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Children's Perspectives on the Friendship Campaign *BlimE!*

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Abstract

This research aims to explore how children and the *BlimE* campaign contribute to ongoing constructions of childhood, friendship, and 'good citizenship'. *BlimE* is an annual friendship campaign hosted by the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK), aiming at conveying positive values and attitudes towards children through song and dance. This thesis aims to contribute to knowledge about campaigns such as *BlimE,* that promote certain values and norms, and how children interpret and position themselves within such initiatives. To investigate the aim of this thesis, the research follows a qualitative approach, through participant observations, focus group interviews and a qualitative content analysis of the music video *Dynamite* from the 2021 *BlimE* campaign. The research is positioned within the field of childhood studies, thus emphasizing children as social actors that actively contribute to shaping their own everyday lives.

The findings from the analysis reveal that the *BlimE* campaign promotes certain ideas and norms that lay grounds for a certain kind of childhood. Furthermore, the analysis reveals how the *BlimE* campaign is closely connected to schools, emphasizing them as partners in a civilizing project. Through these civilizing projects, children are shaped as 'good' citizens who conduct themselves according to the ideas and norms presented to them. Moreover, the analysis emphasizes how children are a part of the constructions. They interpret and use the ideas and norms found in the *BlimE* campaign in various ways, thereby contributing to the construction of a specific type of childhood. The analysis further reveals how inclusion, the importance of friendship, a sense of community, and being respectful and tolerant of differences and diversities are central values conveyed by the *BlimE* campaign. These values must be seen in connection to central democratic values found in Norwegian society. Thus, on the one hand, campaigns such as *BlimE* contribute to constructing certain childhoods, ideals of friendship and citizenship. On the other hand, children's interpretations also play a role in how childhood, friendship and citizenship are constructed and practiced.

Sammendrag

Formålet med denne masteroppgaven er å utforske hvordan barn og BlimE-kampanjen bidrar til pågående konstruksjoner av barndom, vennskap og 'godt medborgerskap'. *BlimE* er en årlig vennskapskampanje i regi av NRK, som tar sikte på å formidle positive verdier og holdninger til barn gjennom sang og dans. Denne oppgaven har som mål å bidra til kunnskap om kampanjer som *BlimE*, som fremmer bestemte verdier og normer, og videre hvordan barn tolker og posisjonerer seg innenfor slike tiltak. For å undersøke formålet med denne oppgaven, følger forskningen en kvalitativ tilnærming, gjennom deltakerobservasjoner, fokusgruppeintervjuer og en kvalitativ innholdsanalyse av musikkvideoen *Dynamitt* fra *BlimE*-kampanjen i 2021. Forskningen er posisjonert innenfor feltet childhood studies, og fremhever dermed barn som sosiale aktører som aktivt bidrar til å forme deres egen hverdag.

Funnene fra analysen avslører at *BlimE*-kampanjen fremmer visse ideer og normer som legger grunnlag for en viss type barndom. Videre avdekker analysen hvordan *BlimE*-kampanjen er nært knyttet til skoler, og fremhever dem som partnere i et siviliserende prosjekt. Gjennom disse siviliserende prosjektene formes barn som 'gode' medborgere som oppfører seg i henhold til ideene og normene som presenteres for dem. Videre legger analysen vekt på hvordan barn er en del av konstruksjonene. De tolker og bruker ideene og normene som finnes i *BlimE*-kampanjen på ulike måter, og bidrar dermed til konstruksjonen av en viss type barndom. Analysen avdekker videre hvordan inkludering, viktigheten av vennskap, fellesskapsfølelse og å være respektfull og tolerant overfor forskjeller og mangfold er sentrale verdier som formidles av *BlimE*-kampanjen. Disse verdiene må sees i sammenheng med sentrale demokratiske verdier som finnes i det norske samfunnet. Dermed bidrar på den ene siden kampanjer som *BlimE* til å konstruere visse typer barndom, vennskapsidealer og medborgerskap. På den annen side spiller barns tolkninger også en rolle for hvordan barndom, vennskap og medborgerskap konstrueres og praktiseres.

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction

While working in various kindergartens in Norway, I came across the *BlimE* campaign. The *BlimE* (in English: join in) campaign is an annual friendship campaign hosted by the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK), which aims at conveying positive values and attitudes toward children through song and dance (NRK, 2021b). While I knew about the campaign before, it was the first time I experienced how the children were engaged in the campaign by doing the dance moves and singing along. However, the impression that stuck with me the most was how dancing and singing to the *BlimE* campaign always seemed like a very social and joyful activity. Those experiences also brought back memories of my own childhood. I especially recall the song *Glow* by Madcon from 2010 and their flashmob movement that spread across Norway and the rest of Europe. I remember sending in a video of me and my friend dancing with hopes of being a part of Madcon's *Glow* performance during the 2010 Eurovision Song Contest in Oslo. My interest in song and dance was a constant throughout my childhood, and I always felt engaged by those kinds of campaigns and initiatives.

As I have become familiarized with the field of childhood studies, I have gained knowledge about different academic perspectives that have provided interesting insights when studying *BlimE.* The emphasis in childhood studies on acknowledging children as social actors who actively participate and share knowledge about their own everyday lives inspired me specifically to research how a campaign such as BlimE is interpreted and experienced by the children who are the campaign's target group. In this regard, childhood studies inspired me to research the phenomenon primarily from the children's perspective, within theoretical perspectives from this research field where children are the central subject. My interest from my childhood for media campaigns and social media in general, combined with my interest in the field of childhood studies, thus affected my engagement in writing about the *BlimE* campaign in this thesis.

This thesis seeks to explore children's interpretations of the friendship campaign *BlimE.* Insight and knowledge about children's interpretations and experiences of the *BlimE* campaign are explored through participant observations and focus group interviews of children aged 8 to 12 years old. Furthermore, a qualitative content analysis was conducted of the *BlimE* music video from 2021 to discover which ideas and norms are central to the *BlimE* campaign. This research is theoretically positioned within the field of childhood studies and emphasizes children as social actors that actively participate in the ongoing constructions of childhood.

1.1. Context of the topic

A 'good' childhood is emphasized and valued in Norwegian society. Equality, sameness, and individuality are values that shape an egalitarian society, which describes Norwegian

society (Gullestad, 2002). Norwegian ideas about children and childhood are thus centered around egalitarian values such as individuality, autonomy, and freedom (Nilsen, 2008). Being able to engage in free play with peers outdoors and having a stable and safe environment have often been pointed out by researchers as essential in 'good' Norwegian childhoods (Gullestad, 1997; Nilsen, 2008). Furthermore, the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into the Norwegian domestic legal framework has had an impact on children as bearers of rights in Norway and has consequentially contributed to a change in children's status as citizens (Hanson & Nieuwenhuys, 2013; Nilsen, 2008). As earlier declarations on the rights of children have emphasized children as objects of human rights with a focus on protection and provision, the UNCRC has led to an increased focus on children's participation. Thus, children are not viewed as 'human becomings' but 'human beings' that have a right to participate and be heard in all matters concerning them (Kjørholt, 2010; Liebel, 2012).

An essential aspect of contemporary Norwegian childhood is the increased institutionalization of childhood. Children spend a lot of time in institutions, such as at school and at *Skolefritidsordningen* (SFO), a municipal before-and-after school care program (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2021). These institutions have a civilizing function, where their role is to actively shape well-functioning citizens in line with ideas that are central in Norwegian society (Gilliam & Gulløv, 2016). As the school has become an important institution contributing to the construction and re-constructions of ideas about children and childhood, one could argue that campaigns aiming at influencing specific values and behaviors also contribute to the ongoing constructions of childhood. Particularly, when campaigns are connected to an institutionalized setting, such as the school, children are met with certain social norms and behaviors that they interpret and adapt to various extents.

Another crucial contextual aspect of this thesis is The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK). The NRK is a public broadcasting service with certain statutes and legislations that provide an outline for its democratic mission. NRK Super, which is NRK's channel aimed specifically at children, also follows the overall broadcasting mission of NRK (NRK, n.d.-b). Moreover, in 2010, NRK Super launched the *BlimE* campaign. The *BlimE* campaign is an annual occurrence and describes itself as a friendship campaign that aims at promoting values of inclusion, friendship, and belonging. The campaign has enjoyed increased popularity over the years, with 80% of all children between 6 to 12 years old participating in 2020 (NRK, 2020a). Essential to the *BlimE* campaign is the new song and accompanying dance released each year. There is also an annual *BlimE*-day, in which children from schools all over Norway gather outside in their courtyards and perform the dance together (NRK, 2018, 2020a).

As the campaign has gotten a prominent place in Norwegian elementary schools, both NRK Super and the *BlimE* campaign can be seen as civilizing projects aimed at children. According to NRK and my personal experiences, *BlimE* is actively used at schools to promote inclusion, friendship, and belonging. As Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) emphasize, schools can be considered civilizing institutions. As I will explore in this thesis, media institutions such as the NRK and campaigns such as *BlimE* can also be viewed as civilizing actors in cooperation with other institutions, such as the school and SFO.

1.2. Research problem

The overall aim of the current thesis is to explore how children and the *BlimE* campaign contribute to ongoing constructions of childhood, friendship, and 'good citizenship'. The research explores the overall aim through participant observations, focus group interviews, and a content analysis of the music video *Dynamite*. By combining the three methods, the intention is to gain a richer and more nuanced understanding of how the *BlimE* campaign and children contribute to the ongoing constructions of childhood, friendship, and 'good citizenship'. To explore the overall aim of the study, three research questions were formulated:

The first research question is: *What ideas and norms do children draw on when interpreting the BlimE campaign?* I have conducted six focus group interviews with children from 8 to 12 years old to answer the question. The question seeks to discover which ideas and norms found in the *BlimE* campaign the children draw on when making meaning and interpreting the campaign, as well as ideas and norms found in Norwegian society.

The second research question is: *How do children interpret the purpose and effectiveness of the BlimE campaign?* The second research question is also based on the focus group interviews which were conducted. The question seeks to investigate how children talk about their experiences with the *BlimE* campaign, and how they interpret the campaign's effectiveness.

Lastly, the third research question is: *What ideas and norms about childhood and citizenship can be found in the BlimE campaign?* To answer the third research question, I have conducted a content analysis of the *BlimE* music video from 2021, named *Dynamitt* (in English Dynamite). The content analysis provides a deeper understanding of values promoted by the *BlimE* campaign and contributes to a more nuanced analysis.

1.3. A 'gap' in research

As part of my preparations for this thesis, I searched for previous research that focused on children's perspectives on media campaigns that promote certain behaviors and attitudes. However, there was little research to find about campaigns specifically similar to *BlimE.* Most of the literature I found relating to such campaigns was either about prevention, such as preventing children from smoking and drinking alcohol (Mold & Elizabeth, 2019; Shahwan et al., 2016) or focusing on health issues, like obesity and promoting physical activity (Olesen et al., 2016). Literature relating to friendship and campaigns to encourage friendship, often revolved around anti-bullying research and national prevention efforts (Bryn, 2011; Edgerton et al., 2016).

While there is limited research on phenomena similar to the *BlimE* campaign, I found interesting research on aspects relevant to this research on *BlimE.* Lødding and Vibe

(2010) find that most anti-bullying campaigns and programs center around the prevention of bullying and aim at developing a better school environment. They point out that 64% of all elementary schools in Norway have participated in or enforced an anti-bullying program. However, as previous research has shown, anti-bullying programs and bullying campaigns have had little demonstrable effect (Lødding & Vibe, 2010). The goal of these programs or campaigns might be the same as *BlimE*'s goal, but they have a different method and focus in achieving these goals. *BlimE* stands out in this regard, as the campaign's focus is to promote values and attitudes that will implicitly work towards a goal of decreased exclusion and bullying.

Helgeland and Lund (2016) explore children's experiences and understanding of bullying in kindergarten. They build on a definition of bullying provided by Dorte Marie Søndergaard, who describes bullying as a reaction to social insecurity and relates bullying to the process of inclusion and exclusion. Helgeland and Lund (2016) elaborate on the tensions between inclusion and exclusion. Results from their qualitative study with children indicated that the best thing about kindergarten was to play and make friends, while the worst thing about kindergarten was being excluded from play. The emphasis on the process of inclusion and exclusion resonates with some of the values and norms found in *BlimE*, where the idea is to include others in play and activities and feel a sense of belonging.

Furthermore, Søndergaard and Hansen (2018) discuss how bullying is a socially enacted phenomenon. They emphasize a longing for belonging and how it intertwines with bullying practices. Longing for belonging can be viewed as an individual's desire to become a part of a group or community. In order to protect that community or group, a member may enact bullying of others who long to belong. Thus, engaging in exclusion practices to maintain groups may increase bullying. This research can be seen in relation to the *BlimE* campaign and its aim of building an inclusive community between children. While the campaign differentiates itself from anti-bullying campaigns by calling itself a friendship campaign, bullying is still an implicit factor. As the focus of *BlimE* is on inclusion, exclusion also becomes an implicit factor. Therefore, fear of being rejected or excluded can be a present factor in children participating in the campaign.

Through my search of literature related to campaigns such as *BlimE* and children's interpretations of them, there was gap in the literature. Thus, the current thesis can contribute insight into campaigns promoting certain values and norms and how children interpret and position themselves within this initiative. Furthermore, by exploring media as an institution closely connected to school, this thesis can contribute to increased knowledge about how media, such as the NRK and school, are institutions that work closely together in a civilizing project.

1.4. Outline of the thesis

The thesis consists of eight chapters, the first chapter being the current introductory chapter. I have in this chapter introduced the context of the research, presented the

research problem and questions, and provided background and actualization for the thesis.

The second chapter provides a thorough outline of the background of this thesis. It presents a brief overview of Norwegian society, focusing on central values and norms, and views on Norwegian children and childhood. Public broadcasting services will be presented in connection to the NRK and its democratic responsibilities as a public broadcasting service. Moreover, NRK's channel aimed at children, NRK Super, will be presented while touching upon the history of children's television in Norway. Lastly, the *BlimE* campaign will be discussed, emphasizing its development, values, and methods.

The third chapter explores the theoretical framework that has been used in this research. First, a general outline of childhood studies will be presented, where I will draw on two perspectives within the field, namely a social constructionist perspective and an actor-oriented perspective. Furthermore, the chapter will explore issues related to children's voices and elaborate on a discursive approach to children's experiences. Lastly, the chapter will provide a theoretical account of citizenship and the concept of civilizing.

In the fourth chapter, I will discuss and reflect upon the methodological choices made in the thesis. The different sections of the chapter will present the fieldwork process, including gaining access to the participants, entering the field, and conducting participant observations and focus group discussions. In addition, ethical considerations connected to the research will be discussed. Lastly, the process of producing and interpreting the data will be elaborated on.

The fifth chapter is the first of the three analysis chapters. In this chapter, I will discuss the ideas and norms found in the *BlimE* campaign through a content analysis of the music video *Dynamite* from the 2021 *BlimE* campaign. *The sixth chapter* is the second analysis chapter and will explore children's interpretations of the *BlimE* campaign. The chapter reflects upon children as citizens and how NRK Super, the school, and SFO are civilizing institutions, while the *BlimE* campaign is a civilizing initiative.

The seventh chapter is the last analysis chapter. It will reflect upon children's experiences and interpretations of the effectiveness of the *BlimE* campaign, where the participants point out both strengths and weaknesses within the campaign. Furthermore, the chapter will focus on *BlimE* as a tool for empowerment that could be used as a resource to master the participants' everyday lives and as a potential source for disempowerment.

The final chapter of this thesis is chapter eight, where I will summarize the findings and main conclusions of this research, point out strengths and weaknesses in the thesis, as well as provide suggestions for further research and practice.

2. Background

To gain an understanding of the research topic, it is pivotal to know the societal context of the topic. This chapter outlines a general historical overview of Norway, pointing to various values and norms found in Norwegian society. Childhood in Norway will also be discussed, emphasizing the Welfare State and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and the Norwegian educational system. Furthermore, the chapter will give a historical overview of the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) while focusing on its various statutes and responsibilities due to its position as a public broadcasting service. Moreover, the chapter will explore NRK's content aimed at children and provide a thorough outline of the *BlimE* campaign.

2.1. Norway: A brief introduction

Norway is a country most known for its nature, mountains, and woods. It has throughout history been viewed as a fishing nation, mainly based on the country's far-reaching coast by the Northern Atlantic Ocean. Today, however, Norway is often depicted as a rich and resourceful country, which is a significant contrast from being one of the poorest countries in Western Europe during the 19th century. A reason for this was the discovery of large oil and gas reservoirs in the North Sea during the 1970s, resulting in Norway flourishing economically (Heidar, 2001). With only 5,5 million inhabitants, Norway is the least populated of the Scandinavian countries (Heidar, 2001; SSB, 2021). For 400 years, Denmark ruled Norway, which resulted in the Norwegian constitution in 1814. Following the Napoleonic Wars, Norway was in a union with Sweden for almost 100 years until it finally gained its independence in 1905. Consequently, Norway has been viewed as a relatively young nation (Gullestad, 1997).

When discussing Norway as a society, researchers have often mentioned the concept of egalitarian individualism. Egalitarian individualism is a concept that has frequently been used to characterize the Western world. However, researchers have found that this concept is particularly emphasized in the Nordic countries (Eriksen & Neumann, 2011; Gullestad, 2002). As Kjørholt (2002) points out, egalitarian individualism, on the one hand, emphasizes self-determination and self-realization, while on the other hand, it emphasizes collectivism and equality. Values of equality, sameness, and individuality are therefore central concepts found in an egalitarian society. Togetherness and community based on shared values and ideals are particularly valued in Norway. However, individualism is also a central aspect, where people strive to have their identity confirmed (Gullestad, 2002). Furthermore, Eriksen and Neumann (2011) point out that while individualism is a central value in Norwegian society, where individuals have a responsibility for their own lives, they also carry a responsibility to confirm and meet their goals in unison with the other individuals in their society.

2.1.1. Childhood in Norway

The rise of the welfare state has had a profound impact on childhood in Norway. In the 19th century, childhood was often defined as a working childhood. Children contributed to their household by working and performing various chores, though the amount of work varied from child to child, based on their environment, gender, status, etc. Work was seen as an essential part of childhood, where children would learn valuable skills that would be useful when entering adult life (Korsvold, 2021). However, as the welfare state developed, several processes of institutionalization came to be. The school became a prominent factor in the institutionalization of childhood, with growing participation in schools and a reduced necessity for working children. Ideals of equality and social justice were central in constructing the Scandinavian welfare model (Korsvold, 2021). Hence, as Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) argue, the institutionalization of childhood brought with it new relations between families and children. From being working children only sent to school due to necessity to children spending a big part of their day in an institutionalized structure. Institutions such as kindergartens or schools are a big part of children's lives, and it is argued that these institutions also have a civilizing aspect. Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) connect the concept of civilizing to various ideals and practices around upbringing. Their argument centers around institutions such as school and their part in how they teach children certain behaviors and conducts in order to become a part of the civilized society.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has been significant in shaping views on children and childhood in contemporary Norway. The creation of the UNCRC brought the recognition of children as holders of rights and has played a part in the development of the Norwegian welfare state (Hanson & Nieuwenhuys, 2013; Nilsen, 2008). Furthermore, the UNCRC states that children are independent individuals with the same rights as adults, in addition to having special rights based on their status as children (Kjørholt, 2008). The UNCRC was passed by the UN Assembly in 1989 and consists of 54 articles that cover various aspects of children's rights, focusing on economic, civil, cultural, and social rights for children and young people. The rights are often divided into the three P's, namely protection, participation, and provision rights (Kjørholt, 2010; Tisdall & Punch, 2012). While earlier declarations on the rights of children, such as the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the child, emphasized children as objects of human rights, the UNCRC emphasized children as a subject of human rights, where the right to participation is an central difference (Liebel, 2012). Participation rights are especially represented through article 12, which states that children have a right to be heard in all matters that affect them. Thus, the right to be heard entails that children have a right to participate and have an influence in their own lives (Kjørholt, 2010)

In 2003, the Norwegian government incorporated the UNCRC into its domestic legal framework, consequently shaping law and policy in Norway (Nilsen, 2008). Based on article 12 in the UNCRC, article 104 in the Norwegian Constitution emphasizes the right to be heard:

Children have the right to respect for their human dignity. They have the right to be heard in questions that concern them, and due weight shall be attached to their views in accordance with their age and development.

For actions and decisions that affect children, the best interests of the child shall be a fundamental consideration.

Children have the right to protection of their personal integrity. The authorities of the state shall create conditions that facilitate the child's development, including ensuring that the child is provided with the necessary economic, social and health security, preferably within their own family (Grunnloven, 1814, §104)

Article 104 in the Norwegian Constitution emphasizes that children have a right to be heard in questions that concern them and that their opinions and views should be taken into account in accordance with the children's age and development (Grunnloven, 1814, §104). The UNCRC has led to a greater focus on children's participation, where autonomy and self-determination are viewed as important in their participation. Moreover, the right to participation has been used to strengthen children's position in society as citizens through strengthening their agency by including children in the social structures of society and viewing them as active subjects (Kjørholt, 2008).

A' good' and 'proper' childhood is often highlighted when discussing Norwegian childhoods (Gullestad, 1997; Nilsen, 2008). In the Norwegian context of what is perceived as a 'good' childhood, freedom, autonomy, and playing with peers are promoted (Kjørholt, 2008; Nilsen, 2008). Nilsen (2008) elaborates on the construction of Norwegian childhood, pointing out how it is intertwined with the values of being outdoors in nature. The outdoors has also been strongly associated with children's free play, where children engage in self-governed play with each other. Gullestad (1997) also argues for the importance of safety and security (*trygghet*) in Norwegian childhoods. While safety and security are essential, the Norwegian term focuses more on stability and certain kinds of protection rather than sheltering children in protected areas. This can be connected to childhood being institutionalized, where children are taught to be autonomous and independent. At the same time there is a civilizing aspect where children are supposed to act and behave in certain ways in order to be good citizens that can positively contribute to society (Gilliam & Gulløv, 2016).

2.1.2. The Norwegian Education System

In Norway, children and young people have a right and obligation to complete primary and lower secondary education. The Norwegian education system consists of ten years of compulsory schooling divided into first to seventh grade, namely primary school, and eight to tenth grade, namely lower secondary school (The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education, n.d.). The school system is built upon a unified system that provides equal education for all children (The Ministry of Education and Research, 2020). Furthermore, most schools in Norway are run by the municipality. They are free of charge, thus being a part of the welfare state (The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education, n.d.).

The objectives and principles for teaching are laid down in the core curriculum and present the fundamental approach for teaching and training responsibilities. The core curriculum emphasizes values of education and training that are central in Norwegian society. The values in the core curriculum point out the importance of inclusion, equality, respect for differences and diversities, developing curiosity and urges to explore, respecting nature, and being aware of the environment. Lastly, the values emphasize democracy and participation, drawing on the ideals of a democratic society, where all citizens have equal rights, and should be able to participate in all matters that affect them (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017).

While not part of the primary education, *Skolefritidsordning* (SFO), a before-and-after school program, is also frequently used in Norway. The SFO is required to provide children with a place to play, participate in various activities, while simultaneously providing care and oversight of the children both before and after school. All municipalities in Norway are required to offer the SFO program to children in the first to fourth grade and for children with special needs from the first to seventh grade (The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education, n.d.) As SFO is part of the municipality's responsibility, it is thus also a part of the welfare state.

2.2. The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK)

The following section will present the origins of public broadcasting services (PBS) and their mission and responsibilities. Secondly, the section will explain public broadcasting services in the Norwegian context, focusing on the NRK as a public broadcaster and its responsibilities concerning statutes and regulations. Lastly, the section will elaborate on children's television in Norway before discussing NRK Super, a channel launched by the NRK to provide content for children under the age of 12.

2.2.1. Origins of public broadcasting

Before discussing the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK), there is a need to understand and define public broadcasting services (PBS). While public broadcasting services have been presented and structured in various ways, McQuail (2010) points out some fundamental similarities. The services are often created as systems bound by law, and the public generally funds the public broadcasting services, commonly through a license paid by each household. In addition, McQuail (2010) addresses the responsibilities of a public broadcasting service, which mainly are to serve and promote public interests through various means. The origin of this concept can be traced back to the 1920s, with the establishment of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) as a publicly owned corporation. John Reith was the first director-general for the BBC and defined a set of core responsibilities for Britain's public broadcasting service to "entertain, inform and educate" (Holtz-Bacha & Norris, 2001; McClean, 2008; Teer-Tomaselli, 2015). Reith argued that broadcasting should be used to promote civilization, culture, and the democratic ideals of Britain to shape society actively (Teer-Tomaselli, 2015). In light of this mandate, public broadcasting services could also be called civilizing institutions,

aiming to promote ideals connected to civilizing. McQuail (2010) further presents a list of the main goals for public broadcasting services. While the list contains several points, "diversity in providing for all main tastes, interests, and needs as well as matching the full range of opinions and beliefs", "provide balanced and impartial information on issues of conflict" and "having concern for the national culture, language and identity" (p. 178) summarizes these main goals and can be seen in connection to Reith's core responsibilities.

