of the system. In one way, it is good, but in another way, you do things because you are afraid. Even in activities, families have to contribute or take part in activities – swimming, football. It is good for the kids, but in some families, there is pressure that the kid does not have enough activities. Maybe *barnevernet* can help you, but people don't want this because it could lead to further investigation... Many immigrant families actually think to travel or to change from Norway because of *barnevernet*, when they get their passport... One reason could be for work or education, but one thing is that *barnevernet* is very scary"

"I have a friend who was a single father with children. He was going to school, he was a student. The money from working and going to school was not enough to care for the children in terms of activities. So he had no money, and he went to *barnevernet* and said he did not have enough money to cover the activities and

they have taken his case and have helped him. They have many activities helping single mom or single dad or have economic problems... The problem is that problem have this negative image and even if they need help they don't talk to *barnevernet* because it is perceived as something dangerous, because maybe they will create a case and take my kids. Not everything *barnevernet* does is bad, but with immigrants – people who have come from war – here, *barnevernet* is unfair and does not consider their situation. They cannot group together people who are university graduates and people who are illiterate and treat them the same”

PRACTITIONER 1:

“I mean, of course everyone's going to change because you'll have to adapt at some point. Even if you don't fully integrate or adapt, you're still going to adapt to some degree. If it is out of fear that you're going to get in trouble, or whatever, you're going to make some changes. So of course you're going to see some change”

“One thing that they do here which I really like is that we have this Introduction Center where they do Norwegian classes... We go in any new class and we do a half day presentation of Child Welfare Services and what happens. And then we sit down with the different groups, and if they have specific questions for us then they can sit and actually ask there – which I think is a good thing, to try to dispel also the myths the other way, that we're out there searching for children or, you know, going to all the neighbors and everything like that. Try to dispel some of those myths and rumors. So I do like that they at least do that outreach, so maybe they won't be totally scared of us, and the other way around when we meet”

“It comes down to how we as individuals meet the families. So, you know, if me and five other colleagues can go out to the Introduction Center, and we can have that, but if... they see more of their children maybe placed in care or feel like they get placed in care, we're not going to be able to bridge that gap that is happening. And, again, sometimes I think also, they always know – immigrant families always know other families, who know other families within their own minority group who have had children removed – and again, there's the different. Their community is so small, while the ethnic Norwegian's community is much larger and then the ethnic Norwegian's are going to be close-lipped about it, while they're not. So it becomes an issue where the myths are able to kind of stay alive”

“I've heard so many families now tell me that even when they were in the refugee camps, or wherever they were, that before even coming to Norway how they – once they knew or how they were provided information about how terrible our child welfare system is and how we're just out to get their children and how they have to be scared and how they have to do this, this and not this, this, this, and this. So some work, I think, is outside even the *kommune's* [municipality's] sort of ability – that it actually has to go more on the national level and even go out to those workers who go out into these camps even from the start of their journeys... because if already have that before they even arrive in this county, and then they meets lots of people, you know, because imagine an immigration center. Raising your child in an immigration center, it's not a natural environment to raise your child at all. So in some ways, I think *barnevernet* gets

	<p>involved a lot, even in the immigration center early on, because the parents from the journey that they come and then they're having to raise and live in an unnatural environment, and then, things can get viewed – I think – a bit wrongly. So then you keep adding on the misconception – so I don't really know what the solution is. I just think it has to be at a higher level than just at the <i>kommune</i> level. I think we can do better, more outreach, but I also think that it actually has to come higher and sometimes even before they actually start their journey”</p> <p>[Barriers in the child welfare system] “Well of course, one, because they have already these myths are rumors and being scared. They fact that they have to have interpreters, speak through interpreters – that’s a big barrier compared to an ethnic Norwegian family where you don’t have that... Some of these families are families that anything having to do with governmental people is very scary thing for them because of their own experiences of where they come from, so those are barriers”</p> <p>PRACTITIONER 2:</p> <p>“We here in Drammen, we try to have meetings with the different communities so they know what we are doing here because, yes, some people are afraid of what is going on with <i>barnevernet</i> because they take the children and so on, so it is a process we do here to have meetings with the different culture communities so they can ask us and they can have the information. Yes, we know that there are many things we must do, but we did start that process and it is really good process that we start so that people can see that we are not so bad. But we do that with the different communities in Drammen and it is very, very important that they see our faces and they can ask questions, so if they come here they won’t be terrified”</p> <p>[Myths or rumors] “Maybe because some of them have been in situations that were not clear or they were not satisfied. Because it is our job. It is hard for families to understand why and what are we doing. Yes. And the bad news goes faster than the good news. That’s why we want to do those meetings. But not that we change our way of working. And there are so many people that come here and when it is the end of the process, they are satisfied, they think there was a good job, that we did work with them. Not for them, but with them. It’s changing. I believe that it is changing. I see in my experience, nice faces, smiling faces after a while. But I can understand that to some people it is hard. A father or a mother, when we say “you are not able to take care of your children” – it is not easy to accept that. So I understand that. But it is our job to work with them and to help them see that I cannot, so no one help me in the situation, but it is our job. But I do believe that we are changing that, I do”</p> <p>PRACTITIONER 3:</p> <p>“The immigrant families, when they come here they are facing a lot of problems really. First there is the employment market, and then there is this fear for the child protective services really – you know, people are really afraid of us before they come to us really. But actually, I’ve been here for two and a half years now, and I’ve seen that with time people actually come to understand what we are trying to get them to understand with parenting... Like I said, people know or they’ve heard a lot about us and they come here very scared. So that much of the time you spend, like trying to make them understand, to calm down, to that level where you can actually work and interact properly with them without being,</p>
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how do I put it? Without being very, uh, trying to dominate over them, because if you like at it there, the parents know their children better than we do, yeah? But when we get to a mutual understanding and we try to make a change – and like I said that the cases I have, some of the cases, I’ve actually seen that when you start they’re not too sure, and there is so much skepticism, but with time they kind of understand that okay, this is what you’ve been trying to make me understand because, like, what I tell the families, especially the parents is that what we have back home, it is collectivism – or whatever – works very fine there, but here when the child grows up here with that kind of attitude or orientation it might cause problems. So that is what I talk about. That is what I preach really when I have a parent who, like immigrant families because **the point is not to change to accept Norwegian values, but to make small changes to that the kids who grow up here can function in society**. Because you can’t think collectivism if you want to live here. So that is what I try to talk about when I talk to the parents”

“But you know, there is so much fear, people are skeptic before they come, and people are angry. People come here, you come here because someone doesn’t, or thinks of you as a very bad parent. So you come prepared to convince them. But sometimes it’s not really the case, you know. Just can be some kind of misunderstanding. And most of the times, when we start talking we kind of understand, okay, yeah, it is just a misunderstanding really”

“The media is also responsible here [for myths and rumors]. Because it is only when – like from my own experience really – it is only when there is something negative when you have a lot of people coming up and writing and telling stories really. What they don’t – there is so much focus on the negative, people’s negative experiences – and that is what sells, anyway. But those positive stories, we don’t get to hear of them really. And we can’t because of the nature of the job, we have to be very confidential with people’s privacy here, so we can’t go out and be talking about things that we know... I think that there are people – as in we, social workers, who work in the system – who have come out and actually started talking about what we’ve seen. And we are just human beings really, you know, so I think we should start coming out and talking more about how we experience families, and how the media stories and the negativism, what it also does to people who apply for jobs here, who want to work here, who work in the services. So we should come out and talk more about it”

“Like I said, we try to go and talk to minority groups. So we go out and talk to them and we invite them here and hold lectures for them really. And I’ve also heard from a couple of the families that I’ve followed up with over the years, where they came, before I got them they came in very, very skeptical, and at the end even, it’s not as bad as I thought it was, really. It’s not that bad really... And it got me thinking, what did you really hear about us?”

“There was one mom that told me that, you know, when she goes into the door there and people see her and start thinking “oh, they are going to take your kid very soon” you know, like all that. Well at the end of the day, we didn’t do that. And it kind of made her realize that we do more than taking the child, which is the general belief of many people really. So we do other things. We actually give counseling, we help with other small things too, like trying to find the right body, or person, or organization to help them, you know, depending on the kind of

	<p>problem. So we do more than taking custody of people's children really. But it is just that, when people come in and are afraid already, then you just know, you have to be very patient and you have to spend up to like a year trying to convince them before they actually see that we all want the same thing. We want what is best for the child – you want what is best for the child and so do I"</p> <p>"I know that it is tough to be an immigrant in Norway, and especially for those immigrants who had a lot, who've kind of lost what they have back home and just came here like that, really. I didn't go through that, so I don't know it is, but I've heard; and I've also seen that it is very challenging really. So that when they come in here, and again, I think that maybe this is someone that ought to be at work, but it actually struggling to get a job, and maybe someone with kids too who really don't have enough, they can't really participate in other kinds of activities just because of the economic situation, other things.</p> <p>And then the language – and like – maybe the other things, like perhaps you would have been able to, or she would have been able to express herself better if she spoke better Norwegian or good English, you know.</p> <p>Even with a translator, we use translators too, but again, there is something, you miss something a lot really when things are translated because we talk for like an hour and sometimes you don't really get the whole picture really. But it is good to use a translator, but it is just that sometimes I feel like you miss some other small things really, because when you translate it, you might not be in the same way that it's been told... You lose the essence there. But you know, I consider that.</p> <p>I also consider the fact that they think because I sit here that I know it all, or already judge them as not being good parents, or like that, you know, so there are other things that I am also thinking about.</p> <p>I'm also thinking about their background too. That maybe if they come from societies where it is accepted to maybe hit the child, because – not because you want to hurt the child, but because you're trying to raise them some kind of corrective, a corrective function – if they come from that kind of society and maybe they do the same thing to their child really, and I'm thinking maybe they're doing the same thing that has been done to them...</p> <p>So I think that it is very challenging because there are lots of things to consider really... And again, I'm thinking that if people are afraid of you, or afraid of the system, so that they try to maybe withhold information, which I think is normal too – you don't go opening up to people you don't know, you don't know what the information may be used for later. But with time, you open up"</p> <p>"We all want the same thing: we want what is best for the child, really, and then the parents right? And I am here because I represent this body, really, but the parents – whatever job I'm going to do in the family, I have to do in collaboration with them. But when they meet me and they come in and they are already very, very skeptical and afraid, then there is a mismatch really, so then I have to use the time... to try to build the trust... which I think is very understandable because they've heard stories, and they've seen things that make them, or are giving them that kind of conclusion which is normal too"</p>
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20 Cross-cultural understanding	<p>PARENT 1:</p> <p>"Before you can understand culture and appreciate culture, you have to get off your moral high horse. You have to stop thinking I'm the best, the civilized, and everyone coming in, you know, here needs to be civilized. You need to get off that. If you don't do that, there is no way of understanding; you are only going to condemn other cultures, telling them what they are doing is wrong. There is no perfect culture, there is no perfect system. I've always learned from other cultures, use common sense to find, you know, what is good, what is bad in a place. They can learn from cultures, they can learn from other systems. If you don't understand a people, a culture, you get in there and you think something is wrong with them when nothing is wrong"</p> <p>"... A professor in international politics and one day, I listened to him and he said something really important. He said, before ever he starts to study any people, he begins with the language, and without understanding the language, you can never understand fully a culture or the people. Of course, that is not practical, it's not practical understanding language which means that whatever you do outside will be limited as far as understanding people is concerned"</p> <p>"The whole system seems to be like a corrupt system. And what is the reason? A lot of things are there – stereotypes are there, people not just being 'switched on', not being competent enough in the system, in the eyes in the land of the blind – we have a saying, a common saying in Nigeria, which I think is worldwide, "in the land of the blind, a one-eyed man is king"... They are thinking in just one straight, narrow way"</p> <p>"They [child welfare services] should simply empty their minds [when working with people from other cultures or backgrounds]. They should empty their minds of prejudice, bias, and base things on facts, things that you can see. Of course, they are there to protect children... They should come with an open mind, a road mind"</p> <p>"They shouldn't put someone who is not qualified on the case. If they do that, they should simply ask for help, and put someone new because it is a serious business. Seriously, they should invest every possible time and resource on that... They shouldn't just take up cases that they couldn't handle, couldn't understand. And they should come with an open mind when they do this"</p> <p>"Even if they try to work better with people from different cultures, I mean the effort may not be sufficient... So, I haven't noticed if there is anything in barnevernet, I haven't noticed and I think people involved are not interested [in adapting to work better with ethnic minority/migrant families]. They have their paycheck, they have their job, and they are immune more or less. It would take a lot of wrong doing for them to be chastised"</p> <p>"They should be held accountable, and given the proper training they need to be effective to do their job"</p> <p>"We like to talk about gender equality, gender balance in Norway; I would also say they should be ethnic balance in their cases. All of the people involved should have – and it doesn't mean that they should have someone from every ethnic group, that might not be realistic – but they should take some steps in what they</p>
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see and what they hear may be things that mean nothing. And I'm not saying – if something is bad, it's bad. If something is bad, there is nothing to argue. But sometimes, you think what is happening is not right, but it helps to see it from another perspective. For instance, Norwegians have this tradition of putting their children out in the snow to play – now someone might see that as torture somewhere, yeah?... They should try to understand somethings, some sentiments, what things mean"

