

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to understand the ways Syrian refugee parents constitute children and construct childhood with respect to their rights, roles and responsibilities, and to explore their experiences of parenting in the early stages of settlement in a new socio-cultural environment. Data collection took place in a medium sized city in Norway in the autumn of 2017 with seven Syrian refugee parents who had at least two children and had been settled in Norway for less than one year. This qualitative study used narrative semi-structured interviews and a cross-language approach. The study is based on social constructionism and draws particularly on the social studies of children and childhood. The idea of plural childhoods socially constructed and structurally constrained underpin this study. Key concepts used are age, structure and agency, generation, gender and intersectionality.

The study has found that the ideas parents have of children and childhood are premised on the concept of interdependencies within the family and the community at large, whereby responsibilities and relationships for children supersede their rights and rules. The responsibilities of children shift throughout the life-course with changing role configurations and childhood is constructed with a distinct future orientation. The study found that constructions of childhood are generally characterised by a generational system and through gendered lenses. However, there is significant diversity in these constructs that can be attributed to the multiple intersecting dimensions of age, religion, family size and birth position.

The child-centred focus, promotion of autonomy and a tendency towards flat structures in Norwegian society present the biggest challenges to Syrian parents' childrearing beliefs and practices. The findings of this study suggest that to support parents in their acculturation to Norway, care should be taken to maintain balance in the interdependent structures of families and minimise situations that subvert the positions of parents. Support for parents should also consider how Syrian fathers and mothers occupy different positions within the family and therefore engage differently with their children.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IMDi	Directorate of Integration and Diversity
SSB	Statistics Norway
UDI	Norwegian Immigration Directorate
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In 2016, I met a family from Syria who had recently been resettled in Norway. I started teaching their 10-year old daughter to play the piano as she expressed an interest in it but the family could not afford lessons. The first day we met, I asked the girl what she wanted to learn and she told me pop music. Her father who was present interrupted and told me not to teach her ‘that nonsense’ as it was a waste of time. I should only teach her proper classical piano. Coming from an Asian culture, I recognised the authority of parents and thought it best to defer to the father’s wishes. During the course of the year, I became better acquainted with the girl and her family and often asked them how they were managing in Norway. In the early days, the girl used to tell me that she was doing well and enjoying school, but she did not think her parents were managing as well in Norway. In my conversations with the parents, among many things, I remember the father telling me once that his young preschool aged daughter had become arrogant because she could speak Norwegian and had stopped listening to them. On another occasion, he told me he was somewhat glad that his oldest daughter struggled to make friends and integrate as this meant she was less likely to go out and often stayed home. Both parents also frequently shared their frustrations at being considered ‘bad parents’ in Norway because they did things differently from Norwegians, and also their frustration that the Norwegian system valued and prioritised children over adults. My interaction with this family in the initial phase of their settlement piqued my interest in understanding how other newly arrived refugee parents experience parenting in a different context, particularly when the two contexts are cultural and social contrasts.

1.1 Background of Research

Culture is a lived experience that is created, acquired, accumulated and transmitted from one generation to another through learning processes (Ocholla-Ayayo, 2002). Every culture is characterised and distinguished from another by deeply-rooted normative beliefs and behaviours. Understanding, accepting and reproducing widely acknowledged ideas about how one ought to feel, think and behave allow individuals to participate as functioning members of society. Adults in each generation are responsible for inculcating the following generation with norms, salient ideas, concepts, values and behaviours that are essential or advantageous to function and thrive within the physical and social settings of everyday life that are characteristic of their culture (Whiting, 1980; Bornstein & Bohr, 2011). In many societies, childrearing can be the duty of parents, extended family or members within the local community as it pertains to the provision of care and protection, and the transmission of cultural knowledge. Childrearing is generally referred to as *parenting* despite the involvement of other actors as parents are often perceived to be the normative influence and possess primary responsibilities for children (Boushel, 2000; Rosenthal & Roer-Strier, 2001; Bornstein, 2002; Harkness & Super, 2006).

Parenting occurs within a larger framework of interdependent elements and families develop alongside the prevailing culture. Migrating and settling in a new country can therefore subject parenting to complex transformations, which include disconnecting families from extended families and reducing them into nuclear family units. Such ruptures amplify the roles and responsibilities of parents which may not be the most natural unit of operationalising everyday life in these families' countries of origin. This is further accentuated, directly or indirectly, when disruption to one's physical and social context is abrupt and accompanied by significant trauma and loss, as is the case for refugees.

Refugee parents not only have to negotiate the complexities of living within a new social environment but also navigate different social constructions around practices and cognitions relating to childrearing and child development. In addition, intergenerational tensions may arise in transition if children integrate and acculturate more quickly than parents in the early stages of settlement. The experiences of refugee parents and their families in general often

go unheard by the wider community. There is limited knowledge about how refugee parents navigate the process of parenting in a new society with values about children and childhood that are quite different from their own. Moreover, there appears to be limited awareness on the diversity within refugee population groups that are currently homogenised and generalised in the media (Sirkeci, Cohen & Yazgan, 2016; Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017; Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017). In Norway, debates on integration, diversity and multiculturalism has predominantly had one group at the centre of discussion – Muslims (Hagelund, 2002; Erikson, 2013; Kyllingstad, 2017)¹.

This study focuses on understanding Muslim refugee parents' experiences of migrating to Norway and the process of acculturation and parenting in the early phase in their new environment. Drawing primarily from childhood studies, this study is built upon the premise that time of childhood constructs, and is constructed by time in childhood (James & Prout, 1997). Therefore, through a comparative exploration of intergenerational childhoods, it aims to address the broad research questions of the extent to which refugee parents maintain their culture, practices and perspectives of children and caregiving, and the extent to which their migration experiences and experiences in early settlement have altered these practices and perspectives. This study draws on empirical material acquired from my fieldwork conducted with Syrian Muslim refugee parents in Norway.

During this process, I have been privileged to share in experiences of happiness, hardship, heartache and hope of parents who have struggled to bring their children to a place of safety and opportunity amidst persecution, war and insecurity. I hope that championing the importance of refugee parents' cultural values (when they do not conflict with the law) will encourage problematisation of existing discourses on diversity and parenting culture in Norway. I believe greater understanding about the process of parenting and integration can help us achieve a more comprehensive picture about societal structures and provide important knowledge for municipality practitioners to best support parents in their caregiving role.

¹ See: <https://www.abcnyheter.no/nyheter/2017/11/22/195349580/ufornuftig-om-islam-og-integrering>

1.2 Problem Statement

Concerns about refugee migration is currently high on the global political agenda and has attracted significant political attention in Norway. In a historically ethnically and culturally homogenous Norwegian society, the rapid growth of an ethnic minority population through labour and refugee migration in the past four decades has prompted intense debates about integration, refugee policy, multiculturalism and national identity amidst rising xenophobia. Norwegian policymakers have tussled with important challenges of maintaining social cohesion and accommodating minorities in the face of growing population diversity. Immigration necessitates integration, or acculturation.

Acculturation refers to process of cultural and psychological change towards mainstream 'receiving culture' that occurs when groups of individuals with dissimilar cultures and social influences come into continuous contact (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936; Berry, 1997; Gibson, 2001; Bornstein & Bohr, 2011). In the Norwegian welfare state, Norwegian integration policies towards refugees have trended in the direction of *likhet*, the Norwegian term for both 'equality' and 'similarity'. Eriksen (2013) states, 'No terminological distinction is made between equal rights and cultural similarity. Claiming equality, therefore, is an understandable and laudable thing to do in Norway, while claiming the right to difference is more difficult to handle ideologically.' (p. 7). The concept of integration in Norway can likely be interpreted as a form of cultural assimilation where there exists a lack of desire to accept intercultural diversity and plurality which refugees represent (Stokke, 2012; Ellingsen, 2009).

With respect to parenting, refugee parents in several municipalities are mandated to participate in the International Child Development Programme (ICDP), a parental guidance course organised as part of the obligatory Introduction Programme². The stated objective of this course is to support parents in their caregiving role. In practice this intends to provide parents with knowledge, skills and training in how to create a more positive, sensitive and emotionally-expressive relationship with their child; a childrearing approach clearly aligned with the same humanitarian spirit encoded in the convention of children's rights which

² The Introduction programme is a right and obligation of newly arrived foreign nationals between 18 and 55 years of age who have been granted asylum. For more details see Chapter 2: Background in this thesis.

promotes an idealised Western vision of childhood (Boyden, 1998; Hundeide & Armstrong, 2011). Refugee parents and children who demonstrate rapid behaviour, value and cultural assimilation into Norwegian society are often lauded as exemplars of successful integration while those who do not are deemed integration challenges. There is great focus on the results of assimilation among refugee parents and less focus on understanding the difficult process parents face in sifting and sorting their cultural values to determine which to retain or adapt for daily and long-term functioning of their families (Clucas, Skar, Sherr & von Tetzchner, 2014; Sherr, Skar, Clucas, von Tetzchner & Hundeide, 2014; Skar, Bjørnstad & Davidsen, 2014). Moreover, little attention is paid towards the disparate cognitions of individual members with similar cultural backgrounds that influence their rate of assimilation.

Refugee parents carry with them contextual models on successful parenting containing functional cultural values and practices from their experience and knowledge of childrearing in their original cultural contexts and from their own individual childhoods. Many parents encounter a lack of validation of their parenting beliefs and practices in a new cultural context such as Norway because the receiving country's culture either fails to understand them or disagrees with their priority (Hagelund, 2002; Shimoni, Este, & Clarke, 2003). Parents, especially those from more collectivist societies, thus experience a strong pressure to re-evaluate their cultural values, beliefs and practices to assimilate more quickly, for example, on issues pertaining to gender roles or parent-child interaction (Deng & Marlowe, 2013). They may recognise that their models do not fit within the new social setting, but feel uncomfortable with the alternatives on offer and the challenging process of assimilation into the receiving culture can heighten stress for parents and negatively affect the development and wellbeing of children from these families (Kim, Chen, Li, Huang & Moon, 2009; Marsiglia, Nagoshi, Parsai & Castro 2014).

Many researchers have focused on acculturation when attempting to understand the adaptation experience of refugee parents and there are established benefits to acculturating when one permanently settles in a new homeland. However, an emerging pattern termed the 'immigration paradox' has shown the value of cultural maintenance and preservation of host culture values (Mendoza, 2009; Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes & Milburn, 2009; Schwartz, Unger,

Zamboanga & Szapocznik, 2010). Research with families in the Global South have demonstrated that there exist diverse understandings of parenting and the roles and responsibilities of children within the family differ (Schildkrout, 1978; Ansell & Robson, 2000; Punch, 2002; Abebe, 2007). Therefore, the notion of intergenerational sustainability pertaining to the process of selectively retaining and transmitting elements of one's heritage culture after migration through childrearing cognitions and parenting practices, is of key focus here.

1.3 Terms and Definitions

1.3.1 Refugee and Immigrant

The terms *refugee* and *immigrant* are often mistakenly used as synonyms. The usage of these terms in this text and in my research, is distinct and will be clarified here.

Immigrant refers to persons born abroad of two foreign-born parents and four foreign-born grandparents who have left their nation of birth to reside in another country.

Refugee as defined by the United Nations (UN) in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees is:

A person who owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country. (UNHCR, 2018)

Immigrants and *refugees* leave their countries at various times and for a variety of economic, political, social and cultural reasons (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). *Immigrants* often leave their native lands voluntarily and have time to prepare and anticipate adjustments. The leavings of *refugees* are often less voluntary, perhaps entail a series of transit camps, temporary residences on arrival and involve more fear and post-traumatic stress disorder. Migration experiences also differ among refugees in terms of force and exertion. Some have been resettled by the UN as quota refugees, some have experienced separation with families

before reunification; others have undertaken perilous journeys and languished in asylum centres whilst awaiting legal asylum.

1.3.2 Norwegian

The Language Council of Norway has proposed ‘ethnic Norwegian’ as a term for individuals with Norwegian ancestry and *Norwegian* for any individual, regardless of origin. Despite the progressive transition of Norway into a multi-ethnic environment, Norwegian culture traditionally places emphasis on identity as defined by ethnicity and race rather than nationality (Dickstein, 2014; Kyllingstad, 2017). Therefore, in this text, the term *Norwegian* is used specifically to define ethnic Norwegians with Norwegian ancestry where ‘whiteness’ is an essential concept.

1.3.3 Global South/Global North

The terms *Global South/Global North* emerged in transnational and postcolonial studies to refer to countries that may also be described as developing/developed, third world/first world and majority/minority world. *Global South/Global North* reflect the geographic division between countries that are generally found in the southern hemisphere and those that are found in the northern hemisphere³, but refer also to the countries’ differential economic and social standards and accompanying life standards, life expectancy and access to resources (Rigg, 1980). I have chosen to use the terms *Global South* in this study despite its limitations (see review: Hollington, 2015) when discussing Syria and other related countries, and the term *Global North* in reference to Norway, other western European countries and the US.

³ Exceptions to this simple North-South geographic dichotomy include Australia, New Zealand, the Four Asian Tigers, Japan, Brunei and Israel.

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the study

The aims of the study are to generate contextual knowledge about the early experiences of parenting for refugee parents in a new environment; and to gain insight into the parents' process of resisting and adapting to culture, practices and perspectives of their new environment. This requires an understanding of how individual experiences of childhood have shaped parents' contemporary constructions of childhood. The study therefore seeks to:

1. Examine newly-arrived Syrian Muslim refugee parents' conceptions of children, childhood and parenting
2. Explore challenges in acculturation and changes in Syrian Muslim refugee parents' parenting beliefs and practices in the initial phase of settlement in Norway

1.5 Research Questions

The key research questions are:

1. How do Syrian Muslim refugee parents interpret and perceive their rights and responsibilities in relation to their children, and the rights and responsibilities of children?
2. What unique parental acculturation challenges do Syrian Muslim refugee parents face in the first 12 months of settlement in Norway?
 - a. How do refugee parents experience and reflect upon changes in their parenting beliefs and practices?
 - b. What reasons do they give for maintaining – or for relinquishing – beliefs and practices from their culture of origin?

1.6 Significance of Study

According to the Norwegian Immigration Directorate (UDI, 2018a), Syrians have constituted the largest nationality granted asylum in Norway in the recent years. My rationale for choosing to conduct this study with Syrian Muslim refugee families is based on anticipated increased levels of migration given the prolonged refugee crisis, and the 'culturally distant' background of this burgeoning population that could potentially come in conflict with Norwegian culture. Refugee migration is a highly politicised issue in Norway and research into refugee integration and the nuances of acculturation is not simply to value diversity as

such but is critical to respond to political and demographic transformation. Greater contextual knowledge about refugee families' experiences of parenting in the early stages of settlement can inform policy and practice that support the wellbeing of the children and their families.

Refugee parents encounter a host of parenting related challenges at the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels when settling into a new culture with a barrage of new cultural information and social changes (Fong, 2004). Common acculturation problems include un- and under-employment, language deficiency and loss, role reversal struggles with spouses and children, poverty, racism and discrimination. My intention in this study is not to present concrete facts on distinct cultures but to examine the driving forces and structures behind dilemmas experienced and decisions made by refugee parents pertaining to childrearing which are often justified by using cultural discourse. More knowledge is needed about concepts of children's positions within the family, how parenting and the family as a unit are interpreted by Syrian Muslim refugee parents, and on-going processes in relation to developments in this understanding as well as the implication this has for their children.

Adjustments and adaptations to a new environment are heavily influenced by refugees' experiences before and during migration (Williams, 2010) but little is written on the process of transitions after they have arrived in Norway. Lives of refugee parents in their native country vary widely and these differential experiences influence the transitional and adjustment experiences parents subsequently have. However, this receives little attention. This study is significant insofar as it intends to highlight the diverse range of functioning within refugee parents of the same ethnic/religious group and dispute the notion that individuals of the same ethnic/religious group come from identical social environments; and to illuminate the process of continuous negotiation and re-negotiation of parenting beliefs and practices that can be both mentally and emotionally challenging (McMichael, Gifford & Correa-Velez, 2011; Renzaho & Vignjevic, 2011). It is also believed that this project will provide an opportunity to strengthen the confidence, knowledge, ability and skills of parents from refugee backgrounds living in Norway through increasing recognition of the value of diverse knowledge and skills and generating awareness of a need for more nuanced understanding about parenting differences.

Ultimately this study has been undertaken in hope that it might also contribute towards enhancing intercultural competency and sensitivity among municipality practitioners in their engagement with refugee parents. It is hoped that promoting recognition of cultural values as strengths can support practitioners in identifying appropriate strategies and models for the provision of effective integration services and secure positive childhoods and upbringing experiences for refugee children.

1.7 Organisation of Thesis

The thesis is organised into seven chapters. Chapter one introduces the study and explains how refugees, parenting and construction of childhood became the focus of this thesis. It further outlines the key questions and objectives that this thesis aims to explore. Chapter two provides the background and contextual framework for understanding the acculturation in Norway. Chapter three is devoted to the theoretical perspectives and key concepts which this thesis builds its understanding upon and has a focus on the social constructivist perspective and structural approach. Chapter four delves into the methodology of this study, describing and justifying the use of methods as well as the challenges and ethical considerations. Presentation of data and discussion of findings is separated into two chapters. Chapter five examines the role and responsibilities of parents relating to the construction of children, while chapter six explores the roles and responsibilities of children relating to the construction of childhood. Chapter seven is the final chapter where key findings from the data are discussed in relation to the original research objects and questions as well as the implications of this study.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

This chapter provides insight into the socio-political and immigration context for refugees in Norway. It also serves as the backdrop for the exploration of beliefs and perceptions on children and childrearing practices among recently arrived Syrian Muslim refugee parents. The chapter begins by providing a sketch of Norway's contemporary migration landscape. This is followed by a synopsis of the Syrian crisis, the system of migration and settlement of refugees in Norway and an overview of the integration process and introduction programme. The chapter rounds off with an exploration of the social, economic and cultural context of Syria and the asylum situations of refugees prior to arrival in Norway so as to provide sufficient background to thoroughly explore the challenges of integration in Norway for Syrian refugees.

2.1 Norway's Shifting Immigration Context

Norway is a country of 5.3 million inhabitants with a relatively small but increasing immigrant population. In 2008, 9.7 percent of the Norwegian population constituted of immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents (SSB, 2008). As of March 2018, there is a total of 916 625 immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents in Norway making up 17.3 percent of the population (SSB, 2018). Among the immigrant population in Norway, 46 percent are from western countries⁴ and 54 percent are from non-western countries. Among the Norwegian-born to two immigrant parents population in Norway only 23.2 percent are from western countries while the majority – 76.8 percent – are from non-western countries.

2.1.1 Historical Context

Contemporary immigration in Norway while relatively recent is a complex phenomenon that has influenced the demographic composition of the Norwegian population, and impacted its social, cultural and political landscape. Although pre-1960 Norway was considered economically and socially less attractive to immigrants than neighbouring Scandinavian

⁴ The term western countries refer to the EU28/EEA, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand while the term non-western countries refer to Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania except Australia and New Zealand, and Europe except the EU28/EEA.

countries⁵, there has since been three waves of immigration to modern Norway: labour immigration, family immigration and asylum-seeking immigration⁶. There are currently immigrants from 221 different countries and independent regions living in Norway.

Labour immigration began towards the late 1960s when single male immigrants began arriving from the Global South responding to the demand in the labour market⁷. The first labour immigrants predominantly from Pakistan, India and Turkey were termed foreign workers (*fremmedarbeidere*) with reference to their physical features and non-western cultural background (Amundsen, 2017). This represented a dramatic change from previous arrivals who were predominantly from the Nordic countries or north-western parts of Europe or North America and their presence affected the social composition of a relatively homogenous society (Brochmann & Kjelstadli, 2008). At that time, Norway's liberal immigration policy and increasing prosperity made it easy and attractive for foreign workers to enter the country (Cappelen & Skjerpen, 2012). However, widespread fear that increased immigration from other parts of the world would threaten Norwegian culture, disrupt fundamental Norwegian values and promote social problems especially during the financial crisis led to stricter immigration restrictions in Norway in 1972, and eventually expanded to an immigration halt (*innvandringsstopp*)⁸ for any unskilled labour immigrants (Cooper, 2005). The immigration halt was intended to be effective protection against immigration from non-European countries. However restrictive regulations made it less secure for labour immigrants to travel between their home country and country of settlement. This had the effect of reinforcing inflow into Norway as a majority of immigrants decided to bring their

⁵ Throughout the 19th century and well into the 20th century, Norway was a net exporter of people. About one-third of the population emigrated before WWI at a rate among the highest in Europe. It was not until the late 1960s that Norway saw net immigration where migration streams into the country were more voluminous than the ones out. Norway is thus considered by all standards to have a relatively recent immigration history (Brochmann & Kjelstadli, 2008)

⁶ These three immigration waves have prompted the introduction of different immigration policies which will be elaborated upon later in the thesis. However, they cannot be seen in isolation as there are significant overlaps.

⁷ The first oil findings in the North Sea at the end of the 1960s led to improvements in the Norwegian economy and expansion of the oil industry, creating jobs for Norwegians which resulted in a shortage of unskilled manual labour (Tjelmeland & Brochmann, 2003). The term developing country is

⁸ Immigration halt (*Innvandringsstopp*) was originally implemented in 1974 as a temporary measure but introduced permanently from 1975. It has had a strong and long-lasting effect on total immigration to Norway, particularly from the American continent and from Asia. For more information see: www.ssb.no

families over through family reunification (*familiiegjenforening*)⁹ (Brochmann & Kjelstadli, 2008; Cappelen, Ouren & Skjerpen, 2011). At that time, the Norwegian government saw family reunification as positive for the integration process of immigrants already residing in Norway and therefore desirable. As a basic measure to ensure new immigrants would not become a burden on social welfare, immigrants had to demonstrate an ability to provide adequate housing and to support themselves and their family members. This reflected the beginning of immigration and integration policy formulation in Norway which saw the decrease of labour immigrants from the Global South. Immigration from the Western world was still possible due to special agreements and regulations. The development of the European Union (EU) in 2004, for example, led to a marked increase in labour immigration from EU-countries, especially from Poland and Lithuania who now constitute the largest countries where immigrants in Norway come from.

In contrast to voluntary and economically-motivated immigration, refugees and asylum seekers became the focus of immigration policy by the late 1970s. Saving lives, alleviating suffering and protecting civilians affected by war and conflict has always been one of the main pillars of Norwegian foreign and international development policy. However, on the home front, Norway had received only 223 refugees between 1960 and 1970. The situation changed between 1978 and 1979 when Norway received 1680 ‘jet refugees’ predominantly from Chile and Vietnam¹⁰. Shortly after, Norway began to participate in the UN High Commissioner for Refugees’ (UNHCR) refugee resettlement program receiving a set quota of resettlement refugees periodically (Østby, 1990). Refugees and asylum seekers came predominantly from non-Western countries such as Iraq, Somalia, Iran, Eritrea and Afghanistan (Daugstad, 2008). As the number of refugees and asylum seekers to Norway increased, the Norwegian public began to react with increased fear and reaffirmed its support

⁹ Family reunification (*familiiegjenforening*) in this context applied to a) one who had already established a family (with spouse and/or children) in their homeland, and was seeking to reunite with them and settle in Norway, b) one who was newly-married and wanted to live together in the same country. The definition of who could be considered closest family members included spouse and children of the immigrant resident in Norway, and in certain cases elderly parents, siblings and other dependents.

¹⁰ Chilean and Vietnamese refugees were termed *ad hoc refugees* or “jet refugees” as they arrived at the borders without prior organisation seeking asylum. Vietnamese “boat refugees” arrived following the American capitulation in Vietnam in 1975 and Chilean refugees arrived following the coup d’état in 1973 that toppled the democratic Allende regime.

for curbing immigration. This led to the implementation of Immigration Act 1988 that provided permission of entry, a border and internal control mechanism, and a sanctions system for the cancellation of permits, rejections and expulsions (Cooper, 2005). In spite of that de facto refugee and asylum-seeking immigration remained high.

