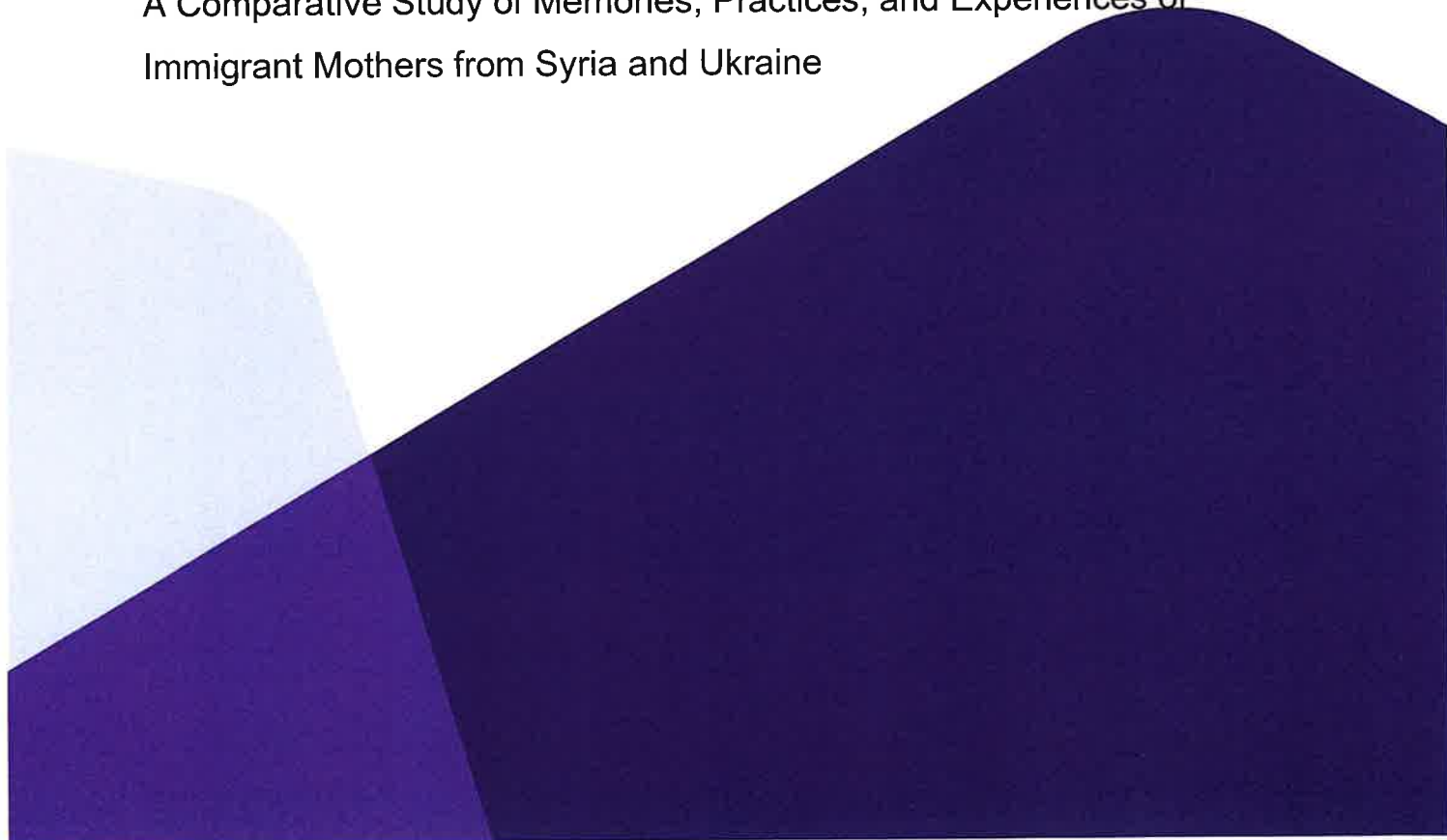


Fahmida Hanif Ela/9010

Discourses of Childhood and Motherhood

A Comparative Study of Memories, Practices, and Experiences of
Immigrant Mothers from Syria and Ukraine



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This thesis is worth 60 study points

Summary

This research has been guided by the aim of understanding the perceptions of childhood and motherhood through immigrant mothers' voices and their experiences. Align with theoretical approaches of social constructionism, Foucauldian discourse theory, and social construction of childhood and motherhood, a qualitative research design has been adopted. Findings show that immigrants' perceptions and practices are connected to their distinct memories and particular sociocultural contexts. Their sociocultural contexts are affected by dynamic sociocultural factors that are related to discursive formations. Without understanding these discursive formations, it is difficult to understand immigrants' cultures. This research also has found that all immigrants don't perceive the things around them in the same way, but they often get generalized treatment from the professionals and the host society.

In the process of being a multicultural society, the narrations of immigrants and their agency are particularly important. Immigrants in exile come from different cultural backgrounds with different memories and distinct perceptions including collectivity. There are distinct sociocultural factors in a society that affect immigrants in different grades. By discovering these carefully from a discursive framework, immigrants can be understood better. Norwegian authorities and professionals who work with immigrants should also take these under consideration by avoiding a generalization mentality.

Refugee is neither a crisis nor only a homogenous identity. Refugees are human beings with their unique life experiences.



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Sammendrag engelsk

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Naun på veileder(e) *

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Engelsk

ABSTRACT

Worldwide the number of international immigrants has been robust over the last two decades. Nearly 281 million people lived outside their country of birth, which rose from 173 million in 2000 to 221 million in 2010. Europe has the largest number of international migrants with a total of 87 million in 2020 (UN, 2021). According to the United Nations, an international migrant is a person who has changed his/her country of residence, nevertheless of his/her legal status, or the nature, or the motive of the movement (UN, 2024).

Immigration to Norway has started relatively late. Within a few decades, the country has been experiencing a visible high ethnic diversity from a relatively ethnically homogenous society (Hermansen, 2017). According to Statistics Norway, In Norway, 9,31,081 people out of 55,50,203 total population are immigrants. This reminds us that 16.8% of the total population is immigrants, up from 4.3% in 1992 (SSB, 2023). Within three decades, Norway has experienced a five-fold increase in immigrant population. Immigrant children who grow up in Norway with a Norwegian child welfare system and diverse perspectives of upbringing, integrate with Norwegian society and also receive insights into parental culture from family. Immigrant mothers with refugee status who flee from their countries could have more than one experience and perspective as the individual and as the mother. It was my main area of interest. Their experiences and perspectives have an effect on their children in different ways.

A qualitative research design was chosen for the study. Data from five in-depth individual interviews and observations have been used. Theoretically, the research was framed by social constructionism as an ontological position; Foucauldian discourse theory and social construction of childhood and mothering have been adopted as theoretical approaches.

Findings show that informants experienced different things related to them both as individuals as well as in their role as mothers. These experiences are related to their historical and culturally specific contexts, dynamic social actions, and power relations. They learn and integrate into a new culture, and in most cases, they make a 'compromised position' which is combined with baggage of memories, past and new experiences, ways of integration, beliefs, customs, practices, expectations, and many more things. This baggage can be heavier and more difficult for some than others. They also make of their different resources from past and present to deal with their difficulties and dilemmas.

The sociocultural differences between home countries and Norway, the loss of their social and cultural networks, the 'authoritarian' child-raising framework versus a 'child-centered' child-raising structure, the dilemmas about what they should keep and what they should dismiss from their 'compromised position' were all salient themes next to language barriers and individual challenges related to the Norwegian system. At times, differences between cultures led to the disclosure of new forms or ways of raising children, which demonstrates that neither culture nor child raising is static but is influenced by social and cultural phenomena, and when wide socio-cultural patterns change, for example from a rather homogenous society to a multicultural society, the state should review the national policies.

This analysis considers the mothers' experiences through past and present experiences, perceptions, and expectations for the future. In conclusion, the experiences of Ukrainian and Syrian refugee mothers influence the parenting process, their perceptions of being a mother, and the outcome of the child.

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I am first and foremost grateful to my mother who is continuously the main source of energy and motivation in my life. She taught me how I should be an energetic, empathic, observant person and achieve my goals. She lives almost 4500 miles away from me, but I have the baggage of learning all the time.

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And I will not forget that line from Jimmy Cliff's song I listened to all the time 'You can get it if you really want, but you must try... You succeed at last.....'

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BLD-----Barne- og likestillingsdepartementet (Ministry of Children and Families)

CRC-----Convention on the Rights of the Children

LDO-----Likestillings- og diskrimineringsombud (The Equality and Discrimination Ombudsman)

NAV-----Arbeids- og velferdsetaten (The Labor and Welfare Administration)

SKI-----Senter for Kvalifisering og Inkludering (Center for Qualification and Inclusion)

SSB-----Statistisk Sentralbyrå (Statistics Norway)

UDI-----Utlendingsdirektoratet (Directorate of Immigration)

UN-----United Nations

UNDP-----United Nations Development Programme

UNHCR-----United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

CHAPTER ONE: FOUNDATION OF THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

How is it that we access, interpret, and analyze stories which, at their heart, are distant from experiences which we ourselves may have encountered not only in our own lives but in the accounts of others which are part of our own narrative repertoire? How do we prepare ourselves for the very demanding task that listening must be if it is to be anything? And how is our own sense of identity affected by opening ourselves to the very different realities which are encountered by others? Is it desirable or even possible to remain unchanged when we come to know, however indirectly, the worlds that exist beyond the radar of what has always been familiar to us? (Andrews, 2007, p. 1)

Culture is a lived experience discovered or made, gained or borrowed, gathered, and channeled through learning processes from one generation to another (Ocholla-Ayayo, 2002). This lived experience produces knowledge of this social world through language (Burr, 2015). In the postwar era, migration expanded with forced flow, people crisscrossed the world and met different cultures. Since then, migration has gotten serious attention in various academic sectors. During the last decades, it has also led to social, cultural, economic, and political changes. These impacts of migration concern narrative interpretation of the insights of immigrant cultures, immigrants' experiences, and the way of their integration into the host culture.

Most societies are multicultural in this world, in different ways. Multicultural policies in Norway prioritize equality that is more or less connected to egalitarianism and that is related to the country's high income, low unemployment, welfare arrangements, gender equality, and free/ cheaper higher education (Johannessen, 2020). With the aim of equality offered by Norwegian authorities, this study searches and researches the voices of immigrant mothers which are still comparatively invisible and less important, at least, according to the unavailability of secondary data. If a state wants to create a multicultural society, multicultural understandings, pieces of knowledge, and multicultural voices matter. It would be difficult for the state if these are unidentified, un-listened, and unlearned.

Parenting and childhood are distinct sociocultural phenomena with specific interdependent elements and are shaped by sociocultural norms, values, taboos, laws, and regulations which produce different knowledge and discourses. Adults, mostly parents, are generally responsible for helping children's development from infancy to adulthood by taking care of their basic needs, passing norms, ideas, concepts, values, and behaviors that are essential and functional in specific everyday physical and social settings (James & Prout, 2005, p.16; Schrupf, 2022; Hennem, 2002).

So, what happens when immigrants settle down in another culture that seems different from their culture? How do they act and react to the policies and practices of the new setting? How do they negotiate with and navigate to the host culture? What are important memories related to childhood and parenthood to them? Which practices and perceptions do they hold and which do they keep inside? Are there any power relations between practices and nonpracticing? These all questions will be revealed, in a small portion, in this research which might tell us that this study, importantly, needs continuity in the future in the cultural studies sector. Researchers tend to analyze the discourse of refugee parenting through different categories such as ‘here and there’, ‘traditional and modern’, and ‘on the way to being modern’; and to focus on their traumas, vulnerabilities, acculturation stresses, physical and psychological impacts of war and fleeing which may lead to ignoring immigrants’, particularly refugees’, sociocultural contexts and factors of parenting and childhood, and their agencies too (Bergset & Ulvik, 2021). I, as a researcher, have carefully avoided these tendencies in this study and tried to understand refugee mothers’ specific sociocultural contexts through their narrations.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Last 40 years, Norway has been developing a welfare state where ‘equality’ gets the limelight. However, there are still differences between *formal* and *real* equality. According to Store Norske Leksikon, *formal* equality means everyone has equal rights in society according to the law. On the other hand, *Real* equality indicates that regardless of individual or group circumstances, everyone has equal opportunities for participation and development in society (Ryste and Igdahl, 2024). According to my understanding, when we talk about *real*, it relates to everyday practices, attitudes, and behaviors toward the context.

Before 2019, BLD (Barne- og likestillingsdepartementet) had the main responsibility for the state’s equality policy and legislation, but from January 2019 the Ministry of Culture has taken responsibility. In 2006, LDO (Likestillings- og diskrimineringsombud) was established to promote equality and fight against any kind of discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, and functional ability. The LDO takes up the Equality Centre (Likestillingssenteret), the Equality Ombudsman (Likestillingsombudet), the Complaints Board for Equality (Klagenemnda for likestilling) and parts of the tasks of the Center against Ethnic Discrimination (Senter mot etnisk diskriminering). The National Documentation Center for Persons with Disabilities was incorporated into LDO on 1 January 2009 (Ryste and Igdahl, 2024).

In Norway, in the postwar years, people experienced from the establishment of the Norwegian welfare state to the egalitarian social welfare state. This change affected the child upbringing system including new forms of cohabitation and family structures, equal parenting, and children's rights have been shaped in a new form both legally and socially (Hermansen, 2017; Schrupf, 2022). Many countries, for example, Syria, Palestine, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, Somalia, and Kongo (most of the immigrants in exile in Norway came from these countries) have different societal forms that indicate 'gendered', 'authoritarian', and 'collective' parenting systems (Hollekim, 2016; Schmidt, 2018). I, concernedly, put these words under quote because they seem like Western tags to me which often reject the alternative interpretations of childhood and child-rearing process.

According to Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 5.1% of the total population in Norway holds refugee status (SSB, 2023). This study has continuously tried to find out the cultural specificity of selected participants, their practices and interpretations, and their perspectives towards Norwegian culture.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research has invited immigrant mothers with refugee status to express their stories, parenting perspectives, experiences between two cultures, and expectations. To understand the topic, the main research question including relative research questions is:

- How do immigrant mothers with refugee status perceive childhood and mothering through their cultural journey?
 - What do they memorize about their childhood and motherhood in their home countries?
 - What do they experience and think about upbringing culture in Norway?
 - What are the differences and similarities between the Norwegian parenting system and parenting of their own cultures?
 - Which cultural practices from their own culture do they want to pass on to their children?

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Beyond the daily experiences in Norway as immigrants, immigrant mothers with a refugee status have their past experiences which often, in general, we want to tag as 'traumatic', 'problematic', and 'difficult'. The question is 'Does it mean all time in these ways?' Research on refugees and migrant parents is often focused on the vulnerability of this group and the problems associated with their vulnerabilities (Tingvold et. al., 2012). If a state, as a provider, provides a guidebook of different disciplinary practices and support schemes as a service, then the people are the service users. As a service user, how do immigrant mothers see it, those who have different types of practices, that is the main aim of this research. Pamela Trevithick named it knowledge-based social work. This framework recognizes and carefully considers all forms of knowledge produced by different stakeholders, such as practitioners, other professionals, and individuals related to the context (Trevithick, 2008).

To promote equality and inclusion in a society that is becoming increasingly more diverse, there is a need for professionals to explore alternative pathways that are strength-based, affirmative, and that follow more curious and dialogue-based approaches (Hollekim, 2016).

The research has aimed to record the experiences and perceptions of immigrant mothers through historical and cultural specificity, their socially processed knowledge and actions, and to understand their perceptions through their narrations.

Many have argued that Refugee studies go better under human rights and multiculturalism, gender studies, refugee studies, and(-or) even anthropology. Cultural studies have strong points to understand this, in many ways, according to my understanding. The main reasons are-

- immigrants are not out of the cultural context, rather they are one of the most important subjects to making a multicultural society.
- their cultural understanding could affect the host culture, make new history, and be important to cultural policies.
- discursive relations between different stakeholders related to immigrants must be understood as part of cultural studies.

As a current student of cultural studies and a previous student of social anthropology, understanding immigrant cultures, with the academic knowledge of cultural studies, is a latent aim of this research.

1.5 FORM OF CHAPTERS

In this section, I will explain how I have formed the chapters in my thesis.

Chapter One is made up of an introduction, background of research, problem statements, research questions as well as aim and objectives.

In Chapter Two, I will discuss different terms and conditions related to immigrants, refugees, childhood, and parenting in the Norwegian context through different literature reviews.

In Chapter Three, I will clear my ontological position and the theories I have chosen based on empirical data.

Chapter Four will explain the methodologies I have used including my role as a researcher, my story and philosophical standpoints, an overview of participants in this study, research strategies, data processing, and data analysis. At the end of this chapter, I will explain the challenges I have met that have given me a better understanding and learning insights.

Chapter Five will show us the memories of Ukrainian immigrant mothers as a child, as an individual, and as a mother in their home country. This chapter will also bring the journey of their understanding of children, childhood, and motherhood as well as their experiences in Norway through their voices.

In Chapter Six we will continue the same structure as Chapter Five with different narrations of Syrian mothers.

Chapter Seven will reveal my discussions which will frame the theory and empirical data including my positions. I shall be careful about any generalizations.

Finally, chapter Eight will help me to summarize my research, definitely not as a conclusion because understanding culture is a continuous journey.

The reference part and Appendixes will show secondary data sources, the guidelines of this study, different research materials, coding tables, charts, and diagrams.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 BACKGROUND

Reviewing related literature is worthy of understanding children, childhood, parenting, mothering immigrant parenting, and perspectives and experiences of immigrants in a new cultural setting. The sociocultural context is neither static nor universal. So how these concepts were used, for example, fifty years ago, and how these are being understood now; how these are used in the immigrants' home country, and how these are being used in the host country, is important for this research. Another important point is understanding immigrants' perspectives and experiences seem important indicators of immigrant children's well-being to me. For example, when a Syrian mother finds it difficult to connect with her son who was raised in Norway and more bonding with the son who was raised in Syria; or when another Syrian mother feels more connection with children in Norway because she didn't have any rights of decision-making on her children in her home country; it indicates that there are some issues we must take into consideration and these need to be understood in the research sector.

The focus of literature on immigrants in exile is often related to immigrants' vulnerabilities, traumas, and the problems linked with this. Only focusing on problems means trying to find immigrants' problems that could be a problem/threat to the host culture and that need an urgent solution. This may lead to avoiding immigrants' agency. I have not found too much literature (which could be my limitations) that focuses on the connection between immigrants' memories and how these impact their knowledge and present lives. To understand immigrant cultures, it seems exceptionally important to me as a student of cultural studies, because memories play an important role in migration, immigration in exile, resettlement, integration, and diaspora. The question and hypothesis raised in my mind that most probably Western literature was not interested in this important issue.

In this chapter, I will explain different concepts through my journey of literature review that will reveal the sociocultural construction of the concepts of refugees, children, childhood, parenting practices, and mothering.

2.2 REFUGEE

According to UNHCR, individuals who flee from their home countries and cross a universal border to find security and to breathe more unreservedly in another nation are called refugees (UNHCR, 2024).

According to the 1951 refugee convention, a refugee is somebody who has a justifiable fear and reason of being mistreated because of race, nationality, religion, participation in special social activities or political standpoints; living outside of the country of nationality because of not being capable to deal with the fear; does not hold nationality in the present living country and is the unwilling tendency to return to home country (UNHCR, 2024). On World Refugee Day 2023, UN Secretary-General António Guterres expressed that displaced people require and merit bolster and solidarity, not closed borders and pushbacks. Displaced people can feel challenged because of insufficient language abilities, segregation, new experiences with authorities, time confinements for budgetary back, delayed movement and family reunification forms, ungraceful government administrations, and socially harsh arrangements. On the other hand, they can face challenges due to their injury and stretch (Stewart et al., 2015). To help the integration of immigrant parents in exile into the host society, national authorities should try to explore immigrants' own perspectives (Bergset & Ulvik, 2021).

According to The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration, an individual meets the necessities of a refugee in Norway who-

- has been oppressed for ethnicity, family, skin color, religion, nationality, part of an extraordinary social group, and political opinions.
- on the way to their home country in genuine peril of being exposed to the death penalty, torture, brutal or corrupting treatment, and punishment.
- Are in special social groups indicating previous casualties of human trafficking, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender individuals or intersex individuals, and vulnerable groups of women and children (UDI, 2024).

If an individual meets one of the criteria above, he or she will get asylum as a refugee in Norway.

2.3 THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is an assertion by the UN states on human rights to secure the rights of children under the age of 18 (UN General Assembly, 1989). UNCRC has 54 articles that incorporate the respectful, political, social, financial, and social rights of any child who is entitled to urge them. Except for the USA, all member states of the UN have ratified the CRC.

The four articles which are known as 'general principles' or 'core principles' are:

- *Article 2 Non-discrimination:* Regardless of ethnicity, religion, sex, language, family background, political or other opinion, abilities, or any other status, children have the same rights.
- *Article 3 Best interest of the child:* member states of the UN are solely responsible for child protection by ensuring children's well-being, rights and duties of parents, and all legislative and administrative procedures.
- *Article 6 Right to life, survival, and development:* Every child has the right to live and development, and the member states must ensure the maximum possibilities of survival and development of children.
- *Article 12 Right to be listened:* Children have the full right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them, from their daily lives to any kind of judicial and administrative proceeding related to them (UNCRC, 1989)

The Convention states about children in exile, particularly in Article 22. Children who are seeking or are considered refugees have full rights according to the articles in the convention, and member states are fully responsible for providing these including family reunification. State parties must cooperate with the UN and all other intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations related to the UN to ensure the rights of refugee children (UNCRC, 1989). Norwegian authorities adopted CRC in their child welfare system in 2003.