2.2.2. Public broadcasting in the Norwegian context

Public broadcasting has been, and still is, prominent in Norway. Public broadcasting in Norway started with privately-owned radio stations in the 1920s. Radio was a new and intriguing medium, as prior to the radio, there were no mass media to communicate information to a large percentage of the population (NRK, 2020b). The Norwegian government realized that the private sector did not have the capacity to offer radio services throughout the whole country, resulting in a decision to make all public broadcasting state-owned in 1933 (Puijk, 2016). Consequently, NRK had a monopoly on all radio and television broadcasting. While television broadcasts did not air until 1960, the NRK has financed its television broadcasts through a license and has never run advertisements on its channels (Puijk, 2016). The arrangement with NRK's monopoly over public broadcasting lasted a couple of decades, though it was inevitable that other corporations and people wished to broadcast radio and television in Norway. Therefore, in the 1980s, various commercial and privately owned radio- and TV stations appeared, both local and international (NRK, 2020b). The sudden surge of new competitors forced NRK to envision new ways and strategies for keeping its audience. Over the following decades, the NRK released several new radio- and TV channels, resulting in three TV channels (NRK1, NRK2, and NRK3/NRK Super) and several new radio channels (NRK, 2020b).

2.2.3. Statutes and legislation

The main aim of the NRK is to provide content from a broad specter of themes and genres in order to contribute positively to society (NRK, 2020a). Due to NRK being a public broadcasting service with a publicly funded license, the Norwegian government has ensured that NRK follows certain statutes and laws. The Norwegian Ministry of Culture adopts the statutes and legislation, while the Norwegian Media Authority reviews the yearly report on how NRK has achieved its goals according to the written statutes (NRK, 2019b). There are 52 statutes, where 12 to 52 describe the NRK-poster, covering NRK's broadcasting mission. A handful of statues are selected and presented as an example of NRK's broadcasting mission:

§12 The purpose of NRK shall be to fulfill democratic, social and cultural needs in society.

§13 NRK shall safeguard freedom of expression and conditions of expression for citizens. NRK shall be editorially independent and be balanced over time. NRK shall contribute to promoting the public conversation and contribute to the entire population receiving sufficient information to be able to be actively involved in

democratic processes.

§14 NRK shall have an independent responsibility for contributing to the
Norwegian media diversity (regionally and nationally).

§ 16 NRK shall strengthen the Norwegian and Sami languages, and strengthen
Norwegian and Sami identity and culture. A large proportion of the offer must
have Norwegian roots and reflect the cultural diversity of the people. NRK shall
have daily broadcasts for the Sami population. NRK shall have programs for
national and linguistic minorities. NRK shall disseminate content from the Nordic
countries and contribute to knowledge about Nordic social conditions,
culture and language (NRK, 2019b).

The statutes written above exemplify NRK's democratic mission. Statute 12 centers
around notions of fulfilling certain democratic, social, and cultural aspects in society.
Furthermore, statute 13 emphasizes the importance of freedom of expression, a central
value in Norwegian society. Lastly, statutes 14 and 16 center around Norway being a
diverse and tolerant society and emphasize how it is NRK's mission to contribute to
various programs and information covering the diversity in society. Moreover, the
statutes draw similarities to Reith's core responsibilities to entertain, educate and inform.
While the statutes are reviewed yearly and changed according to societal changes and
changes in media consumption, NRK also has a long term strategy with the main goals of
"strengthening and developing the democracy", "gathering and engaging everyone that
lives in Norway", and "being a world-class publicist and content producer" (NRK, 2020a).
Thus, NRK can be viewed as a powerful, influential resource, with both responsibilities
and visions for public broadcasting in Norway.

2.2.4.   NRK Super: Children's television

Enli (2013) emphasizes how Nordic public broadcasting channels historically have had
less focus on creating entertainment aimed at children, focusing first and foremost on
entertainment aimed at adults. This could be due to the Nordic view on children and
childhood, which often values being outside in nature and engaging in play with peers,
consequentially spending less time indoors watching TV. However, children's television
has had a prominent history within NRK. Before airing television programs in Norway,
radio programs explicitly aimed at children and youth were a popular installment (Bakøy,
2002). The launching of children's television was, however, a highly debated issue. On
the one side, people were worried and concerned about children's passivity, as children
were viewed as a particularly influential and vulnerable group (Bakøy, 2002; Enli, 2013).
On the other side, the launch of television was viewed positively based on its position as
a communicative force, which had the potential to reach children in new ways (Bakøy,
2002). Furthermore, the broadcasting service aimed at providing children with
educational programs, which would contribute to new methods for learning and
development for children (Enli, 2013).

In the first years after launching NRK's television program, programs aimed at children
were only aired once a week. The first program was called *Kosekroken* (in English: The
Cuddle Corner) and aired for 20 minutes every Friday at 6 a.m (Hake, 2006). The airtime
increased over the following years, and in the 1970s, children's television aired all days
except Fridays. By the 1980s, children's television was aired every day of the week

(Bakøy, 2002). One could argue that one of the main goals of airing children's television programs in the 1960s was to shape children to become good citizens. Lauritz Johnson was the first to head the children and youth division at NRK starting in 1960 and argued for three pillars of television programs, namely enlightenment, experience, and upbringing (Hake, 2006). As Teer-Tomaselli (2015) points out, the mantra for public broadcasting services was to entertain, educate and inform. Parallels can therefore be drawn between Johnson's pillars and the overall mantra of public broadcasting. There was an emphasis on raising and cultivating children, where children were taught certain knowledge, attitudes and values (Hake, 2006).

Furthermore, with change and increased competition in media, as well as the world becoming more globalized, the PBS channels had to rethink their children's television strategies. Disney Channel had become the most popular children's channel in Norway, which threatened public broadcasting and its values. As an alternative to the global niche channels, NRK released its new children's channel, NRK Super, on the 1st of December 2007 (Enli, 2013). The channel aimed at creating content for children between 2 and 12 years old (NRK, 2007). However, in 2019, the channel broadened its target group to include one-year-old children (NRK, 2019a).

The overall aim was to create a new channel dedicated to children and turn the public broadcasting service into a multi-platform environment that provided children with content on TV, the internet, and radio (Enli, 2013). Thus, NRK Super offers various genres and themes, focusing on entertainment, humor, serious content, drama, show, consumer material, music, quiz shows, and documentaries (NRK, 2007). The channel grew rapidly during its first year and according to NRK became a viable alternative to global niche channels such as Disney Channel (NRK, 2008).

As part of the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation, NRK Super has an obligation to follow the different statutes that shape NRK's broadcasting mission. In addition to the statutes mentioned earlier, there are some specific statutes that concern children.

> §22 NRK shall promote children's right to freedom of expression and information, and shield children from harmful forms of content. NRK shall have Norwegian speaking programs for children under 12 years of age, regular Norwegian speaking programs for young people, and regular programs for children and young people in the Sami languages.
>
> §34 NRK shall have daily Norwegian speaking programs for children under 12 years of age.
>
> §50 NRK's services on the internet, collected in live images, sound and text, shall at least contain a continuously updated offer of:
> - Self-developed content for children and young people (NRK, 2020a)

The statutes presented reflect rights that are found in the UNCRC. Statute 22 draws on article 13 and 17 in the UNCRC, where article 13 state that children have the right to freedom of expression and access to all kinds of information. Furthermore, article 17 emphasizes that children should have access to information from various sources, including the media, and that the government should protect children from harmful content (UNCRC, 1989). Based on these statutes and NRK's overall broadcasting mission, NRK Super is a channel that should showcase the cultural and geographical diversity in

Norway and promote quality content and stories that are anchored in the Norwegian culture and language, which is in accordance with the overall PBS rhetoric (NRK, n.d.-b).

2.3.   The *BlimE* Campaign

The following section will try to find a suitable definition for the *BlimE* campaign, considering the variety of campaigns that exist. Secondly, the *BlimE* campaign will be described, from its development and background to the various methods the campaign utilized to reach out to its audience. Lastly, the new initiative #SayHi, which is a further development of the *BlimE*-campaign and aims to create an international friendship campaign, will be described.

2.3.1.   *BlimE* as a communication campaign

The *BlimE* campaign defines itself as a friendship campaign, and aims at promoting positive values and attitudes (NRK, 2020a, 2021b). Thus, I wanted to find a suitable term that would describe *BlimE* as a campaign. While searching for a definition, I found a range of relevant terms that could be applied to describe the *BlimE* campaign, such as information campaigns (Perloff, 2003), awareness campaigns (Staksrud & Ólafsson, 2013) and public communication campaigns (Atkin & Salmon, 2010; Rice & Atkin, 2001). Moreover, McQuail (2010) emphasizes that there are many types of campaigns, emphasizing public information campaigns, election campaigns, and advocacy campaigns. They are often widespread and differ concerning their aim, which norms and rules they follow, the degree of social support they acquire, and which methods and strategies they use to promote themselves. However, the various campaigns also have some commonalities, aiming to direct, reinforce, and activate tendencies towards socially approved objects.

Atkin and Salmon (2010) examine the three basic communication processes that campaigns employ to reach their desired outcome: awareness, instruction, and persuasion. Awareness messages tell people what to do, aiming to create an interest or concern for a subject, to motivate the public further to seek information and knowledge about the topic. In addition, Staksrud and Ólafsson (2013) describe how awareness campaigns aimed at children typically seek to inform them about appropriate behavior considered 'good' or 'safe' and discourage behavior that is 'risky' or 'not wanted'. Moreover, instruction messages seek to inform the public about how to do something, where the message aims at educating people. Lastly, persuasive messages aim to convince the audience to adopt a particular behavior or attitude, often through increased knowledge or beliefs.

Perloff (2003) further discusses campaigns as a measure of persuasion that relies on argumentation, sloganeering, and emotional appeals to shape social attitudes through communication. Furthermore, he presents a broad definition of communication campaigns:

(a) purposive attempts; (b) to inform, persuade, or motivate behavior changes; (c) in a relatively well-defined and large audience; (d) generally for noncommercial benefits to the individual and/or society at large; (e) typically within a given time period; (f) by means of organized communication activities involving mass media; and (g) often complemented by interpersonal support (Rice & Atkin, 2002, as cited in Perloff, 2003, p. 304).

While trying to find a suitable definition for *BlimE* as a campaign, the definition presented above encompasses both the aims of a communications campaign and the goal of shaping or motivating the public to change or create a specific behavior or attitude. Thus, this definition of a communication campaign is adequate to describe *BlimE* as a phenomenon. It encompasses communication strategies found in campaigns and aims at shaping or motivating behaviors or attitudes.

2.3.2.   *BlimE*: Background and development

NRK Super launched the attitude campaign *BlimE*! (Translation: join in!) in Autumn of 2010 (NRK, 2010). The campaign's overall aim is to promote positive values and attitudes rooted in friendship and inclusion and inspire children to care for each other, thus not only defined as an communication campaign but a friendship campaign as well (NRK, 2021b). The concept of a 'friendship campaign' appeared after NRK Super launched in 2007. The channel quickly grew and became essential for many children. The thought behind the campaign was to use the influential power the channel gained to promote positive actions. The idea was first to launch an anti-bullying campaign. However, instead of focusing on what children should not do, the campaign would encourage children to engage in positive actions, such as saying hi to someone (personal communication NRK Super, 2021[1]). Thus, since the campaign's launch in 2010, the slogan for the campaign has been "Say hi, be a friend, join in!" (NRK, 2012).

The main message of the 2021 *BlimE* campaign is to trust that you are good enough as you are (NRK, 2021b). Moreover, the campaign is inspired by the core curriculum's values and principles for primary and secondary education. The values and principles promote friendship to create a sense of belonging. The core curriculum also highlights recognition and trust as part of making children value themselves and others (NRK, 2021b). Furthermore, the principles emphasize that understanding what others think is an important skill in creating friendships between pupils (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2017). Thus, the aim is to respect diversity and recognize that everyone has a place in the community.

2.3.3.   The song and dance

NRK Super uses various methods for promoting the *BlimE* campaign, the most visible one being the annual *BlimE*-song and accompanying dance. The idea for the *BlimE* dance was inspired by a performance at the Eurovision Song Contest in 2010, where the Norwegian duo Madcon performed the song Glow with an accompanying flash mob dance. By witnessing the unity between the various countries shown doing the flash mob dance, the

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[1] Facts-based conversation with representatives from NRK Super

idea of creating a dance to strengthen classroom environments and create memories arose (personal communication with NRK Super, 2021).

The song from 2021 was called *Dynamitt* (translation: dynamite), and according to NRK aims to promote the message of being good enough as you are (NRK, 2021b). The song often carries the campaign's underlying message, which is friendship, inclusion, and community. The song changes each year, with a new Norwegian celebrity fronting the campaign, ranging from the popular music-duo Madcon in 2016 to Nicolay Ramm in 2021, most known for being a Norwegian comedian (NRK, n.d.-a).

The *BlimE* campaign is aimed at children in elementary schools. However, both younger and older children are participating in the campaign. When practicing the dance at school, the intention is to strengthen the classroom environment and create good memories with the children's peers (NRK, 2021b). The song and dance are normally released at the beginning of the school year. Later in the autumn, there is an official *BlimE*-week, with children singing and dancing together at a given time and date, usually a Friday at 12 (personal communication with NRK Super, 2021). The annual event has become a occasion for children to gather, where they collectively sing and dance to the current year's *BlimE*-song (NRK, 2018).

2.3.4.   The website

Another important outlet for the campaign is the website launched in 2010, which is a section of NRK Super's main website (NRK, 2010). The website showcases various clips from the *BlimE* campaign and is a place where children can interact and engage with the material and each other through comments. NRK Super moderates the comments on the website to protect children from harmful content and comments that violate individual privacy (NRK, 2021a). On the website, the children can watch the various *BlimE* dances and music videos, tutorials, and clips of other children dancing the *BlimE* dance. The children can also send video clips of themselves dancing to the website. When the dance is performed together on the given Friday, many schools and kindergartens send in a video clip of the children dancing together, in hopes of having their school or kindergarten be featured in the main video showing children from various schools dancing. However, the videos that are not chosen to ba a part of the main video, can still be found on the NRK Super website (personal communication with NRK Super, 2021).

2.3.5.   International movement: #Sayhi!

The Eurovision Kids Friendship Campaign arose in cooperation with the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), who also organizes the Eurovision Song Contest. In 2020, the campaign expanded its horizon through the international *#Sayhi!* campaign. The aim of the international campaign is related to *BlimE's* aim, where the goal is to encourage children to spread inclusivity while embracing friendship and diversity. The background for the campaign stems from the Norwegian *BlimE* campaign and draws inspiration from

the Flemish campaign *Move against bullying*[2]. The campaign receives the theme song from NRK, which in 2021 was *Dynamite,* and the accompanying choreography (EBU, 2021).

Furthermore, the campaign states that only members of EBU may participate in the campaign. Those who choose to participate must translate the song to their respective language and create a video from their country (EBU, 2021). In 2020, 10 European countries and Japan participated in the campaign. Many of the broadcasters expressed that they were satisfied with the results of the campaign and wished to participate again in 2021. Consequently, 10 European countries participated in the 2021 #SayHi-campaign (EBU, 2021). *BlimE* becoming an international movement is an exciting aspect of the campaign, as it sheds light on how inclusion and the creation of social relationships are central in all children's everyday lives.

2.4.　Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have presented a brief history of Norway and discussed Norway as an egalitarian society, where certain values and norms are viewed as central. Furthermore, an outline of Norwegian childhoods has been described in connection to the development of the welfare state and the implementation of the UNCRC into Norway's domestic legal framework. This has, in effect, contributed to the contemporary Norwegian childhood. The chapter has elaborated on public broadcasting services, with an emphasis on the NRK and its democratic responsibilities. Lastly, a thorough outline of the history of children's television in Norway has been provided, leading up to the *BlimE* campaign, emphasizing its development, values, and methods of promoting itself. In the next chapter, I will elaborate on the theoretical framework of this thesis.

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[2] *Move against bullying* is a campaign hosted by the Flemish public broadcaster Ketnet. More information at: https://www.vrt.be/nl/over-de-vrt/nieuws/2020/02/02/ketnet-doet-opnieuw-move-tegen-pesten/

3. Theoretical Framework

This chapter will provide an overview of the theoretical framework for the thesis. I will outline the 'new' social studies of children and childhood, which provides the theoretical backdrop for my thesis. Furthermore, what has been described as two 'main branches' of childhood studies will be discussed, namely social constructionism and an actor-oriented perspective, which will be used in the analysis chapters. The chapter will then give a theoretical account around issues of the notion of children's voices and emphasize how discursive approaches to children's experiences are fruitful to understanding children's experiences and perspectives. Lastly, theoretical accounts of children's citizenship will be discussed, and the concept of civilizing will be discussed.

3.1. The new social studies of children and childhood

Theoretical perspectives from the field of childhood studies are central to the current master thesis, and the following sections will provide important theoretical background to the thesis. Originally the research field was known as the 'new' social studies of children and childhood and the sociology of children and childhood. However, as the multidisciplinary character of the field evolved over the years, the term childhood studies has become more frequent in describing the field (Abebe et al., 2021). Hence, I will use the term childhood studies in the current thesis. The field emerged during the 1980s and 90s as a critique directed toward traditional research that dominated the understanding of children and childhood. A central claim within childhood studies has been that children were a marginalized group in society, often being viewed as 'human becomings' rather than 'human beings' (Tisdall & Punch, 2012). Furthermore, sociologists argued that anthropological research ignored children's agency by focusing on how children would be socialized into adult culture rather than seeking to understand children's own peer cultures (Hammersley, 2017). Therefore, sociologists of children and childhood argued for the study of children in their own right, where children are seen as social actors that can actively participate and share knowledge about their own lives (Alanen, 2001).

Critiques were mainly centered around developmental psychology, anthropology, and sociology. These fields were critiqued as presenting children as incompetent beings often compared to adults, who were recognized as fully developed human beings (Prout & James, 2015). The rejection of developmental psychology was heavily based on Jean Piaget's work, and critiques centered around the developmental stages that Piaget argued to be universal and standardized (Tisdall & Punch, 2012). Piaget's work highlighted how children and childhood are structured through predetermined stages, where the end goal is to achieve a sense of logical competence. Researchers within childhood studies argued that the developmental stages described by Piaget contributed to the marginalization of children, where they are portrayed as beings awaiting to become rational and a part of the adult world (Prout & James, 2015).

Moreover, ideas about socialization, such as Talcott Parsons' socialization theory, were criticized for portraying children as passive and conforming beings, whom through the process of socialization, transforms from "an asocial child into a social adult" (Prout & James, 2015, p. 11). Furthermore, Parsons viewed society as a model of harmony, where values, norms and behaviors were uniform and stable. The concept of socialization can be viewed as a process that teaches children how to conform to social norms and further views children as individuals shaped by society's structures (Jenks, 2004). Functionalist sociologists describe the child as passive and incomplete, viewing children as 'human becomings' rather than 'human beings'. This view of children is strongly critiqued by researchers within the field of childhood studies (Prout & James, 2015).

Prout and James (1990) introduced six key features of the paradigm that are still relevant within the field of childhood studies to this day. Firstly, childhood is viewed as a social construction. Consequently, childhood cannot be regarded as a natural or universal feature, but rather as structurally and culturally constructed. Secondly, variables such as class, ethnicity, race, and gender will always influence how childhood is constructed. This again underpins the notion of childhood a cultural and diverse phenomenon, rather than a universal phenomenon. Thirdly, children and childhood are worthy of study in their own right. Children are viewed as 'human beings', rather than 'human becomings', insisting on viewing children as valued individuals in the presence, and not solely in the process of becoming an adult. The fourth feature emphasizes that children are active subjects in their own everyday lives and contribute to the construction and re-constructions of the societies around them. The fifth feature points out ethnography as a useful tool in research with children. Ethnography allows for children's voice to be heard and encourages their participation. Lastly, the sixth feature emphasizes that the development of a new paradigm within the study of children and childhood needs to be viewed as a contribution to the constructions and re-constructions of childhood in society (Prout & James, 1990).

While the key features presented by Prout and James (1990) are central in the field of childhood studies today, it is important to acknowledge that childhood studies is an interdisciplinary field, characterized by various approaches, methods and research agendas (Lange & Mierendorff, 2009). However, Alanen (2001) has suggested three overlapping main branches within childhood studies. The first branch is described as 'the sociologies of children', which can be seen as an actor-oriented perspective. The emphasis within this branch is on children being social actors in their own social worlds, whereas the researcher should gain knowledge from children's perspectives and experiences, and further view them as experts in their own everyday lives. The second branch is described as 'the deconstructive sociology of childhood' and is heavily influenced by a social constructionist perspective. Through this perspective, childhood is viewed as socially and culturally constructed, where images, ideas and knowledge about children and childhood are shaped and reshaped through various processes, practices and by different actors in society. The last branch described by Alanen (2001) is 'the structural sociology of childhood', influenced by the structuralist perspective. Here, childhood is viewed as a structural form in society.

For this thesis, I will further elaborate on the social constructionist perspective and the actor-oriented perspective. The thesis will benefit from the social constructionist

perspective by understanding how children and childhood are constructed and re-constructed through various platforms such as the *BlimE* campaign, and institutions such as school, and how themselves participate in the constructions and re-constructions of childhood. In addition, an actor-oriented perspective will highlight children's experiences and perspectives with the campaign, through their position as social actors that are experts in their own everyday lives. As Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) emphasize:

> As we will see, children are influenced by, adapt to and challenge norms. They have other projects and ambitions than learning the social norms of behavior and other criteria for status and hierarchies, and by practicing these occasionally oppositional forms they sometimes challenge, sometimes perpetuate moral and social hierarchies. Moreover, children themselves are active civilizers, nurturing and disciplining one another and sanctioning and encouraging various types of conduct, just as they create friendships and communities on the basis of appraisals of each other's behavior and social characteristic (pp. 30-31).

Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) discuss how it is pivotal to view children as meaning-makers that actively interpret and use the information around them in various ways. Furthermore, the authors emphasize how children influence, adapt to and challenge norms, which supports the notions of children as active subjects that contribute to and participate in ongoing constructions of childhood.

3.1.1.   Childhood as a social construction

Social constructionism is a broad theoretical orientation that encompasses various research approaches and fields that study the social lives of human beings. Furthermore, social constructionism cannot be defined in one specific way, there are however some common features within the theoretical perspective (Burr, 2015). One of the main ideas of social constructionism is that various categories dictate how we perceive the world around us. Furthermore, social constructionists argue that our understandings of the world are culturally and historically bound, and that the knowledge we attain is constructed by interactions between people (Burr, 2015; Montgomery, 2003). Burr (2003) suggests four main principles for social constructionism, which are useful to get a better understanding of the theoretical perspective. Firstly, Burr emphasized that social constructionism urges a critical view on taken-for-granted understandings of the world, and further insist that we challenge the view of objective knowledge of the world. Furthermore, how we understand the world is historically and culturally relative. Burr further emphasizes that our knowledge is sustained by social processes, in which we construct our knowledge and our ways of understanding the world through social process and interactions with others. Lastly, there is a connection between knowledge and social action, where power relations dictate which patterns of social action to sustain, and which to exclude.

Social constructionism is viewed as a fundamental theoretical perspective in childhood studies. The constructionist perspective rejects the notion of childhood being universal, but instead views childhood as distinct from biological age, consequently being a product that varies across time, places and cultures (Jenks, 2004; Montgomery, 2003). Burr (2003) emphasizes that social constructionism invites us to critically assess how we understand the world around us. Furthermore, cultural, and historical aspects will shape

our understandings of the world, implying that all understandings are relative to culture and history. Hence, ideas about children and childhood change according to various contexts and situations, where the construction of a category impacts how the members of the category are treated and viewed (Montgomery, 2003). Connecting the *BlimE* campaign to the ideas about children and childhood, one could argue that campaigns aiming at promoting certain values and behaviors contribute to the construction and re-construction of childhood. Particularly when campaigns are connected to an institutionalized setting, such as the school, children are educated about certain social norms and behaviors that are deemed as appropriate in the given society. In addition, children are often very aware of what institutions expect from them and which norms and conducts are deemed appropriate (Gilliam & Gulløv, 2016). Thus, the ways children interpret and react to the *BlimE* campaign also contributes to the construction and re-construction of childhood.

Philippe Ariès has been noted as a prominent figure in acknowledging childhood as historically and culturally constructed. Through analysis of European art in the Middle Ages, Ariès suggested that childhood and adulthood were not seen as two separate states in the medieval ages. His suggestion was among other things based on his studies of artwork that depicted children as small adults. Ariès claimed that the concept of childhood was invented by man due to attitudes towards children changing over time. Although his findings have met criticism, mainly regarding his use of selected images and paintings, his contributions to social constructionism illustrate how childhood changes according to context, time and place (Montgomery, 2003).

Central to the theoretical perspective of social constructionism is the concept of discourse. Burr (2003) defines discourses as "a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events" (p. 64). Through the concept of discourse, social constructionists explore the notion of childhood. Furthermore, discourses aim at reflecting reality and aiding in the construction of it. Discourses are rooted in historical, cultural, and social contexts, consequently pointing to the fact that societies have differing discourses, such as discourses about childhood. For example, discourses about children and childhood as developing and vulnerable, children as individuals with freedom of choice and right to participation, and children as future citizens. These discourses can portray how the society and culture views children and childhood, and how it positions children in relation to other groups (Montgomery, 2003).