PARENT 2:

"The mentality and cultural traditions are different from country to country. And, um, it is not always meant in violence, it can be just different traditions. For example, in Russia, it is more respect to adults. And, for example, my parents would expect that from their grandson, you know. And it doesn't mean that it is bad or good, it's just different. You can't expect everyone to become Norwegian suddenly once they cross the border. They still have their background and their traditions. And I know that some families from Africa it is not allowed for kids to look straight in the eyes of adults and it is only with showing respect. So here, it would create problems for them because Norwegians would expect that this kid is abused and that is why this kid cannot look into the eyes. And that would involve *barnevernet*. And that's why I think that the people who work in *barnevernet* should learn this differences. Because it is not always a good enough reason stress a child with picking him up and stress parents and ruin families. If you think about what is better for the child, then follow this route. The Norwegian way is not the only way in the world, they should accept this too"

"In Oslo there is one lawyer with Russian background, but she moved here I think when she was in school, so she graduated lawyer here and she works with *barnevernet* cases and she makes some seminars for Russian parents and Russian embassy to talk more about the system to calm down, to explain more about how you should react. Because we are, maybe our mentality, more emotional than Norwegians and when somebody blames you with something wrong and you know that you did not do so, Russians can react very emotional, like "how dare you, I would never do so to my child" and that is not normal reaction in Norway and that would create even more problems with in working authority. Because, you know, in Russia it is okay, everyone would understand, but here most likely they will not because they do not get used to such reactions"

"To learn more about cultural difference. Try to look to the world a little more wider"

PARENT 3:

"*Barnevernet* is missing this point [taking culture into account] totally. Those working in *barnevernet* and kindergartens – I don't know how many of them understand multicultural theories. How many working in *barnevernet* are aware of difference in other cultures? I think that *barnevernet* – what they should do is have rules, regulations, and they have the extra power to interpret articles as they wish. What does it mean that children should be protected? They follow these rules. But in these rules, people should understand cultural nuances. These nuances cannot be put into the rules, because they have these regulations and there would be contradictions. But in some situations that are not very serious, cultural nuances should be considered"

"I have a friend who was a single father with children. He was going to school, he was a student. The money from working and going to school was not enough to care for the children in terms of activities. So he had no money, and he went to *barnevernet* and said he did not have enough money to cover the activities and they have taken his case and have helped him. They have many activities helping single mom or single dad or have economic problems... The problem is that problem have this negative image and even if they need help they don't talk to *barnevernet* because it is perceived as something dangerous, because maybe they will create a case and take my kids. Not everything *barnevernet* does is bad, but with immigrants – people who have come from war – here, *barnevernet* is unfair and does not consider their situation. They cannot group together people who are university graduates and people who are illiterate and treat them the same"

"Here in Norway, people tell you that in Norway, we do it this way. It means that it is an assimilative system, even though in the regulation they take care of different cultures; but in practice, if you don't do it the Norwegian way, then you are the loser. It is silent assimilation. Because in nuances, small cultural differences – for example, if you take a child playing football with a hijab or swimming with a burkini or now also the hijab of children at school – some political parties are trying to ban this one. Saying children are being oppressed with hijab, the rhetoric is that this doesn't belong here. What are we going to do? In institutions, it is assimilative. They have these rules, the rules are being set by those people, they are the majority... If you are assimilated, you have more opportunities. If a woman takes off her hijab, people will applaud and think she is free. Those who keep their own values and cultures don't have the same support, resources, as those who are assimilated. If you do it the Norwegian way, you will succeed"

PRACTITIONER 1:

"As someone who has worked in child welfare in other countries and coming to Norway, I'm actually a bit disappointed with the system that we have – and specifically when it comes to our work with ethnic minorities. I think that at some levels they're trying to give the education and resources needed for someone to expand their knowledge of different cultures. But it's really behind the times, and it's, we're lacking people's understanding I think of where people come from and what they bring with them – for good or bad – when they enter of offices. I think we could do a much better job"

"Some of the things that are said by the immigrant family to us – unless you actually have sort of the background or specific knowledge of, just culturally, the cultural part – you could lose so much when you make your interpretation. Because in child welfare work, it's not black and white, it's just shades of gray that we work in, so it is really on the individual to sort of use their common sense in their interpretation of what's being said to them. But then, if you're lacking the cultural context which things are presented or said, you could lose a lot and quite significant – for both good and bad"

"The Norwegian workers are way – like I said – too kind; we pack in our words professionally and we try to give advice, but it's all so packed in that the meaning gets lost. And then we have expectations of them to meet our expectations, but they didn't really get the expectations to begin with because we use such high

	<p>professional language and packed it in – and then, through an interpreter. So it's sort of like the system is sort of bound to fail these families in some ways. And because we miss that cultural context part, when some of the things are said we could react very negatively, because we're looking at this through our own lenses of being ethnic Norwegians and this is how I grew up, this is what was expected of me, this is how a family works, you know, but you can't do that when you work with these families because they didn't grow up like you, they didn't have the same start, the same context as when you do things. And then when you add up not being direct enough, it's not good"</p> <p>"I try to figure out, okay, where is it that they're from? And once I know kind of the country or the area, I will – if I don't know it already – try to figure out the basics of it because I know that there is going to be things that I'm going to miss if I don't. It's just inevitable.</p> <p>I had a colleague who – I mean, it's just even as basic as this – I had a colleague once make a comment that he did a home visit and during his home visit, he just thought that house was kind of disgusting. But when he described the disgusting, it wasn't that the house was unclean or unkept or anything, but to him it had a very strong, pungent smell. But when you actually started asking him questions – and, well, what was the smell? I mean, this was an ethnic minority family, and basically, this was a family that comes from somewhere where in their cooking, versus ours, they use a lot of garlic, they use a lot of spices, and they also come from an area that because of their skin and haircuts and everything, they don't wash maybe every single day. Because where we want to wash it out, they want to wash the oil in. So it just becomes a difference, but you have to have the understanding that, okay, well, yeah this house wasn't unkept, it wasn't unclean, it wasn't disgusting. Yeah, it smelt different than what we are used to, but that doesn't mean that was really an issue"</p> <p>[Considerations when working with ethnic minority families] "Going and finding someone that knows the area where people are from that can give you some kind of cultural information. I think it is important for us to find workers that have knowledge and use them in the areas where they have the knowledge. And the going in with an open mind"</p> <p>"One thing that they do here which I really like is that we have this Introduction Center where they do Norwegian classes... We go in any new class and we do a half day presentation of Child Welfare Services and what happens. And then we sit down with the different groups, and if they have specific questions for us then they can sit and actually ask there – which I think is a good thing, to try to dispel also the myths the other way, that we're out there searching for children or, you know, going to all the neighbors and everything like that. Try to dispel some of those myths and rumors. So I do like that they at least do that outreach, so maybe they won't be totally scared of us, and the other way around when we meet"</p> <p>[Things to keep in mind when working with people from other cultures] "An open mind. Yeah, open mind. Don't get stuck in your own perspective. Don't get stuck in your paradigm. And when I say 'open mind', be open that perhaps how you were raised or how you are raising your children isn't necessarily the only way or the best way; that there actually can be other ways that are just as good and just as effective, even if it looks different and perhaps even scary because it is</p>
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different than you yourself have experienced. So just, you have to have an open mind and not be judgmental. And then you have to just be willing to not quickly judge or make a judgment or decision about a family before you sort of taken the time to also learn those nuances in their culture and their perspective. And you know, keep in mind what was their journey, what has happened along the path to come here, what does daily life look like – think about all these other things, like the network, their finances, what are the stress factors, what are the positives”

“You have to go in with a mindset that even in the worst of things – even in the worst we can do to our children or to other human beings – that a human being sits across from you being an ethnic Norwegian or a minority, there is always, always going to be something positive about them. And not to lose that perspective. Because if you lose that perspective, then how can you expect to see a change or get a change out of people, if all you see is the negative and the differences. So it kind of goes back to having a very open mind I guess”

PRACTITIONER 2:

“I believe the values are the same. I believe so. The differences I’ve experienced in other countries and the problems are almost the same. But the values are the same. So just, when you get knowing to the people [once you get to know the people], if you will be blind with the problems people have with raising the child, I don’t think it’s really culture. We will be a little bit blind and say, it’s culture, that is why they do that, but we go deeper, we can see the values, and the values – I believe – are almost the same in all human kind... But these *som* are *ikke* the same values, that is not because they are Norwegian, or they from Africa, Kenya, or if they are from Colombia, but because they have different values. But not because of culture. That’s what I believe”

[Anything child welfare services does differently or take into consideration when working with these families] “Yes, it is a bit different. We are seventy people here, so different points of view. There are people, maybe, will be a little bit blind of culture and they want to say – no, it’s culture, so they must do as we Norwegian and other ones who say we must respect their culture, so that is why we must do different. So it will be different ways of working, all of us. And other people try to have a balance between respecting the culture of the other ones, and maybe you can learn about Norwegian parenthood, so maybe it is the best for your children. So it’s a little, different people work with different ways. But I believe here in Drammen, most are open mind, try to do open mind, because we have a lot of people from other countries. So it opens our mind to understand the other cultures. I believe so.