2.4 IMMIGRATION CONTEXT IN NORWAY

Norway, with a population of 5.3 million, has seen a notable increase in the immigrant population over the years. In 2008, immigrants and Norwegian-born immigrant parents comprised 9.7% of the population, rising to 20.8% by March 2024 (SSB, 2008; SSB, 2024). This shift is marked by immigrants predominantly from non-western countries.

The immigration landscape in Norway has evolved through three waves: labor immigration, family immigration, and asylum-seeking immigration. Initially attracting immigrants from the 'Global South' (predominantly from Pakistan, India, and Turkey) in the late 1960s to fulfill labor demands, Norway's liberal immigration policy and economic prosperity facilitated their entry (Amundsen, 2017; Cooper, 2005). However, concerns over cultural threats and social problems for a comparatively homogenous society led to stricter immigration regulations in 1972, including an immigration halt for unskilled labor immigrants. Then family reunification became a common pathway for immigrants to bring their families, contributing to demographic changes. It seemed positive for the integration of those immigrants who were already settling down in Norway. (Amundsen, 2017; Brochmann & Kjelstadli, 2008; Cappelen, Ouren & Skjerpen, 2011; Cooper, 2005).

Refugees and asylum seekers gained prominence in immigration policy in the late 1970s, aligning with Norway's humanitarian values. Between 1960 and 1970 Norway accepted 223 refugees, between 1978 and 1979 it was 1680 (Østby, 2001). Despite efforts to control immigration through regulations like the Immigration Act of 1988, the influx of refugees remained substantial. The asylum situation in Norway experienced a significant spike between 2015 and 2016, notably from countries like Syria and Afghanistan. This surge concerned political and public attention to tighter asylum regulations that resulted in legislative changes in 2016 (Cooper, 2005; Pedersen, 2016). As of April 2024, refugees and asylum seekers constituted 31.9% of all immigrants in Norway; 11,168 individuals are waiting in different asylum receptions to settle down in the host community (SSB, 2024; UDI, 2024). The influx of refugees, particularly from countries with significant Muslim populations, has transformed Norway into a multicultural, multiethnic, and multi-religious society. While diversity is celebrated, there's also apprehension, with a portion of the population expressing skepticism and concerns about the integration of immigrants (SSB, 2016; Ong, 2018; Hollekim, 2016, p.15).

With a remarkable change in past years, Norway has become a multinational, multiethnic, and multireligious country today from a comparatively homogenous nation (Hennum, 2002, p.20; Hermansen, 2017, p.16). Although pieces of evidence show us that there was (and still is) tension toward accepting immigrants in Norway there are also many positive effects of becoming a multicultural society (Pileberg, 2021; Kroglund, 2021).

2.5 CHILD, CHILDHOOD, AND PARENTING

Childhood encompasses the entirety of a child's development, including their physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and cognitive growth, and parents as adults are primarily responsible for the child's development. It is a crucial period where children learn, adapt, and form the foundation for their future selves. The phenomena of child-rearing and parenting are related to the emotional styles and practices, of both parents and children, and these are culturally and historically constructed (Schrumppf, 2022). Social Studies on children and childhood takes a critical and responsive position against universal positivistic views on it. Rather it focuses on the daily life and experiences of children and sociocultural structures (James & Prout, 1997; James et al., 1998; James & James, 2008; Alanen, 1990).

Many authors and researchers such as Richard H. De Lone, Jens Qvortrup, Leena Alanen, Nick Lee, and Ivar Frones have focused on an interesting point in the discourse of child wellbeing. It focuses on both the present state as children's *being* and the future state as children's *becoming*. Parenting and parenting style have links with both (Ben-Arieh, 2007; Elstad & Stefansen, 2014). While the early effort of child-becoming indicated the adult perspective and focused on opportunities rather than assistance, a new effort of child-being indicates the child perspective also (Ben-Arieh, 2007). According to Nick Lee, it is problematic to see children only as beings because the world becomes unstable even for adults due to continuous changes in consumption culture and technology. He mentions that children have access to information and rights to express their important needs as beings and now, they are both independent (beings) and dependent (becoming) (Lee, 2001, s.76).

In the same way, parenting is also a dynamic and plural sociocultural phenomenon. The goal of parenting is to incorporate by norms, values, beliefs, and ideas of parents (Ochacka & Janzen, 2008). The practices of parenting are not only connected with the future but also the past experiences of parents (Bergnehr, 2016). Parenting, motherhood, and gender roles in parenting are neither natural nor static. These are socially constructed and are biased by culture, societal forms

and actions, ethnicity, and public policies that reflect the interests of states (James & Prout, 1998). Very often, motherhood is seen as only a biological and natural process. But motherhood is affected by sociocultural phenomena and except for some biological processes, it is a social construct; even some biological processes are importantly connected to cultural practices too. Motherhood is related to the social construction of motherhood including the mother's duty and actions, expected behaviors, concepts of bad mother or good mother, religious and historical meanings, and hegemonic stereotypes that tell us that motherhood and mothering are highly sociocultural constructions (Delgado-Herrera et al. 2024; Schrumpf, 2022). So, when a society aims to become multicultural, it must consider how childhood and motherhood are approached and understood within diverse cultural contexts (Hays, 1998; Holloway et al., 2010).

In multicultural societies, there are various responses to the concept of childhood. Different cultures may have unique perspectives on parenting practices, mothering, and the roles of children within families and communities. This diversity can lead to both challenges and opportunities in understanding and supporting the development of children from different cultural backgrounds (Renzaho & Vignjevic, 2011; Tingvold et al., 2012). Challenges may arise in reconciling differing cultural norms and values regarding parenting and child-rearing. For immigrant parents with refugee status, it is taken for granted that they are unaware of the new parenting system in host culture due to language barriers, unawareness of service, low economic status as well as different cultural interpretations of parenting, family values, and child behaviors (Ahn et al., 2014; Bergset & Ulvik, 2021). There may be concerns about how to ensure that all children have equal access to opportunities for growth and development, regardless of their cultural background. Additionally, there may be debates about the significance of preserving cultural traditions versus adapting to a more diverse society.

There are still significant research gaps about refugee parents, such as cultural parenting strategies, previous parenting practices, and experiences of resettlement in a new country as individuals and as parents which are interconnected with parenting practices (Grant & Guerin, 2014; Ochocka & Janzen, 2008). However, there are also many benefits to embracing multicultural perspectives on childhood. Diverse cultural practices and beliefs can enrich children's experiences and foster greater empathy and understanding among individuals from different backgrounds. It can also lead to innovative approaches to education and child development that draw from the strengths of various cultures.

In navigating the complexities of childhood in a multicultural society, it's important to have laws, regulations, and guidelines in place to ensure the well-being and rights of all children are protected. These may include policies related to education, healthcare, child welfare, parenting, and cultural sensitivity training for professionals working with children and families. Ultimately, the goal is to create an inclusive and supportive environment where every child has the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential, regardless of their cultural background. This requires ongoing dialogue, collaboration, and a commitment to valuing and respecting the diversity of experiences and perspectives within society.

2.6 CHILDHOOD AND PARENTING IN NORDIC SETTING (NORWAY AS AN EXAMPLE)

In 1896 Norway established a child security arrangement for the first time and was the first nation in the world that started to begin with laws to secure children (Hennum, 2002). It also became the first country to establish the office of an ombudsman for children, tasked with safeguarding children's rights and interests across various societal levels. During the postwar years, Norway had been established as a welfare state, and new ideas of social welfare emerged after 1972. Children as the future were also an important group in welfare politics that affected the meaning of childhood, parenting, family structure, and the relationship between stakeholders related to children (Parents, children, society, state, etc.) (Schrumpf, 2022).

Since the 1990s, there has been a significant shift across the world in perspective toward children and their rights, characterized by a growing emphasis on their autonomy and participation in decision-making processes that affect their lives. This change aligns with the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which Norwegian authorities have integrated into its child welfare acts in 2003 (Hennum, 2004). They have integrated several principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) into its legal framework, including non-discrimination (§2), the paramountcy of the child's best interests (§ 3), the right to life and development (§ 6), and children's right to be heard (§ 12) (Hollekim, 2016, p.15). Furthermore, participation rights have been recognized as fundamental human rights for children in the Norwegian Constitution since 2014.

The primary objective of public policies in Norway is to promote shared parental responsibilities and engage fathers in childcare alongside mothers. Children are considered equal individuals within the household and are afforded opportunities commensurate with adult citizens, including the

right to privacy when needed. It also says that children aged 12 and older have the right to be heard in matters concerning them, and in exceptional cases, even younger children may be included. Both parents and the Norwegian welfare state share the responsibility for children's well-being, as children are recognized as individuals by the state. Despite their lower status in society due to age, emphasizing their rights as individuals and citizens is essential (Hennum, 2004). In 'individualistic' societies like those in the USA, Western Europe, and Scandinavia, values such as independence, privacy, and the right of children to participate in decisions that impact them are highly valued. Norway is renowned for its welfare state model, which encompasses a comprehensive range of legislative support and services for families and society, including educational and child welfare services. These provisions aim to ensure a certain standard of living for children and reflect the government's involvement in the private lives of families. In Norwegian society, the well-being of children is viewed as a broader societal concern, with the quality of parenting practices closely linked to the overall well-being of society (Hollekim, 2016; Johannesen and Appoh, 2016). Children are viewed as autonomous individuals with personal rights, rather than merely the property of their parents or society (Hollekim, 2016; Pösö et al., 2014).

According to The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir), parenting in Norway encompasses eight key themes:

1. Show love and care to your child
2. Accept the initiative of your child
3. Share your feelings and listen to your child's feeling
4. Give commend and appear recognition
5. Shared consideration and shared experience
6. Make encounters meaningfully
7. Make connections
8. Help for self-help
 - Plan
 - Support
 - Facilitate
 - Set positive limits (Bufdir, 2024)

This legislative framework underscores Norway's dedication to promoting the rights and well-being of children, positioning them as active participants in decisions that affect their lives. By

enshrining these principles into law, Norway reaffirms its commitment to fostering a society that prioritizes the rights, voices, and holistic development of its youngest members (Hennum, 2002; Hollekim, 2016). In line with this notion, the Norwegian paradigm of parenting is child-centric, grounded in intuition, and fosters open dialogue between parents and children (Bufdir, 2024). In Norwegian society, individuality and autonomy are highly prized attributes, and children are accorded the same rights as adults. Parents are expected to support their children to become independent, self-assured, and creative individuals, with little emphasis placed on hierarchical structures within the family (Hennum, 2002; Hollekim, 2016; Johannesen and Appoh, 2016). On the other side, the child protection system in Norway is often criticized and questioned for poor quality, questionable services, universal views of children, ignorance of the diversity of immigrants, and child protection professionals' hegemonic influence on immigrants (Pösö et al., 2014; Križ & Skivenes, 2011; Hollekim, 2016; Johannesen and Appoh, 2016).

In alignment with Foucault's theory of power, the information disseminated by the state is not neutral; rather, it reflects the dynamics of power relations and the agendas of those in control (Picot, 2012). Since the inception of the Norwegian welfare state, policies have focused on addressing issues related to broken families, with a shift in concern from the absent working mother to the emphasis on absent fathers (Haukanes and Thelen, 2010). Campaigns promoting breastfeeding, for instance, have influenced perceptions of parenthood by embedding expert knowledge into families' daily lives instead of relying solely on state intervention. Furthermore, parental behaviors are subject to scrutiny through infant health checks and parental support systems (Haukanes and Thelen, 2010). Through the intervention, parenting has become a highly politicized context, with debates emerging around how parents support, discipline, educate, and interact with their children. Even seemingly mundane aspects such as bedtime routines, reading habits, and outdoor play have become contested issues (Faircloth, 2013, p. 8). At the core of these debates are related power relations and questions of democracy concerning what constitutes the best interests of children, parents, and society as a whole (Faircloth, 2013).

2.7 CHANGES IN PARENTING PRACTICES

Adapting to a new environment entails reassessing one's values, ideas, expectations, and parenting norms. Differences between immigrants' child-rearing practices and those of the host society can lead to parental stress and family conflict. Acculturation and parenting are dynamic processes, prompting immigrants to question their parenting styles and adapt to new practices. An ecological approach is essential in understanding immigrant parenting, considering their specific contexts (Ochocka and Janzen, 2008).

Due to globalization and liberal mobility in postwar periods, immigration in different countries emerged which indicates the diverse experiences of immigrants and the host. It puts concentration in different academic and research sectors all over the world. Aldoney and Cabrera (2016) noted immigrant parents adopting American disciplinary methods, such as time-outs (Ong, 2018). Nesteruk and Marks (2011) observed Eastern European parents in the US struggling with the lack of respect for authority while acknowledging the benefits of democratic parenting. These parents selectively integrated aspects of the host culture into their parenting, emphasizing their children's opinions and individuality while maintaining cultural values (Ong, 2018). Maiter and George (2003) highlighted the importance of cultural values like respect for elders and discipline among Asian mothers in Canada, which is influenced by social context, indicating a nuanced adaptation to the host culture. Overall, immigrant parents undergo significant adjustments in their parenting approaches as they navigate the complexities of acculturation and strive to balance cultural values with the demands of their new environment (Maiter and Goerge, 2003).

In Norway, the focus on immigrant parents, parenting, and children in the research area is comparatively still low. As I have expressed before, immigrants are one of the most important subjects in a multicultural society, this area needs close attention. Parenting may be crucial for immigrants adjusting to a new cultural environment. The reasons could be an adjustment to a new culture, less understanding of policies, and different dilemmas related to these. For example, Tingvold found Vietnamese parents in Norway adapting their parenting to promote their children's autonomy, although language barriers hindered emotional communication. Immigrant parents often rely on both immediate and extended family for support in parenting, valuing the opportunities for their children in the host country (Tingvold, 2012). Immigrants' parents in exile may face a new experience between the home country and the host country that may add multiple values to their lives and cause having multiple voices that should be understood through a critical analytical lens (Bergset & Ulvik, 2021).

2.8 INTEGRATION IN NORWAY (INTRODUCTION PROGRAM AS A PROCESS)

Integration represents a complex societal process aimed at facilitating immigrant communities' access to essential social resources and fostering their inclusion in vital institutions such as education, employment, housing, and politics. Achieving full integration entails ensuring that individuals from immigrant backgrounds have equal opportunities and are recognized as legitimate members of the national community, mirroring the life chances of the majority population (Hermansen, 2017; Ong, 2018; Bergset & Ulvik, 2021). The escalating proportion of immigrants in affluent Western countries underscores the urgency of integrating them effectively. By early 2015, the global migrant population had reached an unprecedented 245 million, with Europe hosting a record 76 million international migrants (UN, 2016). Consequently, integrating immigrants and their descendants emerges as a central challenge confronting Norway and other Western nations in the 21st century (Hermansen, 2017). Within this framework, refugee parents participate in structured integration programs run by the state, while their children enroll in schools where they receive language assistance and close support. The subsequent sections will provide a comprehensive overview of the integration program customized specifically for adult refugees, elucidating its various components and objectives in detail.

The objective of the Introduction program is to grant a person fundamental ability of the Norwegian language as well as the fundamental information of the Norwegian social system. It makes a difference to get the person ready for work and/or instruction. The target group comprises people between 18 and 55 years:

- have been allowed asylum and have refugee status.
- resettlement refugees
- Get a residence permit on compassionate humanitarian grounds after an application for asylum
- reunited with the groups mentioned above as part of a family reunion
- following the breakdown of a marriage or cohabitation, have been allowed a residence permit on an independent basis due to mishandling within the marriage or cohabitation (Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, 2023).

The introduction program is a right and an obligation at the same time to these target groups. The primary municipality where the target groups settle is bound to organize an introduction program

for them and the municipality gets the lawful system of the program from the Introduction Act (Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, 2023).

The components of the program are:

- Coping with life - strategies for living in Norway
- Parental guidance - how to be a parent in Norway
- 'Project Freedom' - prevention against bullying and negative social control
- Training Norwegian and social studies for immigrants and refugees
- Work and language practice (Midt Telemark Municipality, 2024)

The target groups must take part in the Norwegian language skills, and social studies classes full time. But for a few extraordinary reasons, this program may run for up to two a long time. During this time a person gets budgetary benefits through the introduction program from the municipality. While refugee parents are obliged to participate in the Introduction program, refugee children have the right to enlist in school, get near follow-up, and enjoy all forms of child rights. (Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, 2023).

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL APPROACHES

In this research, the main goal is to understand childhood and mothering as social construction through narratives told by immigrant mothers. I have sought to understand how immigrant mothers memorize their childhood and motherhood in their home countries and their cultural perceptions of childhood and mothering through their experiences in Norway. Based on the data I have found; I have selected relevant theories and have adopted social constructionism as my basic ontological position. I have used Foucauldian discourse theory and sociocultural understanding of childhood and mothering for my analysis. In the following section, I shall elaborate on these positions and approaches.

3.1 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

Social constructionism is a position that holds meaning and knowledge of the world is developed through social interaction. Our social world may seem natural and normal to us is socially constructed. These constructs change and evolve when historical, political, and economic conditions change. This suggests that we should analyze dynamic power relations in societies and how language, historical and cultural specificity, and specific contexts shape the social world (Main, 2023). Power relations explain how certain groups of people occupy dominant positions, gain more authority and power than others, and can set the standards and norms that to rest of the others are expected to obey. The goal of social constructionism is “understanding the world of lived experience from the perspective of those who live in it” (Andrews, 2012). This indicates cultural relativism and says that social truth and reality can never be excluded from the language. There are multiple perspectives hidden in the social world; and exclusion and inclusion of these perspectives in our knowledge are a matter of power (Burr, 2015). The major influencers of this approach are Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman who wrote the book ‘The Social Construction of Reality’ (1966). Berger and Luckman use the term ‘habitualization’ which indicates people’s repeated performance of specific actions through interactions. These repeated actions get acceptance from most in the society and become habits and patterns. People shape truth and reality according to their perceptions which are shaped by culture and the primary socialization process through childhood (Berger & Luckman, 1966, p. 70, 131, 150).

I will describe some features of social constructionism that are especially relevant to my project. I will connect to these matters in my discussion chapter.

- *A critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge* warns that ways of understanding the world as objective and unbiased truth are ‘taken-for-granted knowledge’. Understanding of the social world differs from person to person which must be considered (Berger & Luckman, 1966, p.137).
- *Historical and cultural specificity* prioritizes specific historical and cultural understanding of the world. This includes particular events and contexts related to people which shape their social world. Without understanding this feature the comparatively powerful knowledge might exclude the other cultures (Berger & Luckman, 1966, p.66-67).
- *Knowledge is sustained by social processes* and describes the understanding of knowledge that is based on daily interactions, shares, and exchanges between people who are constantly engaged with each other. How people format social environment may not be produced by

biological constitution, but through sociocultural and psychological formations. These formations are called 'homo socius' (Berger & Luckman, 1966, p.66-67).

- *Knowledge and social action go together* says that the construction of knowledge and the perception of the world are result of social actions. It tells that through the power of social actions, people include knowledge in their lives and exclude as well (Berger & Luckman, 1966, p.104).
- *Discourse, Disciplinary Power, and Power Relations* refer to a set of culturally meaningful ideas (discourses) and related dynamic power relations (Speer, 2005; Berger & Luckman, 1966, p.126). Burr gives an example of the discourse of personality. The dominant explanation of personality defines different personality traits, the definition of mental illness, mental and psychological disorders, crimes, and punishments (Burr, 2015).

Bringing a Foucauldian discourse approach, effective discourse comes from *Disciplinary* actions by modern governance where power is embedded. Disciplinary power expects the desires of the people in society to conform to the disciplines and normalize these through practices. For example, the discourses of childhood and parenthood in Norway, Syria, and Ukraine are different because of different disciplinary actions and power relations. When a Syrian or Ukrainian parent meets discourses of Norwegian parenthood and childhood, they need to follow disciplinary actions taken by the Norwegian state and must often rearrange and rethink their exercising knowledge. The dominant discourses have the power to characterize other discourses as unacceptable, bad, or even irrelevant. According to Foucault, power is everywhere (Gordon, 1980). Power relations could work between the state and the citizen, between the global west and global east, between so-called higher-class citizens and lower-class citizens, between accepted sexual identities and others, and between the host community and refugees.

3.2 FOUCAULDIAN DISCOURSE THEORY

Discourse refers to a group of statements, ideas, and claims that create the 'truth' and 'reality' of the social world which is historically and socially specific (Alvesson & Billing, 2009. Engstrand & Enberg, 2020). To understand discourse, the connection between three bases- language, power, and knowledge must be understood. All knowledge produced by people is not discourse, it depends on who is producing it for whom (Foucault, 1997). Agreeing with Foucault, Burr says that the subject positions related to power create and suppress 'what is desirable', 'what is possible', and 'who we are' and indicate the individuals' specific subjective experiences (Burr, 1995, p.145).

Foucault defines "discourses, in a systematic way, form the object (knowledge) and the subject (people) of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972, p. 48). According to the Foucauldian definition, discourse is not one statement or one action by one person, it is a group of statements, choices, and concepts that receive acceptance through regularity (an order, correlations, positions, and functioning, transformations) and we can define it as discursive formation (Foucault, 1972, p.38). To refer to a group of statements as a discursive formation, there must be some characteristics-

- Statements indicate the same object
- Statements are expressed in the same way
- Statements share the common systematic abstraction
- Statements have indistinguishable subjects (Foucault, 1972).

He also explains that knowledge and truth that shape our lives are created through discourses structured by power (Foucault, 1972). Through language (oral and text), the subject creates a version of reality that is perspective and specific truth. (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008, p. 102). Discourse is generally accepted and influenced by powerholders and is legitimated by social sharing, use, and distribution to masses of people. Putting aside the traditional belief in top-down power (oppressive and negative), Foucault shows us power as productive producing identity, reality, truth, subject, object, and knowledge (Saroj, 2024).