2.1.2 Present Day Asylum Situation in Norway

Between 2015 and 2016, Norway received a hefty increase in asylum-seeking applications from refugees, notably from Syria and Afghanistan. There was a total of 31 145 asylum seekers. Norway had not seen such a high refugee influx since the Balkan war in the 1990s (Garvik, 2017). This influx coupled with the remarkable increase in refugee immigration over the past decade¹¹ prompted skepticism and calls from political parties and the public for immediate measures to reduce refugee inflow. In June 2016, Parliament passed changes that further tightened the asylum regime and limited the right to subsequent family reunification (Pedersen, 2016).¹²

As of June 2017, thirty percent of all immigrants in Norway are persons with refugee background, making up 4.1 percent of the whole population (SSB, 2017). Of this number 58.4 percent arrived as primary asylum seekers, 26.3 percent through family reunification and 15.3 percent as resettlement refugees. Gross refugee immigration is highest from refugee countries Syria, Eritrea, Somalia and Afghanistan (Dzamarija & Sandnes, 2017); countries with significant Muslim populations. Changes in immigration and overall globalisation has driven homogeneous and conformity-oriented Norway to become a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. This has brought with it a new awareness of diversity in the country that is celebrated as a source of strength, yet also feared as a source of threat. Statistics Norway published a report in December 2017 that reflected the local population's increased scepticism towards immigration and immigrants. A third of the population supported measures to make it more difficult for refugees and asylum seekers to receive permits in Norway, while several believed that immigrants are a source of insecurity in

¹¹ Norway has witnessed a 380.8 percent increase in refugee immigration between 2006-2016. For more details see: <https://www.ssb.no/befolkning/statistikker/innvgrunn>

¹² For more information see: <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/prop.-90-l-20152016/id2481758/>

Norwegian society (SSB, 2016). The issue of asylum and immigration remains high on the political agenda today.

2.2 The Syrian Refugee Crisis

The conflict in Syria between the government of Bashar al-Assad and various other forces started in March 2011 and is now in its sixth year of armed conflict and protection crisis with no end in sight. Over half of the country's pre-war population have been forced to flee their homes within the country and across the region resulting in one of the largest refugee crises since World War II. By the end of 2017, an estimated 6.1 million people were internally displaced, and 5.5 million Syrians had fled the country since the conflict began. Children below 18 years of age represent about half of the Syrian refugee population, with approximately 40 percent under the age of 12.¹³ The Syrian conflict has placed enormous strain on its neighbouring countries with Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan shouldering most of the burden.

2.2.1 Conditions in First-Asylum Countries

The total number of registered refugees in the first-asylum countries of Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt was 5,652,335 as of 26 April 2018.¹⁴ Camps for Syrian refugees exist in three countries: Iraq, Jordan and Turkey. All camps generally meet international standards, but conditions differ considerably. Majority of international attention and resources continue to be directed at refugees living in camps although 85 percent of the region's Syrian refugees actually reside outside camps in major cities, provincial towns, sprawling suburbs and rural areas. Refugees who live outside of camps often lack access to adequate shelter, clean water and sanitation, health care, schools and income-generating opportunities. They often have limited rights in first-asylum countries, receive little access to humanitarian assistance and face discrimination in accessing services. Under-Secretary-General and UN Development Programme Associate Administrator Gina Casar reported in 2014 that 'the countries hosting

¹³ Data as of 2 Jan 2018. UNHCR "Syria Regional Refugee Response, Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal," accessed November 13, 2017, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>

¹⁴ This number includes 2 million Syrians registered by UNHCR in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon, 3 million Syrians registered by the Government of Turkey, as well as more than 30 000 Syrian refugees registered in North Africa. The actual number is probably much higher as many refugees in the region are unregistered.

Syrian refugees are struggling with the massive impact on their economies, societies, and infrastructure threatening not only their stability but the stability of the entire region' (cited in UNDP, 2014 para.4). The situation between Syrian refugees and their host communities has been made more difficult by the scope and protracted nature of the Syrian conflict and Syrian refugees face tension among host community populations and struggle to meet basic needs (Orhan, 2014). This has increasingly prompted Syrians to seek asylum in countries outside the region. In a report on the Syrian Refugee crisis Ostrand (2015) wrote that in 2013, Syria became for the first time the main country of origin of asylum-seekers in 44 industrialised countries in Asia Pacific, Europe and North America. As the conflict began relatively recently, the data available specifically on Syrian refugees in Norway is limited. According to the UNHCR, there were 15,316 first time applications for asylum lodged in Norway by Syrians between April 2011 and October 2017. Annual reports between that period on asylum decisions by UDI indicate an estimated 13,024 Syrians were granted the right to remain.

2.2.2 Asylum, Family Reunification and Refugee Resettlement in Norway

There are three primary avenues for Syrians to access protection in Norway: (1) travelling (legally or illegally) to Norway and claiming asylum in the country, (2) applying for family reunification after a member of the family has been granted refugee status in Norway and can be their sponsor or (3) being recognised as a refugee for resettlement selection from a country of first asylum. These avenues vary with regards to the location of the person at the time of application and has a bearing on the procedure and process that leads towards settlement.

A person seeking asylum applies for protection with the police while they are physically present in or at a port of entry in Norway. They are first sent to an arrival centre where they go through checks and interviews required for the application of asylum. Thereafter, they are sent to an asylum reception centre (*mottaksenter*)¹⁵ where they await a two-part processing

¹⁵ Majority of asylum seekers are placed in ordinary reception centres which often have separate areas for families with children and individuals with special needs (physical or mental). There are also other types of asylum reception centres that cater to special profiles of asylum seekers which include unaccompanied minors under 15 years of age and unaccompanied minors between 15 and 18 years of age.

of their asylum application: (1) the right to remain in Norway and (2) relocation to a Norwegian municipality. Refugees spend an average of 625 days in reception centres, and 205 of them are spent waiting to be relocated to a municipality. There are significant differences in length of time asylum seekers reside in reception centres which relate to factors such as nationality, family type, education and whether the asylum applicant has special needs (Weiss, Djuve, Hamelink & Zhang, 2017). Since the large influx of asylum seekers in 2015, Syrians have been the largest group awaiting decisions on asylum in reception centres (Østby, 2017).

After being granted a residence permit (protection) in Norway and meeting certain requirements¹⁶, a person (defined as the sponsor) can apply for family reunification (also called family immigration) with individuals living outside Norway to be reunited or establish family life in Norway. The right to family reunification is extended to the closest family members of the sponsor, meaning the sponsor's spouse or non-married partner, as well as children under the age of 18. Family reunification may be granted to other family members if specific requirements are fulfilled¹⁷ and refugees who arrive through family reunification often arrive after the sponsor has been settled in a municipality. In the period 1990-2015, 141,300 asylum seekers were granted residence permits in Norway. A total of 45,100 family members of 23,500 of these refugees have subsequently sought family reunification and been accepted into Norway. This is an average of 0.32 family members per refugee. There is little data available now on the scope of family reunification for Syrians who arrived in Norway as asylum seekers in 2015. However, the 2013 cohort made up of just under 1000 people has resulted in 0.37 family immigrants per refugee (Dzamarija & Sandnes, 2017).

¹⁶ For an application for family reunification to be granted the sponsor must, as a main rule, document that they have sufficient means for subsistence. This is meant to promote self-sufficiency and integration, as well as to contribute to preventing forced marriages and reducing the number of asylum seekers coming to Norway. The subsistence requirement does not apply when the sponsor submits the application for family reunification within one year of being granted a residence permit although exceptions to the grace period are made if there are factors beyond the applicant's control (Grønningsæter & Brekke, 2017; UDI, 2018b)

¹⁷ Parents and siblings of an unaccompanied minor with a residence permit as a refugee are entitled to family reunification and the adult sponsor's single parent, adult children, foster children and siblings under the age of 18 are also included. In exceptional cases other categories of family members may also be granted family reunification based on strong humanitarian considerations.

Resettlement refugees are people who are registered as refugees by the UNHCR but who cannot be offered a permanent solution in the country they are currently in e.g. Turkey, Lebanon or Jordan, and who are therefore offered resettlement in a third country. The UDI decides who gets to come to Norway based on applications submitted by the UNHCR for resettlement refugees, and the quota is decided politically. The Norwegian parliament decides how many resettlement refugees Norway will receive per year and the Ministry of Justice and Public Security decides which main groups of refugees to receive. For example, families and vulnerable women may be given priority. The UDI sends representatives to the country where resettlement refugee applicants are in and interviews them there. The purpose of the interview is to establish among other things the applicant's identity, the applicant's need for international protection, the applicant's situation in the country where he/she is staying and the integration potential of the applicant (Long, 2008). If the UDI grants the application (the vast majority are granted refugee status), the applicant is issued with an entry permit that is valid for six months from the decision date and permanent residence. The Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) is responsible for organising a settlement municipality while UDI ensures that the UN Migration Agency makes travel arrangements for the applicant based on when the municipality can receive him/her. Applicants who have been accepted by Norway take part in a cultural introduction course in the country where they are staying before their departure for Norway. The course lasts for four days for adults and two days for children, and it teaches them about Norwegian culture and Norwegian society. The teachers are from the same background as the refugees and have experience of living in Norway (UDI, 2018b). Resettlement refugees are settled directly from country of application into a Norwegian municipality and can apply for family reunification subsequently.

Understanding the different process of immigration and settlement of refugees is important as the Syrian participants in this study arrived through various means. Of the seven parents, three parents were resettled in Norway by the UN, two parents arrived through family reunification and two parents arrived as asylum-seekers. Those who arrived through UN resettlement, for example, reported having higher expectations of an easy transition and integration as compared to those who arrived through the asylum process and endured long

waiting periods. However, regardless of means of arrival, all participants had also experienced life in exile in a neighbouring country (first-asylum country) for varying durations.

2.3 Norway and Integration

Norway frequently tops the human development index (HDI) compiled by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which measures achievements on the dimensions of life expectancy, education and literacy and standard of living (UNDP, 2018). This reflects both the positive manner in which the Norwegian state takes care of its citizens, and also the success of Norwegian welfare system (Hermansen, 2017). These universal welfare provisions extend also to new members of society, i.e., refugee parents and children who receive comprehensive social support upon settlement in a municipality in Norway. Parents are enrolled in a structured integration programme while children are enrolled in school where they receive language support and close follow-up. It is worth mentioning that while refugee parents can only begin participating in integration activities after receiving permanent residency in Norway, refugee children have the right to attend school before receiving permanent residency and often learn the language earlier than their parents (See e.g. Sletten & Engebretsen, 2011; Archambault, 2010). The following sections explain the integration programme for adult refugees to more detail.

2.3.1 The Introduction Programme

The objective of the Introduction Programme is to ensure all new adult refugees in Norway have equal rights to participate in society and in employment¹⁸. Knowledge of the Norwegian language and society are important aspects that contribute towards economic independence and an individual's ability to stand on his own feet (Long, 2008). The Introduction Programme is thus a *right* and *obligation* of newly arrived refugees between 18 and 55 years

¹⁸ Newly arrived is defined as a person who has been resident in a municipality for less than two years when the administrative decision regarding participation in an introduction programme is to be made. The Introduction Programme does not apply to children under the age of 18 as successful integration of refugee children is measured by their attendance and participation in regular schools. Some Norwegian municipalities aim to increase refugee children's social participation through special arrangements at schools and after-school programmes. Several municipalities do not employ such arrangements because of lack of resources and/or the belief that general arrangement directed towards children are adequate for promoting integration of refugee children as well (Bjerkan, 2009).

of age who need to obtain basic qualifications and who have been granted permanent residence in Norway¹⁹.

The Introduction Programme aims:

- (a) to provide basic Norwegian language skills,
- (b) to provide basic insight into Norwegian social conditions and,
- (c) to prepare individuals for participation in working life

The programme entails full-time participation full year-round in Norwegian language training, social studies classes and measures that prepare the participant for further education or access to working life. It may run for up to two years, with additional periods for approved leaves of absences. When special reasons warrant, the programme may run for up to three years. During the period of time in which a person participates in the Introduction Programme, the person is entitled to an introduction benefit that is equivalent to twice the basic amount from the National Insurance Scheme. The benefit is reduced correspondingly in the event of absence from the programme which is not due to illness or other compelling welfare reasons, and for which permission has not been given. Each municipality is responsible for providing the Introduction Programme for refugees living in the municipality or living temporarily at reception centres as soon as possible and not later than three months after a claim or an application for participation is presented (Chapter 4 §18 Introduction Act, 2003). Programmes that are offered can vary between municipalities.

Within the broader framework of Norwegian immigration politics, the intention is that all immigrants in Norway have equal rights, responsibilities and possibilities to participate in society. No one should be treated differently or discriminated on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation (Thorud, 2016). Everyone should have the same opportunities, follow Norwegian laws and the measure of successful integration is equal participation in society and employment. Beyond that and specifically in the context of

¹⁹ Person with permanent residence permits include those granted through asylum seeking, UN resettlement and family reunification, persons granted humanitarian status and person who have collective protection. For more information see The Introduction Act of 2003: <http://app.uio.no/ub/ujur/oversatte-lover/data/lov-20030704-080-eng.pdf>

women and children, the Norwegian government's aims are also (a) that more female refugees participate in the workforce, (b) that all children have good upbringings and possibilities for self-expression and, (c) that young girls and boys can make independent decisions about their lives and their future (Bufdir, 2013). Examining the Introduction Programme against this framework suggests that these objectives are achieved through the social studies and, to an extent, the language training components.

2.3.2 Norwegian Social Studies

Norwegian social studies training consists of 50 hours of teaching and is conducted in a language the participant understands as it requires describing and explaining what is considered important aspects of Norwegian society. The training gives participants information on rights, duties, opportunities, and conveys knowledge of key Norwegian values. It is based on the premise that this need for information is two-sided: the Norwegian authorities want to give information, and those who have arrived in Norway require information.

The objectives of Norwegian social studies training for participants are:

- (a) to acquire knowledge on important historical, social, economic, cultural, legal and political conditions in Norway and be able to express knowledge of these conditions,
- (b) to develop knowledge about their own rights, opportunities and duties in Norwegian society and be able to use this knowledge in daily life, and
- (c) to reflect over and discuss fundamental values and challenges in Norwegian society related to democracy, equality and human rights, and be able to articulate their own thoughts on such issues.

The curriculum therefore contains seven modules: (1) New Immigration in Norway, (2) History, Geography and Lifestyle, (3) Children and Family, (4) Health, (5) Education and Competencies, (6) Working Life and, (7) Democracy and Welfare states. Subjects in the curriculum for social studies can also be found within the different domains of the Norwegian language course reflecting the integrated nature of the social studies and language training programme (See: Kompetanse Norge)

2.3.3 Parenting Programmes

The key aspect of the Children and Family module is on parenting in Norway. Through participation in this module, parents receive information on family patterns and living arrangements in Norway, critical laws regulations and values relating to equality and children's rights, and different views of child rearing and the ways which families, communities and the public can contribute to good childhood and upbringing conditions. It is also conveyed to parents that violence towards children and other family members, genital mutilation and forced marriages are prohibited and that there are strict penalties that accompany these violations. There is a variety of different parenting programmes available for refugee parents and one of these is the International Child Development Programme (ICDP).

The ICDP is a general preventive humanistic value-oriented parenting programme developed by Norwegian professors Karsten Hundeide and Henning Rye at the University of Oslo. The stated aims of the ICDP is to strengthen the caregiving capabilities of parents through self-observation, recognition, exploration and further development; and is focused largely on mentoring as opposed to instructing (Hundeide, 2007; Rye, 2005). The ICDP started as a general parenting programme for all, but has developed over the years towards specific groups such as parents with ethnic minority backgrounds and refugee parents. Since 2015, it has been incorporated as an obligatory component of the Introduction Programme for refugee parents in a steadily increasing number of municipalities (Bufdir, 2016).

2.4 The Syrian Context

Known officially as the Syrian Arab Republic, modern Syria is a young and diverse country constituted of different religious sects and sub-cultures that have historically co-existed in harmony – albeit in relative isolation from one another. Like most of the Middle East, Syria emerged from foreign rule relatively recently, after passing from Ottoman to French rule after World War I, and only gaining independence from France in 1946.

2.4.1 Ethnicity, Religion and Language

Syria is the cradle of several heterodox Christian and Islamic sects, which found refuge in its mountainous areas. It also became a shelter for several waves of immigrants, such as Armenians, Kurds, and Palestinians, most of whom fled their home countries during the first half of the twentieth century (Mahmoud & Rosiny, 2015). Modern Syria is thus a rich and diverse society in terms of its cultural, ethnic and religious composition which overlaps both demographically and geographically. Ethnically the Syrian population is made up of 85 percent Arabs (including 500,000 Palestinians) and 10 percent Kurds; other minorities such as the Turkmen, Armenians, Circassians and Assyrians make up approximately 5 percent. In terms of religious affiliation, it is divided into Muslim (87 percent), Christians (10 percent), Druze (3 percent) and a few small communities such as Yazidis and Jews. The Muslim population is subdivided into Sunni (74 percent), Alawi (10 percent), and Ismaili and Shia (3 percent). There is no official count of Christian sub-population which includes Orthodox, Uniate and Nestorian. Languages spoken in Syria include Arabic (the official language), Kurdish, Armenian, Aramaic and Circassian (widely understood). English which is taught from Grade 1 at school is reasonably understood.

Ethnicity and religion are not always synonymous. A Syrian may identify ethnically as Arab and religiously as Alawite, while another may identify ethnically as Kurdish and religiously as Sunni Muslim. Despite the distinctions, ethnicity and religion are frequently intertwined and mutually reinforcing as language, traditions, values and religion are often key building blocks of ethnic cultures (Gordon, 1964, Schermerhorn, 1978, Van Dam, 1979). Robert Owen, (cited by Clark 2002, p.39) asserted that Middle Eastern religious groups should be viewed as communities where religion serves as a kind of 'ethnic marker defining the boundary of one community as against another'. The dual expression of ethnicity and religion are therefore essential features of individual and group identity construction in Syria with membership characterised by an ethnic sense of belonging based chiefly upon religion and mobilisation around unique religious practices. The term 'ethnoreligious' is often used to refer to this overlap. Syria's ethnoreligious communities tend to be geographically separated and distributed which results in homogenous sub-national units within the country. Though

Sunni Muslims make up by far the largest single community²⁰, they are a minority presence in certain geographic areas – Kurds in the north, Alawites and Christians in the northwest and the Druzes in the south (Rousseau, 2014).

2.4.2 Literacy and Education

Prior to the outbreak of civil conflict in 2011, Syrian young people were among the most educated in the Middle East region. Syria had achieved near universal primary education enrolment and a secondary school completion rate of 74 percent (Bouchane, 2016). In 2015, literacy rate (defined as those aged 15 and over who can read and write) among Syrians was 86.4 percent (males: 91.7 percent, females: 81 percent), still relatively high in comparison with the region as a whole.

The structure of the Syrian education system shares many similarities with other countries around the world. Early childhood education is available for children aged 3 to 5 but is not compulsory and is provided on a fee-paying basis (Immerstein & Al-Shaikhly, 2016). Syria follows a 12-year system of basic and secondary education, consisting of nine years of mandatory basic education divided into two cycles (first cycle: 4 years, second cycle: 5 years) and three years of secondary education in general secondary schools or technical/vocational schools. The primary language of instruction is Arabic with some higher education programmes conducted in French and English. Syria also has a well-developed post-secondary education system which consists of over 200 technical/intermediate institutes, 27 universities (7 public and 20 private), and 6 higher institutes, which are public institutions supervised by the Ministry of Higher Education with higher entry requirements than for public universities, offering diplomas and degrees up to doctorate level (Immerstein & Al-Shaikhly, 2016).

Religious education is compulsory as part of the curriculum from Grade 1 until the end of the upper secondary education. Muslim students study Islamic education while Christian students study Christian education. The religious curriculum is supervised by the Ministry of

²⁰ This is a rough approximation as there has been no official Syrian census since 1960. The data used here is from the Central Intelligence Agency, last updated 9 July 2017.

Education in coordination with the Ministry of Religious Endowments. In addition to regular schools, there are also Sharia schools, Christian schools, and a few Jewish schools.

A fair amount of attention in the media²¹ has been trained on the image of Syrian refugees arriving in Europe as being more educated than refugees from other countries such as Afghanistan and Eritrea, and has highlighted different integration challenges that ‘educated’ refugees might face. Understanding the literacy rates and education background of Syrians is therefore relevant to this thesis as it has been a motivation for choosing to focus on Syrian refugee parents as the study group.

²¹ See: The National ‘*Why many refugees fleeing to Europe are highly educated*’, Deutsche Welles ‘*Refugees in Germany ‘better educated than expected*’’, The Washington Post ‘*Syrian asylum seekers are ‘well educated,’ Austrian survey finds*’, International Business Times ‘*Europe Refugee Crisis Facts: Wealthy, Educated Syrians Risking Lives to Leave War*’.

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CHAPTER 3: THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

A theory is a systematic model or framework for observation and understanding, which shapes both what is seen and how it is seen. Theoretical concepts allow scientific knowledge to be developed by providing a basis for intelligible study of accumulated observations against an already founded body of knowledge or by identifying gaps in existing knowledge (McMillan & Schumacher, 2000). This chapter presents the main theoretical perspectives, key concepts and review of literature relevant to this thesis which have influenced my position as a researcher, informing both research design and guiding the analyses of phenomenon under study. Inspired by ethnography and phenomenology²², this salutogenic (or strengths-focused) study was built upon narrative inquiry and my objective was to offer new insight into how recently resettled Syrian refugee parents in Norway conceptualise children and childhood through examining parenting attitudes and beliefs. These theoretical perspectives are primarily anchored in the social studies of children and childhood, social constructionism and gender studies.

The first section begins by explaining the focal lenses used to analyse the data: *social constructionism* that emphasises the multiplicity of childhood realities constructed relative to contexts (James, Jenks & Prout, 1998; James & James, 2008) and *structural sociology* which emphasises generational categories and relational interactions (Alanen, 2009; Mayall, 2009; Qvortrup, 2014). This is followed by a literature review in the second section that recapitulates cultural context and general child socialisation patterns in Syrian Muslim culture which form the cornerstone of parents' understandings of children, and research pertinent to the challenges of immigration and parenting. I also include a focused examination of literature specifically related to immigrant and refugee parents in Norway thereafter. In the third section I outline and discuss four key theoretical concepts: age, structure and agency, generation, and gender which signify the approach and interest of this thesis. I have used these concepts to view the data and narrow my focus of analysis. Intersectionality has also been included as a fifth and final concept as a supporting lens for

²² According to Waksler (1991), 'phenomenology emphasises the importance of conducting studies from the point of view of those being studied and encourages researchers to suspend judgements about those studied (p.239).'

analysis after a pattern of how different aspects like gender, class, ethnicity, age and religion were bound together began to emerge from the empirical material.

3.1 Social Studies of Children and Childhood

The social studies of children and childhood (herein ‘Childhood Studies’) is an interdisciplinary research field that evolved as a critique and response to the positivistic views (James & Prout, 1990). It primarily draws upon knowledge from social anthropology and sociology but includes also research from other disciplines within the social sciences such as psychology, pedagogy and geography (Alanen, 1992; Qvortrup, 1994; James & Prout, 1997; James, Jenks & Prout, 1998; Corsaro, 2005). Childhood studies challenges the perception of childhood as a developmental stage of the life course universal to all children and characterised by basic physical and developmental patterns (Woodhead, 1990; Woodhead & Faulkner, 2000; Mooney, 2000). It focuses instead on children’s everyday lives, lived experiences and the structures they act upon, framing childhood as a dynamic and plural social and cultural phenomenon that varies across and between cultures and generations (James & James, 2008). Alanen (2001) identified three different positions to approach childhood: sociologies of children, deconstructive sociology of childhood and structural sociology of childhood. This study focuses on the deconstructive sociology (or social construction) and structural sociology of childhood examining closely discursive formation of notions of children and childhood and social (or macro-) structures that constitute children as a social category apart from other social groups.

3.1.1 Social Constructionism

Social constructionists reject any kind of fixed and essential reality or truth. According to Burr (2015), the basic tenets of social constructionism are: (i) a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge, (ii) the historical and cultural specificity of categories and concepts, (iii) the belief that knowledge is derived from and sustained by social processes and, (iv) the recognition that knowledge and social action go together. Within this framework, we question our understanding of ourselves and the world we live in and recognise that our reality is historically, socially and culturally constructed; and that it is diverse. On this

premise, if realities are multiple, then so are childhoods, as underscored by James and Prout (2015, p.7),

Childhood is understood as a social construction. As such it provides an interpretive frame for contextualising 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.

The conceptualisation of childhood as a social and cultural construction was first highlighted by French historian Philippe Aries (1962) who claimed that childhood was a relatively recent social phenomenon that did not exist in medieval society. Despite debate over his research and methods²³, Aries succeeded in drawing attention to the view that childhood is not a natural and universal state but a social and cultural condition; which can be observed in the substantial changes in conceptualisation of children and childhood that has taken place over the past centuries (Zelizer, 1994; Henrick, 1997; Scraton, 2004). While the universal biological aspects of what constitutes a child is incontestable, the social construction of childhood focuses on how childhood is understood and made meaningful. This is all the more significant when we see how notions of children and childhood is fundamentally shaped and reshaped in particular contexts, at particular points, through specific interactions and mediated by class, gender and life experiences. As Fronès (cited in James & Prout, 2015, p.xiv) described, ‘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’.