Also, some of us who work here, they are, I don’t know how many of us who are from other *land* [countries] and can have this discussion with the others to help and see other points of view, and also respect. But it’s a little up to *hver for seg* each one to understand or to respect the others”

[Having colleagues from different places helpful in doing work] “It is a little more color. And we can – it’s both ways. For me, I’m not a Norwegian, I can learn with them why do they do what they do. And also, the other way. That they can hear from me or the other colleagues that come from other countries. So it is very rich

	<p>that can have the best from different countries, not the worst, but the best from several countries”</p> <p>“I try to understand and see the people who are in front of me and try to respect them and see the body language, and if I see that they are uncomfortable – maybe because I know in my mind that I didn’t realize – I try to ask them and try to understand them. If they no defense but it is my culture, I try to understand. Will you be kind and [try to help] me understand what is going on? But I believe that I’ve been long in my country with my culture, so it’s <i>veldig påvirket</i> [very influenced] of what is going on the TV and what is going on, so we have those ideas. So I used to ask myself – but not always I can – he’s a Muslim, he’s a bad guy? No. And if I have in my mind and it is not clear [in the subconscious], if I see that they’re uncomfortable; okay, can you tell me what is going on? Can you tell me did I not understand or respect? So that’s why. But we have sometimes deep in our heads, the bad ideas, bad thoughts about people [subconscious bias influenced by the media]”</p> <p>“We here in Drammen, we try to have meetings with the different communities so they know what we are doing here because, yes, some people are afraid of what is going on with <i>barnevernet</i> because they take the children and so on, so it is a process we do here to have meetings with the different culture communities so they can ask us and they can have the information. Yes, we know that there are many things we must do, but we did start that process and it is really good process that we start so that people can see that we are not so bad. But we do that with the different communities in Drammen and it is very, very important that they see our faces and they can ask questions, so if they come here they won’t be terrified”</p> <p>“Respect. Okay, there are a lot of things. But respect, I think it is the best word, or one of the best words. And here what they say. It is in the respect. Respect is hear what you say, so it is one part of this”</p> <p>“The most impact that we develop, those who work here, they don’t become closed with other cultures. That we open our minds. This is one of the important things. And respect each other. But it doesn’t matter the culture, because it can be Norwegian people. We must have respect. So it is open your mind, but keep the Convention in your mind, keep the law in your mind, and hear what the people say. Because we have a lot to learn with them. So I think that is one of the most important things... Try to learn everyday about the others and about yourself; yes, that is very important. Keep your mind open, but what is n yourself? Why do you become irritated with whatever; what is in the other culture that you don’t understand? Try to be curious. It is very important to be curious, to understand. Try to be clear when you say okay, but it is the best for your child. Why is it the best for your child?... So try to have a conversation that we understand together what is the best to the children”</p> <p>PRACTITIONER 3:</p> <p>“I, for one, I see – and again because of my background – I see that what it terms of expectations, there are lots of expectations like how much a child should do at home as opposed to how much a parent should do, right? Who is responsible for that. Me as a child, I had responsibility for picking up the younger ones at school, the kindergarten, you know, all of the time. But here, I mean, it is not really a</p>
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	<p>child's duty, it's a parental duty to try and pick up the child... so that there is a clear cut – how do I put it – roles here for what a child does as opposed to what a parent should do. So that is different. And for me, working where I do today, I see that and it is very clear really. There are different ways of bringing up a child, depending on where you come from”</p> <p>“I know that it is tough to be an immigrant in Norway, and especially for those immigrants who had a lot, who've kind of lost what they have back home and just came here like that, really. I didn't go through that, so I don't know it is, but I've heard; and I've also seen that it is very challenging really. So that when they come in here, and again, I think that maybe this is someone that ought to be at work, but it actually struggling to get a job, and maybe someone with kids too who really don't have enough, they can't really participate in other kinds of activities just because of the economic situation, other things.</p> <p>And then the language – and like – maybe the other things, like perhaps you would have been able to, or she would have been able to express herself better if she spoke better Norwegian or good English, you know.</p> <p>Even with a translator, we use translators too, but again, there is something, you miss something a lot really when things are translated because we talk for like an hour and sometimes you don't really get the whole picture really. But it is good to use a translator, but it is just that sometimes I feel like you miss some other small things really, because when you translate it, you might not be in the same way that it's been told... You lose the essence there. But you know, I consider that.</p> <p>I also consider the fact that they think because I sit here that I know it all, or already judge them as not being good parents, or like that, you know, so there are other things that I am also thinking about.</p> <p>I'm also thinking about their background too. That maybe if they come from societies where it is accepted to maybe hit the child, because – not because you want to hurt the child, but because you're trying to raise them some kind of corrective, a corrective function – if they come from that kind of society and maybe they do the same thing to their child really, and I'm thinking maybe they're doing the same thing that has been done to them...</p> <p>So I think that it is very challenging because there are lots of things to consider really... And again, I'm thinking that if people are afraid of you, or afraid of the system, so that they try to maybe withhold information, which I think is normal too – you don't go opening up to people you don't know, you don't know what the information may be used for later. But with time, you open up”</p> <p>“I think if we understand that not everyone who lives here is Norwegian because with other cultures can also function in this society and can actually raise their kids up here too. But the challenge remains that we, as social workers, also have to try to understand that even if it is not Norwegian, or as long as they don't do the same as we do, doesn't mean it is wrong. Not everyone sits at the table when they eat. Some people sit on the ground when they eat; some people prefer to sit on the ground when they eat. Some people, it is not very common to show affection for the child in other ways, but here it is shown in another way – but</p>
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	<p>you know, I think we have to try to accept the difference really, and then, there will always be difference really. But again, like I said, because we – you know, like I told you earlier – to function in the society, there are some certain things that the kids, as in our kids really, the immigrant family kids who don't – I feel like they have to – when the parents know how to help the kids to be able to function in society, it will be very, very good for them later on because it is not like the same society that the parents grew up in. It is a different society that is very demanding. It is who you are, it is you – it is very individualistic. So it is not collective, so you don't go around depending or waiting for people; you have to set your own boundaries. You have to try out things – you have to be independent really. That is that it is. But it is not like that in other societies where, the setting is mom and dad who, you know, and then later on they let you go; here it starts much more earlier, you are free to go around, even as a child. Whereas other cultures, you know, they carry the baby until they are like ten months old. They are rarely on the floor. But it is not because they can't crawl, but just because you have to carry them, you still see them as a baby. But here, ten months already they are expected to follow this, and to do that, do that. So it is – for me it is very interesting to see the difference because of my background. I'm like yeah, but those kids that weren't able to crawl at ten months and all that – they are still doing fine. It is just a matter of what culture, or society you belong to really”</p> <p>“I think that the fact that I have a job here should also attest [to ways that Child Welfare Services is adapting to be more multicultural friendly] to that, because it just shows that there is starting to be acceptance that others – there are other Norwegians who aren't, I won't say “ethnic” but other cultures really. So that is the reason why I have my job today, because it has become some kind of acceptance for the fact that, yeah, it is starting to become very, very multicultural here in Norway and especially here in Drammen too. And then again, not just me, but several of my colleagues too who have minority backgrounds. And I see that when we talk about cases here too, we try to talk about the cultural differences too. And also when we look for placement homes too, we try to see if there is any way we can match up with the background of the child, really... I think that is very good”</p>
21 Social network	<p>PARENT 1:</p> <p>“What I have noticed is not to take it to heart if I send a message to someone who is a good friend and they do not respond, even when they should be responding. I just realized why it happens, people don't always respond, they want to stay a bit away sometimes from you so that is something that I have kind of adapted to. Because it is strange, you know, because close friends stick together and they interact, and they always are there for each other. Here it is something different”</p> <p>“In the situations when things are not so clear, I would recommend to stay with friends because <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] is there to generate business for themselves... If they have no case, they have no job, they will get laid off eventually. So they need to make cases. So I wouldn't recommend <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services], I would recommend starting with friends because no other organization is going to come in objectively and try to help. There might be some organizations; I wouldn't recommend them. Not when there is no clear lines on issues”</p>

PRACTITIONER 1:

“Well, first of all, most immigrant families don’t have a big social network. Right? They are more isolated than your typical Norwegian family. Norwegians, we don’t move, migrate as much. So you know, we – I mean my family is a great example, except for me who’s been everywhere – but my kind of core family and extended family, we have all grown up in just three towns around here. And so, the migration hasn’t happened for Norwegians. So they [Norwegians] usually have a bigger social network that they can rely on and tap into for help when things get difficult, while an immigrant family won’t have that and they are usually connected with other immigrant families who are also struggling, sort of with the same thing of lack of a social network to kind of be their safety net. So of course that impacts things”

“Here you have a Norwegian family – stable finances, they know the language, they know where they belong, they have a huge social network, they have a stability, they don’t have the exposure to all of the traumas – and then here you have an immigrant family that lacks access to jobs, financial issues, lots of traumas, no social network. I mean, they don’t even have the initial same starting points really. No. And I think that’s what makes it extra hard when we encounter these families because the expectations are set on the average, the norm, right? Which is the Norwegian family. And then all the sort of things that we expect to see – but with an immigrant family, we really cannot expect to see the same and expect them to meet the same level when they enter our door, because the starting points are completely different”

“I think they’re [ethnic minority parents are] really, really good at using – you know, they have a small social network, but if they happen to have some of their family or have connected, I think that they’re much better at reaching out in their community and in their family to get support in the situation that they might find themselves in, then maybe an ethnic Norwegian who kind of wants to keep everything within the four walls, so to speak, of their house”

[Things to keep in mind when working with people from other cultures] “An open mind. Yeah, open mind. Don’t get stuck in your own perspective. Don’t get stuck in your paradigm. And when I say ‘open mind’, be open that perhaps how you were raised or how you are raising your children isn’t necessarily the only way or the best way; that there actually can be other ways that are just as good and just as effective, even if it looks different and perhaps even scary because it is different than you yourself have experienced. So just, you have to have an open mind and not be judgmental. And then you have to just be willing to not quickly judge or make a judgment or decision about a family before you sort of taken the time to also learn those nuances in their culture and their perspective. And you know, keep in mind what was their journey, what has happened along the path to come here, what does daily life look like – think about all these other things, like the network, their finances, what are the stress factors, what are the positives”

PRACTITIONER 3:

“There is this other thing too, I think is the social network. They have a very limited social network and sometimes, you know, it could just be the key. So that is a challenge... The part with the social network is the greatest difference you find because it is something when you can just call your mom, brother, your

	<p>auntie to help you pick up your child when you are running late from work, or looking for somewhere where the kids can go for the weekend, for example, you know? Or someone that can just come by and help you do one or two things when you are not feeling fine. So that is a difference”</p>
22 Collectivism	<p>PARENT 3: “Practices [in parenting] have also changed. Some are positive and some are not positive. For example, in our culture we are a group oriented society. Family is very important. Parents have a special position, they have to be respected. Families deserve respect. The hierarchy is different. Usually, children are not allowed to criticize families, for example... Here they have to change, have to listen to children. Here, there is two-way communication. Communicating with the child is something good. But also, the negative thing is that children have unlimited rights in Norway so that immigrant families get scared from the laws – because they are immigrants and if they do something they might be targeted from <i>barnevernet</i>. There is extreme fear from <i>barnevernet</i> – it could be real or imaginary, but almost every family shares this perception. This might also affect the relationship between children and their families because the parents know their child is not behaving in a proper way, but they are afraid to correct them. The <i>barnevernet</i> listens to the child and takes the child without any hesitation... Child are perceived as never lying. True, but in what context... Children might lie to get what they want. Families are very afraid of <i>barnevernet</i>. They feel that their children will be taken one day. The school, the kindergarten, they follow the children very well. They ask for details for what has happened and construct – almost a form of espionage”</p> <p>PRACTITIONER 1: “In general I would have to say that immigrant families – or people that I have dealt with from African countries anyways – they are much better at trying to take care of their own. Taking care of their own families... They don’t necessarily make decisions individually, as people. So I think they have a hard time looking at how we have our families built where we’re – it’s like, well this is our core family and the mom or the dad make the decisions and they don’t have to ask or take into consideration their elders”</p> <p>PRACTITIONER 3: “I’m also an immigrant myself and you see that the way that I perceive parenting is also from my background too. And, it’s like you said, the way I’m thinking is not like it is here [in Norway] before most cultures – mine included – are more collective, so it is not just mom and dad as parents, not just two people who are responsible for the child, it is all the aunties, uncles, and every other person, but here it is just the mom and dad... So it is different, it is different really in terms of who does what”</p> <p>[Tensions in values] “There are lots of values – I wouldn’t really say ‘Norwegian values’ – but more like, a thing as in rights of the child; how much do we have to listen to a child really. Because here, because of where I work too, everything a child says, we have to listen to a child first, you know. But again, if you come from somewhere else, there is so much disagreement as to what a child tells and sees – how much credibility one has to attach to things like that really. So there is a huge difference. But here we have the child’s rights that is like, top most, so what the child says comes first and then we consider other things too. But, you know, when you belong to a collective society, it is not really the child who</p>