Foucauldian discourse analysis is grounded in social constructionism as an ontological basis (Ragnhild, 2016). With this approach, a researcher must be critical of how language constructs social knowledge and maintains power structures. I have chosen this as a theory in this study. Kendall and Wickham in their book 'Using Foucault's Method' (1999) show some examples of how a researcher can use Foucauldian theory in cultural studies-

- how Culture and cultural practices produce an overall general logic and meanings through power by avoiding local, historical, and deeper meaning of hegemony.
 - Understand culture as the management of lives instead of the meanings held by people.
 - how and why discourses are made systematically as constructed cultural statements which can be authorized or forbidden by powerholder and the powerless have nothing to do but eventually accept them as their own.
 - how culture as governmental practices produces people who hold it as united.
 - how governments use it as a tool of management and discipline
- how naturalness of knowledge is produced by specific historical events. (Kendall & Wickham, 1999, p. 139-144).

3.3 CHILDHOOD AND MOTHERING AS SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

“Childhood is understood as a social construction. As such it provides an interpretive frame for contextualizing the early years of human life. Childhood, as distinct from biological immaturity, is neither a natural nor universal feature of human groups but appears as a specific structural and cultural component of many societies.” (James & Prout, 2015, P.7)

Childhood in sociology describes childhood as a social and cultural phenomenon. This challenges the universal definition and understanding of childhood and focuses on childhood as a dynamic structural and cultural phenomenon that varies from culture to culture. Theorists in this area suggest that childhood should be understood in specific contexts as social constructs and significant factors related to childhood (gender, class, age, race, and life experiences) (James & Prout, 1998. James & James, 2008. Alanen, 2001, 2014). Motherhood defines the processes of a mother related to birthing and raising children. It is still a less-researched area according to the impacts on mother’s life course. Without understanding mothers as ‘being’ (everything related to their daily life experiences), motherhood might not be figured out fully. The concepts of motherhood and mothering have diverse meanings and experiences across the social world which must be understood through dominant discourses produced by particular contexts (Neely, et al., 2023; Williamson, et al., 2023, Salusky, 2013).

Childhood, children, motherhood, and mothering, these concepts are differently defined but closely interrelated. Children as individual beings go through specific processes called childhood and mothers’ processes are defined by motherhood. In motherhood what a mother does indicates mothering. These concepts are connected to each other. If the principles of children and childhood change, motherhood, mothering, parenting, and parenthood must negotiate with the principles (Ragnhild, 2016). Mothering and motherhood are related to discourses produced by society and have diverse sociocultural meanings. For example, in Syria, the concept or the person ‘mother’ is related to caring for men’s children, women have no right to hold guardianship of their children. In Ukraine, motherhood is connected to gendered notions, taboos, norms, and beliefs. In Norway, equal parenting policies have brought fathering and mothering on the same chair. So, there is no doubt, at least not to me, that motherhood, and mothering are social constructs related to distinct sociocultural factors and discourses. In this project, I have carefully sought an understanding of the notion of ‘childhood’ through memories of immigrant mothers and their experiences of mothering.

James and Sprout explain childhood in terms of cultural, social, and economic systems. They state that the relationship between children and adults depends on both the natural and human-made physical environment. Different circumstances produce different childhoods and there is no 'one' childhood (James & Prout, 2015). They stand on four approaches to childhood-

- The *tribal* approach tends to see children as a specific group with specific behaviors, practices, beliefs, and actions. For example, children's play material, and children's games.
- The *social structural* approach indicates childhood as a specific social class
- The *minority group* approach treats childhood as an oppressed minority group who are, to some extent, able to express themselves
- The *socially constructed child* approach explains childhood as a social construct with specific sociocultural meaning.

James and Prout explain that childhood is connected to the position of social constructionism where children and childhood are seen with specific behaviors, responsibilities, actions, structures, and relationships with adults that are related to very specific cultural descriptions, concepts, and discourses (James & Prout, 1998).

For the study of childhood in sociology, James and Prout again offer a 'New Paradigm' with some principles highlighting the agency of children and important factors related to children.

- The first and prime principle is childhood must be understood as a *social construction*. This means childhood, as an early phase of human life, is related to an interpretative frame with sociocultural components.
- The second principle indicates childhood as a *variable of social analysis* that can never be split up from other variables, such as class, gender, ethnicity, and age.
- The third feature of this paradigm explains children and childhood are not passive subjects according to early structural determinations but *active subjects* who are involved in the construction of their own social lives.
- The fourth and final principle of the New Paradigm shows childhood as a phenomenon that presents the double hermeneutic of sociology. Childhood sociology, for this reason, is engaged in and responds to the process of *reconstruction of childhood* (James & Prout, 2005, p. 1-9).

In this study, understanding childhood and mothering is important and related to several concepts as variables- age, gender, and ethnicity. Through these three concepts, this study has tried to describe childhood and mothering as a social construction that is focused on cultural relativism.

Age is considered a key concept to understanding the social construction of childhood. The homogenous generalized age-based definitions such as juvenile detention, consensual sex, rights to vote, work, marriage, as a witness, giving consent, and schooling make not only a general framework but also ignore the different socio-cultural situations of children which must not be ignored. “it implies a commonality of experience that is not there” (James & James, 2008, p.7). In this study, understanding the age and maturity of children and discourses hidden in specific socio-cultural situations is important.

Gender is another remarkable point in understanding the social construction of childhood and motherhood. Gender creates the pattern of boyhood and girlhood of children based on their biological identity. It indicates gendered behaviors and practices, discourses, norms, taboos, and laws through discursive power, and influences social constructions of childhood through education, information and mobility, manhood and womanhood; responsibilities in productive work, and reproductive work (Butler, 1990; Foucault, 1988; Ong, 2018). In this study, how gender influences childhood to future outcomes of man, woman, mother, and father, will be revealed.

Ethnicity is a concept that underpins social collective identity based on common history, shared traditions, languages, religions, customs, norms, beliefs, practices, nationalities, and political identification. Through this concept, people define what belongs to us and what is not ‘ours’, but ‘others’. Through globalization, people from different regions meet each other, and identifying ‘self’ under a particular ethnic group becomes important (Antweiler, 2015; Shneiderman & Amburgey, 2022). Theories of ethnicity include different intersectional topics such as race, migration, marginality, transnationalism, boundary maintenance, kinship, religion, and cross-cultural marriage. By quoting Max Weber’s definition of ethnicity, this study focuses on importance of ethnicity as an important factor in childhood and mothering- ‘those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration” (Weber, 1978, p. 389). When, for example, mothers from Syria or Ukraine memorize their childhoods and mothering, they clearly mention ‘our culture’, and ‘their culture’ to indicate Syrian, Ukrainian, or Norwegian ethnicity.

Through the next chapters, I will explain how childhood and mothering are socially constructed through diverse specific cultural and cross-cultural definitions, concepts, and discourses.

CHAPTER FOUR METHODOLOGY

4.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

As a researcher, my main interest in this research is to understand individuals' experiences and perspectives from diverse cultural backgrounds, specifically refugee mothers from Ukraine and Syria. Through qualitative research, researchers can explore people's lives, behaviors, experiences, emotions, and feelings as well as social and cultural movements, institutions' operations, cultural phenomena, and cross-cultural interactions between cultures (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.10-11; Kvale, 2015). Dag Ingvar Jacobsen, by criticizing the positivist approach, argues that social and cultural phenomena can not be understood in the same way as natural sciences (Jacobsen, 2015). Social research generally recruits three primary approaches in methodology- quantitative (positivist), qualitative (interpretation-based), and mixed-method (pragmatic) approach (Jacobsen, 2015).

As I have chosen my participants from two different cultures (Ukraine and Syria), to understand their life experiences, perspectives, feelings, and emotions, qualitative methods were the best choice for me. While demographic data was collected through quantitative means, I have prioritized qualitative methodologies for their ability to adapt to the diverse findings of the study (Rowley, 2012).

4.2 ROLE OF A RESEARCHER

According to Sture Kvarv, a variant of the criticism of positivism as applied empiricism suggests that neutral and unconditional observation may not be possible (and perhaps not even desirable) in social science research (Kvarv, 2021). Social research is conducted by individuals who harbor their own prejudices, sympathies, antipathies, and political convictions. Researcher, as a social being, shaped by their upbringing, life experiences, and education, may inadvertently bring their own perspectives into their research project. Moreover, a researcher influences the project itself and determines what should be studied and presented. Factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, social class and status, sexual orientation, immigration status, religious views, as well as values, traditions, beliefs, practices, preferences, and political and ideological standpoints can significantly impact the entire research process (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004)

I want to particularly share my story that will reveal my standpoints as a researcher and as a social being.

4.2.1 Behind The Research (My Story)

I came to Norway in February 2020 before Corona. After arriving in Norway, I needed to seek refugee status because of my political standpoint in my home country; and I started the introduction program with SKI (Center for Qualification and Inclusion). There, I met a lot of people who also were going through the program. I talked with them, observed them, and listened to their stories. That time I decided to do something more for a better understanding of their situations, especially in the research area.

On many occasions, I heard from many refugee mothers that they have lost love and bonding with their children. More or less the reasons are losing authority and decision-making over children, experiences and fear of being judged by the host community and child protection, big cultural differences between the host country and home country, change of economic and social position, and different levels of integration experiences between parents and children.

I met a South Asian mother who was reported for child abuse by her 6-year-old. The child was born in Norway. The mother wanted to teach him some Asian culture and slapped him one day, the boy told the teacher at school and the teacher reported to child protection. Child protection came to her place and told her about the Norwegian law. She told me- 'they just didn't want to tell me about the laws, they threatened me to bring my child somewhere else.' After that another day, her son was not listening to her and she held her son's hand strongly. Child protection visited again and brought the child for one week. That time she got overwhelmed and said that she was judged by the first report and not listened to by the authorities. This kind of sharing from immigrant parents led me to understand the Norwegian upbringing system better.

From 2017 to 2020, I worked in 17 refugee camps in Bangladesh in the areas of general protection, woman empowerment, woman and child protection. That time, I closely observed how humanitarian organizations including the UN work with refugees, how people especially women and children live in refugee settings, what they experienced through the fleeing period; according to their experience of displacement how they act, what they must do and cope with a new setting. Later, I wrote several articles on this issue in national and international newspapers and I have written one book on gender-based violence in refugee camps. The lives of refugees in Norway and in Bangladesh are, of course, not the same, but I have been living in Norway since 2020 and I have tried to observe refugees here also. I have tried to observe how they act and integrate into the new cultural situation.

I grew up in a religious and culturally conservative society, worked in a refugee setting and now I belong in a refugee setting as a refugee which has given me two views of life. On the other hand, previous academic experiences in Social Anthropology and present experiences with Cultural Studies have motivated me to choose this topic. My previous master's thesis was about the internal migration of rural people to urban setting and their experiences. With all of my interests and enthusiasm, I have chosen this topic for my thesis.

Despite my past experiences, I have endeavored to set aside my personal biases and empathize with the perspectives of my interviewees. Here, my ideological standpoints have guided me to:

1. Understand others by empathizing with their positions.
2. Acknowledge that there are no absolute truths; perspectives vary across cultures.
3. Accept and respect different viewpoints.
4. Understand sociocultural context through discourse

4.2.2 Cultural Relativism

Brinkman and Kvale assert that an interview is not merely a professional conversation but also involves an asymmetrical power relation. The role of the researcher can influence the interview through their knowledge or perceptions of the participant's norms and values, as well as their sensitivity and commitment to moral issues. These factors can significantly impact the quality of the obtained scientific knowledge (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). To ensure the quality of the knowledge obtained, I sought information regarding the culture, maintained reflective notes throughout the process, and consulted with supervisors.

Burr says that Social Constructionism leads us to the position that there is no definitive truth about the social world or people. Rather we can carefully knit different features in our theory or the truth we want to accept in time can never be excluded from the language they use, the historical and cultural specificity, the already discussed social actions, discourses, disciplinary power, and power relations. We have to accept that there are multiple perspectives hidden in events, people, incidents, or objects, and which perspectives we are ready to include or exclude in our knowledge is nothing but a matter of politics and power (Burr, 2015)

As a researcher, I have strived to be as neutral as possible, remaining open to receiving whatever the interviewees wished to share and faithfully documenting their statements. Sometimes I use the word 'Water' toward a researcher in a poetic way (not a very scientific way); to understand different

contexts, I make myself free and easy and try to suit others' states and positions, not changing my core elements.

4.3 RESEARCH STRATEGY

Through this section, I will try to describe the research site I have chosen, my sampling strategy, how I have set criteria for participant selection, interview setting, and materials.

4.3.1 Research Site and Sampling Strategy

The research was conducted in Midt Telemark municipality where 10,904 inhabitants live (SSB, 2023). I chose this municipality as the research site because of my four years of residency. I have also established social networks within both the host and refugee communities.

Participants were selected from two countries, Ukraine and Syria. There are 82 Ukrainian nationals and 165 Syrian nationals residing in Midt Telemark municipality, (Midt Telemark Kommune, 2023). I focused on interviewing mothers of these two countries who have refugee backgrounds. The reason is my personal interest in understanding different motherhoods and life experiences of women and more specifically, experiences as a refugee mother in Norway where a mother deals with Norwegian parenting culture with their own cultural perspectives. On the other hand, parenting still happens in gendered ways where the mothers carry out the larger part of parenting (Faircloth, 2013).

The project has been spanned from November 2023 to February 2024. It took me a longer time than usual as I preferred face-to-face interviews and participant observation methods. I had to schedule the interviews around the refugee mothers' availability.

Through my introduction program, I developed connections by meeting individuals and sharing experiences with people having refugee status. In Midt Telemark municipality, there are refugees from different ethnic backgrounds. I have selected two countries with the valuable supervision of my supervisors. I have used the snowball sampling method to find participants. I have followed the strategy:

- I have talked with one refugee mother with whom I have a good understanding and met my interests.
- With informed consent, I collected data and asked her if she knew anyone whom she could suggest to me and who could be interested in this research.

- With her several suggestions, I have checked my selection criteria and chosen one according to the purposive sampling strategy.
- According to the selection I contacted them and asked if they were available and willing to participate.

The goal of this research was to gain comprehensive knowledge through in-depth interviews and participant observations. I selected the sample size of eight mothers, but I have been able to take 5 interviews. All these interviews I have taken were not formal. I have met them several times with their consent. Many mothers have rejected me because of their fear which I will describe more in the challenges and finding sections. I purposely avoided recording their voices because of their fear and I have a clear understanding that they were more open to sharing their experiences without recording. It took more time and energy to take all the notes, but I have focused on the best interest of my research.

4.3.2 Participant Recruitment Criteria

I set the following criteria for recruiting participants with the help of my supervisors. These criteria were carefully adopted in this research to ensure that participants' experiences and research objectives would be achieved according to research interest. Participant's criteria were,

1. Mothers with refugee status: individuals who fled from their home countries because of persecution, conflict, or other form of violence; sought asylum in Norway; and have been officially recognized as refugees by the Norwegian authorities.
2. First-generation immigrants: 'First-generation immigrants' refers to individuals who were born outside of Norway and have immigrated to the country, particularly first-generation immigrants with refugee status. The age range of these criteria was 18 to 55 years old.
3. Participants must have a residency permit in Norway for at least one year before finishing this study. This criterion ensures that participants have sufficient experiences in Norwegian society and culture.
4. Who have been living in Norway for at least one year, because the minimum amount of time is needed to gain an insight into the Norwegian way of childrearing.
5. Who has at least minimum speaking skills in Norwegian and/or English, because I was not able to speak in their mother tongue.
6. Who came to Norway with at least one child who was born in his/her home country.

7. Who came to Norway with at least one child who was born in their home country and gave birth to another child in Norway.
8. Who came to Norway as a refugee and gave birth in Norway.

By these carefully crafted criteria, the study aims to find a comprehension of experiences and perspectives among immigrant mothers in Norway, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of motherhood within the broader societal context.

4.3.3 Interview Setting and Materials

In my qualitative research endeavor, I embraced an approach characterized by openness, informality, and depth in interviews, complemented by participant observation for selected individuals. Central to this methodology was the cultivation of trust and agency among participants, who were empowered to choose the interview settings and schedules that best suited their preferences and comfort levels.

Each participant was thoroughly briefed on the nature of the study and presented with comprehensive consent forms, available in both Norwegian and English languages. With clarity established and queries addressed, participants were invited to sign these forms, signaling their voluntary participation in the research process. Furthermore, copies of the consent forms and study guidelines were offered, ensuring transparency and empowering participants to revisit the terms of their involvement at their discretion.

The absence of voice recordings in some interviews necessitated a precise approach to data collection and preservation. While three participants expressed reservations about voice recording, one participant even requested the deletion of her recording post-interview, but I was able to note down information from the recording. This will briefly be discussed in the challenge chapter. Consequently, interviews were conducted predominantly in Norwegian, with additional support from Ukrainian translation apps for the benefit of two Ukrainian participants. By interview guidelines, I employed probing techniques to elicit rich and nuanced responses from participants. To compensate for the absence of voice recordings, I comprehensively noted down key insights and quotes immediately after each interview. These notes were compiled into detailed Word documents, ensuring the preservation and accessibility of qualitative data. Additionally, participants were offered the opportunity for further clarification and validation, with follow-up communications initiated only with their explicit consent.

Central to the success of this research endeavor was the establishment of rapport and trust between the researcher and participants. This foundation fostered an environment conducive to candid and meaningful dialogue, underscoring the indispensable role of mutual respect and understanding in qualitative inquiry.

4.3.4 Overviews of Participants

To understand the perspectives and experiences, I have chosen five participants who have different age ranges, marital statuses, educational backgrounds, children, and length of living in Norway as well as length of living in refugee camps.

One participant has an informal education from her home country; one has a secondary level in Norway; one has a diploma; one has a bachelor's both from her home country and Norway and one has a master's from her home country. Except for one participant who has a six-month-old child, all have teenage children. While two participants have both a son and a daughter, three participants have either a son or a daughter. All participants have been living in Norway for more than one year and have less than two years of experience living in refugee camps. The marital status of the two participants is married, two are divorced and one is divorced as well as engaged.

Name	Age Range	Children	Length of Living in Norway (year)	Length of Living in Refugee Camp (year)
Bohdana	36- 40	1	1	0
Amina	40-45	2	7	1.5
Samira	40-45	2	8	1
Alina	36- 40	1	1.5	0.04
Aylia	18-24	1	8	1

4.4 DATA COLLECTION AND MATERIALS

To understand the practices and perspectives of parenting as a refugee mother, the qualitative research method was a pivotal choice. To conduct qualitative research, individual interviews, focus group discussions, observation, and literature review are the most common methods (Jacobsen, 2015).

I have chosen interviews, observations, and literature reviews for my research project. These allowed me to choose a few participants with whom I took one-on-one in-depth interviews as well as participant observation with some of them. I have strived to uncover their untold stories, experiences, and thoughts. For demographic information, I added one part to the interview guideline containing close-ended questions.

In this research, data was provided by participants which were solely collected through their oral interviews. Participants were guided by structured, semi-structured, and open-ended questions and probed by research where needed.

All interviews were conducted in Norwegian and carried out solely by me without a translator. Each interview started with demographic questions. After that, the first question was about their life in their home country and daily life or whatever they wanted to share about their life based on the research topic. It was an open-ended question and I found that all participants started feeling comfortable after sharing their own experiences without a single interruption.

The participant observation method helped me a lot to understand the context. I met one Syrian and one Norwegian mother at their home and I spent time with them without putting guidelines. I observed how they live their daily life; with the Syrian family I spent four different days, and I spent two different days with the Ukrainian family. I tried to immerse myself in their daily lives to gain deeper insights.

Finding related secondary sources of literature on experiences and perspectives of child-rearing of refugee mothers in Norway was difficult. There is very little research I have found in this area. I depended on different articles, Ph.D. and master theses, journals, books, websites, government websites, newspapers, and statistics from Statistisk Sentranbyrå as my secondary literature source. These have given me an understanding of what had already been done and what I could contribute more. With the help of secondary sources, I was able to find many materials which helped me to reach my destination.

For primary data collection, I used a consent form (both English and Norwegian), guidelines (structured, semi-structured, and open questions), a notebook, a PC, and a mobile for recording.

The consent form and guidelines were made and translated by me, checked by the supervisors, and after several edits, approved by NSD.

4.5 DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

In this section, I will explain my journey of data collection and processing; how I made the framework (coding) of data analysis, how I met the criteria of quality assurance, and respectively the ethical concerns.

4.5.1 Data Collection and Processing

I collected all the data by actively engaging in note-taking during the conversation sessions. Through note-taking, I wrote data in my own words in a notebook and also wrote quotations that described the direct words from participants. After each session, immediately I wrote down everything thoroughly in a Microsoft Word file and when I needed to check with participants, I called them or met them physically with a printed version. After each recording, I transcribed the audio recordings word for word before my analysis. I made sure that all recordings and information I wrote down from the interview were kept in a password-protected phone, computer, and in my locker to secure the anonymity of my informants. I rechecked information with my informants through physical meetings and phone calls to reduce errors and for respondent validation. After this, I was ready to further develop my data into thematic areas for analysis.

All informants got pseudonyms and all information that could reveal their identity was rechecked and anonymized (name of workplace, school, etc.).

4.5.2 Framework of Data Analysis

Through the process of collecting data and analysis, I diligently recorded the statement and quotations, as well as my interpretations, observations, and assessments. After data collection and documentation, I initiated a Microsoft Word file named 'Interviews-All together' and put all the information together. Then I made three levels of themes- Basic themes, organizing themes, and global themes which was the first step of the approach of coding. I put different colors on different themes- Global theme- no color, Organizing Themes- yellow, green, tranquil, Basic themes- brown, blue, gray.

After color selection, I have gone through the word file 'Interviews-All Together' and put colors on texts according to themes. So, all the texts were full of different colors. Then I copied and pasted all the texts under all the basic themes to construct the codes. According to Attride-Stirling, it is called a guide of Thematic Network (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 391). She describes this as "Web-like illustrations (networks) that summarize the main themes constituting a piece of text".

