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'DIVERSE SIMILARITIES'

Early childhood care and education in Norway: Perspectives from immigrant parents and teachers

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at analyzing diversity in child upbringing practices and institutionalized Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in Norway. In view of the increased number of immigrants in the country, the study explores immigrant parents' early childhood experiences (out of Norway) and that of their children who are being raised in Norway. It also captures parents' expectations and experiences with Norwegian barnehager, which are the Norwegian equivalent of institutionalized child upbringing or ECEC. Thus, the perspectives and experiences of barnehage teachers in relation to values and learning goals during early childhood are also presented and discussed in this study.

Fieldwork was carried out in one Norwegian city with parents and barnehage teachers as key respondents. Empirical data was co-generated through interviews and focus group discussions over a period of four months. The theoretical perspectives on childhood that informed this study include; the social construction of childhood and parenthood; socialization theory, and children's rights. These perspectives attempt to explain parents' choices in child upbringing practices, children's participation in institutionalized early childhood care and learning and the care and learning values emphasized in the different societies 'represented' in this study.

Empirical data from the study revealed that most parents, especially from the global south experienced a rather different kind of child upbringing from that of children in Norway. Although most parents were eager to pass on the same early childhood care and learning values emphasized by their parents, they were also appreciative of most care and learning values emphasized in the Norwegian society. Thus, some were happy to combine values from both their non-Norwegian and Norwegian societies.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACRWC - The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

ECEC – Early Childhood Education and Care

FPCTK – The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens

NAV – Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration

NOK – Norwegian Krones

OECD – The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

OHCHR – Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

UNCRC – United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> On account of geographic mobility and increasing internationalization, Norwegian society is far more diverse than it was in the past. There are now many ways of being Norwegian. ("The Framework Plan," 2012, pp. 7-8)

Statistics has shown that the immigrant[1] population of Norway has increased annually since the year 2007 and this has had implications in regard to the cultural composition of Norway. Consequently, the nature and dynamics of early childhood care and learning have increasingly involved integration of diversity in Norwegian Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) institutions. Commonly referred to as barnehager[2], these institutions play an important role in child care and learning in Norway. The aim of this study therefore, is to get knowledge about different child upbringing practices in Norway, including the actions and perspectives of both parents and barnehage teachers aimed at early childhood care and learning. Thus participants in this study include ten parents from six different countries namely; Zambia, China, Germany, Indonesia, Rwanda and the Netherlands; and four teachers from Norway, India and Germany.

Based on perspectives from Social Studies of children and childhood, the research posits that if agents of child upbringing (parents and kindergarten teachers) understand that (early) childhood care and learning practices are socially constructed, then integration and inclusion of especially non-Norwegian children into the society could be made easier. And the phrase 'socially constructed' simply means that various social contexts have different ideas about childhood, children and their needs, as I will present further in the third chapter.

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[1] In this study, the term 'immigrant' and 'non-Norwegian' will be used inter-changeably because it refers to persons either born to non-Norwegian parents and/or born outside Norway.

2 Barnehage(r) = "A direct translation of the German word Kindergarten (Barn = Kinder, hage = garten). A common term for different types of Early Childhood Education and Care/Early Childhood Care and Education (ECEC/ECCE) under the provisions of the Norwegian Kindergarten Act, covering the age group 0–5 years". ("Kindergarten Act" 2015, p.1) Hence throughout this report, I will use this term interchangeably with formal or institutionalized ECEC, day care center (s) and kindergarten (s). And the term 'learning' will mostly be preferred to the term 'education' in order to depict both institutionalized and home based child upbringing.

Areas of research include values, beliefs, norms and practices perceived as essential for an 'ideal' early childhood period. What do parents and teachers expect the children to learn during the first three years both at home and at the barnehage? What are the forms of care children need for 'proper' holistic growth and development? Are there differences or similarities in the way these are perceived in various cultural, social, religious or national settings? How then do barnehager and homes work towards inclusion and integration of diversity into the Norwegian society?

Previous research about cultural differences in child upbringing and children's participation in ECEC includes; Ways in which non-Norwegian parents respond to barnehage outdoor activities during the winter season (See for example, Marion, 2013); how children's rights in kindergarten are upheld in everyday activities (Bae, 2010); Norwegian policies to aimed at providing universal and quality ECEC (Ellingsæter, 2014) and how outdoor life is linked to dynamics of institutionalization of childhood, children's right to participation, and the Norwegian culture (For example Nilsen, 2008; Nilsen 2012; and Aasen, Grindheim & Waters, 2009) among other research literature.

More research from especially the fields of psychology and education regarding ECEC have focused on matters concerning quality of care at home vis a vis care in day care centers: for example Datler, Ereky-Stevens, Hover-Reisner & Malmberg (2012); Ahnert, Gunnar, Lamb & Barthel (2004) on children's transition to child care in relation to infant-mother attachment; Shpancer, (2002) on 'The home-day care link'; Thelen & Haukanes (2010) in 'Parenting after the century of the child: travelling ideals, institutional negotiations and individual responses' and Lauritsen (2013) in the book, 'Cultural Complexity and Border Markers in Norwegian Kindergartens' among others.

Thus, this study is a contribution to discussions about parenting and child upbringing from a social constructionist point of view. It specifically looks at perspectives of immigrant parents and barnehage teachers regarding their experience with diversity in ECEC in Norway. Focus is also

placed on how inclusion[3] and social equality[4], values stipulated in the Framework plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens [5](FPCTK) are promoted in kindergartens. This study presumes that teachers' understanding of how children and childhood are perceived in different cultures is a means of enhancing inclusion and integration of especially one to three year old children into the Norwegian society.

Thus, if the views of parents aired out during meetings and dialogues between them and teachers are included in the planning process of barnehager activities, then implementation will reflect inclusion and equality in children's lives. Although children are not direct or key informants in this study, their lives are being viewed through the eyes of adults (parents and teachers) who observe them on an almost daily basis.

My inspiration for choosing this topic emanates from the fact that my childhood experience (between 0-6 years) in terms of care and learning differs, to a great extent, from that of children I have encountered in Norway. Love and care is shown in a manner different from that in my own childhood context, and the perceptions of an ideal childhood varies in a number of ways. In Norway these are shown through words and touch; including good night kisses and bedtime stories. Deliberate efforts are made towards applauding personal achievements like assembling parts of a toy; and freedom of choice and expression of emotions is evident. Hence autonomy (subject to diverse interpretations) is emphasized as early in childhood as possible.

From my observation among both Norwegian and non-Norwegian friends over the past 15 months, children in Norway learn to be independent or autonomous at 8 months or earlier since the parents prepare a separate bed and room for them. This is different from my childhood setting where children and parents could share a room and even a bed until the child was about three years old; even then, after leaving the parents' bed, two or three siblings would share the same

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3 UNESCO defines inclusion "as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children through increasing participation in play and learning activities, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education (ECEC)" (Arnesen, 2014)

4 "Kindergartens shall provide an environment in which different individuals and different cultural expressions meet with respect for their differences" ("The Framework Plan," 2012, p. 20)

5More about the The Framework Plan for the Content of Kindergartens is included in chapter three.

bed because space and money for extra beds was a luxury hardly affordable for the greater part of my childhood.

Regarding love and affection, my mother showed love through 'strictness' because she believed that a 'bright' future depended on taking the wise counsel of elders seriously. Elders often admonished me to study hard but at the same time ensuring to help out with house chores (including doing the dishes, collecting water from the spring, sweeping the compound, buying groceries from the store) and respecting home curfews instead of playing till dark among other things. In fact, returning home with injuries resulting from 'reckless' playing sometimes earned me a beating; hence the kinds of games or play activities were sometimes regulated depending on what was deemed safe or unsafe for girls and boys. My dad, being the parent that was away for work most of the day, was 'less strict' and mostly used words to rebuke acts of disobedience; hence, mother took up most of the responsibility for 'active' care and learning. In my view, it was generally a very protective kind of childhood.

Furthermore, being an extended family, child care and learning (exclusively in a home setting) was offered by a range of people and not just the two parents as I have observed in Norway. It is common even today, for Ugandan families to have a teenage relative or older lady to babysit children (in form of both paid and unpaid work). In my case, I was mostly baby sat by my mother's relatives (I am told), including her sisters, brothers and cousins. We often had one or more relatives living with us either on a long-term visit or purposely to take care of us (the younger three, aged 2-6 years) when the older siblings were at school. They fed, played with, bathed and put us to sleep. I especially loved the moments of role play and listening to folk tales that involved singing.

With a relatively big number of relatives available therefore, neither I nor the siblings before me attended any day care center or kindergarten, hence institutionalized ECEC was not a child care and learning option. Furthermore, the fact that we were slam dwellers was proof that my family struggled with finances and probably could not afford kindergarten fees. My family of two parents, six children and a regular 'in-flow' of relatives inhabited a rather small one bed-roomed apartment in the capital city. But of course, I only became aware of the state of our condition

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when I was a teenager and my family was doing much better financially. Otherwise, I basically remember my childhood as the most playful and exciting period of my life; and with lots of children in the neighborhood, it was the norm to play "till the cows come home"[6].

I do not however assume that my experience was the same as that of other immigrants; hence, this study aims at generating knowledge about the experiences of parents from Germany, Rwanda, Zambia, Indonesia, China and the Netherlands. Past childhood experiences of parents were worth studying because I think that these influence parents' choice of child upbringing. All parents in this study have children participating in barnehager so their expectations and experiences regarding the barnehager are presented and discussed.

1.1 Objectives and research questions

The field of social studies of children and childhood has shown that the concepts, childhood and children are socially constructed and cannot be limited to a single definition or perspective;

> There is not one childhood, but many, formed at the intersection of different cultural, social and economic systems, natural and man-made physical environments. Different positions in society produce different experiences. (Frones 1993 and cited by James & Prout, 2015, p. xiv)

The perspective on childhood given above understands childhood as a social construction rather than a period based on a biological make up of human beings. A more detailed account of perspectives on childhood and children will be presented and discussed in the chapter on theoretical framework.

The objectives of this study are;

1. To get knowledge about care and learning values (as perceived by parents) in parents' childhood in the past and in that of their children today
2. To get knowledge about parents' expectations and experiences with child care and learning in Norwegian barnehager

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6 A presumably Scottish saying meaning 'for a long time' or 'non-stop'

3. To investigate childcare and learning values as perceived by barnehager teachers and teachers' experiences with child upbringing among non-Norwegian families

4. To get knowledge about ways in which teachers and parents enhance integration and inclusion of diversity in Norwegian barnehager.

The main research question is;

- *"How do parents and barnehage teachers perceive early childhood care and learning?"*

Sub-questions include;

o What are the experiences (differences and similarities) with care and learning during the parents' own childhood in the past and that of their children today?

o What are parents' expectations of, and experiences with barnehager which their children attend?

o What care and learning values are emphasized in the barnehager and how do teachers describe their experience with care and learning among immigrant families?

o In what ways do teachers and parents enhance integration and inclusion of diversity in the barnehager?

The research question(s) will be discussed from a social-constructionist perspective for reasons partly mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Qualitative interviews and a focus group discussion were used for data co-generation. These methods were preferred not only because of the qualitative nature of the research project, but also the appropriateness of these methods in relation to the fieldwork time-frame and the participant composition. More on methodology will be further discussed in chapter four. The research sample comprised ten parents from six different countries and four barnehage teachers from three different countries.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

The master thesis comprises seven chapters, this being the first with an introduction to the entire report. The second chapter describes child upbringing and ECEC policies in Norway; but also in countries that some of the participants originate from. Chapter three is a presentation of the

theoretical perspectives and concepts that informed the study; and this is followed by a chapter on methodology in which I describe all aspects that influenced the study. That is, right from choosing of the topic and participants, to the actual data collection experience in the field, and the process of data interpretation and analysis. Chapter five and six include interpretation and analysis of empirical data; which are followed by the final chapter with concluding remarks and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In this chapter I will provide an insight into forms of childcare and child upbringing services in Norway. Herein, I will present relevant research and literature about policies regarding Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and other alternative forms of childcare available to parents with children aged one to three years. An in-depth discussion on kindergartens in Norway will also be used to illuminate the place and vitality of institutionalized ECEC (barnehager) in Norway.

2.1 Barnehager

Childcare forms and policies in Norway are considered, on a worldwide scale, to be attractive and even linked to steadily rising fertility rates as compared to other comparable countries (Rønsen, 2004). One form of childcare in Norway is quality and universal ECEC (barnehager). According to Slot (2014), on a global scale, but especially in Western industrialized countries, most children during their early years attend some form of (institutionalized) ECEC before starting [primary] school. The family is perceived to be responsible for creating a secure basis for affectionate and supportive social relationships on which the ECEC can build further (ibid.).

To elaborate more on the place of ECEC in Norway, Aasen et al. note that "in Norway the kindergarten is an early years setting catering for the educational and care needs of children from birth to 6 years or age" (Aasen et al., 2009, 6). And for children aged 1-3 years, various factors influence their parents' choice of whether or not to utilize kindergarten services. An alternative form of child care known as cash-for-care[7] which targets 1 year olds is available for children whose parents would prefer to delay participation in barnehager until their children are two years old. Whichever alternative the parents take, the reasons may include parental preference or judgement, sometimes associated with the social-economic status or ethnic background (see for example, Brandth & Kvande, 2015).

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7 A monthly benefit, currently NOK 6000 per child, received by care providers with children younger than two years, who do not attend kindergarten full time. It facilitates and alternative choice of child care, such that one of the parents can stay at home. (Leira 1998; Berge & Strøm 2015; "Child benefit," 2015)

Aside from being pedagogical entities, barnehager also take care of 0-5year old children while their parents are at work, hence making barnehager a means for equality (in the labor-market) between the genders ("Early childhood," 2014).

At the end of 2014, approximately 90 percent of children aged 1 to 5 years had attended barnehager. 97 percent of these were aged 3 to 5 years while 80 percent were aged between 1 to 2 years (Bjørkli & Moafi, 2015).

Norway, according to Andersen (2012), takes keen interest in children's welfare by offering generous parental leaves, leaves of absence from the work place to attend to a sick child, prioritizing children's kindergarten pick up times over work and full childcare entitlement in a kindergarten for every child as early as one year of age.

> The philosophy in Norway is that children are an integral part of society. This, [as suggested earlier,] is also closely linked with a drive for higher female participation in the workforce. [Thus,] there is general political consensus that the pre-primary sector is vital and needs to be expanded. [And] an important element of this social agreement is that childcare fees should be affordable. (Andersen, 2012, p. 1)

Norway's strategy for universal ECEC to enhance gender equality at the work place also caters for affordability of barnehage participation fees. On average, the minimum-monthly contribution from parents towards municipal kindergartens is NOK 1 656, while the average maximum rate is NOK 2 471 (Scheistrøen & Rønneberg, 2015). The nature of barnehager in Norway however vary as elaborated below.

2.1.1 Types of barnehager

Apart from "barnehager", also referred to as ordinary kindergartens of both public and private establishment, Norway also has *naturbanehager* (nature day care centers) whose activities entirely take place outdoors as compared to other day care centers. The third type referred to as *familienbarnehager* or family kindergartens are established in private homes and supervised weekly by a qualified kindergarten teacher. The fourth type falls under the category of open or drop-in centers where both parents and children can attend and these are led by a qualified

kindergarten teacher (Engel & Barnett, 2015). All the types mentioned ascribe to purposes and content stipulated by the government as presented below.

2.1.2 Purpose and content of barnehager

The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens, 2011 and the Kindergarten Act 2005 provide directives for municipalities and kindergartens to establish and run kindergarten activities.

The purpose of barnehager, according to both the Kindergarten Act and the FPCTK, is to ensure a home-barnehage cooperation which is aimed at safeguarding "children's need for care and play, and promote learning and education as a basis for comprehensive development" ("Kindergarten Act," 2005). The act stipulates that municipalities are responsible for establishment and running of adequate numbers of kindergartens so that every child is guaranteed a place on application ("Early childhood," 2014). Sections 12 and 13 of chapter four (IV) of the Kindergarten Act 2005, authorize municipalities to approve kindergartens which meet the purpose for barnehager. The sections also provide guidelines on how admissions to kindergarten are to be carried out ("Early childhood," 2014).

In connection to section 2 of the Kindergarten Act, the FPCTK, in a more detailed manner, stipulates the contents that kindergartens should offer and what role to play.

> The social role of kindergartens is to offer pre-school children a care and educational environment that benefits each child. They should provide both education and a public service to the parents of young children. ("The Framework Plan," 2012, p. 7)

Values that the kindergarten is mandated to uphold include respect for human dignity as the cornerstone of the rest of the values; "everyone's right to be different" including culturally and religiously; human equality, freedom of thought, compassion and forgiveness as a reflection of what the Norwegian society aspires for ("The Framework Plan," 2012, p. 16).

> Kindergartens shall support and put into account individual children, whilst also looking after the common interests of children, […] increase opportunities that children have to

learn and to participate actively in a peer group, […] promote good health and prevent illness, and shall help to ensure social equality. ("The Framework Plan," 2012, p. 7)

Thus, staff are generally responsible for ensuring inclusion of all children and enhance a feeling of belongingness regardless of their differences. Children's age groups, their cultural, religious and belief-related backgrounds of their homes are to be taken into account in ethical guidance by kindergartens; making sure that the children do not have to deal with conflicting loyalty between their home and the kindergarten. Staff should therefore align personal and professional values to those stipulated in the FPCTK. "[They] must work to strike a balance between respecting parents' priorities and safeguarding children's rights and the fundamental common values to which kindergartens are committed" ("The Framework Plan," 2012, p. 16).

Furthermore, "in order to ensure collaboration with the children's homes, each kindergarten shall have a parents' council and a coordinating committee" (kindergarten Act, Section 4, Parents council and coordinating committee as cited in the "The Framework Plan," 2012, p.16) Parents hence have the primary role of child upbringing as stipulated in article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child ("Convention on the Rights of the Child", 1996); kindergartens only play a supplementary role. The article suggests that collaboration entails the efforts of both parties in maintaining regular communication with each other regarding information on how to ensure the wellbeing and development of the children.

2.1.3 Quality in barnehager

Quality of childcare has many aspects such as standards of hygiene and safety, staff-to-child ratios and the size of groups, parent involvement and compliance with certain educational policies, sometimes laid down in a 'curriculum', which are key factors for regulating quality, qualifications, training and remuneration of childcare staff. ("Quality of childcare," 2010)

The Kindergarten Act-2005 of Norway spells out all the standard procedures and recommendations related to provision of quality services in barnehager. To break this down, Engel and Barnett (2015) categorize quality in kindergartens into three, namely; structural

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quality, process quality and orientation quality. Where structural quality is measured in terms of class or group size, teacher-child ratios, formal staff qualification levels and materials provided by the kindergarten. Process quality is measured in terms of pedagogical interactions between teachers and children, among children and the interactions of children with the space and materials in the barnehage, and finally interaction between staff and parents. "Orientation quality" is measured by the attitudes towards learning, pedagogical beliefs and education values of the teachers.