	<p>decides that much, it's really more mommy and daddy and everyone else, except the child so when you from that to this, it is a bit confusing for lots of kids really. That is my opinion"</p> <p>"The immigrant families, when they come here they are facing a lot of problems really. First there is the employment market, and then there is this fear for the child protective services really – you know, people are really afraid of us before they come to us really. But actually, I've been here for two and a half years now, and I've seen that with time people actually come to understand what we are trying to get them to understand with parenting... Like I said, people know or they've heard a lot about us and they come here very scared. So that much of the time you spend, like trying to make them understand, to calm down, to that level where you can actually work and interact properly with them without being, how do I put it? Without being very, uh, trying to dominate over them, because if you like at it there, the parents know their children better than we do, yeah? But when we get to a mutual understanding and we try to make a change – and like I said that the cases I have, some of the cases, I've actually seen that when you start they're not too sure, and there is so much skepticism, but with time they kind of understand that okay, this is what you've been trying to make me understand because, like, what I tell the families, especially the parents is that what we have back home, it is collectivism – or whatever – works very fine there, but here when the child grows up here with that kind of attitude or orientation it might cause problems. So that is what I talk about. That is what I preach really when I have a parent who, like immigrant families because the point is not to change to accept Norwegian values, but to make small changes to that the kids who grow up here can function in society. Because you can't think collectivism if you want to live here. So that is what I try to talk about when I talk to the parents"</p> <p>"I think if we understand that not everyone who lives here is Norwegian because with other cultures can also function in this society and can actually raise their kids up here too. But the challenge remains that we, as social workers, also have to try to understand that even if it is not Norwegian, or as long as they don't do the same as we do, doesn't mean it is wrong. Not everyone sits at the table when they eat. Some people sit on the ground when they eat; some people prefer to sit on the ground when they eat. Some people, it is not very common to show affection for the child in other ways, but here it is shown in another way – but you know, I think we have to try to accept the difference really, and then, there will always be difference really. But again, like I said, because we – you know, like I told you earlier – to function in the society, there are some certain things that the kids, as in our kids really, the immigrant family kids who don't – I feel like they have to – when the parents know how to help the kids to be able to function in society, it will be very, very good for them later on because it is not like the same society that the parents grew up in. It is a different society that is very demanding. It is who you are, it is you – it is very individualistic. So it is not collective, so you don't go around depending or waiting for people; you have to set your own boundaries. You have to try out things – you have to be independent really. That is that it is. But it is not like that in other societies where, the setting is mom and dad who, you know, and then later on they let you go; here it starts much more earlier, you are free to go around, even as a child. Whereas other cultures, you know, they carry the baby until they are like ten months old. They are rarely on the floor. But it is not because they can't crawl,</p>
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	<p>but just because you have to carry them, you still see them as a baby. But here, ten months already they are expected to follow this, and to do that, do that. So it is – for me it is very interesting to see the difference because of my background. I’m like yeah, but those kids that weren’t able to crawl at ten months and all that – they are still doing fine. It is just a matter of what culture, or society you belong to really”</p>
23 Lack of accountability for child welfare services’ actions	<p>PARENT 1: “Time will tell if what they [child welfare services] are doing is right or not. Already there is kind of a backlash against <i>barnevernet</i> [child welfare services] in Norway, even with Norwegians against themselves. Some of them don’t have any regard for <i>barnevernet</i>. Even someone told me that, he said if you complain about <i>barnevernet</i>, who are you going to complain to?”</p> <p>“The threshold for suing <i>barnevernet</i> or any of these groups is just too low, in a way. They will always claims that they are out fighting for children, you know”</p> <p>“Even if they try to work better with people from different cultures, I mean the effort may not be sufficient... So, I haven’t noticed if there is anything in <i>barnevernet</i>, I haven’t noticed and I think people involved are not interested [in adapting to work better with ethnic minority/migrant families]. They have their paycheck, they have their job, and they are immune more or less. It would take a lot of wrong doing for them to be chastised”</p> <p>“They should be held accountable, and given the proper training they need to be effective to do their job”</p> <p>PARENT 3: “How can you prove that <i>barnevernet</i> is unfair? They are very powerful. They can exaggerate a small mistake and you cannot protest”</p>
24 Lack of information	<p>PARENT 1: “In Norway, information is hidden actually in general, so if you don’t know where to ask, how to ask, you might miss some information that you need to get things done. But <i>barnevernet</i>, they should be obliged to provide clear, precise information about what is happening, state what is going on, and so on and so forth. Which I don’t think they are doing, at least from my experience”</p> <p>PARENT 2: [Are there other ways that you’ve gotten information about <i>barnevernet</i>?] “We got commercial in our mail about this foster families they’re called. So you can apply to be this foster parent and how much does it cost to have an adopted child at home, because they’re paying for support. But I think that is the only”</p> <p>“In Oslo there is one lawyer with Russian background, but she moved here I think when she was in school, so she graduated lawyer here and she works with <i>barnevernet</i> cases and she makes some seminars for Russian parents and Russian embassy to talk more about the system to calm down, to explain more about how you should react. Because we are, maybe our mentality, more emotional than Norwegians and when somebody blames you with something wrong and you know that you did not do so, Russians can react very emotional, like “how dare you, I would never do so to my child” and that is not normal reaction in Norway and that would create even more problems with in working authority.</p>

Because, you know, in Russia it is okay, everyone would understand, but here most likely they will not because they do not get used to such reactions”

PARENT 3:

[Being a good parent in Norway] “Have to be careful of the law. Must understand and follow the law. The law is very strict. Not every immigrant understands what the law says. Many do not have knowledge about the law – they cannot read, they lack information. They get general information in the reception centers, but Norwegian norms are not described intensively”

“I know also some families who have lost their children because they don’t have access to the information – what is right and what is wrong. It could be their ignorance to the law, their background – because there is no warning... In some cases, of course you have to intervene. But in some cases, you have to give warning to some families. Warning is very important... Parents who come from war areas might need warning and help, not just getting their kids taken away. Many families do not know the consequences of their behavior, especially those who have a difficult background – illiterate, for example. Some of these families have lost their children because they don’t understand the consequences. The system here is not doing so much in informing those people in a very detailed way. Educating parents – not late, but early. Telling them immediately when they come to Norway. They do not understand just once, need in a repetitive way. People do not understand the details of the law”

“Most of the information that you get [about Child Welfare Services] from people on the outside, that are traumatized by this system. People talk to each other about stories that *barnevernet* has taken their children. I had to check on my own and see that *barnevernet* also helps. They can help and intervene, not only take away. How many immigrants understand this positive part of *barnevernet*? They have the impression that they take away kids, and are traumatized”

“I think the Norwegian government should invest on a project to tell, educate, and inform families more. Not only once, but must contribute more. They have to map also why people behave in the way that they are behaving – people think what they are doing is right. The system must talk to them that the values are different... So they have to invest more – especially on people who need that information. Illiterate people, for example, information should be given to them with a translator”

PRACTITIONER 1:

“One thing that they do here which I really like is that we have this Introduction Center where they do Norwegian classes... We go in any new class and we do a half day presentation of Child Welfare Services and what happens. And then we sit down with the different groups, and if they have specific questions for us then they can sit and actually ask there – which I think is a good thing, to try to dispel also the myths the other way, that we’re out there searching for children or, you know, going to all the neighbors and everything like that. Try to dispel some of those myths and rumors. So I do like that they at least do that outreach, so maybe they won’t be totally scared of us, and the other way around when we meet”

“I’ve heard so many families now tell me that even when they were in the refugee camps, or wherever they were, that before even coming to Norway how they – once they knew or how they were provided information about how terrible our child welfare system is and how we’re just out to get their children and how they have to be scared and how they have to do this, this and not this, this, this, and this. So some work, I think, is outside even the *kommune*’s [municipality’s] sort of ability – that it actually has to go more on the national level and even go out to those workers who go out into these camps even from the start of their journeys... because if already have that before they even arrive in this county, and then they meets lots of people, you know, because imagine an immigration center. Raising your child in an immigration center, it’s not a natural environment to raise your child at all. So in some ways, I think *barnevernet* gets involved a lot, even in the immigration center early on, because the parents from the journey that they come and then they’re having to raise and live in an unnatural environment, and then, things can get viewed – I think – a bit wrongly. So then you keep adding on the misconception – so I don’t really know what the solution is. I just think it has to be at a higher level than just at the *kommune* level. I think we can do better, more outreach, but I also think that it actually has to come higher and sometimes even before they actually start their journey”

[Barriers in the child welfare system] “One place where we could be helpful – or someone needs to be more helpful with these families – is even what sort of is expected of them in the Norwegian society. So when they send their kids to *barnehage* or to school, what are some – I mean, who takes the time to teach them what is expected to they don’t end up sort of misguidedly in a negative connotation with the school or the *barnehage* because they’re not providing the proper lunchbox according to our tradition and our norms, or the proper winter gear, or how they can overcome their kids attending birthday parties, or extracurricular activities and things like that. I mean, there’s small things, you know, perhaps that someone could positively be like a guidance thing. Definitely some of the things that you have to look at and explore. I’ve seen lots of families that, you know, some of the complaints, concerns come in the form of the lunchboxes and that thing... Everything from the interpretation to expectations. What if you’re from a country where being on time means you’re half an hour late? But that’s a norm for you. But yet, here, that might be counted against you; well, they didn’t show up for their appointment. Well they showed up, but they didn’t show up, they can’t pick up the phone as easily and say, “hey, I need to change” or send you a text message saying, you know, “little Johnny is sick so can I reschedule my appointment?”. I mean, those are all barriers – they are simple barriers, but they’re still barriers”

PRACTITIONER 2:

“We here in Drammen, we try to have meetings with the different communities so they know what we are doing here because, yes, some people are afraid of what is going on with *barnevernet* because they take the children and so on, so it is a process we do here to have meetings with the different culture communities so they can ask us and they can have the information. Yes, we know that there are many things we must do, but we did start that process and it is really good process that we start so that people can see that we are not so bad. But we do that with the different communities in Drammen and it is very, very important that they see our faces and they can ask questions, so if they come here they won’t be terrified”

	<p>[Myths or rumors] “Maybe because some of them have been in situations that were not clear or they were not satisfied. Because it is our job. It is hard for families to understand why and what are we doing. Yes. And the bad news goes faster than the good news. That’s why we want to do those meetings. But not that we change our way of working. And there are so many people that come here and when it is the end of the process, they are satisfied, they think there was a good job, that we did work with them. Not for them, but with them. It’s changing. I believe that it is changing. I see in my experience, nice faces, smiling faces after a while. But I can understand that to some people it is hard. A father or a mother, when we say “you are not able to take care of your children” – it is not easy to accept that. So I understand that. But it is our job to work with them and to help them see that I cannot, so no one help me in the situation, but it is our job. But I do believe that we are changing that, I do”</p> <p>“We must go sometimes go to the <i>grunn</i>, what’s the main job or why we do that job. Because of the Convention [on the Rights of the Child]. There is a law and the Convention. And so when sometimes we miss why we do, we must come to the principles of the Convention and the Norwegian <i>barne lov</i>, <i>barnevernet lov</i>. We can’t miss that way of working”</p> <p>PRACTITIONER 3:</p> <p>“Here we’ve actually been lots to the introduction center where they have, I know my colleagues have been there to hold some kind of lectures about how we work and what we do... We’ve [also] had small groups here where we hold lectures for them, and we’ve also been there too to give lectures to talk to them about what we do... We’re trying to reach out. But the media is also there. But again, we have lots of success stories really”</p> <p>“The fact that they also have very limited access to information too. They don’t really – all that I think is different, it’s very different for them really”</p>
25 Being watched	<p>PARENT 2:</p> <p>“I feel a little more stressed here [in Norway] with the system control, because I know, I heard a lot about this <i>barnevern</i> child support from Russia because they had some TV shows and I’ve heard some stories from my immigrant friends here, but most of the stories end up good, so it was just – but anyway, I would be really stressed, with checking, for example, I wouldn’t like, because of all these stories. And since I know a little how it works, I feel that I’m watched around from society, and that is a little stressful too. I put my boy in the car seat and he is complaining because he wants to go to the playground and I just brought him from there, and shouting and kicking of course and I still try to lock the belt and people around almost look inside to see what I am doing with my child. What can I do? It’s just, so, that is a bit stressful. Because you never know who will complain and who will see your reason. I believe that they have nothing to suspect, but who knows, people are different and they can have different opinions, because of this and that is stressful”</p> <p>“In Russia we have this child support, but their cases, you never know them. You never communicate with them if you’re living a normal life... Here [in Norway] they are powerful to everyone; every person can be under suspicion and can be checked, that makes me feel uncomfortable of course. Because why should they check me? I’m a normal person. And sometimes I hear these strange reasons</p>