To ensure not being lost, this process was completed with full attention and great effort. In this way, I was able to design the coding framework and connect the codes directly from the data, through the different themes to the theoretical framework. To ensure that my network was fully sustainable, I verified several times the codes with the basic themes, the basic themes with the organizing themes, and lastly, the organizing themes with the global themes. The rest of the steps were exploring, describing, and summarizing which I have done in chapters five, six, and seven.

The table of thematic network has been added to the Appendix section.

4.5.3 Quality Assurance

In this section, I took advantage of the article 'Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research Projects' written by Andrew K Shenton, 'Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Traditions: epistemological, theoretical and methodological differences' by Kaya Yilmaz, and 'Hovrdan Gjennomføre Undersøkelser? Innføring I Samfunnsvitenskapelig Metode' By Dag Ingvar Jacobsen.

Qualitative research often faces criticisms because of its concept of validity and reliability which doesn't work in a naturalistic perspective. Based on qualitative research criteria, Shenton describes Egon G. Guba's construct of four criteria that describe:

1. credibility (internal validity)
2. transferability (external validity)
3. dependability (reliability)
4. confirmability (objectivity) (Shenton, 2004).

Qualitative research is situation-specific and does not aim to produce generalizable results (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2005). Maxwell recognizes bias and influence as two threats to researchers in the research setting. This could happen because the researcher plays two most important roles, the instrument and the data in charge. To ensure validity or credibility, trustworthiness, and authenticity in qualitative studies, Creswell proposes exercising different

strategies such as the triangulation of data sources (using elaborative information), presenting contradictory information unbiasedly, and recognizing the biases of researchers. He also recommends checking transcripts for mistakes made during the transcription to make the results reliable, comparing information and data simultaneously, and writing memos of codes and their meaning to make sure that the interpretations of codes do not change during the process (Creswell, 2007). I made sure to apply all these methods throughout the research process. To provide proper and descriptive data I have, in the findings section, used long quotes. I exerted the participant's own words so the reader can independently form an opinion and see if there is any information that emerges as contradictory. I have described my standpoint and my role as a researcher earlier so that the readers can see my biases, as well as how I might have influenced the research process. Transcripts, codes, and emerging themes have been checked and reorganized several times to maintain accuracy and transparency.

Whether or not the findings of the study reflect reality, I ensured credibility by using well-established research methods, which are presented using thick descriptions. Triangulation interviews with essential informants also ensure credibility, as they provide context and thereby provide the reader with a valuable and different insight into aspects of the stories told by the participants. During the interview when I found something confusing or unclear, I made sure to have the participant describe the matter, and thereby assured or refuted my understanding of their view, ensuring genuineness in the research.

Quality in transferability is assured by the description of how I processed data and analyzed it. Transferability refers to the need for transferable findings between researchers and those being studied (Cresswell, 2007). In order to increase transferability Cresswell (2007) urges to place descriptions of participants and context to be able to conclude and generalize the findings to other groups, settings, or time points. Some data has been modified to keep anonymity. I used synonyms of words when this did not seem to interfere with the result I presented.

To enhance dependability, as Cresswell suggests I cited every step and process of my research by elaborating my role as the researcher, getting help from an interview guide, and methods used in the research. I also conducted co-coding. According to the criteria set by Shenton (2004) and Yilmaz (2013) this is sufficient. Since I presumed language was one of the barriers that could affect the dependability of the research, I chose to do all interviews alone and meet the participants more than once to ensure dependability. Due to the researcher's role in the interaction, I also provided a personal interpretation that may have been different from another researcher (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

Lastly, to maintain confirmability, I clearly described probing questions formulated openly. I kept open routes to let participants navigate their self-made decisions and directions. The thematic network is presented to the reader, for transparency in the process of analysis (Shenton, 2004).

4.5.4 Ethical Concerns

Social research has consequences both for who is being researched and for society. So, the researcher has the sole duty to think carefully through how the research impacts the participants and how the research will be perceived and used (Jacobsen, 2015).

...most cross-cultural research is guided by a set of ethical considerations which are either irrelevant, unrealistic and/or possibly inappropriate and insufficient to address the complexity of such encounters (Andrews, 2007, p-18).

For example, 'the interview setting should be a neutral place' - I gave full decision-making capacity to the participants to decide the place and time. I booked a room at the university according to someone's choice as well as I went to their homes for their comfort. According to my understanding, participants are the main source in this research and they should have the power to decide where, when, and how they could feel comfortable. From a cultural perspective of relation and hospitality, I accepted their food, listened to their music, saw photo albums together, and joined in dinner with them, even cooking with them. I continuously considered and ensured that the research was ethically conducted by ensuring the participants were anonymous and protected from identifying who they were during the whole research process.

The project proposal and interview guide (see Appendix) were sent to Sikt – Kunnskapssektorens tjenesteleverandør and approved before the research process was started. After the approval from Sikt was received (see Appendix), I immediately started to contact participants, the data collection, and the process of transcribing.

For interviews in research, respect, justice, and beneficence are the moral principles. Respect means privacy, anonymity, and the right to participate and refuse participation at any time; justice stands for the benefits of the research for the participants; beneficence gives the insurance of no harm will be done (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In the future, knowledge obtained from this research might help Norwegian authorities who work with immigrants with refugee status to assist and support the women.

Possible psychological risks for participants were memorizing and sharing their trauma and stress and getting emotional, embarrassment, a sense of failure, loneliness, or coercion. Possible psychological benefits for participants were feeling light, important, and included by sharing their stories and perceptions, feeling empowered by taking part in this research, and increasing their confidence and knowledge.

All participants received the consent form (see Appendix) when we met physically. They were asked to read through and tell me if they had any questions. All the participants got a copy of the consent form and guidelines as an extra copy if they had further questions or wanted to add new data in the future. Information in the consent form included the background and purpose of the study, what participation in the study includes, how the researcher collects data, what the information about participants happens to, what gives the researcher the right to process participants' personal data, voluntary participation, and participants' rights. Also, they were informed by the researcher about why they were selected as participants, the anonymization of data, and the right to withdraw at any time during the interview as well as the right to skip any questions they did not wish to answer. They were also informed that all information they provided was confidential. To fulfill the agreements of the anonymization of data, anonymity was secured by giving pseudonyms to the participants and by changing all personal information. Confidentiality was secured by discussing data solely with supervisors. Compensation for the participants was never considered a viable alternative; it was never mentioned by any of the participants. The majority of the participants emphasized how happy they were to be able to help out and were also thankful that they could share their stories.

Some interviews were recorded with the mobile recorder which was all cleared and agreed to by the participants before starting the interviews. After transcriptions were completed, the recordings were deleted according to the commitment with participants. I have been committed to telling as accurately as possible what the participants have shared with me, to make sure that it is their views I am presenting, not my own. Since I was not able to record some of the interviews because I did not get consent from participants, I took extensive notes of the conversation by my words, and direct quotations of participants and made an agreement that I would send all the information I intended to use in the thesis, for them to read over and quality check if they want.

4.6 CHALLENGES

This research was confronted by several challenges. To begin with, the sample size was small. People who have to flee from their home countries experience diverse things. Even people from the same country could have different experiences and journeys. So, I believe if we want to understand the context thoroughly, we need to study this area more widely. I interviewed three Syrian mothers and two Ukrainian mothers. For a master's research, this sample size did not affect the purpose of the study, because I tried to collect the empirical data from participants' voices and not to change any meaning. I hope that the findings of the study give a deep insight and understanding of my participants' experiences and perspectives as well as the importance of this study. I hope this study will contribute to the research area of immigrants and will give an understanding that it needs more study in the future.

Secondly, language was an obstacle to communicating and understanding the participants. Ukrainian mothers came to Norway more or less one year ago; they are going through the introduction program; their Norwegian proficiency is still A1 to A2 level and English is not also preferable. On the other side, I am, unfortunately, not able to understand their mother language. When I contacted the first participant, she told me that she had her own translator she wanted to use. I discussed this with my supervisors, got the green signal, and made a translator consent form. When I met her, she was alone. I asked politely where her translator was. She showed me a translator app on her mobile which she meant. We needed to continue with that app which was a big challenge. As I didn't want to compromise with intuition, I met her three times (with her consent) to recheck and understand more clearly. The other Ukrainian mother was comparatively fluent in Norwegian. I didn't feel too much problem with Syrian mothers, because they have all been living in Norway for more or less seven to eight years and they were fluent in Norwegian.

Thirdly, except one, all of the participants didn't want to give me permission to record their voices. However, they were willing to meet me more than once. If I as a researcher want to understand their perspectives, it is completely understandable. Without a recorder, they were more open and fluent to share their feelings and thoughts. They wanted to talk anonymously, but according to their trauma and experiences, they did not feel safe to record. This could also be a finding in my study. I met almost everyone physically more than once, whenever I was missing information I called and texted them. It was undoubtedly difficult for me, but I asked myself 'Why am I doing this research? Just to complete my thesis or do I really want to know something?' It was hard to write, listen, and rewrite data, but I have done this carefully.

Fourthly and finally, I needed (and wanted) to meet them several times, because I wanted accuracy, in-depth understanding as well as follow the participant observation method. Meeting them several times was not a challenge, because I am a full-time student, it was my sole responsibility and I like to talk and understand different perspectives more than anything in the world. The challenge was the available time according to participants' choice. For example, one day one participant wanted to meet me within one hour's notice and I made it. Sometimes I took a little bit more psychological pressure which was visible on my face, according to my family members, But I am satisfied with this study and how I have done this. At the very least, I hope I have done something important and fruitful that will help further research in the future.

CHAPTER FIVE: WEAVING EMPIRICAL DATA: PART ONE

Parents act and react with their children according to their perceptions and memories which are socially and culturally constructed. Perceptions, practices, present experiences, and memories are connected to emotions, cultural practices, social knowledge, social actions, and dynamic power relations related to their specific situation and time (Schrumpf, 2022; James & Prout, 1998). So, if we want to understand the perception of child-rearing of immigrant mothers, we need to listen carefully to how they experienced upbringing in their childhood; what they remember and value as important; and today what they practice.

Through this study, I have found that participants carry memories in their contemporary lives. Mothers try to follow or not follow their examples, but their perceptions and practices change through cultural changes and cross-cultural journeys. Although we cannot conclude that only childhood memories affect parenting, they play a significant role as we shall see. This chapter and next chapter will also explain how mothers continuously remember their childhood and compare this with their children, both to their satisfaction and dissatisfaction; they practice and do not practice mothering according to their experiences in order to follow Norwegian laws and regulations. When some mothers voluntarily adopt different discourses of Norwegian childhood and mothering; some accept them as acculturation pressures; even some of the cultural practices they exercise inside the home, behind the eye of the host society.

5.1 PERCEPTIONS, PRACTICES AND EXPERIENCES

Parents reconfigure concepts of children, childhood, and mothering according to their experiences, cultural norms and values, and also new cultural learning. In this section, I will present the perceptions of childhood and mothering according to Ukrainian participants' perspectives; how they describe relations between mother and child; and their experiences of Norwegian childhood and parenting practices.

5.1.1 Cultural Perceptions of 'Children', 'Childhood' and 'Mother'

In my interviews, Ukrainian mothers shared their understanding of 'children', 'childhood', and 'mothering'. They often used particular concepts which I have written in *Italics* and used comas. This part will also reveal how these terms have been shaped by gender discourses which I shall elaborate further on in the discussion chapter.

Children are a specific group characterized by specific behaviors, responsibilities, learning structure, and dependability on adults, say both Ukrainian mothers. "Children are not adults, they are like a white sheet", Bohdana mentions. She explains that children are unaware of what is happening in the real world. They are not ready to face the world alone but need to learn from adults. She drew a picture of a child as *vulnerable, insecure, and dependent*. Alina explains much the same thing including '*helpless*': "Children are helpless without adults." Following James and Prout, these concepts indicate the childhood approach where children are accepted as a specific group who are dependent on adults because of their physical and psychological capabilities.

According to both mothers, since children are 'vulnerable' and 'dependent', children also have some responsibilities that will shape them as adults in the future. By recognizing children's responsibilities, children are accepted as a 'tribal group'. Being a *responsible* child means taking on responsibility and learning adult responsibilities throughout their childhood. According to them, children should organize and clean up their own clothes, toys, and room; they help parents with household work (cooking, cleaning, buying groceries); children who study without being told; and children who think about others more than themselves. Bohdana mentions that thinking only about oneself can make a child a future adult who could be '*selfish*'. According to her, a *family-oriented* child thinks about family and family members. She also mentions that giving gifts to parents on different occasions is 'sweet' (Søt) and 'nice' (Nydelig) and means that children prioritize and think about their parents. Alina hopes that her son will be a *romantic* man in the future who will show emotions to his woman and give her gifts. Being an *honest* child is related to this and means

sharing his/her personal life with the parents. Throughout interviews and observations, I have found that both participants have tried to draw a picture of a child as a 'human becoming' whereas mothers feel responsible for teaching children about the world. What they try to teach their children is related to how and what they think about life. Both mothers say that they always want to know what their children think; what they do with friends; and what they learn outside the family. They feel that parents get more or less tense when their children are outside because of crimes, the availability of drugs, and bad company.

To both mothers, a *good* child also means a child who practices his/her own culture and a child who doesn't use slang (Gatespråk). The meaning of practicing one's own culture varies between two mothers. Bohdana thinks cooking Ukrainian food, celebrating Christmas in the Ukrainian way, continuing Ukrainian study, and speaking the mother language is important. Alina does not find Ukraine and Norway too different. She only hopes that her son will not forget the 'warm' Ukrainian male attitudes. To them, 'Gatespråk' means the bad language used by 'uneducated', and 'low-class people'. Also, both say that a child who is not involved in sexual activity and doesn't drink alcohol or use drugs is *good*. Bohdana says: "Their bodies and minds are not ready for sex, and drugs are not a good thing for adults either."

The perceptions of 'mother' vary from participant to participant, but one word they all use about '*good*' mother was that '*Love and take care of the child*' is important. How a mother should love and take care of children differs between Bohdana and Alina.

Bohdana mentions that being a *responsible* mother is to foster a healthy family environment. To her, a healthy family environment means showing respect and love for each other, being responsible towards children, teaching children what is good and bad, and how to be honest, and kind. She describes children as a 'white sheet', and says that parents are responsible for painting this sheet. This means parents will teach children about the future adult life. According to her: "I had a divorce because his father was not aware of this and he behaved badly in front of my son". She mentions that behaving wrong in front of children leads them to learn that and they will do the same things with their families. She also says that primarily, children grow up with their parent's mentality. So, it is important to be careful to be good examples (*careful* mother), and parents should do things in line with what they expect from their children. Children are 'helpless' and 'immature', she says. According to her, parents should be as open as possible, but she does not know the boundary of openness between mother and child: "For example, I have never talked with him about sexual education but here, he learns from school now." As a mother, before coming to

Norway, Alina always felt that her largest responsibility was to make good decisions for her child. She mentions that she was a *dominating* mother and wanted to decide everything without listening to her son. She said: "...because I grew up in that way." After coming to Norway and taking the mother course (Parental Guidance is a part of the Introduction Program for refugee parents), her perspectives have changed and she says that she is trying to be a *better* mother now. Being a *good* mother, today, means listening to, helping, and respecting the child, according to both Ukrainian mothers.

5.1.2 Practices of Child and Mother

In my interviews, both Ukrainian mothers shared their experiences of their children showing responsibility, honesty, love, and bonding with them. They expressed satisfaction about their children mentioning '*good child*'. They also shared about their *mothering* by how they practice their motherhood.

Bohdana explains about her 14 years old son,

He studies well and tries to show me that.... He likes to bake pancakes for me.... He helps me with the kitchen and household work.... He hugs me and asks me about my days and plans.... He tends to tell me always not to think too much and that everything will be okay one day.

Alina says that her son is going to be eighteen years old soon and that he has become more distant from her. According to her, her son also feels okay that she is engaged with a man from a different religion in Norway, and that this is how he shows love to her. She mentions that her son had parties at home when she stayed with her fiancé: "They had a party here. Before I came back, he cleaned everything. This was how he showed love to me."

Bohdana shares about her mothering through different practices.

I try to show my child that I love him, and care for him, I am the safest person for him and he can share anything with me. I share my feelings and show interest in his feelings also.

She buys food and goods together with her son and asks for his opinion on which brand is good. By this, she shows that he is the new generation and could know better than her (*Dependent mother*). They go to the cinema, make trips, and make food together. She buys gifts for her son which is an important way to express love. On the other side, Alina knocks on the door before entering her

son's room. She tries to talk about the future and learns from her son now. She shows that what she did before was not right and she is trying to be an *understanding* mother. She also appreciates her son for what he does, for example, playing guitar, continuing Ukrainian studies online, and working part-time.

5.1.3 Experiences in Norway as Mother

When Bohdana and Alina started living in Norway, they experienced many things as individuals as well as mothers, but both mention that the differences between Ukraine and Norway are not very extensive.

Both mothers say that they feel *safe* here because there is no war in Norway and their children are safe. Bohdana expresses her *satisfaction* with the child upbringing system and feels certain that her child will grow up as a 'good human' (godt menneske). "*Freedom* works here", she mentions. Her son can go outside without the fear of being hijacked, get drugs, and learn slang from bad people. They express their *gratefulness* to Norway and they think that they are still alive because the state has given them a place. According to Bohdana:

When we arrived in Norway, we got a warm welcome from Norwegians at the airport. From the airport to the hotel in Oslo, then came to Midt Telemark and got friendly behaviors. Some Norwegians came to our home and we cried together, they showed us deep empathy.

Both mothers are satisfied with the child protection system in Norway. They feel safe that the child protection system works here. Bohdana shares that the child protection system in Ukraine was just a word, there was no practice there. Alina mentions that child protection in Ukraine sleeps inside the book, not in real life. Both have shared their satisfaction with the *support* of the welfare state. They highlight some of the support they have received during their stay in Norway- The introduction program package for refugees, the child benefit schemes, and free education and health for children.

Both Ukrainian mothers have been living in Norway for a short period (less than two years) and have not found a lot of difficulties as mothers yet. They are not negative to the Norwegian upbringing system, but they feel lonely as a person because of the new culture, different weather, and without family and friends.

– Job market and qualifications

Bohdana worked as a bank manager in her home country for 13 years. Now she works in a restaurant as a language practitioner under the Introduction Program. She is disappointed with her current work and questions equality in Norway.

Equality? What is equality? For example, if three persons at different heights stand behind a wall, you can not give the same chairs to them to stand on and see what is going on the other side. I believe in equity. I am 40 years old; I am educated, and I have 13 years of experience as a bank manager. Can you give me the same treats as a refugee who has never gone to school? I have a practice job in a restaurant now. Why can't I do a practice job in a bank? Equality? We have a long way to go.

Alina has never worked according to her academic background. She worked as a jewel maker in Ukraine. She wanted to do this here as well. So, She wrote to a jewelry shop but was rejected because she did not have Norwegian proficiency and an experience certificate from her previous workplace. She says that she wanted to study the language course at the university and was rejected because of her lack of English and Norwegian proficiency. Now she works as a cleaner in a hotel.

- Norwegians are not friendly and warm

Bohdana and Alina both show their unhappiness with the Norwegian people. According to them, Norwegians are not friendly, warm, or romantic and do not even behave equally towards all refugees. Bohdana mentions that she got an empathic and warm welcome when she came here, but after that, she didn't find any friends. Now she is alone, she says. Alina wants her son not to take all things 'blindly' (blind) in Norway. By the word 'blindly', she means without understanding or thinking to accept everything in life.

In my country, people are very warm and friendly. In Norway, people are cold as like their weather. We like romantic people in romantic relationships. If my boyfriend gives me a flower, I feel very happy. In Norway, they don't give gifts to each other without a reason. At least it is not common, I feel. They just think about themselves, although they are loyal partners. It seems boring to me. I want my son to be a romantic partner with his girlfriend.

Bohdana shares that her son is not busy finding friends. He goes to school, comes back, gets rest, and studies in online at evening. She also says that her son has Ukrainian friends with whom he is connected online, but he needs more time to find friends in Norway because people don't make friends fast here.

Both participants share some dilemmas they have these days very often.

- **Going back or never going back?**

Ukrainian mothers are facing dilemmas regarding their future. Today, their children go to school in Norway and also take online Ukrainian classes on Zoom. Bohdana shares that they are not sure about the war situation, but hope it will stop one day. They will go back to their home country. This is why she does not want her son to cease his Ukrainian education. She is happy to see the efforts of her son. Alina says that they are not sure about going back to her home country, but if her son continues his Ukrainian studies, he can move to another European country in the future and settle down. She talked with the teachers in the school here and heard that Ukrainian studies would not count in the Norwegian education system without passing the Norwegian criteria. Yet her son does not stop studying. According to her: “He can move to another country in the future and work there.”

In a sense, they live temporary lives in Norway and uncertain circumstances. They have received household things (Refrigerators, sofas, beds, kitchen kits, washing machines, etc.) from SKI (Center for Qualification and Inclusion), and haven’t invested in anything more. According to Alina: “We don’t know what will happen in the future. I don’t want to buy too many things.”

5.2 MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD AND MOTHERHOOD

I asked the same question to all mothers about their childhood and motherhood memories in order to understand their particular socio-cultural background and their current perceptions. All participants shared their memories from different periods of their lives.

5.2.1 Childhood Memories of Ukrainian Mothers

Both Ukrainian mothers say they grew up in an extended family. Bohdana lived with her parents, brother, and grandparents. Alina lived with her parents, sister, brother, and grandmother. They both were the first child in the family. They both mention that Ukraine is very much a family-oriented society. “Family was our main priority,” Bohdana says and “Family is everything to me,” Alina says. According to present and past tense, Bohdana indicates that she has moved on and considers her son the only family member in her life now. She does not think about other family members from the past and she strongly believes what she says above. Alina, on the other hand, is waiting for her sister and nephew to come to Norway. She calls them as ‘family’. After coming

to Norway Alina's perception has changed and now she feels that how family was important to her was wrong.