Process quality is said to have direct effect on children's learning and development while structural quality indirectly impacts through the factors in process quality. Structural quality is thus supposed to enhance process quality. For instance, the right teacher-child ratios ("pedagogical norm") will enhance good interactions stipulated in the process quality. One teacher is assigned 7-9 children under 3 years 16-18 children per teacher for those aged over 3 years (Engel & Barnett, 2015) because "closer supervision and care matter more for the younger children than the older ones" ("Encouraging Quality," 2011, p. 1).

In Norway, kindergarten teachers' qualification level is attained by a three-year vocational training in kindergarten teacher education with a written bachelor thesis and 100 days practical training. Although some of teaching assistants in barnehager are not qualified in the ECEC field (in 2013, only 37.5 percent kindergarten work force was qualified), efforts have been made to increase the number of qualified staff through seminars, workshops, online training and onsite mentoring (Engel & Barnett, 2015). Thus according to Bjørkli and Moafi (2015), in 2014, 93,800 persons had employment in kindergartens and 90 percent of both directors and assistants had pre-school teacher education. Thus, the emphasis placed on quality in barnehager for whatever reason, also suggests that the level of commitment from the Norwegian government towards ECEC is substantial.

According to Ødegaard (2012), learning in barnehager is child-centered in that children influence the daily activities through an expression of interest in various topics or areas, including narrations about something they have watched on the television; and most of such learning takes place through play such that care, learning and play are interconnected (ibid.). Learning areas

include communication, language and text; body, movement and health; art, culture and creativity; nature, environment and technology; ethics, religion and philosophy; local community and society; numbers, spaces and shapes. The teachers and staff have a mandate to create and maintain an environment in which children can achieve these learning goals during their participation at the barnehage ("Early childhood," 2014).

2.2 Diversity in Norway's population

As briefly mentioned in the introduction chapter, Norway's population has become diversified due to increased geographical mobility and internationalization.
In 2014 alone, the number of foreign citizens moving to Norway was 61 400, and two thirds of these were European citizens, with Polish, Lithuanian and Swedish citizens making up half of the European immigration. And since 2007, employment is noted to be the main reason for such European immigration. Non-European citizens constituted a total of 21,900, most of which were refugees with one third coming from Eritrea, Syria, Somalia and Afghanistan (Rustad, 2015). Commonly, reasons for immigration to Norway include education, family, work and refuge. And some, especially from Nordic and some European countries, the reason may not be specified as they do not need to give one when they cross the borders (Østby, 2015).

Statistics as on June 18, 2015 show even more increase; the total of persons resident in Norway with immigrant background, including those born in Norway to immigrant parents (669,000) and those that immigrated to Norway (136,000) was 805,000. Thus making up 15.6 percent of the entire population which includes persons with backgrounds from 222 different countries and autonomous regions the largest groups coming from Poland, Sweden and Lithuania. And reasons for immigration include; family (36 percent), work (33 percent), asylum (19 percent) and education accounting for 10 percent (Pettersen, 2015).

Regarding the child-composition of immigrants in Norway, literature that I came across hardly indicated specific statistics on 1-3 year olds. However it suggested that most children aged 0-9 years are from Europe, North America and so on even though immigration from these regions is the lowest (Østby, 2015). In 2012, one in every four new born babies had a mother who was an immigrant (Pettersen, 2015). Bjørkli and Moafi (2015) note that as at the end of 2014, the

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number of children with immigrant backgrounds was shown to have increased from 37,600 in 2009 to 41,000 in 2014 which is also 75 percent of all 'immigrant' children that fall under the ages 1-5 years. Some children are however born here and did not necessarily immigrate with their parents. Thus, "immigrant population" refers to all persons whether born in Norway or abroad having two foreign parents (Cooper, 2015).

2.2.1 Migration policies in Norway

Since no community remains isolated forever, aspects of neighboring communities always find their way across the "borders" (Rogoff, 2003). According to Sandelson (2014), although the government of Norway admits that diversity in the population is good for economic growth, immigration is becoming increasingly restricted through great scrutiny of reasons for immigration. More consideration is being given to asylum seekers whose lives are deemed to be under threat and job seekers with high qualifications essential for the economic sector of the country.

Principles guiding Norway's migrant policies, according to Cooper (2005), include; firstly, that immigration must be limited and secondly that all immigrants that get admitted into Norway ought to have equal legal and practical opportunities. He further adds though, that the second principle linked to integration has taken several forms over the years since 1970, including the ruling that immigrants have a right to their own language and culture; then next we see significant demand for immigrants to learn Norwegian, and over the years (through the 1990s), integration was also defined by labor market integration.

2.3 Other childcare/upbringing practices

Considering the diversity in Norway's population, it cannot be denied that different socio-cultural orientations and ideas about ECEC or child upbringing exist. Such ideas are usually influenced by socio-economic and political arrangements in the society. Hence the ways in which parents interpret the needs ('best interests') of children and how they respond to, and meet those

needs depends for the most part, on their social, economic, and/or political capability (Bradly and Corwyn, 2005; Keller and Lamm, 2005).

Among other basic needs like food, healthcare, shelter and clothing, children's social needs in most societies are embedded in socialization practices. The perception that adults have is that if their children are to either compete favorably or thrive in society, then they need to learn the societal norms. Norms could range from those regarding social responsibility, social interactions and relationships, etiquette, autonomy and interdependence among other things. And it is important to note that these practices and norms vary from one society to another, hence impacting children childhood in various ways. I will elaborate more about socialization and other perspectives on childhood and children in the theory chapter. First, I would like to outline some country-specific child upbringing practices.

2.3.1 Childhood in Norway and the global North

In the global North[8], ('modern') childhood is "seen as a period of play and learning lived within the frame of emotionally bonded nuclear family" (Cunningham, 1995, Montgomery, 2009, Wicki 2008 and cited in Thelen & Haukanes, 2010 p. 12); "a period with a lack of responsibility and freedom from work" (Montgomery 2009, 53) with adults assuming full responsibility for care and learning. To place my focus more specifically, I will present some literature and observations global-north countries of interest to this study, including; Norway, the Netherlands and Germany.

As statistics have shown, so have I observed over the past eighteen months that most children aged one to two years usually receive care and learning from both home and barnehage because most parents (both Norwegian and immigrant residents) participate in the labor market or have full-time admission for studies. Food and eating practices are part of child upbringing for the parents. Care usually involves adequate or regular feeding up to four meals a day with fruit

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8 'The global North' and 'global South' are phrases used to show economic inequalities (not in geographical division) between 'rich' and 'poor' countries. Some authors may opt for; 'the North'/'the South'; First/third world; developed/less developed and Minority/majority world where majority means that the greatest percentage of the world is poor and dependent on a few rich regions or the minority world. (Rigg 2007)

snacks in between; adequate sleep of one to two hours in the day and twelve hours at night and appropriate dressing according to the weather. Parents aim at making the children feel loved and confident in themselves (See also, Chao, 2000). Learning takes place through both indoor and outdoor playing, feeding of self, sleeping by self, child-child and child-adult relationship building with great emphasis on respecting other people's 'space'.

The aspect of outdoor play, Nilsen (2008) argues, is greatly emphasized due to the belief that many families are losing "touch" with nature; a part of life which was originally engraved in the very culture of Norwegian people.

Figure 1: A family out hiking in the woods

Gullestad argues that;

> To be in nature is both a question of flora and fauna and a question of climate and seasons. Nature makes both the body and soul hardier, and fresh air gives new strength. Nature trains independence and the ability to cope in the wild. Nature offers harmony and peace of mind and distance from the hustle and bustle of society […]. This is how Norwegian men and women think, and to a greater or lesser degree this marks the upbringing of their children […]. (Gullestad, 1992: 204 cited in Nilsen, 2008, p. 53)

Hence, introducing outdoor activities through childcare agents like barnehager is a way of sustaining the Norwegian culture, which constitutes a notion of 'good' childhood.

In view of childhood in global-north countries represented by some of my participants (the Netherlands and Germany), individuality[9] is a prominent feature in child upbringing (Keller et al 2005; Huijbregts, Leseman and Tavecchio, 2007).

And according to Keller, Voelker and Yovsi (2005), "Germans have been described as representing individualistic or independent value orientations" (p. 159). Parents socialize their children, even infants[10], into separate sleeping (also through the night), and early self-regulation. Thus independence and cognitive competence are highly valued and mothers most exclusively care for infants (Keller et al., 2005). This socialization pattern related to individuality is attributed to the changing times characterized by delayed birth of the first child, very low birth rates, late marriages and increased divorce rates among others. Hence parents aim at preparing their children for competence in their most likely individual-future lives (Keller & Lamm, 2005). Thus in Germany, parents or families are traditionally considered to be responsible for childcare such that childcare services, especially for children under three are limited to working parents who do not have safe alternative options for care outside the ECEC system.

In the same way, ECEC services in the Netherlands mainly target families where both parents are participating in the labor market; only older children from the age of four are guaranteed a place. As a matter of fact, it is quite expensive for parents to have their zero-three year olds in day-care centers or "play groups". Also, the day-care centers must abide by the rule which restricts them to provision of half-day part-time care, four days a week (Rauch, 2007). More recent research by Slot (2014) has however shown that up to eighty percent of two-four year olds now attend some kind of formal ECEC. However, this is still acceptable for a limited number of hours and days (ibid.).

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9 Individuality […] implies self-determination, autonomy and self-realization. (Keller & Lamm, 2005, p.239)

10 Children between 0 and 1 year ("Basic indicators," 2015)

Aside from the work of ECEC institutions, children are generally accorded an immense degree of attention by the society, argues Vangeert, a professor of developmental psychology at university of Groningen, Netherlands;

> The Netherlands has always been a very child-centered society […]. In particular, there is a lot of focus on young children […] "children are used to a" highly protective, highly positive caring environment. (Westcott 2007)

The elements of in this "caring environment" may include parents, institutions of care and learning and government policies and structures which enhance such an environment.

In the proceeding is a presentation of literature on childhood in the global south with more emphasis on countries relevant to this study; Zambia, Rwanda, Indonesia and China.

2.3.2 Childhood in the global South

Childhood in most countries of the global south as opposed to what the 'global childhood' described above may depict, usually takes varied forms. This is also to note that even in the same part or region of the 'world', there are huge variations among countries and even societies within the same country. Hence, depending on children's chronological age or maybe physical size; whether they are born and/or raised in an urban or rural setting; whether they have adult caregivers or fend for themselves; and whatever the economic status of the adult caregivers have, children in the global south may experience more than one childhood as shown by numerous researchers (See for example Punch, 2003, Woodhead & Montgomery, 2003, Boyden & Mann, 2005, Abebe 2007, 2008).

Also, the values, expectations and attitudes that adults attach to children or childhood are quite different. In the Sub-Saharan region[11] for instance, most societies (at least until recently) viewed children as a source of prestige and therefore highly valued; such that, a married couple's social reputation depended on their ability to have children (Evans, 1994). And regarding care and learning, children were primarily a responsibility of the family, but the community as a whole had an obligation in ensuring their growth, development and socialization through which the

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11 Zambia and Rwanda are African countries in the Sub-Saharan region

social norms were passed on from generation to generation (ibid.) As the African proverb goes, *'it takes a village to raise a child'*.

Thus, in the absence of the mother (even in my own childhood experience), children aged one to three years commonly had a baby sitter (usually a female elder sibling, relative or neighbor) to bath, dress, feed and play with. Support was offered in the gradual nurturance of "new motor, language and thinking skills; a chance to develop some independence; [and] in learning how to control their behavior […and…] play with a variety of objects" (Donohue-Colletta 1992, p. 65 and cited in Evans, 1994, p. 5). Evans (1994) attributes the changes in the beliefs and practices related to child upbringing (mostly linked to socialization) to people's desire to be "modern".

Firstly, family structures have changed from the formerly large extended to smaller nuclear structures; the girl child is more involved in school and therefore not "exclusively" involved in babysitting, and so are more women involved in the labor market as the men. Secondly, with economic pressure in many of these countries, families have broken down due to migration to urban centers leaving other relatives in the rural (ibid.).

From my observation, today's babysitters, in Uganda for instance, are paid workers who have no relationship ties to the family as opposed to norms in the past. Children of especially working class[12] parents are also participating more in day care centers than before. Thus child care trends from the global north are taking root due to globalization and its effects on the global market. With increased demands on countries' economies, population increase and high levels of competition for the labor market, both men and women are increasingly involved in the labor market while more children in urban centers are participating in institutionalized early childhood care and learning. Such are the contexts in which some of the parents involved in this research project were brought up. Thus, their social, economic and cultural experiences to a greater extent form the attitudes and choices they have regarding child upbringing even in a foreign country.

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12 'Working class' includes both formal and informal employees, even self-employed-petty-business owners. Some mothers in Uganda simply engage in food vending or roadside candy selling businesses.

Similarly, Kamerman (2002) notes that the childcare responsibility in Indonesia is also primarily shared at family level with relatives, neighbors and caregivers stepping in in cases where parents are engaged in the labor market. She adds that women's involvement in the labor market and efforts to achieve gender equality have become important governmental strategies because this is viewed as a means of enhancing the well-being of children who in the long run become resources to the nation. Emphasis is therefore placed on family planning services and establishment of policies that increase the role of family and the community in child care through improvement of women's health especially during pregnancy, delivery and in the early years of children. Participation in ECEC settings is acceptable for children as young as three months old (ibid.).

Regarding early childhood care and learning in Asian countries like China and Indonesia, the family unit is also very important such that the child does not exist as a separate individual. In fact, the family acts as the bridge between the child and the society as a whole. This position involves training the child in the ways of the society so that he or she can behave appropriately when 'out there'. Dependence on others is so desirable because it is believed to strengthen relationship bonds between family members. A child is thus inclined to be dependent on others for social and physical support. He or she is a "community child" and receives care and education from both close family and others living in the same community as the family. Such a value greatly differs from those emphasized in countries of the global north described above.

Children past the stage of infancy are handled in a relatively controlling, restrictive and protective manner with such high expectations from the parents. Even with great accomplishments, applause seldom entails statements like, "I am so proud of you"; rather an encouragement to work even harder "next time" (Yunus, 2005).

Nelson, Yu, Williams and the International Child Care Practices Study Group Members (2006), argue that five parenting constructs are highly valued in China and these include; "encouragement of modest behavior (e.g., discouraging a child from showing off), parental protection (e.g., expecting a child to play close by), shaming/love withdrawal (e.g., telling a child they should be ashamed when misbehaving), directiveness (e.g., demanding a child do things), and maternal involvement (e.g., taking care of child needs)" (Wu et al., 2002 and cited in Nelson

et al., 2006, p. 262). Mothers are the most involved in the 'active' child care and learning so they spend more time with the children than the fathers (Nelson et al., 2006).

Having provided an overview of child care and learning practices in the countries of interest to the research project, I would like to introduce some statistics on participation of non-Norwegian families in the Norwegian ECEC settings.

2.4 Norwegian childcare services adopted by non-Norwegian families

> The number of children from linguistic and cultural minorities in kindergarten has increased in recent years. The number of children in kindergarten with this background has increased by 9 per cent in the last five years, from 37 600 children in 2009 to 41 000 children in 2014. Seventy-five per cent of all children aged 1-5 years from linguistic and cultural minorities attended kindergarten in 2014. (Bjørkli & Moafi 2015, 1)

In spite of the above figures, the participation of immigrant children is still lower than expected. Although every child in Norway has a right to a place in a barnehage so as to enable parental participation in the labor market among other aims for universal ECEC in Norway, for some reason, not all families utilize it (Engel and Barnett 2015). This could for instance be attributed to alternative childcare forms like the cash-for-care and child benefit[13] that some immigrant mothers with no jobs may prefer to kindergartens. However, Østby (2015) argues that some immigrant women primarily shun from participating in the labor market because they are assured of the cash benefit (ibid.). This is not to say that only immigrants use this cash benefit because it is meant for all children in Norway, and cash-for-care for all one year old children. Research simply shows that more women especially with non-western background do not contribute towards Norway's workforce ("OECD-Thematic Review," 2015), hence probable causes like cash benefit are being criticized.

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13 A monthly benefit, currently NOK 970 per child, received by all care providers with children aged below 18years. (Berge & Strøm, 2015; "Child benefit," 2015)

It is also important to note that some mothers may not choose to be jobless, but rather are seldom preferred to men on the job market. Unemployment may be high among immigrants, especially those from countries outside the European Union, but among these, women are still the most unemployed (Eriksen, 2013). Therefore, with one bread winner in the family and the flat kindergarten fees per child that seems unreasonable, participation may be limited because consequently, such families pay two or three times more than high income families.

Moreover other additional costs of participation like food can also limit ethnic-minority parents' participation (Engel & Barnett, 2015). According to Scheistrøen and Rønneberg (2015), almost all public kindergartens (97 percent) charge an extra fee for food of about NOK 260 per child monthly. It is shown though, that in densely populated municipalities like Trondheim for instance, reductions are offered to households with two or more children attending kindergarten. Hence, I would say that non-Norwegian families are motivated, as much as possible, to utilize all the child care services (banehager and cash benefits) available in Norway in accordance with their socio-cultural and economic statuses; but also according to individual familial preferences.

2.5 Summary

In this chapter I have provided an insight into ECEC in Norway and the countries that parents in this study 'represent'. While it is common practice for almost all children in Norway to participate in kindergarten as soon as they celebrate their first birthday, that may vary in other countries even within Europe, not to mention Africa and Asia. In my discussions I have also shown that values and learning goals attached child upbringing differ greatly, especially between the North and the South. But I have also shown that for various reasons, more immigrant families have adopted and utilized different early childhood care alternatives availed by the Norwegian government. In the proceeding chapter I will discuss childhood perspectives which have informed this study.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter comprises a presentation of concepts and theories applicable for the interpretation and analysis of the empirical data collected during the research project.

In view of the research topic, the study will mainly draw knowledge and perspectives from the field; the sociology of childhoods. Additionally, perspectives about 'proper' childhood as perceived in the Norwegian culture[14] will also be referred to in order to illuminate the context in which the 'minority' or immigrant 'cultures' and families in this study have lived for a period of between two-to-ten years.

Perspectives about children and childhood used in this research project include socialization and children's rights. Key concepts such us childhood, children, parenthood, child upbringing and culture are presented.

3.1 'Child'

How children are perceived is an important aspect of this study because it is from such understanding that parents' and teachers' views about child upbringing will be interpreted; the attitudes of adults, (especially those with direct responsibility for child care and learning) towards children influence the ways in which they relate to them.

The term, "child", is "generally used to denote any young person who has not yet reached social maturity" (Montgomery, 2009, p. 53), such that, in the Western world for instance, a child's 'path' to maturity is demarcated into life stages like what age to start school and when he or she has legal rights (ibid.). As a matter of fact, chronological age has been used by the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC) to define a child as any person below the age of 18 years. Such a definition is what guides the legal processes (laws and crime, elections, health care procedures) of most nations, especially those that have ratified the convention. However, in this research project, the notions of children and childhood among other concepts, are perceived to be socially constructed.

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14 Where culture simply refers to all social action common to a group of people as used in Gullestad (1989) and referred to by Marion (2013).