This perspective of childhood as socially constructed and the accompanying plurality of childhoods is therefore the foundation for this exploratory study of the heterogeneous representation of children and childhood by refugee parents in transition. The theory of social construction of childhood guides exploration of flexible ideas, images and knowledge of children and childhood as conveyed by individuals and society.

²³ See Cunningham, 1991; Hendrick, 1997 and Pollock, 1983

3.1.2 Structural Sociology of Childhood

While the deconstructive stance above argues for childhood as a social conception of elements that change through time and space, the structural sociology of childhood views childhood as a fixed and relatively permanent social category in modern social life around which societies are organised and through which social relations and transactions take place (Alanen, 2001; Qvortrup, 2002; 2009). Mayall (2002) defined childhood as ‘an essential component of a social order where the general understanding is that childhood is a first and separate condition of the lifespan whose characteristics are different from the later ones’ (p.23). What this definition does is position childhood as a structural category comparable with other universally recognised categories in society such as class and gender that persists even though childhood is a transient period of life for individual children and the members who occupy childhood change (Qvortrup, 1994; Alanen, 2001; James & James, 2008).

According to Qvortrup (1994), ‘children who live within a defined area – whether in terms of time, space, economics or other relevant criteria – have a number of characteristics in common’ (p.5). Choosing to use this broad macro-level framework of commonality will allow us to draw upon social structures and mechanisms to examine how childhood and child-adult relations are contextualised irrespective of children themselves, and the interplay with family politics, family economics and family networks.

The use of theoretical tools from structural sociology of childhood thus complements deconstructive sociology by guiding the exploration and analysis of childhood as a relational phenomenon, focusing not just on structural relations between children and adult, but also on how these categories are constituted. For example, the notion within Syrian culture that parents are responsible for children and children responsible to parents can be seen as a norm of reciprocity and power exchange between two generational categories. In this study, approaching this from the perspective of adults, we are essentially extricating Syrian children conceptually from parents and the family to study the social conditions of childhood and the way children fit into the social order.

3.2 Key Concepts

In this section, I will briefly outline and clarify the way age, structure and agency, generation, gender and intersectionality function as primary theoretical concepts for this thesis.

3.2.1 Age

In contemporary western societies, age is commonly regarded as a key definitional marker of the status of a child. Chronological age is often used to operationalise aging (Durkin, 1995; Clark-Kazak, 2009); conceptualise social identities such as age of criminal responsibility, consensual sex and the right to vote and institutionalise development within the life course such as age-based school systems (Laslett, 1989; Hockey & James, 2003). However, universalising age-based definitions disregards the different social, cultural and economic circumstances that children across the world experience and as James and James (2008) states, 'it implies a commonality of experience that is not there (p.7-8)'. Children have been shown to, for example, leave school, engage in work and get married at different ages in various parts of the world (Baker & Hinton, 2001; Chant & Jones, 2003; Abebe & Bessell, 2011). In a study with Norwegian children, Solberg (1997) found that parents perceived children who were able to competently perform household tasks as more responsible, mature and thereby 'older', verifying the argument that age is a relative concept that can be circumvented and introducing the socially constructed notion of maturity. This study thus approaches age (and maturity) from different perspectives in different temporalities within the construct of parent-child relationships and childhood.

3.2.2 Structure and Agency

Agency is a core notion in childhood studies in which children are seen as independent social actors who have the capacity to make decisions, express ideas and direct their own lives (James, Jenks & Prout, 1998; James & James, 2008). In relation to the context of childhood as a structural form where children are perceived as socialised within a social system, the notion of children as social actors is traditionally considered an opposing approach. This has given rise to the structure-agency debate about the extent to which individuals can act independent of social structures, and value systems in which they live (Outhwaite, 1990; Jessop, 1996; Willmott, 1997).

In his work on structuration theory, Giddens (1979) highlighted the way structure and agency are intertwined, 'every act which contributes to the reproduction of a structure is also an act of production, and as such may initiate change by altering the structure at the same time as it reproduces it' (p. 69). He argued for the importance of understanding agency in terms of knowledge and reflexivity that relates to the social system. From that, we get Mayall's (2002) description of children's agency as the way children's interactions with others 'make a difference – to a relationship or to a decision, to the workings of a set of social assumptions or constraints' (p.21) which gives us the premise for analysing children's agency within the structure of the household.

3.2.3 Generation

There are two understandings of generation in childhood studies: generation as a structural and structuring concept with the emphasis on aggregated level, or generation as a relational concept where one category/position cannot exist without the other (Qvortrup, 1994; Alanen, 2014). The former has already been taken up in the discussion of childhood as a structural approach above. This section thus focuses on the latter and discussions of generational order, generational process and power.

one position (such as the parental position) cannot exist without the other (child) position; also what parenting is - that is, action in the position of a parent – is dependent on its relation to the action 'performed' in the child position, and a change in one part is tied to change in the other. (Alanen & Mayall, 2001, p. 19)

According to Alanen's argument, childhood is socially constructed in relation to adulthood within a generational structure that circumscribes how children behave and participate in ongoing social life in relation to adults. In other words, generational processes shape the nature of parent-child relations and is the grounds on which distinct adult and child positions are produced (Mayall, 2002). One key issue arising from this generational order is the nature of power differentials in these relationships. Parents (or adults) have power and authority

over children, while children occupy a subordinate position vis-à-vis adults (Alanen & Mayall, 2001; James & James, 2008). The theoretical concept of generation is used predominantly to view and analyse power within the processes of child socialisation, parent-child interdependencies and the changing structure of the family; and the way parents and children navigate their positions within this structure.

3.2.4 Gender

Gender describes the way differences between the sexes are socially and culturally constructed, while gender roles refer to societal norms that dictate types of behaviour that is considered acceptable, appropriate or desirable for people based on their sex. The notion of sex and gender in childhood studies reflects the nature/nurture debate (cf. psychology). Gendering in childhood occurs across a wide range of social settings ranging from the home, to the school and in the neighbourhood and in different contexts (McHale, Bartko, Crouter & Perry-Jenkins, 1990; Johnson, Hill & Ivan-Smith, 1995; Punch, 2001; Robson, 2003). Gender is a major (if not main) determinant of the allocation of labour and resources in the household (White & Brinkerhoff, 1981; McHale *et al.* 1990; Punch, 2001; Ansell, 2005).

Gender allocation of labour relates to the economic significance of productive work as opposed to reproductive housework whereby men/boys perform the former and women/girls the latter. Research shows that girls help their mothers in the domestic arena while boys help their fathers with agricultural work (Robson, 1996) or household maintenance (McHale *et al.* 1990); and that girls have a greater burden of labour than boys (Niewenhuys, 1994; Robson, 1996). However, Punch (2001) argued that gender allocation of household chores can only occur if the household composition allows for it, i.e., it does not apply if only a single child is present in the household or children of the same sex.

With regards to household resource allocation, studies indicate a consistent preference for allocating resources to boys over girls for things like education, health and nutrition etc. Furthermore, girls often have lower school attendance and poorer school performances and educational outcomes (Ansell, 2005). Gender as a theoretical concept is thus used for analysis

to approach issues of gendering that arise in parenting and socialisation, particularly relating to the home and school.

3.2.5 Intersectionality

In this study with Syrian parents, aspects such as age, generation and gender were identified as important individually in the construct of childhood and children within the family e.g. what are the differential roles of boys and girls within the households or how are young children treated differently from older children. However, it began to emerge in early stages of working with the empirical material that approaching these experiences on individual axis was reductionist and did not take into account the way the different axes together shaped complex and situational identities of children. Intersectionality, which originates from the work of Crenshaw (1989) in feminist study, was thus included as a supporting analytical tool. Intersectionality as a theoretical tool guides analysis by examining the ways different forms of identity intersect and overlap and how these give rise to differential constructions of roles and responsibilities for children, and accompanying parenting practices. For example, the interaction of age and gender may be reflected in the question of how young girls and older girls are differently positioned within the family and assigned different responsibilities. By looking at the interaction and intersection of multiple theoretical drivers, this study hopes to develop a fuller understanding of the complex and contextual relationships between parents and children that have a bearing on constructions of roles, expectations and responsibilities within the family.

3.3 Literature Review

3.3.1 Parent-Child Relationships among Syrian Muslims

In this section, I briefly describe the main features of cultural perceptions and parenting practices in Syrian Muslim culture drawing also on literature from the Arab or Muslim context due to multiple socio-cultural intersects. My intention is to furnish readers with an overview of common cultural practices for them to be able to locate where and how Syrian Muslim parents are positioned in discussions of cultural conflicts pertaining to child upbringing and parent-child interactions. I acknowledge that this information cannot accurately represent Syrian Muslim parents given the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, languages, geographies and religions in Syria, but I believe it still provides a good basic for understanding the framework parents in this study draw upon in their comparison of Norwegian culture to their heritage culture.

In Syrian Muslim culture, traditional patterns of relations are characterised by hierarchy, authority and dependency (Haddad, 1969). Fathers are in general the leading figure in the household with traditional authority and symbolic duties which include providing economically for the family and disciplining children. Mothers occupy nutritive roles of secondary control over children and tend to their physical and emotional needs. Parent-child relations are situated within a framework of responsibilities and rights stipulated by Islam. As Hopkins and Ibrahim (1997) wrote,

The husband's obligations include providing for the family, discipline of the children, and fidelity to his wife. The wife's obligations include obedience, respect, and fidelity to her husband in addition to care for children and the household. Children receive nourishment, clothing, shelter, protection, and education from their parents. They are expected to obey, respect, show compassion and take care of their parents in old age (p.174).

The nature of parent-child relationships within Syrian Muslim culture is visibly hierarchical and each member according to his age, gender, status etc. has a secure place within the family with definite duties and obligations. As seen in the description above, these roles are also

complementary as the responsibilities of one role are automatically the rights of the other, even if the extent and degree may differ (Antoun & Quataert, 1991; Hopkins & Ibrahim, 1997; Shoup, 2008).

Syrian families have often been described as possessing a collectivistic orientation that emphasise family members' responsibilities to each other. Individualism and collectivism is a much used model in cultural psychology that pertain to the construal of selves. A collectivist construal is primarily anchored in the connectedness of human beings to each other while an individualistic construal involves a conception of the self as autonomous, self-contained, self-determined and unique (Geertz, 1975; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995). These conceptions are integral to how people organise and construct beliefs, attitudes, norms, roles and values, and the behaviour is most easily observed in interactions within families. Cultures with a collectivistic orientation such as Syria emphasise the goals, feelings, interests and actions of the group over those of the individual (De Vos, 1973; Shweder & Bourne, 1984; Hsu, 1985). As we see from childhood research delving into the role of children in family collectives, there exists a strong kinship bond within the family and individuals have a place in a strong, cohesive in-group within a hierarchical order that requires no further justifications (Schildkrout, 1978; Robson, 2003; Ansell, 2005; Abebe, 2012; Boyden, 2013). Long-term commitment and loyalty to the family, or extended family, is paramount (Hofstede, 2001; Smith, 2012; Merkin & Ramadan, 2016).

Several studies have suggested that children are socialised into this structure and that parents from collectivistic cultures tend to adopt an authoritarian style of parenting²⁴. The authoritarian style implies control, coldness and distance, and is shown to be negative for children (Baumrind, 1971; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1991). This has been challenged by researchers who argued that it is not an issue of control and dominance but that children are taught to respect the authority and wishes of the family, and to defer to the opinion and advice of elders on important matters even if it

²⁴ According to Baumrind's (1971) typological model of parental control there are three manners of parenting: permissive, authoritarian and authoritative. Permissive parents allow children to self-regulate and display minimal control, authoritarian parents emphasise strict control and demand obedience, and authoritative parents are directive but rational emphasising self-will and discipline.

entails sublimating their personal wishes and desires (Chao, 1994; Punch, 2002; Dekovic, Pels & Model, 2006; Abebe, 2007). Syrian Muslim parenting style is significantly more balanced than this measure portrays and emphasises affection, involvement and high concern for children in combination with strict control over actions and behaviour (Dwairy, Achoui, Abouserie & Farah, 2006).

3.3.2 Migration, Parenting and Acculturation

Previous qualitative and quantitative studies on the topic of migration, parenting and acculturation have, to a large extent, focused on the problems and challenges immigrant and refugee parents generally encounter in learning new competencies and adjusting behaviour to align with the beliefs, values and traditions of the new culture (Berry, 1994; 2006; Gibson, 2001; Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010). Much attention has been given to examining contributors to acculturation stress such as intercultural and intergenerational conflicts (Gray & Elliot, 2001; Kwak 2003; Degni, Pontinen & Molsa, 2006; Deng & Marlowe, 2013; Vu & Rook, 2013) and issues of cultural maintenance and value transmission (Marlowe, 2011; Renzaho, McCabe & Sainsbury, 2011). These studies indicate that most immigrant parents have the fundamental desire to transmit cultural values to their children to ensure the perpetuation and continuation of relevant customs and norms while acculturating to their new environment. Acculturation stress arises when parents who try to maintain traditional cultural practices, values and relational structures within the family encounter that their new culture does not endorse identical cultural values as their heritage culture (Thomas, 1995; Milner & Khawaja, 2010).

In her review of cross-generational family relations in immigrant and non-immigrant families, Kwak (2003) found that the potential for intercultural conflict is greater when there is a larger cultural distance between the immigrant families' culture of origin and the host culture. Moreover, the degree of conflict related closely to how similar the modes of acculturation²⁵

²⁵ Berry (2007) developed a nuanced four-fold classification of acculturation which distinguished between form degree and direction of change experienced by dominant and non-dominant groups: integration (adopts the receiving culture and retains heritage culture), assimilation (adopts the receiving culture and discards heritage culture), separation (rejects the receiving culture and retains the heritage culture) and marginalisation (rejects both the heritage and the receiving cultures).

parent and children adopted were. Assimilation reflects the pursuit of new behavioural patterns from the new culture and the rejection of heritage culture (Berry, 2007). Children who attempted to assimilate are thus seen to be challenging traditional familial relationships which provoke conflict with their parents (Choi, He & Harachi, 2008; Nilsson, Barazanji, Heintzelman, Siddiqi & Shilla, 2012).

In his essay *Intercultural Contact and Intergenerational Transmission in Immigrant Families*, Nauck (2001) distinguished between intercultural conflict and intergenerational conflict. The former is a result of contact between contrasting cultures while the latter relates to the differential rate of acculturation for children and their parents which in turn challenges existing relationship dynamics within the family. Other researchers refer to this as the ‘acculturation gap’, a phenomenon that commonly occurs when children experience greater or more rapid acculturation than parents in arenas such as language acquisition, local knowledge, network development or host culture value orientation (Kwak, 2003; Ho & Birman, 2010; Renzaho, McCabe & Sainsbury, 2011). Rasmi and Daly (2016) conducted a study investigating the salient issues that spark intergenerational conflict in Arab families and found that the desire of children to seek more autonomy than parents were willing to give was a significant factor. This related often to domains such as risky behaviour, personal choice, family expectations, dating and marriage; and girls reported more conflict than boys, reflecting the additional significance of gender restrictions within Arab culture. Other studies conducted with Arab-American families also underscored a gender disparity in intergenerational conflict but demonstrated that high levels of conflict can occur between fathers and eldest sons as well (Ajrouch & Jamal, 2007; Goforth, Pham & Oka, 2015; Rasmi & Daly, 2016).

In the Western world much has been written about parenting with respect to parenting styles and parental control (e.g. Baumrind, 1971; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). These models of parenting are largely based on the dimensions of support, affection and control e.g. acceptance-rejection, warmth-cold, permissiveness-strictness. Several studies have demonstrated that intergenerational conflict is especially noticeable among immigrant families where parents are high in strictness/control and low in warmth and harbour

expectations of children's obedience suggesting that parent-child conflict relates closely to the notion of parental authority (Lim, Liang, Lau & McCabe, 2009; Ying, 2009). According to Zhou and Bankston (2000) who studied Vietnamese immigrants in the United States, two main sources of conflict between parents and children revolve around the way children perceive the nature and extent of parental authority, and the appropriateness of the use of traditional parenting practices for teaching and punishment. Children who acculturated faster and better to the host culture than parents were more likely to challenge parental authority which led immigrant parents to experience a sense of loss relating to this diminished authority. Moreover, this loss of respect may be further amplified when parents have to rely on their children for language brokering as well (Garcia Coll & Magnuson, 1997; Okagaki & Bojczyk, 2002; Fong, 2004).

3.3.3 Challenges in the Norwegian System

I attempted to summarise key challenges refugee parents have been shown to encounter in acculturation and parenting above. In this section, I examine challenges that arise in relation to immigration and resettlement in Norway. It should be emphasised that this is a summary of findings from previous research and not a statement of how things are.

Most of the existing studies about refugee immigration in Norway have focused on aspects of integration and assimilation, both in terms of increasing labour market participation (e.g. Hauff & Vaglum, 1993) and promoting social inclusion (e.g. Valenta, 2007). Much attention has also been given to integration politics, trauma and mental health issues in refugees (Jensen, Fjernestad, Granly & Wilhelmsen, 2015; Oppedal & Idsoe, 2015) and the development of bi-cultural identities in immigrant children (Rabehanitriniony, 2012; Soltanpanah, 2017). In the past few decades, integration of immigrants and individuals with minority backgrounds in the workplace and at school has become a popular topic of research interest within the field of social work and sociology (Bakken, 2003; Fekjær, 2006; Lauglo, 2010; 2015). However, there are still few studies that have examined the experiences of refugee families within the home and the process of parenting and acculturation in Norway, especially in the initial stage. My intention with this study is therefore to focus on how parenting acculturation occurs within a specific population by exploring everyday

experiences and interactions between parents and children, including the way parents construct and communicate notions of roles and responsibilities, if any.

In their report *Youths in Refugee Families (Ungdom i flyktningfamilie)*, Engebrigtsen and Fuglerud (2006) found that youths with refugee backgrounds desired to obey their parents and promote a sense of belonging and security to their families, but grappled with the challenge of balancing this with their desire for autonomy and this contributed towards parent-child conflict. Other studies have demonstrated the importance of cultural scripts concerning kinship and gender and the role of cultural distance in the acculturation process for families in Norway, and the way these differential ways in which these contribute towards constructions of ‘good migrant’ or failed migrant, i.e. not integrated (Engebrigtsen, 2007; Ali, 2010). Some studies suggest that refugee parents in Norway encounter challenges similar to what has been laid out in the previous section such as having to learn a new language, rupture of social support; as well as challenges of overcoming general prejudice (e.g. Engebrigtsen & Fuglerud, 2009; Guribye, 2009; Guribye & Sandal & Oppdeal, 2011, Oppedal & Guribye, 2011;). However, what appears to be missing is literature that explores the experiences of acculturation for parents that takes into account the unique context of the Norwegian welfare model which provides extensive resettlement and integration assistance to refugees²⁶.

Previous research indicates that good and extensive welfare support in the early phases of settlement in a new culture can have the positive effect of buffering parents from the severe challenges of unemployment and language inadequacies and support their acculturation (Brochmann, 2008; Brochmann & Grødem, 2017). At the same time, strong involvement of the state in private affairs of the family can have a less positive impact particularly when the values, norms and practices in Norway conflict with that of the immigrant parent’s (Hundeide, 1995; Hennem, 2002; 2011; 2014; Johannesen & Appoh, 2016).

²⁶ For more information on the comparison of Norwegian (and Scandinavian) refugee integration policies with other countries: see Berg (2002), Carrera (2006), Sainsbury (2006), Brekke and Vevstad (2007)

In an in-depth study of the contemporary discourses on children and parenting in Norway, Hollekim (2016) found that contemporary ideals of parenting are informed by a rights discourse which position children as citizens with individual rights entitled to enjoy fundamental ideals such as humanitarianism, autonomy and justice. At the same time, children are seen as vulnerable and in need of adult protection, espousing notions derived from attachment theories (e.g. Bowlby, 1969; Ainsworth, 1989). Hollekim (2016) argued that connecting the latter with the understanding of children as individuals emphasises the need for extensive parental dedication and the importance of emotional and relational aspects between parent and child. As Morelli and Rothbaum (2007) illustrated, this means the use of little physical contact and control by parents and increased opportunities for children to be autonomous and self-directive. Gullestad (1996) also found that Norwegian parents display high sensitivity to the emotional needs of their children, preferring often to discuss, negotiate and compromise with children through face-to-face and verbal interactions.

The past two decades has seen an increase of obligatory parenting programmes for refugees being implemented in different municipalities to target the issues of colliding parenting values. While limited, there has been some research that explore the effectiveness of these programmes with different populations e.g. parents in general, parents with minority backgrounds, fathers, parents in prison etc. (Sherr, Skar, Clucas, von Tetzchner & Hundeide, 2013; Skar, 2013; Skar, Bjørnstad & Davidsen, 2014). The results generally reflected a positive effect with parents reporting that they had more knowledge of different parenting strategies, better skills for coping in their roles as parents and had stopped using physical punishments with children Bjørknes, Kjøbli, Manger & Jakobsen, 2012; Sherr, Skar, Clucas, von Tetzchner & Hundeide, 2013; Skar, von Tetzchner, Clucas & Sherr, 2015). All of these studies were conducted after the course and predominantly used a quantitative or mixed-methods design with focus group interviews. One main limitation was that none of these studies explored existing parenting values, beliefs and norms parents had prior to beginning the program that may have already been affected through the pre-flight, post-flight and migration contexts (Williams, 2010). The researchers have thus underscored a need for follow-up studies that also closely examine parenting constructs among newly settled refugee parents before participation in parenting programmes, which this study hopes to achieve.

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CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This study explores changes and continuities in newly-arrived Syrian refugee parents' conceptions of children and childhood post-migration in response to a new socio-cultural context. It aims to provide a basis of new empirical knowledge to contribute to evidence-based integration policy and action in schools and the community. The theoretical basis considers parenting as childhood performed within a specific historic and social landscape and childhood as a changing social phenomenon connected to a social and cultural context (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998). This social constructionist perspective or the constructivist worldview is therefore closely intertwined with the methodological concerns presented in this chapter. This study utilises qualitative methodological tools, primarily narrative semi-structured biographical approach (Wengraf, 2001) supplemented by informal participant observation and document analysis. The use of triangulation through multiple sources and different data collection techniques allows for an understanding of the anticipated complexity of the research context and reduces the chances of establishing inaccurate assumptions, results and implications; increasing validity of findings.

This chapter presents how the study was devised, conducted and analysed. The first part of this chapter delineates considerations prior to data collection (research design and researcher position) which are relevant throughout the whole research process. The second part describes the process of data collection (research site, research location, participant recruitment and access) while the third part is an in-depth discussion of methods used. The fourth part details language challenges, transcription and the process of data analysis, and the fifth and final part is a reflection over ethical concerns and methodological challenges encountered during the research process.

4.1 Worldview of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is concerned with interpreting existing subjective phenomena and experiences in a way that explores meaning and illuminates our understanding of actions or outcomes that are typically measured by quantitative strategies (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Kvale, 2015). Given the emphasis of the study on issues and themes which shape constructions of parenting, a qualitative approach to data collection was most appropriate.

Such a method enables the way refugee parents think about such ideas to be identified, rather than imposing pre-existing concepts and ideas upon them. By identifying and discussing systematically study design, procedures and principles regarding the research process, methods of data collection and analysis, reflexivity and fair dealing, my goal is to secure the transparency of this qualitative empirical research and thereby its scientific value.

The study in this thesis is inspired by an interest in the stories I was told by refugee parents of their experiences and frustrations in interactions with Norwegian authorities, teachers and parents pertaining to childrearing. The study is intended to be contextual and exploratory with the wide-reaching objective of describing and displaying parenting as experienced and constructed by newly arrived Syrian Muslim parents in Norway in fine-tuned detail and in the participants' own terms, not to prove or disprove theories or predictions. An examination of existing research on refugee immigration, integration and parenting in Norway (and Scandinavia) turned up studies that concentrated primarily on parental engagement in children's education (Alitolppa-niitamo, 2002; McBrien, 2005; Bergset, 2017), inter-generational acculturation distance and experiences of inclusion-exclusion and coping (Gullestad, 2002; Kabuya, 2008; Guribye, Sandal & Oppedal, 2011; Johannesen & Appoh, 2016). These studies responded to the *what* and *so what* of integration but was limited when broaching the *why* and *how* of processes. They also reflected a lack of breadth and depth in the exploration of parenting integration with respect to within-culture diversity. As such, my focus was to gain specific insight and familiarity into the changes, challenges and diversity within a single group in the initial phase of cross-cultural post-migration parenting and potentially reduce commonly held perceptions. This has been achieved by employing a narrative research design (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, 2006) that utilises parents' recollections of childhood experiences alongside present day recounting of parenting experiences to explore constructions and reconstructions of childhood.