In relation to the current research project, the perspective of childhood as a social construction will be seen in light of how children participate in ongoing constructions of children and childhood through meaning-making and relating to the *BlimE* campaign. Furthermore, another emphasis will be on how NRK contributes to certain ideals and ideas about childhood through the campaign, and how the campaign contributes to upholding certain norms and values that are viewed as 'proper' or 'good'.

3.1.2. Actor-oriented perspective

The actor-oriented perspective is another central theoretical approach within the field of childhood studies. The perspective centers around the notion of viewing children as social actors that navigate and contribute to shaping their own social worlds (Robson et al., 2007). In addition, researchers within the actor-oriented perspective seek to study children in their own everyday lives, while enabling children to practice their agency and using their voice (Robson et al., 2007). Agency is therefore a key concept within the perspective, alongside concepts such as children's cultures and space and place (Clark, 2013; Corsaro, 2009). Furthermore, the actor-oriented approach builds on the notion of agency in connection to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Through the implementation of the UNCRC, children are given the right to participation, autonomy and self-determination (Abebe, 2019).

Children's peer cultures are central in relation to agency, and are defined as stable routines, activities, values and concern that children share and produce with each other (Corsaro, 2009). Corsaro (2009) discusses the process of 'interpretive reproduction', where children appropriate information and knowledge from adult cultures in order to produce their own peer cultures. However, children's peer cultures cannot be viewed as separate from adult cultures. Children participate in both cultures simultaneously, and children's and adults peer cultures intersect throughout space and time. Furthermore, children have been shown to practice their agency in the production of peer cultures through negotiation and gaining control. Thus, to gain a better understanding of agency, it is pivotal to look at the connections between agency and the social structures that are a part of children's lives.

Robson et al. (2007) emphasize the conceptualization of children and young people as agents, which steers away from viewing children as 'human becomings', but rather as 'thinkers' and 'doers'. Consequently, children and young people are seen as active agents contributing to the definition and production of the spaces around them. Furthermore, young people's agency should be viewed as a continuum, where the amount of agency an individual practices changes through various situations and locations (Robson et al., 2007). Similarly, Abebe (2019) argues that agency needs to be viewed as situated, dynamic and contextual. Valentine (2011) further elaborates on the concept, arguing that agency needs to be seen as a complex and multidimensional concept. Children's agency needs to be seen in the light of other factors, such as race, class, disability and gender, and how these variables may skew their actions and understandings.

Through the actor-oriented perspective, researchers can study children's experiences and everyday lives. The perspective provides an opportunity to grasp children's perspectives, choices, and outlooks for the future by learning from children. Furthermore, there is an emphasis on children being worthy of study in their own right, consequently enabling their right to participation. Combining social constructionism and the actor-oriented perspective entails a recognition of children as social actors within certain relations, structures, and frames which they have not decided for themselves. Children are viewed as social actors that actively give meaning to the world around them and participate in an ongoing process of the construction and re-construction of childhood. This perspective is in line with previous research, as mentioned in chapter 1.3., and Søndergaard and

Hansen's (2018) 'socially enacted phenomenon', where phenomena are socially enacted between children.

3.2.   Exploring children's voices

The concept of children's voices is central in the field of childhood studies. When discussing the notion of children's voices, researchers wish to gain knowledge about children and childhood by giving children a voice (Spyrou, 2011). With the rise of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), children's voices have gone from being silenced and marginalized, to being heard. The concept of voice has been widely debated, where on the one hand children's voices are seen as a symbol of authenticity and innocence, where they are positioned as symbolic commentators on the social world. On the other hand, children's voices are still being silenced, where their opinions and views are being dismissed, consequentially being positioned as silent spectators in their everyday experiences (James, 2007). Furthermore, Spyrou (2011) argues for a more reflexive approach to children's voices. Critiques are raised towards the individualizing tendencies in research, where children's voices are seen as reflecting autonomy and rationality. Children's voices should be viewed as co-constructed and social, where voices are both constrained and shaped through a variety of factors. It is important to acknowledge researcher's role in the process of interpretating children's voices, and how it is necessary for researchers to exercise reflexivity and be aware of how their own assumptions can impact the interpretation of children's voices (Spyrou, 2011).

James (2007) problematizes the concept of children's voices, arguing that there are three themes that may constitute problems within the 'new' social studies of children and childhood. Firstly, there are matters of authenticity connected to children's voices. If the implication is that children need to be given a voice, and are otherwise incapable or prevented from speaking, then a critical epistemological issue occurs. Issues of translation, interpretation, mediation, and representation are central here, which relate to the ways in which adults can modify and translate what is being said by children in accordance with their own assumptions, knowledge and understandings. Thus, there lies an issue with the representation of children's voices, and a question emerges of who's voice is being represented, and for what purpose (James, 2007).

The second issue revolves around the homogenization of children's voices, where the very conceptualization of children's voices may imply that all children's voices are the same, not considering the diversity and experiences of children's lives. Moreover, such a conceptualization risks putting all children into one category, further being irrespective of children's class or culture. A homogenization of children's voices contributes to a recurring circle of children's voices being neglected and disempowered (James, 2007). Thirdly, James (2007) questions children's participation in research, where the emphasis has changed from research 'on' children to research 'with' children. Considering children's voices, researchers seek to position children as participating subjects in research rather than objects in an adult study. Furthermore, being reflexive and aware of power differentials between children and adults in research has become a central factor in the social studies of children and childhood.

Furthermore, Spyrou (2011) argues for more critical discussions on the concept of children's voices. There are limits to children's voices, as voices are both constrained and shaped through our own assumptions and ideas about children. How voices are produced in research is therefore a central aspect of the discussion, and there is a need to move beyond the aspect of authenticity and explore notions of children's voices through their multi-layered character. When discussing children's voices, there is a need to address all types of voices. While some claim that voice is a direct route to children's perspectives and experiences, there is also the aspect of the non-normative voice. Particularly, one can address silences or the absence of voice. Silences are often ignored in qualitative research, and through the process of transcription, silences are omitted or paid little attention to. However, it is argued that silences should not be viewed as lack of voice, or be positioned against voice, but rather be viewed as purposeful and meaningful (Spyrou, 2016).

3.2.1.   Discursive approaches to children's experiences

Several researchers have recommended discursive approaches to children's voices (Alldred & Burman, 2005; Buckingham, 1993, 2000; Spyrou, 2011). Spyrou (2011) argues for a discursive approach to children's voices. When children speak, they draw on different repertoires connected to their social language, which may to some degree constrain what they wish to express. Viewing languages as social and ideological, language can represent values, assumptions, and interests of a group. It is therefore central that researchers become familiar with the discourses that impact children's voices, and the discourses that inform the researchers own analyses and interpretations of children's experiences and perspectives.

Alldred and Burman (2005) elaborate on a discursive approach to children's experiences and emphasize that a discursive approach focuses on the interpretative nature of research. Furthermore, in their research they point out two aspects of what a discursive approach can offer to research with children. Firstly, a discursive approach seeks to research the statements of children on a cultural, rather than individual, level. When talking, children draw on discourses that are produced through cultural meanings and practices, and thus give meaning to their experiences through knowledge, norms and values that exist in the cultural landscape they are a part of.

Secondly, discursive work emphasizes that the analysis is grounded in the context of which it is produced. Hence, the researcher's involvement in hearing, interpreting and representing children's voices is central. A discursive approach draws on how individuals are positioned within certain discourses, and how they are able to draw on these discourses. While my thesis will have the theoretical frameworks of social constructionism and agency as the base, a discursive approach will be fruitful in understanding the meaning of what the participants are saying and their perspectives and experiences.

As pointed out by Spyrou (2011) and Alldred and Burman (2005), discursive approaches to children's voices are fruitful to understanding children's perspectives and experiences,

as they look at the various discourses that children draw on when talking about an experience or a phenomenon. As explained in chapter 3.1.1., discourses are sets of meaning, representations, statements and so on, that together produce particular understandings of an event (Burr, 2003, p. 64). A discursive approach to children's experiences will therefore not only focus on children's perspectives, but also emphasize that children's ways of thinking and speaking are connected to certain ways of thinking in society. Furthermore, discursive approaches aim at studying how individuals use discourses in their interactions with each other. Through a discursive approach lies the potential to study how children use language in their everyday lives to interact with their peers and share experiences (Burr, 2003). Moreover, Hall (1992) presents a different definition of discourses then the one presented earlier by Burr (2003), where social practices are emphasized to a greater extent:

> A discourse is a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – i.e. a way of representing – a particular kind of knowledge about a topic… Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But it is itself produced by a practice: 'discursive practice' the practice of producing meaning. Since all social practices entail meaning, all practices have a discursive aspect. (p. 291)

Hall's (1992) definition of the concept of discourses differs from Burr's (2003) definition as it focuses on the understanding of children's meaning-making practices as a discursive practice. Relating to the current thesis, this definition is relevant as it can highlight children's talks in interviews, and when the children talk about the *BlimE* campaign they participate in a discursive practice, where various ideas, ideals, norms and metaphors are drawn on. Thus, the children produce knowledge through the way they talk about the phenomenon.

In order to create a more nuanced analysis, I have also taken inspiration from Buckingham's discursive approach. Buckingham (1993, 2000) has argued for a discursive approach to research with children and media. A discursive approach to children's talk about news and media phenomena entails a focus on how people use language to create social interactions. However, Buckingham also points out that a discursive approach does not entail taking children's words and statements at face value. The participants' statements are not neutral reflections of their thoughts, knowledge, or understandings. He further points out that talk should be viewed as a form of social action, in which individuals define themselves and negotiate relationships with others. Furthermore, in his research Buckingham emphasizes how participants often position themselves in particular ways with certain ideas when being interviewed about various media phenomena. This can be seen in relation to the current thesis, as two of my analysis chapters will consist of discussion based on children's talks in focus group interviews.

Thus, there are two aspects that are interesting to look at through a discursive approach. The first is what ideas the children orient themselves towards and use when they talk, and what kind of discourses they drawn on. Secondly, a discursive approach offers a way to gain insight into how the children present themselves and negotiate relationships with others. While I will not be doing a formal discourse analysis in this thesis, I will draw inspiration from discursive perspectives, to draw attention to the various aspects discussed in this chapter.

3.3.   Perspectives on children as citizens

When viewing the *BlimE* campaign as a civilizing initiative that aims at shaping children into 'good' citizens, there is a need to discuss the different perspectives on children as citizens. Children's citizenship is a heavily debated concept in childhood studies. At the formal level, citizenship can be defined through the legal status of membership, such as the right to a passport. However, at a substantive level, citizenship needs to be recognized as contextual, entailing that the concept bears different meanings across various political and social movements (Lister, 2008). Citizenship is therefore hard to define. Marshall proposes a traditional definition of citizenship, where it can be viewed as "a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed" (Lister, 2008, p. 9). Central to this definition is the membership of a community, equal status of the members, and certain responsibilities and rights that come from having a membership (Lister, 2008). However, the emphasis on members equal status, can lead to the exclusion of children from this category, as children often are viewed as a marginalized group in society, thus not being equal.

Furthermore, through the implementation of the UNCRC, the right to participation, protection and provision became central in legislation concerning children's citizenship (Bjerke, 2010). The right to participation enabled researchers to treat children as co-citizens and promoted researchers to conceptualize citizenship in new ways (Kjørholt, 2008). There is a vast body of literature focusing on children's participation as a crucial point in acknowledging their status as citizens, where the participation rights provide children with the status of social actors that contribute to the construction of their own lives and the society around them. However, traditional theories about citizenship have argued that the rights to participation do not encompass children's political rights, such as the right to vote, and consequentially fails to recognize children as full citizens (Kjørholt, 2008).

In traditional liberal theories about citizenship, children are not viewed as citizens, based on the political sense of the term. This is due to lack of political rights, such as the right to vote. However, other rights that children encompass have been emphasized, such as social rights and certain civic rights (Kjørholt, 2008). Consequentially, researchers have developed new, alternative understandings in connection to citizenship. Jans (2004) argues for a child-sized citizenship, where citizenship may entail one or more of the following dimensions, namely citizenship as rights, citizenship as responsibilities, citizenship as identity, and citizenship as participation (p. 19). The author further emphasizes how citizenship is a dynamic process, steering away from the notion of citizenship as universal set of rights and responsibilities (Jans, 2004). Citizenship can therefore be viewed in connection to identity, where children are seen as social actors that contribute to society. Moreover, Moosa-Mitha (2005) proposes a difference-centered approach to children's citizenship. The author draws on difference-centered models of citizenship and feminist citizenship and argues for children's rights as 'differently equal' members of society (p. 377). Furthermore, there is an emphasis on children being recognized as citizens and respecting their differences from adults, but simultaneously having equal value as members of society.

As Lister (2008) argues, children's citizenship entails a recognition of children as different from adults. Furthermore, the author implies that differences children have from adults should be valued, where children's right to equality and their specific needs as children should be recognized.

> In fact, much of the literature that is making the case for recognition of children as citizens is not so much arguing for an extension of adult rights (and obligations) of citizenship to children but recognition that their citizenship practice (where it occurs) constitutes them as *de facto*, even if not complete *de jure*, citizens (Lister, 2008, p. 18)

The field of childhood studies emphasizes that notions of children and childhood vary according to time and place. Childhood is viewed as a social construct, dependent on various historical and cultural contexts. Based on this notion, children's citizenship can be viewed as being connected to the various factors surrounding them, such as age, ethnicity, gender, and economic, social and cultural status (Bjerke, 2010). In addition, researchers within the field of childhood studies emphasize that children should be viewed as competent, social actors with the right to participate in various social arenas, such as school, family and the society around them (Bjerke, 2010). Bjerke (2010) points out that children's citizenship entails a recognition of children as citizens with both responsibilities and rights. Moreover, children's citizenship is viewed in context to the shaping of their identity as citizens through experiences with others, where shared interests, values and lifestyles are central.

3.3.1.   Civilizing institutions

While children are recognized to a greater extent as citizens with the right to be heard and participate, children are also part of civilizing institutions. Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) draw on Norbert Elias's theory of 'the civilizing process'. Elias emphasizes that civilizing takes places in all societies, but is particularly visible in Western societies, where the state has a central role. Thus, Elias argues that as the state developed, higher standards for conduct and behavior were set. In consequence, certain behaviors were promoted and deemed as appropriate and civilized, in contrast to behaviors that were viewed as barbaric, tacky or vulgar. Civilizing reflects upon certain values found in the society, where dominant groups that are regarded as cultivated and respectable, are viewed in contrast to groups regarded as uncultivated. The concept of civilizing can therefore be seen in light of the hierarchal dimension in society, and culturally produced ideas about the respectable and educated person (Gilliam & Gulløv, 2016).

As talked about in chapter 2.1.1., institutions now have a significant role in children lives, where many children spend most of their days in an institutionalized setting. Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) connect Elias's perspectives to some of the main perspectives in childhood studies, elaborating on how children contribute to the various social dynamics in institutional childrearing, by both being influenced by, adapt to, and challenge the norms that the civilizing institutions aim at promoting. It can therefore be argued that institutions such as kindergartens and schools have a childrearing dimension, where they aim at shaping children to become civilized citizens, in accordance with norms and behaviors that are deemed as appropriate civilized conduct. The institutions in which children spend most of their weekdays are thus highly influential in the construction of

what is deemed as civilized. However, the authors point out the 'paradox of civilizing', stating that there is a duality to the concept of civilizing. The mere aspect of trying to civilize has a counteractive effect, where it simultaneously excludes many of the individuals it aims as civilizing. The civilizing institutions therefore also give rise to and produced 'uncivilized' ways of behavior, in which people that do not identify themselves with the civilized category are excluded or positing themselves as outsiders of the civilized society (Gilliam & Gulløv, 2016).

Consequently, there are two perspectives that complement each other. By taking into account the perspectives of citizenship and civilizing, children are recognized to a greater extent as citizens here and now, who must participate and be listened to as citizens while they are children. At the same time children are part of civilizing institutions that seek to shape them through certain ideals. Both of these dimensions are visible in campaigns such as *BlimE*, where children are involved in the campaign, and must participate actively and often voice their opinion. However, it is also quite clearly that such campaigns seek to teach children certain ideals and norms. Institutions such as schools and campaigns therefore have a civilizing perspective, where they aim at promoting certain ways of conducting in order to civilize children and shape them as good citizens. However, as discussed, children also interpret and use the norms and values that are presented to them in various ways, and thus contribute to constructions of what a civilized citizen is.

3.4. Chapter summary

In this chapter I have explored the theoretical framework that has been used in this thesis. The research is positioned within the field of childhood studies, thus recognizing children as social actors that actively participate and share knowledge about their own everyday lives. I draw on social constructionism and an actor-oriented perspectives within the field of childhood studies. The combination of these two perspectives lay grounds for viewing children as active subjects within certain structures or relations, that they have not decided for themselves. Furthermore, this chapter discusses issues relation to children's voices, and point out how a discursive approach to children's experiences can be fruitful as it emphasizes looking at experiences through knowledge, norms and values that exist in the cultural landscape around them. Lastly, theoretical accounts of children's citizenship were discussed, and citizenship was connected to the concept of civilizing. In contemporary society children are to a greater extent recognized as citizens with the right to be heard and to participation, while simultaneously being a part of civilizing institutions that shape children through certain ideals and expectations for acceptable conduct. In the next chapter, I will discuss to various methodological choices made in this thesis, focusing on all the stages of data collection, from fieldwork to producing the analysis.

4. Methodology

This chapter presents the methodological choices made for the current thesis. It will introduce the methodological approach and my positioning as a researcher to set grounds for the research. Furthermore, the chapter will describe all stages of the data collection process, from gaining access to participants, planning the fieldwork, and conducting the participant observations and focus group interviews. In addition, the process of producing and interpreting the data, both the interviews and the music video, will be presented. Ethical guidelines and considerations will also be discussed in this chapter.

4.1.   Methodological approach

The new social studies of children and childhood have brought a new perspective of viewing children as social actors that actively contribute to the development of society (James, 2007). Furthermore, as mentioned in chapter 2.1.1., the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has led to the acknowledgment of children as rights-holders and their right to participation. The UNCRC further provides children and young people with the right to participate in decision-making in society, community, and family (Kjørholt, 2008). Moreover, Alderson (2008) emphasizes that the recognition of children as subjects rather than objects has led to the acceptance of children voicing their rights and the validation of their experiences and perspectives. Therefore, my positioning as a researcher is based on the acknowledgment of children as 'human beings', rather than 'human becomings'.

Ennew et al. (2009) emphasize that children have the right to be properly researched. The right to be properly researched is based on the interpretation of four articles in the UNCRC, that together promote children's right to be properly research. The articles emphasize that children are subjects of rights rather than objects and promote a rights-based approach to research with children in order to treat children with respect and dignity. Therefore, a qualitative approach to the current research was chosen, to shed light on children's perspectives on the *BlimE* campaign and recognize them as social actors that actively contribute to knowledge production. Qualitative research aims at producing data from in-depth accounts with participants, through methods such as interviews, observations, documents or other written methods (Kuper et al., 2008). Qualitative research concerning children and childhood has often been preferred by researchers within childhood studies, as it is an interpretative approach where the researcher can gain insight into participants' experiences of certain social phenomena (Palmer & Bolderston, 2006). Thus, through a qualitative approach, children's agency and voice are acknowledged and ensure their active participation in the research.

Following the qualitative approach, a combination of methods was chosen. The first method that was conducted was a limited time of participant observation with children

from the fourth grade. Participant observation is a useful method of collecting data, where the researcher observers the participants while interacting and engaging in their everyday lives (James, 2001). However, as the observation period for this project only lasted for three days, it is important to point out that this study is not an ethnographic study. As James (2001) discusses, ethnographic research seeks to make sense of people's actions by analyzing the components of the various structures of signification. In other words, ethnography can be seen as an approach where the researcher produces knowledge by taking part in various social interactions with the informants, usually over a long period of time, through different social contexts and engagement between the researcher and their participants (Christensen, 2004; James, 2001). As emphasized, my thesis is not an ethnographic study, however, the participant observations contributed to sharpen my interview guide, as well as getting to know the children, so that they would feel more comfortable with me during the focus group interviews.

The second method of this study were focus group interviews with children aged 8 to 12 years old. The aim of the focus group interviews was to gain more profound and insightful knowledge about children's perspectives on the *BlimE* campaign, as well as how children themselves participate in ongoing constructions and re-constructions of children and childhood through making sense of and relating to the *BlimE* campaign. The third method of this study was also placed within the frame of qualitative research, namely a qualitative, content analysis of the *BlimE* music video from 2021. The aim of the music video analysis is to gain more understanding of which values and notions about children and childhood are represented in the music video, which can further contribute to a deeper understanding of children's perspectives towards the campaign. Thus, by combining participant observations, focus group interviews with children and the analysis of the music video, the intention is to gain more knowledge about children's perspectives and experiences with the campaign and research which values and attitudes NRK promotes towards children through its campaign.

Moreover, the combination of various methods can be viewed as a type of triangulation. As Seale (1999) emphasizes, triangulation derives from a discussion about validity in qualitative research by quantitative methodologists. Triangulation, therefore, entails using several methods to avoid the biases of only using a single method to provide data. Thus, the aim is to gain a richer and more credible picture of the phenomenon being researched by looking at the phenomenon through various perspectives. In order to understand how children interpret the *BlimE* campaign, it is also important to understand the phenomenon itself. The content analysis of the music video *Dynamite* therefore provides a deeper understanding of the phenomenon *BlimE*, by looking at which ideas and norms the campaign aims at promoting. Furthermore, the participant observations prove to be useful both in getting to know the children before the focus group interviews, and to sharpen the interview guide.

4.1.1. The role of the researcher

Before elaborating on the fieldwork process, there is a need to establish my role as the researcher in this process. While conducting my observation period with the fourth-graders, I drew inspiration from Abebe (2009) and Corsaro and Molinari (2008). They

demonstrate how the researcher can work towards an atypical, adult role. Abebe (2009) discusses the 'friendly role', in which the researcher seeks to minimize their power to establish trust between them and the children. The author provides an example of how the researcher can undertake the 'friendly role' from his own research, where he was a voluntary teacher. In the example, Abebe (2009) points out how he tried to avoid disciplining children, but rather express a desire to be with the children and treat them with respect. Furthermore, instead of siding with the teachers in the school, the author would empathize with the children, in order not to be viewed as an authority figure.

Similarly, Corsaro and Molinari (2008) elaborate on the concept of an 'incompetent adult'. The authors draw on research by Corsaro from an Italian kindergarten, where the focus was on the transition from preschool to elementary school. In the study, the researcher's lack of knowledge towards the Italian language made the children view him as 'incompetent', and thus being perceived as a lesser adult. As a result, the children accepted him as an adult with less authority. Taking on roles such as the 'friendly role' or the 'incompetent adult' during research is a way of recognizing the power differentials between children and adults. It is important to point out that adults will always have power over children and taking on a 'friendly role' or the role as an 'incompetent adult' does not lead to the equalization of power. However, by being aware of the power imbalances and using techniques such as taking on a different role as a different adult with less authority, can reduce the power imbalances that become even more prominent when conducting research with children (Abebe, 2009).

To exemplify my role as a researcher, I draw on my experiences from the participant observation. During the observations, I wanted the children to feel like I did not have as much authority as the teacher had. For example, during name calls, I always asked the children if I could sit next to them if there was an empty seat. If the children spoke to me while the teacher was speaking, I did not tell them to be quiet and listen to the teacher, but I tried to answer them in a friendly tone. In addition, the children let me sit next to them during lunch and included me in conversations they had. While the teachers often walked around and helped hand out food, I sat down with a group of children and talked. I did not try to steer the conversations, but I answered if I got asked a question and would ask questions back. I found the children to be very talkative and open, and I believe that they did view me as a more atypical adult in some way. However, I am not under the illusion that the children did not believe I was an adult, but rather that they viewed me as an adult with less authority than the teachers. By taking on the role as an adult with less authority, the participants might have felt more comfortable to discuss and talk about subjects that they would not normally talk about with their teachers. For example, they discussed various shows they liked to watch during their leisure time and talking about their social lives in front of me. I believe this led to the children being more comfortable during the focus group interviews, as they had gotten to know me a little bit and experienced how it was having me around them.

4.2. The fieldwork process

In the next section I will present and discuss the fieldwork process in three main stages. The first stage will describe the process of recruitment and gaining access to the

fieldwork site, with various obstacles considered. The second stage will elaborate on the recruitment of participants, bearing in mind various gatekeepers and exploring my few days of fieldwork. The third stage will explain the reasoning behind my choice of methods, including the participant observations, the structure of the interview guide and conducting the focus group interviews with children.

4.2.1. Recruitment and accessibility

For my research on children's interpretations of the *BlimE* campaign, I decided that it was fruitful to recruit children in elementary schools. This was mainly due to the *BlimE* campaign being targeted at children in elementary schools, thus basing my decision on the most prominent target group of the campaign. Hence, I sought to recruit children from ages 8 to 12 in elementary schools.