3.2 Childhood and child upbringing as socially constructed

Montgomery (2009) purports that "anthropologists […] have shown consistently that the idea of a universal child is an impossible fiction and that children's lives are influenced as strongly by their culture as by their biology" (p.1). And James and Prout (2015) add that "[…] childhood, as a variable of social analysis can never be entirely separated from other variables such as class, gender, or ethnicity" (p. 3). When an understanding of childhood in one part of the world, say the global North is transported to another part, say the global south, many actions of caregivers (in the latter world) towards children may be deemed or appear to be deviant or criminal. This is criticized and seen to be contradicting with historical and cross-cultural analyses which show a diversity of childhoods rather than a single childhood (James and Prout, 2015).

Thus the notions of 'childhood' or 'children' are considered to be socially constructed, across societies, over historical times and even generations and individual families, as I will attempt to present in the analysis chapters. But first, a look at a historical explanation of the 'origin' of 'childhood'.

3.2.1 Historical accounts

Based on works of painters before the 12th century, Ariès (1982, 2005) argues that childhood was treated as "a period of transition which passed quickly and which was just as quickly forgotten" (p. 6). Thus in most paintings, children were depicted alongside adults as persons with 'adult-like' features and physic except "on a smaller scale" (p. 5). In everyday life, no attention was paid to children as a distinct group of people; they were involved in the same activities as the adults, including work, and leisure or family events. Unlike the modern era, families at the time saw no need for keeping (pictorial) memories of an individual who would eventually grow into manhood or die as an infant. And because of the demographic situation with children's probability to survive through infancy being low, the existence of personality and mental activity of children was not given much consideration; parents never allowed themselves get attached to their infants. Ariès refers to this as 'conditions being unfavorable for the idea of childhood'.

Over the years between the 12th and 17th century, perspectives on children and childhood gradually reflected special interest in the making of children's portraits and depicting them as distinct in appearance from adults. Also, literary work revealed that parents were using more emotional descriptions when referring to their "little darling" (Ariès, 2005, p.19). Ariès, according to Woodhead and Montgomery (2003), is however criticized for using only the paintings as a source to conclude that children were not treated separately from adults, while neglecting the fact that literature and medical records revealed otherwise. Moreover, the paintings at the time were designed for religious purposes and thus represented particular themes and not the appearance of children as such. Also, even though Ariès describes parents as being indifferent towards children until the age of seven years, literature still shows cases where parents emotionally reacted to the death of their children of a younger age (ibid.)

Towards the end of the 20th century, childhood had started to be perceived as a social phenomenon in the world of research, drawing to itself, the attention of childhood researchers like James and Prout. These researchers also write about criticisms on Ariès' work by referring to existence of childhood in medical practice long before the time Ariès claims it was discovered (1990). James and Prout (1990) also provide a research based account on five key features which emphasize the need to shift from studying children as objects to considering them as subjects in research. And the key feature in my research project is, "childhood is understood as a social construction" (James & Prout, 1990, p. 8).

For the purpose of this study, a 'historical' background on parents' childhood experiences is included in because it opens a window into the world in which they were raised and most probably lived in before they became parents. And in many ways, their childhood in the past may have been different from that of their own children today. As noted by James and James (2012);

> Clearly, childhood as a developmental phase in the life-course, which is typified by certain biological commonalities in terms of physical growth, some of which are broadly linked to chronological age, exists in all cultures and in all historical contexts […]. Beyond this, however, childhood must be accurately located in its social, geographical, cultural and historical contexts in order to be understood in terms of the diverse, global

experiences of those children who occupy that 'space' at any given time. (James & James, 2012, p. 47)

James and James (2012) suggest that physical and biological changes of children should not be the only determinants of children's experiences. Rather, biological and physical factors should be perceived alongside social, cultural and historical contexts.

According to Woodhead & Montgomery (2003), since childhood varies across time and place, it is not even appropriate to compare and contrast two societies in the North. Between Britain and America for instance, there are variations in age, gender, ethnicity and income which all influence the way people think about children. Additionally, ideas about children change because they depend on the social, cultural and historical factors which are dynamic in nature (ibid.).

Hence, the same child may experience multiple childhoods, depending on the social, cultural, political and economic circumstances under which he or she is born and/or lives. And, understanding childhood as a social construction "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, 1990, p. 8).

Woodhead & Montgomery (2003) argue that the view of childhood as a social construction does not refer to different 'facts' about childhood, but rather refers to different 'ideas' about childhood. As well stated by King (2007), children as they exist are constructions of the society in which they live;

> What the society expects of children, the way that they are perceived, what is seen as good or bad for them and what they are competent or incompetent to perform depends upon the particular concept of childhood that the society has constructed. (King 2007, p. 196)

Accordingly, members of the society formulate views and ideas about what children and childhood should be like and this becomes the common way of perceiving the phenomena.

The social constructionist perspective as referred to in Woodhead (2008) also purports that children's growth and development is not entirely a natural or biological phenomenon, but also a social and cultural process such that children are not seen as growing by themselves. Rather:

> They learn and think, feel, communicate and act within social relationships in the context of particular cultural settings and practices, mediated by beliefs about how children should be treated and what it means to be a child, as well as when childhood begins and ends. (Richards & Light 1986; Schaffer 1996; Woodhead et al. 1998 and cited in Woodhead, 2008, p. 19)

Children, according to the above quote, are products of the relationships and practices that influence their experiences. The people involved in their care and education, the family, economic and political structures and contexts in which they are born and/or live affect their childhood care and learning experiences. Since my study is focusing on participants of both Norwegian and non-Norwegian backgrounds, both childhood and child upbringing are herein understood as socially constructed.

3.2.2 Child upbringing as socially constructed

> The most significant features of any child's environment are the humans with whom they establish close relationships. These individuals (usually family) are themselves cultural beings. They are the product of cultural history and circumstance, which structures their lives and gives meaning and direction to the experiences of their offspring, as they introduce them to cultural practices, and scaffold their acquisition of skills and ways of communicating. The ways parents care for their children are shaped in part by their cultural beliefs (or ethno-theories) about what is appropriate and desirable, in terms both of the goals of child development and the means to achieve those goals. (Woodhead, 2005, p. 90)

According to Woodhead (2005), no matter where a child is being brought up, the greatest impact in his or her environment comes from the people closely involved in their upbringing. Such people shape the child based on their perception of children's needs for 'proper' growth and development.

The term upbringing, in this study will be used interchangeably with parenting and parenthood. To breakdown the term child upbringing, notions of mothering, parenting and parenthood will hence be presented. But firstly, upbringing is considered "…a process through which adults lead and guide the next generation. [Particularly,] in the process of raising and educating children, our values, norms, ideas and modes of expression and action are being passed on, changed and subjected to negotiation" ("The Framework Plan," 2012, p. 27). In this case, change and negotiation in values and norms are influenced by various factors including socio-economic, political and cultural alterations all of which co-impact one another. Most relevant to this research project are social and cultural changes in parenting or child upbringing practices in Norway as experienced by non-Norwegian families.

Haukanes and Thelen (2010) define parenting as "the actual practices of parents with regard to their children, [and] parents are those who enact these notions and practices" (p. 11). According to Bornstein (2011), parents have beliefs and behaviors which influence their actions towards children. These include expectations of how their children should develop or attitudes and attributes of a 'good' childhood. Parents also have ideas and goals that are aimed at different socializing children into the social norms or way of life. Their behaviors involve provision of protection and care (physical, biological and emotional), but also guidance in how to deal with emotions and how to relate to others.

Parenting thus entails "giving and responsibility" (p. 4) towards children. It is influenced by not only the biological make up of human beings and factors like pregnancy or prenatal events, but also the ecological make-up of the environment in which parenting takes place. Other factors include "family configuration; both formal and informal support systems; community ties and work; social, legal, medical, and governmental institutions" (p. 3) among others; hence suggesting that parenting practices are also socially constructed.

Consequently, the concept, mothering[15], is also perceived as socially constructed. Thus, it is not limited the role of mothers or female characters in child upbringing. This perception on mothering stems from the feminist perspective that 'mothering' is not an innate ability, but rather a skill reproduced by society through exposure and training of girl children to carry out specific mothering roles (Glenn, Chang & Forcey, 1994). For instance, the argument is that society (mothers) teaches girl-children to feed, bath and give comfort; entertain and educate younger children among other things; and because mothers eventually become role models of the girls, then every action they take becomes worth emulating by the girls. But in the 'modern' world and citing the example of African-American women since slavery, Glenn, Chang & Forcey (1994) argue that these mothering roles can be assumed by male characters too.

It is therefore important to note that, particularly in the contemporary world, care giving in early childhood may also be undertaken by other adults including fathers, relatives and friends; but also staff in child care institutions are often involved in children's lives (Bornstein, 2011). Thus in this study, staff at ECEC institutions (barnehager) are vital contributors to knowledge about the topic of child upbringing. Hence, the term child upbringing is more preferred in this study than parenting.

3.3 Culture

In this study, the concept of culture, as I mentioned earlier, is used in the same ways as Gullestad (1989) and referred to in Marion (2013) to refer to social actions common to a group of people. It goes beyond values and individual preferences, to include practices or actions people take in their day-to-day lives. In relation to child upbringing, these may include; how parents respond to their children's needs, how children relate to their parents and vice versa, the contents of children's daily routines, the kind of activities children and parents engage in during a particular season or time of the year among others (ibid.).

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[15] The mothering-role resulting from role-division between men and women was traditionally linked or drawn from the reproductive nature of women, such that, pregnancy, delivery and nursing of a new born baby were naturally possible only through a woman's biological make up (Glenn, Chang & Forcey, 1994)

Thus, the aim of this study is to analyse the activities which parents and teachers in barnehager commonly undertake in provision of care and education to children of especially ages one to three years. Some of these could be influenced by religious affiliations and ethnic traditions, or socio-economic statuses of the parents and teachers as will be elaborated in the analysis chapters. Hence, since this study leans on the perception that childhood and child upbringing are perceived as socially constructed, in the following sections, I will discuss some of the perspectives about children and childhood that influence attitudes of caregivers and their child upbringing practices.

3.4 Perspectives on children and childhood

3.4.1 Socialization

It is generally held that cultural views, values and norms are passed on from generation to generation (See for example Evans, 1994; Rogoff, 2003). Sociological accounts of childhood consider socialization as a means by which children learn to participate in society through assignment of social roles taught by agents such as family and school among others. It is "the processes by which children adapt to and internalize society. […] The child is being seen as apart from the society that must be shaped and guided by the external forces to become a fully functioning member" (Corsaro, 1997, p. 9); "a mechanism whereby social roles come to be replicated in successive generations" (James & Prout, 1997, p. 12).

Evans (1994) denotes that the need to sustain society's traditions by passing down from generation to generation, among other factors, influences parents' (adults') child care and learning practices. (Other factors being; economic, social and political factors). For instance, in order to prepare children to compete favorably in the future job market, parents may socialize their children into developing a reading culture that points them into academic careers that are marketable in society. Social expectations based on values, norms and beliefs also influence parents' child upbringing practices; for instance regarding respect of other people's "space", hard work, independence and interdependence among others (ibid.). But children do not only learn social norms from parents or relations at home; but also from peers with whom they may interact during play for instance.

3.4.2 Peers as agents of socialization

According to Corsaro (1981), parents and siblings, as significant others in early childhood, introduce children to cultural values and norms which in most cases are linked to non-negotiable relationship demands. However, when children first meet their peers outside the home, they learn that social interactions are negotiable and that they can choose whom to relate with or not. Also, that some peers may not be welcoming at once, hence they need to earn their friendship (ibid.). Thus, children learn as early as possible, how to build and maintain relationships also as vividly described in research about *'Greetings and welcomes among toddler peers in a Norwegian barnehage'* by Løkken (2004). Greetings are used by toddler peers as an indication of an already established social relationship or a means of starting a new one. And this is done through vocal conversations, bodily gestures, laughter or smile and vivid movements like jumping among other things (ibid.).

UNICEF considers childhood as the most significant developmental period of life during which foundations for future learning and growth are established ("Early Childhood Education," 2015). Thus, all agents of care and learning play an important role in shaping the early childhood period.

UNICEF further argues that:

> The true measure of a nation's standing is how well it attends to its children – their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialization, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included in families and societies into which they are born. ("Child Poverty," 2007, p. 1)

The UNICEF-perspective broadens the cultural borders and suggests that the well-being of children is a yardstick for measuring an entire nation's 'reputation', such that 'good' child upbringing and socialization are considered vital aspects of national policies and actions. The definition also reflects different discourses[16] about childhood; especially the '*tabula rasa'* and romantic discourses which are referred to in Woodhead & Montgomery (2003). I will however

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16 Discourses are used in this study to refer to sets of ideas and truths formulated about childhood based on historical, social and political contexts. (Woodhead & Montgomery, 2003)

not dwell much on the discourses except to note that these discourse perceive children as transitioning into adulthood and largely dependent on the actions of adults for all aspects of care and learning.

Thus, the ideas or truths associated with childhood greatly influence the ways in which adults socialize or bring up children especially in the global North. Notably though, the sociology of childhoods has criticized socialization theory on grounds that it neglects children's agency or active involvement and equal contribution to societal life because of its perception of them primarily as "human becomings" (Lee 2001, 7 and cited in James, 2009, p. 34) rather than full human beings in their childhood state. Also, the theory is largely influenced by Piaget's work on child development from which childhood is perceived as "a path through which children [must] pass in order to attain the goal of adulthood […] an irrational stage of human life" (Khalifa, 2012, pp. 163,164) with neglect of children's worth.

3.4.3 The 'adult-child'

On another hand, socialization (in the global south for instance) is sometimes used as a tool to suppress children's opinions on matters even concerning themselves because of a perception that they are irrational. However, the same adults often expect children to act *'like an adult'*. The concept, *'adult-child'* was conceived from the experience of Any, an Indonesian participant who recounts that as a child, tasks such as babysitting her younger sister and surrendering her own toys to her (putting others' needs above self) were a 'normal' thing for her and other elder siblings in Indonesia to do. Her example suggests that parents manipulate situations in order to meet their goals while hiding under the disguise of socialization or training which influences their attitudes and behavior towards children. More will be presented in the first analysis chapter.

Thus, on one hand, adults assign tasks to children as a form of 'training' due to the view of them as "future adults with a place in the social order and contributions to make in it" (Corsaro, 1997, p. 8) such that childhood is only "a period of apprenticeship that prepares children for competent membership in adult society" (Corsaro, 1990, p. 199); and on the other hand, because the same children are viewed as irrational beings incapable of making sensible contributions in their 'present-child-like' state, the voice of Any, a parent from Indonesia for instance, was not given a

listening ear because she was 'just a child'. Such perspectives about children and their abilities or physical characteristics are criticized in sociology of childhoods.

As mentioned earlier, theories of socialization and child development are greatly criticized for being 'westernized' and depicting children as marginalized beings; incompetent and irrational persons with intellectual ability restricted to specific ages along the human life course as elaborated in the previous sections. The theories as seen as culture specific and homogenizing childhood experiences with no room for diversity. That all children have access to a home, story books, adult-care and presence (Woodhead, 2006).

However, in agreement with sociology of childhood, especially regarding the understanding of children as competent social actors, (a feature I will not directly refer to in this study) are children's rights discussed in the next section. Researchers in sociology of childhood acknowledge that the emergence of the field at about the same time as children's rights were 'globalized' is no coincidence. (See for example King, 2007 and Mayall, 2000). The two appear to have influenced each other.

However, with reference to Smith (2007), it is important to note that children's rights and the notion of childhood are local occurrences that should not be assumed to mean the same to all societies. Rather, rights should be considered a tool for fighting (all forms of) inequalities in the social structures of societies in which children live. Moreover, children are only able to learn and develop in spaces (provided by adults) where they can interact with peers and skilled personnel like barnehage teachers for instance (ibid.).

3.5 Children's rights

Regarding the combination of societal institutions, particularly the family, barnehager and political sectors responsible for planning and implementing social policies, I would like to refer to children's rights from UNCRC. Articles used in this research project are those related to actions or responsibilities of adults towards children rather than agency of children. Norway ratified the 1989 UNCRC in 1991 and in 2003, the children's rights convention was incorporated into Norwegian Law. ("The Framework Plan," 2012)

Herein, I also refer to the 2005 Norwegian Kindergarten Act which is one of two main government papers that act as guidelines for all planning, establishment and execution of matters regarding kindergartens in Norway.

3.5.1 "Best interests of the child"

> **Article 3**
> 1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1996)

Adults often make decisions concerning children based on the assumption that it is for the children's own good. However, what is best or good for children is understood and interpreted differently depending on individual preferences, culture, social-economic status of the adults involved and the political environment in which the children live. In this study, the parents' and teachers' early childhood care and learning choices are explored and discussed in relation to the 'requirement' of article three above of the children's rights convention.

3.5.2 Children's right to participation

> **Article 12**
> 1. State parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. ("Convention on the Rights of the Child", 1996)

The child participation principle is stated in the FPCTK; and in this study it is used to interpret children's involvement in planning, implementation and evaluation of kindergarten activities as will further be elaborated in the analysis chapters. Most importantly, the participation right in relation to Norway, includes the right to a place in a kindergarten ("Early childhood," 2014).

According to Bae (2010), children's right to participation, in planning kindergartens activities, for instance, is based on the view that all human beings regardless of age, race, gender or ability

have inherent worth and dignity which should be recognized. It is one thing to have established the participation right but completely another, to interpret and practice it in day-to-day life (Bae, 2010). Bae most specifically refers to the influence of Article 12 in the amendment of the Norwegian Kindergarten Act to include a section about every child and parent's right participation in the kindergarten:

> Section 3: Children's right to participate
>
> Children in kindergartens will have the right to express their views on the day-to-day activities of the kindergarten.
>
> Children shall regularly be given an opportunity to take an active part in planning and assessing the activities of the kindergarten
>
> The children's views will be given due weight according to their age and maturity (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research 2006 and cited in Bae, 2010, pp. 205,206).

By including the aspect of age in the participation right, attention is drawn to the fact that children of different ages bear different competencies based on their mental and physical make up such that adults ought to create the most appropriate channels through which their views can be expressed.

In explaining the right to participation of even the youngest children through freedom of expression, Bae (2010) with reference to the CRC general comments from 2009 notes that children communicate in many other ways long before they are able to verbally articulate their views. And according to Clark, Kjorholt & Moss (2005), listening to children's views is "a means of enhancing their participation in shaping their own lives and environments…" (p. 1); and listening, according to them, is not just about hearing (involving verbal communication) but also "an understanding that encompasses relationships, dialogue, interpretation and the hundred languages of children" (p. 1).

Also, Nilsen (2012) on research about nature day care centers in Norway, describes how outdoor activities organized by kindergartens create an atmosphere for children (mostly aged three years

and above) to exercise their participation right in deciding where to go for a nature tour. At the end of these tours, children are asked to give feedback on what their experiences were like during the tours as a means of evaluating the activity.

3.5.3 Inclusion and equality

According to Ellingsæter (2014), kindergartens in Norway have moved from an institution for helping needy children and their families to a universal one where a place in the barnehage is now considered a social right for all children who turn one year. Setting aside the "institutionalization of childhood" as closely linked to the need for a workforce in the labor market (see Kjorholt, 2012), the underlying goal for universal coverage is improvement of quality of services to all children, with specific concern for inclusion of immigrant children and families with low income and education backgrounds. (Ellingsæter, 2014). And again, as presented in the introduction chapter, inclusion here refers to a process of addressing the diversity of needs of all children.