	<p>that they are checking. Like, somebody texted that a child has probably bad teeth because he drinks milk in the evening... It is strange reasons and that makes me uncomfortable because I don't know what people can think and I always should think about what people can think about it"</p> <p>PARENT 3: "Practices [in parenting] have also changed. Some are positive and some are not positive. For example, in our culture we are a group oriented society. Family is very important. Parents have a special position, they have to be respected. Families deserve respect. The hierarchy is different. Usually, children are not allowed to criticize families, for example... Here they have to change, have to listen to children. Here, there is two-way communication. Communicating with the child is something good. But also, the negative thing is that children have unlimited rights in Norway so that immigrant families get scared from the laws – because they are immigrants and if they do something they might be targeted from <i>barnevernet</i>. There is extreme fear from <i>barnevernet</i> – it could be real or imaginary, but almost every family shares this perception. This might also affect the relationship between children and their families because the parents know their child is not behaving in a proper way, but they are afraid to correct them. The <i>barnevernet</i> listens to the child and takes the child without any hesitation... Child are perceived as never lying. True, but in what context... Children might lie to get what they want. Families are very afraid of <i>barnevernet</i>. They feel that their children will be taken one day. The school, the kindergarten, they follow the children very well. They ask for details for what has happened and construct – almost a form of espionage"</p>
26 Maldistribution	<p>PARENT 2: "I still have this uncomfortable feeling about <i>barnevernet</i>. But people say it, more and more often I hear on international forums that some people actually recommend to do so [going to child welfare services with familial problems]... At least this advice, I heard, not from my situation, but for others I've read on forums, and that makes me a little more calm also. That it is not only this scary picture, that it has another side and that it is actually meant to be a support and that you can get support there"</p> <p>PARENT 3: "I have a friend who was a single father with children. He was going to school, he was a student. The money from working and going to school was not enough to care for the children in terms of activities. So he had no money, and he went to <i>barnevernet</i> and said he did not have enough money to cover the activities and they have taken his case and have helped him. They have many activities helping single mom or single dad or have economic problems... The problem is that problem have this negative image and even if they need help they don't talk to <i>barnevernet</i> because it is perceived as something dangerous, because maybe they will create a case and take my kids. Not everything <i>barnevernet</i> does is bad, but with immigrants – people who have come from war – here, <i>barnevernet</i> is unfair and does not consider their situation. They cannot group together people who are university graduates and people who are illiterate and treat them the same"</p> <p>PRACTITIONER 1: "Economic factors, you know, the different in the financial aspect would – usually – between the ethnic Norwegian family and an immigrant family is huge. And we</p>

all know that economic stress impacts a family and how they end up treating their children, how they are able to meet their children's needs"

"Here you have a Norwegian family – stable finances, they know the language, they know where they belong, they have a huge social network, they have a stability, they don't have the exposure to all of the traumas – and then here you have an immigrant family that lacks access to jobs, financial issues, lots of traumas, no social network. I mean, they don't even have the initial same starting points really. No. And I think that's what makes it extra hard when we encounter these families because the expectations are set on the average, the norm, right? Which is the Norwegian family. And then all the sort of things that we expect to see – but with an immigrant family, we really cannot expect to see the same and expect them to meet the same level when they enter our door, because the starting points are completely different"

[Things to keep in mind when working with people from other cultures] "An open mind. Yeah, open mind. Don't get stuck in your own perspective. Don't get stuck in your paradigm. And when I say 'open mind', be open that perhaps how you were raised or how you are raising your children isn't necessarily the only way or the best way; that there actually can be other ways that are just as good and just as effective, even if it looks different and perhaps even scary because it is different than you yourself have experienced. So just, you have to have an open mind and not be judgmental. And then you have to just be willing to not quickly judge or make a judgment or decision about a family before you sort of taken the time to also learn those nuances in their culture and their perspective. And you know, keep in mind what was their journey, what has happened along the path to come here, what does daily life look like – think about all these other things, like the network, their finances, what are the stress factors, what are the positives"

PRACTITIONER 3:

"The immigrant families, when they come here they are facing a lot of problems really. First there is the employment market, and then there is this fear for the child protective services really – you know, people are really afraid of us before they come to us really. But actually, I've been here for two and a half years now, and I've seen that with time people actually come to understand what we are trying to get them to understand with parenting... Like I said, people know or they've heard a lot about us and they come here very scared. So that much of the time you spend, like trying to make them understand, to calm down, to that level where you can actually work and interact properly with them without being, how do I put it? Without being very, uh, trying to dominate over them, because if you like at it there, the parents know their children better than we do, yeah? But when we get to a mutual understanding and we try to make a change – and like I said that the cases I have, some of the cases, I've actually seen that when you start they're not too sure, and there is so much skepticism, but with time they kind of understand that okay, this is what you've been trying to make me understand because, like, what I tell the families, especially the parents is that what we have back home, it is collectivism – or whatever – works very fine there, but here when the child grows up here with that kind of attitude or orientation it might cause problems. So that is what I talk about. That is what I preach really when I have a parent who, like immigrant families because **the point is not to change to accept Norwegian values, but to make small changes to that the kids**

	<p>who grow up here can function in society. Because you can't think collectivism if you want to live here. So that is what I try to talk about when I talk to the parents"</p> <p>"I know that it is tough to be an immigrant in Norway, and especially for those immigrants who had a lot, who've kind of lost what they have back home and just came here like that, really. I didn't go through that, so I don't know it is, but I've heard; and I've also seen that it is very challenging really. So that when they come in here, and again, I think that maybe this is someone that ought to be at work, but it actually struggling to get a job, and maybe someone with kids too who really don't have enough, they can't really participate in other kinds of activities just because of the economic situation, other things.</p> <p>And then the language – and like – maybe the other things, like perhaps you would have been able to, or she would have been able to express herself better if she spoke better Norwegian or good English, you know.</p> <p>Even with a translator, we use translators too, but again, there is something, you miss something a lot really when things are translated because we talk for like an hour and sometimes you don't really get the whole picture really. But it is good to use a translator, but it is just that sometimes I feel like you miss some other small things really, because when you translate it, you might not be in the same way that it's been told... You lose the essence there. But you know, I consider that.</p> <p>I also consider the fact that they think because I sit here that I know it all, or already judge them as not being good parents, or like that, you know, so there are other things that I am also thinking about.</p> <p>I'm also thinking about their background too. That maybe if they come from societies where it is accepted to maybe hit the child, because – not because you want to hurt the child, but because you're trying to raise them some kind of corrective, a corrective function – if they come from that kind of society and maybe they do the same thing to their child really, and I'm thinking maybe they're doing the same thing that has been done to them...</p> <p>So I think that it is very challenging because there are lots of things to consider really... And again, I'm thinking that if people are afraid of you, or afraid of the system, so that they try to maybe withhold information, which I think is normal too – you don't go opening up to people you don't know, you don't know what the information may be used for later. But with time, you open up"</p> <p>"Immigrant families, they're facing a lot of challenges really, a lot of challenges. And sometimes, when you tackle one, they you actually, it reflects on the others really. But the way the community is now, the society is now... going to work – as in having a job to go to – that is part of who you are as a person. If you don't have a job, and again, if you have a job too, again the kids or the children will look up to you really... So maybe if people actually, those immigrant families had everything in place – which I know can take years really – if everything was in place and all that, then perhaps one would have avoided the whole of things, really. So going to the source, which I have come to realize is not just economic, there are other things that people have been trailing with problems and haven't</p>
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	gotten help, you know. And knowing when to [get help] is the greatest challenge really”
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Annex 7: Collection of Candidate Themes and Sub-Themes

Potential Themes and Sub-Themes with Coded Data	
Reactions Judged Against Norwegian Normative Framework	<p>“In Oslo there is one lawyer with Russian background, but she moved here I think when she was in school, so she graduated lawyer here and she works with <i>barnevernet</i> cases and she makes some seminars for Russian parents and Russian embassy to talk more about the system to calm down, to explain more about how you should react. Because we are, maybe our mentality, more emotional than Norwegians and when somebody blames you with something wrong and you know that you did not do so, Russians can react very emotional, like “how dare you, I would never do so to my child” and that is not normal reaction in Norway and that would create even more problems with in working authority. Because, you know, in Russia it is okay, everyone would understand, but here most likely they will not because they do not get used to such reactions” (Parent 2)</p>
Outdated Laws & Regulations	<p>“When I talk to my child, I must first check what the law says. I must check and behave according to the values here in Norway. In many ways the principles in <i>barnevernet</i> in theory are good, but in practice they can target different communities. It is very institutionalized” (Parent 3)</p> <p>“I think that <i>barnevernet</i> – what they should do is have rules, regulations, and they have the extra power to interpret articles as they wish. What does it mean that children should be protected? They follow these rules. But in these rules, people should understand cultural nuances. These nuances cannot be put into the rules, because they have these regulations and there would be contradictions. But in some situations that are not very serious, cultural nuances should be considered” (Parent 3)</p> <p>“I think our laws and regulations in Norway are old – they don’t fit the families of today, the problems that we see today and they certainly do not fit other cultures and other contexts, other than the ethnic Norwegian. I think we need a whole revamp of our laws, our regulations, even how the system functions in these families” (Practitioner 1)</p> <p>“So, you just have to move slow, but that’s not easy because we’re literally overworked, we have too much, and we have deadlines, and I think that’s what I’m saying is the way we do things, the laws and regulations, the whole system actually needs to change to adapt to the families that we actually see today and the problems... So the whole system actually needs to change” (Practitioner 1)</p>

	<p>"I think minority families would perhaps find it easier to interact and deal with us if we had a system that was the same everywhere. That just because you live in this community and then you move and something is different – I think if we were more the same I think it would be easier for everyone" (Practitioner 1)</p>
<p>Knowledge Hierarchy (Superiority of Norwegian Expectations / Culture)</p> <p>Sub-theme: "Silent Assimilation"</p>	<p><u>Within Child Welfare Services:</u> "Before you can understand culture and appreciate culture, you have to get off your moral high horse. You have to stop thinking I'm the best, the civilized, and everyone coming in, you know, here needs to be civilized. You need to get off that. If you don't do that, there is no way of understanding; you are only going to condemn other cultures, telling them what they are doing is wrong. There is no perfect culture, there is no perfect system. I've always learned from other cultures, use common sense to find, you know, what is good, what is bad in a place. They can learn from cultures, they can learn from other systems. If you don't understand a people, a culture, you get in there and you think something is wrong with them when nothing is wrong" (Parent 1)</p> <p><u>Within Child Welfare Services:</u> "The Norwegian way is not the only way in the world, they should accept this too" (Parent 2)</p> <p><u>Within Child Welfare Services:</u> "As someone who has worked in child welfare in other countries and coming to Norway, I'm actually a bit disappointed with the system that we have – and specifically when it comes to our work with ethnic minorities. I think that at some levels they're trying to give the education and resources needed for someone to expand their knowledge of different cultures. But it's really behind the times, and it's, we're lacking people's understanding I think of where people come from and what they bring with them – for good or bad – when they enter of offices. I think we could do a much better job" (Practitioner 1)</p> <p><u>Within Child Welfare Services:</u> "I had a colleague who – I mean, it's just even as basic as this – I had a colleague once make a comment that he did a home visit and during his home visit, he just thought that house was kind of disgusting. But when he described the disgusting, it wasn't that the house was unclean or unkept or anything, but to him it had a very strong, pungent smell. But when you actually started asking him questions – and, well, what was the smell? I mean, this was an ethnic minority family, and basically, this was a family that comes from somewhere where in their cooking, versus ours, they use a lot of garlic, they use a lot of spices, and they also come from an area that because of their skin and haircuts and everything, they don't wash maybe every single day. Because where we want to wash it out, they want to wash the oil in. So it just becomes a difference, but you have to have the understanding that, okay, well, yeah this house wasn't unkept, it wasn't unclean, it wasn't disgusting. Yeah, it smelt different than what we are used to, but that doesn't mean that was really an issue" (Practitioner 1)</p> <p><u>Within Child Welfare Services:</u> [Things to keep in mind when working with people from other cultures] "Don't get stuck in your own</p>

perspective. Don't get stuck in your paradigm. And when I say 'open mind', be open that perhaps how you were raised or how you are raising your children isn't necessarily the only way or the best way; that there actually can be other ways that are just as good and just as effective, even if it looks different and perhaps even scary because it is different than you yourself have experienced... And then you have to just be willing to not quickly judge or make a judgment or decision about a family before you sort of taken the time to also learn those nuances in their culture and their perspective" (Practitioner 1)