I first contacted various elementary schools in the Trondheim, Norway, after my project was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data[3] (NSD) in September of 2021. I had written an information letter about my project in Norwegian and began sending e-mails to various elementary schools in the area asking if they were interested in participating in my project. Out of 8 schools, I got a reply by e-mail from two schools, and a phone call from a third school. However, this was when I met my first obstacle, which resulted in the recruitment process taking more time than anticipated. The two schools that replied by e-mail informed me of a procedure in the municipality regarding conducting fieldwork and projects in elementary schools. Consequentially, I had to fill out a form with information about my project, which was then sent to a committee in charge of academic cooperation between the University and the municipality. However, the phone call I received from the third school was promising, and I was told that the school wished to participate in my project. Yet, I still had to go through the process with the municipality, resulting in a long wait until all formalities were finalized. After various e-mails and phone calls, I finally got approval for conducting my fieldwork at the school that had expressed their wishes to participate in my project.

Dealing with various gatekeepers is a crucial step in gaining access to the participants, especially regarding research with children (Corsaro & Molinari, 2008). Gatekeepers are defined as individuals who can grant access to the research by allowing researchers to enter a certain space or granting permissions for conducting the research in a certain way (Homan, 2001). In the case of my fieldwork, there were several gatekeepers. The teachers' role as gatekeepers were to help me gain access to the fieldwork site and participants, in addition to allowing me to have time with the children to conduct interviews during their classes and after-school activities. In addition, the children's parents or legal guardians were central gatekeepers, as I needed their consent to interview the children. Lastly, there was the committee from the municipality, that granted me permission to conduct my fieldwork at the elementary school in Trondheim. The committee from the municipality also set some requirements and guidelines for my project, particularly concerning ethical considerations about informed consent and voluntary participation. They pointed out that the consent form should be given out by hand, and not through the digital platform the school uses to give parents or legal

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[3] See appendix 1 for approval letter from NSD

guardians, and children, information about various happenings at the school and out-of-school program. The committee emphasized that by sending out the consent form through the digital platform, the parents or legal guardians, and the children, could perceive my project as something the children had to participate in, and not something that was completely voluntary. Thus, the requirements provided by the committee laid some guidelines for the ethical considerations of my research. As Punch (2002) emphasizes, adult gatekeepers can open and limit the researcher's access to the children, depending on which permissions and grants they provide for the researcher.

4.2.2.   Participants

After gaining access to the elementary school, the recruitment of participants for my project began. In collaboration with the school, it was decided that I would be able to conduct my observations and focus group interviews with a fourth-grade class at the school's *Skolefritidsordning* (SFO). As described in chapter 2.1.2., SFO can be translated to a before- and after-school program, where the aim is to provide children with a place to socialize and play, offering various cultural- and leisure activities, and provide both care and oversight of the children. Moreover, the program is often available for children in the first to fourth grade, both before and after school (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2021).

While I had initially planned to conduct my fieldwork during school hours, I did not see any problems with conducting my fieldwork during the SFO hours since the program was located at the school with children from the school. In addition, the children in fourth grade were 8 to 9 years old, which was within the age range I had envisioned for my project. When contacting the school, they expressed that they wished to participate due to their focus on the *BlimE* campaign at the SFO. I later learned that the *BlimE* campaign was implemented in the SFO's schedule most years. This did not come as a surprise, as the campaign has gained popularity over the years, and more schools want to participate in the campaign. What I found interesting was that the *BlimE* campaign was not only important during school-hours, but also after school. However, it was also essential to acknowledge that since the class had focused on the *BlimE* campaign during their after-school hours at the SFO, the children would most likely all be familiar with the campaign.

In my first day of observations with the fourth grade, I started by introducing myself, the project, and why I would be there in the class for the next couple of days. In addition, I explained the consent form which would be handed out on paper to all the students. I informed them that if they wished to participate in the project, they had to bring the consent form back with a signature from one of their parents or legal guardians. The process of gathering consent forms from children who wished to participate took some time, primarily due to them forgetting it at home or forgetting to get their parents' or legal guardian's signature. However, in the end, a total of 11 children from the fourth grade wanted to participate in the research.

While I was pleased with the number of participants after conducting both observations and interviews with the fourth graders, I had initially planned to have around 15 children participating. After conducting the interviews with the fourth graders, I therefore

established further contact with teachers from the sixth and seventh grades at the school. Due to lack of time, and me not having planned beforehand that I was going to do interviews with older children as well, there was no time for an observation period with the older participants. In addition, children from the fifth to the seventh grade, do not attend the SFO, which meant that I had to conduct interviews with them during their school-hours. I was invited to come and present my project in front of one of the seventh-grade classes. Prior to talking to the class, the teachers had received the consent forms, and could ask the class if anyone wished to participate in my project and handed out consent forms for those who were interested. Later that week, I came to the class and presented my project, which resulted in a couple more children wanting to participate in my project. In the other classes where I did not present my project, the teacher would ask their students and hand out the consent form to those who were interested. In total, there were 7 children from the sixth and seventh grades who wanted to participate in the interviews, resulting in a total of 18 participants.

4.2.3.   Participant observations

As mentioned previously, I started my fieldwork by having an observation period with the fourth graders. The aim of my observations was not to conduct ethnographic research, but for the children to get to know me and be a little comfortable around me, before conducting the interviews. Another aspect of my observations was to write down observations that could be connected to the campaign and its underlying themes, in addition I used my notes from the observations to pinpoint my interview guide further. I spent three days with the fourth-grade class before conducting the interviews. I sometimes wrote down some observations, mainly if anything could be connected to the campaign and its underlying themes. Another aspect of writing down what I observed was to pinpoint my interview guide further. However, as mentioned previously, I did not have an observation period with the sixth and seventh graders.

In retrospect, I believe that if I would have had an observation period with the older participants, it might have contributed to more children wanting to participate in my project. As witnessed in my observation period with the younger children, throughout my time with them more children wanted to participate at the end of the observation period than in the start of it. However, as I had the observation period with the younger children after school, this might have been a crucial factor, as I did not disrupt their school-day. Relating to the concept of gatekeepers, the teachers from the sixth and seventh grade did give me access to their students, by agreeing to hand out the consent forms and asking their class if anyone wanted to participate.

4.2.4.   Interviews

Out of the 18 participants, 6 focus groups were constructed, with 2 to 4 participants in each group. The teacher of the class conducted the selection of the groups based on who handed in their consent form. This approach was chosen based on the teacher's knowledge of which children would fit well together in a group setting, thus creating a setting where the children would feel comfortable and express themselves freely.

However, the way in which the focus groups where chosen could also potentially be problematic, as the teacher is given power and influence over the research project. This could affect the outcome of the data being produced, as the children might feel like the focus group interviews are connected to work at school, and thus feeling like they must answer 'correctly' during the interviews. During the fieldwork, I emphasized to the children that the focus group interviews are completely voluntary, and that they could choose not to participate at any given time. Additionally, the groups were also based on when the consent form was handed in. As discussed previously in chapter 4.2.2., the children handed in the signed consent forms at varying times, which further affected the selection of the groups.

Out of the 18 participants, 15 were girls, and 3 were boys. This resulted in a skewed gender distribution between the participants. I aimed at having a balanced gender distribution between the participants, however, I experienced that it was easier to recruit girls than boys. A reason for this can be that *BlimE* is perceived as a more girl-friendly phenomenon. As will be discussed later in the analysis chapter, several of the participants associated *BlimE* with the dance and song, which also can be perceived as more 'girly' activities. From my observation period and process of recruitment, I got the impression that many of the boys thought there was something not so cool about the *BlimE* campaign. In addition, based on the gatekeeping from the municipality committee, I was very aware of not pressuring or trying to persuade any of the children to participate. Hence, I ended up with a skewed gender distribution, however, I believe my interviews provided rich and fruitful data, nonetheless.

4.2.4.1. Focus groups

Ennew et al. (2009) elaborate on focus group interviews as a method that centers around a specific topic, where the researcher takes on the role as a facilitator. Furthermore, a focus group interview aims to take advantage of the group dynamic and better understand the group's ideas, knowledge, values, attitudes, and beliefs. Therefore, the aim of a focus group interview is not to reach a conclusion or a solution to a question, but rather to take advantage of the group dynamics and encourage a variety of viewpoints on the topics presented (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Ennew et al., 2009). Furthermore, researchers point out that focus groups should often consist of eight to fifteen participants (Ennew et al., 2009; Gibson, 2007). However, Gibson (2007) emphasizes that having less participants in each focus group when conducting research with younger children might be fruitful. In addition, Lange and Mierendorff (2009) discuss how focus groups are a method that is particularly suitable with children. Focus groups can create an environment for the interview where the children feel safe regarding peer environment and the setting in which the focus group is conducted. Furthermore, the authors argue that a focus group interview can soften the power asymmetry between the adult researcher and the children that often appear in individual interviews by the provision of peer support. In addition, by listening to the input from other participants, children might feel encouraged to voice their opinions, and to develop new ideas and thoughts about the phenomenon discussed (Lange & Mierendorff, 2009)

When initially planning my project, I wanted to conduct both focus group interviews and follow up the focus group interviews with individual interviews. However, after some deliberation, I decided on only doing focus group interviews. My reasoning for this was that I believed that the children might be more comfortable and open for discussion with other children around them. Lange and Mierendorff (2009) elaborate on both qualitative interviews and focus groups, where qualitative interviews are characterized as one of the most used methods in the new sociology of children and childhood. By conducting individual qualitative interviews, the researcher can achieve a deeper understanding of children's everyday lives, and their experiences and perspectives. However, Ennew et al. (2009) argue that individual interviews might not be the best method to use with children, as it enhances the power differentials between the adult and the child in the research setting, which can lead to the participant trying to answer what they believe the researcher things is the 'correct answer'. Consequently, this led to my decision to conduct focus group interviews with the children. Through my experience of conducting the focus groups discussion, the children were able to talk about various topics without me having to interrupt them much, where they collectively shared ideas, further elaborated on each other's thoughts, and provided me with rich and insightful data.

4.2.4.2. Interview guide

An interview guide is a set of pre-determined questions and topics that structure the interview. The interview guide can differ and can consist both of topics or detailed questions. As Brinkmann and Kvale (2018) elaborate on, qualitative interviews usually follow a semi-structured approach. This entails that the interview guide has both themes to cover and pre-defined questions. However, the questions and themes are also open for change, in accordance with the answers and viewpoints of the participants. The ability to actively listen is also a prominent factor of qualitative interviews. The researcher needs to be able to ask spontaneous follow-up questions to the participants answers, which are not pre-defined in the interview guide.

To prepare for the focus group interviews, I constructed a semi-structured interview guide with a set of pre-defined questions. The questions in the interview guide started off more general, asking the participants questions about what they liked and disliked doing at school and in their leisure time. Questions about their media habits, such as what programs they enjoyed watching, and if they liked to watch programs at NRK Super followed. From there on, the questions steered towards the *BlimE* campaign. The questions were about their knowledge about *BlimE*, whether there was anything good or bad about the campaign, and if they talked about the campaign at school, with their peers or family. I aimed at keeping the questions as open as possible, trying to construct questions that invite rich and detailed answers rather than 'yes' or 'no' answers.

However, I was determined not to follow the interview guide to the point, but rather to use the questions as a starting point for further discussion. Additionally, I used the interview guide if I felt that the conversations had moved too far from the topic. However, in instances when the children talked about topics that they found important and the group actively participated in the conversation, I did not interfere. By interfering in their off-topic conversations, the participants might perceive the action as me not

being interested in what they were talking about, thus compromising the informal atmosphere that had been established. Conclusively, I found that the off-topic conversation provided rich and fruitful data to strengthen the analysis. For example, in the beginning of one of the focus group discussions with the younger participants, while discussing what they liked and disliked doing at school and in their leisure time, the conversation steered towards friendships and more specifically arguments between friends. The participants discussed how they negotiate and resolve conflicts, and how they were tired of arguments and conflicts amongst their peers. In hindsight, this aspect proved to be useful in my analysis, as it became a vital part of the analysis of children's friendships and social relationships.

4.2.4.3. Conducting the interviews

The interviews were conducted in two different places at the school. With the fourth graders, the interviews were held in the library. The library created a good environment for discussions, with a comfortable seating area that provided us with the opportunity to sit together in a circle. The library was empty during the focus group interviews; however, the room was open, which could have led to someone walking into the library during our conversations. Before starting the interview, I told the children that they did not have to raise their hand before speaking, believing that this would create a more open and free discussion. As Punch (2002) emphasizes, unequal power relations between children and adults might lead to the children avoiding telling the truth or lying about certain subjects. Conducting the interviews at school might therefore contribute to the power differences between me as a researcher and the participants, which can make the children feel like they must answer according to what they think I want to hear. However, by taking on a role of an adult with less authority, and by creating a less formal interview setting, the hope was to reduce the power imbalances in the hopes that the participants would feel comfortable and answer according to their own opinions and thoughts.

The focus group interviews with the participants from sixth and seventh grade were held at a meeting-room in the school. The room had a large table with chairs around it and was maybe not the best place to conduct the interviews, due to the big table being in the middle of the room. This might contribute to a separation of space between me and the participant, consequently affecting the environment in the room. Nevertheless, when the children entered, I explained to them that they could sit anywhere they wanted and did not have to raise their hand before speaking. This aided in creating a calm and laid-back atmosphere, and even though the large table was there, I did not feel like it affected the conversations or the group dynamic.

Prior to conducting the focus group interviews, I decided to show the children the *BlimE*-music video during the interviews. The video was shown in the middle of the interview, after having asked the children if they had heard about the *BlimE* campaign, but before discussing the campaign more in-depth. Hence, the music video provided more context on the phenomenon *BlimE*. In addition, the music video provided a break from the discussions, with both the younger and the older children looking interestingly at the video. The younger children were both singing and dancing while watching the music

video, while the older children were mostly just listening and watching. By showing the music video to the children, the hope was that they could reflect upon what was happening in the music video. In addition, some of the questions from my interview guide were about the music video. The questions centered around what was happening in the music video and aimed at providing further conversation about the values promoted by the *BlimE* campaign.

To record the interviews, I used an audio recorder. Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) point out that using an audio recorder contributes to the interviewer being more engaged and concentrated on the ongoing interview, rather than writing down everything by hand. Moreover, audio recorders make it possible for the interviewer to listen to the conversations repeatedly, paying more attention to other details such as the tone of the participants. Before starting the recorder, I asked the children if they knew what it was. Some of the children knew, while others did not. I then explained to the children that it was a recorder, and that I needed to record the conversation in order to later recall what was said. None of the children seemed alarmed by this or had any objections to it.

I did not encounter any difficult situations during my interviews, and most of them ran smoothly without the conversation coming to a halt at any point. However, the interviews varied in length, and due to me informing the children that they did not have to raise their hands before speaking, there were instances where the children talked at the same time. Consequently, this proved to sometimes be a challenge during the transcription of the interviews, as it was difficult to differentiate the voices of the various children. Yet, the interviews provided rich and fruitful data even with instances where it was difficult to hear who was saying what when transcribing. In conclusion, I do believe that I managed to make a reliable transcript. Furthermore, a strength might have been that I both conducted the interviews and transcribed them, which could have made it easier for me to differentiate the voices in the recordings. In addition, I tried to keep the atmosphere in the room light, by laughing when the children were laughing about something they were talking about or encouraging them with follow-up questions to their conversations. However, when transcribing my interviews and analyzing them, there are several places where I realized that I could have asked more follow-up questions. This was perhaps due to not having any experience with conducting interviews before this project. Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) point out interviewing as a craft skill, where the interviewing process relies on the skills and judgements of the researcher. Furthermore, the authors emphasize how interviewing is a skill learned through practice.

Moreover, the interviews with the younger children were a bit shorter than with the older ones. I noticed that after a while, that some of the younger children had a more challenging time sitting still and concentrating, which sometimes ended up with them fooling around a bit. For example, towards the end of one of the focus group discussions with the younger children, the participants began to grab the audio recorder and hold it like a microphone and make funny comments into it. As it was during the end of the interview, this situation made it natural to end the interview shortly after the occurrence, as it was difficult to steer the conversation back on track again, in addition to the interview being almost over. There were also instances where some children would talk more than others, consequently contributing to an uneven power dynamic between the children. In such instances, I would try to reflect my next question towards those

participants that did not get to speak as much, without asking them the question directly. In conclusion, the process of interviewing went by quite smoothly, as I felt like I got a lot of information from the participants. However, in situations such as the one described above, where the interview ended due to lack of concentration, I do wish I had the opportunity to come back and conduct a round of follow-up interviews.

4.3.   Ethical considerations

When conducting research with children as participants, various ethical guidelines need to be considered (Abebe & Bessell, 2014; Ennew et al., 2009). Ensuring ethical research is especially important when conducting research with children, as there will always be power differentials between children and adults. Respecting children's rights and ensuring that the research conducted is ethically sound is therefore crucial in research with children (Ennew et al., 2009). Informed consent, voluntary participation and ensuring that children's rights to protection and participation are all central aspects of ethical research. Therefore, it is essential that the researcher is familiar with the ethical guidelines that aim at protecting and respecting both the participants and the researcher throughout the research process (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Ennew et al., 2009). However, an argument could be made that such guidelines are also constructions based on certain ideals and ideas, and moreover what it means to be a child. While following ethical guidelines, the researcher still encounters ethical dilemmas that occur in research.

4.3.1.   Informed consent and voluntary participation

Informed consent is a fundamental part of ethical research (Ennew et al., 2009; Homan, 2001). Informed consent aims at ensuring that the participants are aware of the research that they are asked to participate in, and that their participation in the research is voluntary (Homan, 2001). When conducting research with children, it is therefore crucial to inform them about the research and ask for their consent in a way that they will understand (Ennew et al., 2009). In addition, when conducting research with children, gaining consent often involves gatekeepers, such as parents or legal guardians. However, the researcher should be aware that gaining consent only from gatekeepers is not sufficient, as the children need to consent to participate in the research (Ennew et al., 2009). The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees provide guidelines for research ethics and emphasize that getting informed consent when conducting research with children is crucial. Furthermore, they point out that consent needs to be obtained from legal guardians and the children participating. The consent to participate also needs to be voluntary, without any pressure or restrictions to the participants' freedom of choice (The National Committee for Research Ethics, 2021).

In the current research, the children were informed about my project before being handed the consent form. With the fourth graders, I explained in the beginning of my observation period who I was and why I was at their school, and I repeatedly emphasized that the children themselves decided whether they wanted to participate. Furthermore, I mentioned that if they wished to participate, they would receive a consent

form that needed to be read through and signed by a parent or legal guardian. Thus, while handing out the consent forms to the children, several children told me that they did not want a consent form because they did not wish to participate. This could be seen as the children demonstrating their understanding of voluntary participation, where they did not feel pressured into participating in my research. In addition, some children were not sure if they wanted to participate, and I specified to them that even though their parents would sign the consent form, they could choose not to participate at any given time. With the older children, I informed one of the classes about my project, while the other classes were informed by the teachers. Furthermore, consent forms were handed out to those expressing that they wanted to participate in the project.

4.3.2.   Privacy and confidentiality

Another critical aspect of conducting ethical research is privacy and confidentiality. Alderson and Morrow (2011) differentiate between privacy and confidentiality, where privacy is related to avoiding intrusion into the participant's private affairs, while confidentiality deals with concealing personal information about the participants that could be used to identify them, such as name, age, and gender. Ennew et al. (2009) point out the importance of not naming children in the research to ensure children's confidentiality.

To ensure the participants privacy and confidentially, I informed the children that they would be anonymous in my project. I explained that it entailed that I would change their names, so that no one could recognize who said what. This was written in the consent form, as well as by informing the participants verbally. Thus, to ensure the participants anonymity, their names would be changed in the thesis. Furthermore, at the beginning of each focus group interview, the participants were once again informed about their privacy and confidentiality, and that I would not use their real names when writing my thesis, but that I would come up with new names for them. Some of the children expressed wishes regarding which name they should be given, however, I did not promise to use the names that were proposed. One of the reasons for this was that many of the children proposed the same names. Furthermore, in order to ensure their anonymity, I took the choice of deciding the participants' myself, so that none of the children could be identified in my thesis. When choosing names for the participants, I simply googled the most popular names in Norway, and picked names at random from the first list I found.

In addition to informing the participants about their anonymity through the consent form and verbal information, I also did not use the children's names while taking notes and transcribing the interview. While taking notes and transcribing, I used a unique code for each of the children. However, when writing up the analysis chapters, I assigned each participant a name. By giving the participants names in the analysis chapters, instead of referring to them by codes, the aim was to make the analysis feel more personal.

4.3.3. Power imbalances and reflexivity

Negotiating power imbalances and the role of the researcher is another central aspect of conducting ethical research. The researcher needs to be aware of the unequal power relations between adults and children, and how it can affect the research process and outcome (Abebe, 2009; Ennew et al., 2009). As Abebe (2009) points out, researchers often try to encompass a more "atypical" role to negotiate power imbalances. Utilizing various techniques, such as a change in clothing, appearance and speaking styles, may decrease the power inequalities between the adult researcher and the child. However, it is also essential for the researcher to be aware of the imbalances, and that the adult researcher will hold some degree of power over the children.

Another important aspect is the researchers need to be reflexive. Reflexivity concerns itself with the researcher's positioning and how it may affect the research (Berger, 2015). Characteristics such as gender, age, beliefs, personal experiences, and emotional responses to the participant may impact the research in various ways. Therefore, it is important that the researcher is reflexive and aware of how these characteristics may impact the data being produced (Berger, 2015). From my own experience as a kindergarten teacher, I was very aware of how I conducted myself during both the observation period and the focus group interviews. For example, when I was sitting with the children during name call, my instinct would normally be to ask them to pay attention to the teacher if they were talking while the teacher was giving out information. Instead, I answered their questions if they were directed at me, trying to avoid presenting myself as an adult with authority.

4.4. Producing and interpreting data

The following section will elaborate on the process of production and interpretation of the data. The section will describe the process of transcribing the interviews, before elaborating on the analysis of the focus group interviews through a thematic analysis. Furthermore, the analysis of the music video *Dynamite* will be described, focusing on a content analysis with inspiration from thematic analysis.

4.4.1. Transcribing the interviews

The process of transcription is a crucial step in producing and interpreting data. When transcribing the interviews from oral to written mode the researcher initiates the first step of the analytic process. However, the beginning of the analytical process can also be considered whilst out in the field, when interpreting what is being said by the participants, and gathering thoughts and ideas of what the participants' talks can entail (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014). While some researchers choose to have a professional transcriber, research assistant or secretary conduct the transcribing for them, others choose to undertake the task themselves. Furthermore, when transcribing the interview yourself it increases the familiarity with the research data. In my case, I chose to conduct the transcriptions myself. The transcription process was conducted

simultaneously with the fieldwork period, as it lasted for over a month. The interviews were transcribed shortly after they were conducted, which enabled me to remember additional details of the participants behaviors and body language during the interview. As discussed previously, the participants would sometimes talk simultaneously, which could make it hard to distinguish the various voices. However, by having conducted the focus group discussions myself, I was able to recall the interview setting, which proved to be helpful in distinguishing the voices of the participants.

Due to all interviews being in Norwegian, the transcriptions were also written in Norwegian. I opted to transcribe the interviews as closely as possible to how to participants expressed themselves, adding pauses, laughs, and silences to my transcriptions. As Braun and Clarke (2006) state, it is important to stay true to the original recording, which entails writing down both verbal and nonverbal utterances, in order to gain the full scope of the research material. However, as Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) point out, it is not productive to talk about the 'right' way of transcribing, as the way of transcribing is related to the goal of the analysis. In addition, the process of transcription is also viewed as an interpretive act, where the researcher initiates the first analytical processes while familiarizing themselves with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

4.4.2.   Analysis of interviews

The data gathered from the interviews was analyzed using a thematic analysis. A thematic analysis can be described as a method to identify patterns and themes within data. Furthermore, there is not set way of conducting a thematic analysis. However, Braun and Clarke (2006) have suggested six phases of thematic analysis, which is what my analysis is based on. In the first phase, I familiarized myself with the data that had been produced. This entailed that I repeatedly read through the transcriptions of the interviews, while making up thoughts and various suggestions for codes and themes. As I also had transcribed the interviews myself, there were already some themes that came to mind. After I felt like I have read through my data enough times, I started to generate codes from my data. I used the qualitative data analysis software NVivo to create codes and themes from my transcriptions. In the third phase, I started to cluster together codes in order to find various themes. This required a combination of various codes, in order to create broader themes that would be meaningful to my project. In the next phase, I reviewed my themes, making sure that I had enough data to support my themes, and that they were relevant to my project. Throughout this process, the themes did change a couple of times, as each time I read through my codes new ideas for themes emerged. When I finally felt content with my themes, I moved on to the fifth step, which consisted of defining and naming the themes. The sixth phase consists of producing the report, which make up the thesis. The findings from my analysis will be discussed in chapters 6 and 7.

4.4.3.   Analysis of the music video

In addition to the analysis of the interviews, an analysis of the *BlimE* campaigns music video from 2021 was conducted. The aim of this analysis was to gain insight into which ideas and norms that were represented in the music video. Moreover, the analysis

provides a backdrop for the analysis chapters based on the interviews, in order to provide a richer and more in-depth discussion on children's perspectives of the *BlimE*-campaign. I conducted the analysis of the music video by doing a qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis can be described as a method that views texts, images and expressions as data that can be read, interpreted, and acted on for their meanings through systematic analyzing it (Krippendorff, 2004). Furthermore, I drew inspiration from Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis, by interpreting and identifying salient themes in the music video.