Bohdana says that before starting higher education she had never thought about childhood. After she started studying, she read different books which changed her mind. Although she can not remember any titles, she remembers that she read about gender which made her question her own childhood. Bohdana learned household chores in her childhood, needed to help her mother cook and clean, took care of her younger brother and grandparents, and needed to check if her father needed anything when he came from the office. She mentions that her childhood was 'gendered'. According to her:

I learned boy that meant work outside, play outside, football, car, shouting and girl meant learning household chores, dolls and kitchen kits, football, car, calm and silent, tidy and Carey, beautiful, makeover. One day I shouted at my brother because he made a mistake. My grandmother told me that I must be patient, responsible, and calm because I was a sister. I think she meant I was a girl who would be a future woman and mother.

Alina also heard that she must take care of her siblings, help her mother in the kitchen, and be clean and beautiful. She learned about makeover from her aunt when she was eleven. She had a lot of dolls, doll houses, and kitchen kits with which she played a lot inside the home with her sister. Her brother played outside and he didn't want to play with them because he said that those toys were for girls, Alina can still remember this. He was messy and Alina needed to tidy her brother's room.

(Laughing)... I even needed to put the plate with food in front of him. He was cute... I feel surprised that my little brother who was so helpless without me, how he takes care of our country now! I miss him (Crying).

Alina believes that her childhood was 'sweet'. She also mentions that girls and boys should behave differently. If boys behave like girls and play 'only' inside, and if they are not strong enough, they appear 'unattractive' to her, she says. As young girls, both Bohdana and Alina remember that they did not make any decisions when they were children. Their parents and grandparents always told them what they should do and they followed those. Alina says that she was a 'princess' to her father and that he always bought things she wanted. Both mention that their childhood was a means of going to school, studying, helping mothers at home, and taking care of family members. Only Bohdana now feels that this was not good for children and she does not repeat the same gendered pattern with her son.

5.2.2 Memories of Motherhood

As mothers, Bohdana and Alina need to take responsibility for their children. After marriage, they both started a nuclear family and had a family with a husband and children. The husband and wife both worked inside and outside of the home. Both say that they were the decision-makers for children along with their husbands.

Bohdana uses the word 'Lunefull' to describe the child upbringing system in Ukraine. There were no definite rules for raising children and there, child protection was invisible in real life. As a mother and wife, Bohdana remembers that she took responsibility for household work after office; needed to decide what her son would eat, wear, read, and when to sleep. She needed to monitor the health, studies, and other needs of her son. She went on family tours, to the cinema, shopping, or dinner often, and sent her son to grandparents' house to learn from them. She also needed to meet teachers in parents' meetings, read books together with her son, and tried to teach that man and woman are equal. Sometimes, the father decided something (gifts, toys, schooling) without discussing it with her.

Parenting in my homeland is Capricious! It depends on economic and educational status. It is not equal parenting either. The father decided suddenly without my consent and all the physical work related to the child I needed to do.

Alina draws a picture of child upbringing in Ukraine. She says that if 5 mothers drink together, one should be sober and take care of the children of all. But in her home county, no one maintains this and everyone gets drunk in front of children. She also says that fathers don't show enough care for their children. They feel their main responsibility is to earn money and to decide about schooling, and jobs for their children. She remembers that her husband went outside with the kid in the stroller, he went to a bar and came back fully drunk.

...one thing I like in Norway. Laws are not sleeping on paper only, people obey these. For example, child protection in Ukraine is just an ornamental thing. They don't do anything. In Norway, it is very strict. I like this. About alcohol and drugs, laws are strict also. In Ukraine, teenagers can buy and use drugs. No system there!

Alina confesses that she did not know much about being a mother when she was in Ukraine. She learned many things after coming to Norway. She grew up as a child who did not decide anything. When she became a mother, she and her ex-husband decided everything for their son.

I didn't think that I needed to knock on the door before going inside my son's room. I thought I was the mother who must know everything. I didn't want to listen to what my

child wanted to say. After coming to Norway, when he started to learn many things, a clear distance was made between us. Now he often blames me for ruining his childhood.

When Alina decided to leave Ukraine, she did not get permission from her husband. Her husband told her to leave alone, without the child, but she took her son with her without informing her husband. Now she has a new fiance in Norway and they are engaged. He is a Muslim from a West Asian country who came to Norway 8 years ago.

My mother, sister, and my son have accepted him positively. He is a nice person. He gave me a ring also. He wanted to help me with integration, and now he helps me with everything... (laughing). I go to church regularly. He is a liberal Muslim and we don't have any problem with religion. He likes my son too. I was surprised the first day when he cooked for me. Our men in Ukraine don't want to cook, it is our work. He is a good man. We will marry one day.

5.3 PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

Ukrainian mothers have their cultural perceptions of 'childhood' and 'mothering' and they don't feel too different from Norwegian perceptions. They both are from the same country, but they had of course different experiences. Both described children as vulnerable, insecure, dependent, helpless, responsible, selfish, family-oriented, honest, and good through similar criteria. Through these concepts and their narrations, they drew a picture of children as 'human becoming' who have a particular set of responsibilities, attitudes, and behaviors. They also described mothers with some conceptual words- responsible, caring, careful, dependent, dominating, better, and understanding. Their practices and stories about motherhood and childhood tell us that their perceptions and practices are even not static. Rather they change over time, and according to contexts. In this chapter, we have also seen that participants' experiences are connected to their memories, perceptions, and practices, and yet also related to particular cultural backgrounds and discourses, where memories play a significant role.

The chapter shows what it means to be a mother or child is not static or natural, but socially constructed through continuous discursive processes. In the discussion chapter, I will elaborate on this from different theoretical positions.

CHAPTER SIX: WEAVING EMPIRICAL DATA: PART TWO

This chapter will explain perceptions of 'children', 'childhood', and 'motherhood' through the narration of Syrian immigrant mothers. These Syrian mothers have distinct and similar memories from their home countries and are having new experiences in Norway. Through this chapter, I will present and analyze their voices and memories focusing on childhood and motherhood; look into what is important to them; how they met a comparatively different culture in Norway, what they think, and their feelings about it. Three participants have been living in Norway for more than seven years. So, they had more things to share than Ukrainian participants.

According to empirical data, sometimes immigrants change their views under the pressure of disciplinary actions (laws, host cultural practices, literature, and media) and sometimes voluntarily without feeling the pressure.

6.1 PERCEPTIONS, PRACTICES, AND EXPERIENCES

We have war and different things than Norway, but it does not mean that we know nothing and everything from our country is a problem. They give us the impression that we must learn from the beginning (Aylia)

Through this section, we shall observe what Syrian mothers think about childhood and motherhood, how they practice it, and relate these to their experiences. As like chapter five, I will put all central concepts in *Italics* and *comas*.

6.1.1 Cultural Perceptions of ‘Children’, ‘Childhood’, And ‘Mother’

All mothers share their views on childhood and motherhood, indicating their very specific cross-cultural journey. All three mothers describe the responsibility of children. According to them, children should-

- organize and clean up own clothes, toys, and room.
- takes care of siblings. Sisters are more responsible than brothers. Sisters should understand what brothers need.
- help parents with household work (cooking, cleaning, buying groceries)
- provide financial support (for teenagers who work part-time and live with parents)
- not need to be told to study
- not think only about selves; think about the family too.

Amina says that being a *responsible* child is important. This means learning how to be a future adult, little by little, and adult family members are responsible for this. She says: “My son is not so organized, but he is responsible in many ways. He helps me and my partner cook and buy groceries. My daughter is more responsible than him.” As a mother of a newborn child, Aylia thinks a responsible child means studying well.

Being an *Honest* child is also important to all participants. This means sharing personal lives, obeying parents, and showing honesty and loyalty to the family. They say that sharing with parents is more important for girls than boys because females are stigmatized by society easily more than males. Also, the norms, values, and practices of raising a girl child are very different between Syria and Norway. Samira and Aylia say that they have relatives in Syria and Norway with whom they have regular connections. They are scared that if their girls do something wrong they will be shamed by their community. Their fear and stress indicate strong existing gender discourse in

their culture. It also shows us that maintaining their community is related to maintaining particular cultural phenomena that may create stress in their cross-cultural life. However, Amina does not show her fear of this because she has already been abandoned by her community. She doesn't worry about this, still, she is not happy with the host community. According to Amina,

One day I heard from my daughter that their friends tried alcohol and marijuana at a party and had sex, and she shared with me. I talked with teachers at the school and the parents of her friends received a parent meeting letter. After that, my daughter lost Norwegian friends and got a tag that she is conservative. I told my children if they want to drink alcohol, they can do that when they are adults. What should I do that time as a parent? If I see any wrong things, I must tell the authority. My daughter was so sad after that and I tried to discuss a lot with her. I requested her not to stop sharing with me.

All Syrian mothers lived in extended families, both before and after marriage. They all say that family is the most important place for children. To my question "Can you explain what you mean by 'most important'?" Samira becomes surprised and says: "What are you asking? I don't understand! How can I explain? Family is of course important." Amina explains that children live with their family before meeting the outside world and learn all basic things from the family, which forms a base. She compares this with a house, she said: "The stronger the foundation, the stronger the house." Through this quotation, she tries to explain the house as a life course of a person and that, to children, family and learning from family in childhood is the basis of a future being.

However, the meaning of family varies from participant to participant. Samira says all her children including her daughters-in-law and grandchildren, husband, and relatives in Syria and Norway, are family to her. Aylia lives with her husband and child, which is family to her. She also mentions her brother and mother as family. She says about in-laws: "They are family too."

They say that a *family-oriented* child is important in their perception of children. It means living with parents, giving gifts, seeing what the family needs, understanding the emotions of the mother, helping parents buy groceries, and sometimes small things. According to Samira, it is not mandatory, but it shows that children think and care for the family. Amina and Aylia think it is important for children to live with family for at least 18 years. Otherwise, children could make mistakes because they are not fully aware of the world. The age is according to The Child Rights Convention, they say. Samira still wants her children, and grandchildren to live with her. She feels it makes 'family bonding' and: "We left everything. We have nothing here except family". She also says that a child should understand and feel their mother's expectations because a mother loves unconditionally and can sacrifice everything for her child.

To all participants, a *Good* child means a child who practices his/her own culture; a child who doesn't use slang (*Gatespråk*); a child who is not involved in sexual activity and doesn't take alcohol or drugs. Practicing one's own culture means speaking their native language at home, following their religion, wearing proper clothes, cooking and loving Syrian food, eating dinner together, kissing and hugging family members, marrying Syrians or Muslims, eating halal, talking with family members living far away, listening to religious music, and watching Syrian movies, TV shows, religious talk shows. Only Amina, however, shares that only the Syrian language and Syrian food are the things she expects from her children as adopted cultural practices. Samira shares that touching is particularly important between her family members. All of her children always hug and kiss her. This makes her feel secure.

All mothers say that they are strict with children about using bad language. Amina and Aylia mentioned the word '*Gatespråk*' which means the bad language used by 'low-class people'. Amina and Samira have teenage daughters and say that children involved in sexual activity are not accepted. They worry about their daughters more than their sons. Amina says that children's "body and mind are not ready for that." Samira's main fear concerns religion and losing community. She shares that her religion does not allow sex before marriage, and drugs are "Haram".

The definition of '*parent*' and '*mother*' varies from participant to participant. They all say that *good* parents '*Love the child unconditionally*', but how a parent should love and take care of children differs from mother to mother. Amina shares her thoughts about a good mother:

As a mother, I believe my most important responsibilities are giving love unconditionally to my children, helping to open their brains to think widely, give them a feeling that I am here for them if they need help..... I am very strict about bad language, slang, and backbiting.

As a mother, I feel, I can never ignore my responsibilities. That is why, I am still living with my children after a lot of struggles, not their father. Fathers can leave even children, but mothers can not. I wanted to be a good mother.

Samira believes good parents mean giving love unconditionally, teaching how to obey parents and respect others, practicing religion properly, speaking in their native language, and practicing their own culture. She learned all of these when she was a child, and now, she always tries to follow these ideals. To the question 'What do you mean by practicing religion properly?', she answered-

Pray to God and never forget about our destiny... practice religious fasting, celebrate religious festivals, wear proper clothes, eat halal, and be humble, helpful, and

honest... We need to adapt to a new culture but should not forget our roots. Good parents practice this.

When she mentions children not having sex and drugs because of religion and losing community, she shares her fear that if her daughter does this, her family and relatives will blame her for not giving proper learning to children and she will be a '*bad mother*'. According to her: "If children do bad things, the mother is responsible." At this point, Amina disagrees and says that she is not scared of the consequences. As a mother of a newborn, Aylia believes good parents mean taking care of children, giving the best, giving love, feeding them healthy food, helping them to become good human beings, and teaching some of their own cultures. She also shares that the mother is more responsible than the father because children spend more time with their mothers. To the question 'What does own culture mean?' she says,

Parents will teach children their mother language, what Syrian food is, what Syrian religious festivals and clothes are, how Syrians believe in family, love, and respect elders; and how she can be a responsible family person. But they must also practice Norwegian culture because we live here now. I don't want to teach everything to my daughter except language, food, generosity, kindness, responsibilities, and God.

She learned all this when she was a child and always tries now to follow some of these ideals.

6.1.2 Practices of Child and Mother

All mothers share their experiences of how their children show responsibility, honesty, love, and bonding with them. They express satisfaction about their children mentioning 'good child', but some express dissatisfaction with 'not a good child' as a reason for 'bad company'. 'Bad company' means children who don't learn these concepts from parents and family, and affect other children by their behaviors, Samira and Aylia say. This concept was absent in Amina's narration. According to Amina:

Not only me, but children also show love to me. I am struggling to finish my studies, job, and integration with the society. They integrated themselves in Norway faster than me... Sometimes when I am tired after studying or job, my daughter tries to hug me, offer me a drink, make cakes for me, tidy up the home, and clean clothes. She shares a lot about her life, dreams, and goals with me... My son also tries to help me; buy groceries, wash the house, give kisses, and help my partner cook food. They both helped me to learn Norwegian. When I miss Syria and get sad, they try to convince me that what I did and do is right and they are happy for me...

To Samira, hugs, kisses, and touches are important. All her children always do this, she mentions. She feels more love for her children who stay with her, listen to her, and share with her before

they make decisions. This makes her an important person in the family. She feels less bonding with her youngest son because he doesn't want to understand her needs. Her daughter buys gifts for her and gives money to the family, this is a 'big support' she says.

My children integrated into Norway faster than us, but they also don't forget our culture, and this makes me happy. They show their love by helping me at home, obeying me, buying gifts for me, practicing culture, share their emotion and love for the homeland, except for my youngest son. I don't understand his problem, and my husband doesn't think about him.

How a mother practices 'mothering' is different for the three participants. Amina has shared many things about her practices of motherhood. She makes her children's favorite food to show them love (*loving mother*). She is good at making different cultural foods (Turkish, Greek, Norwegian, Palestinian), and her partner is good at cooking Syrian food. Amina says they both cook at home, but her partner takes more responsibility for household chores. They go to the cinema together and often the children decide which film to watch. According to her, it means 'giving importance' to children. They watch TV together at home also. As a *good mother*, Amina tries to discuss with her children about their lives and listen to their opinions carefully. She also tells them to think broadly with open hearts, and that they shouldn't judge people too fast. When they go shopping, she asks them what they like, but she doesn't buy instantly. She buys as 'appreciation', if they do something good, for example, study well, take their responsibilities, or show respect and love. By this, she wants to teach them that whatever they want, they will not get it. They must earn it. Otherwise, they would be *spoiled* (*Bortskjemt*). She hugs and kisses her children often. This is their culture and they practice it, Amina explains (*dedicated mother*).

Also, I always try to show them that they are more important in my life than my partner, because if I lose a partner, I will get another, not my children. Although they have a very good relationship with him. My son is close to him and share many things with him, more than with me.

Teaching children equality and respect is important to her (*teacher mother*). Sometimes she is strict (Streng) with them.

...my children were fighting one day at home and my son showed his strength to his sister. I told him very strictly that he could not do that and he must respect women, physical strength is not the main thing; being able to take responsibility, show respect, and organize and manage capacity are important. My son is not so organized, but he is responsible in many ways. So as a parent, these are my key duties and responsibilities. I do not expect that my partner will be a father to them, but he must accept my children with love. Otherwise, I cannot love him. He is a very responsible partner and loving person towards my kids. He is a Christian minority from Syria.

Samira shares also her practices as a mother. She works full-time, sometimes overtime. She has recently bought a house with 4 bedrooms- one is for her, one is for her daughter, one is for the son and daughter-in-law and one is a guestroom for other children. She has arranged a room in the basement for her youngest son recently. She says that she has shown 'love' and 'priority' to her children in this way. Samira shows responsibility (*responsible mother*) by doing household chores, giving opinions to children about their decisions, talking with children and grandchildren about what they need, and buying things for them. She shows also bonding (*loving mother*) by touching, sharing, and wanting to know about children's daily lives. She shares: "At my son's wedding, 100 guests came, I arranged this. If we were in Syria, we could invite 1000 people. I and my husband wanted to make it as big as possible."

Aylia is a mother of a newborn child. She says that she is doing her best for her daughter and that learning every day how to be a mother.

I have a girlchild now. I want to raise her with freedom and equality. I couldn't go outside when I was a child, I couldn't choose anything. But my child will do everything that I couldn't do in my life. Practicing religion doesn't mean a woman can't earn money and must depend on her husband. Although I heard this from my family. But they don't say this now. Because in Norway, you cannot practice this, or a husband can't hold a family with one's salary... (laughing)

6.1.3 Experiences in Norway as Mother

Now I can go out with a stroller with my baby and don't need to think about bombing, feel safe for my child. My child doesn't breathe oxygen with the poisonous bombing smell. We are safe here. Aylia says.

All mothers tell me that they *feel safe* in Norway because there is no war, women are safe and their children are safe too. Amina expresses her feelings of safety and says that the Norwegian system is not gendered like Syria, and she feels safe that no one would take her children away from her. All three Syrian mothers used the word 'likestilling' on several occasions. They say that they learned about equality through the Introduction Program, and they know how it is important in Norway.

Amina expresses her satisfaction with the child upbringing system, and she feels safe that her children will grow up to become 'good humans' (godt menneske) in the future. All mothers say that they had never heard the word 'equality' before coming to Norway. It doesn't exist in Syria. Aylia says,

In Syria, women even don't go to the doctor until there are no complications and they give birth at home with the help of midwives. Here, I got full support from the doctor and it was free, it was a luxury for me!... After my child's birth, I needed to go to Gvarv every week with other newborn kids' moms and learn many things together.

Amina expresses her incredible (Utrolig) joy about her *freedom* here as a woman and as a mother in Norway. She can decide for herself and her children. Her girl child has equal rights; children go out without any fear; she has found her 'voice'; and she has found love that doesn't exist in Syria, according to her. Through the expression 'found voice', she explains that she can decide about herself and her children. It indicates the 'agency' of women (Meyers, 2014). Amina shows her satisfaction by saying: "I want to die here." Samira shares that she can earn money, go out alone, and decide alone about her children which means 'freedom' to her.

All express their *gratefulness* to Norway and they feel that they are still alive because the state has served them a safe place. They have shared their *satisfaction* with the support of the welfare state. They mention some of the support they have received during their time in Norway-

- The introduction program package for refugees
- The child benefit schemes
- Kindergarten for children
- Free education and health for children
- Loan for higher study from Lånekasse
- Free medical support for pregnant women
- Financial support from the NAV (Unemployment benefits, sick pay)

Besides satisfaction, participants share some difficulties they face in Norway.

- **Children are too independent here**

Two mothers say that it was difficult to cope with the child upbringing culture in Norway. According to the Norwegian system, children are accepted as social beings with their rights in the state, and they are not the property of guardians or society. They share that their childhood was not as like here. They did not have a voice to make decisions and depended on parents and other adult family members. In Norway, on the contrary, they must be careful about children's needs and their voices which sometimes seem difficult to them. Samira is still struggling with this. In Syria, parents and(-or) grandparents decide everything for children. This is the culture in Syria, in general, she says. Her youngest son who is 14 years old has distanced himself from his parents. He

wanted to live alone. So he rented an apartment with friends and lived there for one year. One day, he came back and told his parents that he wanted to live with parents again, but that he wanted a separate room. Samira and her husband organized a room for him in the basement. Her son is happy now, but Samira worries a lot. She can't go to her son's room whenever she wants. According to her:

One day I just shouted a little with my youngest son because he didn't organize his clothes and room, he directly shouted back at me and threatened me that he would call child protection! Can you believe it!

Samira feels children here are too free and have too much freedom. Sometimes she doesn't understand what she needs to do.

- **Losing bonding and love**

Samira feels a loss of bonding and love between parents and their children. She says the main reason for this is that children are free and independent here. They are not bound to obey their parents and be responsible as in Syria, and parents are not allowed to make every decision. She also mentions that children are accepted as individuals with boundaries. They sleep in their rooms, and they don't share everything with their parents. Samira also feels that mothers are busy working outside and don't have enough time to give their children. Children learn and integrate themselves faster than their parents, and this is sometimes hard, she says. On the contrary, Amina feels that she has more bonding with her children now because several negative factors disappeared from her life, such as authoritarian, disrespectful, and dominating husbands; conservative, religious, and gendered laws; and feelings of insecurity and unsafety.