Gullestad (2005) stated that 'childhood reminiscences demonstrate particularly well that childhood is not only perceived as a stage of *period of time* in the life of each, but also as a manifestation of certain *qualities of life*' (p.524). The study of childhoods as they are experienced and performed, recalled and reconstructed, enables a special focus on social

relationships, customs and practices. Moreover, it promotes learning and knowledge transmission within the family across gender and generations; and further enables exploration of continuities and discontinuities along intergenerational lines (Putallaz, Costanzo, Grimes & Sherman, 2001; Kwak, 2003; Campbell & Gilmore, 2007). It is on this premise that this life history narrative qualitative research design has been conceived. The use of retrospective methods has often been criticised for being prone to inaccuracies due to the nature of human memory (Parry, Thomson & Fowkes 1999; Hardt & Rutter, 2004) and retrospective empirical material – as all empirical material – is also often deemed subjective and selective, chosen consciously or subconsciously in acts of self-representation (Gullestad, 1996). However, as the objective of this research is to rely as much as possible on Syrian parents' subjective negotiated meanings of their childhood experiences based on their historical and social perspectives, these distortions, self-representations or polarisation of narratives lend valuable insight towards making sense of the meanings they have of childhood and children.

4.2 Role of the Researcher: Researcher Positionality

No researcher is entirely detached or non-intervening during the research process; the outcome of research is greatly affected by who the researcher is as a human being or where the researcher is 'coming from' (Salner, 1989; Gudmundsdottir, 1996). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) states that 'in interviewing, the importance of the researcher's integrity is magnified because the interviewer him- or herself is the main instrument for obtaining knowledge' (p.74). A researcher's background including personal characteristics such as gender, age, race, social class and status, sexual orientation, immigration status and religious faith; and values, traditions, beliefs, preferences, political and ideological stances etc. affects the entire research process (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Sikes, 2004; Stronach, Garatt, Pearce & Piper, 2007). Taking this in to consideration, positionality therefore describes the position individuals have chosen to adopt within a given research that influences research actions and outcomes. Positionality should be informed by a reflexive approach whereby the researcher maintains awareness of themselves as part of the world they study and seek to understand their influence on the research to be able to clearly identify, construct, critique and articulate their positionality (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). I will engage further with the issue of reflexivity later in this chapter. However, my focus here is

to disclose my own self in this research and discuss my own influence on and in the process according to the three primary ways of accomplishing positionality as identified by Savin-Baden & Howell Major (2013) locating myself in relation to the subject, to the participants, and to the research context and process.

I relocated from Singapore to Norway in August 2016 and embarked on this research project on parenting acculturation with Syrian Muslim parents a year later after I had the opportunity to become involved in volunteer work with refugee parents and children as a Norwegian language training (*norsktrener*) and as a family guide (*flyktingguide*). At that time, despite being a volunteer, I was myself still learning to live in another language which was not my own, coming to terms with a Scandinavian culture that starkly contrasted the ones I was familiar with and had ‘newly’ stepped into the role of stepmother to my boyfriend’s two sons. The insider-outside positionality debate is a common distinction made in ethnographic research pertaining to the perspective and position of the researcher as being either an insider or outsider relative to the culture being studied (Merton, 1972; Weiner-Levy & Queder, 2012). As a female, Singaporean, Chinese, agnostic, academic, immigrant step-parent researching Syrian Muslim refugee parents in Norway, I am neither an insider nor an outsider; and yet both. Having shared the immigration experience with study participants and hailing from a non-Western culture positioned me in the role of the ‘insider’ to a small extent and offered a few advantages such as a head-start in knowing about the topic, understanding the general reactions of participants and easier entry into the field as identified by Kacen and Chaitin (2006). Possession of a priori knowledge of Muslim culture and traditional beliefs from my upbringing in a multiracial and multi-religious society allowed me to ask relevant, meaningful and insightful question. Despite initial hesitancy at participating in a research project, most participants quickly became receptive and open, expressing confidence that as a non-Norwegian and ‘being one of them’ I would be better able to understand and represent their experiences. This was presumably in reference to my being an immigrant and based on my overt physical ‘foreignness’.

Mercer (2007) raised the point that although the conditions for insider or outsider status are dichotomous (e.g. male or female, black or White, Christian or Muslim), ‘insiderness’ is not

itself a single fixed status but a continuum. I concur with this because while my immigration status gave me a platform to approach participants, being of a different nationality, religion, a voluntary immigrant (as opposed to a victim of forced migration) and unable to speak the language (Arabic) positioned me simultaneously as an outsider. I am also a stranger in a strange land studying the unfamiliar. My outsider status may have affected the process of data collection insofar as I lack the language competency and thereby language sensitivity in the conceptualising of questions relevant to participant's experience, for example, I was unaware (until advised by my interpreter) of the preference for the term 'widow' as opposed to 'single mother' which has negative connotations. This could lead one to question my ability to competently understand the experiences of those inside the culture, as well as the authenticity of responses received from participants who might have perceived me as an outsider with whom they would have no future contact. Recruitment of participants was laborious and involved negotiations to gain access through the municipality and subsequently the trust and cooperation of individual participants whom I could not directly communicate with. However, I believe these issues were negated by collaboration with interpreters native to the participants' culture, something I will elaborate upon in a subsequent section.

Merriam et al. (2001) and Mercer (2007) argued for the outsider's strengths being the insider's weaknesses and vice-versa. Kusow (2003) highlighted the potential for researchers from an outsider perspective to detach themselves from the target culture and be able to study it without inherent bias. Building on this argument, I would say that being an outsider allowed me to legitimately ask 'dumb' questions (Naaek et al., 2011) and raise potentially provocative or taboo questions e.g. about beliefs and values related to Islam and the position of women. Participants are not able to act under the assumptions that I know things and have to elaborate upon certain topics. Berger and Malkinson (2000) found that when the researcher is 'ignorant' and the respondent is in the expert position, it can also be an empowering experience. Many of my participants thanked me post-interview for being interested in their lives and reported feeling satisfied and validated by being asked to share their perceptions and stories.

My decision to pursue this research was inspired by my time volunteering with refugees and a certain degree of self-identification with the challenges of integration. I consequently

encountered the struggle of how much personal information relative to my own experience to disclose, in which manner, when and to whom. I gradually became more sensitive and responsive to participants, and the personal experiences I chose to highlight were situation dependent. I noted also that I had the ability to manipulate my positionality in the way I stressed attributes of my identity to participants, which included for example, presenting myself as a mother to female participants but as a researcher (with children) to male participants in the beginning to either appear more ‘harmless’ and identifiable or to convey a certain status so as to negotiate power relations in a gender influenced space. My role as a researcher and insider-outsider positionality naturally changed over time as we progressed, and more contact and informal discussions took place (Herod, 1999). Regardless, I consistently emphasised to all participants throughout that we were co-creators of knowledge in this study.

4.3 Research Site

A medium-sized city in Norway was selected as the research site for this project that was conducted over a period of 3 months from October 2017 to December 2017. The basis for selecting this research site was the high share of non-western immigrants and strong support from the municipality towards the research. Moreover, the city has had long experience as a settlement municipality for refugees and has established centres that offer the Introduction Programme to newly arrived refugees and other immigrants. According to IMDi (2017), the municipality has seen a sharp increase over several years in the number of new refugees settled. Since 2012, the number of refugees has more than doubled with the latest waves composing predominantly of persons from the Syrian Arab Republic.

4.4 Participant Recruitment and Access

The purpose of this research was to gain access to subjective, rich and in-depth information that illuminate the phenomenon of post-migration parenting. This required purposeful sampling which is the identification and selection of individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell & Plano-Clark, 2011) who are available and willing to participate (Spradley, 1979; Bernard, 2002). The resulting sample of participants in this research was small. However, as

Sandelowski (1995) highlighted, the adequacy of sample size in qualitative research is relative and lies primarily in the quality of information obtained per sampling unit, as opposed to their number per se. To ensure the richness of data collected, careful research and thought was invested in the development of a detailed interview guide that formed the basis of all the interviews conducted.

Due to the latest wave of refugees being predominantly from Syria, my primary intention was to look for Syrian parents (both mothers and fathers) who had been settled in the municipality for no longer than 24 months and whose children were already attending structured education in the form of kindergarten or school. In my engagements with Syrian parents through volunteer work, I realised that few parents had sufficient knowledge of English or Norwegian yet for me to be able to independently recruit participants. As such, I needed to recruit participants through a structured platform that could effectively allow me access to multiple individuals at once. The municipality regularly organises “ICDP for Minorities” parenting courses that run over 12 weeks and is an obligatory component of the Introduction Programme for newly arrived refugee parents. It was important that I interviewed parents who had not attended the parenting course to minimise direct and concentrated influence from the Norwegian environment on parents’ thoughts on children and parenting. “ICDP for Minorities” courses are conducted in different languages based on the target group. I contacted the municipality in early spring 2017 to enquire about the possibility of collaborating with them on this research and was informed about an “ICDP for minorities” course in Arabic planned for autumn 2017. I was welcomed to recruit participants at the pre-course briefing for parents where there would also be professional translators available who could assist me in relaying my recruitment message.

There were 35 parents present at the 2-hour pre-course briefing in autumn 2017. Majority were from Syria. Parents were divided into three relatively equal groups based on their schedule and availability. Each group would proceed with the “ICDP for Minorities” course at the same time but at different locations under the guidance of two ICDP trainers - a Norwegian trainer and an Arabic-speaking trainer. I decided to recruit solely from the group that was logistically most convenient for me to conduct interviews and organise observations

with. There were 11 Syrian parents in the group. I presented my study to the parents and distributed information texts (and consent forms) translated into Arabic (see appendix 1 and 2). The information texts had been previously translated and back-translated by two Arabic speakers independently to minimise possibility of misrepresentation of the study. Deliberate care was taken to disassociate my research from the Introduction Programme and to reiterate that there was no obligation to participate in the study nor any consequences for not participating. This is important to highlight because parents receive *introduksjonsstønader* (introduction benefits) for participation in the Introduction Programme and benefits are reduced accordingly for non-attendance or non-participation.²⁷ To ensure participation was voluntary, potential participants had to be clear about the separation between my study and the Introduction Programme.

Parents had up to a week to decide if they wanted to participate in the study. All parents agreed to be contacted by phone within the week to confirm or reject participation, and no email addresses or home addresses were recorded. The reason for minimal exchange of personal contact details was to minimise researcher intrusiveness keeping correspondences to a single platform (text/call) or face-to-face. Husband and wife pairs were contacted through the husband at their request. Participants were followed-up with via phone within the first week. Three husband-wife pairs and two mothers agreed to participate. Prior to beginning interviews, a young mother from a husband-wife pair withdrew from the study. Her husband explained that his wife was uncomfortable with participating as she did not feel able to express herself well. The study proceeded with seven participants – three fathers and four mothers – none of whom I knew personally prior to the study.

²⁷ According to § 9 and §10 of the *Lov om introduksjonsordning og norskoopplæring for nyankomne innvandrere* (2003). Retrieved from: https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2003-07-04-80/KAPITTEL_3#§10

4.5 Description of Participants

The participants were between 24 years and 45 years old. All participants had been settled in the municipality for between 6 and 12 months and were currently undergoing the Introduction Programme. None of the parents had higher education.

Pseudonym	Gender	Age (years)	No. of Children	Age Range (years)	Duration in Norway
Jumanah	Mother	24	2	0-5	< 1 year
Maya	Mother	39	5	0-20	< 6 months
Kasrin	Mother	47	3	15-25	< 1 year
Samira	Mother	35	5	0-20	< 6 months
Jamal	Father	29	2	0-5	< 1 year
Khalil	Father	27	2	0-5	< 6 months
Maan	Father	49	5	0-20	< 6 months

4.6 Research Location

Parents undergoing the Introduction Programme typically have a full schedule Monday to Friday from 8am to 4pm attending various classes at two different locations (A) and (B). Participants in the “ICDP for Minorities” course, however, have Wednesday mornings open to accompany their children at the kindergarten (for those with small children), and afternoons dedicated to attending ICDP classes. The group I recruited from attended ICDP classes at the kindergarten. I consulted each parent about when and where they would prefer to be interviewed. I was aware of the intensely packed schedules these parents had and my aim was therefore for participation in this study to have minimal disruptions to their lives and routines. Moreover, giving participants the choice about where they would be interviewed was intended to give participants a greater sense of empowerment in their interaction with the researcher (me). Most parents who had young children attending the kindergarten suggested having the interviews ‘on-site’ (at the kindergarten) on Wednesday mornings before ICDP classes citing reasons such as minimising travel time. On my part, locating the study at the kindergarten also facilitated the possibility for informal observations of parents with their children.

While pragmatic considerations are often an issue in determining interview location, the multiple scales of spatial relations and meaning embodied and constituted in interview sites that constitute power and position of researcher and participants should not be overlooked (Gilbert, 1994; Katz, 1994, Elwood & Martin, 2000). I accepted the kindergarten as the interview site because I interpreted it as a relatively neutral location neither ‘belonging’ to the researcher nor the participants; yet recognised that it represented a familiar and safe space for parents who know their way around the facility as they visit the site weekly and interact comfortably with bilingual staff at the kindergarten. In addition, being at a kindergarten could potentially serve as a physical reminder steering parents towards the focus of this study – childhood. At the same time, it is necessary to acknowledge that locating the interview in an institution can also accentuate social and spatial divisions through the way participants construct their identities in this space (Elwood & Martin, 2000). I noted that participants seemed more anxious and concerned in the early stages of the interview with whether they were presenting the ‘right’ answer which could reflect the embedded hierarchy of expertise within institutions such as a kindergarten. All interviews, with the exception of one, was conducted at the kindergarten. The last interview was conducted ‘off-site’ at location (A) where the parent attended the Introduction Programme as the parent did not have children at the kindergarten and was therefore not there in the morning.

4.7 Methods used in Generating Data

This section describes the different phases and different research methods employed to generate a holistic understanding of the phenomena under study that is as objective and accurate as possible. While the primary method is the narrative interview, other research methods were chosen as complements both in preparation for the narrative interview and for data triangulation. Choice of methods was based on the research questions and ethical considerations when conducting research with a vulnerable population.

4.7.1 Phase One: Establishing the Context

Designing an interview-based research study requires thematising and a key aspect is obtaining pre-knowledge of the context and conceptual understanding of the phenomena

under study (Berg, 2007; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; 2015). Familiarity with the theme investigated is required to be able to pose relevant questions and this is not obtained only through literature and theoretical studies. It can be obtained through ‘hanging out in the environment where interviews are to be conducted... provide a sense of what the interviewees will be talking about’ (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009 p.108). In this study, understanding the new parenting context for refugee parents in Norway (the reception context) required gaining familiarity with family and parenting constructs in Norway as well as cultural constructs relating to parenting and the family in Syria. I therefore decided to participate in an ICDP trainer course that started in May 2017 and ended in August 2017.

The ICDP trainer course consisted of 2x3 days of theoretical and practical training. Of the 24 trainees attending the course, majority were parents and a third of them were immigrants or refugees with minority backgrounds. There were twenty-three women and one man, the age range was 30 to 55 years old. As an observer, I listened in on active discussions among trainers and trainers-to-be on legal regulations, parenting practices in Norway, and cross-cultural challenges parents with minority backgrounds might encounter with Norwegian authorities and social services. I also had informal chats with the trainers and trainees to explore taken-for-granted assumptions. Observing the ICDP trainer course allowed me to explore topics that might otherwise be uncomfortable to discuss and it supplemented knowledge I had obtained from printed material. It was also critical to have an overview of the framework of the ICDP course to know what participants would be going through later and this knowledge steered phase-appropriate interactions. The ICDP course is unique insofar as participants reveal personal and private details in a safe environment guided by trainers. This realisation led me to decide against observing the participants as they undergo the ICDP course so as to not intrude on their privacy beyond what is necessary for this study.

To gain an overview of Syrian cultural constructs beyond literature research, I conducted informal online interviews with five Syrian refugees resettled in Norway whom I am socially acquainted with through volunteer work. These individuals who were convenience sampled consisted of two women and three men ranging from 20-30 years of age who were unmarried and did not have children. My deliberate choice to interview single and childless Syrians

after attending the ICDP trainer course was to gain an alternative perspective on the constructs of family beyond that of parents while avoiding including a doubly vulnerable population – refugee children. Not being parents positioned these young Syrians as ‘children’ in a family structure, albeit more reflective and mature, from which they draw their understanding of family and cultural constructs and supplemented the gap in this pre-field work. In these interviews, I explored themes relating to values, tradition, religion, family and parent-child relationships. Each interview took place over synchronous online chat, was unstructured and lasted approximately 30-40 minutes. I adopted a clear etic position in these conversations allowing individuals to share everything they were comfortable with, prompting for more detailed elaboration and explanations when necessary.

All involved were informed about the research project verbally and in writing prior to engagement and gave verbal consent for information shared in conversations/discussions and observations to be used in this write-up. The notes recording during pre-field observation of the ICDP trainer course, informal conversations with trainers and trainees and online transcripts of the informal interviews were concept mapped and used to structure the topics I wanted to investigate further (Kinchin, Streatfield & Hay, 2010). Information garnered from pre-field work also brought to attention certain considerations pertaining to cross-cultural interactions such as initiative, directness, modes of questioning etc. that were critical for subsequent research methods design.

4.7.2 Phase Two: The Narrative Interview

In the field of social science research, there are various types of interviews suited for different purposes and the usefulness of interviews has long been recognised (Kvale, 1996; Gubrium & Holstein, 2002; Berg, 2007). An interview is essentially a conversation where the purpose is to gather people’s descriptions of thoughts and feelings, and explore their views in greater depth (Kvale, 1996; Berg, 2007). Interviews are an interactive process where meanings are constructed and negotiated in a natural setting (Cohen et al., 2007). Narrative interviews emphasise the temporal, the social, and the meaning structures of the interview (Mishler, 1986). In this research I see myself as a traveller exploring an unknown terrain ready to help others tell the stories of their lived worlds (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015) as the narratives in

this study concern the participant's life story or biographies as seen through their perspective, focusing on childhood and parenting experiences.

The semi-structured interview design in this study consisted of three parts. The first part concentrated on participants' account of their childhoods, the second part related to accounts of pre-migration parenting while the third part examined participants' migration journeys, and parenting experiences during and post-migration. Experiences relating to traditions, values, knowledge, education and work were explored across all parts. The use of semi-structured technique allowed for comparability across the empirical data accumulated and ensured optimal use of interview time for a comprehensive exploration of the phenomena under study. During the interviews, I used a detailed interview guide (appendix 3) prepared from the concept map charted from pre-field work. This interview guide was a key tool in keeping interviews focused on the desired line of action especially when participants' narratives strayed off-topic e.g. one participant launched into an extensive elaboration about his migration route and immigration politics. There was naturally room for improvisation, clarifications and follow-up questions, flexibility with the order in which topics were broached and inclusion and/or exclusion of questions based on the way participants responded i.e. if the participant elaborated upon issues that were mentioned later in the guide, these were not repeated. As the epistemological analogy of the interviewer as a traveller holds, 'interviewing and analysis (are) intertwined phases of knowledge construction, with an emphasis on the narrative to be told to an audience' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, p.58). I therefore paid close attention to the way participants chose to narrate their own biographical stories in response to questions as it offered deeper insight into the personal circumstances, social contexts and structural conditions that have shaped their past and present experiences and the significance and meaning they accord to these.

Interview-based research should engage participants directly in a conversation with the researcher in a way that facilitates access to deeply contextual, nuanced and authentic accounts of participants' experiences and interpretation of them. The onus is therefore on the researcher to remain an active listener, abstain from interruptions, pose questions for clarifications and assist the participant in sharing his or her story (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

I adopted certain techniques to help maintain validity and reliability of interviewing such as paying close attention to my tone of voice, body language and frequently repeating or summing up what participants had said and seeking confirmation that I had understood them correctly²⁸. This presented them with the opportunities to correct me or elaborate if necessary. I was acutely aware of the potentially sensitive nature of the phenomenon under study and as such was careful to maintain an empathic interviewer style (as opposed to a confrontational style) and avoided asking leading questions. It is also important to acknowledge the unequal power dynamic present between myself (as the researcher) and participant that was not solely confined to our respective statuses within the research but in the cross-over to our private lives as well. This was highlighted to me when a participant asked me if I could request on his behalf that the municipality manage the problem of drug addicts in his neighbourhood as they posed a threat to his children. He felt convinced that a request sent by me would be more effective because ‘you are different, you are not in the system like us’.

The interviews were predominantly conducted at the same site, chosen by the participants. I arranged with the kindergarten to have use of a meeting room which granted us more privacy but also increased formality of the procedure. The meeting room was small, cozy and relatively sound proof. There were three persons in the room during the interview – the participant, the interpreter and the researcher. All interviews took place without partners present which was intended to give participants more room and confidence to speak openly. This study utilised a one-off in-depth interview methodology that offered a single snapshot in time. It is recommended that interviews be conducted at different points in time to ensure validity of data. However, due to time and economic limitations I opted instead for one-off interviews instead of repeated interviews supplemented by alternative triangulation methods. I am aware that participants will likely have new futures which may consequently change their interpretation of their life history, but do not anticipate this as a problem of validity of the result of these interviews. It is merely a condition. All interviews with the exception of one, were conducted in one sitting and lasted between 1.5-2 hours. The interview that was carried over to two sessions was due both to the participant arriving late and the information-

²⁸ All interviews were conducted with an interpreter as an intermediary between researcher and participant translating from English to Arabic and Arabic to English. Practical issues and implications informing and arising from this process are reported in the following section.

rich nature of that interview (3 hours). Prior to beginning the interviews, participants were again briefed about the study, confidentiality issues in handling of data and informed that they could withdraw at any time. Consent was sought for interviews to be audio-recorded and all who agreed to participate returned signed consent forms. Having conducted pre-field work, I was thoroughly familiar with the ICDP syllabus and teaching plan and knew that certain themes that my research aimed to explore were part of the syllabus which would be taken up in class. Collective discussions have a tendency to orientate individual responses towards a group norm (Janis, 1982; Paulus, 1998). Therefore, to ensure reflections of participants' individual responses were as accurate as possible, I arranged to conduct all interviews before parents progressed into the third week of the ICDP course. All parents received a reminder via text two days before their interviews and were again given the opportunity to confirm or decline participation.

4.7.3 Phase Three: Contextualising the Lives of Parents (Triangulation)

The challenge of qualitative research is to design studies that give rich, unbiased data that can be interpreted with a comfortable degree of assurance (Breitmayer, Ayres & Knafl, 1993; Jick, 1979). This requires methodology that increases internal and external validity and reliability and decreases researcher biases and can be achieved through triangulation. Triangulation entails the combination of two or more aspects of research within the same study. There are different types of triangulation such as data source triangulation, investigator triangulation, methodological triangulation, theoretical triangulation or data analysis triangulation (Denzin, 1970; Patton, 1990; Kimchi, Polivka & Stevenson, 1991). In this study I utilised two types of triangulation – data source triangulation and within-method methodological triangulation. The former involved interviewing ICDP trainers who had led the course participants in this study were enrolled in, while the latter involved observing participants in their interactions with their children. My intention through both methods was to identify atypical data or similar patterns that could increase confidence in the research data obtained through narrative interviews.

Nonparticipant observation was conducted following the completion of interviews with all participants. This involved two thirty-minute sessions observing parent-child interaction at

the kindergarten and one thirty-minute session observing parents in their penultimate ICDP class. These observations were conducted without an interpreter present and I focused on recording non-verbal interactions such as body language, facial expressions and tonal modulations in speech. Bilingual teaching assistants at the kindergarten were occasionally consulted for interpretations of verbal interactions, however their involvement was minimal as the focus in parent-child interaction observation was to study parents' non-verbal interactions with their child that could reflect attitudes and perceptions of their roles. During the ICDP class, on-going discussions with parents were interpreted by the Arabic-speaking trainer for the other Norwegian-speaking trainer and that assisted me in following the general gist of discussions. However, as with the other observation sessions, I relied heavily on non-verbal actions and expressions to infer parents' reception and engagement during the class.