I conducted my analysis by watching the music video several times. Furthermore, I made a simple table in Word, where I wrote down what was happening in the music video. In addition, I wrote down the lyrics, so that the lyrics and the events of the music video were synchronized. From that point, I started to code the data. The table had three columns, where in the first column I inserted the translated lyrics of the *BlimE* song. In the second column I wrote down the particular situations happening in the music video, and matched to situations to the lyrics. In the third column I wrote down codes relating to the lyrics and the corresponding situations depcited in the music video. After I was satisified with my codes, I clustered them into themes. The themes found in the music video will be presented and discussed in the next chapter.

4.5.   Chapter summary

In this chapter I have provided a description and reflection on the methodological choices for this thesis. I have elaborated on the fieldwork period, emphasizing my role as a researcher and the importance of being reflexive. I highlight the combination of methods in this thesis and reflect upon how these three methods have provided more rich and nuanced data. Furthermore, ethical considerations when conducting research with children have been discussed, emphasizing informed consent and voluntary participation, privacy and confidentiality, and reflexivity. Lastly, the process of transcription and analyzing has been elaborated on, focusing both on the focus group discussions and on the content analysis of *Dynamite.* The next chapter is the first of three analysis chapters and will center around the content analysis of the music video *Dynamite.*

5. Analysis Part I: The ideals of *BlimE*

The current chapter will provide a backdrop to the following analysis chapters. By analyzing the music video[4] *Dynamite* from the 2021 *BlimE* campaign, the main focus of the chapter is to answer the following research question: *What ideas and norms about childhood and citizenship can be found in the BlimE campaign?* The chapter will discuss the various themes found in the music video analysis. I will first discuss the notions of inclusion and diversity, then move on to feelings of community and individuality before rounding off the chapter with a discussion about children's friendships and their value.

5.1.   Analysis of music video

I will start this chapter by presenting a brief description of the music video to provide a basis for the following analysis. The music video is roughly 3 minutes long and shifts between scenes of the artist Nicolay Ramm singing and various children in different situations. The video starts with scenes of various children being alone in different places. They appear to be sad, uncertain, or maybe lonely, based on the situation they are presented in. Most of the children at the beginning of the video are looking quite uncertainly down at the ground or at other people doing activities. Several different activities are shown throughout the video, such as a boy playing with a soccer ball, a girl in a skatepark, and other children just dancing. As the music video progress and the chorus starts, the children in the various scenes start to dance. Ultimately, they are met by other children, which seems to brighten their mood. Throughout the rest of the music video, a diversity of children is portrayed, dancing either alone or with others. The music video also continuously shifts between scenes of Nicolay Ramm singing and the children dancing. At the end of the music video, all the children gather, including Nicolay Ramm, and they are shown dancing together. They make a half-circle where various children step in the middle and dance while the others cheer them on.

As mentioned previously, The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) is a public broadcasting service obligated to follow specific statutes when publishing content. These statues encompass various democratic values that are central to Norwegian society. By doing a content analysis of the music video, the aim is to provide a backdrop of the themes presented in the music video before directing the analysis towards children's perspectives and interpretations. Based on the theoretical perspective of social constructionism, stating that childhood is socially constructed, it is pivotal to look at how the *BlimE* campaign contributes to the ongoing constructions of childhood. The music video portrays children in different situations and offers a certain narrative of what it is like to be a child by both emphasizing the difficulties and the joys of children's

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[4] The music video *Dynamite* from the 2021 *BlimE* campaign can be found at:
https://nrksuper.no/blime/musikkvideo-blime-2021-13724

friendships and social lives. The *BlimE* campaign also promotes certain ideas and norms expected of children as 'good' citizens. Identifying such ideals and norms and exploring what NRK conveys to children is valuable. It can help us understand the discursive landscape that children navigate in their everyday lives, thus helping us understand their perspectives. Through an analysis of the music video, several themes were identified. The most prominent themes found in the music video analysis were inclusion, diversity, community, individuality, and friendship. I argue that a common thread through my analysis of the music video is that the values and ideas presented are connected to democratic values and citizenship ideals found in Norwegian society.

5.1.1.   Inclusion

Throughout my analysis of the music video, a prominent theme was the concept of inclusion. Inclusion is a concept that often has been connected to policymaking, education, and welfare development (Arnesen et al., 2007) As Felder (2018) states, inclusion can be understood in various ways, from viewing children as being in the same situation to a form of participation where ideas of belonging, social learning, and shared experiences are central. The latter understanding can be attributed to anti-bullying programs, where resources are spent on bettering the social situation of those excluded or providing for a better social community at school. As inclusion is a concept that can be applied to various situations and theoretical discussions, my understanding of inclusion is based on feelings of belonging, where one is included in different activities and therefore creates a set of shared experiences and feelings of validation (Felder, 2018).

In the music video, there are several short scenes at the beginning of the music video of children being portrayed alone in different places. For instance, one boy is playing with a soccer ball by himself, another girl is standing with her skateboard at a skatepark, and a second girl is sitting alone at a bus stop. The children can be perceived as unsure, unhappy, or exhibiting feelings of loneliness. This is signalized through the children's body language, and glance, where they are looking down uncertainly and their posture is restrained. The song adds to this perception of the mood with the following lyrics[5]:

> I say hello to you, do you want to be my friend?
> If you want to join the gang, there is room for more
> Or are you like me, who quickly feels alone
> Feels like you are the one, that no one asks.

These lyrics can be seen as communicating to children watching the music video that it is common to feel lonely or excluded. Furthermore, it builds on the notion that there is always room for more people and that it is possible to be included in play, activities, or other situations. In addition, the section aims at inspiring children to include others as well, presenting it as a valuable trait. Situations of being included or including others can be seen in several scenes throughout the music video. Children who are seemingly alone at the start of the music video are approached by other children, resulting in a positive shift in their demeanor. For example, the girl standing alone in the skatepark is

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[5] Original and translated lyrics for the *BlimE*-song *Dynamite* can be found in the appendix 8

approached by two other girls with skateboards. They greet each other, and then they start dancing together.

The campaign's attempt at promoting the value of inclusion can be seen in the context of shaping children to contribute to the ideal, civilized society. As Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) discuss, the civilizing of children often happens through institutions, such as kindergartens or schools. However, parallels can be drawn to campaigns that promote certain values and attitudes, where these efforts can be seen as attempts at shaping the ideal citizen. Moreover, viewing the concept of inclusion as social inclusion entails being included in play or different activities by peers, creating a sense of belonging, validation, and citizenship. As Bjerke (2010) points out in his research on children as citizens, the concept of social responsibility is a central theme in is findings. Social responsibility is explained as children having differing responsibilities in various situations, where the ideal is to "do to others as you would want others to do to you" (p. 234). As I will discuss later in the chapter, the notion of social responsibility is also central in children's sense-making practices about *BlimE* and friendship.

5.1.1.1. Diversity

A concept that is closely related to inclusion is diversity. Connected to the Norwegian welfare state, inclusiveness is a central value for education policies. Furthermore, ideas of multiculturalism and diversities have a central role in the Norwegian school curriculum and aim to encourage social inclusion and a sense of community between all children (Arnesen et al., 2007). While the concept of diversity is hard to define, with definitions varying according to situations and contexts, a central notion of diversity is that it encompasses phenomena that are viewed as different. In addition, the concept of diversity is often associated with positive connotations, embracing cultural diversities and respect for differences. Therefore, cultural diversity can be viewed as a central notion in communities that children are a part of, such as school or kindergarten, where children are given the same rights and opportunities despite their differences and backgrounds (Korsvold, 2011). Hence, respecting differences and diversities can be seen as a central value in being a good citizen.

As mentioned previously in chapter 2.2.3., NRK is obligated to follow certain statutes and legislation when creating content. The statues are based on democratic values in Norwegian society, which can be seen in connection to values that are encouraged to be a 'good' citizen. As exemplified in the statue below, NRK positions itself as a source of information and knowledge about the diversity in the Norwegian society, emphasizing Norway as a multicultural nation:

> § 32 NRK shall disseminate knowledge about different groups and about the diversity in Norwegian society. NRK will create arenas for debate and information about Norway as a multicultural society (NRK, 2019b).

When reflecting on the music video, there is a broad representation of children. There are children of different ethnicities, children with disabilities, such as one girl with Down's syndrome and one girl in a wheelchair, and children of various ages and body shapes. One could argue that through the diverse representation in the music video NRK

consciously promotes Norway as a diverse and tolerant society, portraying children of different ethnicities, disabilities, genders, ages, and hobbies in the music video.

Arnesen et al. (2007) state that inclusiveness can be seen as a political concept, connecting it to a common value society strives for to construct the ideal society. Furthermore, the ideal society embraces differences, working towards a balanced and harmonious relationship between a diversity of people while at the same time not viewing anyone as an 'outsider'. As Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) note, the prospect of accepting differences is a crucial element in becoming a part of the 'civilized' community. The aspect of accepting differences entails that there should be room for everyone in society and, furthermore, that everyone should be able to be themselves. As we have noticed so far through the analysis, the *BlimE* campaign signalizes that there is room to include all children, and all children should be accepted for their differences and diversity. They promote certain values that have been pointed out to be central in the Nordic welfare states.

5.1.2.   The Individualistic Community

> My heart goes boom ka-boom
> It goes boom ka-boom
> Together we are dyna-dynamite

The lyrics written above are the song's chorus, which is repeated throughout the music video, becoming a prominent slogan for the song. From these three short phrases, the theme of community emerges. The lyrics signalize that by being together as a community, we are 'dynamite', suggesting that feeling a sense of belonging and community is a central aspect of bringing out the best in people. In addition, throughout the music video, there are several scenes where inclusion is shown, indicating a sense of community between the children. For example, one boy is sitting alone in what seems to be a park, and his face brightens up when another boy approaches him. Furthermore, as the music video progresses, the song gets gradually more upbeat. This is reflected in the children's moods, accompanied by scenes of children including others in their activities. The children's body language changes, from having a restrained posture and a more solemn demeanor, to increased smiling and having a more relaxed body language. The children in the various settings begin to dance, radiate more confidence, and overall appear to be happier. The lyrics contribute to this upbeat feeling:

> Because you
> Have tried to be something more
> But just look at what happens
> When you are being you
> You are unique as you are

The situation in the music video can be seen as communicating two things. Firstly, it aims at showing how being included in a community is a central citizenship ideal. As Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) discuss, institutions such as schools actively shape future citizens, which can contribute to a certain kind of community. The various values and norms children are exposed to at school, such as inclusiveness and being open to diversity, are all emphasized as essential values for a 'good' citizen to possess. However,

46

community refers not only to society at large, but also to the smaller communities that children are a part of, such as their social relations with peers at school, or home with their families.

The second situation that the music video reflects upon, is the notion of Norway as an individualistic society, where independence and autonomy are ideals that are central to the notion of a 'good' childhood (Nilsen, 2008). As Nilsen (2008) elaborates upon, the qualities children are ascribed, such as being rational, independent and autonomous, is closely connected to the children's rights discourse, influenced by the implementation of The United Nations Charter on The Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Furthermore, the right to participation enables individualization and autonomy and strengthens the discourse regarding notions of a 'good' childhood (Kjørholt, 2013). As witnessed in the music video, there is a focus on children's individual abilities and gaining confidence to be themselves. This is visible in the song, as exemplified in the lyrics below:

> Don't be something that you are not
> As long as you are yourself
> You're doing something smart
> Because you are you, you, you
> And never lose faith
> That you will find something you're good at
> You'll see it soon

There is a duality to the concept of community in the song. On one side, it emphasizes how being in a group, experiencing social inclusion, and accepting differences is important. Still, on the other side, it presents an individualistic view of children, prompting them to believe in their abilities, and encouraging their individuality and autonomy. Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) explore the relationship between individuality and community. In their study of two elementary schools in Denmark, the authors found that the children at the school are taught by the teachers a variety of different behavioral norms and how to conduct themselves around others. The teachers at the school often proclaimed that each individual pupil should be able to be themselves at school, while at the same time, there was a significant focus on children's role in the class community. As Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) note, "in the ideal civilized community, everyone is accepted at the same time as everyone adapts, yet no one 'violates' themselves or others in order to fit on" (p. 110). Thus, acceptable individuality is that which can contribute to and be combined with civilized interaction between peers in the class community.

While children are taught to be individualistic, they are also required to adapt to fit into a specific community (Gilliam & Gulløv, 2016). Drawing on the concept of diversity, fitting into a particular community might entail the ability to respect differences. However, the accepted differences are often those that can contribute to civilized society, consequently creating two contrasting narratives regarding communities. On one side, children are expected to contribute to the feeling of community and create a good environment, for example, in class, where they are expected to act and behave in certain ways that contribute to the community they are in. On the other side, there is a great emphasis on children's individuality and that each child should be seen and heard and be themselves. However, as Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) point out, the individuality allowed in children has to coincide with aspects of a civilized community. Consequentially, children who act and behave in ways that do not fit into a civilized community may have their individuality and

autonomy restrained and conformed to fit better into their communities. Therefore, relating to the *BlimE* campaign, children are expected to include others, to contribute to the community and feel a sense of belonging. However, children that do not necessarily behave or act in ways that fit into the values or norms of *BlimE*, might be restrained regarding their individuality and autonomy.

5.1.3. Friendship

The last part of the current analysis chapter will focus on the concept of friendship. The *BlimE* campaign promotes itself as a friendship campaign, yet, friendship is a difficult concept to define, with varying definitions depending on the context or situation. Kvello (2012) points out that researchers often connect friendship to four dimensions. Friendships must be voluntary, predominately positive, long-lasting, and there should be a mutuality or reciprocity (p. 45). Furthermore, friendships are often based on social acceptance and belonging to social communities. However, to be a part of a social community does not necessarily mean that a person must be friends with each individual belonging to the group (Kvello, 2012). Barnes (2003) emphasizes that friendships between children appear at an early age. Children spend a lot of their time creating, maintaining, and breaking friendships. By engaging in social interactions with others and thinking back at situations that have occurred with peers, children navigate their friendships and further make up their own thoughts about their preferences in a friendship. Consequently, friendships provide a lot of experiences for children, which can be perceived as both positive and negative.

Reflecting on the music video, it is apparent that the situations predominantly depict positive experiences, where the children are included in play or another activity, where they experience positive feelings connected to those acts. However, as witnessed at the start of the music video, some scenes depict children as lonely or uncertain, consequently depicting situations that are not exclusively positive. Looking back at chapters 5.1.2. and 5.1.3., values of inclusiveness and a sense of community can be seen as central aspects of friendships. As discussed by Nilsen (2008), freedom and autonomy are values that are central to the Norwegian notion of a 'good' and 'proper' childhood. Therefore, one could argue that the ability to make and break friendships is central, as children themselves decide with social bonds they create. However, as witnessed in the music video, the children are often approached by others, seemingly always being content with their social interactions and relations. This may point to the aspect of a civilized community as discussed by Gilliam and Gulløv (2016), where children have to act and behave in certain ways in order to be ideal, civilized citizens. The notion of friendships emphasizing individuality and independence, can be seen in contrast to societies and cultures that are more collectivistic. In collectivistic cultures, there is a greater emphasis on the group identity, where the well-being of the group members surpasses the needs of the individual (Barnes, 2003). As the lyrics of the *BlimE* song highlight, "you are unique as you are". The phrase indicates a more individualistic view on society, which often is viewed as a central characteristic of Western societies (Gullestad, 2002). In contrast to the collectivistic society, the individualistic society emphasizes the needs of the individual more than the community.

Moreover, children often describe friendship as doing things together, such as playing or partaking in activities with others (Barnes, 2003). Thus, *BlimE* can be understood as a campaign that aims to facilitate friendships by encouraging children to dance together and partake in activities together. A concept that can be used to understand how and why children engage in social relations is the concept of we-ness. Children create a social relationships by sharing interests and knowledge, partaking in play and other activities, arguing, sharing secrets, and resisting adult control (Nilsen, 2005). Furthermore, we-ness between children does not necessarily imply friendships, but it is defined as a more fluid concept, where the social relationships can shift from being friends to not being friends, and from being together to not being together. We-ness, therefore, describes the act of being together with other peers (Nilsen, 2005).

Reflecting on the music video once more, the situations in the video indicate that the children portrayed might be friends. However, there is no concrete evidence of this, which can imply that they are exhibiting we-ness, where they partake in activities together, but do not necessarily define themselves as friends. Furthermore, as Kvello (2012) points out, being a part of a social community or group does not immediately entail that all group members are friends. Including others and being part of a community does lay grounds for forming friendships. However, there is also the possibility of being kind, inclusive, and respectful of others without necessarily being defined as friends. Moreover, citizenship ideals are reflected throughout the music video, and being able to form social relationships with others is a crucial part of becoming a 'good' citizen (Bjerke, 2010).

5.2. Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored which ideas and norms that are found in the *BlimE* campaign through a content analysis of the music video *Dynamite* from the 2021 *BlimE* campaign. The analysis reveals several themes that can be connected to values and norms central to the Norwegian society. As we have seen, the notion of being inclusive is one of the most prominent traits in the *BlimE* campaign. It is closely connected to the establishment of friendships and social relationships. Furthermore, the music video emphasizes being respectful and tolerant towards differences and diversities, which is highlighted as an important value for Norwegian citizens. The chapter also discusses the duality between individuality and community. On the one hand, the music video sheds light on the importance of being independent and autonomous. On the other hand, it promotes a feeling of belonging to a community. The following analysis chapter will elaborate on children's interpretations of the *BlimE* campaigns and how the children interpret and use the ideas and norms found in the *BlimE* campaign.

6. Analysis Part II: Children as citizens

The current chapter will elaborate on how the *BlimE*-campaign contributes to shaping children as citizens. The chapter will investigate the following research question: *What ideas and norms do children draw on when interpreting the BlimE campaign?* The analysis will first focus on children's interpretations and experiences with the campaign, emphasizing the underlying themes discovered in chapter 5. Furthermore, I will discuss children's talks about friendships and social relationships and how their statements reflect upon several aspects of citizenship ideals. Lastly, I will discuss how the BlimE campaign can be seen as a civilizing institution and how platforms such as school and the campaign contribute to shaping children to become 'good' citizens.

6.1.   Children's interpretations of the campaign

In order to get an impression of how *BlimE* contributes to the construction of childhood and shaping children as citizens, the chapter will first focus on children's knowledge about *BlimE*. My analysis of the focus group interviews shows that all the children participating in my project have knowledge about the *BlimE*-campaign[6]. When asked if they had heard about the campaign, all the participants answered yes. However, when asked to explain what *BlimE* is, their answers varied. The most common responses were either that they first and foremost connected *BlimE* to the annual dance, while the other common answer was that it aimed at including others in play and activities. As 9-year-old Nora explained, she first and foremost thought about the dance when thinking about *BlimE*. However, her description of the campaign then steered towards thoughts about others in the world who are not doing well:

> Karoline: What exactly is *BlimE*? Can anyone explain it to me?
> Nora (9): When I think of *BlimE*, I kind of think about that everyone should be able to join in on play. What I think of first and foremost is perhaps the *BlimE* dance […] I also think about that not everyone in the world is doing well. And that maybe we can make the world a better place. And that everyone can participate in play, and that not everyone has friends and are bullied and things like that. I kind of think about those who are bullied and that they could have had it better, and I feel a little sorry for them.

What is interesting about Nora's description of *BlimE* is that she does not only reflect upon values connected to the *BlimE* campaign, such as inclusion and feelings of being excluded, but she reflects upon society and the world in a broader sense. Her utterances strengthen the idea of *BlimE* as a civilizing initiative as it can be seen as inviting children to think about the connection between individuals' behavior and the state of the world. Moreover, Nora shows empathy towards those who have it worse than her and talks

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[6] Transcription codes:
K (Karoline) = researcher
.. = pause/hesitation
[...] = omitted segment

about how the world could be a better place. Furthermore, there is an understanding of a larger community, a community she is a part of. As Bjerke (2010) points out, studies have shown how Norwegian children tend to reflect upon how good their lives are, while other children in the world do not have the same rights and privileges as them. That children in Norway care about justice and equality may result from their relatively safe upbringing in a social democratic nation, where values such as equality weigh heavily.

Furthermore, the participants exhibit vast knowledge about inclusion and exclusion, with many drawing connections between the campaign and the concept of inclusion. As Olivia (9) explains when asked about what *BlimE* is:

> Olivia (9): That you like bring people with you to do stuff. It doesn't have to be play, but maybe to come and visit, or Leos Playland or something. I think that it is that

Olivia relates the concept of inclusion to the campaign and emphasizes that inclusion does not necessarily have to be related to play but could entail other activities, such as visiting a friend or going together to an activity center. However, many of the participants talk about inclusion in relation to play and doing activities together. As 9-year-old Lukas explains when asked what inclusion means, he states that inclusion is to invite others to play or do something together. He draws on his own experiences, saying:

> Lukas (9): It is that you bring people into play. And if someone is at home and is bored and sad, then suddenly someone knocks at the door and says "hi, do you want to join to the skatepark?" and then says, "come on", and then we go skate together and have a good time

Lukas further mentions that he invites almost everyone he knows to the skatepark, drawing on the concept of inclusion. Inviting or asking others to participate is repeatedly mentioned throughout the interviews. However, there are interesting instances where the participants mention that the person who feels left out or alone can also ask to be included in play. This notion is particularly mentioned by Vilde (9) and Nora (9), who were in two separate focus groups, when asked what they believe *BlimE* is about:

> Vilde (9): It's like everyone should be allowed to join. In play and such.. and that one should include. And that if there is someone who is excluded, they can ask to join, or you can ask if that person wants to join

> Nora (9): I think it's about.. it's kind of about that.. people must not be alone, they must not sit alone, and that it is not always those who are together and have someone to be with, they don't always have to ask those who are alone, also those who are alone can ask if the others want to be together

Vilde and Nora talk about how those who feel alone or excluded, can ask to join, suggesting that it is not the sole responsibility of others to include people. Nora also emphasizes that people must not be alone. Nora's statements could suggest that the campaign can be perceived as an institution that aims to instruct how children should act and behave. Furthermore, Vilde and Nora's utterances can be seen in the light of citizenship ideals and how social responsibility is a crucial point in becoming a citizen. Thus, it can be argued that a good citizen must be able to adapt to social settings, and the individual also has a responsibility to contribute and become a part of society. The girls' statements may reflect a view that the excluded also have a responsibility to work to be included.

As mentioned previously, the *BlimE* dance often comes up when asking the participants what they believe *BlimE* is. Some participants explain that the *BlimE* dance is what they think about first, while others are a bit more confused when asked about the campaign, asking me if I mean the dance or something different. Alma (8 years) elaborates on the importance of the dance, stating that it is good that they make a new dance each year and how it can contribute to teaching people to be kinder. When asked why she thinks it is good that they release a new dance each year, she answers:

> Alma (8): Because then more people can learn it together. And then it's like more people who can join in on it. So it's like that kind of thing *BlimE* stands for, so that more people can dance. Because if the case is that there is someone who is at home, or someone who is in the schoolyard and dancing alone, then there is no point to it [...] But if there are more friends that want to join, then it is the *BlimE* theme that has made them join in

In this excerpt, Alma reflects upon the dance as something more than simply a dance. She states that it contributes to creating a community and a sense of belonging, where people dance together, driven by the theme of *BlimE*. While Alma does not explain what themes she is referring to, she emphasizes inclusion and being together with other people. Furthermore, she implies that *BlimE* would not be the same if people would not join in on it, as she argues, "then there is no point to it". Bjerke (2010) points out that the concept of citizenship entails a feeling of belonging and community, where children share their interests and respect differences. The way Alma portrays it, the campaign contributes to the construction of a community, where the children gather to dance together, creating social relations and experiences together.

6.1.1. "Everyone is unique, but they are still the same"

As discussed in chapter 5, several themes appeared during the music video analysis. Many of the themes were also prominent in the children's interpretations of the campaign. Some of the participants mentioned the concept of diversity, as they talked about differences and that everyone is unique. There was particularly talk about differences and diversity after watching the music video together. 9-year-old Hedda explains what is happening in the music video, drawing attention to the children with disabilities. She further points out that even though someone might appear to be slightly different, they are still the same as others.

> Hedda (9): They make *BlimE* because they are saying "you have to join, you are still who you are" and you like have to be who you are. And not care about what others say
> Vilde (9): And then he sings like "join and sing dingdingding"
> Hedda (9): Yes, and that they are the same even though they have illnesses. And that they are not unique because of the illness in a way. I know that everyone is unique, but they are still the same. That they should not care about what others say and such

Hedda reflects upon an interesting aspect of being unique and different. She states that a disability does not make an individual unique, but rather the individual themselves. She points out that everyone is the same, but everyone is also unique. Through this statement, Hedda draws on ideas and norms connected to being a good citizen, presenting herself as having knowledge, respect, and tolerance towards diversity and differences by emphasizing that people should not care about what others say. The girls'

conversation illustrates the coexistence of various values, such as equality, the value of diversity and tolerance, and how individualism and community are intertwined. As Hedda states, "..everyone is unique, but they are still the same". Gullestad (2002) discusses the notion of equality as sameness, where the idea of equality correlates to social actors in a community feeling more or less the same. Furthermore, it highlights an implicit social model in the Scandinavian countries, where people establish social relationships with people who are the same as them, avoiding or down-playing differences. The focus is, therefore, on commonalities people have with others, while differences are often played down. Hedda's portrayal of sameness can therefore be linked to core values of Norwegian society, where everyone is presented as equal, and differences, such as illnesses, are played down.