- **Responsible lonely mother**

All three Syrian mothers say that they needed to take responsibility for themselves and their children in Norway which was quite a new experience. The journey from an extended family and a society where women, in general, don't decide independently, they have mixed feelings about this. They didn't (and couldn't) need to decide for either themselves or their children. After coming to Norway, they found that they must earn, and decide for both themselves and their children which was not easy, they mention. Amina says that she was very happy to get freedom here. But she also couldn't understand what and how much she could use her freedom because of her lack of experience. At that time, she felt helpless and lonely as well as free and responsible. Samira also is still struggling with this. Her parents, husbands, and in-laws were always beside her for help. She

never thought to take responsibility for herself and her children. But now she needs to communicate with teachers, join parent meetings, talk with children's counselors and child protection, and make decisions that are quite heavy for her. On the other hand, she works to earn money and still needs to do all household work. "At this age, I can't change everything about myself. I miss my family; I feel tired of holding all the responsibilities.", she says. She shares her disappointment about her husband who doesn't want to help at home and who is also careless towards children.

Aylia came to Norway when she was a child. That time she missed her brother and father a lot. She still feels lonely, but she is very happy to hold a family together with her husband and child. Aylia says:

I lived with my in-laws for one year. It was not a very good experience. They tried to teach me how to be a good wife...if I decided something, I needed to hear lots of comments. I didn't like it, but now I feel good. I meet my in-laws once a week, but I am free in my home. On the other hand, I didn't have a good relationship with my mother-in-law at that time, but now we have a formal relationship.

- **Experiences and expectations of employment and education**

Amina worked as an archeologist in Syria for five years which she liked. Now she is studying nursing and working as Vikår in an old home. She says that Norway needs more nurses and she had to sacrifice her career.

...but I worked as an Archaeologist in Syria for five years, can I decide to do that here? No. I needed to forget my dream, and my past and now I always need to remember that I am a refugee, I have nowhere to go back, and I must be grateful to the Norwegian state and the people here, even if they sometimes mistakenly misbehave...What we learned all was wrong, my childhood, work, motherhood everything. we need to learn from the beginning here...I needed to earn money and get a job as early as possible, so I chose to be a nurse in the future.

- **Norwegians are not friendly and warm**

Amina experienced unequal treatment from her teacher in class. She didn't want to define it as racist behavior, but she felt that it was because of her ethnic identity. She mentions that she was the only Syrian refugee in the class. Samira has no formal education or work experience from her home country. She feels that because of her lack of education and experience, she works harder than anyone at her workplace now. She shares that her colleagues are very friendly with her, and help her a lot, but sometimes she is unhappy. Her younger daughter who is 15 years old works

part-time in the same place as other Norwegian teenagers, and she too does not get the same treatment.

I can't read and write; I know I have to struggle more than anyone. But my daughter works part-time, she is just a little child! Bosses' teenage children also work part-time here. They eat free whatever they want, and don't work with responsibilities. But my daughter works hard and one day she sat for 15 minutes and her bosses came to me and said that she sat too long!

- **Difficult to find Norwegian friends**

All mothers share that it is difficult to find Norwegian friends both for them and their children. Amina feels that there are different reasons they do not find friends in Norway. She mentions the word 'gap' between cultures. When her daughter shared with her about friends' parties, alcohol, and drugs; she took action, and her daughter got a 'tag' as 'conservative'. She lost her friend's circle after that. Amina's children have neither Syrian nor Norwegian friends. Her daughter's best friend is from a European country that also has a history of war, and her son's best friend is from a Latin American country.

I think, being friends needs some common grounds, it could be the same mentality, same behaviors, same thoughts, same experiences. Sorry to say, sometimes maybe the same ethnicity, same contingent, or skin color, although these don't apply to everyone.

Samira says that her son has Norwegian friends but not her daughter. The reason she mentions is that Norwegian girls are 'too open' (Åpen), and her daughter feels shy. Her daughter also got the tag 'conservative' from some of her friends in the past. To the question 'What do you mean by Open?', she answers that open means parties with boys for whole nights, wearing short clothes, going on tour for several days without parents, and watching movies that are 'open'. Those movies that have intimate scenes, foul language, drugs, and alcohol are 'open' to her. Samira feels happy that her son has Norwegian friends, but she worries a lot also.

- **Compromising with own culture**

All three Syrian mothers show their sadness to compromise with their own culture continuously. Samira wears a hijab often (not always), but her daughter doesn't. It is not something that makes her sad, but still, she mentions that God will forgive them. Her daughter wears a hijab when she talks with relatives in Syria because she does not want to listen or let her mother listen to any kind of blaming from her relatives. They buy always Halal meat (red meat) from Asian shops which is important to them. But chicken seems 'okay' from REMA or KIWI.

We don't know how they process beef and pork, maybe together? So that is why we buy halal red meat. We know they don't religiously kill chickens. But it is okay, we are now liberal Muslims.' (Laughing).

Samira also shares that she always needs to be careful towards the children. She can neither punish her children nor decide everything. She also feels sad that they live like poor people in Norway. She can't buy whatever her children want. In her home country, they were rich, she says: "I am sharing this only with you because you will understand me. I can't tell whatever I feel."

Participants also share the dilemmas they feel every day in Norway.

- **Fear of the child protection system**

All Syrian mothers share their fear of the Norwegian child protection system. No one has experienced anything negative yet, but they have heard stories about the child protection system through books, newspapers, movies, etc. They feel scared to practice their own parenting culture sometimes because they feel that if anything happens that is not right according to the Norwegian system, Child protection could come and take their children away. to the question 'What are your feelings about the child protection system?', they answer that Child Protection in Norway doesn't understand cultural practices and only cares about their standards of upbringing. CP has done a lot of incidents with immigrants, and participants have heard that they don't respect immigrants' culture, judge immigrants more than Norwegians, and take away children from their parents. To the question 'What can you not practice for the fear?', they explain that children cannot sleep with their parents after a certain age; they don't feed children by hand, and can't be strict with children. If children don't want to practice their own culture, parents feel fear to give little pressure.

- **Losing or fear of losing own community**

Amina has already lost contact with her Syrian community in Norway. 'Community' means Syrians as well as immigrants from Muslim countries to her. The reasons, she thinks, are not practicing religion, not having visible cultural symbols (Hijab, full-sleeved dress, loose dress, maintaining distance from men, not swimming with men), having a Christian partner, and not teaching children about religion and culture. Neither she nor her children have Syrian friends. According to her: "My community avoids me." Amina does not even have any connection with her family in Syria. They abandoned her because she left the country without permission from her husband, got a divorce from Norway, and has a Christian partner. She mentions that although it doesn't bother her, but she feels lonely sometimes, but her children are happy here.

Samira, however, practices and maintains her community well. She joins in religious discussions; invites Syrian friends to dinner, and practices Syrian culture as much as possible. According to her she is a respected person in her community, both here and in Syria. She has regular contact with her family and friends who live in Syria, and her children also regularly talk with them. Still she also worries about losing her community. To the question ‘What are the worries?’ she answers- maintain religion properly and join religious sessions; children shouldn’t have sex before marriage and shouldn’t take drugs or drink alcohol. She also mentions that girl child should maintain her womanhood (dress code, be polite and calm, caring, think about family first, know about household chores, take care of male members of the family)

Aylia got some negative comments from her community for not wearing hijab all the time and for starting a family without in-laws. She mentions that she maintains many things because of fear of losing her community.

- **Fear of being judged by the host culture**

They think that we beat our children, put pressure, and don’t listen to our children, we came from a war country and know nothing. But what they don’t know is that we love our children and family unconditionally. My husband doesn’t have a permanent job but I have. Should I think that I am more powerful than him? I bought the house, should I feel that I only own it? We own it, we are family. Everything is not only about money and property, sometimes you love without any expectations. (Samira)

All participants share that they have a fear of being judged by the host culture. According to them, Norwegians feel that Syrians know nothing or that their cultural practices are problematic. Amina says that she had both experiences, being abandoned by her community and judged by the host community. Her daughter had also experienced this with her friends.

- **Going back or never going back?**

For the Syrian mothers, there is no hope of going back to Syria. The history of war doesn’t give them hope. Amina mentions that even if the war stops, she will never go back to Syria because women are ‘powerless’ (null makt), and ‘unsafe’ (utrygg) there. Samira misses her home country and her past, but she, also, doesn’t feel any hope of going back permanently. Yet, she dreams of visiting Syria one day. Aylia also doesn’t want to go back. She feels that they have “Nowhere to go”. They also say that they have bought many things last couple of years. They believe Norway is their final destination to settle down and that they want to live here. Samira bought a house recently and she got citizenship a couple of weeks before this interview. She mentioned that she worked

hard for the last five years to get citizenship here. On the other hand, Amina is waiting to get a permanent job to buy a house here and Aylia says that they will buy a house soon. Aylia dreams of decorating her house like a 'Heaven' (Himmelig sted).

6.2 MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD AND MOTHERHOOD

6.2.1 Childhood in Syria: Memories of Syrian Mothers

All Syrian mothers remember that they grew up in an extended family. Amina had parents, four brothers, two sisters, three uncles and grandparents. Her parents were educated and they wanted all children to be educated too. She went to a school near their home and remembered that she had never walked to school alone. Her father, uncles, grandfather, and brothers were always with her. According to Amina: "My youngest brother was seven years old and also brought me to school... (smiling). If something happened, he needed help from me, but he was also my male guardian sometimes". She learned in her childhood that male members of the family were the decision-makers and she must follow them all the time:

When I grew up, my parents wanted me to get an education. But they also told me always that when I would earn money, that would be my husband's money, I should work only to support my husband and if my husband doesn't like it, I should quit.

Amina got a chance to read international books her father brought from the library for her. She read about Iranian history, English books, and Russian literature when she was a child which opened her eyes to the world, she memorizes. She saw her father beating her mother in front of her for a silly mistake that made her sad and angry, but she was silent because she was scared of her father.

When Samira was a kid, she didn't make any decisions for herself. Her father and grandmother did. She had a lot of responsibilities in the home, for example taking care of and playing with younger siblings and nephews, washing the house, and cooking. All the siblings slept together in a big room: "I even slept in the same bed with my parents when I was twelve, it made more bonding between me and my parents." She had twelve siblings, seven nieces and nephews, parents, and grandparents. Her five uncles with family lived in the same village and she several times mentioned them as family in her interview.

Samira didn't get the chance to go to school. She finished her basic education at home. A home tutor came to teach and help with her brothers' homework and she got permission to sit with them

and learn. She heard that women needed basic education to read and write, but didn't need formal education, because they didn't need to earn money outside. She still remembers and misses her childhood. They had a big house with an olive garden and a big yard; and domestic animals. They were rich; they had an extended family which she was happy with.

Aylia has two different experiences of childhood because she came to Norway when she was 14 years old. As a child in Syria, she didn't go outside of the house because of safety. She started Hijab when she was five. She went to school with her grandfather and father. She didn't have any 'power' to make decisions, she mentions. After coming to Norway, she started school and she found 'freedom', and 'safety' as a child. Throughout the interview, she uses certain words several times - like stilling (equality), makt (power), egne avgjørelser (own decisions), and trygghet (safety). Aylia has found all of these in Norway. She experienced the bombing at their house and the death of her brother and father in Syria. According to her:

I had nightmares for a couple of years. I shouted, cried, and panicked in the middle of my sleep. I talked with Child Protection and a child psychologist when I came here. Now it is much better, but sometimes I dream of my father's face.

6.2.2 Memories of Motherhood in Syria

Two mothers lived in an extended family also after marriage. Aylia has no personal experience as a mother in Syria because she married and gave birth in Norway. Amina had, however, no right to make any decisions regarding her children. She says that it was the practice according to laws, religion, and culture:

My ex-husband and his family took all the decisions; I was only the caregiver. I needed to feed, and wash my children, the rest of the responsibility and decisions were done by the father. My children saw how people misbehaved with their mother...

Amina was beaten by her husband in front of the children. Her only fault was watching European videos on YouTube. In the middle of the argumentation, her husband beat her and told her that she was not properly raised by her parents, that her parents gave her bad books, and that she believed in 'women's power', which does not exist in religion. Also, she was trying to spoil 'his' children. Amina tried to protest but was badly beaten by him.

The responsibilities I am talking about, I couldn't get these from my parents. When I wanted to get a divorce in Syria, my parents directly told me that they would never support me and they would not take responsibility for me. If I wanted to do that, I needed to do it myself and go somewhere else. You know, as a woman living alone in Syria is not safe. That is why I needed to accept many things in my in-law's house. You know, in Syria, women don't have the right to get a divorce until their husbands say yes. But now? I have learned from my own life. I do not want back to Syria and I cannot as well.

Samira had an extended family with her husband, parents-in-law, brothers- and sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law wives and children, and grandmothers-in-law where she lived after marriage. She still misses that life. She was laughing when she was sharing her story.

I didn't need to do anything. We had maids to wash and cook. I was like a princess in my in-law's house. How did I give birth to seven? My in-law's family took care of my children a lot. This is a big support when you live in an extended family. My husband was a good child to his parents, he always shared and decided together with his parents. I started giving birth when I was fifteen and I gave birth to the youngest one when I was twenty-nine. Me and my first child have only sixteen years of age difference, but we are still friends. We grew up together....(laughing)

As a mother, she just needed to tell her husband what children needed. Her husband fulfilled all her needs. About schooling and study, she says: "I didn't need to make all the decisions. Their father and uncles made it. Thank Allah!"

6.3 A PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

In this chapter, we have seen that three Syrian mothers have distinct and diverse ideas, viewpoints, and experiences of childhood and motherhood. Much of this is related to their sociocultural norms and taboos, class, education, access to information through media and literature, family structure, and cross-cultural contact. All remembered that their childhood included a set of responsibilities and expected behaviors that differed from that of boys and were adult-dominated. When they drew pictures of childhood and motherhood, it is related to their memories, and also to their present circumstances. We have seen that their understandings have changed over time, and through the exchange of culture.

They described children as responsible, yet also helpless, dependent, and immature. According to participants, the concept of a responsible child indicates that children start to learn a small portion of adult responsibilities and how to become adults. On several occasions, they mentioned some important sociocultural resources in their culture. The strong economic class system is one of them. Throughout Samira's memories, we see how she identified herself as rich in Syria and poor

in Norway. This thought affects her 'mothering' when she gets sad, and says she can not buy whatever she wants for her children. Inviting thousands of guests to a wedding also indicates the financial ability of a family. Samira does not want to forget her past ability, so in Norway, she invited hundreds of guests to her son's wedding. On the other hand, she learned how to speak Norwegian, started earning money in Norway, and bought a house that is related to her previous socioeconomic position.

Another important sociocultural resource in Syria we found from the interviews is education. Education can help a person get a valuable job and social position in Syria. Amina told me that holding power is related to socioeconomic factors (education, income, and occupation) in Syria. She showed her dissatisfaction toward Norwegian authorities for not getting a job according to her educational and professional background. She and Aylia came from middle-class families where education was important, and they showed their priority for their children getting an education in Norway also. On the other side, we also see that participants' views have changed through cross-cultural journeys. Samira, as a woman, never thought of earning money outside when she was in Syria which is related to her culture. But her teenage daughter has started earning money in Norway and supporting her family which is a 'big support'.

Through the narration of participants, motherhood is also related to some cultural concepts that are strongly related to gender norms and values- loving mother, dedicated mother, good mother, bad mother, responsible mother, and teacher mother. When some of them see these norms and values as a pressure, some of them feel sad for not practicing these. The journey of motherhood of all participants has given way to different experiences. Sometimes they had similar experiences, but not similar feelings or understandings. It clearly says that we can't generalize all people from the same state.

Another point we should not overlook is that when all mothers mention 'good parents' mean 'love children unconditionally', they have many visible conditions or expectations (criteria) toward their children. When a child meets these criteria, for example living with parents, the mother feels bonding, and on the contrary, a mother shows dissatisfaction toward her child who does not meet expectations. I find these as conditions, criteria, and expectations of mothers toward their children instead of 'unconditional'.

So, if we listen carefully to their experiences in Norway, we will understand they have both distinct feelings and experiences. Coming from a very different culture, they face a variety of difficulties

and dilemmas. We can arrive at the proposition that when a state tries to build a multicultural society, authorities should understand that immigrants from different cultural backgrounds should be understood carefully according to their very specific experiences, views, and needs, and equality comes through the practice of equity.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

... remembrance is in very large measure a reconstruction of the past achieved with the data borrowed from the present, a reconstruction prepared, furthermore, by reconstruction of earlier periods wherein past images had already been altered. (Halbwachs, 1980, p. 69).

Halbwachs explains through his book 'On Collective Memory', how memories bring people together in and contribute to 'collective identity'. He also tells us that there can be strong divergences between individual memories and group memories. These affect other parts of an people's life, importantly family life. By the example of 'urban changes', Halbwachs explains that when people must change their place or habits, they can become confused and troubled (Halbwachs, 1980). I have found similar tendencies in this study. For example, a Syrian mother woke up with the smell of spices in her home country, when her place and situation changed after fleeing, she started to miss those habits and became unhappy, sad, and/or nostalgic. In this study, I have found out that through memories of the past, forcefully displaced people can try to connect with their own community or particular periods that have significance in their lives. On this point, I agree and disagree with Halbwachs. People in exile, in a new place, may not only become unhappy, confused, or troubled. They may also become relieved because of the absence of negative factors of their past. I have tried to describe individuals' memories that are connected to their perceptions, practices, and perspectives of 'childhood' and 'motherhood'. I have also tried to find how these perceptions and perspectives form part of different discourses. Here, I will discuss my materials from chapters five and six and relate to my theoretical approaches. Finally, I shall raise some important questions to the esteemed readers.

7.1 DISCOURSES OF 'CHILDREN', 'CHILDHOOD', AND 'MOTHERING'

If we read carefully what participants remember, we find several concepts related to their cultural backgrounds. These are part of different discourses related to children, childhood, and motherhood. This is, of course, connected to their particular historical backgrounds, norms and values, taboos, and legislative rules and regulations. All of these contributes to discursive formations (Foucault, 1972). While some mothers remembered their childhood as good; some shared that their childhood was not. Some have found their practice of childhood and motherhood was 'wrong' when they got access to information through new cultural exchanges. Although they have different memories, in many personal ways, their perceptions are social. Through this study, I have continuously tried to find reasons and explanations to this. Perceptions of individuals can change through time, space, and even through encountering comparatively more powerful discourses. Sometimes they accept these changes positively because these do not oppose their values. Sometimes they accept these as a pressure. For example, in Norway, child upbringing has different meanings than in Syria or Ukraine, and that is connected to laws and monitoring of authorities. People in exile must repress many of their perceptions and practices from their own cultures that do not match with the host culture and must follow the Norwegian system. Foucault identifies this as 'disciplinary actions' (Foucault, 1975). Through this study, I have also found out that immigrant mothers try to practice some of their cultural perceptions inside the home due to fear of authorities, but they get objections from their children. Samira's case is here as an example. When she shouted at her son, he protested and threatened calling Child Protection. To Samira, child protection is an authority she fears, but to her son, child protection is a saver, help, or defense for him to avoid the 'unexpected behavior' of his mother. On the other side, if we look at Amina and Bohdana's cases, they feel happy with the Norwegian child upbringing system and the practicing of motherhood, in many ways, because some practices and disciplinary actions in Norway are similar to their values. Although these values were not acceptable in their culture. So, it is immensely important to understand people in exile from a critical and sensitive point of view, and should not locate 'refugee' as a homogenous concept. I also want to add that we should even not generalize 'Syrian refugee' or 'Ukrainian refugee' as collectivity. Although Syrians or Ukrainians collectively have their cultural contexts, when they are in exile, many other factors lead to their integrational process.

Below, I shall present some discourses on children, childhood, and motherhood that I have found through this study.

- **Children are on the way to becoming human beings**

This discourse has been revealed through all the participants' memories, both their childhood and motherhood. They described children with particular concepts throughout interviews indicating them as a 'group' who are 'human becoming', not fully 'beings'. Adults are the mediators for children's progress to become 'beings' (Ben-Arieh, 2007; Lee, 2001). Although some mothers carefully listen to and prioritize their children's perspectives, they also feel that this is important for children to become better future beings. Sometimes 'human-being' and 'human-becoming' concepts may intersect due to particular sociocultural factors and produce different meanings. For example, a lack of education may position a mother as intrusive and less responsive toward children's education; and children become responsible (beings) for maintaining this part, Samira is the case. The concepts of being and becoming seem confusing and problematic to me when I think about a twelve years old child in Bangladesh (as an example), from an economically unstable (so-called poor class) family, who is the breadwinner in the family and decides everything about his/her life. But according to CRC or national laws, he/she does not meet many criteria as a 'human being'. So I think we will lose the understanding of the specific sociocultural contexts if we only calculate children between 'becomings' and 'beings'. There might be a third concept-mixed of becoming and being, sometimes less-becoming and more-being, more-becoming and less-being; sometimes difficult to find variables to define these concepts concretely that it is not either becoming or being.

In this study, I have also noticed that immigrant mothers often become confused about concepts of childhood and motherhood. Experiencing comparatively different meanings of these concepts in Norway and remembering their childhood make their thoughts complex. Rather, in their lives, they adopt a 'compromised position'. According to my understanding, this 'compromised position' can be understood through following theoretical approaches of Foucault, Butler, James, and Prout. I want to here understand the sociocultural construction of childhood and motherhood as discursive formations.

James, Jenks, and Prout's theory of childhood based on the notion of 'social construction' is relevant to this study. Theorists' four approaches to childhood 'tribal child', 'social structural child', 'minority group child', and 'socially constructed child' has been explained by participants in this study (James & Prout, 1998). If we look at the participants' narratives both from Syria and Ukraine, they explain children-

- as a 'tribal group' where children have 'children's playing and games materials', 'children's responsibilities', and 'children's behaviors'. Although these criteria vary from mother to mother. For example, while obeying solely to parents was important to some participants as children's responsibility; some expressed decision-making capacity as important in child development.
- as a 'minority group' and 'social structural' where children are 'vulnerable', 'not safe', 'insecure', 'helpless', 'a white sheet', 'have less idea of the real world', and 'dependent on adults for their development'. If we look carefully at the Syrian context, through norms and values, laws and taboos women are also valued as a 'minority group' like children.
- 'The socially constructed child' is located in all three approaches above where participants have different perceptions, and practices that produce concepts of 'responsible', 'honest', 'family-oriented', 'selfish', or 'good' child as well as 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable behaviors' of a child.