Thus, regarding inclusion and equality in relation to cultural differences, this study refers to statistics that show an increase and diversity in the immigrant population in Norway (See background and context chapter). The concept of inclusion is seen as an important aspect of a heterogeneous society because where values, beliefs and norms differ, a society is liable to conflicts of interest. Consequently, matters of discrimination may arise, even in ECEC settings. But are there ways in which the Norwegian barnehager perform inclusion and promote diversity?

3.5.4 "Room for identities"

As parents most probably make efforts to blend the 'Norwegian' way of childcare and learning into their probably different child upbringing practices, barnehager teachers attempt to do the same. Lauritsen (2013) refers to the teachers' action as a creation of 'room for identities'; which she refers to as the process through which "[… kindergarten] staff open up to a wider range of practices and expressions than the majority's in their daily dealings with children of diverse cultural backgrounds" (p. 351).

During her research, Lauritsen (2013) discovered that a few staff from her two participating institutions had joined a project to attend classes at a university college that focused on aspects of cultural diversity in kindergarten like language, religion, traditions and how to communicate with immigrant children and parents. A child's identity, she adds, is contributed to by a combination of factors like parent's education and status, his or her age and even physical ability. Additionally, he or she may be similar or different from other children depending on parents' language, religion and cultural background.

Aside from incorporating diversity, teachers also 'help' parents to learn the norms of the Norwegian society as a means of helping them 'blend in'. Staff from Lauritsen's research for instance, took initiative in conducting (bread) baking classes for minority parents so that they too could make 'good' lunch packs for their children and consequently 'feel-a-part' of the rest of the barnehager or Norwegian culture/community.

However, Lauritsen adds that equality and inclusion may also require children to be treated as individuals. Thus, equality entails both "'treating everybody the same' [yet at the same time] 'taking the individual child into consideration'" (Lauritsen 2013, p. 357); including the individual (and special) needs ranging from physical to mental for instance. And in this study, even cultural needs are given special focus as will be presented in one of the analysis chapters.

I would like to note that the 1989 UNCRC, although ratified by all nations of the world except the United States of America, has not exactly been fully embraced by all the nations because it is presumably based on westernized understandings of what childhood is and should entail. Yet still, because of the widespread ratification and accountability approach of its governing body, the convention still has great influence on political affairs of these nation states (Woodhead, 2006). Hence in this study, the convention is referred to because of the context (Norway/global north/western world) in which the research project was conducted.

3.6 Summary

The aim of this chapter has been to bring to the reader's attention, different theoretical perspectives on childhood which are suitable for interpreting and analyzing empirical data from

the research project. Perspectives discussed include socialization, social construction of children, childhood and parenthood/upbringing, plus children's rights discourses. Key concepts like childhood, child/children, culture, parenting and child upbringing have also been presented and discussed. The underlying idea is that understanding the way children are perceived helps determine actions made towards them.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes accounts for reasons underlying my choice of the study topic on ECEC and/or child upbringing in Norway, the initial research questions and how I attempted to answer them. The study is qualitative in nature, with focus and reliability on participants' perspectives and as limited researcher bias as possible. Thus, empirical data was co-generated using qualitative interviews and one focus group discussion. The idea is that, since perspectives of a 'good' childhood and child upbringing or 'proper' parenting are "socially constructed"[17], the most preferred methods for acquiring knowledge on the topic ought to be qualitative.

4.1 The genesis of the study

As I pondered on the topic for my master thesis, I constantly reflected on what the experience could be like for parents from one cultural or traditional origin to raise children in another (in this case, Norway). For instance; how do parents perceive early childhood care and learning? What child upbringing values were emphasized when they were growing up? How do they apply their past experiences in their children's upbringing while living in an environment different from the one in which they were brought up? What are their expectations and experiences with Norwegian barnehager as supplementary agents of child care and learning? Do matters of inclusion and/or exclusion in relation to cultural diversity in barnehager come up during parents' and teachers' encounters? Hence, having personally experienced a different childhood from what I have observed in Norway, such thoughts fueled my curiosity and influenced the choice of my research topic and the nature of my research as presented below.

4.2 Qualitative research

Allender, Gunnar, Lamb & Barthel (2006) and Marshall & Rossman (2016) argue that qualitative research is the most appropriate way to get in-depth insight into the experiences and perspectives of people because then we are able to hear it from the "horse's mouth". Asking the parents to

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17 Vary from one socio-cultural, economic and sometimes political setting to another. Also referred to as Constructionism/perspectivism which is "the view that all knowledge claim and evaluation takes place within a conceptual framework through which the world is described and explained." (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, 197)

share about their childhood experiences with care and learning in the past involved 'going down memory lane'. They took all the time necessary to probably sieve and select "details of their experience from their stream of consciousness" (Seidman, 2013, 7) which applied to the questions asked during the interviews.

Qualitative research thus seeks to understand how participants interpret the world from their own point of view (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) and understanding these experiences in context (Allender et al., 2006). To be able to do this, I assumed the position or role of "the one being told" in order to allow the parents' childhood stories to 'flow'. My occasional interruptions were only aimed at probing for in-depth responses on areas brought up by the participants.

Another aspect of qualitative research is the acknowledgment of data collected regardless of how relatively small the sample size that produced it may be (Allender et al., 2006). For instance, although the initial target-size of parent-participants was between 12 and 15, the 10 who accepted to take part provided satisfactorily relevant empirical material. All participants were both purposively and randomly selected as I will elaborate more in another section.

To add on still, theories explaining the findings in qualitative research also emerge from the experiences of the participants, unlike in quantitative research where the aim doing research is to prove an already pre-determined hypothesis (Allender et al., 2006). During the data collection process, the responses of participants frequently reflected some theoretical perspectives related to childhood, including socialization and childhood as a social construction. Thus, knowledge acquired in this study comprises the ways in which parents and teachers perceive and perform early childhood care and learning.

4.3 Whom and How? - Access and participant recruitment

In order to answer the questions above, the research required the choice of 'suitable' respondents with whom I would co-generate knowledge. I specifically wanted to meet non-Norwegian parents with children aged between ten months to three years; and barnehage teachers handling children within the same age group. Access to the respondents thus began, 'informally' or

indirectly, with passive identification of participants whom I believed were suitable for my study. This included casual talks with friends about my research topic and listening to their opinions about it. As a result, some of them suggested potential participants for my study. However, I did not take any steps to contact the potential participants and request for their involvement in the study until I had received clearance and documentation from the official research gatekeepers.

Research in social sciences according to Hennink (2007), requires that permission be sought from the "institutional review committees [that] are mandated by governments and research institutions to assess proposed research studies for scientific validity, ethical acceptability and relevance to the advancement of knowledge" (33); even the probable risks and benefits the study could have on participants (Hennik, 2007). These and other figures of authority are referred to as "gatekeepers" (Fraser, Lewis, Kellet & Robinson, 2004) without whose permission access may prove difficult.

The first formal step I took in obtaining access in the field was to seek notification from the Norwegian Social Science Data services (NSD) through an online application. The process involved the drafting and attachment of project description, consent letter and interview guides that were to be used during the research. Thus, I needed to explain the nature of my study, including what kind of information (whether "identifiable" or "non-identifiable"); and category of participants I was targeting.

Secondly, I requested for an introductory letter from the department, Norwegian Centre for Child Research (NOSEB). This was also attached to the emails written to the barnehager as my supplementary identification. Efforts like these are necessary because the position of adults (in this case, barnehage staffs or administrators) comes with "legal responsibilities for children's well-being outside the family. [… The administrators] are subject to managerial control in that they may not be able to agree to requests. [More so,] although they have direct, personal responsibility for the welfare of the children in their care, they must comply with their employers' directions and codes of practice" (Fraser et al 2004, p.46). Hence an introductory letter from the department to affirm the authenticity of my request came in handy.

4.3.1 Sampling

My sample selection process was both purposive and convenient considering the time-frame and availability of suitable participants. Regarding the selection of parent-participants, some were personally known to me and had previously shown keen interest in my study program, while others were recommended by snowball sampling (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Still, others were instantly selected during casual and unplanned meetings in public places during which my study topic came up.

Regarding barnehage teachers, two barnehager that had been recommended by friends were contacted via email with the formal documents attached, while the third was visited in person. These barnehager sample selection was not based on the fact that the children of parent-participants' attended them. Out of the three, only one responded and one teacher was willing to participate. The other three teachers involved in this study were selected either through personal connections or the snowball technique. All participant-researcher communication for recruitment and scheduling of appointments took place either face-to-face, via email or phone call and text message.

In summary, the Participants for this study included 10 parents and four barnehage teachers. Some of the parents are students while others are employees; yet still others are simply accompanying their spouses during their period of study (family reunion).

Also, while eight of my parent participants comprised four couples, two were mothers whose husbands did not participate either by choice or because they were not physically available and therefore not approached by me.

The barnehage teachers include two female Norwegians and two non-Norwegians, male and female. Participants were selected with consideration of cultural (national) diversity and also gender balance.

4.3.2 Informed consent

As a general ethical rule, researchers in social sciences ought to inform research subjects about the nature and consequences of taking part in a study so they can make an informed decision to

take part in the research. Acceptance to participate should be voluntary, not coerced (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

As part of getting access therefore, my participants each received a written consent letter. (They all had the ability to read and understand English). The letter clearly spelt out that anonymity and confidentiality would be ensured regarding the participant's identity and information shared. It also stated that participation was entirely voluntary and that the information shared would strictly be used for academic purposes. A brief description of the nature of research tools[18] was also explained in the letter but also verbally at the start of the actual participant-researcher study conversation. The participants were therefore aware of what their role and mine was.

4.3.3 Challenges with recruitment

For most parent-participants, booking appointments was mostly easy because they discussed with me all the factors that needed to be considered in order for them to avail time for the interviews and I assured them that I would work with whatever was convenient for them. Generally speaking, they were able to fix an appointment after discussing with their spouses.

Barnehage teachers were generally difficult to access because the emails were either not answered soon enough or not answered at all. From the second barnehage I contacted, one teacher was willing to participate and an appointment was fixed at her convenience. The other three barnehage teachers were accessed both through personal connections and snowballing. Reasons attributed to slow responses include, to the best of my knowledge, the fact that contacts were made during summer holidays when probably barnehage routines were not as regular as other periods of the year. Another could be language barrier because even some of those who participated mentioned that they were not accustomed to using English.

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18 Narrative, individual, focus group and semi-structured interviews were used mostly interchangeably or simultaneously.

4.4 Research tools – pros and cons involved

According to Marshall & Rossman (2016), "decisions about sampling people […] are made concurrently with decisions about the specific data collection methods to be used and should be thought through in advance" (p. 110). Methods used in the study include naming, interviews of various forms and focus group discussion.

4.4.1 Naming - Building rapport

In order to create a researched-researcher bond, my interpersonal skills went a long way in building rapport or trust with my participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Also, having put ethical matters like the consent letter and permission from NSD into consideration, participants were able to freely share their knowledge regarding the topic of study.

As a research tool, naming was simply used as an ice breaker, but also as a means of involving participants in the process of ensuring anonymity. It was clearly explained to participants that the name chosen needed to be absolutely unfamiliar to anyone that knew them. Only two out of the 14 participants were not involved in this activity and that is only because I forgot to bring it up given that our meeting was not planned prior to our encounter. The participants volunteered spontaneously on realizing that they had information and experience on my topic of study.

The exercises helped in the process of creating a special kind of openness that I never had even with participants that I had known prior to the study process. It involved a lot of laughing, jokes and at the same time, some level of contemplation on what name could be the least associated to them. It was therefore a fun tool to use.

4.4.2 Interviews

Brikmann & Kvale (2015) suggest that an interview is the exchange of views; a professional conversation in which the researcher and participant share individual views on a particular topic that in most cases has been decided by the researcher. It "[…] is based on the conversations of daily life; a professional conversation […] where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action

between the interviewer and interviewee" (p. 4). Also, "we interview to find what is in and on someone else's mind, to gather their stories" (Patton 2002, p. 341) about their experiences of what they know.

Parents and teachers were expected to share the world simply as they knew and understood it regarding child care and learning. For instance what activities they undertook to show care and affection, the areas of learning they emphasized and why; and the people and institutions (like kindergartens) that they interacted and worked together with in order to achieve the care and learning goals set up for their children's upbringing.

Gudmundsdottir (1996) adds that an interview is a form of conversation where someone asks a question and another person responds; hence the semi-structured interview guides used in this study. In order to probe further on the topic of discussion, participants were asked questions related to the subject matter and they responded accordingly. This is not to say that as the researcher, "I knew it all"; rather, I bore in mind, as Brinkmann & Kvale (2015) suggest, that in qualitative interviews my participants are subjects "actively engaged in meaning making" (p. 3). It is "an *interactive* and structured context where information and interpretation flows both ways" (Marton 1981 in Gudmundsdottir, 1996, p. 294).

The questions asked were from an interview guide that was designed to focus on particular themes and objectives related to the topic, and to ensure that time availed by interviewees was maximized. (Patton, 2002) Separate interview guides were used for the parents and barnehage staff.

Narratives were used at the beginning of the parent conversations so as to encourage them to use their own words and style to share their childhood experience with early childhood care and learning. A good description of a narrative interview is given by Jovchelovitch & Bauer;

> A narrative interview takes the form of a conversation and participants relate their experiences, bringing in whatever they consider to be relevant. The researcher probes where necessary to guide the interviewee through the research topic(s). At

the heart of narrative interviewing is the "basic idea ... to reconstruct social events from the perspective of informants as directly as possible." (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000, p. 59 and cited in Bates, 2005, p. 16)

The narrative interviews were also aimed at balancing any power relations between the participants and me. Asking participants to simply share what their experience with care and learning was like, especially in the first six years of their life, gave them a platform to go down memory lane. To clarify the question better, I asked them to talk about people involved in caring for them; what was emphasized as important for a 'good' childhood and probable learning goals parents aimed at attaining.

Eight of ten parents were interviewed individually. This was convenient for most couples simply because one was available at a time different from the other. Other reasons include the need for one to either watch the children or make dinner while the other was interviewed. While the interview guide was prepared for all interviews, most of the conversations involved probing parents on issues that came up in their responses to one question or another. This was in order to deepen their responses as much as possible (Patton, 2002).

4.4.3 Focus group discussion

The focus group discussion was used only once in this study. The two participants were both available at the same time and therefore did not mind sharing their experiences in the same forum.

Focus group discussions enable the researcher to get a wide range of responses about participants' individual attitudes and opinions about the study topic but in a homogeneous environment. The discussions also enhance peer support and free exchange of views between participants and the researcher and thus produce data that would otherwise be left out in individual interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). For instance, they can ask each other to clarify some doubts about certain situations because they are free and comfortable around each other. During the discussion with Amelie and Andrew, I asked them to share about the people involved in care and learning during their childhood;

Andrew: And aaaam ....there was no barnehage, nothing...we just ...did you go to barnehage? (Pointing at Amelie)

Amelie: From three...the last two years I think...2 or 3 years before school… I don't remember when...

Andrew: I did not go to barnehage...there was no barnehage there… I just went out with my friends play and do whatever

Also, during the discussion, each party was free to interject whenever they had something to add, as illustrated below:

Andrew: A good childhood?

Me: yes, how would u describe a good childhood in regard to your children or 'proper' parenting?

Amelie: I would say children should feel...know they are loved

Me: ok

Amelie: they… they love being fed, (laughter) that is basic

Me: (laughter), yes food is important

Amelie: aaaam, I think they need to feel safe and know what's going on, they need some routine and that they can somehow know what is expected. ammm, or what's going to happen next. And not all the time something new might happen and they don't know what to expect but the days are more or less the same...

An. predictable,

Amelie: predictable

Andrew: boring

Amelie: boring...

The focus group discussion excerpt reveals that I had very limited influence on the discussions. And my role was basically to moderate and ensure consistency in information being shared (Hennink, 2007) and encourage each one to participate. And it goes without saying that focus group discussions can been convenient in terms of saving time for both participants and the researcher. For instance, it is unnecessary to make two separate appointments for members of the same family when they can and are willing participate at the same time and the topic of discussion is not potentially sensitive.

4.5 The transcription process

All interviews were audio-recorded using a mobile telephone and they lasted between 27 minutes to 1, 20 hours. The choice was to transcribe the interviews as soon as possible. Sometimes I had three interviews in a week and sometimes none at all in the following week. So then I used the period to transcribe the three interviews from the previous week. As a general rule, accumulation of interviews without transcriptions was avoided. This was firstly, to avoid accidents like deleting the recordings by mistake and secondly, to regulate my work load and thirdly, to ensure memory space on the phone for further interviews.

Transcriptions took between one to five hours because I wanted to capture as much information as possible, hence they were verbatim. I also did not want to use a second party to help with the process because I believed that having been the interviewer, it would be easier for me to understand the flow of the words and voices. During interviews that took place in the presence of children, many times it was difficult to ignore the children; plus, their voices were most times louder than those of the parents. To capture the words of parents therefore took a lot of time, hence long hours of transcription.

The transcriptions were done with pseudo-names such that participants were not identifiable and the hard copies were securely stored in a locker and soft copies on a computer in password protected mode. Audio recordings on the phone were deleted immediately after transcription. Thus to the best of my knowledge, no other party had access to raw data collected from participants involved in this study.

As a pitfall, it is still difficult to say that transcription could capture all the clues from the interviews to make meaning (Marshall & Rossman, 2016); but recording the voices was the best shot at getting as much information as possible compared to just taking notes. One technical problem though was that I forgot to re-charge my phone battery or even carry with me, the charger before one of the teacher-interviews. So I made about four different recordings due to interruptions from "low-battery" warnings. The choice I made was to take notes during those recording gaps and the discussion was able to flow fairly well in spite of the mishaps.

4.6 Data analysis

To analyze data, according to Brinkmann & Kvale (2015), is to interpret and 'make sense' of, or uncover the meaning of our research question using the empirical data. They argue further, that analysis takes place throughout the research process because the researcher constantly evaluates the topic, the research questions, the methods and every other aspect to make sure that they are on track and the main focus is not lost. So, I have had to edit my topic as the entire research process unfolds.

At the stage of interpreting empirical data, even during the interviews for instance, Gudmundsdottir (1996, p. 301) suggests that "we must learn to get behind the words and silently translate the informants' language so that we understand using their dictionary rather than ours". Thus, my analysis was dialectical because I went back and forth between the empirical data and known existing theories. (Nilsen, 2005)

4.6.1 Coding

The first phase of data analysis was coding. With a considerable amount of data collected, a lot of issues and words or statements (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) came up. So I looked out for repetitions and similarities, key words and concepts (as explained in the theory chapter); which I eventually clustered under the themes below;

- Experiences with childcare in the past
- Learning goals in the past
- Agents of care and learning during parents' childhoods
- Childcare values emphasized by parents
- Parents' learning goals
- Parents' expectations and experiences associated with Norwegian barnehager
- Teachers' perspectives on childcare values
- Learning goals emphasized in barnehage
- Teachers experiences with diversity in barnehage
- Performing integration and inclusion

4.6.2 Meaning making

Interpretation of data, my second analysis phase, was based on both 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches described by Nilsen (2005). The 'top-down' approach is where established theoretical concepts are imported and applied in data interpretation, an example in my study is the use of "socialization" and the new concept, "adult-child" to explain adult-child relations in some cultures.