Individual interviews with both trainers of the ICDP course was conducted in spring 2018 after the 12-week ICDP course was over at locations chosen by the trainer. These turned out to be in their offices at their respective workplaces. Both structured and unstructured techniques were used to collect data. The rationale for interviewing the ICDP trainers was because of their close contact with participants over the course of the programme and the discussions of parenting themes during the course that closely related to this research study. By including ICDP trainers as a data source, I sought to discover areas of convergence and divergence between participants' responses to common themes in the interviews and on the course; and to explore if additional issues were raised outside of the interview. The trainers were first invited to give an account of the recent ICDP course and highlight key thematic issues that were raised or incidents that occurred during the course, with minimum guidance from the researcher. Following that, the trainers were encouraged to elaborate more on experiences and reflections of thematic discussions participants had related to traditions, values, education and work.

Morse (as cited in Thurmond, 2001) observed that the primary method must be rigorous enough to be able to sustain the study by itself, while the added method contributes to the strength of the research. The function of these triangulation methods was thus essentially to supplement the construction of theory, generate hypotheses and identify potential situations

of distortions or inaccuracies from interviews that had been conducted (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; DeWalt & DeWalt, 2009).

4.8 Language and Translation

Research with ethnic minority groups is commonly practised by researchers who share the participants' ethnicity, culture and first language because they are perceived to have the language skills necessary to communicate with these populations. There is however growing acknowledgement of the value of outsider researchers' involvement in research given increasing international diversity (Murray & Wynne, 2001), and this study is one such example. All seven participants in this study spoke little or no English or Norwegian, and I could not speak their language. Verbal understanding and communication in the narrative interviews could only take place with the presence of an intermediary – an interpreter. This section attempts to make explicit the role of interpreters (oral translation) and translators (written translation) during the process of carrying out this cross-language research and illuminate relevant methodological issues surrounding language barriers and representation between researcher and participant.

Two non-professional female interpreters were separately involved in this study, the first from Syria, the second from Tunisia. Unexpected work-interview scheduling conflicts for the first interpreter necessitated the subsequent recruitment of a second. Both interpreters were personal acquaintances of mine who had Arabic as their mother tongues, were fluent in English and possessed higher education qualifications. Both were in their 30s, from middle class backgrounds and did not yet have children. The deliberate choice to recruit a female interpreter was to encourage female participants to feel more comfortable in the interview setting. An all-female interview team was anticipated to have minimal impact on male participants' interaction and engagement during interviews. The use of non-professional interpreters was due to the financial limitations of this study that precluded payment for professional services. Instead, both interpreters were voluntarily engaged and awarded a token sum for their time and assistance in the study. While the use of non-professional interpreters is open for a range of criticisms, it also presented certain critical advantages in a range of functions beyond data collection in the participants' first language. The first

interpreter who had herself arrived in Norway as an asylum seeker from Syria was critical in supporting my entry into the community and lent credibility to the study (if a Syrian refugee is involved, research is not being done ‘to’ but ‘with’ the Syrian refugee community). In addition, local knowledge and know-how was valuable in both planning and conduct of the research. Being personally acquainted with my interpreters also gave me the advantage of insight into the cultural brokering role they played during interviews and to recognise my interpreters’ own active constructions of meanings which offered room for clarifications.

Interpreters were given some training prior to beginning with the interviews that involved helping them understand basic issues about the nature of qualitative interviewing and how I intended to conduct them. By engaging in in-depth discussions with my interpreters about the subculture of the participants, the phenomena to be studied, sensitivity to response biases and neutral communication mode to avoid biases, I sought to ensure that my interpreters had acquired sufficient familiarity with the main aspects of the interview theme to be able to do the job in a satisfactory way. There was insufficient time however for the conduct of pilot interviews to allow interpreters to have an idea of the problems likely to be encountered during interviewing. Interpreters were advised to translate as precisely as possible with minimal paraphrasing, and any necessary explanations or elaborations on questions from participants were to be directed to me. All participants were informed prior to beginning the interviews that the interpreter would only provide direct translations and could not assist in providing contextual or cultural information to the researcher. Therefore, participants were asked to refrain from giving responses to the interpreter that presumed shared knowledge and be willing to explain things that might seem obvious to all. This problem arose occasionally in the initial interviews, however recognising the change in tone and prolonged conversation between interpreter and participant allowed me to interrupt, reframe and re-direct the question to the participant. I also used post-interview debriefs with the interpreter to follow-up on such instances to understand the discussions that had taken place, receive feedback and evaluate the quality of the work.

Cooperation and mutual understanding of researcher and interpreter takes time to develop and is critical to the interview as the interpreter is active in the interview situation; as is the

researcher (Bragason, 1997). I decided not to go into details about the theoretical background with the interpreters as I was wary that such knowledge could unconsciously and unintentionally bias the way the interpreters phrased questions. I did however show the interpreters the interview guide for them to understand the structure of the interview although they were also informed about flexibility in interviewing and the potential for order of questions to be altered. Working with an interpreter required me to be mindful of using short and well-focused questions, probing deeper into things that were unclear and to constantly verify that I had understood things correctly e.g. the existence of words and concepts that have no equivalent single-term meaning in English that were described by the interpreter often required follow-up questions to the participants for elaboration through examples.

Non-verbal contact between researcher and participant is often a critical aspect of qualitative research interviews; however working with an interpreter limited non-verbal contact between myself and my participants. To establish some contact with the participants, I learnt to say a few phrases in Arabic and customarily greeted all participants in their language. During interviews, I sat facing participants holding eye contact, nodding and smiling to indicate I understood what had been translated. I noticed that although participants began interviews speaking to the interpreters, they quickly started directing responses (and questions) at me.

4.9 Preparing the Data: Transcription and Validity

All interviews were transcribed into written form for closer study and analysis; field notes from observations and interviews were typed up. I transcribed conversations between the participant and myself (through the interpreter) and conversations between the interpreter and myself focusing on non-verbatim content due to the inability to catch this in the native language; and the interpreter did not translate verbatim. I included pauses and silences, and sounds of emotion or body sounds such as [laughs], [smiles], [shrugs]. Care had been taken to choose suitable interpreters, and frequent check of understanding conducted with participants during the interviews which are means of ensuring communicative validity (Kvale, 1985). However, as an additional evaluation of the quality of the translation of the interpreters, I decided to recruit a third person to independently translate and transcribe all the interviews which I compared against the results of the translations of the interpreters. The

independent translator was asked to include in the transcripts, as much as possible, places of significant speech disfluency and non-lexical utterances e.g. ‘uhh’ ‘umm’ ‘mmm’. In the analysis, I substitute these with (...) to preserve the flow of the text. The independent translator was from Syria, had higher education qualifications and was fluent in English and Arabic. She received a token sum for her assistance.

The validity of translations is often related to the problem of equivalence of meaning. Sechrest, Fay, Todd and Zaidi (1972) identified five different categories of meaning equivalence, particularly relevant in this study is *vocabulary equivalence* – the use of different kind of languages between interpreter and participant. The participants in this study came from different social classes as my interpreters (upper-middle class) and it is likely that the interpreters’ translations could have altered original meaning of what was said during the interview. This was raised by the independent translator who remarked that ‘some people talked very simply (...) like village people with little education’ so her transcription was kept simple to be as true to the recording as possible and ‘might be different from the interpreter’s’. All final transcripts were read through while listening to the recording again, corrected for spelling errors, anonymised to prevent participants from being identified from anything that had been said (e.g. names, places), tagged with contextual information (from field notes) that might have affected the participant, and then printed, copied and prepared for analysis.

4.10 Data Analysis

Qualitative research produces data that is not amenable to mechanical manipulation, analysis and data reduction (Yin, 1984). This data has to be worked, organised, broken down and synthesised in order for patterns and themes to be identified. According to Miles and Huberman (1984), data analysis should be a concurrent process that overlaps with data collection procedures so that the researcher remains open to new ideas, patterns or categories which may emerge. This back and forth process working with the data is important and the different stages of data analysis was an interactive process that entailed much deliberation and recursion. I found that field notes compiled during interviews and observations were especially useful complementary sources of information to facilitate the data analysis process given the gap in time between conducting the interviews, transcribing and coding that gave

rise to certain memory biases that could have affected interpretation of the data. Coding was done on a printed copy of the transcripts in the margin by highlighting sections of the texts. These identified codes were then clustered and used to generate categories and themes which formed the basis for interpretation and discussion.

4.11 Ethical Concerns and Methodological Challenges

Research can only be justified if the outcome will benefit the community rather than further damaging it (Benatar & Singer, 2000; Leaning, 2001). In the process of working with participants, reporting and discussing findings, qualitative researchers may encounter ethically challenging situations and face contradicting issues that require choosing between different methodological strategies (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Van den Hoonaard, 2002; Kvale). This study was potentially fraught with more methodological and ethical challenges as it involved conducting research with refugees, a ‘vulnerable population’ for reasons not limited to their immigration status, limited language proficiency, stigma and marginalisation. This section is a critical examination of ethical issues across different stages of this cross-cultural study and how these were treated.

4.11.1 Privacy and Confidentiality

This study is registered to and approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) (appendix 4). Data collection adhered to guidelines governing the protection of privacy and confidentiality of participants such as the anonymisation of data and exclusion of personal information in texts. Confidentiality is however not limited to anonymity and also implies not discussing information provided by an individual with others, and/or presenting findings in ways that ensure individuals cannot be identified (Van den Hoonaard, 2002; Wiles, Crow, Heath & Charles, 2008). Participants were given written information about the project, their potential role, the objective of the research, how the results would be published and used, and informed of the measures taken to maintain their privacy in this study (see appendix 1).

Before on-boarding an independent translator for assistance with transcription, I consulted participants for permission to share research data and received verbal assent for her inclusion. Translators and interpreters involved in the research were briefed thoroughly to ensure

everyone had an explicit and agreed understanding of confidentiality and requested to sign a confidentiality agreement (see appendix 5). Despite these measures taken, I did not however inform participants that it might be impossible to assure complete confidentiality, especially with narratives and life histories, even if pseudonyms were used. This decision was taken due to concerns that if primed with this ‘risk’ participants would be more hesitant and less open in their responses. To manage this ethical concern, the primary responsibility for protecting the identity of participants, knowledge to assess risk and making decisions about confidentiality became mine. This meant disguising participants beyond pseudonyms by changing key characteristics in various ways without distorting the data and even excluding data from use if it contained issues that simple anonymisation could not sufficiently protect.

Beyond that, an additional difficulty in relation to confidentiality was that this study involved collection of data from family members who held different views that they did not want the other to know. Careful anonymisation and decision-making about how the data was to be used was thus necessary to ensure participants would not be able to recognise the views of other family members; even if they could recognise themselves. It is often recommended that researchers check back with participants to see if they are happy with how their identities have been changed. However, I was unable to do that due to resource constraints.

4.11.2 Researcher Reflexivity

Qualitative inquiry across cultures demands the researcher’s continuous awareness and reflexivity whereby reflexivity is the constant striving for objectivity, neutrality and professionalism in the collection, interpretation and presentation of qualitative data. This is achieved through reflecting upon ways in which personal biases, beliefs and one’s own background might influence the research. Fawcett and Hearn (2004) stated that the paramount importance of reflexivity is in studying ‘others’ and highlighted a concern that a researcher is not fully able to comprehend what it is like to be in something they have not personally experienced. We hear stories according to our realities and an element of reflexivity is therefore ‘situating ourselves socially and emotionally in relation to respondents’ (Mauther & Doucet, cited in Berger, 2015, p. 228). In this research on parenting in a new culture, while I am cognitively aware of gender role differentiation located in Syrian Muslim

culture, a part of me is critical of unquestioning submissive and dominant positions. I realised that to compensate for potentially being judgmental, I tended to be overly empathetic in my interactions with participants which might have coloured the way in which I regarded or disregarded aspects of parents' narratives.

Acknowledging this struggle has enhanced my ability to be true to the voice of my participants. In the absence of 'cultural, historic, and temporal understandings of the world (under study)' (Smith, 1999, p.359), I was more aware of potential biases and therefore more diligent in my effort to reflect upon my conceptualisations of interview questions and interpretation of participants' experiences. In accordance with the three practical measures recommended by Berger (2015) to maintain balance between researcher's own experience and that of participants, I kept a log documenting encounters with participants and my personal reflections on those experiences, and reviewed the logs again a few weeks after the original analysis recording any new reflections on the same material. In addition, I consulted with my interpreters on their observations of the interviews and possible projections in my analysis.

4.11.3 Power and Respect

In the context of displacement, refugees have often been forced into exile, experienced multiple losses including those of family, support systems, lifestyle and homeland and are undergoing the mammoth task of reconstructing their lives in new environments (Keyes, 2000). A fundamental power differential exists between the researcher and participant whereby one is the observer and the other the observed, with the latter possibly feeling obligated to accede to requests from those they perceive to be more powerful. This power disparity and the associated need for extra care in respecting participants must be taken into account when conducting research with refugees (Ellis et al., 2007). Acutely aware of the 'vulnerability' of participants in this study, I struggled primarily with determining the degree to which I should be involved in their lives as the snapshot interview methodology precluded the need for extensive contact yet I wanted to be able to give an honest representation of their perspectives and minimise the potential of participants feeling 'used' (for information).

Researching people from a cross-cultural perspective often requires more time for the study to be complete as it takes considerably longer time to gain access to potential participants, and build trust and rapport. However, I decided to meet participants only in the context of the research e.g. at interviews and during observations in order to minimise my intrusion in their personal lives which was admittedly fostered also by my limited ability to communicate with participants independently. At the final session when 'leaving the field', I was heartened to receive invitations from participants to maintain contact and visit them outside of the study; a reflection perhaps of the trust and relationship I had successfully built albeit in a non-traditional manner.

CHAPTER 5: CONSTRUCTING CHILDREN

Parental beliefs consist of ‘ideas, expectations and subjective knowledge individuals hold about issues relevant to their role as parents’ (Seginer, 2009, p.138) which are affected by parents’ cultural values and lived experiences, both as children and subsequently as parents themselves. The purpose of this chapter is to present findings and discuss what Syrian Muslim parents who were part of this study espoused about how they construct children. This is done by examining what parents communicate about perceptions of their duties and responsibilities towards children. In this chapter the role of both fathers and mothers is regarded collectively whenever possible and a closer examination of the gender element is taken up in a subsequent chapter.

5.1 The Helpless Child

Fathers and mothers interviewed in this study, from across a variety of social locations, had a common understanding of what they perceived as their duties towards children and reported a primary responsibility for securing the physiological and emotional needs of their children. This was identified as: ‘food, shelter, clothes and things that [they] need’. Jamal who is 29 years old and has two young children, stated clearly that ‘three important things that you cannot disconnect is food, drink and shelter. To give [my children] food, drinks, house to stay are the principles of life. My duty... is to provide life needs’.

The needs articulated by parents as their primary responsibilities towards children is compatible with Maslow’s (1943) universal and time-tested hierarchy of needs that identified fulfilment of physiological and safety needs as pre-conditions for fulfilment of other needs. Describing his journey to Norway, Khalil, a 27-year old father who arrived as an asylum seeker with his wife and young daughter, said,

We always ensured that we had food with us all the time for our baby just in case she got hungry so we could feed her. It is okay for us as adults to go hungry, we can endure the hunger but not for a small baby.

We also see parents' focus on fundamental needs such as food in the saliency of their experiences of deprivation. Refugee parents who have lived through periods of prolonged instability and experienced life characterised by hardship perceive the provision of basic needs for their children as much more critical than those who have never experienced a lack of it.

Several parents remarked that their duty to provide for their children was compelled by the reliance of children on adults because they are small, dependent and require care. Samirah, a 35-year old mother of five, whose baby accompanied her to all interviews and at all parenting courses pointed to her child and said, 'My youngest son is so small and little. Look at him... look how he needs me.' The way parents describe and understand children aligns with the developmental discourse espoused by Goldson (1997) that 'childhood is represented as a fact of human life with biology determining children's dependency on adults to provide care' (p.2). This discourse reinforces childhood immaturity and vulnerability and constructs the child as deeply dependent upon adults for fundamental biological needs that will enable them to mature to adulthood and become healthy productive participants in society.

At the same time, embedded in the way parents described their children's dependence and need for care from them is a construction of biological parents as *the* primary caregiver. This is in accordance with the Norwegian Children Act (1981) that considers biological parents who are married or co-habiting natural and legal guardians of children assigning them the role of primary caregivers and according them parental rights and responsibilities. While these global legislations have gradually changed over the past decades to recognise evolving family structures, the social construct of biological parents as primary caregivers still persists for many, as appears to be the case for these Syrian parents.

5.2 The Innocent Child

Beyond providing for fundamental physiological needs, keeping children safe from physical and psychological harm is another aspect of the duty of adults to ensure the survival and healthy development of children. In the following excerpt from the interview with Khalil we see the way vulnerability is a social construction that is situational and culturally bound,

Here in Norway I think when children become sixteen years old, they are free to do whatever they want with their bodies. For me, this is wrong because they are still children and what they are doing here should only be done after marriage... Maybe someone will fool them and after one month or two months, they will leave them. So it is my job to control and guide them and make sure that this does not happen.

Woodhead (1996) wrote that the construction of vulnerability is ‘as much about the culture and society into which the child is growing as they are about the child’ (p.35). The above quote that highlights the perceived dangers of exploitation pertaining to sexuality reveals a complex construction of the vulnerability of children that is bound to emotive conceptions of innocence and purity. Addressing this conception without yet broaching intersecting connotations of chastity and virtue attached to religion and culture (Islam), Khalil’s response alludes to the Romantic discourse of childhood as innocent, virtuous, decent and moral, and the contemporary notion that children and sex should be kept apart (Archard, 1993; Braggs, Kehily & Montgomery, 2013; Kehily, 2004). It also reflects the discourse that adults know best and have more experience with things a child would not yet understand, e.g. knowing for instance that a person might leave. Parents therefore see themselves as being in a better position to protect the best interest of the child, something children would not be able to do themselves (Nieuwenhuys, 2006; Hart, 2008; Alston & Tobin, 2005; Hanson & Nieuwenhuys, 2013; Alston, 1994)

What this suggests and is evidenced in general responses from parents in this study, is that with this understanding of children, parents are thus compelled to assume the role and responsibility to guide, regulate and control children in order to protect their innocence. The way parents described this also reflects how they regard the notion of childhood as a period of innocence as naturalised and as a given. Childhood researchers have challenged this and argued for this being, rather, an adult constructed ideal (Kehily & Montgomery, 2004). This adult construction of the responsibility of adults to protect children is further reinforced by the fact it is reflected in the rights and forms of protection children are now accorded by states

and institutions (See UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). Enshrined in these international treaties are the responsibility of adults to protect children from abuse, neglect and exploitation (Articles 20, 34, 36). This deep concern for the wellbeing of children and responsibility towards their care reflect the current perception parents have of children as vulnerable, a significant development in the understanding of children since medieval times when they were considered insignificant and neglected (Aries, 1963; Jenks, 2005).

5.3 The Ignorant Child

Guidance, advice and instruction were key terms that arose frequently during interviews in relation to the notion of protecting children from doing things. Adults as decision makers for children was an overarching theme that arose when examining the concept of parental control. There was little disagreement between parents' responses towards their responsibility for protecting children from executing poor decisions and actions as expressed by Khalil, 'Boys and girls at their age are not conscious and mature enough. Children do not think like adults.'

Adult responsibility for decision-making is thus built on the construction of children as immature, naïve, ignorant and vulnerable. Ignorant insofar as of their position of vulnerability to others and vulnerable within situations as a consequence of being presented with matters more complex than they are able to comprehend given their inexperience and less developed cognitive skills. Constructing children as ignorant creates a juxtaposing construction of adults as wise and experienced and places the onus of responsibility on parents, as well as the fundamental constitution of parental decision-making as being motivated by the best interest of the child.

This section categorises and structures the argument for adults as decision makers on children's behalf into three interrelated themes: defining what is good for the child, relationship-communication-interaction, aspirations and goals, and methods.

5.3.1 For the Good of the Child

A specific theme parents spoke frequently of when discussing parental responsibilities was pondering the child's best interests and defining what they believed to be good for the child.

All parents mentioned that they had firm rules within the family that dictated what was accepted or not, citing restrictions placed on things like going out late at night, drinking and smoking, and reiterated that children received guidance and instruction when on the verge of making ‘wrong’ choices,

The child does not know what is right and what is wrong but parents know that because they have experience in life... I will try my best to let them change their minds... I have to choose the best for my children.

As expressed by 49-year old father-of-five Maan, the construction of children as ignorant and inexperienced is closely associated with the conception of children as cognitively immature which resonates with developmental thinking and is a widely held view today. Developmental psychologists Piaget (1932, 1976) and Kohlberg (1973, 1984) hypothesised that children possess a distinct immaturity of conceptualisation because they lack necessary cognitive structures and as they grow, they progress in stage-like sequence from the immature, young child to the mature, adult form of reasoning through gradually developing these cognitive structures adequately. As children, they present a distinct immaturity of conceptualisation. Parents perceive children as immature decision makers and vulnerable to both the influence of and harm from others. Hence, in an effort to protect children from themselves (and others) and with their children’s best interests at heart, parents see it as their duty to take on the responsibility and authority over important decisions on their children’s behalf.

5.3.2 Hopes and Fears

When discussing adult decision making on behalf of children, parents often commented on the broad context of their motivations phrased in terms of hopes and fears for their children’s present and future lives. Taking a look at the following extracts from the interviews,

Good parenting is to provide children with a good life, a happy life, to be behind them all the time, watching out for them, making sure they do not go wrong and looking after them

always. For children to be happy, their parents should be with them. We should look after them. That way they can have a good life... a happy life. It is of course important that children think about their future and have a good education when they can (Maya, mother)

A good childhood is to let [children] learn and begin again a new life, and to build their future and to hope that each one of them will choose the right way... Of course the children must have all their rights but it is a problem if a child says 'I don't want to go to school'. We have our cultures and traditions at home but in the society whatever it is, Syrian or Norwegian society, all parents will choose the best for the child (Maan, father).

As resettled refugees in Norway re-establishing their lives, the hopeful future-oriented aspirations parents have for their children's future lives are certainly understandable, especially pertaining to schooling which has always had a symbolic value among parents and is perceived as a prime means of escaping household poverty and realising parent's ambitions for social mobility (Kabeer, 2000; Abebe, 2007; Kjørholt, 2013). A more thorough examination of the education aspirations of parents will be taken up in the subsequent chapter. However, what we observe here in the current discussion of the significance of parents' hopes and fears related to their need to regulate the decisions children make is the perception of children as human capital and objects of social investment (Kjørholt, 2013; Kryger, 2004). This aligns with contemporary global discourses that emphasise children as future citizens and becomings rather than beings (Prout & James, 1990; Qvortrup, 2009).

On one hand, we see that goals and aspirations with a hopeful future-oriented focus drive decision-making and parental involvement from parents. On the other hand, we notice also that worry and concern prompt a fear driven focus of parental decision-making that concentrates on preventive action. There is some indication that parents acknowledge children's autonomy but this is subsumed by the greater attention parents paid towards children's deficiencies and moral incompetence, conceptions derived from their own childhood experiences.

Parents described the decisions of their younger selves as having been limited in awareness and ignorant of consequences of important decisions relating for example to school, work and family. Explaining that their choices had fortunately not affected their ability to find careers, provide for or take care of their family, several parents provided justification for parental authority and practical decision making built on the belief that parents have more experience, knowledge and foresight and are therefore better positioned to make decisions on their behalf when they were children. Most parents generally displayed retroactive acceptance and appreciation for parental authority based on their childhood experiences with some expressing that the positive effects of parental decision making could only be understood looking back now as adults,

My father has a lot of wisdom when it comes to raising children, when he needs to be tough he is tough. And when he is supposed to take it easy, then he takes it easy. Maybe we do not see it when we are children, but I see it now that I am a father myself... I do not let my children do whatever they want (Jamal).

As can be seen, there is a high level of intergenerational dependence, social responsibility and connectedness within collectivist families that co-exists with an asymmetrical power hierarchy (Kabeer, 2000). This often demands conformity, emotional self-control and unquestioning acquiescence from children in the parent-child relationship that functions on the premise that parental decisions are taken with consideration of the best interest for children, and the best interest for the family.

5.3.3 Relationship, Communication and Interaction

Parents often spoke of their relationships with children, and the communication and social interaction between parent and child in a manner that reflected a hierarchical structure pertaining to decision making. Take the following extracts from three parents,

In our society in general, the children are raised up knowing to listen to the parents... the base of educating children here is to listen to parents... children are taught that they should follow their father and mother's opinions, rules and words (Jamal, father).

[My children] are open to listening to what I say and accept advice. I tell them often that they cannot do this or that and they listen because they know I am their mother (Maya, 39-year old mother-of-five).