Within Child Welfare Services: [Anything child welfare services does differently or take into consideration when working with these families] "Yes, it is a bit different. We are seventy people here, so different points of view. There are people, maybe, will be a little bit blind of culture and they want to say – no, it's culture, so they must do as we Norwegian and other ones who say we must respect their culture, so that is why we must do different. So it will be different ways of working, all of us" (Practitioner 2)

Within Child Welfare Services: "But I believe that I've been long in my country with my culture, so it's *veldig påvirket* [very influenced] of what is going on the TV and what is going on, so we have those ideas... And if I have in my mind and it is not clear [in the subconscious], if I see that they're uncomfortable; okay, can you tell me what is going on? Can you tell me did I not understand or respect? So that's why. But we have sometimes deep in our heads, the bad ideas, bad thoughts about people [subconscious bias influenced by the media]" (Practitioner 2)

Within Child Welfare Services: "People know or they've heard a lot about us and they come here very scared. So that much of the time you spend, like trying to make them understand, to calm down, to that level where you can actually work and interact properly with them without being, how do I put it? Without being very, uh, trying to dominate over them, because if you like at it there, the parents know their children better than we do, yeah? But when we get to a mutual understanding and we try to make a change – and like I said that the cases I have, some of the cases, I've actually seen that when you start they're not too sure, and there is so much skepticism, but with time they kind of understand that okay, this is what you've been trying to make me understand because, like, what I tell the families, especially the parents is that what we have back home, it is collectivism – or whatever – works very fine there, but here when the child grows up here with that kind of attitude or orientation it might cause problems. So that is what I talk about. That is what I preach really when I have a parent who, like immigrant families because **the point is not to change to accept Norwegian values, but to make small changes to that the kids who grow up here can function in society**" (Practitioner 3)

Within Child Welfare Services & Familial Life: "I think if we understand that not everyone who lives here is Norwegian because

with other cultures can also function in this society and can actually raise their kids up here too. But the challenge remains that we, as social workers, also have to try to understand that even if it is not Norwegian, or as long as they don't do the same as we do, doesn't mean it is wrong. Not everyone sits at the table when they eat. Some people sit on the ground when they eat; some people prefer to sit on the ground when they eat. Some people, it is not very common to show affection for the child in other ways, but here it is shown in another way – but you know, I think we have to try to accept the difference really, and then, there will always be difference really. But again, like I said, because we – you know, like I told you earlier – to function in the society, there are some certain things that the kids, as in our kids really, the immigrant family kids who don't – I feel like they have to – when the parents know how to help the kids to be able to function in society, it will be very, very good for them later on because it is not like the same society that the parents grew up in. It is a different society that is very demanding. It is who you are, it is you – it is very individualistic. So it is not collective, so you don't go around depending or waiting for people; you have to set your own boundaries. You have to try out things – you have to be independent really. That is that it is. But it is not like that in other societies where, the setting is mom and dad who, you know, and then later on they let you go; here it starts much more earlier, you are free to go around, even as a child. Whereas other cultures, you know, they carry the baby until they are like ten months old. They are rarely on the floor. But it is not because they can't crawl, but just because you have to carry them, you still see them as a baby. But here, ten months already they are expected to follow this, and to do that, do that. So it is – for me it is very interesting to see the difference because of my background. I'm like yeah, but those kids that weren't able to crawl at ten months and all that – they are still doing fine. It is just a matter of what culture, or society you belong to really” (Practitioner 3)

Within Familial Life (Expectations): “I, for one, I see – and again because of my background – I see that what it terms of expectations, there are lots of expectations like how much a child should do at home as opposed to how much a parent should do, right? Who is responsible for that. Me as a child, I had responsibility for picking up the younger ones at school, the kindergarten, you know, all of the time. But here, I mean, it is not really a child's duty, it's a parental duty to try and pick up the child... so that there is a clear cut – how do I put it – roles here for what a child does as opposed to what a parent should do. So that is different. And for me, working where I do today, I see that and it is very clear really. There are different ways of bringing up a child, depending on where you come from” (Practitioner 3)

Within the Community: “I would say most parents have the best interest of their child at heart. So I say this because a friend of mine was in Bergen, I think, someone experienced with two children and tried to get them in the bus, but one of the children was crying on

	<p>the floor and she was telling the child “we have to go now, I’m begging” and the child refused, he wanted something, I don’t know what. So at that point, she was desperate and just pulled the child into the bus while the child was protesting. And this Norwegian woman just saw her and rushed towards her to give some instructions and guidance on her child, and she got angry and told her to get lost. Because people sometimes, they interject into your problems and they tell you how to live your life and give you instructions because they think you don’t have it, you don’t know what to do. <i>It’s where you’re coming from. They think you’ve got it backward, you need to be instructed, or civilized so to say</i>” (Parent 1)</p> <p><u>Within the Community</u>: [Despite international critique...] “nothing changes with the system in Norway... Norway, as a country, as a state, is nationalistic as any other country... They have their own branch of nationalism here in Norway, and that is what makes them immune to outside criticism” (Parent 1)</p> <p><u>Within the Community</u>: “Norway is not a multicultural country yet – it is a multicultural country in the making. Here it is a homogenous society in perception. They have the perception of one culture and you have to in some way assimilate. Other cultures are not yet seen as developed” (Parent 3)</p> <p><u>Within the Community</u>: “Here in Norway, people tell you that in Norway, we do it this way. It means that it is an assimilative system, even though in the regulation they take care of different cultures; but in practice, if you don’t do it the Norwegian way, then you are the loser. It is silent assimilation. Because in nuances, small cultural differences – for example, if you take a child playing football with a hijab or swimming with a burkini or now also the hijab of children at school – some political parties are trying to ban this one. Saying children are being oppressed with hijab, the rhetoric is that this doesn’t belong here. What are we going to do? In institutions, it is assimilative. They have these rules, the rules are being set by those people, they are the majority... If you are assimilated, you have more opportunities. If a woman takes off her hajib, people will applause and think she is free. Those who keep their own values and cultures don’t have the same support, resources, as those who are assimilated. If you do it the Norwegian way, you will succeed” (Parent 3)</p>
Intersecting Identities of Subordination	<p>“Well, they have this gender equality in Norway, for goodness sake, that means if they hear other countries in Africa their women end up being harassed by the system, like men are by <i>barnevernet</i> in Norway. I’m not saying it is intentional, but yes. The men are the victims in a way of this incompetent system. So, if there was a country somewhere where women get at the wrong end of the stick of an incompetent system, Norway as a country would be out having outreaches, NGOs to help those women, you know. So the mystery of gender equality in Norway, what do they do? Don’t they hear the stories? Don’t they read? Do they think it’s sufficient, it’s okay, because men who are immigrants get more, the rough end of the</p>

	<p>deal. So that's why I think, I believe it, and I say it clearly, this country is full of hypocrisy" (Parent 1)</p> <p>"An immigrant family are from the start under bigger suspicion than Norwegian families. They give more attention to immigrants. And that probably because of, probably we have common propaganda, you know. In Russia, they show these horrible pictures about <i>barnevernet</i> that just picks up kids but here in the news I can read that Russia reduced penalty for home violence, of course it is common impression of each other. And since they read this huge article that Russia doesn't punish for home violence and with some scary numbers, they can think that home violence is normal in Russian families, right? They should check them more careful then since they live in Norway and raise kids here. So, yeah, they [immigrant families] have more attention, as I have heard" (Parent 2)</p> <p>"Maybe because we are immigrants – and in addition, I am a Muslim – so I have to be extra careful because I might be an easy target. There is a general perception that immigrants mistreat their children and bring their cultures. In some cases, it could be true, but not all of them" (Parent 3)</p> <p>"Rights of the child and the woman – the law is always on their side. It is good, but it can sometimes split families and create misunderstanding" (Parent 3)</p> <p>"If... they see more of their children maybe placed in care or feel like they get placed in care, we're not going to be able to bridge that gap that is happening. And, again, sometimes I think also, they always know – immigrant families always know other families, who know other families within their own minority group who have had children removed" (Practitioner 1)</p> <p>"I think it is something that also runs through what we've talked about, is just that they're [immigrant families are] faced with challenges – not just one, but many challenges really. Which makes them at-risk, it places them at-risk, not just the kids, but the parents too" (Practitioner 3)</p>
Equality-as-Sameness	<p>"Even if they try to work better with people from different cultures, I mean the effort may not be sufficient... So, I haven't noticed if there is anything in <i>barnevernet</i>, I haven't noticed and I think people involved are not interested [in adapting to work better with ethnic minority/migrant families]. They have their paycheck, they have their job, and they are immune more or less. It would take a lot of wrong doing for them to be chastised" (Parent 1)</p> <p>"Not everything <i>barnevernet</i> does is bad, but with immigrants – people who have come from war – here, <i>barnevernet</i> is unfair and does not consider their situation. They cannot group together people who are university graduates and people who are illiterate and treat them the same" (Parent 3)</p>

	<p>“And I think that’s what makes it extra hard when we encounter these families because the expectations are set on the average, the norm, right? Which is the Norwegian family. And then all the sort of things that we expect to see – but with an immigrant family, we really cannot expect to see the same and expect them to meet the same level when they enter our door, because the starting points are completely different” (Practitioner 1)</p> <p>“I just think you have to move at a slower pace with these families and have a lower expectation. Not because you don’t think that they can... present a change, but they can’t meet that if you’re expectations are the same as an ethnic Norwegian because they’re not standing on the same foundation. Of course it’s going to take a lot more for them” (Practitioner 1)</p>
Adaptation: “Hybrid System”	<p>“If you come from a different place and suddenly you are cut off from everything you have known, everything you have grown-up with, you are going to be a misfit – you know... which belongs neither here nor there, but it is kind of in-between. So you to get something new from your new environment or culture, you need to something new, but it is not possible or realistic to be cut off from everything that has made you what you are and take up new things. So yes, it is important to bring something into your home, and eventually with time there will be a new hybrid system, you know, from your home and your new place. But it takes time. It shouldn’t be forced, it will come naturally” (Parent 1)</p> <p>“The way that you are raised up will determine the way that you relate to others, your children included. Of course when you, you can try to adapt to, kind of embed other cultures, but it takes quite some time to really let go of old things and bring in new things. So culture affects the way you do parenting” (Parent 1)</p> <p>“The mentality and cultural traditions are different from country to country. And, um, it is not always meant in violence, it can be just different traditions. For example, in Russia, it is more respect to adults. And, for example, my parents would expect that from their grandson, you know. And it doesn’t mean that it is bad or good, it’s just different. You can’t expect everyone to become Norwegian suddenly once they cross the border. They still have their background and their traditions” (Parent 2)</p> <p>“But in some way, I truly believe that I am trying to find this perfect middle between Norwegian relaxed way and Russian maybe too stressed” (Parent 2)</p> <p>“I have changed and have to compromise many things” (Parent 3)</p> <p>“Practices [in parenting] have also changed. Some are positive and some are not positive. For example, in our culture we are a group-oriented society. Family is very important. Parents have a special position, they have to be respected. Families deserve respect. The hierarchy is different. Usually, children are not allowed to criticize</p>