One of the important observations is that when a Syrian or Ukrainian mother explained her strong position in defining these concepts of childhood and children, other mothers from the same cultures had a different point of view. For example, Samira said a family-oriented child maintains contact with relatives, but Amina told us it is not important to her. While Bohdana practiced listening carefully to children's needs, Alina didn't even think about it. Through my research, I have found out that what children do and do not do is connected to adults' needs and expectations. Another important finding is that we can not even explain Syrian or Ukrainian 'childhood' as a 'homogenous'. It is a complex concept even differ between two persons from the same state. So childhood and motherhood should be understood within very specific sociocultural, economic, and political contexts and specific experiences. We can not generalize people who came from the same country. I stand with the authors that not only Western research but also views of the host culture towards immigrant cultures, the policy of child-rearing has neglected the localized view of children which is contradictory with the notion of 'multicultural society'.

- **The concept of extended family and family-oriented parenting practices**

These two concepts have been disclosed through participants' memories. Both representatives of two states tell us that extended family structures were practiced that had a significant role in their childhood. Parenting practices have also been influenced by these two concepts, particularly in Syria. 'Family' has different meanings to them than the Norwegian notion of family. Norwegian notions of family is connected to 'private domain', 'nuclear family' and 'egalitarianism' (Skirbekk,

et al. 2022). In this study, some participants include people in their definition of the 'family' who live under the same roof and share the same household; others include members from the patrilineage who even live away from them; and some include relatives both from the father and mother's side. The concept of 'kinship' describe how people connect family differently. In terms of social and biological relationships between individuals, some people hold the decision-making for their kin. For example, grandparents or uncles from patrilineage can decide about children more than a mother, sometimes even more than a father. Through the voices of participants, we see that their cultural practices of family had a more powerful role in their childhood than the state. Many of their views also have been changed through migration and cultural exchanges. According to the findings of this study, both Ukraine and Syria have family-oriented parenting systems. Parents and/or other adult family members set the rules, responsibilities, and perceptions of childhood and parenting where the state has a distant role. Through different literature, it is often called '*authoritarian*' parenting practices (Baumrind, 1971; Ranghild, 2016, Ong, 2018). In postwar Norway, by eliminating *authoritarian parenting*, child upbringing and parenting have been handed over from family to state to make both mother and father free and relaxed so that they can be part of the economic sector (Schrumppf, 2022). Before conceptualizing parenting by 'authoritarian', 'authoritative', or 'permissive', we should understand carefully several important sociocultural factors that have significant roles in a society like Syria and Ukraine. Class, gender, education, cross-cultural experiences, family structure, norms and taboos, laws and regulations all are factors that work in parenting practices; and these factors even shape parenting practices differently inside the cultural space. For example, if a Syrian woman does not have any relatives from in-laws, the way of parenting practices would be shaped differently than the woman who has twenty relatives from in-laws around her. We have also seen that the strong economic class system shaped Samira and Amina's childhood. Samira's narrative indicates the so-called 'rich' class, while Amina was from the 'middle class'. Another example can be in Syria where hugs, kisses, or siblings sleeping in the same bed are important as cultural practices. They have different meanings of physical boundaries. When they can not practice these in Norway, they feel 'less bonding', 'less love', and 'less emotion' between parents and children. We have also seen how access to information changed Bohdana's perceptions of childhood and questioned her childhood as 'gendered'. These strong visible factors in a society lead to diverse experiences of childhood and motherhood that we should not overlook. My standpoint, in one way, is that both 'collectivistic' and 'individualistic' societies exercise different forms of authoritarian practices from the discursive framework analysis. For example, when in Norway, the authorities make particular child upbringing policies and want people to follow those, this indicates a different form of authoritarian

position of the state (disciplinary actions) where the authorities hold the power and say what people can or can not do. It indicates Foucault's theory of discipline and punishment where the state sets a wide range of control techniques (policies of child-rearing, child protection system, parenting) as 'discipline' with the willing participation of the 'governed' (citizen) (Foucault, 1995). Succinctly, members of society must follow the rules and regulations (discipline) set by the state (government); authorities (different public bodies and agencies) will follow up; and if someone breaks the rules, they will be punished. "There is no blueprint for parenting and no families are alike. Something we all have in common – regardless of culture, background or ethnicity – is that children's basic needs are the same" (Bufir, 2024). If we just focus on 'children's basic needs' from a global view, specific sociocultural contexts of immigrants are missing there. The question is- a child born in a Norwegian family, a child born in Norway in an immigrant family, or a child who fleeing from his/her home country, do they have the same needs? On the other hand, parenting is directly connected with children. Parents from different cultures have their own way of parenting practices. When parenting is advised by authorities (it is a part of the Introduction Program for refugees) in one common way, my second question is- are we avoiding listening to their particular contexts? Here, my point is that when a state tries to become a 'multicultural society' and immigrants including immigrant children live there, the views, and policies need a follow-up by authorities and by critical social researchers too.

Another finding in this study is that childhood and parenting depend on sociocultural resources which suits well with Bourdieu's 'Forms of Capital' which is valuable in the very specific 'cultural field' (Bourdieu, 1986). When all Syrian mothers shared the same memories, they had very diverse experiences also. For example, Amina got an education because her parents wanted that. She got access to various international books which opened her eyes to the world. When Amina or Bohdana found out that they would not get a job according to their previous education and experiences, they criticized the Norwegian system for 'inequality'. If we look at Samira's case, she several times mentioned her family as 'rich' with the indicators of a big yard, house, olive trees, cattle, maids, and living as princesses. In Norway, when she sees the comparatively less visible class system and also sees that earning money is comparatively more difficult than in Syria, she shows her unhappiness and identifies herself as 'poor'. Ukrainian mothers did not mention economic status but also saw the world differently because of their specific knowledge. When they all mentioned 'gatespråk' (street-language) as a language of 'uneducated', 'bad', and 'low-class people', they denied strongly identifying themselves in that group. It indicates that they see the class system. So, we have found that access to books, literary works and information, education,

social class status, and relationships with extended family members all were resources (social and cultural capital) to them that constructed their childhood and motherhood. Without understanding how these factors affect an individual, the understanding of immigrants might not be possible, according to my position.

7.2 DISCOURSES THROUGH GENDER-LENS

Men or adults connected to men are powerful in decision-making expresses a gendered dimension with these discourses. Here the hierarchical position is strongly visible in both countries in different ways. This hierarchical position is evident between child and adult, sometimes between male and female, and sometimes even between two females. While this discourse sometimes is connected to strong stereotyped cultural norms and practices, Ukraine here is an example; sometimes it is legalized through laws and institutions, Syria is the example. Syria has a law that husbands hold the full power of marriage, divorce, and other decision-making towards women where women/wives are bound to serve men and men's families. Through Amina's case, '*Women have no rights for divorce*', '*Women need permission from husbands/fathers/males*', and '*Women are caregivers*' have been revealed which indicate strongly gendered practices of a society. If we look at Amina's statement, she told us how her husband mentioned 'my child' during the fight. Gendered discourses also construct childhood where the girlchild must learn the responsibilities as a future woman, wife, and mother. On the other hand, boys learn to become powerful men when a seven-year-old brother gets the role of guardianship and protection for his elder sister. The interesting part is that a woman can belong in this power position if she gives birth to a son and becomes a mother-in-law, then she can decide over the daughter-in-law and grandchild. On the other side, a man even can lose power if he has a daughter. Through marriage, his daughter is handed over to in-law's territory where the father loses his power.

Gendered discourses also shape the concepts of *boyhood and girlhood* which exist in both Ukraine and Syria, in different ways. Boyhood meant becoming a future man according to the expectations of socio-cultural brains. Boyhood connotes the outside of the house (the world), messy, shouting, boy's playing materials, physical strength, learning about guardianship and responsibilities of the world. Alina mentioned that her brother did not want to play with her because those plays were for girls. She also mentioned that if a boy behaves like a girl, it is not attractive to her. Amina or Samira never walked to school alone because of their gender identity. Girlhood means becoming a future woman connotes calmness, patience, caring, and responsibility inside the house, tidy, beautiful, makeovers, reproductive work, obeying men, and being protected by males. Judith Butler

considered gender a 'corporeal style', which is intentional and performative (Butler, 1990). Gender performances include everyday actions, body movements, facial expressions, dress habits, food culture, tone of voice, taboos, and so on through juridic-discursive power which all are constructed by the culture. How specific behaviors and actions are intentionally performed by the individuals and produce gendered discourses have been revealed through this study. But what is missing from Butler in this study is how the concept of gender works in immigrants' lives. An immigrant mother (Samira) who had never gone outside alone is praising her teenage daughter for earning money but at the same time requesting her daughter to cover her hair while she talks with relatives in Syria. Another example is Amina, she came from a gendered society, but she feels freedom in Norway. Bohdana and Alina came from the same country, but their understanding of gender is different. So, after looking at the data, can we tell that people coming from the same country are the same and they need the same treatments from the host?

I particularly want to present Foucault's conception of power here. Power is essentially juridical, based on the statement of the law and taboo, and is seen as straightforwardly restrictive and repressive (Foucault, 1988). Women are 'vulnerable', 'weak', 'related to reproductive works', 'taking care of husband's children', and 'she must not lose her virginity before marriage' these all cultural gendered norms and taboos has been revealed by Syrian participants. Some try to practice these in Norway by mentioning 'not having sex without marriage, it is Haram', and some try not to practice. Amina told me that she didn't agree with the discourse 'wife takes care of her husband's children', but she was silent because of legislative laws. In immigrant life, when a mother from a different cultural context comes to Norway, maintains contact with his/her community, and sees comparatively less visible gendered norms in the host society, it may create pressure and crisis, particularly for a mother who has a girl child. These tension, crisis, pressure, and coping mechanisms are particularly important to understand immigrants' cultures, according to my findings.

7.3 PRACTICES RELATED (AND NOT RELATED) TO MEMORIES

'Immigrant' as an identity is complex because of the sense of belonging (Bauman, 1996). Immigrants try to define their identity through cultural practices, also they redefine themselves by adopting and negotiating with host culture. If we go through the sections on practices, we can see how and what specific practices are important to participants to describe their 'cultural identity' and what they adopt from the host culture through their cross-cultural journeys. We have listened to participants' voices that tell us children show support and responsibility towards parents by helping them with household chores, giving money as financial support, buying groceries, taking care of siblings, accepting their mother's new partner, and showing empathy; they show bonding towards parents by touch (hugging and kissing), staying with parents, sharing their everyday lives, buying gifts, going out with parents, making favorite food; they show their cultural practices by studying in own cultural system, speaking the native language, practicing religions, maintaining communication with relatives who live in their home countries. These all are also expected by parents. Through cross-cultural experiences and getting resources, practices change. In Syria, a woman can never have a partner without marriage, a partner from a different religion. In Norway, through cultural change, it is acceptable, and it is acceptable to immigrant children also. Sometimes children are engaged in cultural practices to make their parents happy, Samira's teenage girl is an example. Sometimes children integrate into the host society faster than parents which creates a crisis between parents and children. Parents also show support, responsibility, priority, and bonding toward children. If we see carefully what the important things are to mothers who want their children to continue as cultural identity, we find that language, food, and religion are particularly common to all. Although they have their unique expectations also. Also, we should not ignore another part that what parents expect and practice now is not always related to their childhood experiences. By meeting different sociocultural factors, in different periods of their lives, their expectations toward children have changed.

At last, we can come up with a standpoint that memories are social which has a significant effect on childhood and parenting varies from person to person, but the perceptions are not static and change throughout time, spaces, and meeting new cultures. We also found different discourses and concepts related to children, childhood, motherhood, girlchild, and boychild. These socially constructed discourses also have been revealed through dynamic power relations.

CHAPTER EIGHT SUMMERY

We know nothing, right? So, we must start from the beginning. I see their face and understand everything! They show that we have nowhere to go and we are the problem for them...we must accept and be grateful for everything because they graciously accommodated us...but they do never know what we have gone through in just one life... (Amina)

In this research, I have tried to listen carefully to what an individual wants to remember from the past as important. These important memories are connected to their perceptions of children, childhood, and motherhood. Also through their narrations, different sociocultural factors that affected their perceptions, how they explain different discourses, and what they experience in Norway and think about it all were my research questions and findings. I have found some of the answers. Their narratives have shown us that not all people from the same cultural region perceive the same thing; not all miss their home country in the same degree; not all integrate themselves in the same way; not all even have the same needs and abilities. Then the question is- 'then why do they get the same treatment from the authorities and people from their surroundings?' According to this research journey, I have come up with the point that the experiences that refugees had before and are having in a new context may not be identified by one parameter. Some of their perceptions change, and some pretend in public but practice their own culture behind the door because of fears. Some want to change but can not because of the pressure of their own community, not even from the host. These are realities and truths in the social world that are more complex than theory and hypothesis; and vary from person to person. I have found each participant as a unique research area because of their distinct stories.

In the process of being a multicultural society, the narrations of immigrants and their agency are particularly important. Immigrants in exile come from different cultural backgrounds with different memories and distinct perceptions including collectivity. There are distinct sociocultural factors in a society that affect immigrants in different grades. By discovering these carefully from a discursive framework, immigrants can be understood better. Norwegian authorities and professionals who work with immigrants also should take these under consideration by avoiding a generalization mentality. Through media and powerholders, the discourse 'refugee crisis' has been produced. But refugee is neither a crisis nor only a homogenous identity. Refugees are human beings with their unique life experiences.

Through this study, I want to raise two questions.

Question One:

If there is only 'one rule' for everyone without understanding the social construction of immigrant culture, is it not pointing to another 'hegemonic authoritarian model'?

Question Two:

Is this 'one rule' making a homogenous childhood and parenting practice in a 'multicultural society' where the next generation will remember only one childhood?

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT OF MASTER'S THESIS

'Upbringing in Norway: Refugee mothers' voices and their way'

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

I am a student at the University of South-Eastern Norway and will write my master's thesis on how refugee mothers experience upbringing and parenting in Norway. I am interested in experiences and opinions from refugee mothers on this topic. The target group is refugee mothers who have come to Norway with children and/or gave birth in Norway. In the study, I want to hear more about your experiences and opinions as a mother in Norway and in your home country. You have received this information sheet because you expressed interest in becoming a participant in this study. Before you decide to participate, it is important that you understand the purpose of this study and what it involves. Please read the following information carefully. We encourage you to contact us if anything is not clear or you would like more information. The purpose of this study is understanding the experiences and perspectives as a refugee mother in Norway.

WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY INCLUDE?

I would like to interview you about your experiences as a mother in Norway and your perspectives and opinions about Norwegian upbringing system. I would like to talk about what you think about this and what has been helpful in connection with establishing and adapting to a new life in Norway.

My main questions are:

1. What means the child upbringing to you?
2. How did you experience this in your home country and how do you experience in Norway?
3. What are the similarities and differences of upbringing between two countries? How do you deal with these?
4. What are the benefits and problems you experience in Norway as a mother?

USN (University of south-eastern Norway) is responsible for personal data processed in the study.

This Study consists of two parts:

Part 1 involves a one-to-one interview, lasting approximately 60-90 minutes. During the interview, the researcher will ask you questions about your experiences of child upbringing and parenting in Norway, its impact on you as a person. Parenting may be a sensitive topic, and it may bring up difficult emotions. If you wish to take a break at any point, please inform the interviewer. If you wish to stop and withdraw your participation from the study, please let the interviewer know.

Part 2 is an optional element. If you decide to participate in part 2, the research team will contact you once the preliminary results of the study are ready (approximately five months after the interview). You will be asked to read the preliminary results and attend a follow-up conversation with the research team. The follow up conversation is expected to last between 30 and 45 minutes.

The purpose of this follow-up conversation is to enhance the quality of the research findings, by ensuring that the findings resonate with the study participants. The research team may make changes to the research findings following this conversation; however, this is not guaranteed. If you decide to participate in this optional part, the research team will contact you a maximum of two times, to inform you that the preliminary research findings are ready for review. If you do not respond to the second contact attempt, the research team will not contact you again about it.

HOW DO RESEARCHER COLLECT DATA?

- Researcher will collect data by one-to-one interview with a guideline. And she will also use observation method.
- Researcher have chosen you as participant by snowball method. She got your information from a person you know and contacted with you for your interest. You have showed your interest to participate in this study and that is why I am here to talk with you.
- Researcher will write the information you are giving on notebook and she will record your voice with your permission. Written documents and recordings of the interview will be deleted as soon as the project is over and will not be shared with anyone.
- Researcher will interview some other participants and also collect data from secondary sources; for example, newspaper, website, previous research data.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE INFORMATION ABOUT YOU?

There are two possible risks. The likelihood of these risks occurring is low.

Parenting is a sensitive topic and interview questions may bring up difficult emotions. We recommend that you only participate in this study if you feel emotionally ready to do so.

Breach of confidentiality: For the purposes of this research study, your identity will be known to the research team. However, every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

The research team will collect the following direct personal information from research participants: Phone number and/or email addresses. We will also obtain, store and analyze indirect personal information, obtained through interviews and recorded in transcripts. Interview transcripts will not contain directly identifiable personal information, and any information that could reasonably be expected to lead to the identification of the participant will be redacted during analysis. Directly identifiable personal information is kept separate from transcripts and can only be linked via a separate code sheet. The code sheet will be stored on a password protected external hard drive, which can only be accessed by the research team. All information relating to research participants and interviews will be stored on password protected computers and will only be accessible to the research team. The research team uses industry leading software and cloud-based services (Microsoft One Drive and Zoom).

The research team will replace all participant names with pseudonyms. However, research always contains a residual risk. For example, a close friend or relative may recognize a research participant despite our best efforts to remove personal information, or personal identifiable information may leak due to technological issues. You may decline to answer any or all interview questions and you

may terminate your involvement at any time during the duration of the research project, without any negative impact. Please note that you will not be able to withdraw from the research after the results have been published.

Personal information, such as name, age, where you live, address and other such details will not be shared with anyone else. Only I and my supervisors will be privy to this. The project is scheduled to end on 15 May 2024. Recording of the interview will be deleted as soon as the project is over. In what is written down, neither your name nor other identifying information about you will appear. Your name will therefore not appear in any of the documents that will be written and no one will be able to recognize you. What is said in the interview will not be passed on to others around you, or to the authorities.

WHAT GIVES US THE RIGHT TO PROCESS YOUR PERSONAL DATA?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with University of South-eastern Norway, The Data Protection Services of Sikt – Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project meets requirements in data protection legislation.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND YOUR RIGHTS

Participation in the study is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving any reason. If you withdraw, all information about you will be deleted. If you have questions about this study, at any point in time, or you experience any negative impact as a result of participating in this study, you may contact the researchers. The project has been approved by NSD. If you wish to participate or have questions about the study, please contact me

- Fahmida Hanif Ela, E-mail: 250750@student.usn.no, Mobile phone number: 90936089 or my supervisors,
- Steffen Johannessen, Email: steffen.f.johannessen@usn.no;
- Ellen Schrumpf, Email: ellen.schrumpf@usn.no

Your rights:

so long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the norwegian data protection authority regarding the processing of your personal data

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

I have received information about the study and am willing to participate

(Signed by project participant, date)

I am interested in participating only part one

(Signed by project participant, date)

I am interested in participating both parts of the study

(Signed by project participant, date)

APPENDIX 2

FORESPØRSEL OM DELTAKELSE I FORSKNINGSPROSJEKTET AV MASTEROPPGAVE

'Oppdragelse I Norge: Flyktningmødres Stemme Og Deres Perspektiver'

BAKGRUNN OG FORMÅL

Jeg er student ved Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge og skal skrive masteroppgave om hvordan flyktningmødre opplever oppvekst og foreldreskap i Norge. Jeg er interessert i erfaringer og meninger fra flyktningmødre om dette temaet. Målgruppen er flyktningmødre som har kommet til Norge med barn og/eller født i Norge. I studien ønsker jeg å høre mer om dine erfaringer og meninger som mor i Norge og i ditt hjemland. Du har mottatt dette informasjonsarket fordi du har uttrykt interesse for å delta i denne studien. Før du bestemmer deg for å delta, er det viktig at du forstår formålet med denne studien og hva den innebærer. Vennligst les følgende informasjon nøye. Vi oppfordrer deg til å kontakte oss hvis noe er uklart eller du ønsker mer informasjon. Hensikten med denne studien er å forstå erfaringene og perspektivene som flyktningmor i Norge.

HVA INNEHOLDER DELTAGELSE I STUDIEET?

Jeg vil gjerne intervju deg om dine erfaringer som mor i Norge og dine perspektiver og meninger om norsk oppvekstsystem. Jeg vil gjerne snakke om hva du synes om dette og hva som har vært til hjelp i forbindelse med etablering og tilpasning til et nytt liv i Norge.

Mine hovedspørsmål er:

1. Hva betyr barneoppdragelsen for deg?
2. Hvordan opplevde du dette i hjemlandet ditt og hvordan opplever du i Norge?
3. Hva er likhetene og forskjellene i oppvekst mellom to land? Hvordan takler du disse?
4. Hva er fordelene og problemene du opplever i Norge som mor?

USN (Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge) er ansvarlig for personopplysninger som behandles i studien.

Denne studien består av to deler:

Del 1 innebærer et en-til-en-intervju, som varer ca. 60-90 minutter. Under intervjuet vil forskeren stille deg spørsmål om dine erfaringer med barneoppdragelse og foreldreskap i Norge, dets innvirkning på deg som person. Foreldre kan være et sensitivt tema, og det kan vekke vanskelige følelser. Hvis du ønsker å ta en pause på noe tidspunkt, vennligst informer intervjueren. Hvis du ønsker å stoppe og trekke din deltakelse fra studien, vennligst gi intervjueren beskjed.