[The children's] father considered himself the authority figure and that his decision is considered always to be right. And sometimes the children feel that there is something wrong with his opinion and they try to convince him to change his mind but he never did. Our religion teaches that parents are good and that children should not cut the relationship with their parents. You are not supposed to make your father sad or angry. So it was always not allowed for any of them to discuss their father negatively, they just had to do as he said (Kasrin, 47-year old mother-of-three).

In the above quotes, we see that children's lives are mediated by parents' decision on how childhood should be lived and that parents are in authority over the behaviour of their children. Children are positioned along the dimensions of obedience and negotiation, dependence and interdependence and through this we observe how childhood relates to adulthood (or rather parenthood). Adulthood is as much a social construction as childhood. The constitution of childhood always stands in opposition to something, in this case adulthood, and the binary that constructs the child as inherently different from adults yields therefore a construction of the adult as well (James & James, 2008; Prout & James, 1990; Jenks, 2004; 1982; Alanen, 2009). As Mayall (2009) wrote,

'The child' is defined in its difference from 'adult'; similarly childhood differs from adulthood... Childhood is relational with adulthood, too, in the sense that relational

processes between the two may lead to changes, both within families and within society more generally. Changes in perceptions of one social group may emerge, and change in one social group will, in the end, lead to changes in the other (p. 175-176).

Thus looking at the child-adult dyad as a relational pair, if children evoke images of incompetence, ignorance, and moral unreliability, the corollary is that adults are best placed to determine their child's best interests and decision-making becomes their responsibility and right. This means that if children get older and gain competence and knowledge like adults, there will be less requirement on parents to control their children's decisions and behaviour.

In their childhood narratives, many parents highlighted similar patterns of behaviour and experiences in their interaction with their parents that was instructive rather than consultative. This manner of adult decision-making is unlike the western consultative or collaborative style that is often encouraged between parent and child (Triandis, 1995; Rudy & Grusec, 2006). It is important therefore to point out that contrary to the perspective that this type of power-relationship is intrusive, negative and exploitative (Baumrind et al., 2007; Hoskins, 2014), the relationship seems to be characterised by trust and respect undoubtedly connected to the premise that parents are motivated by their child's best interest. The data appeared to indicate that parents generally experienced adult decision making as positive themselves in their childhood and had therefore similar expectations that their children acknowledge and accept the authority of parents with respect to decision-making, regulation and control.

There was also an interesting difference in the way mothers and father interacted with children relating to the degree of authority they perceived they had over their children. This was visible in the manner they described their influence within the family. Fathers referred more frequently to their position as 'the lead' and 'the head' of the household which implied an unquestionable and unchallenged authority when fulfilling their duty towards their children, while mothers expressed awareness that they had comparatively less authority over their children despite greater proximity and more time spent together. Several mothers also described themselves as the bridge between children and their father, thereby occupying a different position of authority over their children. Maya related,

The boys are closer to me than to their father, they feel more comfortable in talking with me than talking to their father. When they need to talk to their father about things, they often ask me to do it for them.

Due to the greater emotional and power distance between father and children, fathers were more likely to construct children as immature and ignorant, and expect dutiful obedience from them through firm authority. Mothers, on the other hand, who were more involved in their children's lives were more likely to recognise children's agency. They also developed more open and unique relationships with their children and asserted their authority through more emotional approaches.

5.3.4 Different Strokes for Different Folks

Parental decision making for children is a common thread among all parents. However the way they describe enacting it differs as evidenced in the three excerpts below,

I will teach [my children] to be honest with me. I will teach them wrong from right and I will try my best to stay with them as much as I can. I will try to control them and to prevent them from going out and having relationships as long as I can. It will be okay only when they think that the other person deserves that. I will try to control them and to prevent them from going out and having relationships as long as I can (Khalil, father, 27).

My oldest child told me that 'I want to be a hairdresser and I don't want to study'. I told him, I advise you to learn about cars mechanic, it is better for you. My duty is to advise him but he insists that he wants to be a hairdresser so he is free. In general, our children listen to us even if they want to do something. If we advise them to not to do this thing they will listen to us. My children and I have respect, discussions, understanding and opinions exchange between each other (Maan, father, 49).

My daughter will not cross the red line, she will not smoke, drink alcohol or take drugs... this kind of things. She will know what her limits are and she will not cross the red line... she will not smoke, drink alcohol or take drugs... I am going to convince her and I am going to tell her that her aunty was smoking and went to the hospital many times so this is how I will convince her not to do these bad things (Samira, mother, 35).

These three extracts relating to different topics from parents ranging in age and gender reflected methods that range in terms of autonomy and control. Khalil described influencing children's decision making by restricting their actions and limiting their choices while Maan described giving children advice, presenting them with options, listening to their perspective and ultimately encouraging them to follow their parents' choosing. Samira, on the other hand, described using methods of persuasion and reasoning to achieve her desired outcome. Even in this small research population, we observe the diversity of parenting techniques and approaches towards different parenting issues. We could hypothesise that issues relating to sexuality and chastity command a stronger reaction from parents than issues relating to choice of study.

Irrespective of the different modes of parent-child interaction and the different causes, as displayed above, the way these parents communicate indicate a certain degree of self-assurance that their children would do their bidding and accept their decisions. It implies also the perception of authority and control parents have over their children.

5.4 The Immature Child

The empirical material presented above indicates that children in Syrian Muslim culture are perceived as helpless, innocent and ignorant which warrants additional care and special protection from adults. Immaturity has been constructed thus far as a biological and cognitive condition that separates the status of children from adults following the everyday discourse of childhood and adulthood as different life stages. Yet Davis (1940) wrote that age is 'perpetually changing condition and therefore cannot give rise to permanent lifetime statuses'

(p.219). During my interviews, I noticed that while parents had a tendency to refer to age as a criterion and specify age phases when they referenced the immaturity and vulnerability of children, their descriptions of the quality of ‘childness’ (cf. Cook-Gumperz, 1991 in Alanen, 2009) extended beyond chronological age. Take the following example of Kasrin speaking about the reliance of her 19-year old daughter on her,

My daughter now sometimes tells me that she could live alone but she knows that I love her and I cannot live without [my children]. That is why [she] will not think of this now, especially since [she] depend[s] on me a lot to take care of [her] and cook and clean, so [she] cannot live without me now.

Kasrin’s quote demonstrates the dependency of a child on a parent which would not naturally be associated with a biological, cognitive or social immaturity as her daughter has already reached the age of majority in Norway and is in full possession of her faculties. In fact, as a few parents in the study criticised, children in Norway are asked to move out of the family home after they have reached the age of eighteen as they are perceived as independent and ‘adult’. Leaving childhood to become a full-fledged adult has culturally specific criteria that extends beyond age (Arnett & Taber, 1994; Arnett, 1997; Schlegel & Barry, 1991; Alanen, 2009; Mayall, 2009).

Davis (1940) postulated that positions and statuses are in reality constructed not in terms of age but in terms of an ‘age relationship’ and that the strength of age relationships has intrinsic social relevance. Reflected in the manner these parents regard children and childhood, we can infer that the concept of immaturity to these parents is not associated with age but of age changes and the time interval between people that remains fixed, for example, between parent and child, elder sibling and younger sibling. His argument relates to and can be strengthened by the generational perspective (Alanen, 2001; 2009; Qvortrup, 2009; Mayall; 2009; Mannheim, 1952).

5.4.1 Immaturity as Generational

I briefly touched on the relational nature of the social categories of childhood and adulthood in the section on interaction and communication above. This section now delves further into

an exploration of the construction of immaturity as a generational process. From the structural sociology branch of childhood studies comes the argument that childhood is a distinct generational phase structured by generational relationships that continues over time and place despite the changing form and content of these relationships (Qvortrup, 2009; Alanen, 2001; Mannheim, 1952). Relations between children and adults are both external and internal, where the former is defined in terms of shared attributes such as age, while the latter is positioned in and acts within necessary interrelations with adulthood (or parenthood) whereby one cannot exist without the other, and the change of one position will effect change in the other (Alanen, 2001; 2009). What this essentially means is that childhood is persistent, interdependent and reciprocal.

The data from this study showed that despite the fact that children got older and progressed towards what would legally be considered adulthood (and independence) in countries like Norway, most parents still regarded them as children describing them as immature, vulnerable and dependent. The way parents constructed children as dependent and vulnerable had the effect of constructing the role of adults as providers for and protectors of children. At the same time, the effect of this role division was the creation of a clear separation between childhood and adulthood that places children in the context of an oppositional dichotomy against adult and represents children as what they were not yet – adults.

The concept of generation is especially crucial within Syrian Muslim culture in fostering interconnections and interdependencies between adulthood and childhood and circumscribing the way children (and parents) can act within necessary interrelations. We see this in the way parents' construction of children's behaviour, needs and wants reciprocally constructed their roles and responsibilities. Childhood as a generational system appears to be both ideological and practical particularly within collectivist culture with a stronger sense of interdependency. However the implication here then is that successful re-structuring of the positioning and conception of children as immature would entail the challenging process of engaging both adults and children. Disagreement between parent and child with regards to the form and content of this relationship could result in conflict as seen here in a simple example about teenager-parent relationship,

Teenage age is generally not a very good age... sixteen, seventeen... so you feel that the child has just discovered life. And when he is discovering life, he thinks he is the smartest person who doesn't need any advice or guidance (Jamal).

Jamal's response suggests that the primary challenge to positively engaging with such re-structuration can be the persistence of a rigid mentality within a generational constructed hierarchy which demands obedience and deference from children that stands in conflict with the development of autonomy and individuation in adolescence (Steinberg & Silk, 2002).

5.4.2 Immaturity as Cultural

Anthropological and sociological studies have emphasised the importance of role transitions e.g. moving out, finishing education, beginning (full-time employment), in signifying the attainment of adulthood or the lack thereof as an indication of the persistence of childhood (Arnett, 1997; 2000; Gilmore, 1990; Schlegel & Barry, 1991; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1999; Hogan & Astone, 1986). On the basis of this, childhood and immaturity can be perceived as not just a structural status but also a social and cultural phenomenon.

During these interviews, one of the parents interviewed shared his anguish and worry for a daughter living alone outside Norway and explained that while a child became an adult after he or she had turned 18 years old in Syria, cultural tradition dictated that both boys and girls be considered independent only after they have gotten married. As his daughter was as yet unmarried and a dependent 'child', his concern for her was as great as his concern for his younger children. At this point, I will leave aside gender related discussions for a subsequent chapter but identify that, in this example, marriage is perceived as an important characteristic that symbolises a child's independence from their parents.

In most cultures marriage is seen to be a natural life event that follows closely upon puberty and the mark of adulthood. Marriage is considered achievable after children have cultivated capacities for fulfilling a variety of family responsibilities independently (e.g. Gilmore, 1990; Schlegel & Barry, 1991). The data in this study suggested that parents possess this conception

of marriage as a means exiting childhood, displaying maturity and achieving independence (or, one could say, removing dependence of children on parents). This conception of marriage is in turn accompanied by a perception of parental responsibility for cultivating their children's capacities so as to guarantee their children's future and successful transition into adulthood. We see here the construction of childhood as a formative period.

In her ethnographic account on the roles of children in Hausa society, Schildkrout (1978) underscored the notion that childhood is constructed as an apprenticeship for adulthood and a phase preparing children to graduate into their inevitable roles in the workforce and the social order,

child culture is seen as a rehearsal for adult life and socialisation consists of the processes through which, by one method or another, children are made to conform, in cases of 'successful' socialisation or become deviants in cases of 'failed socialization' (p.109-110)

This perspective articulated about children aligns with socialisation or social learning theorists who position children as unfinished products worthy of interest not so much for what they are but for the adults they will become and as representatives of the future generation. Parents thus construct their involvement in their children's lives as necessary and critical to support their children's future success academically, economically and socially. Beyond meeting the needs of children for food, and protection, parents shoulder the responsibility for providing necessary care, education and guidance to children with respect to the acquisition of practical skills and the internalisation of social and cultural norms that will allow them to mature, develop and thrive.

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CHAPTER 6: CHILDHOOD ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Contemporary understandings of childhood and about how to best raise a child are not the same everywhere. Expectations adults place on children differ according to the society in which they live, reflected in the roles attributed to children within day-to-day family and social life. Childhood thus vary greatly across countries, cultures and class and change (have changed) in significant ways over time (Montgomery, 2009; James, Jenks & Prout, 1998; James & James, 2008; Mayall, 1994; 2002). This chapter aims to explore the ideas Syrian refugee parents have of childhood, drawn from their own childhoods, influenced by their migration experiences, and contextualised against the backdrop of new and specific social, economic and cultural contexts after resettlement in Norway.

In this chapter, I hope to provide insight into how parents constitute childhood by looking closely at the ways children are thought about and treated with regards to their roles, duties, responsibilities and place. This involves examining the complex ways parents set moral social, cultural and economic expectations on children in the family and community settings, and the beliefs and practices that guide the conception of these duties and responsibilities. As a key focus of childhood studies is also the notion of children's agency, participation and voice, I will also explore the ways children's personal and interdependent agency play out within these macro-level structures and micro-level contexts and act on to transform these parental constructions. Taken together, this chapter essentially looks at what parents communicate about childhood, defined here as the responsibilities, roles and place of children.

6.1 Responsibilities in the Family

Children have been studied for years as a social category under the conceptual umbrella of 'the family' (Brannen & O'Brien, 1996; Morgan, 1996; Silva & Smart, 1999) and been largely regarded as heavily dependent on adults. Family generally provides the site and space in which children are born and brought up in. Children are thus primarily located and understood as members of the family and childhood is seen as a period of helplessness and passivity. However contrary to that construction, children have the capacity to contribute and participate in the family and, more importantly, the *duty* to do so.

6.1.1 Helping the Family is a Must

Since I was a kid, I have helped my parents in different ways. If a person lives a life where he is surrounded by family, he will feel that helping the family is a must. It is an obligation of family. All of us also helped with the housework.

The above extract from Maan reflect, first and foremost, the idea of childhood as a period of socialisation and the family as the crucible of socialisation. Secondly, it demonstrates the key notion that childhood is characterised by responsibilities and as members of the family, children are obligated and obliged to contribute towards the family unit in different ways e.g. helping with housework. Family socialisation is defined as the process in which children learn and acquire the family's system of values, norms and beliefs (Bornstein & Cote, 2006). Here we observe that children's active participation within the family is regarded by parents as a childhood norm, and that children's duty towards family is a given. As researchers have shown, being a member of a family collective entails complex responsibilities that involve balancing expectations and obligations within the family against one's individual wants and needs (Abebe, 2007; Abebe & Aase, 2007; Punch, 2002). This essentially means that cooperative behaviour and duty towards shared goals can often take priority over individual desires (or lack of desire) as illustrated by Jamal,

The most important responsibilities were to bring things home. Shopping for the house. It was mainly my job, my mother rarely went shopping. When you can count on a child to do things, you can give him this kind of responsibilities. It was the most tiring and hateful responsibility. I had to do it always because it is necessary for the family.

On the contrary, the following extract from 25- year old mother-of-two Jumanah speaking about her children's response to duty highlights the effect of individual desire taking priority over shared goals,

When I was ten years old, it was just small tasks that I had to do at home. It was our house so of course it was important to keep it clean. I did not need a reward to do it. But it is different here in Norway. Here the children want to get paid if they help with cleaning and my daughter tells that to me when I ask her to come and help me or to clean.

Jumanah's example illustrates how children resist instead of acquiesce to executing obligatory family duties and she attributed it to being a result of her children being in a different socio-cultural environment that has exposed them to a separate set of values and beliefs which contradict those parents hold. Children's agency is evident here as an assertion of rights and independence, resistance to collective expectations and suggests the placement of 'self' before 'the group'. In this situation, we observe Jumanah's daughter demonstrating an ability and desire to make a difference to an existing relationship and 'to the workings of a set of social assumptions or constraints' (Mayall, 2002, p.21). This is typical in individualist cultures where children's positions within the family is constructed as more equal and participation more democratic and collaborative than in collectivistic cultures (Triandis, 1995).

The idea of children as independent social actors is core to the social studies of children and childhood and it emphasises the ability of children to make choices about the things they do. The above quotations discussing the general sense of duty children have towards their family raise a number of questions about the extent to which children are able to exercise their agency if bound by such obligations derived from their generational position vis-à-vis adults. In his work on structuration theory, Giddens (1979) suggested that structure and agency cannot be perceived as independent concepts as they are innately interconnected. Agency is not just a matter of individual will and skill, as often interpreted in Norwegian culture. Agency is enhanced by control over resources and exercised through the following, or rejection, of rules which are structural properties of social systems. We observe this in the way Maan emphasises the role of choice in children choosing to fulfil familial obligations,

It is not about whether we like to help or do not like to help, we know what we have to do. Of course there are some children in other families who do not like to help their family. It depends on the nature of the human if you like to help or not but my sisters, brothers and I were serving ourselves. We knew that our parents had many things to do so we learnt to be independent very early to look after ourselves and by doing that we help them.

I will therefore contend that parents construct children's fulfilment of their duties and obligations within the family as an important element of childhood. It is through being an active and contributing member of the family that children reinforce their position as social actors and demonstrate agency in their capacity 'to be able and willing to take account of other people's views... and [to] put aside their own immediate interests with the aim of helping others' (Mayall, 2002, p. 110). This becomes especially critical in situations of poverty and poor economic conditions where children are an even more valuable resource within the household (Boyden, 2013; Lancy, 2018). By accepting the responsibility of chores re-distributed from adults to them, children allow adults to focus on productive work thereby contributing towards ensuring the family's survival.

6.1.2 Taking Care of Parents

A key element of childhood in interdependent cultures is the responsibility children have to serve the collective in the present. In the following extract, Khalil gives a detailed description of a more future-oriented childhood and its accompanying responsibilities,

Once I went to an elderly home [in Norway] and I saw all these old people there. I saw how the parents are alone, no one of their children is around them and that is a result of how they raised their children. If they took good care of the children and taught them how to be close to them even when they grow up so the children would not leave them alone when they are old. These people's lives have been in vain and are meaningless because their children are not around. Here, they do not have strong family relationship as us. It is not logical that after the parents give all their time to the children, the children leave

them in the future without any feelings or emotions about their parents. It is not fair to raise children like this because in life there is a stage that the father and the mother will be like children and they will need help and care and it is not fair to see yourself living alone after you have spent all your time taking care of your children. Maybe they lack the passion here for their family, respect, love and care for their father, mother, sisters and brothers for example.

Children's reciprocity for years of parental care is highlighted in the above text. What we observe here is the way Khalil has identified a principle role of children in this future-oriented childhood as being responsible for collective familial ambitions. He expressed it as both a duty ('it is not fair... after you have spent all your time taking care of your children') and an innate desire ('it is not logical that... the children leave them... without any feelings or emotions'), the latter implying children's autonomous choice.

'Filial responsibility' is defined as a sense of personal obligation or duty of children for the wellbeing of their parents and a distinct marker of childhood (Brubaker & Brubaker, 1999; Wakui & Cheng, 2016). It entails deferring to parental wishes and meeting their physical and emotional needs, reflecting children's respect for intergenerational relationships and desire to reciprocate for years of childhood dependency. This implicit intergenerational contract is that parents look after children when they are young and expect to be looked after by them in old age. This includes both emotional and material provisions and is a particularly important component of collectivist non-welfare based societies as it propagates a sustainable system of care that shifts responsibilities from the state to the family (Kabeer, 2000).

We observe also that reciprocity and filial responsibility in childhood has a gender dimension in the Syrian social context,

It is nice to have a son because he can take care of the parents when they get old and see if they need something. Girls get married, move out of the family home and they become busy with their husbands and children. Boys have bigger responsibilities like financial

support. My brother-in-law or husband go to their mother each day and take her with him to his place. My husband and his brother does not like to let their mother stay alone at home. They are always thinking about her and checking on her (Jumanah).

Boys have greater responsibilities in the future towards their parents than girls, and girls have responsibilities in the future towards their parents-in-law. This in turn has implications on how parents constitute present-day roles and responsibilities for children in childhood. While not explicitly stated in the empirical material, research has shown that reciprocity in parent-child relations within non-western collectivist cultures often entails the prospect of financial or social return through future employment or marriage (Lee, Netzer & Coward, 1994; Lowenstein, Katz & Gur-Yaish, 2007). This becomes more evident when we examine the ideas parents have of childhood in relation to education, work and marriage in their children's lives and the expectations they have of their children.

6.2 Family Life, Public Life

Beyond practical contributions of instrumental value as outlined above, children also contribute and participate as members of the household in less visible, less tangible and more symbolic ways (Boyden, 2013; Heissler & Porter, 2013).

With my children I teach them that they should not argue with older people like parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts... everyone even older strangers. I don't teach them to keep quiet when other people are wrong but I teach them not to respond or react when they do not like what their elders say. It is better that they keep quiet and listen instead of provoking with a negative response that can be seen as rudeness and disrespect. We respect the elder's opinion even when we disagree with it. It is embarrassing for the family and shameful to [answer back] in front of others especially when they are much older than you, so just listen (Maya).

When asked what values parents believed were most important for children to acquire, the answer that surfaced most frequently was ‘respect’. This was defined as ‘listening, obeying and not talking back’ and applied towards all older persons. In the above quote, Maya identified demonstrating respect for their elders as a responsibility of children, implying that one of children’s symbolic contributions is to avoid transgressions that embarrass the family.

If you do something wrong, it looks bad on you and also on your mother and on your father. So it is important to remember to do the right thing because as it is important not just for you, but also for your family. People get an impression of parents when they see how children behave so children must always remember not to do shameful things (Jumanah).

Jumanah’s quote supports Maya’s and explicitly states that children’s actions reflect on their parents and on the family. The word ‘shame’ stands out notably. Arab Muslim cultures have often been characterised as ‘shame cultures’ and children are taught from a young age that their actions are a reflection of the family as a whole (Mourad & Abdella, 2010; Haboush, 2007; Landes, 2007). Parents use shaming as a way to emphasise conformity to social norms and to stress the need for children to modify their behaviour (Barakat, 1993; Nydell, 1987). The concept of shame usually exists alongside concepts of honour and guilt (Thorbjørnsrud, 2003; Creighton, 1990). Children learn that their fundamental commitment is to their family and experience associating feelings of guilt when they disappoint their parents.

In Syrian Muslim culture, one’s actions and behaviour is contextual and a sense of identification with other pre-exists. This stands in stark contrast to western cultures that encourage individuation, self-determination and autonomous action within a social group (Creighton, 1990). In western cultures, childhood is often constructed as care-free, responsibility-free, and children’s behaviour are excused on the grounds that ‘they’re just children’. On the contrary, we observe here that in Syrian culture, childhood is characterised by responsibility and accountability. Children have a strong duty and obligation as members of a social group (the family) to respect their parents, recognise their role as representatives

of the family and behave in befitting manner that maintains and protects the family image (or honour). The roles of boys and girls are constructed differently and will be explored later in a subsequent section.

6.3 School, Not Paid Labour

Educational aspirations parents have for children cannot be entirely separated from the collective familial ambitions they hold of the future. This is reflected in the way they construct roles and responsibilities of children pertaining to school and work. Work, in this context, refers solely to paid labour and does not include unpaid labour within the home.

6.3.1 School as Investment

Education is very good for both boys and girls but, in my case, I just did not want to go to the school... I felt that I would be more creative and better in a job than in studying. My parents did not choose for me. Life was difficult you know... In the future, if my children do not want to study, I will try my best to let them change their minds because I know that education is very important. I have to choose the best for my children.

Father-of-five Maan reported leaving school so as to be able to contribute economically to his family and also because he did not think remaining in formal education would give him relevant knowledge for his future working life. Yet, he possessed elevated educational aspirations for his children. Maan was not the only parent with this perspective of education,

I want [my children] to do things that I could not do when I was [their] age such as studying, for example. Both my husband and I did not finish our education and had to stop school when we were 12, so it is very important for us that our children continue with their education, focus on it and finish it... it is important that children think about their future and have a good education when they can (Maya, mother, 39).

It seemed that all parents, including those who had not completed their education, expressed strong opinions about the value of education in securing their children's futures despite having limited understanding of the kinds of knowledge or skills that best promote social advancement in adulthood. Connecting this to the earlier discussions on parent-child reciprocity and the high levels of inter-generational dependence and social connectedness within collectivistic families, we observe that parents' concern for children's academic success and future also reflects the construction of children as human capital and social investment (Whitehead, Hashim & Iversen; 2007). By encouraging their children's pursuit of formal education, parents are also investing in their own collective future (Kjørholt, 2013; Kryger, 2004). The role of children as in this process is therefore a duty to fulfil the obligation parents have of them by performing well at school and eventually achieving success for the good of the family. However, the way in which success was defined differed yet again for boys and girls.