The 'bottom-up' approach on the other hand is where new theoretical concepts that ensue from empirical data are generated. In this study, I generated the concept, "adult-child" to explain parents' expectations towards children in different situations. For instance when they allocate tasks, the child is expected to act like an 'adult' and accomplish them, but when it comes to decision making, they are 'mere children' and know nothing.

4.7 Methodological challenges and Ethical reflections

4.7.1 Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality in qualitative research means that the researcher protects and safeguards the identities of his or her participants, even the research location to safeguard against unwanted exposure to harm. Thus, data is only made public with a shield of anonymity. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)

Many times I pondered on confidentiality issues related to the individual interviews I carried out in the hearing of some spouses. I was basically conscious about cases where participants may sometimes share information that they otherwise did not intend to share (Patton 2002, Hennink, 2007). In one case for instance, while I interviewed the wife, the husband was within the same area attending to some tasks and watching the children. And in two other cases, the wife was either making dinner in the kitchen or preparing the children for bed as I interviewed the husband. Most of these arrangements were the most convenient for the participants so I made sure to stick to only non-sensitive and the semi-structured questions I had prepared to avoid sensitive topics from coming up.

4.7.2 The researcher role

My role in the research was clear for the most part, except that I knew most of the participants personally and had the challenge of separating myself from being "the friend" to being "the researcher". As a matter of fact, I was very nervous before my first interview as I was conscious about how to ask the questions and stay focused on the research topic and not the casual talk between friends.

In another incidence, one parent (Johan) that I approached about the study thought that I could be of help in advising about parenting, so she, to some extent, derived motivation to participate from that expectation. I amicably told her that I was not going to give any 'expert' advice on good parenting, because I considered her as the expert of her own parenting style and was requesting to learn from her personal experience. This involved keeping my ego in check, knowing that I was "not the center of the world" (Seidman, 2013, p. 9) and that my role was to be an active listener to the worthwhile information (Seidman, 2013) the Johan had to share. So I threw the same questions back at her so as to get her opinion instead. More so, ensuring neutrality in research meant that I was neither in a position to change my respondents, judge them, nor offer them some kind of therapy (Patton, 2002).

4.7.3 Power relations

Regarding power relations, I felt quite unskilled because almost all the participants were either masters or doctorate degree holders, hence they most definitely had experience with research procedures. Fortunate enough, they were cooperative and willing to give me all the information I needed, so I considered it as a balanced interviewer-interviewee power relation. From my observation, they did not see me any differently from the friend they knew before I talked about the study. And in my opinion this was an advantage in that they felt free to share as much as possible about the topic.

The naming exercise, although meant for the participants, also went a long way in calming my own nerves prior to the interviews because it was fun and relaxing. Rapport building as a "friend" also helped with balancing power relations because then both the participants and I felt

relaxed about the whole interview process. It was more like a normal conversation as implied by Gudmundsdottir (1996) and Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) and yet professional as it yielded answers to questions I set out to ask.

4.7.4 Reciprocity

Compensating participants for their time and information shared can be a contentious issue sometimes. It can also prove to be costly if the number of participants is relatively large, hence one may be tempted to leave out this aspect of research. Marshall and Rossman (2016) argue however, that "when people adjust their priorities and routines to help the researcher, or even get others to tolerate the Researcher's presence, they are giving of themselves" (p. 126); hence the need to show some form of reciprocity.

In my case, reciprocity took various forms like, seasons (Christmas) cards and offering to paid and babysitting (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I also consider the fact that interviews were conducted at hours and venues convenient for the clients as reciprocity because I more or less "danced according to their tune".

Additionally, during the interviews with Any and Naomi for instance, I accorded a certain degree of attention to the children, M and Zoe, respectively, while the mothers responded to the interview questions. Playing with the children and at the same time paying attention to the mothers was a big task but I considered it my way of making it easy for the participants to share their knowledge with me without having to worry about the children. Moreover, all the parent-interviews, except for Johan and Any, took place in the comfort of their homes. Even if this was by far the only shot I had at receiving data it was also my way of reciprocating participants' acceptance to participate in the study.

In the case of Johan, after the interview she was also able to share more about her feelings regarding the different ways in which her parenting style departs from that of others. I gave her a listening ear and referred her to some websites from which she could read and learn more about other people's experiences regarding child growth and development. This was also one way to reciprocate her time.

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Furthermore, I had mentioned to some of the participants that if they would be interested in getting a copy of my final master thesis report, they could do so. This according to Hennik (2007) is one way of reciprocating clients for their time. It means that findings from the study can be given back to the people involved so that relevant knowledge can be used to improve actions and perspectives of people. Both researchers and participants or the community at large get to learn something new about themselves by reading the report (ibid).

4.8 Limitations of the study

4.8.1 Reliability

Data collected in this study is, to a larger extent, free from bias and therefore reliable (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015) because I believe the views expressed by the participants to be true and representative of their individual understanding and experience of the real world in the context of the topic discussed. I also consider it reliable because I was conscious about the urge to share my own childhood experience which was a lot similar to some of my participants. It was a great task to control myself from interjecting or strongly agreeing using prejudiced (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015) statements like, "I know, right?"; "Exactly"; but I remained aware of it.

4.8.2 Validity

To add on still, the interview guide was changed a number of times while in the field as it was basically designed to provide some form of focus. At some point, it was not used at all, probably because I had mastered what exactly I wanted to ask about during the interviews. But this could have affected the consistency in information from all participants, since information and areas of discussion could be slightly different. According to Patton (2002), "an interview guide is prepared to ensure that the same basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each person interviewed" (p. 343). Most empirical data used here is thus based on a similar line of participant questioning.

More so, apart from the interviews, a focus group discussion was the only additional method used. Perhaps there is need to use more methods or even triangulation of methods including participant observation in future research regarding the topic.

Statistical generalization is inappropriate since each country had at most two parent 'representatives', who were mostly self-selected rather than randomly. Also, considering the fact that all parent-participants had a relatively high education level, data collected was limited to persons of a particular category or social class. They were conveniently situated or simply accessible to me (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015) and thus, I never went out of my "comfort zone" to seek views from other parents who for instance had low levels of education, or immigrated to Norway due to other reasons like refuge.

However, information from the four teachers can be generalized since they were randomly selected (Brinkman & Kvale, 2015). And considering the amount of time available for my research, this was all the coverage I found most feasible. A more extensive research thus needs to be done to include more categories of immigrants and their experiences with integration related to child upbringing in Norway.

4.9 Summary

This study focuses on the perspectives of parents and kindergarten teachers from different nationalities and in this chapter I have described the recruitment process which was done through personal connections and the snow ball technique. Here I also describe the research methods used to collect data, the ethical issues I had to consider and the challenges related to the study. Qualitative interviews, that is; narrative, semi-structured and individual along with one focus group discussion were used for data collection. The naming exercise as a research tool was used to build rapport and engage participants in choosing their pseudo-names for the research project. Only adult participants were considered because of the time availability; plus, my goal was to generate knowledge about the way parents and teachers perceive 'ideal' early childhood care and learning. More rationale will be reflected in the section about further research recommendations. But first, I would like to introduce the analysis chapters for my study.

CHAPTER 5: PARENTS' CHILDCARE AND LEARNING PRACTICES

This is one of the two analysis chapters, and it will mainly comprise interpretation and discussion on parents' perspectives about child care and learning. The data analysis process as a whole will be done dialectically such that I will go back and forth between my empirical data and existing theory plus relevant literature. Hence both the 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' approaches described in the methodology chapter will be applied.

The coding process involved a thorough engagement with my research objectives and questions; also the key theoretical concepts and the empirical data in order to categorize and come up with the final themes under which all data will be interpreted.

Thus, the (six) themes in this chapter represent my goal to delve as deeply as possible, into parents' childhood experiences with care and learning in the past, and the care and learning values and options they have adopted with regard to their children. For instance, could there be similarities between child care values of their parents and their own considering different child upbringing contexts? What are their experiences with utilizing institutionalized ECEC in Norway?

To recap briefly, the research questions to be answered in this chapter are;

- o What are the experiences (differences and similarities) in care and learning during parents' childhood in the past and that of their children today?
- o What are parents' expectations of, and experiences with barnehager which their children attend?

The themes include;

1. Experiences with childcare in the past
2. Learning goals in the past
3. Agents of care and learning during parents' childhoods
4. Childcare values emphasized by parents
5. Parents' learning goals
6. Parents' expectations and experiences associated with Norwegian barnehage

Hence, in the first three sections, the parents and I go down memory lane in order to capture different aspects of their upbringing, followed by co-generation of knowledge about their present child upbringing choices. The views represented are of parents from Germany, Zambia, Indonesia, China, Rwanda, and the Netherlands. However, just like afore mentioned, though my study did not include Norwegian parent-participants, I will use information from literature to elucidate Norwegian childhoods for contextual purposes.

5.1 Experiences with early childhood care in 'the past'

The aim of generating knowledge about parents' past childhood experiences is to discover whether or not these have influence on parents own child upbringing choices especially considering the fact that the context in which they are raising their children may be different. As discussed in the third chapter, through socialization, society has a means of passing on traditions from generation to generation, including traditions about how children should be raised. And from my empirical findings, more than half the parent-participants admitted that they were following in their parents' footsteps in relation to child upbringing. More elaboration will be included later in this chapter. But first, we shall look at forms of care which parents received during their childhood; and since most parents could not assign chronological age to these experiences, I simply asked them to share experiences from six years and below.

5.1.1 Love, affection, provision and protection

Almost all parents reported to have received some form of physical affection and care in the past. Random responses include their parents' emphasis on *"proper dressing"* (according to the weather), said a parent from Germany; *"taking sand flees out of my feet"*, said a parent raised in Tanzania; adequate sleep, being bathed at least until the age of six when one is taught to bath themselves, said a lady from Zambia; *"He [father] would lift me and put me on his shoulders…and then he would go round the house with me on the shoulders and when he would sit, I would always sit on his lap"*, she added. They (parents) were *"very loving […] as a child you felt safe […] I was never afraid that they were not going to be there"*, narrates Rose, from the Netherlands. Parents' faces beamed as they shared experiences with care; most of which reflected on a 'romantic' childhood (See Woodhead & Montgomery, 2009).

However, the empirical data also suggests that interpretation and expression of love differed for some parents because their childhood experiences involved love being expressed through strict emphasis on areas like academic excellence instead of cuddling and free expression of feelings for instance. Therefore, although all parent-participants currently show love and affection for their children through words like 'I love you', or by cuddling and kissing, not all of them necessarily experienced the same kind of treatment. For some parents, acts of protection, strictness and high expectations to perform better in subsequent tasks were a sign that their parents loved and cared about them as exemplified by Johan from China.

> *"I cannot remember that my father and mother hold me…"My mother is very strict, that's the most important words for my childhood",* she said.

Hence, we see that some parents like Johan did not experience the cuddly and 'smooch' kind of care in their early childhood. And Chao (1994) notes that; "For Asians, parental obedience and some level of strictness may be associated with parental concern, caring, or involvement" (p. 1112). As a matter of fact, he adds that for the Chinese, the phrase *chiao shun*[19] translated as 'training' is used synonymously with the term 'child rearing'. Thus it carries both the meaning of caring and teaching or passing on of familial and societal norms; and the process often includes a high degree of strictness.

Johan also mentioned that her play time was restricted within the confines of the family compound and/or for a limited amount of time; an experience which can easily be interpreted as abusive parenting. But Chao (1994) argues that this does not necessarily depict parental domination over children, but rather a means of maintaining the smooth running of the family unit, which is also a very important aspect of the Chinese culture. And according to Rao, McHale, & Pearson (2003), children are taught as early as possible, to control their emotions and expression of feelings. Instead, they are admonished to work hard towards excellence, which as Evans (1994) notes is also a reflection of parents' child upbringing competencies. And in Johan's

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19 Chiao shun is a Chinese term that contains the idea of training (i.e., Teaching or educating) children in the appropriate or expected […] socially desirable and approved behaviour". (Chao 1994, p. 1112)

case, play time was limited so that more time could be devoted to studying because, *"the only way to change the position in the society is to study"*, she quotes her mother who together with her father were peasant farmers. Johan's example suggests that strictness in care and learning during childhood is indeed perceived to be done in the 'best interests' of the child.

5.2 Learning goals and values emphasized in 'the past'

5.2.1 Respect, obedience and discipline

Aside from receiving care, all parents mentioned that children were also expected to learn different values that were linked to both individual care and social relationships. For instance, respect and obedience towards elders (parents/adults and older siblings) by use of titles or pet names was a social expectation. But also, learning skills like personal hygiene as mentioned in Naomi's narration were expected during parents' childhood. According to her, when a child turned six years, she would be taught to bath and dress herself.

Regarding respect for elders, Naomi said that an elder sibling in Zambia is addressed with a prefix, *'ba'*, which connotes respect. Thus, for someone to refer to me as *'ba Gladys'*, would indicate that I am elder to him or her. Also, aspects of respect included politeness and hospitality towards visitors such that one had to abandon everything one was doing to *'come say hello'* to the visitor before returning to the abandoned tasks which would also include fetching a drink and/bite for the visitor.

Monica from Rwanda adds; *"You have to respect…even the housemaids, they were paid to take care of us but we had to respect them"*. And this aspect of respect was involved obedience or listening to, and doing whatever one was asked to do.

Moreover, it is disrespectful for a child to talk back at the adult in an opposing manner because he or she 'knows nothing' and the adult 'knows it all', something not common in the Norwegian culture today. "… *You have to hear what the parents are saying to you, and you don't argue, you don't quarrel with them […] but here, yes, I can tell my child don't do this and they'll do it"*. Hence, although Monica was keen to obey and meet her parents' learning expectations of respect, she is not able to impose the same on her children. The children (being in a different

context) have a right to their views and parents must at least pay attention to them before 'brushing them off'.

Regarding the notion of respect among the Chinese and Indonesians, Any from Indonesia enlightened me that titles are also used in different ways; For instance, an elder sibling addresses a younger one as *'meimei'* while the younger one addresses his or her elder as *'jiejie'.* And in Indonesia, the title is *'kakak'*, is used instead of names of peers.

And according to Bond and Hwang (1986), Chinese have such great regard to family and social relationships and this is a great value adopted from the Confucian tradition summarized as follows;

1. A person is defined by his or her relationship with others
2. Relationships are structured hierarchically, and
3. Social order and harmony are maintained by each party honouring the requirements and responsibilities of the role relationships. (Bond and Hwang, 1986 cited in Chiao 1994, p. 1113).

Children are thus socialized in light of the Confucian tradition which is passed on from generation to generation. As mentioned in the theory chapter, socialization of children as a process enables adults to preserve and carry on the cultural traditions long after they are 'gone'.

Also, according to a parent from the Netherlands, while growing up, the degree of respect varied depending on the age of the adult:

> *"Yeah, for sure...that you would treat adults differently than those of the same age for instance… and grandmas and grandpas were of course a different category again",* she said,

Hence, it is important to note that culture is a question of both time and space. In the case of Norway, for instance, Gullestad (1996) argues, that during the 1950s and 1960s, obedience was more emphasized than being one's own (*egen*) or oneself because the latter was considered a negative form of behavior. She refers to Kari's narration about her childhood, saying that obedience contributed to one's sociability and oneness with others, while being *egen* meant;

being "obstinate, inflexible, and not social" (Gullestad, 1996, p. 30). Thus one's life was to be seen in relation to the lives or wellbeing of others as the next section depicts.

Basically, I could say, in both historical Norway and some other non-Norwegian contexts, parents' experiences suggest that 'children were seen and not heard'. The parents were custodians of societal morality and they made efforts to maintain social harmony from generation to generation. Hence to some extent, Norwegian child upbringing goals during that time resembled those in some non-Norwegian contexts represented in this study.

Regarding discipline, Johan's example about her parents' expectations on good academic performance reflect an emphasis on hard work. She was not allowed to play too long or even spend 'precious' time on reading 'non-academic' books. As a matter of fact, she shared about a moment when she was severely punished when after her mother found her hideously ready a story book; an experience she described as *"very painful"*.

In the same way, Aggrey from Rwanda mentions that having been *"an educated teacher"*, his father was so strict with school that being an only son who was *"cherished and loved"* did not make him immune to high expectations regarding school. Also, as a little boy, he and other children were involved, as early as possible, in family work and businesses including herding cattle, especially for boys. *"It's just a matter of being able to talk"*, he said. And for girls, they had to take part in caring for younger ones, to cook especially in the absence of their mothers. Hence discipline and hard work were an emphasized virtue during childhood.

5.2.2 Concern for others

Showing concern for others, in view of Monica from Rwanda, is related to moral and physical interdependence which she finds quite rare in the Norwegian society today as compared to Africa where *"you have to think of my brother whose children are not going to school, my cousins who don't have something to eat"*. She adds that even if children have turned 18 years and have left home, it does not mean that they can now survive on their own. *"They will always need their parents support,"* she says.

And according to Any from Indonesia, concern from others also means that when a younger sibling cries over a toy belonging to an older sibling, the parent expects that it should be given to him or her. The elder must take care of the younger one *"even though she is only two years younger"* which eventually culminates into being a "*good role model*".

In connection to Norway, based on Kari's narrations recounted by Gullestad (1997), during the 1950s and 1960s, sharing and giving were also emphasized by Norwegian parents as a moral principle "clearly derived from a secularized religious culture" (Gullestad, 1997, p. 27). Such behavior was to be exhibited whenever need arose as illustrated in Kari's writing about her grandmother's response to uncle, Gustav's situation;

> As all adults know, unemployment was widespread. One of my uncles had a family with three children. He was a brick-layer by trade. He was unemployed. That was bad, I felt, even if we did not miss anything at home. Late one autumn evening it rained outside, and I had gone to bed. My bed was, by the way, two chairs against each other, and that was OK. It was placed in the room in such a way that when the door was partly open, I could see the big mirror in the hall. Then somebody rang the bell, and I became wide awake and peeked at the mirror to see the person Grandmother met at the door. It was Uncle Gustav. He had a black raincoat which was dripping wet, and his black hair hung in strips over his forehead. I listened intently and clearly heard him say, with his head on his mother's shoulder: 'I have no food to give the kids tomorrow, Mother'. I see and hear it whenever I want to. They went into the kitchen and closed the door, but he did not return home empty-handed. (Gullestad 1997, p. 28)

Kari's grandmother, according to the above extract, modeled the value of sharing and giving probably without knowing that the granddaughter was observing. But it goes without saying that she understood the message pretty well. Hence we still see that in the past, Norwegian culture placed emphasis on care and learning values similar to some cultures in the global south like Monica's. And now I would like to move on to agents of childhood care and learning in the past.

5.3 Agents of care and learning during parents' childhoods

In order to later understand the role of agents involved in child upbringing today, I will discuss knowledge generated during my interview with parents about agents of care and learning during their childhoods.