Lotte (12) also brings up the subject of diversity when asked if there is anything to learn from the campaign:

> K: Is there anything to learn from it?
> Lotte (12): A little, that you can be friends even.. or like, you don't have to think that you can't make friends even if you are different

Lotte explains that even if you are different, you can still make friends, emphasizing that those who are different might feel like they cannot make friends. As discussed in the previous chapters, tolerance, and respect for diversities are central to being a good citizen. However, Hedda's and Lotte's interpretations of the campaign could also point to a more negative view of diversity and differences. Looking back at Gullestad's concept of 'equality as sameness', how Lotte talks about differences and friendship may point to a notion of differences being perceived negatively. While Lotte's statement does shine a light on tolerance and respect for diversity, there is also an underlying presumption of people that are different being friendless or having more difficulties with making friends. As she states, "you don't have to think that you can't make friends even if you are different". With sameness having a central place in the formation of social relationships in the Scandinavian countries and differences being played down, one could argue that if one really had basic respect and appreciation for diversity in society, perhaps the idea that one can be friendless if one is different would not have been as easily accessible. While it is difficult to conclude whether the *BlimE*-campaign has played a significant role in the participants' values and attitudes towards diversity, the children interpret the campaign in ways that resonates with what I have found in my analysis of the music video, especially considering values of inclusion and diversity. Furthermore, their statements resonate with various social norms found in Norwegian society.

6.1.2.   Friendships and social relationships

Having presented the music video analysis in the previous chapter, many of the themes and values found in the campaign can be connected to citizenship ideals and children as citizens in the present. Bjerke (2011) explores the notion of children as responsible beings, emphasizing how children's agency plays an important part in recognizing children as citizens. Furthermore, responsibilities are experienced both as a burden and a privilege. The relationship between ideas of children and childhood as different from adults, but simultaneously equal, plays a crucial part in understanding children's

responsibilities. Moreover, through his research, children's understanding of a 'good citizenship' emerged, with responsibilities such as helping the community, contributing to society, and looking after the vulnerable being prominent. Drawing on the notions of children as 'human beings' rather than 'human becomings', children are seen as competent individuals with both rights to participation and responsibilities connected to their childhoods (Bjerke, 2011).

Children's talk about friendship can shed light on how children use their agency to implement the values represented in the campaign into their everyday lives. From my analysis of the interviews, several key aspects of the importance of friendship emerged. Trust, safety, inclusion, kindness, and the effects of arguments were frequently mentioned characteristics of friendship. As illustrated in the excerpt below, the participants have a clear understanding of what friendship means to them, and what they find is essential in a friendship.

> K: Does *BlimE* say anything about friendship? What is a friend?
> Mia (8): A friend is someone you can trust. So it's about being able to trust a friend, and that there is someone who includes you no matter what
> Tiril (8): A friend is someone you can play with, that you can.. if one friend wants to play with others, then they have another best friend
> K: Do you have to be best friends to be friends then?
> Mia (8): You can have as many friends as you want
> Tiril (8): You can have a thousand
> K: How can you be a good friend?
> Mia (8): That you can keep secrets and that you trust them
> K: Why is it important to trust each other?
> Mia (8): Being a good friend.. it's very smart to include others. You can be a good friend anyway, even if you fight, you can still be a good friend

Mia (8) and Tiril (8) discuss the concept of friendship. There are several aspects of friendship that they find important. Firstly, the girls describe how a friend is someone you can trust, and that includes you in play no matter what. The emphasis on play is important and correlates with Barnes (2003) findings, stating that children often define friendship through playing or engaging in activities with their peers. Furthermore, Mia and Tiril mention that if a friend wants to play with another friend, then they have another best friend. This may imply that the girls associate friendship with being best friends. In addition, the two girls in the excerpt told me that they had been best friends since they were little, which could influence their conversation about friendship. Moreover, the girls reflect upon the number of friends you can have and mention that you can have a thousand friends if you want to.

The emphasis on having more than one friend was also mentioned by other participants, becoming an interesting aspect of my analysis. Olivia (9) states that "we are not allowed to only have one best friend", followed by Emma (9) supporting this notion by saying, "and we can never have enough best friends". What is interesting about Olivia and Emma's talks about friendship is how they emphasize that they are not allowed to have just one friend. None of the participants mentioned who told them that they are not allowed to have just one friend. However, from my observation period at the SFO, I observed the children and the teacher talk about inclusion and friendship, implying that school is one of the places where the children have heard this message. However, Olivia and Emma's statements can also indicate that friendship is a topic they talk about at

various places, and not only at school, but at the SFO or through the media, where it is emphasized that it is important to include others in play and activities.

Additionally, drawing on the theoretical perspective of social constructionism, the campaign and the school contribute to the construction of childhood by portraying what friendship should look like, and the children contribute to this construction through the ways they relate to what the adults at school are telling them. Social relationships are important for children, with studies showing how children gradually, as they get older, become more aware of those around them (Sørenssen, 2021). However, as Sørenssen (2021) points out, some studies have shown how children in kindergartens are conscious of those around them, and position themselves in groups to secure their social inclusion and avoid exclusion. Considering norms of being a 'good' citizen, it is important to be able to function in a community together with others. By teaching children to include others and befriend more people, the school and the campaign simultaneously work to shape children as citizens. The children actively participate in this process by interpreting the ideals and norms presented to them.

Arguments amongst friends and peers were another aspect mentioned quite a lot by the participants. While the participants' talks about arguments are not directly connected to the *BlimE* campaign, one of the themes I identified in my music video analysis was friendship. Furthermore, as *BlimE* defines itself as a 'friendship campaign', I believe that it is central to this thesis to discuss the children's experiences and perspectives of friendship, including arguments that might occur between friends. Some of the participants referred to arguments as a rupture of friendships, others reflected upon arguments as part of friendships. As Hedda (9) pointed out, "best friends might argue, but it's just friendship-love". Therefore, it is interesting to look at how the participant talk about arguments and their experiences with resolving them.

> Nora (9): I like least to argue when we are outside […]. Often there are two girls fighting each other. And they have people on each team. So it's like two people against each other.
> K: But how can you stop arguing? What can you do?
> Emma (9): Tell an adult or try to sort things out
> Nora (9): But first of all, I usually try to say like.. I say like: "Hey you, there's no point to this. I don't want to argue. So in that case, I'm going to do something else. Those who do not want to argue can come with me. Then those who want to argue can stay here and argue"
> Emma (9): But if there's a fight like that.. Then usually it's like, it's like two teams. And then some are more excluded. If there is someone that is sad then many will follow that person. And then someone joins someone. And if you are sad, then many people follow that person

Nora and Emma reflect upon arguments as unnecessary, creating a bad atmosphere in the group that they do not want to be a part of. In addition, they mention ways of handling and sorting out their disagreements. As the participants explain, arguments often occur between two individuals, where the rest of the group chooses sides. Furthermore, if one of the individuals in the conflict is more visibly sad or unhappy, more people will get behind that person. This is an interesting aspect of the conflict, as it implies that visibly sad individuals get more empathy from the group. Furthermore, as seen in the *BlimE* music video, several children were portrayed as sad initially and grew happier as other children approached them.

In addition, Nora mentions that she often tries to resolve the conflicts by saying there is no point in arguing. Based on the excerpt, it seems like the children almost have learned how to avoid conflicts or arguments. As Nora explains, she tries to end the conflicts by suggesting that they split of the group into an argument-group and a group that leaves the argument in order to do something more reasonable. Relating to the notion of citizenship as responsibility, there is a pattern of trying to take responsibility to mediate arising conflicts between peers. Moreover, the conversation sheds light on how arguments and conflicts are a part of children's everyday life while they try to navigate and avoid conflicts. Hedda (9) also talks about how friends might argue:

> Hedda (9): When you are best friends and argue, you say words that you don't really mean, like "we are not friends anymore". But when I and another argue and we like try to sort things out, I say "we are not friends, we are best friends"

Hedda talks about arguments and how often, in an argument with friends, things can be said that neither part means. The notion of arguments connected to friendships is mentioned by other participants as well, focusing on how they can still stay friends even though they argue. As Mia (8) points out, "You can still be a good friend, even though you argue, you can still be a good friend". Nilsen (2005) discusses how conflicts can lead to friendships and peer relations. They are a part of children's social relationships, where disputes, negotiations, resistance, and conflicts are central. Furthermore, the interviews indicate that the children often resolve conflicts themselves, without any interventions from the adults at school. Hence, the participants participate and take responsibility in various situations in their everyday lives.

The analysis of children's talk about *BlimE* revealed several ideals about a 'good' citizenship. Institutions and actors such as *BlimE* contribute to a discursive landscape that children must make sense of and navigate in everyday life. They are faced with certain ideals and norms dictating how to act and behave in various places and situations. At the same time, when talking about children's citizenship, it is important to acknowledge children's agency and how they participate in and construct their social worlds. For example, as talked about by Aurora, she mentions how she used to be in a group, where she did not feel like she could be herself. Aurora characterizes herself as a silly type of person who likes to laugh and be a bit goofy.

> Aurora (12): Kind, and just be yourself really. I think that you're not a good friend with them if you don't feel like yourself with them. So if you for example.. have experienced that you are yourself.. Because I'm more of a silly type, I joke a lot and such, and I was in a group before where I felt I couldn't be myself. Because they just rolled their eyes and looked at each other with mean looks and stuff. But the group I'm in now is very good

While being in a group, Aurora felt like she was not welcomed there. She mentions the other people in her group rolling their eyes at her, making her feel like she could not be herself in the group. As Barnes (2003) points out, children tend to compare themselves with their friends and peers, which can result in a better understanding of who they are and what they wish to become. How children create friendships, and the experiences they gain through them, are connected to developing their identities and personalities (Barnes, 2003). Moreover, Aurora's statement touches upon the interaction between being an individual and belonging to a group. Drawing connections between Aurora's statement and Gullestad (2002) concept of 'equality as sameness', Aurora's differences

from the rest of the group might have made the group reject her, as she was not perceived as the 'same' as them. Aurora emphasizes the value of being included and accepted for who one is. She masters her situation by using discourses to reconcile with how she felt in the past and how she feels now and orients herself towards certain ideas and norms that are central in *BlimE.*

Bjerke (2010) emphasizes that children need to be recognized as active participants in society. Through their agency, children are enabled to take social responsibility in various situations and participate in various activities connected to school, friends, and family. Furthermore, through experiences and participation in everyday life, children are being shaped and shape themselves as citizens that can create knowledge and contribute to society. Therefore, acknowledging children as responsible beings can be seen in the context of recognizing children as citizens. Furthermore, several ideals and values connected to friendship were found in the analysis. Being inclusive and respecting diversities and differences was a prominent trait throughout the participants' talks about friendship, highlighting that you should not only have one friend and how negotiations and conflicts are a part of friendships. Moreover, exhibiting individuality and autonomy was also a central value, where the emphasis was on being accepted for who you are and that you can make friends even though you are different.

6.2.   A civilizing initiative

As Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) emphasize, childhoods are becoming increasingly institutionalized. Children spend a large part of their days in institutions, whether in kindergarten, at school, or at various after-school activities. Based on the research by Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) on civilizing institutions, NRK and school can both be considered civilizing institutions, and the *BlimE* campaign a civilizing initiative. The *BlimE* campaign aims at promoting certain ideals and norms on how children should act and behave, emphasizing values that are dominant in the Norwegian society, such as inclusion, respect, and tolerance for diversities, and promoting a community among the children. Thus, the campaign plays a role in shaping children as certain kinds of citizens, emphasizing ideals and norms that are central to being good citizens. Schools have become an arena not only for education but also an institution where socialization occurs. Through the analysis of the interviews, a clear theme emerged of the participants closely connecting the campaign to school. While the younger participants often replied that they are taught the dance at school, but do not really talk about the campaign, some of the older participants emphasized that they do not talk about the campaign at school but rather that there is much more talk about it in the younger classes. Emma (9) and Alma (8) elaborate on their discussions about *BlimE*:

> K: Do you talk about *BlimE* at school?
> Alma (8): Yes, no, yes
> Emma (9): We dance the dance, but we do not usually talk so much
> K: What about your friends? Do you talk about *BlimE* with your friends?
> Emma (9): Not so much
> K: Why is that?
> Emma (9): I don't know, we just don't, we have so much other fun things to do
> K: What about your parents? Have you talked about *BlimE* with them?
> Alma (8): No

Their conversations about *BlimE* at school or with their peers mostly revolve around the dance. However, from my brief period of observation at the school, I witnessed an interesting situation. On Friday, the children danced the *BlimE*-dance together during their after-school program. The teacher mentioned that this is something they do every Friday. The teacher then proceeded to ask the children a question, about whether the children felt like they had been included in something, included someone, or witnessed someone being included. One boy answered that he was walking with his friend that day, and then another boy was a bit late. So instead of going with his friend, he decided to wait for the other boy so he would not walk alone. Through this description of the situation, and the question posed by the teacher, it seems that the children do talk about the values behind *BlimE*, at least to some degree, at school.

However, it might be possible that the questions I asked relating to if *BlimE* was talked about amongst the participants or at school, were a bit unclear, and that I should have phrased myself differently. On the other hand, as described earlier, many participants initially connected *BlimE* to the dance, consequently making it hard to pose the 'right' question. The participants might have perceived my question as specific talks about the campaign, and not talks about the underlying themes, such as inclusion, friendship and community. However, when asking the older participants the same question, many of them replied that they do not talk about the campaign, but that there is a greater focus on it in the younger classes. Sara (12), Julie (12) and Erle (12) point this out in the interview:

> K: Do you talk about *BlimE* at school?
> Sara (12): No
> Julie (12): Often negatively
> Erle (12): In music class we do it
> Julie (12): In the first and second year the teachers have much more focus on *BlimE* and then you learn like "okay you should include people and such"
> Sara (12): It depends on the years. In the first and second year there was a lot of talk about it. Eventually, I think our teachers didn't care as much about it
> Julie (12): I think it's because we did not care as much so then they just gave up

The girls talk about how they feel *BlimE* is more directed towards the younger children and how in their year, most talk about *BlimE* is negative. They also mention that one of the reasons for *BlimE* not being talked about in their class, is because they simply do not care as much about the campaign anymore. Consequently, there seems to be a kind of collective distancing among the older participants, where they position themselves as above the target group for the campaign. Hagen and Wold (2017) describe positioning as a way of presenting yourself in relation to different media discourses. When talking about media phenomena, children construct their identity in relation to their friends, family, and interview setting. With NRK Super being a channel aimed at children between 2 and 12 years old, the oldest participants in elementary school might associate the channel with childishness and try to position themselves as more mature and competent.

However, there is a difference between this focus group, and another focus group with 12-year-old participants. Here, Aurora (12) talks about how it used to be embarrassing to like *BlimE*, but as they have gotten older, it is not like that anymore.

> Aurora (12): It is quite fun, but what I think is stupid is that from like the fifth grade to the seventh.. From like the start of the fifth grade to the start of the seventh grade, sort of between there, *BlimE* is kind of embarrassing. People kind of think it's like "oh it's so stupid and it's so embarrassing". But now that we're quite older, I feel like it's not that embarrassing anymore
> K: Are there others in your class that find it stupid and embarrassing?
> Aurora (12): Yes
> K: Why do you think it's like that?
> Aurora (12): They probably think it's a bit silly and.. just..
> Ingrid (11): In my class it's like a quarter of the class likes to dance and stuff

In this excerpt, Aurora, like the participants in the focus group mentioned above, positions herself as mature and competent, but instead of feeling too old for *BlimE*, she explains that she is old enough not to be embarrassed by liking the campaign. As Buckingham (1993) points out, children actively position themselves in certain ways when being interviewed about various topics. Through discursive approaches to how children talk about media, one can explore the ways children position themselves as a certain person that follows certain ideals (Buckingham, 1993, 2000). Hence, Aurora's positionality as mature and competent can be seen in the light of being in the oldest target-group of the campaign.

Regarding Aurora's experience with *BlimE*, Sørenssen (2020) describes the social construction of the concept 'tween'. Tween is a category that encompasses the time between childhood and teenagers, ranging from 8 to 12 years old. Children in this age group describe themselves as shifting between two different age groups. Age-shifting often depends on the context and situation, as Sørenssen (2020) describes in her research, "it is a constructed age category where the main characteristic is that inhabitants of this category move between acting like a child and acting like a teenager" (p. 86). Thus, one can argue that the way the older participants talk about the campaign can be seen as the participants relating to ideas about different age groups in different ways, where some feel like they have out-grown the campaign, while others feel old enough not to be embarrassed of liking the campaign.

Drawing on the aspect of *BlimE* as a civilizing initiative, the participants might feel like the campaign has an instructing dimension, consequentially telling them how to act and behave. An interesting aspect of this instructing dimension is mentioned by Erle (12):

> K: Can you tell me what *BlimE* is?
> Erle (12): A thing we are forced to do

When asked what *BlimE* is, Erle replies that it is a thing that they are forced to do. As discussed earlier, *BlimE* is often associated with school. Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) argue that school is no longer an institution that solely focuses on academic education, but that entails an instructing dimension, where children are taught how to act and behave to conform to the civilized society. Therefore, it can be suggested that the relation the *BlimE* campaign has to school influences how the campaign itself is perceived. By being implemented by the school in their schedule and as homework, the children might create associations to the campaign as a child-rearing practice. Furthermore, Oliver (9) states that "we all gather outside and then we have to dance". His statement is in relation to the *BlimE* dance as an annual event, where children at elementary schools all over Norway gather on a given Friday during the year and dance the *BlimE* dance together.

Oliver's statement is similar to Erle's, where he points out that they *have* to dance outside. Their talks about how the dance is something that they have to do or are forced to do, suggests a negative association to the campaign in relation to school, as it is perceived as something that is forced upon the children.

6.2.1.   NRK Super in a school context

While the participants talk about the *BlimE* campaign at school, and participate in the annual dance, many of the participants describe their relation and use of the channel NRK Super, especially connected to school. Due to the *BlimE* campaign being a part of NRK Super, it is therefore interesting to look at how the children interact with the channel NRK Super. Many of the younger participants talk about how they watch NRK Super both at home and in class, mentioning many programs[7] such as *Ikke gjør dette mot klimaet!, Klassen, Gjør det sjøl* and *FlippKlipp.* This is illustrated by Hedda (9) and Vilde (8) in the excerpt below:

> K: But do you watch anything on NRK Super?
> Hedda (9): Yes, I watch *Rabalder* and *Klassen*, and I also watch *Litt av en jobb.* I also watch *Bamselegen*
> Vilde (9): I usually watch it most at school

Hedda talks about all the programs she watches, indicating that she interacts with NRK Super in her leisure time. Vilde states that she usually just watches NRK Super at school. While Vilde was one of the few participants amongst the younger children talking about how she usually just watches programs from NRK Super at school, her statement suggests that the younger children do watch NRK Super during their school hours. However, the older participants talk about how they used to watch NRK Super in their leisure time before, but now they mostly watch it at school. Ingrid (11), Aurora (12) and Lotte (12) explain that they watch various programs from NRK Super during their lunch break:

> K: Do you watch something on NRK Super?
> Ingrid (11): I don't watch it that much
> K: Did you use to watch it, is there something that you watched?
> Ingrid (11): Yes, I watched.. I used to watch it quite a lot before
> K: What did you watch, do you remember?
> Lotte (12): More like comedy series, and like.. a lot at school. In the sixth grade there was a lot about the body and puberty and stuff
> Aurora (12): But we watched *Lik Meg* at school, for quite some time
> Lotte (12): Sometimes we watched the puberty thing, it's a very fun.. comedy series
> K: Did you watch it in class?
> Aurora (12): Not in class, but during lunch there's often like *Klassen* and *Lik Meg* and series like that
> K: Do you watch it every day or?

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[7] Translations of programs:
Ikke gjør dette mot klimaet! = Don't do this to the climate!
Klassen = The Class
Gjør det sjøl = Do it yourself
Lik meg = Like me
Supernytt = Supernews
Litt av en jobb = A bit of a job
Rabalder = Ruckus
Bamselegen = The teddy doctor

Aurora (12): No, like 2-3 days a week

The participants explain that they usually only watch programs from NRK Super at school, but they used to watch it in their leisure time before. Furthermore, they explain how they watch some of the programs during their lunch break, which they watch 2 to 3 times a week. As Lotte mentions, they watched programs about the body and puberty in the sixth grade, implying that some of NRK Super's programs are considered educational tools, where the children learn about their bodies and the changes that occur during puberty. Furthermore, the other focus group with the older participants point out how watching programs from NRK Super is something they must watch:

> K: What about *Supernytt* and such?
> Julie (12): Yeah we watch it at school. We have no choice
> Erle (12): Do we?
> Sara (12): We used to
> Thale (12): Now we watch *Lik Meg*, it's on NRK Super
> K: Why do you watch at school?
> Julie (12): Because we wanted to
> Thale (12): It was either that or *Klassen*, and we've seen *Klassen* before

An interesting aspect of the conversation between the older participants is that there is a duality in their sayings. When asked if they watch *Supernytt*, Julie answers that they do watch it, but that they have no choice and thereby must watch it at school. Julie then goes on to saying that they watch *Lik Meg* at school because they want to. The conversation in the excerpt above could imply that the participants must watch something during lunch break but that the class decides what they should watch. This can again be connected to the instructing position the school as an institution has, and that the older participants are taking a collective distance toward NRK Super.

Consequently, a link between the school and the campaign is evident, with the children getting most of their knowledge about *BlimE* from school, or in school contexts. As Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) discuss, the construction of a civilized community is often connected to schools and institutions where children spend a lot of their day. The school has an instructing dimension, where they shed light on educating children about social norms and behaviors that are deemed appropriate, in order to contribute to the ideal, civilized society. While the analysis suggests that the participants recognize the values communicated through the *BlimE* campaign as important and implement them into their daily lives both consciously and unconsciously, the children might also recognize that institutions are trying to shape their behavior. The connection between the school and the campaign may impact how children position themselves to the campaign, where on the one hand they do recognize its importance, but on the other hand might position themselves more negatively towards it. This could be due to the association of the campaign as a child-rearing practice, or due to the children wanting to position themselves as older and more mature in relation to the campaign.

6.3.   Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored how children interpret and use the various ideas and norms found in the *BlimE* campaign. The analysis was based on focus group discussions with groups of children aged 8 to 12 and revealed how the children reflect widely upon the various values connected to the *BlimE* campaign. One of the most prominent values discussed was inclusivity, and how being inclusive is viewed as an important aspect of being a part of the civilized community. Furthermore, the children's statements reflect upon aspects of accepting differences and diversities, while also shedding light on how these statements can reflect ideas and norms about 'good' citizens. Furthermore, in light of the children's statements and the analysis conducted in the previous chapter, the *BlimE* campaign can be seen as a civilizing initiative, aiming to promote certain ideals and values connected to notions of being a 'good' and civilized citizen. At the same time, the analysis reveals how the children interpret and use the values presented to them in various ways. In the next analysis chapter, I will elaborate further on the children's interpretations of the purpose and effectiveness of the campaign.

7. Analysis Part III: Empowerment

In the current chapter, I will elaborate on the concept of empowerment in connection to the *BlimE*-campaign. In this chapter, I will explore the following research questions: *How do children interpret the purpose and effectiveness of the BlimE campaign?* Furthermore, the chapter will touch upon aspects related to the previous analysis chapter. The chapter will focus on how the participants talk about *BlimE* as a tool for empowerment and connect the concept of empowerment to agency and autonomy. Furthermore, the chapter will discuss feelings of mastery and motivation and how the campaign can be used as a resource to master situations that occur in the participants' everyday lives. The chapter will also look at how the campaign can be perceived as a double-edged sword. Where one on the hand, it can help empower the children, while on the other hand it might create more differences and feelings of disempowerment.

7.1.   *BlimE* as a tool to use in everyday life

Connected to the aspect of *BlimE* as a tool to aid in everyday life, some participants highlight how the campaign has a central function in creating friendships and exhibiting values of inclusiveness.

> Mia (8): If we didn't have *BlimE* then everyone would be like «no, you can't join, only my friends can join"

Mia (8) describes *BlimE* as a tool for participation. In her statements, she regards *BlimE* as a crucial tool for promoting inclusion, and states that without *BlimE,* only those you regard as friends would participate in play and activity. As mentioned in chapter 5.1.3., playing with peers and participating in activities together does not necessarily imply friendships but can also be viewed as an act of 'we-ness', where children create social relationships through taking part in activities and sharing interests together (Nilsen, 2005). Furthermore, some participants elaborate on the function *BlimE* has for creating friendships. Lukas (9) emphasizes the importance of *BlimE* for friendships:

> Lukas (9): *BlimE*.. if *BlimE* didn't exist then.. then we would have had almost no friends

Both Mia (8) and Lukas (9) talk about how the campaign is a helpful tool in creating social relationships. While Mia points out that without the campaign, you would not be able to participate in activities with other than your friends, Lukas states that without *BlimE*, they would almost have no friends. Through Lukas' statement, it can be argued that the campaign can help empower children to create friendships and social relations. Thus, an important aspect when discussing how campaigns such as *BlimE* work is to acknowledge children as active meaning-makers that interpret the campaign in various ways. Although Mia and Lukas' talks are similar, they touch upon different aspects of social relationships, connecting *BlimE* to friendship and the concept of inclusion.