Jamal and Maan who had left school early to work shared that they felt it was much easier before to get a job without having formal education or qualifications, but less probable now, especially in Norway. Therefore they felt it was considerably important for their sons to acquire necessary knowledge through schooling to be assured of good jobs.

My oldest child told me that 'I want to be a hairdresser and I don't want to study'. I told him, I advise you to learn about cars mechanic, it is better for you. My duty is to advise him but he insists that he wants to be a hairdresser so he is free.

Maan expressed a willingness to accept his son's career choice but displayed a preference for him to pursue something that required formal education (and possibly something considered more masculine). The greater and more positive orientation parents display towards formal education for their children reflects the increasing awareness they have of the shift in the global economy towards a 'knowledge economy' and the significance of human capital increases for future success (Ansell, 2015; Boyden, 2013). What stood out from all the interviews was that all mentions of job and work were associated with sons and even though all parents reiterated the importance of education for all their children, none of the parents

discussed their daughters' education alongside a potential career. This begs the question of how parents constitute the role of 'school-going daughter' and its importance.

The data suggested that while fathers generally reiterated the importance of education for children, they possessed no expectations for daughters associated with academic achievement. However, describing her own experience one mother said,

[my parents] planned for [my sisters and me] to finish the baccalaureate and then get married because it will be easier to find a good husband with more education. I wanted to go to university but they said it is good enough with a baccalaureate.

The above quote implies that parents might see an educated daughter as a better marriage prospect. A possible reason as implied by another mother is that educated mothers will be better able to educate their own children,

I ask my children about their day at school. I am happy to see what they did, like homework etc. and try to help them but since I did not finish school, I cannot really help... so I just tell them stories [laughs]

These remarks indicate an association between education, matrimony and family life that still firmly reflects a construction of the role of girls as confined within the home (Ahmad, 2012), and by extension, the role of boys outside the home. This suggests that even though the conceptualisation of education has changed it has not had an effect on the construction of children's gender based roles.

6.3.2 School as Children's Work

Prior to arriving in Norway, mother-of-five Maya fled from Syria with her children to a neighbouring country where they lived as refugees in the city for a few years. During that period, the family did not have the same rights as citizens and her children were unable to go to school and instead had to work to ensure the family had food and shelter,

It was very *very* difficult for me because they were only children but I could not do anything for them. They had to work, there was nothing I could do. We had to live. When they were in Syria, there were going to school and having a normal life, there in [country] they could not, they were forced to work... The boys said that previously when they worked it was hard and they felt a lot of stress doing it but they continued doing it because they had to. The work was really a big responsibility on them. Now there is no need for that, they feel they are children again back in school carrying their backpacks. My oldest son told me that he missed school, missed using a pen and writing in notebooks.

There are two opposing constructions in the extract above: the school-going child and the working child. The construction of the school-going child aligns with the depiction of childhood laid out by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) as a work-free and carefree time for children to be at school, to learn and play and be recipients of care in an idyllic existence,

Childhood [is] a time when children are allowed to grow and develop to their full potential: healthy children in school and at play, growing strong and confident with the love and encouragement of their family and an extended community of caring adults, gradually taking on the responsibilities of adulthood, free from fear... protected from abuse and exploitation (UNICEF, 2005 p.1).

Corsaro (2005) has argued for school to be seen as the child's place of work and schooling as a duty of children. Just as adults are positioned at work earning money to pay the bills, children are positioned in school to be educated and socialised, but Maya's example challenged this notion and showed the transgression of roles with children occupying the role and space meant for adults. In Maya's response, she acknowledged that the construct of working children challenges the construct of schooling children but asserted that it was necessary. What we can observe here is how the roles of 'school-going child' and 'working

child' are closely related to the social and cultural context and different material conditions give rise to each construct. As research has shown, childhood characterised by paid work is not uncommon in the majority world where poverty necessitates children's participation in the labour market, and in circumstances like these, leaving school and working is a crucial contribution to sustain the household across a difficult period (Lancy, 2018). We can also observe that the current generation of parents ascribe more strongly to the idea of children in school as compared to that of earlier generations, and a childhood free of work.

6.4 Preparation for the Future

Childhood is both consumptive and productive. What that means, and as seen in the previous chapter and above sections, is that children are both passive recipients of care within the family and also active contributors to the family in different ways. However, what arose from the interviews with Syrian parents was the additional notion of childhood as preparative. In this section, I look at how parents perceive childhood as a crucial period of preparation for adulthood. Furthermore, I will discuss how the social positions of children as constructed within the family and the expectations of preparatory roles, specifically pertaining to household duties, are differentiated by interacting elements such as gender, age and generation.

6.4.1 Skill and Knowledge Acquisition

Local understanding of childhood in Syrian and Muslim culture suggests that a primary goal for girls and boys (and the responsibility of parents) is successful transition to adulthood (Weiss, Salamandra & Stenberg, 2015; Antoun, 1991). The 'chore curriculum' (Lancy, 2012) refers therefore to the learning of chores, duties and incremental acceptance of responsibilities within the family that constitute an important element of childhood.

[My mother] worked hard to raise us in a good environment and to be good people. To be a good housewife, and look after a house and the family. My mother taught me to cook when I was young. I have taught [my daughters] the same... I taught one when she was only five years old and she has a passion for cooking now (Maya).

We used to help with housework cleaning the floor, washing the dishes for example. My mother gave us this responsibility. When we have guests over we serve them tea and coffee and bring fruits. [My mother] taught us to be good hosts and look after visitors... Someday [my daughter] will grow up, get married and will be responsible for her house so she needs to learn what to do and how to do it well (Jumanah).

The thing I remember most of all from the time I spent with my dad was when we were going out to the market and we were buying things for the house. My dad used to take [my brothers and I] with him to the market to teach us how to buy things, what to buy and how much things cost because that is an important responsibility for the man of the house (Maan).

My parents taught me to care about my family, to take care of my little brothers and sisters and that I should focus on my studies and do well. When I was around 13 or 14, my father began to talk with me about everything, for example, house issues, family economy, or the way one chooses friends. You can say we had democracy in our house... he included me in discussions that mattered to him. He talked to all of us brothers but he talked with me more and less with them because I was the oldest son. My father wanted us to be social and open to other things. And the most important thing was that he wanted us to be independent (Khalil).

Clearly visible in the above quotes is firstly, that boys and girls are subjected to different demands. Secondly, chores were not explained to passive listeners, but were taught through active participation and children learned the rules of behaviour by observing and shadowing their parents. Thirdly, the way responsibilities and household chores were allocated and taught to children reflected an intensification with age in gender-related role expectations.

The mothers' responses exemplify the typical domestic responsibilities of girls and reflect familial expectations of what is considered important skills required for the proper place of a woman; as a wife and mother. Daughters are expected to attach themselves to their mothers (or older sisters) in order to learn, emulate and master these skills. Chores such as these are thus seen as a regular part of childhood and also as an investment that ensures girls have a good future when they marry and move away to their own families. Conversely, the fathers' responses portray responsibilities related to finances, decision-making and control, as well as masculine characteristics such as independence and openness that stand in stark contrast to those usually associated with girls 'conformity, dependence, passivity and competence' (Bardwick & Douvan, 1971, p.149). In addition, it is interesting to notice that even in his description of independence, Khalil refers to it as 'us' which connotes independence enmeshed within a collectivist way of thinking. This is a stark contrast to common descriptions of independence that relates firmly with the notion of 'me' and separation of self from others.

6.4.2 Age for Learning

The notion of childhood as a stage for learning skills and behaviour as preparation for adulthood was closely related to chronological age. Several parents expressed views that children had to be taught behaviours, values and habits within a certain time-frame for it to be most effective and the younger one began, the better.

It is all from the beginning, if the beginning was not good then it becomes more difficult to teach and raise your children. At the end of the line if you want to repair something that has been corrupted for so many years, it is difficult. You cannot try to manage or teach [children] when they are 16 years old. So, you start from young to teach them, you need to give them a good education while they are children (Jamal).

Jamal's quote relates more to the imparting of values and beliefs to children than domestic skills, however it underscores the general belief parents share that children should acquire

the necessary skills and knowledge in childhood to prepare them for similar and larger responsibilities subsequently as adults.

The following presents an opposing example that illustrates an instance when the individual did not acquire certain necessary skills in childhood. Samira who grew up in a well-to-do family described,

I used to live with my mother-in-law and the first time I tried to cook rice, my mother-in-law threw it away three times because it was terrible. One time I wanted to make some eggs but I ended up burning it and there was a fire in the kitchen. When that happened, my mother-in-law said to me ‘Your mother hasn’t even taught you how to make an egg?’ [laughs] My mother never asked us to help in the house, she would do it all herself and after my mother was finished with all the housework, my father would take her out to go for a walk or do something together.

Although this anecdote underscores a general social expectation that parents transmit necessary homemaking skills to their daughters, it demonstrates how a family’s economic situation can negate this. Learning to perform household chores in economically well-off families becomes less critical while children are younger, but regardless remains a necessary skill as a part of societal expectations of a woman’s role ultimately. Given that she was never asked to participate in household work, Samira reported eventually learning how to do a few simple tasks by observing her mother and emulating the actions as play e.g. pretending to change her baby brother’s diapers. She also laughed and admitted to learning to cook only after she was married from her mother-in-law and husband.

Interestingly, Samira reiterated a few times throughout the interview that she did not believe her situation was typical of Syrian girls and that she came from a ‘very special family’ growing up in a very different environment. However, when asked what her expectations of her daughters were, she expressed a simple desire for them ‘just to be kind people’ and, most importantly ‘to get married’. This suggests that the symbolism of marriage transcends social

class and persists both as a goal of parents, as the responsibility of children and an important aspect that guides the construction of childhood.

6.4.3 Gender-Age Segregated Roles

Having seen that social class (or economic background) influences how childhood is perceived, this section examines the role of other demographic factors and the way it interacts with the construction of preparatory roles in childhood.

Both boys and girls must help the parents but in different ways. Boys do things that girls cannot do and it is the same the other way around, girls do things that boys cannot do. For example, if my sisters see my mum is tired, of course they will help her with the housework. When we were growing up, we all felt that our oldest sister was like our second mother because she looked after us and did everything like my mother. For me, I left school at the age of twelve to start working and gave the money I earned to my parents (Maan).

I have one older sister, but I am second... the oldest among the boys... [my sister and my] responsibilities were different. My responsibilities were fewer. I was only responsible for taking care of my other sisters and brothers and playing with them. My sister's responsibilities were significantly more than mine. She was expected to take care of the house, assist in household chores like cleaning and cooking, almost like my mother. She also had main responsibility for the youngest and smallest children and looked after them much more than me. For me, I used to go out with my younger brothers and play with them, but my sister had to do real work taking care of the children. I also helped a little with some outdoor tasks (Khalil).

Girls were tasked with routine domestic chores within the home such as cleaning, cooking and caregiving, sharing these responsibilities with their mothers or sisters. Boys, on the other

hand, were more involved in domestic chores outside the home and productive work that helped the family financially.

This gendered segregation of children's duties can essentially be seen as reflection of societal constructions within Syrian Muslim culture that separates masculine and feminine spaces. Fathers were frequently described as busy working outside the home and returning home late at night, while mothers were described as being around all the time looking after the children and the home. Even when some mothers were involved in income-generating work, they were mostly described as home-based jobs such as tailoring or teaching the Quran.

When they are young both boys and girls can do the same things, there is no difference.

But at a certain age according to our culture, for girls they don't do it anymore. They can no longer go out and do such things. She can go out but not grocery shopping, the girl becomes restricted to some social criteria and traditions (Jamal).

My daughter can do whatever she wants because she is still a child. As long as she is young she can do whatever she wants, I will not put any restrictions on her. But in the nice neighbourhood we were living in, there was a certain mentality about what you can do and cannot do when you are married... with children (Samira).

Looking at Jamal and Samira's explanations for the socio-spatial restrictions on women/girls, we observe how gender interacts with age in terms of constructing responsibilities for children and ascribing different roles and behaviours to boys and girls. Intertwined with that is also the influence of marital status, class and generation. Both men and women are expected to work and contribute towards the family, where men are often positioned outside the home while women are often positioned within the home because of socio-religious practice of Muslim seclusion.

Researchers have argued that in Muslim culture the public male space is associated accordingly with power, politics and production while the private female space is associated with domesticity and reproduction (Spain, 1992; Massey, 1994; Laws, 1997). Older girls and women outside the safe space of home place themselves at risk of physical and social dangers. Therefore, the ways their roles and responsibilities are constructed are meant to keep them within the home and, by extension, safe. Children who are not subsumed under these gendered categories occupy a valuable position within the family because of their spatial mobility and freedom that allows them to navigate both spaces and support adults and the family (Schildkrout, 1978; Nieuwenhuys, 1994; Punch, 2001; Robson, 2003). In this case, domestic chores like shopping that is less appropriate for women to engage in, yet outside the sphere of men's responsibility fits perfectly for children. This type of children's work which closely relates to women's work in the private sphere, however important in the socio-cultural context, is still considered low status work, normalised and therefore does not afford children higher status within the family (Morrow, 1996; Robson, 2003)

It was visible from the data that work and responsibilities were considered by parents to be integral to childhood and to what children are. Furthermore, that the segregated work of men and women outside the home influence the division of household labour both gendered and generational. More importantly, the socially constructed gender relations embedded in parents' ideologies and expectations is a careful balance between utilising the capacity of children's right to transgress adult gender divisions of space and labour, while still ensuring children mimic and learn ascribed roles, behaviour and spatial realms in childhood as they move towards adulthood.

Interestingly, some parents described instances where gender division of labour was more fluid. As Maya who grew up with a widowed mother shared,

I have four sisters and one brother. My brother is the oldest and I am the youngest. My brother was like our father and he had a lot of responsibilities because of his position and we are a big family. I was all the time with [my mother], I was going out a lot with her for shopping and to get things we needed for the house. My mother was a housewife with no

husband so she was responsible for all the house needs like getting food and clothes. When I got older, I started going with my sisters to do the shopping so my mother did not have to do that.

A family's social composition influences the allocation of household labour. As illustrated by Maya's case, girls may transgress the societal gender division of labour and engage in what is considered as boys' responsibilities if there is a need for that e.g. when there are no boys in the family to perform those chores. However it is important that these tasks are still performed in a manner that continues to adhere to structures of adult authority and social expectations of age and gender appropriate behaviour.

In families where children did not have to take on domestic responsibilities at an early age because of the family's comfortable economic situation, these responsibilities fell noticeably on mothers, but not on fathers. The clear gender divided domestic responsibilities were articulated by Maya in this example,

Inside the home my husband also helps me with the work... however there are things he never helps with. Things that are not typical for men to help with, such as cooking. That is not typical at all [shakes head]. We had four children one after one, and that was the only time my husband had to help with the cooking because I couldn't do it myself and we were living very far from my mother so I did not have her help. That was the only time.

All the other times even if the children are sick, or I am sick, it is still my responsibility.

Fathers in this study displayed strong alignment of their beliefs with gendered societal expectations in the way they discussed the importance of children (more specifically, girls) adhering to behaviour generally deemed socially and culturally appropriate/inappropriate, and their involvement in teaching sons. Mothers, on the other hand, reiterated the importance of skills their daughters had to acquire to be equipped for the future while minimising the

importance of these for their sons. When asked if she had the same expectations of sons contributing towards household chores as she had of daughters, Maya replied,

I try to teach my sons some things I teach my daughters... but they are not interested and do not like to help... In general, I don't expect any help from the boys except perhaps simple things like taking their dishes to the sink... although if it is too much effort to ask them to do it, it is better to do it myself. Their main responsibility is to take care of themselves. That's it, I do not need them to do anything more... The girls must do [chores] themselves though, it is more important that they learn to do things on their own as they will do it alone in the future.

Maya constructs girls and boys as inherently different and makes a direct connection between sex ('girls') and female nature ('the girls must do [chores] themselves though'). Here this female nature is directly connected to a specific role within the context of the household and this discourse serves to fix boys and girls in separate positions within the family with girls being made responsible for domestic chores.

6.4.4 Birth Order and Role Modelling

Beyond age, sibling composition and birth order also interacts with gender to play a critical role in the construction of childhood responsibilities within the context of the Syrian Muslim families. The following exchange occurred with 25-year old Khalil who is the oldest son in a large family,

Interviewer: How did your parents teach you right from wrong?

Khalil: Traditionally speaking in a Syrian family, if the parents teach the oldest brother or sister what is right or wrong and discipline them, the younger siblings will follow. When the older children do something good the rest will be like them. So in my case, my father and mother taught me and my sister the most about the rules in the house and what we should and should not do so we could be like a model for our little brothers and sisters. If

the older brother makes mistakes so will the rest also make the same mistakes. I think that if I was a failure then I would fail my brothers and sisters.

Research has already demonstrated that children play a critical role in the socialisation experiences of their younger siblings through modelling behaviour, transmitting and creating societal values, standards and norms and supporting development of social and emotional competence (Barr & Hayne, 2003; Dunn, 2015; Howe & Ross, 1990; Kramer, 2014; Zukow-Goldring, 2002). However, these are predominantly recognition of passive roles occurring through interaction and play. In the exchange above, Khalil highlights instead an active duty and responsibilities older children within the family have towards their younger siblings that span beyond traditional markers of age-based responsibility. In this context, duty is located within a hierarchy-based family system that privileges as much as it punishes.

[My sisters and I] have four older brothers and they were the ones who guided us... They made dos and don'ts rules for me and no 'outsider' could influence me. My father allowed my oldest brother to be in charge of all the issues of the home. He was given the authority even though my sister is actually oldest (Kasrin).

Men who are positioned as head of the households have significant responsibilities that accompany the power they are afforded over all other members of the household. In a similar vein, older siblings who have significant responsibilities towards their family on account of their younger siblings are privileged with power such as the prerogative to discipline younger siblings for misdemeanour and failings. As illustrated by Kasrin above, the responsibility that older siblings have over younger siblings is also accompanied by power and interacts with gender. Older brothers have more authority than older sisters.

6.5 Plural and Intersecting Childhood Identities

From what we have seen thus far, this research indicates that attitudes, beliefs and values related to parenting, children and childhood is not determined by any one social identity, but that the interaction of multiple categorical dimensions was more important in contributing towards the diverse and varied ways parents in this study constructed the roles and

responsibilities of children. According to Collins (1989) intersectional perspectives often explore the most visible categories of race, class and gender that have the most direct socioeconomic consequences while categories such as age and religion are less visible.

Many of the sentiments articulated by Syrian parents in this study seemed divided by gender, and conformity to traditional cultural expectations of behaviour was common for these parents interviewed. However, there was a discernible and distinct variation by social class and age in the mix which reflected the intersect of other dimensions that impact these parenting constructions. While children taking on responsibilities for household chores at a young age appeared normative in families from lower social class as a whole, freedom from responsibilities for children held more importance for families from middle and upper social classes. Middle-class parents expressed that giving children responsibilities disrupted childhood and that such responsibilities were expected to occur after children became adults, as when Kasrin remarked, 'I like the child to live a normal childhood because they will get older eventually and they have many more and much bigger responsibilities later... my daughter... is a child and she is not supposed to work.'

In addition to class, religion appeared to be an intersecting factor as well related to responsibilities of children. Parents varied in the way they perceived religion and the role of religion in their lives,

For me, Islam is ethics so if a Muslim has good ethics, she can be whatever she wants and go wherever she wants... it does not matter if you stay home and you are cleaning or if you go out... if you are a good person you are a good Muslim (Kasrin, mother).

My children still have strong faith. Alhamdulillah. This is the situation as it is, but we do not know if it will change. So I must teach them our traditions and our habits and to let them follow the religion... I teach my daughters to cook so they can look after the home... maybe not everybody does it but I want my children to understand that everybody comes from a different environment and we have to not forget our traditions (Maya, mother).

The above extracts demonstrate how differing interpretations of what it means to be Muslim may interact with value and behaviour expectations parents have of their children. Both mothers have strong faith, however while Maya perceives these roles and responsibilities for children (particularly daughters) as a means of sustaining and transmitting traditions and religious heritage, Kasrin separates religious identity from practical household tasks and thus does not hold similar role expectations of her children. It is therefore important not just to identify a person's religiosity but to understand how it manifests itself in thought and practice.

Attitudes towards children also had particular orientations related not just to characteristics of parents, but to characteristics of the children and their intersectional identities. Children, were often described as vulnerable and parents emphasised the importance of providing care and protection. However, this view of vulnerability was not homogenous as it was constructed on the basis of gender, age, birth position etc. in combination. Girls tended to be perceived as more vulnerable than boys irrespective of age. Older girls were also considered more socially vulnerable than younger girls because of cultural norms and restrictions. In the construction of children and their roles, intersectionality helps us to understand the unique positioning of girls, particularly teenage girls, at the margins of age and gender in relation to other children. Examining this with respect to responsibility and maturity (juxtaposing vulnerability), we have seen how Syrian children in families from lower social classes are given increased responsibilities with age and constructed as more mature especially if they have younger siblings. Moreover, when it pertained to the nature and degree of responsibilities, girls were often given more responsibilities within the household than boys, although the value of the responsibilities boys were given can be considered greater.

Cole (in Miville & Ferguson, 2014) wrote that 'failure to attend to how social categories depend on one another for meaning renders knowledge of any one category both incomplete and biased (p.173)'. Through the lens of intersectionality, this study has tried to address that gap by demonstrating the ways Syrian parents perceive childhood and the roles and responsibilities of children influence, and are influenced by multiple interacting dimensions related to both children and parents such as class, gender, age, religion and other social hierarchies.

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CHAPTER 7: CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this final chapter, I will re-examine my original research questions and objectives, and summarise the main findings in relation to these. I chose to discuss the data in two chapters, one focusing on the constructions of children (the roles and responsibilities of parents) and one focusing on the constructions of childhood (the roles and responsibilities of children). I will now address these two aspects collectively framed by the concept of interdependencies which has been running through the analyses. This is followed by a conclusion that reflects on the value of these key findings in the context of childhood studies and the implications of these findings on our understanding of the integration process for newly resettled refugee parents and children in Norway. The challenges of parenting and acculturation for refugee families will be examined in light of the existing integration system and parent-oriented policies. Finally, I will round this chapter off with some recommendations and directions for further research and policy.

7.1 Summary of Objectives, Theory & Methods

In this thesis I wanted to explore the experiences and challenges of parenting for refugee parents in a new social context, the focus being on parenting in the early stages of settlement in Norway. The aim was to better understand how Syrian refugee parents constitute children and construct childhood, both in terms of the way they interpret and perceive parental rights and responsibilities in relation to their children, and the rights and responsibilities of children towards parents. A further aim was to gain insight into how parents resist and adapt to the culture, practices and perspectives of their new cultural environment, and how they reflect upon these changes.

Theoretically, the study was approached from a social constructionist perspective. The notion of childhood as plural, distinct and shaped by social contexts which has a bearing on parent-child interactions underpinned the research. At the same time a social structural approach was utilised to facilitate consideration of the relevance of different categorical factors to the character of childhood. In addition the key concepts of age, structure and agency, generation, gender and intersectionality were adopted as primary theoretical concepts to help frame the analysis and discussion.

This study was carried out using a qualitative methodological approach, primarily utilising narrative semi-structured interviews. I found this multi-lingual research design to be demanding, yet enjoyable. It involved the cooperation of several interpreters and the challenge was that every translation involved an interpretation of meaning by the translator which made integrating and systematising translation in the research process difficult. However, using this narrative cross-language approach allowed participants to comfortable and encouraged them to provide rich data which in turn enabled thick description, thick interpretation and thick meaning (Geertz, 1973).

In the discussion chapters 5 and 6, the key concept of interdependencies (or relationality) emerged as important for understanding the way Syrian refugee parents construct children and childhood, as well as the challenges they encounter parenting in a different context.

7.2 Main Findings

7.2.1 Childhood is Socially Constructed and Relational

Within this framework of interdependencies, children and parents are positioned in juxtaposition to each other throughout the life course. Children are socially constructed as immature, dependent, ignorant and vulnerable because of their chronological age and smaller physical stature; in need of protection and guidance. Placed in an oppositional dichotomy, parents are seen as mature, experienced, knowledgeable and capable and are thus the caregiver to children's dependence, decision-makers to their ignorance etc. In this sense childhood relates to adulthood, and adulthood is as much a social construction as childhood.