5.3.1 Mothers

As mentioned in the theory chapter, historical accounts based in the global north suggest that the concept of mothering was attached to a woman's biological role of reproduction, child care and nurture. But with the onset of the feminist movement, this view was contested with the argument that the claims were based on social rather than biological factors. The feminists argued that girls were being socialized into roles related to child care and nurture, hence the skills were not inherent. (Glenn et al., 1994). Empirical data from this study reveals that women were indeed more involved with the care and nurture roles in parents' past childhood than in their children's lives today. For the sake of this study therefore, mothering is replaced with parenting because the care and nurture roles, according to participants, are sometimes shared between men and women, but the concept, 'mothers' is used in this section to refer to the female parent.

For most parent-participants from both the global south and north, mothers carried out 'active' parenting by provision of care and guidance through actual physical presence as compared to fathers for instance. And in the absence of mothers, female nannies or relatives took on the mother's role. Thus, men or fathers were not frequently referred to in relation to child care when parents shared about people involved in their care.

> *"I cannot remember what kind of things that my father did with me… really I just remember from my childhood; only my mother",* said Johan from China.

Johan thus experienced a childhood where her mother was more involved in child care and learning than her father. To expound more on her experience, I will refer to the works of Rao, McHale, & Pearson (2003) and Chao (1994) who note that in the Chinese culture, it is mothers who ascribe a lot of attention to training of a child. And in the years before school, the mother is

physically available to meet every care and learning need of the child. And when the child eventually reaches the school going age, the mother still reserves the responsibility of providing the support and drive for working hard to achieve familial and societal expectations of excellence. Hence Johan's experience is not an isolated case but one that is common among the Chinese.

One parent from the Netherlands also acknowledged that his mother was more physically present and active in child upbringing than his father. A survey conducted in 1965 showed that "80 percent of both [Dutch] women and men disapproved of women with school age children taking a job and nearly 100% of men and women disapproved of placing children in a childcare center [… but through the 90s, the percentages dropped to] less than 20% […] and 50% [respectively] ". (Van Praag, 1997 and cited in "Early childhood," 2000, p. 24)

And according to professor Vangeert, such percentages had not changed much by 2007. He mentions that a lower percentage of especially young mothers participate in the labor force as compared to other comparable countries, and that there is a strong tendency for mothers to raise children or take a long time off work after children are born. (Westcott, 2007). Now, the reasons underlying such practice could range from individual to societal preferences, beliefs, attitudes and norms. For instance, believing that mothers are natural caregivers could influence society to have common practices among its people as exemplified by the Netherlands above. Other factors like economic and economic structures are a separate discussion altogether.

But to mention briefly, in the case of one German parent, because his dad had a 'flexible' job that allowed him to be physically available, or able to have his son tag along during his work errands, he was rather actively involved in his son's upbringing. It is clear therefore that apart from probable cultural beliefs and attitudes attached to mothers doing the caring and teaching job, career choices or orientations can influence parents to act differently.

Compared to their children today, most parents either underwent ECEC for only one year before school, or not at all. Thus, the years before attaining school going age were spent at home with their mother. As far as they can remember, parents who attended kindergarten, joined as late as the age of four or one year before school. Parents from the global north and Asia belonged to small nuclear families and the responsibility of child care basically fell in the hands of the parents, especially the mothers. And in the case of the three parent-participants from the African countries, all of them were raised in large nuclear families which occasionally became extended with relatively long-term visits from relatives. And according to Monica from Rwanda, the family had house helps living at their home, who carried out child care duties and house chores while the parents were work and when she and siblings were not at the kindergarten.

5.3.3 Peers and siblings

According to Corsaro (1990), peers, just like other agents of care and learning, are a means by which children learn about the world around them. Unlike the small families the parents have made today, their families while growing up were relatively large with siblings between two and seven. The parents' faces beamed at the mention of siblings and peers. Some thought that the presence of siblings and peers enhanced growth and development of children because they always have playmates at home and in the neighborhood to interact with.

For Naomi from Zambia who had 7 siblings, time with siblings was something she looked forward to, and sadness crept in when they had to part during school and kindergarten time. Thus, she generally perceives sibling and/or peer-presence as a tool for enhancing children's 'normal' or 'fast' growth and development. She said:

> *"I think children develop faster whey they are around a lot of people...even around other kids... When I was with my nephews, I saw how active she got. She liked it, the way the boys were running around, you can see that she is also trying to stand up and walk...so I think when there are a lot of kids around, a lot of people around, a child tends to develop much quicker."*

According to Naomi, children learn to walk by hanging onto each other or merely observing and tagging along their peers through various movements. Her view suggests that children's motivation to for instance learn walking skills among other growth factors, comes from exposure to peers and a lot of people.

5.3.4 Observational learning

1, a parent from Asia mentioned that his parents did not use words at all times, to teach him various values. He cites the example of watching his father reading newspapers and gradually taking keen interest in reading, which eventually enabled him to learn how read all by himself. As Corsaro (1990) notes, "Children interpret, organize, and use information from the environment and, in the process, acquire adult skills and knowledge" (p. 198). As exemplified by Kari's story under section 5.2.2 on '*concern for others,*' some of these skills are linked to important child care and learning values rooted in culture. Being a male child, 1 could also have assumed that boys and men ought to pay keen attention to reading the news and staying informed about issues in the community since it was his father and not the mother reading the newspapers. Thus, in relation to Corsaro's argument above, socialization may take various forms, even un-intended modeling of character by adults.

5.4 Childcare values emphasized by parents 'today'

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the parents would, in a number of ways, like to impart the same care values and learning goals received from their parents with a few modifications to suit their parenting contexts and personal preferences.

5.4.1 Intimacy, verbal communication, physical availability

> *"When I'm raising my children…everyday they just come back from the kindergarten and I say, "oh come here [she puts her arms as if taking them round to give a hug]…are you happy in the kindergarten?"*- Johan, a parent from China

Looking at Johan's statement, verbal communication of love and affection towards children is one of her child care values. Also, when what parents thought constituted a 'good' childhood a

parent from Germany said that it involved letting the *children… know they are loved … telling them more often that I love them*. Parents like Rose from the Netherlands are certain that they were loved by their parents but words were not often used. And this is one of the things Rose wants to do differently with her children.

Parents also understand children's care needs in relation to their display of vulnerability or demands; and meeting these demands constitute a 'good' childhood according to the parents. Random responses from the focus group discussion with Amelie and Andrew include;

> *"They (children) love being fed, (laughter), that is basic … they need to feel safe and know what's going on … they need some routine and that they can know what is expected …or what's going to happen next … we get up we get dressed … Kristian drinks his milk. It's always the same. If there is no milk one day, he will feel out of place, (laughter)… the days we tell them there is barnehage or not. Then they know … Then there's breakfast and then we go to barnehagen. If it isn't barnehage day then Kristian will also check that … So for him it's obviously more important to know".*

According Amelie and Andrew, communication of children's daily activities is considered an integral part of a good childhood which is expressed through good adult-child communication and negotiation. This upbringing practice is also considered to provide a sense of safety for the children.

Parents also think that children need a safe environment where they can develop and grow in social relationships, feel at home and experience respect and acceptance, support and love from those around them. Hence, parents attribute safety to physical (especially adult) presence or being *"very easily accessible"*. They also believe that it is important for children that they have the same people around them as it creates a sense of safety and comfort. *"For me I was lucky that my father was at home, actually was always there when I needed him… even though I probably played outside in the woods most of the time...but then it was good to know that there's my mother",* narrates Andrew. Hence Andrew would also like to provide the same kind of privilege to his children.

Thus, care is associated to meeting of children's need for love, affection, safety and stability. However, in this study, childhood is not only considered as a time for children to receive care from adults; children are also expected to achieve certain goals or acquire a number of skills for social life, as I will now go on to discuss.

5.5 Parents' learning goals

Concerning the topic on learning goals emphasized in early childhood, parents also adopted those from their own parents, except for *'not so important'* aspects. For instance, Johan from China did not think it was necessary to be as strict as her mother over 'trivial' matters such as dictating what vegetables her children should eat. She said;

> *"Somethings I must be very strict with them but some things maybe I think it's not very important ... I think he has to study, my children, they have to study…Norwegian, Mathematics and Chinese. But I also encourage them to do the things they like… for example if they like to read the book, you know, read novel… not now, but later, if they like, I will not stop them because I think that these things are also a kind of study ... about eating vegetables, maybe, "you like this kind, you do not like this kind?" it's not so important ... for the stealing, I think,… completely no! ...so according to the different things, I can choose the level of strictness."*

Johan is aware that her child upbringing choices are similar to those of her mother; however she mentions that the level of 'strictness' is in 'moderation' compared to her mother's. Her goal is mainly to ensure the children's overall happiness in the now, not just their intellectual well-being for a 'better future'. Thus, she deploys selective restrictions in areas that in her opinion require her to do so, and 'lays down-her-guard' in areas that do not require too much restriction.

Meanwhile, 1, who is a parent from Indonesia had the following view;

> *"... since I don't really remember how my parents raised me, I have my own idea, how should parents teach their children...so let's see, aaah, because I think my wife probably had the same experience like me, so we don't have really an ideal, a role model how to raise our children. So we got our idea from reading, from*

books, asking from other parents, friends, teachers, things like that… the most important thing that we should understand the general perspective about the experts about the childhood development […] How they mentally and physically develop year by year... and then we try to follow the guidance, like aaaam, you know there's like …We use that as our main guidelines and we add somethings that we think is not there. For example aaaam in terms of spirituality, we can't get from general experts".

According to this interview extract, 1 makes his child upbringing choices based on studies about children's growth and development. He and his Any, aim at providing a childhood experience involving self-care and independence where their child can learn to take responsibility for herself *'in her capacity'*. Which brings me to my next sub topic on independence.

5.5.1 Independence

Based on my empirical data, the theme on independence was used to refer to autonomy, and hence the ability to dress up and dress oneself, self-feeding, sleeping through the night and ability to use words to communicate ones needs and opinions.

As mentioned above, 1 and Any would like their child to learn how to be independent but *"in her capacity"*. Unlike her parents' expectations of her to take responsibility for younger siblings, Any says:

"… we don't want to pressure her to be older than her age … Responsibility is something she has…she has to know she has to do that, even now … But not take care of other people…. Like, she is able to eat by herself, drink by herself, sleep by herself, wake up by herself, and we hope that she can do more and more…. Yeah, she has to be independent and care. So whatever difficult situation, she will survive… In our country it is very normal for little kids to get fed by adults until they are 5, that's still normal… And for us it's not normal. You're able to eat by yourself, you have your hands, and everything is fine, you can do that."

Any narrates her childhood experience about playing the baby-sitter role as an elder sibling; and according to the above interview extract, she considered it a responsibility suitable for an older

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person. Hence she and her husband do not have intentions of subjecting their daughter to the same kind of experience. Their daughter, M only needs to learn how to take care of herself.

While some parents as suggested by Any and 1's example, may cultivate a particular child upbringing style different from one in their own childhood, others like Monica opt for a mix of both as discussed below.

5.5.2 "Mixed culture"

Since the parents involved in this study have lived in Norway for periods ranging from two to 10 years, most of them have adopted what Monica, from Rwanda (among those that have lived here the longest) called a "mixed culture". In her opinion, applying a combination of values from the African culture she was raised in and those from the Norwegian culture is preferred to one because she finds positives in both cultures. The aspect of sometimes listening to and respecting the views of children practiced in Norway was preferred to the 'children-have-no-say' style from her childhood because she knows that children sometimes have good ideas.

Regarding independence and interdependence Monica said;

> "We learned to depend on each other. But here, the way they raise up their children, they teach them to be independent since they are born I think? Because when you're born you have your own room… from the hospital to your own bed… but in Africa you share… now I am in a different context. I have to pick what I have learned in Norwegian or Western culture and then mix with what I have from my country."

Monica cites a contrast between the societies she was raised in and that in which she is raising her children. She thinks that children in Norway learn to be independent from the time of birth since they sleep in their own bed as soon as they arrive from the hospital. Meanwhile *'in Africa'* sharing is more emphasized and this is a value she also aims at incorporating into her child upbringing. While projecting into the future, she argues that children may be mentally and economically independent when they later become adults and have *"a job… a car… a house… but it's not enough. The stress can be there…You need even to depend on your parents. You don't*

say that, "now am 18, I can be on my own" you still need them." Monica therefore thinks that children need to learn to be both independent and interdependent in order to seek support from others and also support others when need arises.

<u>*5.5.3 Language skills*</u>

All parents considered it important to use the mother tongue almost exclusively while children are under their care. However, they believed that mastery of many languages was important for a 'competitive' world. Aggrey in particular said;

> *"We did not think that children should learn one language, even the Norwegian. Why to limit ourselves when the world is opening itself? ... So at least we need to have a global vision to talk more than two languages I think, and especially these international ones. That's one. Second, by speaking our mother language. Language is an identity, a point of reference."*

From Aggrey's view point, language is not only a means of communicating with others, but it is also a symbol for (social) identity. For the sake of this study, identity will simply refer to a sense of belonging derived from one's knowledge about their membership to a particular social group (Tajfel, 2010). Aggrey thinks that knowledge of the Norwegian language is essential for the children to be able to thrive in Norway, but the children need to be able to communicate with their relatives as well. Hence the need to also learn the Rwandese language. Aggrey also thinks that education is contextual and that the world is in constant change with people inventing new ideas all the time. Therefore, learning many languages may be beneficial for future success in a competitive world. And in his opinion, children need to understand the very existence of such competition in society.

Similarly, in Rose's case, an opportunity to learn Norwegian and English was one of the main reasons for sending their children to barnehage, (another being the need for them to experience social interactions outside the home). But otherwise, her plan had been to keep them at home till school going age.

Thus, parents learning goal regarding the Norwegian language appears to be associated with the enhancement of children's social well-being while living in Norway.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, in some African and Asian societies, as a form of respect, an adult or sibling is referred to using a title and/or their last name. This is not the same for Norwegian children who call teachers by their first name. Hence the meaning of respect is totally different between the Norwegian society and some societies that parent-participants come from. Monica relates respect for elders to being 'disciplined'. She admits that children's opinions should be heard and good behavior applauded to a limited extent; but they should also be taught to obey what adults say.

> *"Sometimes you need to be strict, and when they deserve praises, they have done well ...because sometimes children they, they can tell you something that, yeah, they can come with ideas",* she said.

In Monica's opinion, the level of respect in Norwegian families is 'low' because children are given too much praises and room for decision making. Also, they address elders, even their parents, in a 'disrespectful' manner, sometimes calling them *"stupid"*; and this is something she says that she can never put up with. The common ground for her therefore, is to apply some amount of strictness while at the same time giving some room for her children's ideas.

5.5.5 Picture Bible

> "We read the bible every day, three of us, before we go to bed…and if you talk to M, she will show you the bible…but it's only the picture bible…she remembers a lot of things and now she talks more about the stories… We want to build a culture that the bible is important and it's fun to read the bible. A lot of interesting stories," narrates Any.

Any thinks that the family-bible reading time is the best moment of the day and that M enjoys it so much. I was actually able to confirm Any's words during the interview when, with just one hint from her mother, M, whose vocabulary was still limited, was able to use sounds and gestures to complete particular bible stories from previous family readings. Thus, for this family, bible reading was an important learning goal emphasized in child upbringing. Although the topic did

not come up as clearly in other interviews, some parents referred to Christian moral values like friendship and respect for others in their responses.

5.6 Parents' expectations and experiences associated with barnehage

5.6.1 Barnehage as a bundle of joy

Expectations from different parents include the children's ability to learn other languages like Norwegian and English, to develop social skills and appreciation of people and cultures different from them and theirs respectively. Parents also expect teachers to love their children because *"for a good childhood it's essential that they are loved."*

According to Amalie, once the children feel safe with the adults in the barnehage and spend some degree of time (not too long or else they get over stressed) of maximum six hours daily for four days a week, then it is good for their wellbeing. She adds that children need consistency when it comes to adult-presence they are to have a "smooth" transition from home to barnehage and to build secure attachments therein. Also, *"If there is some routine [in barnehage activities] that makes them feel safe ...and comfortable that they know what to expect ... then I think it's good."* added Andrew.

For most parents, their children's participation in barnehager was positive because many of their expectations were met. For instance, the expectations for their children to be loved, to learn the Norwegian language, make new friends and relate peacefully with others were met. Rose was happy to learn that her two and a half year old daughter, Esther had learned the principle of respecting other children's space and property such that she would *"krangler ikke"* (Norwegian for "not fight"). The teacher had reportedly told her; *"there's never really anybody fussing or fighting with Esther."* And Rose acknowledged that this was a principle Esther would probably not have learned by spending time alone with her mother.

Furthermore, Monica whose son had to join barnehage at nine months because of her being admitted for school expected him to be shown love and be given food. And she admits that

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although it was a tough situation for both her and the son, the teachers *"were good"*. Hence barnehage was perceive as a 'bundle of joy'.

Regarding peer influence, Naomi, whose daughter Zoe was to join barnehage one month from the time of the interview, was worried about being separated from her. However, she also thought that joining barnehage would enhance her daughter's growth and development because of the presence of peers to play with. This reflects an attitude that could have been formed as a result of being raised in a big family of eight children.

Additionally, the aspect of diversity was seen as good thing because children were exposed as much as possible, to the fact that the world consists of different people, languages and ways of behavior. *"And I think the barnehage, teaching them about the different countries, I think that's good"*, said a parent from Germany. Thus children learn to appreciate and respect the differences that exist between them and others by focusing on the positive aspects about those differences.

One parent, Rose, expressed pleasure in the fact that teachers availed a long period of time for the regular parent-teacher dialogues during which questions concerning the child's welfare are asked and answered. She however expected the barnehage to involve parents more in other barnehage activities like children's trips and planning events which involved handicrafts and so on. On the other hand, she observed that the barnehage may be reluctant to do so because of less interest shown by other parents. In her opinion, maybe *this is where they want to deliver their kids and pick them up again… and they don't want to be asked to come to the barnehage to organize a play time or tell them something about their culture"*. During my teacher-interviews, this matter also came up when I asked about parents' involvement in barnehage programs but I will   discuss   this   in   the   next   chapter.

5.6.2 Choice of barnehage.

During the interviews, Rose mentioned that she was glad that her children were attending a Christian barnehage because she believed that her expectations in the way people should treat one another was similar to values emphasized by the barnehage. *"They are very much focusing*

on friendships and on positive things in the barnehage and I appreciate that a lot", she said. Hence her view suggests that parents actually have a right to choose the barnehage to which their child should go, but also that the government has considerable interest in integration and inclusion of diversity in the society.

In the case of Monica, her choice of a 'student-barnehage' for the nine month old son at that time was based on the fact that, being 'fragile', her son needed extra special care and attention which other barnehager in the city were not capable of providing. Plus, she thought that the teachers at this barnehage understood the plight of students and their busy study schedules, such that, it was possible for her to ask for favors related to taking care of her son whenever need arose.