	<p>families, for example... Here they have to change, have to listen to children. Here, there is two-way communication. Communicating with the child is something good” (Parent 3)</p> <p>“I mean, of course everyone’s going to change because you’ll have to adapt at some point. Even if you don’t fully integrate or adapt, you’re still going to adapt to some degree. If it is out of fear that you’re going to get in trouble, or whatever, you’re going to make some changes. So of course you’re going to see some change” (Practitioner 1)</p>
Being Watched	<p>“I feel a little more stressed here [in Norway] with the system control, because I know, I heard a lot about this <i>barnevern</i> child support from Russia because they had some TV shows and I’ve heard some stories from my immigrant friends here, but most of the stories end up good, so it was just – but anyway, I would be really stressed, with checking, for example, I wouldn’t like, because of all these stories. And since I know a little how it works, I feel that I’m watched around from society, and that is a little stressful too. I put my boy in the car seat and he is complaining because he wants to go to the playground and I just brought him from there, and shouting and kicking of course and I still try to lock the belt and people around almost look inside to see what I am doing with my child. What can I do? It’s just, so, that is a bit stressful. Because you never know who will complain and who will see your reason. I believe that they have nothing to suspect, but who knows, people are different and they can have different opinions, because of this and that is stressful” (Parent 2)</p> <p>“There is extreme fear from <i>barnevernet</i> – it could be real or imaginary, but almost every family shares this perception. This might also affect the relationship between children and their families because the parents know their child is not behaving in a proper way, but they are afraid to correct them. The <i>barnevernet</i> listens to the child and takes the child without any hesitation... Child are perceived as never lying. True, but in what context... Children might lie to get what they want. Families are very afraid of <i>barnevernet</i>. They feel that their children will be taken one day. The school, the kindergarten, they follow the children very well. They ask for details for what has happened and construct – almost a form of espionage” (Parent 3)</p>

Annex 8: Reviewing Themes

REVIEWING THEMES	
Knowledge Hierarchy	
Expectations of Child Welfare Services	<p>“I had a colleague who – I mean, it’s just even as basic as this – I had a colleague once make a comment that he did a home visit and during his home visit, he just thought that house was kind of disgusting. But when he described the disgusting, it wasn’t that the house was unclean or unkept or anything, but to him it had a very strong, pungent smell. But when you actually started</p>

	<p>asking him questions – and, well, what was the smell? I mean, this was an ethnic minority family, and basically, this was a family that comes from somewhere where in their cooking, versus ours, they use a lot of garlic, they use a lot of spices, and they also come from an area that because of their skin and haircuts and everything, they don't wash maybe every single day. Because where we want to wash it out, they want to wash the oil in. So it just becomes a difference, but you have to have the understanding that, okay, well, yeah this house wasn't unkept, it wasn't unclean, it wasn't disgusting. Yeah, it smelt different than what we are used to, but that doesn't mean that was really an issue" (Practitioner 1)</p> <p>"Not everyone sits at the table when they eat. Some people sit on the ground when they eat; some people prefer to sit on the ground when they eat. Some people, it is not very common to show affection for the child in other ways, but here it is shown in another way – but you know, I think we have to try to accept the difference really, and then, there will always be difference really. But again, like I said, because we – you know, like I told you earlier – to function in the society, there are some certain things that the kids, as in our kids really, the immigrant family kids who don't – I feel like they have to – when the parents know how to help the kids to be able to function in society, it will be very, very good for them later on because it is not like the same society that the parents grew up in. It is a different society that is very demanding. It is who you are, it is you – it is very individualistic. So it is not collective, so you don't go around depending or waiting for people; you have to set your own boundaries. You have to try out things – you have to be independent really. That is that it is. But it is not like that in other societies where, the setting is mom and dad who, you know, and then later on they let you go; here it starts much more earlier, you are free to go around, even as a child. Whereas other cultures, you know, they carry the baby until they are like ten months old. They are rarely on the floor. But it is not because they can't crawl, but just because you have to carry them, you still see them as a baby. But here, ten months already they are expected to follow this, and to do that, do that. So it is – for me it is very interesting to see the difference because of my background. I'm like yeah, but those kids that weren't able to crawl at ten months and all that – they are still doing fine. It is just a matter of what culture, or society you belong to really" (Practitioner 3)</p> <p>"I, for one, I see – and again because of my background – I see that what it terms of expectations, there are lots of expectations like how much a child should do at home as opposed to how much a parent should do, right? Who is responsible for that. Me as a child, I had responsibility for picking up the younger ones at school, the kindergarten, you know, all of the time. But here, I mean, it is not really a child's duty, it's a parental duty to try and pick up the child... so that there is a clear cut – how do I put it – roles here for what a child does as opposed to what a parent should do. So that is different. And for me, working where I do today, I see that and it is very clear really. There are different ways of bringing up a child, depending on where you come from" (Practitioner 3)</p>
Cultural Superiority	<p>"Before you can understand culture and appreciate culture, you have to get off your moral high horse. You have to stop thinking I'm the best, the civilized, and everyone coming in, you know, here needs to be civilized. You need to get off that. If you don't do that, there is no way of understanding; you are only going</p>

	<p>to condemn other cultures, telling them what they are doing is wrong. There is no perfect culture, there is no perfect system. I've always learned from other cultures, use common sense to find, you know, what is good, what is bad in a place. They can learn from cultures, they can learn from other systems. If you don't understand a people, a culture, you get in there and you think something is wrong with them when nothing is wrong" (Parent 1)</p> <p>[Anything child welfare services does differently or take into consideration when working with these families] "Yes, it is a bit different. We are seventy people here, so different points of view. There are people, maybe, will be a little bit blind of culture and they want to say – no, it's culture, so they must do as we Norwegian and other ones who say we must respect their culture, so that is why we must do different. So it will be different ways of working, all of us" (Practitioner 2)</p> <p>"But I believe that I've been long in my country with my culture, so it's <i>veldig påvirket</i> [very influenced] of what is going on the TV and what is going on, so we have those ideas... And if I have in my mind and it is not clear [in the subconscious], if I see that they're uncomfortable; okay, can you tell me what is going on? Can you tell me did I not understand or respect? So that's why. But we have sometimes deep in our heads, the bad ideas, bad thoughts about people [subconscious bias influenced by the media]" (Practitioner 2)</p> <p>"I would say most parents have the best interest of their child at heart. So I say this because a friend of mine was in Bergen, I think, someone experienced with two children and tried to get them in the bus, but one of the children was crying on the floor and she was telling the child "we have to go now, I'm begging" and the child refused, he wanted something, I don't know what. So at that point, she was desperate and just pulled the child into the bus while the child was protesting. And this Norwegian woman just saw her and rushed towards her to give some instructions and guidance on her child, and she got angry and told her to get lost. Because people sometimes, they interject into your problems and they tell you how to live your life and give you instructions because they think you don't have it, you don't know what to do. <i>It's where you're coming from. They think you've got it backward, you need to be instructed, or civilized so to say</i>" (Parent 1)</p> <p>[Despite international critique...] "nothing changes with the system in Norway... Norway, as a country, as a state, is nationalistic as any other country... They have their own branch of nationalism here in Norway, and that is what makes them immune to outside criticism" (Parent 1)</p> <p>"Norway is not a multicultural country yet – it is a multicultural country in the making. Here it is a homogenous society in perception. They have the perception of one culture and you have to in some way assimilate. Other cultures are not yet seen as developed" (Parent 3)</p> <p>"Here in Norway, people tell you that in Norway, we do it this way. It means that it is an assimilative system, even though in the regulation they take care of different cultures; but in practice, if you don't do it the Norwegian way, then you are the loser. It is silent assimilation. Because in nuances, small cultural differences – for example, if you take a child playing football with a hijab or</p>
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	<p>swimming with a burkini or now also the hijab of children at school – some political parties are trying to ban this one. Saying children are being oppressed with hijab, the rhetoric is that this doesn't belong here. What are we going to do? In institutions, it is assimilative. They have these rules, the rules are being set by those people, they are the majority... If you are assimilated, you have more opportunities. If a woman takes off her hajib, people will applause and think she is free. Those who keep their own values and cultures don't have the same support, resources, as those who are assimilated. If you do it the Norwegian way, you will succeed" (Parent 3)</p>
Norwegian Way Not the Only Way	<p>"The Norwegian way is not the only way in the world, they should accept this too" (Parent 2)</p> <p>[Things to keep in mind when working with people from other cultures] "Don't get stuck in your own perspective. Don't get stuck in your paradigm. And when I say 'open mind', be open that perhaps how you were raised or how you are raising your children isn't necessarily the only way or the best way; that there actually can be other ways that are just as good and just as effective, even if it looks different and perhaps even scary because it is different than you yourself have experienced... And then you have to just be willing to not quickly judge or make a judgment or decision about a family before you sort of taken the time to also learn those nuances in their culture and their perspective" (Practitioner 1)</p> <p>"I think if we understand that not everyone who lives here is Norwegian because with other cultures can also function in this society and can actually raise their kids up here too. But the challenge remains that we, as social workers, also have to try to understand that even if it is not Norwegian, or as long as they don't do the same as we do, doesn't mean it is wrong" (Practitioner 3)</p>
Intersecting Identities of Subordination	
Status Subordination	<p>"Well, they have this gender equality in Norway, for goodness sake, that means if they hear other countries in Africa their women end up being harassed by the system, like men are by <i>barnevernet</i> in Norway. I'm not saying it is intentional, but yes. The men are the victims in a way of this incompetent system. So, if there was a country somewhere where women get at the wrong end of the stick of an incompetent system, Norway as a country would be out having outreaches, NGOs to help those women, you know. So the mystery of gender equality in Norway, what do they do? Don't they hear the stories? Don't they read? Do they think it's sufficient, it's okay, because men who are immigrants get more, the rough end of the deal. So that's why I think, I believe it, and I say it clearly, this country is full of hypocrisy" (Parent 1)</p> <p>"An immigrant family are from the start under bigger suspicion than Norwegian families. They give more attention to immigrants. And that probably because of, probably we have common propaganda, you know. In Russia, they show these horrible pictures about <i>barnevernet</i> that just picks up kids but here in the news I can read that Russia reduced penalty for home violence, of course it is common impression of each other. And since they read this huge article that Russia doesn't punish for home violence and with some scary numbers, they can think that home violence is normal in Russian families, right? They should check them more careful then since they live in Norway and</p>

	<p>raise kids here. So, yeah, they [immigrant families] have more attention, as I have heard” (Parent 2)</p> <p>“Maybe because we are immigrants – and in addition, I am a Muslim – so I have to be extra careful because I might be an easy target. There is a general perception that immigrants mistreat their children and bring their cultures. In some cases, it could be true, but not all of them” (Parent 3)</p> <p>“Rights of the child and the woman – the law is always on their side. It is good, but it can sometimes split families and create misunderstanding” (Parent 3)</p> <p>“If... they see more of their children maybe placed in care or feel like they get placed in care, we’re not going to be able to bridge that gap that is happening. And, again, sometimes I think also, they always know – immigrant families always know other families, who know other families within their own minority group who have had children removed” (Practitioner 1)</p> <p>“I think it is something that also runs through what we’ve talked about, is just that they’re [immigrant families are] faced with challenges – not just one, but many challenges really. Which makes them at-risk, it places them at-risk, not just the kids, but the parents too” (Practitioner 3)</p>
<p>Contra Equality-as-Sameness (Need for Different Expectations Due to Different Starting Points)</p>	<p>“Even if they try to work better with people from different cultures, I mean the effort may not be sufficient... So, I haven’t noticed if there is anything in barnevernet, I haven’t noticed and I think people involved are not interested [in adapting to work better with ethnic minority/migrant families]. They have their paycheck, they have their job, and they are immune more or less. It would take a lot of wrong doing for them to be chastised” (Parent 1)</p> <p>“Not everything <i>barnevernet</i> does is bad, but with immigrants – people who have come from war – here, <i>barnevernet</i> is unfair and does not consider their situation. They cannot group together people who are university graduates and people who are illiterate and treat them the same” (Parent 3)</p> <p>“And I think that’s what makes it extra hard when we encounter these families because the expectations are set on the average, the norm, right? Which is the Norwegian family. And then all the sort of things that we expect to see – but with an immigrant family, we really cannot expect to see the same and expect them to meet the same level when they enter our door, because the starting points are completely different” (Practitioner 1)</p> <p>“I just think you have to move at a slower pace with these families and have a lower expectation. Not because you don’t think that they can... present a change, but they can’t meet that if you’re expectations are the same as an ethnic Norwegian because they’re not standing on the same foundation. Of course it’s going to take a lot more for them” (Practitioner 1)</p>