In my interviews, some of the participants talked about motivation and gaining mastery over their own lives in relation to the *BlimE* campaign. Consequently, this became a prominent theme in my analysis. While some participants talked about how *BlimE* provided them with increased autonomy and self-esteem, others mentioned that the campaign led them to feel a decreased degree of mastery and motivation. Therefore, this section will elaborate on *BlimE* as a tool for empowerment that can assist children in their own everyday lives. When the participants were asked whether there were any negative aspects of the campaign, Aurora (12) answered accordingly:

> K: Is there anything that's not so good about *BlimE*?
> Aurora (12): Not really, it's mostly a good thing. There's a lot *BlimE* has helped me with. In first grade there was quite a lot of bullying, and I was often bullied because I was quite short, so I was bullied a lot for it. But then I feel like *BlimE* has helped me a little with that
> K: In what way has it helped?
> Aurora (12): I heard the songs and stuff like that, and then I thought that I am good enough as I am and that no one should be allowed to change how I am

In this excerpt, Aurora talks about her own experiences with the campaign. She mentions that she does not really think there is anything bad about *BlimE* and explains how the campaign has helped her in her own life. She talks about being bullied when she was younger and how the campaign has made her realize that she is good enough as she is, and that no one can change who she is. What Aurora is talking about can be seen as positioning herself as a resourceful person that masters her own everyday life. Furthermore, she emphasizes that she has used the song as a resource to help her master a difficult situation. While she explains that the song helped her feel more empowered, Aurora's statements could be connected to notions of individuality and self-esteem. As Aurora talks about her experiences, *BlimE* has a central role, which implies that the campaign is important to her. As stated by Revollo and Portela (2019), agency and empowerment are two intertwined concepts. When describing empowerment, the emphasis is often on how subjects use their agency to make strategic and meaningful choices and actively participate in the process of change in their lives. Aurora's decision to regard herself as good enough is an example of using her agency to improve her situation by drawing on a notion of individuality. Through the way the participants talk, certain ideas that surround them are used, and that are conveyed by *BlimE*, to navigate and give meaning to experiences the participants have in everyday life.

7.2.　Feelings of mastery

As some of the participants discussed, the *BlimE* campaign can be used as a resource to help master their everyday lives. The concept of mastery was central in the older participants' talk. As stated by Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988), gaining mastery over their own lives a crucial aspect of empowerment. Furthermore, Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988) propose the following definition for empowerment: "It is thought to be a process by which individuals gain mastery or control over their own lives and democratic participation in the life of their community" (p. 726). Thus, empowerment can be connected to an individual's sense of self-confidence and self-acceptance, and the ability to make decisions in the community around them (Zimmerman & Rappaport,

1988). Moreover, most scholars agree that agency is central in relation to empowerment (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008; Revollo & Portela, 2019). Agency is viewed as the core of empowerment, as it provides the individual with the ability to make purposeful choices and decisions in their own everyday lives (Revollo & Portela, 2019). The older participants reflected on how the *BlimE* campaign simultaneously can empower children to feel a sense of mastery, but also make them feel less empowered:

> Sara (12): There are many schools that dance the *BlimE*-dance together each year, at the same time. It is supposed to bring people together based on feelings of mastery and stuff, but they do not get that
> Julie (12): Because the dances are too difficult for the first graders, and too easy for the seventh graders. And if you.. Because the seventh graders are very unmotivated for it. The first graders are the ones that are most motivated. But eventually they can't do the actual dance. Because it is difficult. And then they lose motivation for it as well. And then it's no fun to stand in front of people and dance when they do not know the dance themselves and have lost the feeling of mastery and motivation completely
> Sara (12): In addition, the dances are very made for children. Like the way, and the songs in particular, they are not like.. They are very suitable for children, but it's not songs that we who are a bit older are interested in
> Thale (12): I think most of the grades here think.. I know at least that our grade think that each time.. Each year the dance and songs get worse
> Erle (12): That's true
> Julie (12): I think the first, second and third year are motivated-ish. But after that you just don't bother with it anymore. Because 3 years and each year you haven't managed to learn the dance because it's too difficult. And once you actually know it, you just don't bother with it. Because the seventh grade can learn the dance and we know it pretty well. But then you just don't bother because you have lost your motivation completely

In this excerpt, the participants discuss feelings of mastery and motivation in connection to the campaign. They specifically use the dance as an example, arguing that the dance is too difficult for the younger children, and too easy for the older children. Furthermore, motivation comes up as a frequent topic with the older participants. They state the younger children might feel motivated to the dance at first, but because it is too difficult, they quickly lose their motivation. The excerpt can be seen as an expression of children's perspective on the campaign itself. They emphasize that it exists to create motivation and mastery, but they also point out several weaknesses within the campaign. As Julie (12) emphasizes, the dances are too difficult for the first graders, and too easy for the seventh graders. Furthermore, she explains that due to the dance being perceived as too easy, the oldest children in the school lose their motivation for the campaign. Similarly, she points out another weakness, which is that the dance is too difficult for the first graders, making them lose their motivation as well.

Nilsen (2009/2014) mentions that resistance and negotiations are a way for children to exhibit their agency. Therefore, resistance can be seen to oppose adult authority and as a tool for empowerment. By gaining control of their experiences in their everyday lives, one can conclude that resistance can be understood as a form of agency and empowerment. Furthermore, as witnessed in the excerpt above, there is a clear collective distancing toward the campaign by the older participants. As mentioned previously, children aged 8 to 12 can be characterized as tweens, shifting from one age group to another (Sørenssen, 2020). Conclusively, the participants' collective distancing and resistance towards the campaign can be seen as a form of exercising power, where they interpret the campaign in a specific way and point out its weaknesses.

Moreover, the participants' statements can also be seen as a collective positioning in the interview setting. The participants present themselves as being 'past' *BlimE*, both for me, for each other, and perhaps for an imaginary audience, implying that they are older and more mature than the target group for *BlimE*. As Buckingham (1993) points out, while being interviewed, children position themselves in certain ways when discussing various media phenomena. He further emphasizes how a group setting in research often tends to steer towards a consensus within the group, building up group solidarity. As experienced in the interview with Sara, Julie, Thale and Erle, the girls agreed that the campaign had several weaknesses, most often relating to being too difficult for younger children and too easy for older children, resulting in a loss of motivation. Buckingham (1993) emphasizes that children often position themselves in relation to age. When talking about various television programs, they would often describe them as either 'childish' or 'grown-up', where the categories would often reflect the program's target audience (p. 75). Thus, by discussing a phenomenon with the target group of 8 to 12, and the older participants being in the upper age of the target group, might contribute to their presentation of themselves as too mature or too old for the campaign.

However, in contrast, Aurora (12) points out that the dances have become increasingly more difficult. Still, she views this as a positive aspect, becoming a gradual transition as she becomes older herself.

> K: Did you like it?
> Aurora (12): I feel like the dance is better this year actually, it used to be a bit simple. But it's probably a little different now that we've gotten older. Because in the first grade it was quite an easy dance, but it was good, so I feel like it's kind of good that for us who are in the seventh grade the dance has become harder and harder over the years. And it's kind of good because we're getting better and better at dancing, from the first grade to now

Aurora reflects upon how she has developed her skills continually as *BlimE* has gotten more advanced over the years. In contrast to the previous excerpt, Aurora exhibits more positive associations with the campaign, stating that it is still relevant to her. She also points out that "we're getting better", implying that more children in her class feel that the level of the dance is adequate to their dancing skills. Aurora draws on feelings of mastery, and emphasizes that because the difficulty level of the dance has developed alongside her dancing skills, the campaign is enabling her empowerment.

The stark differences between the two focus groups with participants from the sixth and seventh grade, is an example of how agency is relational, and how an individual uses their agency depends on factors such as their experiences, interests and skills relating to the phenomenon (Robson et al., 2007). Relating this once again to Buckingham (1993), the focus group Aurora was a part of was in agreement that the campaign mainly had positive aspects. Thus, one could argue that the group setting influenced the group's consensus about their views on the campaign. In contrast, the group discussed previously, reached a consensus that the campaign has several weaknesses. Another factor to take into consideration, is that the participants' teachers chose the groups. This might have contributed to the children being in a focus group with children they were friends with, sharing similar mindsets and ideas. While both focus groups with the older participants exhibit power and agency when interpreting and talking about the *BlimE* campaign, one group draws on notions of gaining mastery and empowerment from the

campaign. At the same time, the other exercises power by interpreting the campaign's weaknesses.

Moreover, in the following excerpt Julie (12), Thale (12) and Sara (12) draw on an interesting aspect of motivation and the sense of mastery:

> Julie (12): I think the first and second graders like it. Maybe the girls are a bit more motivated in the first and second grade, but like now everyone is like "no"
> Thale (12): In first grade I think both genders like it. Because in the first grade you are a bit more like "yey"
> Sara (12): But it really depends on the person. Those who like to dance most likely like *BlimE*. But then there are those who do not like to dance, so then they do not feel a sense of mastery

As stated in their talks about motivation, Sara mentions that the amount of motivation for the campaign depends on the individual. Through their statements, one could argue that the campaign can empower those experience a longing for inclusion or those who have an interest in dancing, while the individuals who do not have an affiliation for dancing might feel less inclined towards the campaign. In addition, regarding *BlimE* as a tool for empowerment, there is reason to think that the campaign might feel more empowering towards the individuals who need it most. As Aurora (12) explained earlier in the chapter, the *BlimE* song became a resource for her to use to master a difficult situation. Therefore, the feeling of relatedness to the campaign might lay grounds for one's interpretation of the campaign.

7.2.1. The importance of choice

While the older participants talk quite a lot about how the younger children find the dance difficult and lose their sense of mastery, the younger participants center their talks more on the fact that they must dance at school. There is no mention of losing motivation or feelings of mastery, but rather talks about how they would like to decide for themselves when they want to dance. However, their utterances still revolve around empowerment, as they express a lack of power and influence.

> K: But why is there a *BlimE* dance?
> Lukas (9): It's a bit tiring, because we are done with something, like straight from gym class, and then they want us to dance the *BlimE*-dance. Like can't we decide when we want to dance it

Lukas (9) explains that he feels that it is a bit tiresome to be told when and where to dance the *BlimE*-dances. He expressed that he would like to decide for himself when and if he chooses to dance. From Lukas' statement, one could argue that the school's role in connection to the campaign contributes to the inhibition of children's agency and empowerment. As agency and empowerment are closely connected to choice and decision, where the ability to make purposeful choices is central, Lukas's statement indicates the opposite (Priestley, 2020). Moreover, when asked whether there were any good or bad aspects of the *BlimE* campaign, Olivia (9) and Emma (9) point out that some may find it challenging to do the dance, and that it is tiring to have to practice the dance several times at school:

K: What is good and not so good about *BlimE*?
Olivia (9): Maybe someone finds it a little difficult to do the dance
Emma (9): If you dance it over and over and over again, and many more times, like at school a lot, then you can get very tired of practicing just that, and would rather do something else

As Emma indicates, the participants practice the dance several times at school, resulting in the children wanting to do something else, as it gets tiring over time. In addition, Olivia's statement emphasizes that some children might find it difficult to do the dance. The children's interest in dancing and their dancing skills can influence how they interpret the campaign. By implementing the dance during their school hours, the participants might feel like they do not have influence over the matter. Furthermore, children are social actors that actively interpret and use the information surrounding them, and how children give meaning to the *BlimE* campaign determines how the campaign works. Moreover, Isak (8) and Oliver (8) further elaborate on how it is being told to dance without being able to decide when they want to dance:

Isak (8): What is bad is that we must dance all the time. We have to dance all the time and then it gets like..
Oliver (9): ..boring

Isak and Oliver's conversation emphasizes how the participants feel like they do not have control over when to dance. In addition, the school's role in the campaign creates a feeling of the campaign having a child-rearing and institutionalized dimension and can suggest that the children feel like they are being pressured to dance for friendship and inclusion. Having the *BlimE* campaign implemented in an institutionalized framework may therefore lay grounds for how the campaign is implemented and experienced. Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) emphasize how children encounter various norms in institutions that dictate appropriate behaviors and ways to conduct themselves. As children are met with these expectations, they find strategies to negotiate and challenge the ideas presented and ways to influence and understand their own positions and possibilities in the situations. As seen in the excerpts above, the participants' statements can be viewed as a way of expressing opposition to the school's norms and authority and challenging the way *BlimE* has been implemented in an institutionalized framework. Moreover, Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) point out how, in an ideal institutionalized setting, children are expected to do things out of free will, not only what the adults tell them to do, exhibiting autonomy and individuality. However, as children become older, there are more expectations for the children to act and behave in a civilized way, thus being a good citizen.

7.3.   A double-edged sword

With the *BlimE* campaign aiming at promoting values of inclusiveness, friendship, and community, it is interesting to look at children's perspectives on the campaign's effectiveness. Several of the participants reflect upon the campaign having contradicting effects throughout the analysis. While some participants reflect on the campaign as a resource to master their everyday life, some participants point out weaknesses in the campaign, such as a lack of motivation or feeling like they are 'forced' to partake in the campaign. Thus, the *BlimE* campaign can be viewed in connection to what Gilliam and

Gulløv (2016) call 'the paradox of civilizing', where the attempt at integrating children into the civilized community also has a counterproductive effect, where some groups or individuals identify themselves as outside the civilized community.

In one of the focus group discussions, the participants talked about how there was one year when the *BlimE* campaign tried to facilitate the level of difficulty of dance for the different target groups. Thale (12) and Julie (12) describe this occurrence, emphasizing how there were two dances created, one easier and one more advanced:

> Thale (12): It could have been done in a different way so it could be fun for everyone
> Julie (12): There was one year where they had made two dances, one difficult and one easy. But everyone wanted to try the difficult version because if not then everyone would say like "loser, you are doing the easy version". So the difficult one was far too difficult because it was meant for seventh graders

Julie explains how *BlimE* made two dances to facilitate the dance towards the appropriate skill level for the children, which can be seen as an attempt to empower children, by helping them master the dance, either by doing the easier version or the more challenging version. However, Julie's statement demonstrates a dilemma by the children gain access to two different dances. If the children chose to dance the easier version, other children would comment that they were bad at dancing because they did not choose the more difficult version of the dance. As talked about in chapters 5.1.1.1. and 6.1.1., Norway is characterized as a diverse and tolerant society. Autonomy, individualism, and respecting differences are ideals that are central to the Norwegian identity. From earlier discussion, the participants exhibit tolerance and respect for differences, and talked about how everyone is unique, and that even though some individuals are different, they should still be able to be friends. However, as seen in the excerpt above, there is a clear contrast to this notion in their talks. The concept of 'equality as sameness' by Gullestad (2002) can be applied to the situation described by the girls. As explained in chapter 6, equality as sameness is a central concept in Norwegian society. When two levels of difficulty for the dances are offered, the children choosing to do the more accessible dance can be perceived as different than the others. This can suggest that by choosing to do so, they are positioning themselves as 'different', which can lead to other children excluding them for their group or community, because they are not dancing the same dance as the rest of the children.

As Julie explained, when doing the easier version of the dance, children could be told "loser, you are doing the easy version". This utterance supports the notion of being the 'same' to fit into a group, where differences often are played down or excluded. Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) draw on Norbert Elias's concept of the duality of civilizing, naming it 'the paradox of civilizing'. Elias's approach centers around a perspective where social groups that have had a higher standing throughout the history of European societies often have had a mission to educate groups that were considered 'uncivilized', such as children. Thus, Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) argue that by trying to civilize the 'uncivilized', one creates a paradox where those who do not fit into the presented categories often abstain from the norms presented, consequentially identifying themselves as outside of the civilized category. Therefore, one can argue that by having such civilizing institutions and initiatives as the school and the *BlimE* campaign, they simultaneously produce certain 'uncivilized' norms and behaviors, excluding many of the individuals the institutions aim at civilizing. Julie's statement also portrays an aspect of how the *BlimE*

campaign as a civilizing initiative contributes to the expectations of having certain dance skills. While the campaign aims at promoting inclusion and diversity, it does so through a dance that requires certain skills. Therefore, the dance can serve as a way of excluding others, as Julie highlights in her statement.

While the *BlimE* campaign promotes itself as a friendship campaign, the participants' statements reflect upon an aspect of bullying in relation to the campaign. Thale and Julie discuss how participating in the campaign by dancing can be a source of bullying:

> Thale (12): We know that the concept is about not excluding others and such, but I don't think it helps to just stand and dance
> Julie (12): I think it almost just makes it worse. Because if a person feels excluded, and they think like "oh I can dance the *BlimE*-dance", but then you are just bullied because you are dancing the *BlimE*-dance
> Thale (12): So I don't think it exactly helps

The participants explain how they know that the concept of *BlimE* is about not excluding others, but that they do not believe it helps just to dance. As Julie emphasizes, she believes that the dance could lead to more bullying. She further explains that if someone is feeling excluded, they think that they can dance the *BlimE* dance to feel more included, but consequently, this can lead to more bullying because they are dancing. The girls' conversation can be connected to earlier examples of how the *BlimE* campaign can be perceived as 'embarrassing'. Thus, by participating in the dance the children indirectly provide a kind of ammunition for bullies.

Another interesting instance in the interviews that illustrate how the campaign can be viewed as a double-edged sword, comes from the participants' talks about the' friendship bench'. The friendship bench was an initiative put together by the school, in order for children to create more friendships. The friendship bench is not a part of the *BlimE* campaign, but it is an interesting situation that reflects upon the same aspects as mentioned previously by Thale and Julie, where two dances were created in order to make the campaign more fun for everyone.

> Julie (12): We had a friendship bench, which was like if you didn't have any friends then you could sit on the friendship bench, and someone would come and sit with you. In the start it worked, but after two weeks the friendship bench just became a regular bench.
> Sara (12): In addition, only the adults would come. And if you sat on it, then sometimes people would come and say "haha you don't have any friends"
> Thale (12): I have actually experienced that
> Julie (12): It's kind of a way for people to bully
> Thale (12): More like a bullying bench than a friendship bench

I found the conversation about the 'friendship bench' very interesting. The participants talk about how the school implemented the friendship bench in order for the children to create new friendships and social relationships. As the participants describe, the friendship bench worked for the first couple of weeks, but after some time it just became a regular bench. Sara's statement emphasizes that if someone were sitting on the bench, other children would tease them for having no friends. Furthermore, the participants talk about how the adults would come and sit with the children if they were sitting alone. The participants' talks can shed light on how bullying can be viewed as a social process. If an adult approaches a child sitting alone on the bench, it might highlight that none of their peers approaches them, contributing to feelings of being friendless and excluded. In

70

addition, though the adults can have good intentions by approaching a child they see sitting alone on the bench, this might in fact enhance the feeling of being socially excluded, as creating social relationships with peers is seen as a central aspect of being a part of the civilizing society. Thus, by creating the friendship bench, the school presents itself as a civilizing institution where values of friendship and inclusion are central.

In addition, Sara explained that if someone sat on the bench, other children would say "haha you don't have any friends". Thus, sitting on the bench would provide ammunition for bullies by highlighting the children's 'differences'. Bullying can be seen as a socially enacted phenomenon, where people actively participate in the social processes of inclusion and exclusion (Søndergaard & Hansen, 2018). Furthermore, Søndergaard (2018) discusses the thrill of bullying, where children use humor to participate in the social enactment of bullying. Sara's statement can be seen as using humor to ridicule others, emphasizing the "haha" at the beginning of the statement. Using humor and ridicule as a form of bullying affects feelings of embarrassment, humiliation, and shame. It can also be viewed as a way to negotiate social order, where the victim of the ridicule might feel disempowered or excluded. Ridicule, humor, and bullying in all its varying from is therefore viewed as a social process enacted between the children.

Furthermore, as Helgeland and Lund (2016) point out in their study about children's experiences and understandings of bullying in kindergarten, that the children's biggest fear was to be excluded from the group. The authors draw on the concept of 'social exclusion anxiety', which builds on the notion of individuals being dependent on belonging to a community. Therefore, the fear of reject or being excluded from play is a central aspect of children's everyday interactions with peers. Moreover, Helgeland and Lund (2016) point out that children who are repeatedly rejected or excluded from play often are overlooked by adults. It can therefore be thought that adults sitting down on the bench with children do not recognize the potential for bullying in the situation, where the child will be perceived as 'different' by other children.

The excerpt exemplifies how a campaign like *BlimE* can have good intentions to promote positive values, but how it manifests in real life is dependent on context and situation. As Thale remarks at the end of the excerpt, "more like a bullying bench than a friendship bench". Children who felt alone or excluded, could feel even more excluded and disempowered by partaking in the friendship bench concept. This can also be related to the *BlimE* campaign as discussed in the chapter, where children who partake in the dance might be ridiculed for dancing. Conclusively, as Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) discussed, institutions and initiatives that have a civilizing aspect also have a counteractive effect. While they aim at promoting positive ideas and norms, in the case of *BlimE* connected to values of being a 'good' citizen, they simultaneously might exclude and stigmatize individuals from the civilized category.

7.4.   Chapter Summary

In this last analysis chapters, I have discussed children's interpretations of the purpose and effectiveness of the *BlimE* campaign. The analysis center arounds feelings of empowerment and mastery and reveals how the campaign can be a tool to help master

the children's everyday lives. However, the children's statements also touch upon a duality, where it is emphasized that while the campaign can empower some children, it can also disempower others. Furthermore, the analysis revealed how while *BlimE* aims at promoting values of inclusion, there is also the implicit factor of exclusion. This suggests that bullying is still a central aspect even though the campaign is described as a friendship campaign. This is further highlighted by the children's utterances, in which they discuss how the aim to be inclusive can also leads to exclusion and bullying. In the next chapter, I will summarize the findings from my analysis. Furthermore, I will point out the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis, and provide suggestions for further research and practice.

8. Concluding remarks

The overall aim of the current thesis was to explore how children and the *BlimE* campaign contribute to ongoing constructions of childhood, friendship and 'good citizenship'. In order to explore the overall aim, I have studied the following three research questions: 1) *What ideas and norms do children draw on when interpreting the BlimE campaign?* 2) *How do children interpret the purpose and effectiveness of the BlimE campaign?* 3) *What ideas and norms about childhood and citizenship can be found in the BlimE campaign?* Through participant observations, focus group interviews and a qualitative content analysis of the music video *Dynamite*, I have gained a deeper and more nuanced understanding of how children and the *BlimE* campaign contribute to ongoing constructions of childhood, friendship and citizenship. The research questions will be discussed in the same order as they were presented in the analysis chapters, in order to make the summarizing of the findings coherent. Thus, I will first discuss the third research question, then the first research question, and finally the second research question. This chapter will present summarize the findings from my analysis, discuss the strengths and limitations of the study, and provide suggestions for further research and practice.

8.1. Summarizing findings

The thesis uses a qualitative approach to explore children's and the *BlimE* campaign's contributions to the construction of childhood, friendship and 'good' citizenship. As my analysis indicates, the *BlimE* campaign promotes certain ideas and norms that lay grounds for a certain kind of childhood, where children are shaped as 'good' citizens that conduct themselves according to certain values and norms. Furthermore, children interpret and use the ideas and norms found in the *BlimE* campaign in various ways, which contributes to the construction of a specific type of childhood. The emphasis on inclusion, community and diversity is central in my findings, and can be connected to the democratic values found in Norwegian society. The intersection of the ideas and norms found in the *BlimE* campaign, and the children's interpretations and use of them, have therefore lay grounds for my findings. The follow sections will explore the three research questions that I have constructed.

8.1.1. The ideals of *BlimE*

In an effort to understand how children interpret *BlimE*, it is essential to investigate the phenomenon itself. To do this, I initially explored the following research question: *What ideas and norms about childhood and citizenship can be found in the BlimE campaign?* To answer this research question, a content analysis of the *Dynamite* music video from the 2021 *BlimE* campaign was conducted in chapter 5. The *Blime* campaign portrays various

aspects of what it means to be a good citizen, emphasizing and promoting certain behaviors and ways to act. These ideas and norms are closely connected to central values found in the Norwegian society, and contribute to the construction of the ideal, civilized society. Thus, the *BlimE* campaign can be seen as a civilizing initiative.

There is a considerable emphasis on being inclusive and promoting friendships in the music video. The music video often portrayed children being included in play or activities, laying grounds for the creation of friendships and social relationships. These depictions contribute to a certain construction of childhood, where they aim at encouraging children to be inclusive. The prominent theme of inclusiveness strengthens notions of what it means to be a good citizen, where the ability to form social relations, as well as having a social responsibility to participate in the community, is central. Moreover, by including a wide representation of children of various ethnicities, disabilities and genders in the music video, *BlimE* and NRK Super contributes to the portrayal of Norway as a tolerant and diverse society. By emphasizing the importance of accepting differences and being tolerant and respectful towards diversities, *BlimE* highlights how in the ideal society, there is room for everyone. Therefore, the campaign emphasizes how being a good citizen entails the acceptance of diversities. Conclusively, the music video promotes certain ideas and norms that are seen as central to the Norwegian society.