One couple thought that they had make a good choice by placing their children in international barnehager was because these exposed the children to diverse cultures, something they think their children are being raised in and constantly exposed to. Additionally, it provided an opportunity for the children to learn multiple languages, which is one of their child upbringing goals. Thus in general, parents' choice of barnehage was based on compatibility in theirs and barnehage's moral values and learning goals. But it is also important to note that, just like Naomi, most of the barnehager were chosen due to their close location to homes of the participants.

5.6.3 Fears and challenges; 'Clash of cultures'?

Children's participation in barnehage was mostly referred to positively, with lots of desirable outcomes like acquisition and improvement in speech and language skills, fast (physical/practical) growth and (mental) development. A few matters of concern however arose with regard to balancing care and learning goals at home and at the barnehage (which to some extent promotes predominantly Norwegian-child upbringing values).

Parents expressed fear both as a state of being unable to 'do anything about it' and having the task of using children's time at home to teach and maintain family traditions in order to 'balance' the cultures.

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For instance, regarding learning goals, 1 and Any both expressed fear regarding their child's adopting the Norwegian way of addressing adults by their first name, which is different from that of their Indonesian culture.

So, the phrase, 'clash of cultures' emanated from Any's recognition of contrasting views on the notion of "respect" between the two cultures;

> *"One thing, maybe we've been a bit afraid the culture which shows...aaah, the children call adults by the first name... Because we are planning to go home and she will get stuck with such things... Here, the way you show respect is not in the way you call, you still respect people even though you call by their first name... But in our culture, if you respect somebody, you use title. Even though for other kids who are maybe one year older, even though two months old, still you need to call them by title."*

While elders and peers in Any's culture are referred to by use of titles, at Norwegian barnehager children can call their teachers by their first name and this is something Any fears her child, M would adopt from the kindergarten. She was afraid that M could come off as disrespectful if she did the same with elders back in her home country. In her opinion, regular visits to their home country would help strike the balance between the two cultural perspectives on respect because then, M would learn aspects of their culture through exposure to people who practice it.

However, considering the child's age, she thought that it was not going to be an easy task to teach M how to differentiate between cultures. She shares the experience of her friend regarding the notion of 'respect':

> ***Any:*** *"One of my friends married to a Norwegian and sent the daughter to the kindergarten...After one year she was able to talk and of course in Norwegian, but then her mommy was not satisfied with the way she talked to her..."Du mama, herregud" (laughter)...And then she said, not in English of course, "my daughter, you don't talk to me like that. You don't call me 'du'. If you call me 'mama', just 'mama', that's ok. But not, 'du, mama'" (laughter).*
>
> ***Me:*** *So that's one of your fears...but I guess there's nothing the barnehage can do about that?*
>
> ***Any:*** *No. That's our job at home.*

Me: Ok. So how do you think you can do it...or will you be like your friend who tells her child how to call her?

Any: Yes. I think I will do the same. But we know it's not easy to tell a child about different culture. What is different culture?

The situation in which Any's friend found herself suggests that some parents perceive some forms of children's speech in Norwegian culture as 'disrespectful'. Hence their expectations and those of, for instance barnehage teachers appear to be in contradiction. But Any recognizes that it is just different and non-familiar, hence it is hers and other parents' duty to socialize their children according to expectations of the different societies.

Any was also worried about M's feeding at the barnehage. She cites an incident when she was picking up M from the barnehage. The teacher had said to her: *"Spiste godt! Spiste godt[20]!"* which translated from Norwegian means, "She ate well! She ate well!" But Any was not sure about the actual amount of food her daughter was given. In her experience, M eats a relatively big amount of food over a long stretch of time and she is not sure if the teachers have the patience and time to watch one child with so many others to care for.

Another source of fear that came up during interviews and had turned out to be a 'blessing in disguise', was that Monica's children had been discriminated against by other children because of the color of their skin. And Monica narrates;

"It's normal when children are growing that they can beat each other. But the thing that they experienced that was scary, I was not feeling ... well because I had to talk to teachers almost every time they say so; it was like, there were some children who don't play with them because they are not the same color... and they were like, "are we going to become white when we grow?" ... Then I had to sit and explain to them; "before I go to the teacher, know, we are like this, we are not going to change, your color is this, and it's because you are coming from this part of the world"... And then she [she points at her daughter] started showing interest of where she comes from... She became proud and

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[20] Author's translation

started showing interest in the mother language, read books ... and when she is going to sleep, (I don't have books in our language) ... [but] I have some books in Norwegian. She would say, "Read in Norwegian then explain to me in [the mother tongue]" ... But I had to talk to the teachers and then they talked to all children; "You see, they are not chocolate, because they are looking like this, they are not bad." ... Of course some can continue [discriminating], but at least for them [Monica's children] they felt their [confidence was restored]

Monica had become afraid because the incidence had occurred more than once, hence she had taken a step to talk to the teachers about it. But first, she had let the children know that their skin color was not going to change and that it was based on the fact that they were coming from a geographical location different from Norway. As it turned out, that explanation was enough to stir up inside her daughter, Malaika such deep interest in her home country that she made her mother proud by asking her to read her bed-time stories in her mother tongue.

In general therefore, it will appear that parents have taken it upon themselves to deal with fears associated with barnehager by through communication with both their children and adults involved in their care at the barnehager.

5.6.4 Intersections and dissections between the past and the present

Empirical data described in the sections above suggests that parents' past childhood experiences outside Norway both intersect and dissect with childhood in Norway in the present. As stated earlier, majority of parents generally aim at emphasizing the same care and learning values that were present in their own childhood in the past. But also, some parents like Monica think that they have to combine both their past and Norwegian values, considering her children will live in Norway for all of their lives.

Furthermore, it is important to note that some differences exist between countries that the immigrants come from and Norway as described in the background and context chapter; but

some parents simply adopt 'mixed cultures' for the sake of convenience and contextual provision of care and learning for their children.

Main differences between 'non-Norwegian' and 'Norwegian childhood' include 'tough' love versus gentle love; independence/individualization versus dependence/interdependence; 'total' freedom of expression versus restricted/limited children's voices and 'wild' playing (sometimes in combination with work) versus protected playing in the presence of adults.

Monica partly agrees with teaching her children some form of autonomy and freedom of expression because "*sometimes children come up with good ideas"*, she says. However she thinks that Norwegian children learn lean to be independent and self-opinionated rather too early. And regarding play time, Monica thinks that although she is expected to observe her children during play time, it was not the case with her parents when growing up in Rwanda. As a child, she and other children played wherever and whenever as long as they returned home at the end of the day. "*Here we protect our children too much,"* she said. Then again the definition of protection could range from ensuring safety, to restriction of freedom. Thus, it has to be interpreted in context and with an understanding of parents' general belief that whichever way protection is defined, it is for the good of the children.

Johan admits that she is as strict as her mother because she expects her sons (aged between one and three years old) "*to study"*. The only difference she cites is that she is happy to provide room for her children to explore personal 'non-academic' interests like reading novels and story books which her mother never permitted her to do because they were not considered academic. This is also a choice she attributes to her education and social status which is relatively higher than her parents had; hence the status enables her to be more liberal. This suggests that, given similar circumstances as her parents raised her in, she would probably have been exactly like her mother; hence her experience reflects a different childhood than what is present in Norwegian childhood today.

David who is from the Netherlands and is married to Rose, thought that their child upbringing style and setting was very similar to that in his childhood. He noted that, just like his father, he is

away from home working for most of the day, and like his mother did, Rose works at home and thus spends more time with the children especially because they do not participate 100 percent in barnehager. This as explained in section 5.3.1, is also quite different from the Norwegian culture which advocates for gender equality in the labor market by placing emphasis on the use of nearly 100 percent of services provided by ECEC institutions. Thus, their child upbringing arrangement is rather different from that in most Norwegian families.

5.7 Summary

In this chapter, my focus has been to explore parents' childhood experiences with care and learning in the past, and how these experiences have influenced parents' child upbringing choices today. Being that barnehager are an important aspect of child upbringing in the Norwegian society, parents' expectations and experiences associated with sending children to barnehager have also been discussed. Parents, especially from Europe indicated, for the most part, that their learning and caring goals were not so different from those of their parents; one reason being that the Norwegian setting is relatively similar to that during their own childhood. Aspects in the Norwegian setting that are similar to their countries of origin include, the climate, political and social settings for instance in the ECEC and other childcare related policies or perspectives.

However, a lot of differences emerged especially between African and/or Asian parents' past child upbringing values and those emphasized in Norwegian society. The 'major' point of divergence exhausted in this chapter is the interpretation and application of the concepts, love, respect, autonomy, obedience and discipline. With reference to the accounts of Gullestad (1996), I also showed that some values like obedience and concern for others which are common in countries in the global south were previously emphasized in the Norwegian society during the 1950s. Hence, culture in this study is not only understood as a question of place, but also of time.

CHAPTER 6: THE PLACE OF BARNEHAGER IN CHILD UPBRINGING

As the second analysis chapter, in this text I will attempt to interpret empirical data about the perspectives and experiences of barnehage teachers with child upbringing among children from non-Norwegian families. The following research questions will be answered:

o What care and learning values are emphasized in barnehager and how do teachers describe their experience with care and learning in immigrant?

o In what ways do teachers and parents enhance integration and inclusion of diversity in the barnehager?

The themes under which these questions will be answered are:

- Teachers' perspectives on childcare values
- Learning goals emphasized in barnehage
- Teachers experiences with diversity in barnehage
- Performing integration and inclusion

6.1 Teachers' perspectives on childcare values

Barnehage teachers place specific emphasis on certain aspects of care depending on the age of the children and the amount of time they have spent at the barnehage. For children aged one to three years, teachers aim at creating a conducive environment in which children can grow and develop in a holistic manner as I will discuss in the proceeding sections. Areas of care that are considered fundamental for the overall well-being of children include 'love' and 'safety'.

6.1.1 Love and safety

According to (teacher) Odda, love is emphasized as a prerequisite to making the children *"feel [trygg]²¹ even when their parents are not there…and that they have confidence in us"*.

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21 Norwegian for "safe" (author's translation); and according to the teachers, it is not just physical safety but also mental security that enhances children's ability to 'explore' their environment, interact with peers and adults in the absence of their parents.

And Miriam adds:

> *"So when a child starts in the kindergarten, we use a lot of time to get to know each other [...]. We always have this, aaam, there is one adult who spends a lot of time with that child [...] in the first weeks. So the attachment between the adult and child is very important. [...] So we continue, we look for that safeness and that attachment to be good [...] because then they are feeling safe (...)because then they can start exploring the world around them [...] Then they start looking at each other and coping each other."* -
> Miriam

Thus, at the beginning of their stay at the barnehage, children are treated as individuals by allocating one teacher who becomes exclusively responsible for ensuring a 'smooth' home-barnehage transition. He or she closely monitors and attends to the child's every need in the new environment so that a sense of safeness is created. This is important because it eventually enables the child to feel free to explore his or her surrounding:

Miriam also defines safeness in terms of having *enough adults who see the children well…because if a child can't feel the safeness, it wouldn't be themselves.* Children's sociability, according to her, is enhanced by an awareness of adult presence to provide support during their stay away from home. And according to Andreas, teachers *"really see the best for the children all the time"*.

Still regarding values attached to care, Odda describes her own experience below:

> *"I think it is very important [...] that they [children] have confidence in us, in me… So then I will look at them, talk to them, aaam give them some, aaam, comfort, use my hands on them [she gently strokes my arm] … aaam, try to find…they don't tell me what they are thinking so much but I can see in what mood they are and perhaps try to help them if they are sad or, to…aaa perhaps they have to have a new diaper, or they are thirsty or they feel sad, they are longing for their parents … and talk to them and put them on my lap or,… yes".*

Odda thinks that earning children's trust and meeting their need for affection is an important care value and these needs can be recognized through their non-verbal communication. Hence, building of a trusting relationship is a means of enhancing children's ability to communicate their needs. And perhaps it all boils down to the most referred to childcare values of 'love and safety' which are an important aspect of learning. The teachers think that children are more open to learning when their environment is secure. Hence in the next section I will discuss some of the learning areas or goals that barnehager emphasize.

6.2 Learning goals emphasized in barnehage

6.2.1 Autonomy

Teachers in barnehager support and applaud children when they attempt to execute different tasks by themselves. For instance, they help the child take their first step onto the *stellebord*[22] by giving a push "*under the bum*" and say *"oh, you did it! Good!"* They also encourage children to learn how to feed themselves and to dress up or take off their warm clothing before and after outdoor activities, respectively. Odda thinks that encouraging self-care elates the children's mood and self-esteem because they are happy and motivated to learn more self-care tasks over time.

Teaching autonomy can also be viewed from the rights perspective as facilitating children's participation in the society through self-care and decision making. If children are empowered in their *"own capacity"* as one parent, Any, stated, then it indicates that their ability to contribute towards personal growth and development is recognized. They can establish and maintain their own friendships, feed themselves and take off their *"lue"*[23] among other things mentioned by the teachers.

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22 Norwegian for a "changing table" for children's diapers (translated by author).

23 Norwegian word for a warm hat or head gear (translated by author).

6.2.2 Relationships and Communication

At the barnehage, children also learn attributes for good relationships and communication, like kindness and gentleness, and the ability to show remorse or control feelings of anger. Principles like *"waiting for your turn"* and sharing help children understand that every child at the barnehage is equally entitled to all the toys and other facilities available to them. For instance, instead of fighting over the first position in the queue, children learn to patiently wait for each other to take their turn, say during handwashing. And when they are unhappy about each other's actions, they are expected to use words to express displeasure and not hit each other. The body or hands are to be used to show forgiveness and remorse through gentle bodily strokes on the arm or back. Odda refers to this as *"...helping the children to be kind and to be good friends"*.

Teachers' actions revealed by this study present them as agents of socialization; they impart knowledge about norms of the barnehage and the society at large so that they can build and maintain good inter-personal relationships and to enhance harmony in all barnehage activities.

6.2.3 Children's participation

As stated in the theory chapter, the Kindergarten act requires kindergartens to uphold children's right to participation. Hence Miriam explains that children are greatly involved in determining day-to-day barnehage activities. Teachers keenly observe children during play time and determine their interests or learning needs expressed through uniform and repeated actions. These actions are then shared during teachers' meetings and 'transformed' into barnehage activities.

For instance, if children are constantly playing with cars, then teachers can create an activity related to making roads and cars out of maybe paper and all children can be involved. Also, if they appear to show interest in tumbling pillows, then teachers can create a room full of pillows so that children can jump and play in it. And if they show interest and some knowledge about birds or bees in the summer for instance, or fish because of a movie they have watched at home, then an activity about these will also be created and carried out. Thus, instead of a structured study timetable with topics formulated by teachers, children's interests usually guide activities of the barnehage.

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Participation is also related to the 2011 FPCTK requirement to ensure inclusion and equality among all the children. According to the 2011 FPCTK, kindergartens are to represent "an environment that instils a respect for human dignity and everyone's right to be different" ("The Framework Plan," 2012, P. 9). Children's individual ideas are to be given consideration no matter their age, ethnicity or religion. So in light of the values on inclusion and equality, how do teachers perceive diversity in barnehager?

6.3 Teachers experiences with diversity in barnehage

The teachers involved in this research project did not have a lot of knowledge about different cultures represented in the barnehage, but they could site differences in values and childcare practices among parents and children from different cultures. Areas of diversity included food, dressing in a weather (winter) appropriate manner, and child-adult interactions.

6.3.1 Not challenging, just different

According to the research by Lauritsen which I referred to in the third chapter about barnehager and cultural complexities, barnehage teachers, just like other professionals appear to be unaware of, and inadequately prepared (at least during the course of their training), for the implications of the increased cultural diversity in Norway's society. However, some municipalities have encouraged some teachers to attend multicultural classes to improve their communication across diverse languages, religions and ethnic practices.

Thus, the title of this sub-section means that differences are not seen as challenges but rather as a call for collaboration between homes and kindergartens. And because teachers understand that childcare practices can vary from family to family and society to society; they think that it is important to have regular communication with parents through what Miriam called 'dialogues'. During the dialogues, teachers get to explain the rationale for values and learning goals emphasized in the barnehage while also listening to parents concerns and opinions. Regarding appropriate dressing for instance, Miriam and Odda shared their opinions and experiences;

"I think I have experienced that parents from other cultures than Norwegian are often very, they think of kindergarten more like school…but I think when we explain the values of caring, they appreciate it very much […] It is so important that you have this dialogue because it can be…, ammm, things like the winter in Norway for example, it can be very challenging for a family from Africa at the first time", said Miriam.

Also, *"… Many parents from other cultures, they are putting four trousers, cotton, and they think that should be warm, but it can be difficult for the children to move because they are, it will many many layers… but they have not been children here in Norway so they don't know really, how it is. [Laughter]"*, said Odda.

Odda notes that although parents are asked to provide warm clothes for their children, some of them are not completely aware of what cloth-combination constitutes warm dressing. Hence parents go ahead and dress their children up in the best way known to them. As it turns out, they need help from the teachers on the right combination that enables children to thrive in outdoor activities of the barnehage during the cold winter season for instance.

Aside from learning proper dressing, teachers still mentioned that some non-Norwegian parents expected kindergartens to be more like school.

"I have heard many comments like maybe the children are too much outside or the children are not learning to read or to write in the kindergarten […]But they hear stories, they read books, with the teachers and assistants, they learn songs. And for me the important part, they go for a tour in the city or in the woods so children get to know their surroundings. That is very important", said Andreas

According to Andreas, learning goals and expectations of the kindergarten can depart from those of parents. And this can result from parents past experiences or from what they have observed and are used to from their home country. But he thinks that other forms of learning outside the classroom without use of writing or reading skills are equally important. He says for instance, that it is just as important for children to learn social and interpersonal skills as any academic subject.

Andreas also notes that being so protective of their children as compared to their Norwegian counterparts, immigrant parents are often alarmed during pick-up time when their children turn out to have a scratch or stain of blood resulting from a 'rough' play-time. In his opinion, 'rough play' is part of education because it is one way that children learn about border markers related to how far they should go when it comes to role play involving 'violent scenes' for instance. They learn that in a game, one should not give a 'real punch', but just pretend to do so. He also adds that accidents are bound to happen when children play with sticks in the woods for instance; and that as long as teachers are watching to ensure positive play, parents can rest assured that their children are in safe hands.

Regarding self-care and autonomy, while Norwegian children easily adapted to self-feeding at the barnehage, children from some non-Norwegian children expected to be fed. The same applied to dressing up when it was time for outdoor activities, for instance.

> *"I mean other cultures don't share it equally, like, I mean, it's not the most important thing that the child eats on its own, you could do it one year later, you know, why is it so important that it should be done at a specific age",* said Nelly.

And during a conversation with Odda, the following views were shared:

> **Odda.** *Yes, my experience is that children from perhaps especially from Africa, but they are not used to eating by themselves*
>
> **Me.** *Ok*
>
> **Odda.** *The mother or parents have put the food into their mouth, and they are not so used to do things by themselves*
>
> **Me.** *Yes,   [Laughter]*
>
> **Odda.** *Yes,   [Laughter]. I don't know but perhaps when they are the youngest child in the family.*
>
> **Me.** *Yeah*
>
> **Odda.** *So because we don't have enough arms to help nine children, we have to encourage   them to eat, "oh, here is your food, you can take a little piece and put in your mouth"*

Me.   *[Laughter]*

Odda. *Yes*

Me.   *How is that? Do they learn?*

Odda. *Yeah,*

In reference to the above interview excerpt, Odda implies that children just need a little 'push into the right direction' and they can try and learn how to for instance feed themselves. But the notion of autonomy can also be a contentious issue.