Del 2 er et valgfritt element. Hvis du bestemmer deg for å delta i del 2, vil forskerteamet kontakte deg når de foreløpige resultatene av studien er klare (omtrent fem måneder etter intervjuet). Du vil bli bedt om å lese de foreløpige resultatene og delta på en oppfølgingssamtale med forskerteamet. Oppfølgingssamtalen forventes å vare mellom 30 og 45 minutter. Hensikten med

denne oppfølgingssamtalen er å heve kvaliteten på forskningsfunnene, ved å sikre at funnene gir gjenklang hos studiedeltakerne. Forskerteamet kan gjøre endringer i forskningsfunnene etter denne samtalen; dette er imidlertid ikke garantert. Hvis du bestemmer deg for å delta i denne valgfrie delen, vil forskerteamet kontakte deg maksimalt to ganger, for å informere deg om at de foreløpige forskningsfunnene er klare for vurdering. Hvis du ikke svarer på det andre kontaktforsøket, vil ikke forskningsteamet kontakte deg igjen om det.

HVORDAN SAMLER FORSKER IN DATA?

- Forsker vil samle inn data ved en-til-en intervju med en veiledning. Og hun vil også bruke observasjonsmetode.
- Forsker har valgt deg som deltaker etter snøballmetoden. Hun fikk informasjonen din fra en person du kjenner og tok kontakt med deg for din interesse. Du har vist din interesse for å delta i denne studien, og det er derfor jeg er her for å snakke med deg.
- Forsker vil skrive informasjonen du gir på notatboken, og hun vil spille inn stemmen din med din tillatelse. Skriftlige dokumenter og opptak av intervjuet vil bli slettet så snart prosjektet er over og vil ikke bli delt med noen.
- Forsker vil intervju noen andre deltakere og også samle inn data fra sekundære kilder; for eksempel avis, nettside, tidligere forskningsdata.

HVA SKJER MED INFORMASJONEN OM DEG?

Det er to mulige risikoer. Sannsynligheten for at disse risikoene oppstår er lav.

Foreldre er et sensitivt tema og intervju spørsmål kan vekke vanskelige følelser. Vi anbefaler at du bare deltar i denne studien hvis du føler deg følelsesmessig klar til å gjøre det.

Brudd på konfidensialitet: For formålet med denne forskningsstudien vil identiteten din være kjent for forskerteamet. Forskeren vil imidlertid gjøre sitt ytterste for å bevare din konfidensialitet, inkludert følgende:

Forskerteamet vil samle inn følgende direkte personopplysninger fra forskningsdeltakere: Telefonnummer og/eller e-postadresser. Vi vil også innhente, lagre og analysere indirekte personopplysninger, innhentet gjennom intervjuer og registrert i utskrifter. Intervjuutskrifter vil ikke inneholde direkte identifiserbar personlig informasjon, og all informasjon som med rimelighet kan forventes å føre til identifikasjon av deltakeren vil bli redigert under analysen. Direkte identifiserbare personopplysninger holdes atskilt fra utskrifter og kan kun kobles sammen via et eget kodeark. Kodearket vil bli lagret på en passordbeskyttet ekstern harddisk, som kun forskerteamet har tilgang til. All informasjon knyttet til forskningsdeltakere og intervjuer vil bli lagret på passordbeskyttede datamaskiner og vil kun være tilgjengelig for forskerteamet. Forskerteamet bruker bransjeledende programvare og skybaserte tjenester (Microsoft One Drive og Zoom).

Forskerteamet vil erstatte alle deltakernavn med pseudonymer. Forskning inneholder imidlertid alltid en gjenværende risiko. For eksempel kan en nær venn eller slektning gjenkjenne en

forskningsdeltaker til tross for vårt beste for å fjerne personlig informasjon, eller personlig identifiserbar informasjon kan lekke på grunn av teknologiske problemer. Du kan nekte å svare på noen eller alle intervju spørsmål, og du kan avslutte engasjementet ditt når som helst i løpet av forskningsprosjektet, uten negativ innvirkning. Vær oppmerksom på at du ikke vil kunne trekke deg fra forskningen etter resultatene har blitt publisert.

Personlig informasjon, som navn, alder, hvor du bor, adresse og andre slike detaljer vil ikke bli delt med noen andre. Det er bare jeg og mine veiledere som vil være klar over dette. Prosjektet er planlagt avsluttet 15. mai 2024. Opptak av intervjuet vil bli slettet så snart prosjektet er over. I det som er skrevet ned vil verken navnet ditt eller annen identifiserende informasjon om deg fremkomme. Navnet ditt vil derfor ikke stå i noen av dokumentene som skal skrives og ingen vil kunne kjenne deg igjen. Det som blir sagt i intervjuet vil ikke bli gitt videre til andre rundt deg, eller til myndighetene.

HVA GIR OSS RETT TIL Å BEHANDLE DINE PERSONOPPLYSNINGER?

Vi vil behandle dine personopplysninger basert på ditt samtykke.

Datatilsynet i Sikt – Etat for fellestjenester i utdanning og forskning har basert på avtale med Høgskolen i Sørøst-Norge vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet oppfyller krav i personvernlovgivningen.

FRIVILLIG DELTAKELSE OG DINE RETTIGHETER

Det er helt frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke tilbake samtykket ditt uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du trekker deg, vil all informasjon om deg bli slettet. Hvis du har spørsmål om denne studien, på et hvilket som helst tidspunkt, eller du opplever negativ påvirkning som følge av å delta i denne studien, kan du kontakte forskerne. Prosjektet er godkjent av NSD. Hvis du ønsker å delta eller har spørsmål om studien, vennligst kontakt meg

- Fahmida Hanif Ela, E-post: 250750@student.usn.no, Mobilnummer: 90936089

eller mine veiledere,

- Steffen Johannessen, E-post: steffen.f.johannessen@usn.no;
- Ellen Schrumpf, E-post: ellen.schrumpf@usn.no

Dine rettigheter:

så lenge du kan identifiseres i de innsamlede dataene, har du rett til:

- få tilgang til personopplysningene som behandles om deg
- be om at dine personopplysninger slettes
- be om at uriktige personopplysninger om deg blir rettet/rettet
- motta en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og
- sende en klage til datatilsynet angående behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

SAMTYKKE TIL DELTAKELSE I STUDIEN

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien og er villig til å delta

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Jeg er interessert i å delta kun i del én

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Jeg er interessert i å delta i begge deler av studien

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW GUIDELINE

SECTION I: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Participant's Gender

Which among the below items defines gender?

- Female Other Rather not say

Participant's Age

Which among the below items defines your age?

- 18-24 Years 24-30 Years 31-35 Years 36-40 Years
 41-45 Years 46-50 Years over 50 Years

Participant's Marital Status

Which among the following describes your current status? *

- Single Divorced
 Married Widow
 Engaged Prefer not to say

Education level

What is your current highest attained academic/educational level?

- High school/college Doctorate/PhD
 Bachelors Prefer not to say
 Masters

Nationality Status

Of the below items, kindly select only one distinct option

- Syrian National
 Ukrainian national
 Prefer not to say

Employability Situation/Status

Which among the below items offers the best description of your current employability state *

- Working/Employed Self-Employed
 Not working Prefer not to say

Family Member

How many members in your family?

Children

How many children do you have?

Children Ages

How old are your children?

0-5 6-10

11-15 15-18

Children Gender

Male (Number)

Female (Number)

Other (Number)

Rather not say (Number)

Relationship to child

Direct

Step

Adopted

Participants Religion

What is your religion?

Living in Norway

How many years are you living in Norway?

Place of Living

Which city do you currently live in?

Former living area

Where did you live in your home country?

SECTION II: UPBRINGING: PERCEPTIONS & PRACTICES

- How is the upbringing culture in your home country? Can you explain how you experienced in your childhood as girlchild? (Explore in-depth memories of how interviewees parents were perceived, degree and type of interaction. Gender role differences, responsibilities and duties of each parent, who else part of her childhood was, how the childhood and teenagerhood were, What the most important memories are from her childhood)
- What do you think is are the key duties and responsibilities of parents? What makes a good parent?
- (If you gave birth in your home country) How did you practice with your children when you were your home country?
- How do you express your love to your children? (Explore gender or age-based differences in types and strength of interaction and communication) (Prompt: physical contact, positive language/words, praising them to others, buying things, making favorite food, going out etc.)
- How do your children express affection and love for you? (Explore gender or age-based differences)
- What does “parent-child bonding” mean to you? Has this relationship changed because of your living condition?
- How open should parents be with children? How open should children be with parents? What are the things parents should talk with children and vice versa?
- What is unacceptable behavior for a child? - Describe how your parents managed unacceptable behavior at home or in public and how you as parent manage with your children now?
- What are some of the most important things (values, beliefs, concepts) that a child should learn from parents? What you learnt when you were child? How did your parents teach you these? What methods did they use? How do you teach your children now? What are the things you want to teach? (Prompt: Praise, discipline, firm words, respect, following laws)
- In what area did adults make decisions for you when you were child and in what areas did you make decisions for yourselves? In what area do you make decisions for your child and in what areas do they make decisions for themselves?
- Did you have responsibilities or duties growing up? What were those? What type of responsibilities do your children have and how they do these? (Prompt: towards parents/siblings/family etc.)
- What are the biggest similarities between your culture (values and beliefs) and the culture here in Norway? What are the biggest differences between your culture (values and beliefs) and the culture here in Norway? Limit to: children and parents’ roles, child rearing, family relations etc

- What are the things about upbringing you can still practice in Norway from your home country?
- What are the things about upbringing you cannot practice in Norway from your home country? If not, why?
- What are the new things about upbringing do you practice in Norway?
- What do you like most about upbringing in Norway? What do you not like or less like about upbringing in Norway? Why?
- your experience as a parent in Norway is similar/different from being a parent in your home country? In what ways has it changed? Prompt: social relationships and support, economic status, decision making, policy.
- How much “freedom” do you feel as a parent in Norway to raise your children the way you want to? Elaborate. (Explore how parents perceive Norwegian attitudes, beliefs, policies)
- What different types of support do you have (have received) in Norway that helps you in your role as a parent? (Prompt: municipality, social, individual, electronic etc.)
- What do you think about gender equal upbringing policy in Norway? Is it same or different from your home country?
- What are the challenges you feel about upbringing your children in Norway? What are challenges you feel upbringing according to two different cultures in Norway?
- Do you have any expectations about upbringing in Norway?
- Who takes decision about children most in family? Who took decision about children most in family in home country? (Explore duties and responsibilities of each parent, gender role differences)
- What do you expect your child to attain in the future? Future goals in terms of education, career, family formation, emotional stability and contentment. How you want to contribute?
- What your children do at home? A daily routine.
(According to conversation interviewer will probe. For example: What are their playing materials, Who help for household works, who help outside, What parents prefer, gender roles differences)

APPENDIX 4

DEL I: DEMOGRAFISK INFORMASJON

Deltakerens kjønn

Hvilken av elementene nedenfor definerer kjønn?

- Kvinne Annet Heller ikke si

Deltakerens alder

Hvilken av elementene nedenfor definerer din alder?

- 18-24 år 24-30 år
 31-35 år 36-40 år
 41-45 år 46-50 år
 over 50 år

Deltakerens sivilstand

Hvilken av følgende beskriver din nåværende status? *

- Singel
 Gift
 Forlovet
 Skilt
 Enke
 Foretrekker å ikke si

Utdanningsnivå

Hva er ditt nåværende høyeste oppnådde akademiske/utdanningsnivå?

- Videregående skole/høyskole
 Bachelor
 Master
 Doktorgrad
 Foretrekker å ikke si

Nasjonalitetsstatus

Av elementene nedenfor, vennligst velg bare ett distinkt alternativ

- Syrisk
 Ukrainsk

Foretrekker å ikke si

Ansettelsesevne Situasjon/status

Hvilken av elementene nedenfor gir den beste beskrivelsen av din nåværende ansettelsesevne *

Arbeidende/Sett Selvstendig næringsdrivende

Har ikke jobb Foretrekker å ikke si

Familiemedlem

Hvor mange medlemmer i familien din?

Barn

Hvor mange barn har du?

Barn Alder

Hvor gamle er dine barn?

0-5 6-10

11-15 15-18

Barn Kjønn

Mann (Antall)

Kvinne (antall)

Annet (Antall)

Si heller ikke (nummer)

Forhold til barn

Direkte

Steg

Adoptert

Deltakere Religion

Hva er din religion?

Bor i Norge

Hvor mange år bor du i Norge?

Bosted

Hvilken by bor du i nå?

Tidligere oppholdsrom

Hvor bodde du i hjemlandet ditt?

DEL II: OPPFORDRING: PERSEPSJON OG PRAKSIS

- Hvordan er oppvekstkulturen i ditt hjemland? Kan du forklare hvordan du opplevde det i barndommen som jente? (Utforsk dybdeminner om hvordan intervjuobjektene foreldre ble oppfattet, grad og type samhandling. Kjønsrolleforskjeller, ansvar og plikter til hver forelder, hvem annen del av barndommen hennes var, hvordan barndommen og tenåringen var, Hva de viktigste minnene er fra hennes barndom)
- Hva mener du er foreldrenes viktigste plikter og ansvar? Hva gjør en god forelder?
- (Hvis du fødte i hjemlandet ditt) Hvordan praktiserte du med barna dine da du var hjemlandet?
- Hvordan uttrykker du din kjærlighet til barna dine? (Utforsk kjønns- eller aldersbaserte forskjeller i type og styrke av samhandling og kommunikasjon) (Spørsmål: fysisk kontakt, positivt språk/ord, rose dem til andre, kjøpe ting, lage favorittmat, gå ut osv.)
- Hvordan uttrykker barna dine hengivenhet og kjærlighet til deg? (Utforsk kjønns- eller aldersbaserte forskjeller)
- Hva betyr «foreldre-barn-binding» for deg? Har dette forholdet endret seg på grunn av levekåren din?
- Hvor åpne bør foreldre være med barn? Hvor åpne skal barn være med foreldre? Hva er de tingene foreldre bør snakke med barn og omvendt?
- Hva er uakseptabel oppførsel for et barn? – Beskriv hvordan foreldrene dine klarte uakseptabel oppførsel hjemme eller offentlig og hvordan du som forelder klarer deg med barna dine nå?
- Hva er noen av de viktigste tingene (verdier, tro, begreper) som et barn bør lære av foreldre? Hva lærte du da du var barn? Hvordan lærte foreldrene dine deg disse? Hvilke metoder brukte de? Hvordan lærer du barna dine nå? Hva er tingene du ønsker å lære bort? (Prompt: Ros, disiplin, faste ord, respekt, følge lover)
- På hvilket område tok voksne beslutninger for deg da du var barn, og på hvilke områder tok du avgjørelser for deg selv? På hvilket område tar du avgjørelser for barnet ditt og på hvilke områder tar de avgjørelser for seg selv?
- Hadde du ansvar eller plikter i oppveksten? Hva var det? Hvilken type ansvar har barna dine og hvordan de utfører disse? (Forespørsel: overfor foreldre/søsken/familie osv.)

- Hva er de største likhetene mellom din kultur (verdier og tro) og kulturen her i Norge? Hva er de største forskjellene mellom din kultur (verdier og tro) og kulturen her i Norge? Begrens til: barn og foreldres roller, barneoppdragelse, familieforhold osv
- Hva er det med oppvekst du fortsatt kan praktisere i Norge fra hjemlandet ditt?
- Hva er det med oppvekst du ikke kan praktisere i Norge fra hjemlandet ditt? Hvis ikke, hvorfor?
- Hva er det nye med oppvekst praktiserer du i Norge?
- Hva liker du best med oppveksten i Norge? Hva liker du ikke eller mindre med oppveksten i Norge? Hvorfor?
- din erfaring som forelder i Norge er lik/forskjellig fra å være forelder i hjemlandet? På hvilke måter har det endret seg? Spørsmål: sosiale relasjoner og støtte, økonomisk status, beslutningstaking, politikk.
- Hvor stor «frihet» føler du som forelder i Norge til å oppdra barna dine slik du vil? Utdype. (Utforsk hvordan foreldre oppfatter norske holdninger, tro, politikk)
- Hvilke ulike typer støtte har du (har mottatt) i Norge som hjelper deg i rollen som forelder? (Prompt: kommune, sosial, individuell, elektronisk osv.)
- Hva tenker du om likestilt oppvekstpolitikk i Norge? Er det likt eller forskjellig fra hjemlandet ditt?
- Hvilke utfordringer føler du med å oppdra barna dine i Norge? Hvilke utfordringer opplever du som oppdragelse i henhold til to ulike kulturer i Norge?
- Har du noen forventninger til oppvekst i Norge?
- Hvem bestemmer mest om barn i familien? Hvem tok avgjørelsen om barn mest i familien i hjemlandet? (Utforsk plikter og ansvar for hver forelder, kjønnsrolleforskjeller)
- Hva forventer du at barnet ditt skal oppnå i fremtiden? Fremtidige mål når det gjelder utdanning, karriere, familiedannelse, følelsesmessig stabilitet og tilfredshet. Hvordan ønsker du å bidra?
- Hva gjør barna dine hjemme? En daglig rutine. (I følge samtalen vil intervjueren undersøke. For eksempel: Hva er deres spillemateriell, Hvem hjelper til med husarbeid, hvem hjelper utenfor, Hva foreldre foretrekker, kjønnsrolleforskjeller)

APPENDIX 5

TRANSLATOR/INTERPRETER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

UPBRINGING IN NORWAY: VOICE OF REFUGEE MOTHERS AND THEIR WAY

I, _____ [name of RA], agree to assist the primary investigator with this study by translating and facilitating communication between the researcher and participants. I agree to maintain full confidentiality when performing these tasks.

Specifically, I agree to:

1. keep all research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than the primary investigator.
2. hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be revealed during the course of performing the research tasks.
3. not make copies of any raw data in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts), unless specifically requested to do so by the primary investigator.
4. keep all raw data that contains identifying information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) secure while it is in my possession. This includes:
 - keeping all digitized raw data in computer password-protected files and other raw data in a locked file.
 - closing any computer programs and documents of the raw data when temporarily away from the computer.
 - permanently deleting any e-mail communication containing the data; and
 - using closed headphones if transcribing recordings.
5. give, all raw data in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) to the primary investigator when I have completed the research tasks.
6. destroy all research information in any form or format that is not returnable to the primary investigator (e.g., information stored on my computer hard drive) upon completion of the research tasks.

Printed name of translator/interpreter: _____

Signature of translator/interpreter / Date: _____

Printed name of primary investigator:

Signature of primary investigator / Date: _____

Norway: Refugee mothers' voices and their way

Responsible for the project

UiT - The Arctic University of Norway / Fakultet for humaniora, idrett- og utdanningsvitenskap / Institutt for kultur, religion og samfunnsfag

Østmannsgaten 15
0407 Stamsund

2024

2024

Personal data

Under the EU Data Protection Regulation art. 6 nr. 1 a) Explicit consent and Data Protection Regulation art. 9 nr. 2 a)

The processing of personal data is lawful, so long as it is carried out as stated in the notification form. The legal basis is valid until 15.05.2024



ASSESSMENT

UiT The Arctic University of Norway has an agreement with the institution where you are a student or a researcher. As part of this agreement, we provide the processing of personal data in your project is lawful and complies with data protection legislation. We have now assessed that your processing of personal data is lawful.

We have also assessed that your processing of special categories of personal data about ethnicity, political beliefs and religious beliefs is lawful.

INSTITUTION'S GUIDELINES

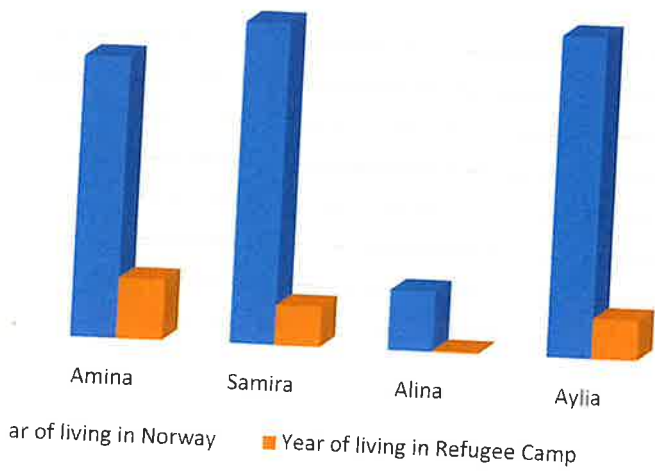
UiT The Arctic University of Norway will ensure that the collected data is stored and secure in accordance with your institution's guidelines. This means that you must use data processing tools that UiT The Arctic University of Norway has an agreement with (i.e. cloud storage, online survey, and video conferencing).

UiT The Arctic University of Norway presupposes that the project will meet the requirements of accuracy (art. 5.1 d), integrity and confidentiality (art. 5.1 f) and security of personal data.

CHANGES

If you want to make changes to the processing of personal data in this project, it may be necessary to notify us. This is done by updating the Notification Form. On our website we explain which changes must be notified. Wait until you receive an answer from us at <https://sikt.no/en/notify-changes-notification-form>

od in the homeland orway	Memories before Norway	Memories
ildhood notherhood (parenthood)	Perception of childhood and parenthood	Perceptions and Practices
: onsibility	Parents-child relationship: Practices	
anguage, Norwegian Education, ocial studies, Earning source, rk, Acceptances	Important things in Norway	Current Experiences
nd expectation-related job rom host re not friendly and warm nd Norwegian friends onsibilities	Difficulties they face	
ion system emes in the welfare state	Satisfaction they found	
rotection system, losing own racticing and(-or) losing own andards, losing bonding and dged by the host culture elpless mothers from extended r never going back?	Dilemma they have	



APPENDIX 9

ly Members of Participants

LY MEMBERS OF PARTICIPANTS