Annex 9: Refining Themes

1. REFINING THEMES
Knowledge Hierarchy

<p>Expectations of Child Welfare Services</p>	<p>“I had a colleague who – I mean, it’s just even as basic as this – I had a colleague once make a comment that he did a home visit and during his home visit, he just thought that house was kind of disgusting. But when he described the disgusting, it wasn’t that the house was unclean or unkept or anything, but to him it had a very strong, pungent smell. But when you actually started asking him questions – and, well, what was the smell? I mean, this was an ethnic minority family, and basically, this was a family that comes from somewhere where in their cooking, versus ours, they use a lot of garlic, they use a lot of spices, and they also come from an area that because of their skin and haircuts and everything, they don’t wash maybe every single day. Because where we want to wash it out, they want to wash the oil in. So it just becomes a difference, but you have to have the understanding that, okay, well, yeah this house wasn’t unkept, it wasn’t unclean, it wasn’t disgusting. Yeah, it smelt different than what we are used to, but that doesn’t mean that was really an issue” (Practitioner 1)</p> <p>“One place where we could be helpful – or someone needs to be more helpful with these families – is even what sort of is expected of them in the Norwegian society. So when they send their kids to <i>barnehage</i> or to school, what are some – I mean, who takes the time to teach them what is expected to they don’t end up sort of misguidedly in a negative connotation with the school or the <i>barnehage</i> because they’re not providing the proper lunchbox according to our tradition and our norms, or the proper winter gear, or how they can overcome their kids attending birthday parties, or extracurricular activities and things like that. I mean, there’s small things, you know, perhaps that someone could positively be like a guidance thing. Definitely some of the things that you have to look at and explore. I’ve seen lots of families that, you know, some of the complaints, concerns come in the form of the lunchboxes and that thing...” (Practitioner 1)</p> <p>“Everything from the interpretation to expectations. What if you’re from a country where being on time means you’re half an hour late? But that’s a norm for you. But yet, here, that might be counted against you; well, they didn’t show up for their appointment. Well they showed up, but they didn’t show up, they can’t pick up the phone as easily and say, “hey, I need to change” or send you a text message saying, you know, “little Johnny is sick so can I reschedule my appointment?”. I mean, those are all barriers – they are simple barriers, but they’re still barriers” (Practitioner 1)</p> <p>“I’m also an immigrant myself and you see that the way that I perceive parenting is also from my background too. And, it’s like you said, the way I’m thinking is not like it is here [in Norway] before most cultures – mine included – are more collective, so it is not just mom and dad as parents, not just two people who are responsible for the child, it is all the aunties, uncles, and every other person, but here it is just the mom and dad... So it is different, it is different really in terms of who does what” (Practitioner 3)</p> <p>“Not everyone sits at the table when they eat. Some people sit on the ground when they eat; some people prefer to sit on the ground when they eat. Some people, it is not very common to show affection for the child in other ways, but here it is shown in another way – but you know, I think we have to try to accept the difference really, and then, there will always be difference really.</p>
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	<p>But again, like I said, because we – you know, like I told you earlier – to function in the society, there are some certain things that the kids, as in our kids really, the immigrant family kids who don’t – I feel like they have to – when the parents know how to help the kids to be able to function in society, it will be very, very good for them later on because it is not like the same society that the parents grew up in. It is a different society that is very demanding. It is who you are, it is you – it is very individualistic. So it is not collective, so you don’t go around depending or waiting for people; you have to set your own boundaries. You have to try out things – you have to be independent really. That is that it is. But it is not like that in other societies where, the setting is mom and dad who, you know, and then later on they let you go; here it starts much more earlier, you are free to go around, even as a child. Whereas other cultures, you know, they carry the baby until they are like ten months old. They are rarely on the floor. But it is not because they can’t crawl, but just because you have to carry them, you still see them as a baby. But here, ten months already they are expected to follow this, and to do that, do that. So it is – for me it is very interesting to see the difference because of my background. I’m like yeah, but those kids that weren’t able to crawl at ten months and all that – they are still doing fine. It is just a matter of what culture, or society you belong to really” (Practitioner 3)</p> <p>“I, for one, I see – and again because of my background – I see that what it terms of expectations, there are lots of expectations like how much a child should do at home as opposed to how much a parent should do, right? Who is responsible for that. Me as a child, I had responsibility for picking up the younger ones at school, the kindergarten, you know, all of the time. But here, I mean, it is not really a child’s duty, it’s a parental duty to try and pick up the child... so that there is a clear cut – how do I put it – roles here for what a child does as opposed to what a parent should do. So that is different. And for me, working where I do today, I see that and it is very clear really. There are different ways of bringing up a child, depending on where you come from” (Practitioner 3)</p>
Cultural Superiority	<p>“Before you can understand culture and appreciate culture, you have to get off your moral high horse. You have to stop thinking I’m the best, the civilized, and everyone coming in, you know, here needs to be civilized. You need to get off that. If you don’t do that, there is no way of understanding; you are only going to condemn other cultures, telling them what they are doing is wrong. There is no perfect culture, there is no perfect system. I’ve always learned from other cultures, use common sense to find, you know, what is good, what is bad in a place. They can learn from cultures, they can learn from other systems. If you don’t understand a people, a culture, you get in there and you think something is wrong with them when nothing is wrong” (Parent 1)</p> <p>“I think our laws and regulations in Norway are old – they don’t fit the families of today, the problems that we see today and they certainly do not fit other cultures and other contexts, other than the ethnic Norwegian. I think we need a whole revamp of our laws, our regulations, even how the system functions in these families” (Practitioner 1)</p> <p>[Anything child welfare services does differently or take into consideration when working with these families] “Yes, it is a bit different. We are seventy people here, so different points of view. There are people, maybe, will be a</p>

little bit blind of culture and they want to say – no, it's culture, so they must do as we Norwegian and other ones who say we must respect their culture, so that is why we must do different. So it will be different ways of working, all of us" (Practitioner 2)

"But I believe that I've been long in my country with my culture, so it's *veldig påvirket* [very influenced] of what is going on the TV and what is going on, so we have those ideas... And if I have in my mind and it is not clear [in the subconscious], if I see that they're uncomfortable; okay, can you tell me what is going on? Can you tell me did I not understand or respect? So that's why. But we have sometimes deep in our heads, the bad ideas, bad thoughts about people [subconscious bias influenced by the media]" (Practitioner 2)

"I would say most parents have the best interest of their child at heart. So I say this because a friend of mine was in Bergen, I think, someone experienced with two children and tried to get them in the bus, but one of the children was crying on the floor and she was telling the child "we have to go now, I'm begging" and the child refused, he wanted something, I don't know what. So at that point, she was desperate and just pulled the child into the bus while the child was protesting. And this Norwegian woman just saw her and rushed towards her to give some instructions and guidance on her child, and she got angry and told her to get lost. Because people sometimes, they interject into your problems and they tell you how to live your life and give you instructions because they think you don't have it, you don't know what to do. *It's where you're coming from. They think you've got it backward, you need to be instructed, or civilized so to say*" (Parent 1)

[Despite international critique...] "nothing changes with the system in Norway... Norway, as a country, as a state, is nationalistic as any other country... They have their own branch of nationalism here in Norway, and that is what makes them immune to outside criticism" (Parent 1)

"Norway is not a multicultural country yet – it is a multicultural country in the making. Here it is a homogenous society in perception. They have the perception of one culture and you have to in some way assimilate. Other cultures are not yet seen as developed" (Parent 3)

"Here in Norway, people tell you that in Norway, we do it this way. It means that it is an assimilative system, even though in the regulation they take care of different cultures; but in practice, if you don't do it the Norwegian way, then you are the loser. It is silent assimilation. Because in nuances, small cultural differences – for example, if you take a child playing football with a hijab or swimming with a burkini or now also the hijab of children at school – some political parties are trying to ban this one. Saying children are being oppressed with hijab, the rhetoric is that this doesn't belong here. What are we going to do? In institutions, it is assimilative. They have these rules, the rules are being set by those people, they are the majority... If you are assimilated, you have more opportunities. If a woman takes off her hajib, people will applause and think she is free. Those who keep their own values and cultures don't have the same support, resources, as those who are assimilated. If you do it the Norwegian way, you will succeed" (Parent 3)

<p>Norwegian Way Not the Only Way</p>	<p>“The Norwegian way is not the only way in the world, they should accept this too” (Parent 2)</p> <p>“How many working in <i>barnevernet</i> are aware of difference in other cultures? I think that <i>barnevernet</i> – what they should do is have rules, regulations, and they have the extra power to interpret articles as they wish. What does it mean that children should be protected? They follow these rules. But in these rules, people should understand cultural nuances. These nuances cannot be put into the rules, because they have these regulations and there would be contradictions. But in some situations that are not very serious, cultural nuances should be considered” (Parent 3)</p> <p>[Things to keep in mind when working with people from other cultures] “Don’t get stuck in your own perspective. Don’t get stuck in your paradigm. And when I say ‘open mind’, be open that perhaps how you were raised or how you are raising your children isn’t necessarily the only way or the best way; that there actually can be other ways that are just as good and just as effective, even if it looks different and perhaps even scary because it is different than you yourself have experienced... And then you have to just be willing to not quickly judge or make a judgment or decision about a family before you sort of taken the time to also learn those nuances in their culture and their perspective” (Practitioner 1)</p> <p>“I think if we understand that not everyone who lives here is Norwegian because with other cultures can also function in this society and can actually raise their kids up here too. But the challenge remains that we, as social workers, also have to try to understand that even if it is not Norwegian, or as long as they don’t do the same as we do, doesn’t mean it is wrong” (Practitioner 3)</p>
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<p>Status Subordination</p>	<p>“Well, they have this gender equality in Norway, for goodness sake, that means if they hear other countries in Africa their women end up being harassed by the system, like men are by <i>barnevernet</i> in Norway. I’m not saying it is intentional, but yes. The men are the victims in a way of this incompetent system. So, if there was a country somewhere where women get at the wrong end of the stick of an incompetent system, Norway as a country would be out having outreaches, NGOs to help those women, you know. So the mystery of gender equality in Norway, what do they do? Don’t they hear the stories? Don’t they read? Do they think it’s sufficient, it’s okay, because men who are immigrants get more, the rough end of the deal. So that’s why I think, I believe it, and I say it clearly, this country is full of hypocrisy” (Parent 1)</p> <p>“An immigrant family are from the start under bigger suspicion than Norwegian families. They give more attention to immigrants. And that probably because of, probably we have common propaganda, you know. In Russia, they show these horrible pictures about <i>barnevernet</i> that just picks up kids but here in the news I can read that Russia reduced penalty for home violence, of course it is common impression of each other. And since they read this huge article that Russia doesn’t punish for home violence and with some scary numbers, they can think that home violence is normal in Russian families, right? They should check them more careful then since they live in Norway and</p>

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