Evans' (1994) view on autonomy and the experience of some parents as demonstrated in chapter five, suggests that it is a childcare value emphasized more in the global north than the south. He notes that in the global south, learning to be autonomous is paradoxically perceived as becoming a 'full' 'man' or 'woman' and thus accompanied with responsibilities and tasks such as house chores and caring for others. It is not interpreted in relation to self-concern as this can come off as 'selfishness'.

Thus, from the children's rights point of view, becoming autonomous may be interpreted differently depending on the social context. In one perception, it may be seen as beneficial for the child and on the other, for both adult and child. One of the teachers, Nelly, shared her encounter with a parent who preferred to feed her child for as long as possible. And during my interview with her, she asked a lot of rhetorical questions like; 'why is it so important that the child should be able to self-feed by the age of two years?' 'What difference does it make that he or she does so a year or two later?' 'Why do parents encourage dependence anyway?' 'Could there be cultural values attached to such practice?' 'What if feeding and dressing the child is a time of sharing intimacy between parent and child?'

She further argued that teaching independence to one year olds in a kindergarten may elate their self-esteem, but it also lightens the work of staff workers. She said:

> *"... 'For the benefit of the child' can be very misleading; also you can lie to yourself that the child should take a nap in the afternoon, but the staff needs a break as well (...) and I think it can open up a better space if you can communicate honestly and say that, 'yeah,*

it is for our convenience that the children should be autonomous and because we don't have time for this kind of care for so many children'..."

Having had an education background in studies involving children's rights, Nelly was being keen on the way adults most times define, handle and apply these rights. Her inquiry was whether it was 'for the benefit of the child' ('in the best interests of the child') or the teachers. And if it is for both, then teachers ought not to 'hide' under the guise of helping children but rather, they should honestly state the reason as it really is.

Hence, Odda acknowledges the fact that both children and teachers benefit from children's autonomy because it lightens the teachers' work load and teachers "*don't have enough arms to help nine children"*. She also suggested that teachers have to protect their backs by not always lifting the children up and down the diaper changing 'table' for instance. Additionally, Andreas notes that it is important to help the parents understand what values teachers emphasize at the barnehage and why, so that there is some form of consistency for the children. Otherwise, efforts can be futile if while at home, parents constantly "undo" what the teachers have done at the barnehage.

6.4 Performing integration and inclusion

In light of the 'clashing' views discussed in section 6.3, Nelly believes that it is hard to dictate how the parents should raise their children because *"I don't think there is always a common ground on this."* Hence, the best thing to do, according to Miriam (teacher with Norwegian origin), is to help parents understand the reason behind the actions of teachers so that everyone is on the same page. For instance, explaining to parents that it is safe to play out in the snow as long as children have proper dressing may calm parents' fears about 'exposing' their children to the cold. Regular dialogues, she says, allow parents and teachers to air out their views and find common ground on how to handle the different childcare 'disparities' between the home and kindergarten.

The home-barnehage collaboration is also a key tool in understanding the socially constructed views about child care and learning values across cultures. In my opinion therefore, parents may

appear to be untrusting of the kindergartens, but they are just reacting to different perceptions of child care learned (for a long time) from their personal or cultural orientations.

Different ways in which teachers respond to these fears include asking parents about the important values which as a 'golden rule' need to be upheld. The aspect of food taboos among Muslims for instance is one that came up when Odda was asked about the culturally varying issues that she has observed;

> *"Now, our nine children, this year there is no Muslim. But that is seldom. Often there is two or three… so we have to, 'oh we have to remember that they shall not eat pork and eat also halal' if the children have, they want to eat halal, we have to remember this and buy… We ask, 'what is important for you as a mother or father that we should do for the child?'",* Said Odda

In light of Odda's statement above, communication with parents is crucial in making teachers aware of cultural border markers (in this case food) which need to be maintained so that both children and parents feel accepted and included in the barnehage and the society at large. Moreover, Norwegian kindergartens, according to the FPCTK are mandated to impart and uphold values related to respect and appreciation for differences in their surroundings by exposing children to the positive aspects of their differences with others.

> "Staff are responsible for ensuring that all children regardless of their level of functioning, age, gender and family background, feel that they and everyone else in the group are important to the community […Kindergartens] shall help to ensure social equality […and] have a responsibility in society for early preventing discrimination and bullying." ("The Framework Plan," 2012, pp. 7, 20).

Consequently, the government hopes that exercising social equality in kindergartens lays a strong foundation for children's practice of the same later in life.

6.4.1 Uniqueness, Individualism

In addition to making children feel a part of the whole group through joining in all activities that others are engaged in, children also have a right, according the UNCRC of 1989, to enjoy their

own culture even while living in a society where theirs is a minority culture. Article 30 of the convention states;

> In those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons or indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group to enjoy his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice her own religion, or to use his or her own language. ("Convention on the Rights," 1996)

In this view as referred to earlier, individuality is the other side of the same social-equality 'coin'. Lauritsen (2013), as mentioned in section 3.5.4, argues that, taking the individual or special needs of children into consideration is also a means of ensuring equality.

Odda, gives an example of one child who was particularly slow in feeding herself. She explained that because of having experienced trauma to her brain during birth, this had slowed down her growth and development process. So, even though all children needed to start and finish specific activities at each allocated time in the barnehage routine, Odda mentioned that this one child was given extra time during meal times for instance. Hence equality enhanced by meeting individual needs.

6.5 Summary

This chapter has focused on the role and activities of barnehager in child care and learning. I have discussed the different values emphasized by teachers and also ways in which these can differ from those which parents emphasize at home. Thus, part of this chapter was also dedicated to a discussion on how teachers work together with parents to ensure consistency in provision of care and learning at the barnehage and the home. Areas included, teaching of autonomy, appropriate dressing and food. The next chapter will now comprise my concluding remarks on the empirical data and the research project as a whole.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

In this study, I sought to generate knowledge about what it is like for immigrant parents (who most likely had a different childhood from that of Norwegian children) to raise their children in the Norwegian society. It was fueled by my curiosity about how different my childhood experience was in relation to care and learning as compared to that of Norwegian children. Being a relatively sensitive topic aimed at exploring personal choices of parents' child upbringing or early childhood education and care practices, participant recruitment, data collection and analysis processes were handled with utmost ethical considerations as elaborated in chapter four. My remarks on empirical material will then be included under the next two sections; 'An amalgamation of values' and 'The barnehage as a valuable childcare agent'.

7.1 An amalgamation of values

In chapter five I mentioned that forms of care and learning that parents received during their childhood were in different ways both similar and different from those emphasized by them. (See 5.1 – 5.4) As a result, upbringing choices made by parents range from carrying on past values like referring to elders by use of titles to the application of completely new values like teaching autonomy. But we also see from Monica's perspective that having a 'mixed culture' includes an amalgamation of Norwegian and non-Norwegian values in her child upbringing choices. And since parents referred to many positive things about barnehager (which uphold values rooted in the Norwegian culture), then it reasonable to suggest that they have adopted a 'mixed-culture' approach.

Monica and Aggrey's choice of mixed culture is based on the fact that she knows her children are going to 'grow up' and most likely live in Norway all their lives hence they are better off learning the Norwegian way of life. But at the same time, they would like their children to have a 'piece' of their heritage which gives both parents and the children an 'authentic' identity based on their 'roots' and at the same time enables them to relate 'appropriately' during their occasional visits to the home country. Hence elements related to heritage and identity that parents emphasized include; spoken language and moral values based on interpersonal relationships with adults and peers.

I argue therefore, that no matter how far from 'home' parents may be, the values imparted in them during the childhood period (as determined by the particular society) cannot be easily forgotten. For instance, it is probable that parents never thought about their child upbringing choices being similar to that of their parents or caregivers, because they 'naturally' adopted them because as Rose suggested, *"that's just the way it is supposed to be done"!* And yet sometimes, as Any, 1 and Johan's stories suggest, some parents pay so much attention to their choices and can deliberately decide whether or not to differ from their 'predecessors'.

Either way, with the view that children, childhood and parenting or child upbringing practices are socially constructed, there is indeed no absolute way, as (teacher) Nelly implied, of defining or coinciding these care and learning practices. Children are what their environment exhibits; the prevailing social structures, beliefs, attitudes and circumstances during their 'childhood' greatly influence their experiences as young human beings and what they later become as they grow older. Parents' experiences and perspectives suggest that love and care are not always interpreted in the same way; while 'tough' love may be perceived as punishment or poor parenting, it may actually be a means of looking out for the child's well-being especially among parents from some societies. Also, while allowing room for children's opinions may come off as neglect of parental responsibility with repercussions such as 'spare the rod, spoil the child', it may be aimed at balancing child-adult relations in global north societies for instance.

7.2 The barnehage as a valuable childcare agent

Irrespective of parents' reasons for considering barnehager as supplementary agents of child care and learning, in general they were happy about that choice. To mention briefly, reasons included (apart from the fact that parents had to work or study); the need for their children to learn social interaction skills, language skills in Norwegian and English, the belief that interaction with peers would enhance faster growth and development as compared to keeping them home where there was no siblings to challenge them into trying to take their first step for instance. Thus we see that parents did perceive peers as equally important agents in children's learning and development, especially in an environment that is well supervised by an appropriate number of adults.

With values such as social equality, inclusion and respect of human dignity that are imported from human rights declarations, the FPCTK as a set of guidelines for kindergarten workers in Norway has made it possible for children from immigrant families to thrive. Emphasis on celebrating cultural differences as a positive aspect of children's lives gives them a sense of belonging and pride in who they are; something that parent-participants were pleased with. Statistics about increased participation by immigrant-children in kindergartens also suggested that parents' interests (be it cultural, moral or financial) are adequately addressed.

Furthermore, children's right to participate is upheld by teachers through keen observation of children's interests during play time and social interactions and transforming these interests into barnehage activities. Diversity is encouraged through activities like music, dance and drama which according to the teachers' responses are sometimes specifically based on their cultural or national backgrounds. Although some parents are not as courageous and enthusiastic in getting involved through the music, at least they are responsive when it comes to sharing food from their cultures. And such activities enable children to take part in telling others about their culture.

7.3 Recommendations

Considering the fact that I set out to satisfy a curiosity about how immigrant parents who are raised outside Norway juggle or combine child upbringing practices from their culture and those prevalent in Norway, the research project conjured up a number of issues that require further research, preferably over a longer period of time. For instance, although I briefly sited different ways in which 'love' and 'care' are defined, interpreted and expressed by parents and teachers across time and place, more research focusing on the two concepts as socially constructed would be interesting.

Also, further research capturing actual experiences and perspectives of children, where they are direct subjects or participants in the study would be a very interesting venture for enriching this study topic. To shed more light, looking at the dilemma that teachers sometimes face regarding clashing values between the kindergarten and homes, it goes without saying that children are caught up in the middle. They experience two separate lives at home and the barnehage (at least

for as long as the two parties do not come to an agreement on the way forward); and underlying consequences as explained by children could, in my opinion be an important area of research.

It would also be interesting to answer questions like: how do parents describe the social relations between their children and relatives during periodic visits to the home country? Are there particular ways in which people from the parents' home country are involved in their children's lives while living in Norway? How do children exercise agency in learning and practicing multi-cultural traditions and languages? In what ways does cultural diversity in kindergartens impact children born to only 'native' Norwegian parents?

Additionally, methods and research tools like participant and non-participant observation, drawings, parents' diaries and photo stories could also enhance the research given a longer time frame, even ethnography. This way children's own vocabulary and voices on values of care and learning they have received would be captured, hence yielding an even richer research.

Last but not least, teachers' effort towards enhancing integration of cultural diversity in Norway's barnehager needs to be recognized more in childhood research in Norway. In my opinion, it is through open acknowledgment that good works are encouraged to go on. Moreover, Norway is becoming more and more diverse for various reasons such as mentioned in the background chapter; hence such efforts need to be encouraged and sustained.

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APPENDICES

Table 1: Description of participants

Participant's Name	Children	Origin	Participant-category	Method	Occupation
Amelie	Simon & Kristian	Europe	Parent (Mother)	Focus group discussion	Employed
Andrew (married to Amelie)	Simon & Kristian	Europe	Parent (Father)	Focus group discussion	Employed
Aggrey	Malaika & Abel	Africa	Parent (Father)	Interview	Employed
Monica (married to Aggrey)	Malaika & Abel	Africa	Parent (Mother)	Interview	Employed
David	Esther, Ruth, Rachael & Thomas	Europe	Parent (Father)	Interview	Employed
Rose (married to David)	Esther, Ruth, Rachael & Thomas	Europe	Parent (Mother)	Interview	
Any	M	Asia	Parent (Mother)	Interview	Student
One (married to Any)	M	Asia	Parent (Father)	Interview	
Johan	H and B	Asia	Parent (Mother)	Interview	
Naomi	Zoe	Africa	Parent (Mother)	Interview	Student
Andreas	Not applicable	Europe	Teacher	Interview	Employed
Nelly	Not applicable	Asia	Teacher	Interview	Employed
Miriam	Not applicable	Europe	Teacher	Interview	Employed
Odda	Not applicable	Europe	Teacher	Interview	Employed

Parent's informed consent letter

CONSENT FORM

Hello,

My name is Gladys Ayakaka and I am a student of Master of Philosophy in Childhood Studies at the Norwegian Center for Child Research (NOSEB), Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

As part of my program, I am required to carry out a research project related to my field of study (Social studies of childhood). I am therefore requesting you to participate by sharing information on the topic: Parenting and early childhood care and education in different cultural contexts.

Any information shared will be treated in confidence and so will your identity. Participation is absolutely voluntary and you are free to decline from taking part in this project or withdraw your consent at any point after you agree to take part without stating reason. The report that will result from this fieldwork will strictly be used for academic purposes and you may have a copy on request.

What does participation in the project imply?

During this project I intend to use either individual interviews or focus group discussions, depending on what is convenient for you. You will be asked to share your childhood experience with care and learning, plus your own childcare values and goals for children aged three years and below. Part of this will include your expectations and experiences associated with your children's participation in the barnehage.

I will also be interview some barnehage teachers about child care and learning values emphasized in barnehager.

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

_____

(Signed by participant, date)

Teachers' informed consent letter

CONSENT FORM

Hello,

My name is Gladys Ayakaka and I am a student of Master of Philosophy in Childhood Studies at the department of Norwegian Center of Child Research (NOSEB), Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

As part of my program, I am required to carry out a research project related to my field of study (Social studies of childhood). I am therefore requesting you to participate in this project by providing information related to your own knowledge and experience with early childhood care and education.

You can rest assured that all information shared with me will be kept strictly confidential and your identity will not be given to anyone else. Participation is absolutely voluntary and you are free to decline from taking part in this project or withdraw your consent at any point after you agree to take part without stating reason. The report that will result from this fieldwork will strictly be used for academic purposes and you may have a copy if you want.

What does participation in the project imply?

During this project I will interview you about your experience with early childhood care and education in culturally diverse settings, especially with toddlers during their first two years at barnehage. For instance the exciting things, the challenges you and the children encounter and how you together with the parents support each other and the children. I have also had interviews with parents from different cultural backgrounds about their experience with raising children in a setting other than their own childhood setting in the past.

Please note that you are free to withdraw from taking part in the interview at any point.

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

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(Signed by participant, date)

Letter from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD)

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

Anne Trine Kjørholt

Norsk senter for barneforskning NTNU

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Vår dato: 12.06.2015   Vår ref: 43292 / 3 / AMS   Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 28.04.2015. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

| 43292 | *Parenting and early childhood care and education in different cultural contexts* |

Behandlingsansvarlig NTNU, ved institusjonens øverste leder
Daglig ansvarlig   Anne Trine Kjørholt
Student   Gladys Ayakaka

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets

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kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 30.06.2016, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Anne-Mette Somby

Kontaktperson: Anne-Mette Somby tlf: 55 58 24 10

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Kopi: Gladys Ayakaka gletiru@gmail.com

Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

The purpose of the project is to explore the childhood experiences of parents from different cultural contexts with regard to parenting and early childhood care and education when growing up; and how that relates to or defers from that of their children in the context of Norwegian 'barnehage'. Thus, parents expectations and actual experiences of their children's transition from exclusive home care to kindergarten will be examined.

The sample will receive written and oral information about the project, and give their consent to participate. The letter of information is well formulated.

Please note that when children actively participate in research, participation is always voluntary, even though parents have given their consent. Children should be given information adapted to their age, and it must be made sure that they understand that their participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time.

There will be registered sensitive information relating to ethnic origin or political/philosophical/religious beliefs.

The Data Protection Official presupposes that the researcher follows internal routines of NTNU regarding data security. If personal data is to be stored on portable storage devices, the information should be adequately encrypted.

Estimated end date of the project is 30.06.2016. According to the notification form all collected data will be made anonymous by this date.

Making the data anonymous entails processing it in such a way that no individuals can be recognised. This is done by:

- deleting all direct personal data (such as names/lists of reference numbers)
- deleting/rewriting indirectly identifiable data (i.e. an identifying combination of background variables, such asresidence/work place, age and gender) - deleting digital audio and video files

1. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Theme 1: How parents describe their experience with parenting in the past (What was your childhood like?)

1. From your childhood experience, what was your parents' understanding of a 'proper' or good childhood? In terms of care you received, the things you learned, values, norms or character/behavior?

2. What were the responsibilities of different family members towards you while you were growing up?

3. What is your best childhood memory?

Theme 2: Child upbringing practices and values that parents uphold now (Now that you are a parent...)

1. How would you want to raise your children?

2. What areas of care and learning do you emphasize as a parent?

3. Can you describe recent memories of your typical day with the family, the places visited, activities carried out and people involved?

Theme 3: Parents' expectations of kindergarten and staff regarding care and learning practices? (Since barnehager are greatly involved in child care and learning today, please share your perspectives about this**)**

1. What kind of care do you expect your child to receive while at the kindergarten?

2. Can you mention any specific learning goals you expect the kindergarten to meet regarding your child/children? (Learning could include values, norms or activities related to hobbies)

3. What are your thoughts, expectations and experiences regarding cultural differences in terms of childcare and learning that your child might encounter at the barnehage?

4. Can you suggest ways in which cultural diversity can be integrated in the barnehage activities?

2. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Theme 1: Values and goals in barnehage

1. What would you consider the aims or objectives and values of the barnehage?
2. What kind of care and learning do you emphasize at the barnehage?
3. How do you identify children's needs in the 1-3 year olds' age group?

Theme 2: Diversity in barnehage

4. What do you know about child upbringing in other cultures other than the Norwwegian culture?
5. How do you integrate diversity in barnehage activities?
6. What are the probable challenges associated with cultural diversity in barnehage?

Theme 3: Home-barnehage collaboration

7. In what ways do you involve parents in integrating diversity in barnehage activities?