The concept of childhood as a generational system is also especially crucial within Syrian Muslim culture in fostering interconnections and interdependencies between adulthood and childhood and circumscribing the way children (and parents) can act within necessary interrelations. Childhood as generational appears to be both ideological and practical particularly within collectivist culture with a stronger sense of interdependency. Children's generational position that governs interdependent relationships within the family and other social structures means also that their position will always figure and function in relation to

others in complex ways. It is with an understanding of these constraints and within these structures that children know to act or react. Children have therefore agency, although it is not absolute. The agency of children within Syrian families is structurally determined with relative constraints and freedoms. Beyond the one-dimensional concept of agency in Norway as characterised by an assertion of rights and independence, the concept of agency as expressed by Syrian parents recognises the ability of individuals to be engaged and willing to put aside one's own immediate interests on account of the needs of others. Agency is not only resistance, but acquiescence.

Looking at generational structure, findings indicated that the categories of childhood and adulthood were limiting insofar as they failed to consider other categories such as older adults or teenagers that are recognised in Syrian culture as part of the life course constructions. Older adults occupy a unique role in Syrian culture and are bequeathed respect and significant positional power for their experience and knowledge in contrast to the perspective in Norway of older adults as a burden. Recognising the foundational structure of interdependent family relations, a system of prolonged family ties, and the importance of intergenerational respect within Syrian culture is important as it guides understanding of the relational aspect of how childhood is constructed and children treated.

7.2.2 Parent-Child Relations influence Childhood Responsibilities

Syrian parents in this study construct the roles of children not solely in relation to their time in childhood, but in relation to their position within the family extending beyond childhood. Childhood may end for children but the parent-child relationship persists. The roles and responsibilities Syrian parents have of children are thus negotiated throughout the life course capturing changes in parent-child role configurations and other shifting responsibilities. An element of children's responsibilities thus have a long-term orientation fundamentally premised on a family-based system of old age security that works well in societies where there are few alternative sources of welfare. Adult children (especially sons) are expected to maintain contact and care for their parents down the line, both emotionally and financially. Part of the challenge for Syrian parents in Norway with its strong individual focus that encourages the independence, autonomy and rights of children is thus finding acceptance for

their ideal of childhood and accompanying parenting values that emphasise the interdependency of family life and responsibilities of children for parents.

7.2.3 Future-Related Roles: Education and Work

Childhood is constructed as a period of preparation for future responsibilities and roles. As it is often referred to in childhood studies, children are seen as ‘becomings’ rather than ‘beings’ (James & Prout, 1997). The findings of this study showed that education was prioritised by all Syrian parents who recognised the importance of schooling for children, despite their own lack of education and despite not being able to isolate the precise and specific utility of education. Parents generally appeared to recognise the importance of education in an evolving knowledge-based economy and the prioritisation of education for children was closely related to the ease of access to schooling opportunities. Experiences of migration, hardship, uncertainty and deprivation which in some cases challenged constructs of childhood that parents knew, i.e., children working instead of being in school, also contributed further towards cementing the importance of education. Children being in school and acquiring ‘work-related’ knowledge is therefore seen as a critical and necessary stepping stone for families to collectively be able to secure comfortable futures.

In addition to schooling, childhood is also constructed as a stage for the acquisition of skills and knowledge relevant to children’s future roles and responsibilities within the family, i.e., role of husband/wife, father/mother. These skills are acquired through three primary modes: passive learning (watching parents or siblings), direct teaching (parents demonstrate to children) or active participation (performing chores in the home). Passive learning and direct teaching is constructed as the responsibilities of parents while children’s active participation in household chores manifests itself as one of the defining features of how parents construct childhood and the responsibilities of children. In the current context of Norway, children’s participation in household chores is generally seen more as cultural and social transmission of knowledge as opposed to it filling a physical and actual need within the home. Interestingly, the study also showed that while parents expressed the necessity for children to acquire these skills, education was prioritised with parents willing to let children dedicate time to school than household chores.

7.2.4 Gendered Relations

The arena of household chores confirmed a clear gender divisions in parents' construction of responsibilities within the home, in general, and more specifically in the way the ideas they had of childhood and the roles of children. In Norway, both Syrian fathers and mothers are engaged in 'paid work' outside the home through their participation in the Introduction Programme. However divisions of responsibilities within the household still has persistent and distinct gendered constructions with fathers positioned as head of households and mothers responsible for childcare and homecare similar to as it was in Syria when mothers were full-time housewives. Fathers are involved in educating and guiding children, but not in actual childcare. This gendered constructions of female roles in the home extends beyond mothers to daughters. The findings indicate that parents focus more on daughters acquiring domestic skills than sons with parents reproducing gendered roles in the expectations they communicated of children. Mothers in this study expressed frustration at these gendered roles, yet the data demonstrates ironically that mothers are also more responsible for perpetuating these gendered roles within the home.

The use of an intersectional perspective also showed that beyond gender, the construction of children's roles in the home was a result of multiple intersecting factors. Ideas of childhood parents have and accompanying constructs of children's responsibilities vary depending on elements such as whether the child is young/old, male/female and whether the parents have low-education/high-education, low-income/high-income, many children/few children etc. The findings underscore the fact Syrian parents do not have a homogeneous construction of childhood or of children and it differs based on how factors such as class, age, education, religion, family size and birth position interact.

7.2.5 Interdependencies and Power

There is a high degree of connectedness, closeness and involvement among Syrian family members. Within this network of family relations, it is important for all members in the family to balance individual wants and needs against family expectations and obligations whereby cooperative goal oriented behaviour and duty is prioritised. With such involvement and interdependence comes the notion of power. Power does not exist independently but

relationally. The data from this study indicates that an asymmetrical power hierarchy exists between Syrian parents and their children in an intergenerational relationship characterised by dependence, social responsibility and connectedness. Parents expect children to conform, display emotional self-control and be obedient which is tethered to the firm belief that parental decisions are the best for the child and for the family. Even parents who are more relaxed and display less control present with a certain assurance of their authority due to the hierarchical structure of the Syrian family.

Previous research has challenged the notion that parental authority and control is necessarily negative (Chao, 1994; Punch 2002). This study supports that finding by demonstrating the benevolent character of parental authority and duty within a collectivist Syrian family. Another thing that surfaced was that the experiences of displacement and migration which ruptured family life for Syrian parents seem to have contributed towards parents' stronger sense of duty towards protecting their children. In the early stages of settlement this fundamentally manifests itself as greater control and authority over children.

Intrinsically linked to the concept of authority and control is the idea of position and roles. A balance in position, power and roles of parents and children is optimal, however differential rates of adaptations for parents and children in the early phase of settlement can lead to role changes which affect balance in relationships and create power conflicts between parents and children. This study showed that the effect of power imbalance and conflict is greater on fathers than on mothers due to the patriarchal nature of Syrian society. Moreover, such conflicts were more likely to occur between father-son dyads than father-daughter dyads.

7.3 Conclusion

The present study was initiated to collect contextual-based knowledge about Syrian refugee parents' perceptions of children and childhood and its implications on parenting in Norway. The key finding of this thesis was how relationality is a critical element in the way Syrian refugee parents construct children and childhood and that the concept of interdependencies drive parenting practices. The data demonstrated how at its core, children in Syrian culture live relationally and inter-generationally within their families which is a stark contrast to the practice in Norway where children are perceived as autonomous individuals, focus is on the promotion of individual rights and rules and welfare policies and practices are increasingly child-centred (Hennum, 2011; 2014; Hollekim, 2016). Among Syrian families there is an overarching expectation that responsibilities and relationships for children supersede rights and rules, whereby the fundamental responsibility of children is to recognise and supports interdependencies in their families and in their communities. Children have agency but it is not absolute. It is structurally determined with relative constraints and freedoms. The notion is that as parents have responsibilities towards their children, so have children responsibilities towards their parents and these manifest themselves in both present and future-oriented behaviours and actions such as helping out with household chores, getting a good education and subsequently finding a financially stable job or secure marriage. The responsibilities children have towards parents (and the family) often extend beyond childhood and are negotiated throughout the life course through changing parent-child role configurations. A notable asymmetrical power hierarchy within the Syrian family structure consign members of the family to different roles based on intersecting factors such as gender, age, class, religiosity, ethnicity and family size. There is a distinct gender and class dimension in future-oriented ideas of childhood pertaining to the assigning of responsibilities and the types of tasks. While both fathers and mothers participate in propagating gender in parenting, the findings suggest that mothers who have greater access, closer proximity and more engagement with children demonstrate a certain resistance towards transgressing norms within the existing family structure.

7.4 Suggestions and Recommendations

The challenges refugee families face upon settlement in a new country are complex and varied. Although municipalities currently organise mandated parenting programmes to support refugee parents in building relationships with their children, the programmes meet resistance because of its Norwegian centric focus. One of the huge tensions is that Norwegian practitioners and Syrian parents have versions of childhoods from different times and spaces, and various overlays of ideas about what childhood has been and should be that may not match. As Syrian parents view children through relational, family-centric, structural lenses, I would recommend that solutions to support parents in the early stages of settlement pertaining to parenting should seek to engage both parents and children simultaneously. This is especially relevant for parents with older children, but equally relevant for those with younger children. The way parents position children within the family and construct responsibilities of childhood needs to occur in tandem with children's changing positionalities and constructions of themselves.

Norwegian practitioners also need to recognise the positive functions of the interdependent and hierarchical structure within Syrian culture and the way it sustains transmission of important values and beliefs. Care should therefore be taken to maintain balance in parent child power relationships and minimise subverting parents' positions within the family while offering support to families. Respecting parents' position within this interdependent structure in an inclusive and cooperative manner would encourage more positive engagement from parents. Structural support or provisions for refugee families should focus on engaging fathers within the family as they have greater influence than other members of the family when it comes to the household. Mothers who spend significantly more time with children can also benefit from learning to be reflexive in their engagement with children particularly when it pertains to unwitting gender socialisation.

Syrian Muslim refugee parents have diverse demographical backgrounds and these factors intersect to shape differential values and beliefs. It would be unfortunate and ineffectual to assume that there is a homogeneous parenting profile among Syrian parents and that they all

face the same challenges e.g. a mother from a low-income family who only finished primary school and had many domestic responsibilities growing up would have a significantly different construction of childhood from a mother from a high-income family who finished high school and never had to participate in household chores. It is therefore necessary to offer more diversified solutions to narrow that gap. An example would be offering parenting courses separately for parents with teenagers or young children.

With regards to research areas for future exploration, firstly, this study was a cross-sectional study with parents who were newly settled and had recently began participating in the integration programme. It showed that the ideas parents had about childhood had a strong relationality construct and persistent gendered constructs. It would therefore be interesting to conduct a follow-up study after these parents have completed the programme and/or entered the workforce to see if and how these constructs have changed given both parents' and children's immersion in a culture with a focus on independence and gender-equality.

In addition, this study explored the images parents have of childhood and children in an attempt to isolate parenting acculturation and challenges in Norway. The reverse could be done with the same objective to identify parenting acculturation and challenges but from the perspective of children exploring their images of parents and parenting after migration and settlement. Third and lastly, this study could be contrasted with studies on parents from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds settled in Norway such as Somalians, Eritreans or Afghanis to identify the nuances of other children and childhood constructions that can promote better understanding of others with experiences from a different context.

Ultimately underlying motivations can be the same, yet behaviours can manifest and be interpreted differently. Immigrant parents may face the challenge of meeting the contemporary expectations Norwegians hold of parenting despite their best intentions and arguably similar motives. As Jamal pointed out to me, *'Norwegian people think we come from behind the cows... To tell the truth we all come from the same place, the same home. Not diverse. There are a lot of good things here in Norway that are the same as the many good things that are in Syria but these [Norwegians] ... they do not see it.'*

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APPENDIX 1a: Participant Information Sheet (English)

Resettlement and Parenting in Norway

Hi!

I am a Masters student from Singapore at the Norwegian Centre for Child Research at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim. I am currently working on my thesis centered on newly resettled refugee families in Norway and parenting. I am interested in how you manage your role as parents in a new country and within a new socio-cultural environment. The aim of this research is to generate knowledge that increases recognition of the value of diverse parenting knowledge and skills and contribute towards increasing cross-cultural understanding.

I am therefore interested in speaking with as many parents as possible to gain insight into your perception of parents' roles and child upbringing. I would like to hear the different experiences, thoughts and opinions you have and would ideally interview 5-10 parents. There is no right or wrong answer, and there is no expectation that you will all have the same thoughts and beliefs.

The interview will be completely anonymised and take approximately 1-2hrs in the form of a conversation. It can be conducted in English, Norwegian or Arabic (with a translator). I would like to record the interviews to ensure that I do not misinterpret anything when analysing the data. All recordings will be strictly confidential and will be deleted once the project is finished. It will be impossible to identify you in any way when this thesis is published in June 2018.

This project has been approved by the *Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS* (Norwegian Centre for Research Data) and is supervised by Associate Professor Marit Ursin from the Institute of Pedagogy and Lifelong Learning at NTNU.

Participation in this project is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any point without having to give a reason. If you would like to participate, please contact me via email: siokho@stud.ntnu.no or mobile: 46536108. Please note that this is an independent research project not connected to the *kommune* in any way and I would really appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about your experiences. My hope is that knowledge generated from this project will assist *kommunes* in providing effective resettlement services that best support you and your children here in Norway.

Thank you for your interest!

APPENDIX 1b: Participant Information Sheet (Arabic)

إعادة التوطين والعائلة (الأبوة والأمومة) في النرويج (ورقة معلومات المشارك)

مرحبا !

أنا طالبة ماجستير من سنغافورة في المركز النرويجي لبحوث الطفل التابع للجامعة النرويجية للعلوم و التكنولوجيا (نتنو) في تروندهايم. أعمل حالياً على أطروحتي التي تركز على الأسر اللاجئة، والتي أعيد توطينها حديثاً في النرويج وتربية الأطفال. أنا مهتمة بمعرفة طرقكم في إدارة أدواركم كوالدين، في بلد جديد و ضمن بيئة اجتماعية و ثقافية جديدة، حيث يهدف هذا البحث إلى تطوير المعرفة التي تزيد من قيم التنوع المعرفي و المهارات لدى العائلات، و المساهمة في زيادة التفاهم و التقارب بين الثقافات المختلفة.

أنا مهتمة بالتحدث مع أكبر عدد ممكن من أولياء الأمور لأحصل على تحليل أعمق لأرائكم عن إدراك الوالدين لأدوارهم ولتربية الأطفال. و أود أيضاً أن أتعلم عن خبراتكم المختلفة وأفكاركم و آرائكم من خلال تنفيذ 5-10 مقابلات مع عائلات مختلفة. مع العلم أنه ليس هناك إجابات صحيحة أو خاطئة، و لا يوجد توقع بأن تكون جميع أفكاركم و معتقداتكم متشابهة.

سوف تكون جميع المقابلات سرية تماماً و ستستخدم لأغراض البحث العلمي فقط، و سيتم تنفيذها على شكل محادثات مسجلة تمتد ما بين ساعة واحدة إلى ساعتين باللغة الإنجليزية أو النرويجية أو العربية (مع الترجمة). و سيتم تسجيل المقابلات لضمان المصداقية و الدقة عند تحليل البيانات. ستكون جميع التسجيلات سرية للغاية و سيتم حذفها بمجرد الانتهاء من مشروع الدراسة. و سيكون من المستحيل التعرف على الأشخاص الذين تمت مقابلتهم بأي شكل من الأشكال عندما يتم نشر هذه الدراسة في يونيو/حزيران عام 2018.

تمت الموافقة على هذا المشروع من قبل (المركز النرويجي لبيانات البحوث) و يشرف عليه الأستاذة المشاركة ماريت أورسين من معهد التربية و التعلم مدى الحياة في NTNU.

مشاركتم في هذا المشروع تطوعية تماماً، و يمكنكم الاعتراض على أي نقطة به أو عدم التعليق دون الحاجة إلى إبداء أسباب، فإذا كنتم ترغبون بالمشاركة، يرجى الاتصال بي على البريد الإلكتروني : siokho@stud.ntnu.no أو هاتف: 46536108.

يرجى العلم بأن هذا المشروع هو بحث مستقل لا علاقة للبلدية به بأي شكل من الأشكال، و أني شخصياً أقدر الفرصة للتحدث معكم عن تجاربكم و أمني أن يتم استخدام المعرفة الناتجة عن هذا المشروع لمساعدة البلدية في توفير خدمات أفضل في دعم التوطين والاستقرار لكم ولأطفالكم هنا في النرويج.

شكرا لاهتمامكم
سيوك هوي أون

APPENDIX 2: Consent Form for Participation

Consent Form for Participation (English)

I have received information on the study, and am willing to participate.

.....

(Signature of participant, date)

I confirm I have provided information on the study.

.....

(Signature of researcher, date)

Consent Form for Participation (Arabic)

نموذج موافقة المشاركين:

لقد استلمت المعلومات الخاصة بالدراسة وعليها أود المشاركة في المقابلات:
(التاريخ، وتوقيع المشارك)

.....

أؤكد على تسليم المعلومات الخاصة بالدراسة:
(التاريخ، وتوقيع الباحثة)

.....

APPENDIX 3: Interview Guide for Parents

Introduction

Gather overview of background information about participant

- Name, age
- Nationality
- Religion and Ethnicity
- Family –number of children, ages of children, relationship to child (direct/step), year married etc. (draw family map of core family) (*Followup: other family members in Norway, own family size growing up*)
- Education
- Previous Profession (*Followup: What would you like to work as here in Norway?*)
- When did you arrive in Norway? (*Followup: When did your family arrive in Norway?*)
- Process of how you arrived in Norway – application, wait-time, places of residence in interim period
- ***What did you know about Norway before arriving here?***
- “Current Status” – length of time in Introduction Programme, children’s schooling progress, reason for participating in *foreldreveiledningkurs*
- Proficiency in Norwegian and English (oral/written)

The interview guide is divided into 3 broad sections for discussion: Your Childhood (Memories), Your Family and Children (Reflections) and Acculturation and Change.

Section 1: Your Childhood (Memories)

Family

- Tell me about your family/family life as you remember from your childhood. Activities: What did you do? With whom (relations)? Where (places)?
- What do you remember about your mum/dad, extended family (grandparents or relatives)? Explore in-depth memories of how mum and dad were perceived, degree and type of interaction. Gender role differences, responsibilities and duties of each parent.
- How was your relationship with your parents as a young child? Did it change later in life as you got older (teenager)?
- Did your mother/father express affection and love for you? If yes, in which ways? How did you express love affection and love to them?
- How was communication between parents and children? Did you have dialogues, instruction etc. Was there any difference in parent-child communication in public and in private?
- How open were your parents with you (children)? Were there issues adults did not discuss/share with children? Were you aware that there were things your parents did not discuss with you? How open were you with your parents? Explore gender relationships and age differences. Explore general relations between adults and

children e.g. how do children relate and talk with other adult relatives, neighbours etc. (children's position in the local community)

- Did you have responsibilities or duties growing up? Prompt: towards parents/siblings/family etc. Ask about freedom/autonomy
- In what area did adults make decisions for you (children) and in what areas did you make decisions for yourselves?
- Describe, if any, the rules/expectations in your household when you were growing up. What is unacceptable behaviour for a child?
- Describe how your parents managed unacceptable behaviour at home or in public

- Did you learn important things from your parents or family? What are some of the most important things (values, beliefs, concepts) that you learnt from them? How did your parents teach you these positive behaviours and good values? What methods did they use? Prompt: Praise, discipline, firm words
- What expectations did your parents have of you? Future goals in terms of education, career, family formation, emotional stability and contentment

Community

- Ask participant to define community
- Tell me about your community as you remember from your childhood. What do you remember about the people and places? Is there anything special that you feel about it?
- How important was religion/faith in your community? How important was religion/faith in your family? Describe the ways it was present in your life.
- What were the expectations of children (present) or as future adults within your community (inside the home and outside the home)?
- Did you learn important things from your community? What are some of the most important things (values, beliefs, concepts) that you learnt from them?
- What do you think was the most important role your community had when you were growing up?

Section 2: Your Children and Family (Reflection)

Family

- Tell me about your family/family life now. Activities: What do you do? With whom (relations)? Where (places)? Explore what parents and children do separately or together
- Tell me about your relationship with your spouse. Explore duties and responsibilities of each parent, gender role differences.
- How is your relationship with your children? Explore gender or age-based differences in types and strength of interaction and communication.
- How do you express love and affection to your children? Prompt: physical contact, positive language/words, praising them to others etc. Describe how your children express affection and love for you.

- What does “parent-child bonding” mean to you? Has this relationship changed over the years? Do you think your relationship with your children will change as they get older (teenager)?
- Describe the communication between you and your children. How often do you have dialogues with your children? How often do you teach and instruct them? Are there things that you feel your children teach you?
- In what areas do you make decisions for your children and in what areas can your children make decisions themselves? Why? Explore communication, hierarchy, dialogue, openness, disagreement
- How open should parents be with children? How open should children be with parents?
- Do your children have responsibilities or duties at home? Towards parents/siblings/family etc. Do these duties and responsibilities change with age?
- Describe, if any, the rules/expectations in your household. What is unacceptable behaviour for a child? Explore differences based on age/gender
- How do you teach your children positive behaviours and values? What methods do you use? Explore: praise, verbal discipline, physical discipline Do you use different methods with different children? Why? Describe how you manage situations where your children display unacceptable behaviour at home or in public
- What are some things (values, beliefs, concepts) you teach your children? Why are these important?
- What do you think are the key duties and responsibilities of parents? What makes a good parent?
- Who do you think is responsible for ensuring that children’s needs are met and they have their rights? Prompt: Protecting and providing for children.
- Describe your future goals and expectations for your children. What do you expect your child to attain in the future? Future goals in terms of education, career, family formation, emotional stability and contentment
- What steps do you think it would take for your children to achieve these goals? What barriers would block your children’s attainment of these goals? What steps do you think it would take for you to help, as a parent, your children meet these goals.

Community (Norway)

- Ask participant to define community (again) in the Norwegian context
- Tell me about your community (the community) here. What do you think about the people and places?
- How much interaction do you have regularly with people in the community? With whom? What do you do? Is there anything special that you feel about it?
- How important is religion/faith in your community here? How important is religion/faith in your family? Describe the ways it is present in your life.
- What are the expectations of children within your community (inside the home and outside the home)? Is it different from what you expect of your children within your

family? In what ways are the roles of children in the community here different from in their former community?

- What do you think your children are learning from their community here?
- Are you learning important things from your community? What are some of the most important things (values, beliefs, concepts) that you are learning from them?

Section 3: Acculturation and Change

- Tell me a bit about your experience since resettling in Norway. Explore general progress, expectations, frustrations and satisfaction e.g. language, education, job, social network
- What are the biggest similarities between your culture (values and beliefs) and the culture here in Norway? What are the biggest differences between your culture (values and beliefs) and the culture here in Norway? Limit to: children and parents' roles, child rearing, family relations etc.
- Do you feel that your experience as a parent in Norway is similar/different from being a parent in your home country? In what ways has it changed? Prompt: social relationships and support, economic status.
- What would you say are some of the major challenges (if any) you face in teaching your children these values/behaviours/beliefs that are important to you? How do you deal with them? Who do you turn to for help (spouse, community, municipality)?
- Are there values, behaviours or beliefs that your children have learnt in Norway which are different from yours? Why/how do you think they have learnt it?
- Are there any changes you have observed in your connection and communication with your children after moving to Norway? If yes/no, why?
- How much "freedom" do you feel as a parent in Norway to parent your children the way you want to? Elaborate. Explore how parents perceive Norwegian attitudes and beliefs about parents with ethnic-minority background.
- What different types of support do you have (have received) in Norway that helps you in your role as a parent? Prompt: municipality, social, individual, electronic etc.

*Introduce physical punishment as acceptable and normalized in Singapore...
What are your thoughts on physical punishment and its effectiveness in teaching children the right value and behaviour?

APPENDIX 4: NSD form



Marit Ursin
Institutt for pedagogikk og livslang læring NTNU

7491 TRONDHEIM

Vår dato: 15.06.2017

Vår ref: 54201 / 3 / GTM

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 25.04.2017. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

54201	<i>Resettled Refugees and Parenting in a Different Context: an exploration of parenting and upbringing in relation to the perspectives of children's position after resettlement in Norway</i>
Behandlingsansvarlig	NTNU, ved institusjonens øverste leder
Daglig ansvarlig	Marit Ursin
Student	Siok Hui Ong

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 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/personvernombud/meld_prosjekt/meld_endringer.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, 01.02.2018, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Kjersti Haugstvedt

Siri Tenden Myklebust

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

APPENDIX 5: Translator/Interpreter Confidentiality Agreement

Resettled Refugees and Parenting in the Norwegian Context

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

Specifically, I agree to:

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

Printed name of translator/interpreter: _____

Signature of translator/interpreter / Date: _____

Printed name of primary investigator: **SIOK HUI ONG**

Signature of primary investigator / Date: _____