Furthermore, the music video highlights individualism as a central part of childhood, where autonomy and independence are ideals that are prominent in the Norwegian notion of a 'good' childhood. The music video emphasizes the importance of 'being who you are', believing in yourself, and therefore encourages children's individuality. However, there are also ideas and norms centered around the notion of belonging to a community. Thus, *BlimE* paints a dual picture of what is expected from children as good citizens, where on the one hand the campaign emphasizes the importance of autonomy and individuality, while on the other hand there is a clear message of the importance of being socially inclusive, accepting differences, and belonging to a community. As Gilliam and Gulløv (2016) state, civilizing institutions in the Nordic countries often highlight the importance of children having free will and the ability to do as they please, while children are also required to adapt to certain behaviors in order to fit into the community. In effect, some behaviors are accepted, while others are reprimanded. While the *BlimE* campaign aims at promoting positive values and attitudes towards children, it can be argued that the campaign contributes to certain expectations for children on how they should act and behave. Furthermore, the campaign contributes to the construction of a certain notion of childhood and citizenship in Norway, closely connected to democratic values of inclusiveness, individuality, and community.

8.1.2. Children's interpretations of the *BlimE* campaign

While chapter 5 presents the various ideas and norms found in the *BlimE* campaign, chapters 6 and 7 focus on children's interpretations of the campaign. Chapter 6 and 7 aimed at exploring the following research question: *What ideas and norms do children draw on when interpreting the BlimE campaign?* This was investigated through six focus group discussions that were conducted with children aged 8-12.

The analysis of the focus group discussions showed that all the participants were familiar with the *BlimE* campaign. The participants reflect widely upon values connected to the campaign, such as inclusion, friendship, and feelings of being excluded. Their utterances reflect ideas about the importance of including others in play and activities, but also how it is important to ask to be included and take initiative as well. Their statements about inclusion in connection to the *BlimE* campaign strengthens the notion of *BlimE* as a civilizing initiative. Furthermore, the participants' statements draw upon notions of what it means to be a good citizen, where children must adapt to certain social settings, while also having a responsibility to contribute and become a part of society. The *BlimE* dance was also a topic that was mentioned frequently, where the dance can be seen as contributing to the creation of social relationships and a feeling of belonging. Moreover, through their statements the participants illustrate a coexistence between various values connected to the *BlimE* campaign, such as the values of tolerance and diversity, and the duality of individualism and community.

Some of the participants' statements also reflect upon an interesting aspect of diversities and differences, highlighting how everyone is unique, but everyone is still the same. While their utterances do reflect ideas and norms connected to being a good citizens, where respect and tolerance towards difference are central values, their utterances could also reflect a more negative aspect of diversities. For example, some of participants talked about that even if someone is different, they can still make friends. Their utterances could suggest a view of difference being correlated to friendlessness. Hence, their statements draw upon an idea that corresponds with the concept of 'equality as sameness', as proposed by Gullestad (2002), where individuals tend to establish social relation with people they have commonalities with, while people they perceive as different are often avoided. Drawing on the theoretical concept of social constructionism, childhood is seen as constructed through social, cultural, and historical factors, implying that childhood changes according to the context and situation (Burr, 2003). Hence, campaigns such as *BlimE* contribute to the ongoing constructions of childhood, where the core values of inclusion, being a part of a community, and creating social relationships are central.

Another main finding from the analysis, is that the participants connect the campaign closely to school. Through the participants statements it is revealed that the campaign can be associated to an instructing or childrearing dimension, emphasizing the *BlimE* dance, and how the participants have no choice or influence in when and where they have to practice the dance. As seen in the analysis in chapter 7.2.1., their associations to the campaign can be connected to the various norms that children encounter in institutions, that promote a certain kind of behavior. When the participants are met with these expectations, such as the expectations to practice the dance during school-hours a certain amount of time, they find ways to negotiate and challenges the expectations that are presented.

Furthermore, while talking about the campaign's connection to school, the participants positioned themselves in relation to the campaign in various ways. For example, as seen in the analysis, some of the older participants often draw on ideas of the campaign as 'childish', where the campaign was interpreted as embarrassing, while others positioning themselves as being old enough not to feel embarrassed by the campaign. Thus, through

positioning themselves in the focus group discussions as a certain person following certain ideals, the participants interpret the campaign in differing ways and consequently have different views of the *BlimE* campaign. In order to research how campaigns such as *BlimE* work, it is pivotal to view children as active meaning-makers that interpret and use the ideals and norms presented to them in various ways. Furthermore, through their interpretations of the campaign, the participants realize that the campaign is trying to shape them into certain kinds of citizens, while they simultaneously acknowledge the values that are presented to them.

8.1.3. The effectiveness of the *BlimE* campaign

The last aspect of the analysis was to explore the following research question: *How do children interpret the purpose and effectiveness of the BlimE campaign?* The question was investigated in both in chapter 6 and chapter 7, through the data collected by conducting the focus group discussions with the children. A central aspect of the analysis was how the *BlimE* campaign can be viewed as a tool for empowerment and how it can be used a resource to master everyday life. Through the participants utterances, *BlimE* is described as both a tool for participation, and a tool that can aid in the creation of friendships and social relationships between the children. For instance, one participant elaborated on her own experiences with the campaign, connecting *BlimE* to the concept of empowerment. The participant talks about how the campaign has aided in mastering her own life. Drawing on an actor-oriented perspective, empowerment needs to be viewed in connection to individuals using their agency to make meaningful choices that affects a process of change in their lives. Throughout the analysis, the concept of agency is therefore central, and by viewing agency as relation, one accounts for the various factors that can how an individual uses their agency in a given situation (Robson et al., 2007).

An important finding in my analysis, is the duality expressed in connection to the *BlimE* campaign. While some participants present the campaign as a resource to gain mastery and motivation, other participants talk about how the campaign has a counteractive effect, consequently making children feel disempowered. The dance is specifically mentioned when discussion this aspect, as the participants talk about how it might be too difficult for the younger children, but too easy for the older children. Their statements reflect upon the effectiveness of the campaign, and how the dance can contribute to feeling less motivated for the campaign, as the younger children do not experience mastery, and the older children find the dance too easy. Moreover, the participants statements also draw upon an aspect of individual skills and experiences, where the campaign can empower children that have an interest in dancing and singing, and those who have experienced exclusion or not belonging to a group. In contrast, children who do not have an affiliation for dancing or have not felt social exclusion, might feel less inclined towards the campaign.

Lastly, I want to present what I have chosen to call a 'double-edged sword'. While the *BlimE* campaign promotes itself as a friendship campaign, the participants talk about how the campaign might lead to bullying and exclusion. In chapter 7.3. I elaborate on the 'friendship bench' that was implemented by the school. The participants reflect upon how

the friendship bench quickly turned into a bullying bench, where children who were seen sitting alone one the bench would be teased and bullied by other children. In connection to the friendship bench, I draw on the concept of bullying a socially enacted phenomenon (Søndergaard & Hansen, 2018). Bullying is thus enacted between children, where they participate in social processes of inclusion and exclusion, often drawing on social categories that they and others are a part of. Furthermore, while bullying as a socially produced phenomena, it is also experienced individually. Thus, the children might draw on different ideas about bullying and exclusion while talking about the 'friendship bench'. The participants' statements exemplify how campaigns such as *BlimE* might have good intentions to promote positive values, but its actual purpose and effectiveness depends on the context and situation, and which ideas and norms children use to interpret to phenomena. Conclusively, the analysis shows the importance of studying children's perspectives and social practices when researching campaigns such as *BlimE*.

8.2.   Strengths and limitations

As described in chapter 4, this thesis used a combination of three methods in order to get a richer picture of the children's interpretation of the phenomenon *BlimE*. By combining observations, focus group interviews and a content analysis of the music video *Dynamite,* it has allowed me to tackle the research question from different angles, which has proven to be a strength in this thesis. The knowledge I gained from the content analysis proved to be useful contextual data in gaining a fuller picture of children's interpretations of the campaign, and which ideals and norms from the campaign they draw on when talking about *BlimE.* However, there are also weaknesses and limitations when taking upon an approach of mixed methods. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and thus the implications it had for the fieldwork, I did not get to conduct observations over a prolonged period of time, which could have been fruitful to this research.

Moreover, it would have been a strength to partake in observations during the *BlimE* week at the elementary school, which was again proven to be difficult due to the pandemic. A longer period of observations at the school might also have contribute to getting a more even distribution of girls and boys in my study, which could have provided a deeper and maybe different picture on children's perspectives. Another weakness of the study was lack of time, as it would have been fruitful for this study to conduct a second round of focus group interviews, in order to ask follow-up questions and thus gain even richer data. Furthermore, this was the first time that I conducted a research interview, and as Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) elaborate on, interviewing is a craft skill that requires experience and practice. However, my experience with conducting the focus group interviews has made me aware of the importance of being focused and present in the interview setting. In addition, during my transcriptions of the data, I experienced several instances where I could have asked follow-up question to the participants' statements. Thus, this made me reflect upon the importance of asking follow-up questions. All in all, through conducting the interviews, transcribing, and analyzing, I have gained experience that will be valuable for the next time I conduct a research interview.

8.3.   Implications for further research and practice

This thesis aimed at exploring how children and the *BlimE* campaign contribute to ongoing constructions of childhood, friendship and 'good citizenship'. Regarding media as institutions that not only provide entertainment, but also serve as institutions that aim at promoting certain values and attitudes, should be researched more in-depth. Moreover, it could be fruitful to conduct further qualitative research on how campaigns that use tools such as singing and dancing play a role in shaping citizens, by studying the effectiveness of the songs and how they are interpreted and used by children. Campaigns such as *BlimE* should be studied more thorough and in detail, and as we have witnessed in this thesis, they have a central role as a civilizing initiative.

Another aspect could be to focus more on the relation between schools and media as civilizing institutions. As we have witnessed in this thesis, my findings show how the NRK and school are closely connected, not only through the *BlimE* campaign, but also through NRK Super and their programs. These findings suggests that media institutions are gaining an increased role in children's institutionalized lives. Thus, to further investigate how schools and media institutions are partners in a civilizing project could be fruitful to gain more insight and knowledge about, and how they have a central role in children's lives.

Furthermore, it would be beneficial to research such campaigns from children's perspectives, taking into account perspectives from childhood studies, such as children's voice and agency, and how the way children interpret and use the information from campaigns affects how such campaigns work. An ongoing debate in the field of childhood studies is centered around the aspect of agency as relational (Sørenssen et al., 2021). By viewing childhood as relational, one thus recognizes children both as individuals and as a social category, where children are positioned by society, but also position themselves within the socio-cultural and institutional context that they are a part of (Sørenssen et al., 2021). Furthermore, my analysis illustrated a two-sided focus, where on the one hand it looked at how campaigns like BlimE contribute to constructing certain childhoods, ideals of friendship and citizenship, while on the other hand it emphasized how children's interpretations also play a role in how childhood, friendship and citizenship is practiced. It would therefore be interesting to research this further within an relational approach.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Confirmation from NSD
Appendix 2: Letter of information (Norwegian)
Appendix 3: Letter of information (English)
Appendix 4: Consent form (Norwegian)
Appendix 5: Consent form (English)
Appendix 6: Interview guide (Norwegian)
Appendix 7: Interview guide (English)
Appendix 8: The *BlimE* lyrics in Norwegian and English

Appendix 1: Confirmation letter from NSD

Assessment

Reference number
174540

Project title
Masteroppgave "Children's perspectives on the friendship campaign BlimE!"

Data controller (institution responsible for the project)
Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet / Fakultet for samfunns- og utdanningsvitenskap (SU) / Institutt for pedagogikk og livslang læring

Project leader
Linn Cathrin Lorgen

Student
Karoline Normandbo

Project period
16.08.2021 - 15.05.2022

Notification Form ↗

Date	**Type**
09.09.2021	Standard

Comment
Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet den 09.09.2021 med vedlegg, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og NSD. Behandlingen kan starte.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET
Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 15.05.2022.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG
Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra foresatte til behandlingen av personopplysninger om barna/elevene. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som foresatte kan trekke tilbake. Barna/elevene vil også samtykke til deltakelse.

Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være foresattes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER
NSD vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om:

lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at foresatte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen

formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke viderebehandles til nye uforenlige formål

dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet

lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

NSD vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte og deres foresatte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18) og dataportabilitet (art. 20).

87

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert/foresatt tar kontakt om sine/barnets rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og eventuelt rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER
Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til NSD ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilke type endringer det er nødvendig å melde:

https://www.nsd.no/personverntjenester/fylle-ut-meldeskjema-for-personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema

Du må vente på svar fra NSD før endringen gjennomføres.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET
NSD vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Kontaktperson hos NSD: Kajsa Amundsen

Lykke til med prosjektet!

Informasjonsskriv til skole og foresatte/foreldre

Mitt navn er Karoline Normandbo, og jeg er en masterstudent i Childhood Studies ved NTNU i Trondheim. Jeg holder på med et forskningsprosjekt der jeg ønsker å finne ut hva barn tenker om vennskapskampanjen BlimE. Prosjektet sitt formål er å undersøke hva slags perspektiver barn har om BlimE-kampanjen, hvordan de tolker de ulike verdiene og holdningene som blir fremmet av kampanjen, samt hvordan de gir mening til ideer og idealer formidlet av kampanjen. Alt datamateriale som samles inn skal brukes til min masteroppgave ved NTNU.

Jeg ser derfor etter barn mellom 8 og 12 år som vil være med i prosjektet mitt, gjennom observasjoner og intervju. Jeg kommer jeg til å være tilstede og observere en periode på skolen. Hvor mange ganger jeg er på besøk hos skolen er avhengig av hva skolen ønsker og deres kapasitet. Grunnen til at jeg ønsker en periode med observasjon er for å bli bedre kjent med barna, samt observere hvordan barna forholder seg til BlimE-kampanjen. Under observasjonsperioden skal jeg ikke samle inn personidentifiserende opplysninger, og alle notater jeg tar vil være anonymisert.

I tillegg til observasjon ønsker jeg å gjennomføre gruppeintervju. Gruppeintervjuene vil foregå med barn på samme alder, som kommer til å vare rundt 60 minutter. Å delta i intervju er helt frivillig, og de som ønsker å bli intervjuet må ha fått og lest et samtykkeskriv, og foreldre må ha gitt sitt samtykke.

Under intervjuet ønsker jeg gjerne å ta lydopptak, og jeg kommer også til å skrive ned litt notater. Det er kun jeg som vil høre opptakene og lese notatene, og alt vil bli slettet når prosjektet mitt er slutt, som ifølge planen er rundt juni 2022.

Det er helt frivillig å delta i prosjektet mitt. Man kan når som helst trekke seg, og da vil jeg slette alle lydopptakene og notatene med barnet. Hvis man velger å delta i mitt forskningsprosjekt vil man også være helt anonym.

Hvis det er noen spørsmål om prosjektet, kan jeg kontaktes på epost: ………………… eller telefon: ………… Veileder for masteroppgaven ved NTNU i Trondheim, førsteamanuensis Linn C. Lorgen, kan også kontaktes på epost: ………………… eller telefon: …………

Med vennlig hilsen,
Karoline Normandbo

Information letter to school and parents / guardians

My name is Karoline Normandbo, and I am a master's student in Childhood Studies at NTNU in Trondheim. I am working on a research project where I want to find out what children think about the friendship campaign BlimE. The purpose of the project is to investigate what kind of perspectives children have about the BlimE campaign, how they interpret the different values and attitudes that are promoted by the campaign, and how they give meaning to ideas and ideals conveyed by the campaign. All data material collected will be used for my master's thesis at NTNU.

I am therefore looking for children between the ages of 8 and 12 who want to be part of my project, through observations and interviews. I will be present at the school to conduct a period of observation. How many times I visit the school depends on what the school wants and their capacity. The reason for why I want a period of observation is to get to know the children better, as well as observe how the children relate to the BlimE campaign. During the observation period, I will not collect personally identifiable information, and all notes I take will be anonymized.

In addition to observation, I want to conduct group interviews. The group interviews will take place with children of the same age, which will last around 60 minutes. Participating in an interview is completely voluntary, and those who want to be interviewed must have received and read a letter of consent, and parents must have given their consent.

During the interview, I would like to record audio, and I will also write down some notes. Only I will hear the recordings and read the notes, and everything will be deleted when my project is over, which according to the plan is around June 2022.

It is completely voluntary to participate in my project. You can withdraw at any time, and then I will delete all the audio recordings and notes with the child. If you choose to participate in my research project, you will also be completely anonymous.

If there are any questions about the project, I can be contacted by email: …………………
or phone: ……….. Supervisor for the master's thesis at NTNU in Trondheim, Associate Professor Linn C. Lorgen, can also be contacted by email: …………………   or phone: …………..

With best regards,
Karoline Normandbo

Vil du være med i forskningsprosjektet
«Barn sine perspektiver på vennskapskampanjen BlimE!»?

Mitt navn er Karoline Normandbo, og jeg er en masterstudent i Childhood Studies ved NTNU i Trondheim. Jeg holder på med et forskningsprosjekt der jeg ønsker å finne ut hva barn på barneskolen tenker om vennskapskampanjen *BlimE.* Alt datamateriale som samles inn skal brukes til min masteroppgave ved NTNU.

Jeg ser derfor etter barn mellom 8 og 12 år som vil være med i prosjektet mitt ved å bli intervjuet om dette. Et intervjuet er som en samtale, der jeg vil stille deg forskjellige spørsmål. De ulike spørsmålene kan handle om hva du liker å gjøre på fritiden, om du har hørt om *BlimE,* og spesielt hva du synes om *BlimE.* Intervjuet vil foregå i en gruppe med barn på samme alder som deg, og kommer til å vare rundt 60 minutter. Jeg kommer også til å være til stedet på skolen for å bli kjent med dere.

Når vi har intervjuet ønsker jeg gjerne å ta lydopptak, og jeg kommer også til å skrive ned litt notater, så det blir enklere for meg å huske alt du sier til meg. Det er kun jeg som vil høre opptakene og lese notatene, og alt vil bli slettet når prosjektet mitt er slutt, som ifølge planen er rundt juni 2022.

Det er helt frivillig å delta i prosjektet mitt. Dette vil si at det er du som bestemmer om du vil være med eller ikke. Du kan også bestemme deg for å trekke deg når som helst, og da vil jeg slette alle lydopptakene og notatene med deg. Hvis du velger å delta i mitt forskningsprosjekt vil du også være helt anonym. Dette vil si at jeg finner på et annet navn til deg enn det du har når jeg skriver om det jeg har funnet ut av, slik at ingen kan finne ut av hva du har sagt til meg under samtalene.

Hvis det kommer frem opplysninger om deg i det som jeg skriver, eller i dokumentene mine, har du rett til å få se hvilken informasjon om deg som jeg samler inn. Du kan også be om at informasjonen slettes slik at den ikke finnes lenger. Hvis det er noen opplysninger som er feil kan du si ifra og be meg rette dem. Du kan også spørre om å få en kopi av informasjonen fra meg. Du kan også klage til Datatilsynet dersom du synes at jeg har behandlet opplysningene om deg på en uforsiktig måte eller på en måte som ikke er riktig**.**

Hvis du ønsker å være med i prosjektet, eller har noen spørsmål om prosjektet, kan du og dine foreldre/foresatte ta kontakt med meg på epost: ………………… eller telefon: …………… Veileder for masteroppgaven ved NTNU i Trondheim, førsteamanuensis Linn C. Lorgen, kan også kontaktes på epost: ………………… eller telefon: ……………

Norsk senter for forskningsdata (NSD) har sagt at det er greit at jeg gjør dette forskningsprosjektet. Hvis du lurer på hvorfor NSD har bestemt dette, kan du ta kontakt med: NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på epost: personverntjenester@nsd.no eller telefon: +47 55582117.

Med vennlig hilsen,
Karoline Normandbo

1

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har lest og forstått informasjonen som har blitt gitt om masterprosjektet om vennskapskampanjen *BlimE* og jeg har lyst til å delta. Jeg samtykker til:

☐   å delta i gruppe-intervju

_____
Barnets navn

_____
Foreldres signatur og dato

2

Do you want to be part of the research project
"Children's perspectives on the friendship campaign BlimE!"?

My name is Karoline Normandbo, and I am a master's student in Childhood Studies at NTNU in Trondheim. I am working on a research project where I want to find out what children in primary school think about the friendship campaign *BlimE.* All data material collected will be used for my master's thesis at NTNU.

I am therefore looking for children between the ages of 8 and 12 who want to be part of my project by being interviewed about this. An interview is like a conversation, where I want to ask you different questions. The various questions can be about what you like to do in your free time, if you have heard of *BlimE,* and especially what you think about *BlimE.* The interview will take place with a group of children the same age as you and will last about 60 minutes. I will also be present at the school to get to know you.

When we have the interview, I would like to take audio recordings, and I will also write down some notes, so that it will be easier for me to remember everything you say to me. Only I will hear the recordings and read the notes, and everything will be deleted when my project is over, which according to the plan is around June 2022.

It is completely voluntary to participate in my project. This means that it is you who decides whether you want to participate or not. You can also decide to withdraw at any time, and then I will delete all audio recordings and notes that you are a part of. If you choose to participate in my research project, you will also be anonymous. This means that I will come up with a different name for you than your real name when I write about my findings, so that no one can find out what you have said to me during the conversations.

If information about you appears in what I write, or in my documents, you have the right to see what information about you I collect. You can also request to delete the information about you so that it no longer exists. If there is any information that is incorrect, you can tell me and ask me to correct it. You can also ask to get a copy of the information from me. You can also complain to the The Norwegian Data Protection Authority if you think that I have treated the information about you in a careless way or in a way that is not correct.

If you want to be part of the project, or have any questions about the project, you and your parents/guardians can contact me by email: ………………… or phone: …………. Supervisor for the master's thesis at NTNU in Trondheim, Associate Professor Linn C. Lorgen, can also be contacted by email: ………………… or telephone: …………

The Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) has said that it is okay for me to do this research project. If you are wondering why NSD has decided this, you can contact: NSD - Norwegian Center for Research Data AS by email: personverntjenester@nsd.no or telephone: +47 55582117.

With best regards,
Karoline Normandbo

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Consent form

I have read and understood the information that has been given about the master project on the friendship campaign *BlimE* and I would like to participate. I give consent:

☐ to participate in group interviews

_____

 The child's name

_____

Parents' signature and date

<div align="center">

Intervjuguide til masteroppgave om _BlimE_:

</div>

Bakgrunnsinformasjon
- Hvor gamle er dere?

Fritidsaktiviteter
- Hva liker dere å gjøre på skolen?
  - Liker best/minst å gjøre på skolen
- Hva liker dere å gjøre på fritiden? (Se på TV, være på PC/iPad, leke med venner etc.)
  - Liker best/minst å gjøre på fritiden

Mediebruk
- Ser dere ofte på TV?
  - Hva liker dere å se på?
- Ser der ofte på NRK Super?
- Hvilke programmer ser dere på?
  - Hva er yndlingsprogrammet?

NRK Super – BlimE
- Har dere hørt om BlimE?
  - Hvor hørte dere om BlimE først?
- Hva er BlimE? (beskrive det som om jeg aldri har hørt om det)
- Hva betyr BlimE?
  - Kan alle være med på BlimE?
- Hva er bra og ikke bra med BlimE?

Virkemidler
Vise musikkvideo
- Hva synes dere om musikk-videoen til BlimE-sangen?
  - Hva skjer i musikk-videoen?
- Har dere hørt om BlimE-sangen og BlimE-dansen?
  - Hvorfor finnes det en BlimE-dans?
    - Hva synes dere om den?
  - Hva handler sangen om?
    - Hva sier den om vennskap?

BlimE og skole
- Snakker dere om BlimE på skolen?
  - Med vennene deres?
  - Foreldrene deres?
- Hvorfor snakker dere om BlimE på skolen?
  - Hva snakker dere om?
- Hva kan man lære fra Blime?

Vennskap
- Hva er en venn?
- Hva kan man gjøre for å være en god venn?

Interview guide for master's thesis on *BlimE*:

Background information
- How old are you?

Leisure activities
- What do you like to do at school?
  - Likes best / least to do at school
- What do you like to do in your free time? (Watch TV, be on PC / iPad, play with friends etc.)
  - Likes best / least to do in his spare time

Media use
- Do you often watch TV?
  - What do you like to watch?
- Do you often watch NRK Super?
- What programs are you watching?
  - What is your favorite program?

NRK Super - BlimE
- Have you heard of BlimE?
  - Where did you first hear about BlimE?
- What is BlimE? (describe it as if I have never heard of it)
- What does BlimE mean?
  - Can everyone join BlimE?
- What is good and not good about BlimE?

Methods
* View music video *
- What do you think of the music video for the BlimE song?
  - What happens in the music video?
- Have you heard of the BlimE song and the BlimE dance?
  - Why is there a BlimE dance?
    - What do you think about it?
  - What is the song about?
    - What does it say about friendship?

BlimE and school
- Do you talk about BlimE at school?
  - With your friends?
  - Their parents?
- Why do you talk about BlimE at school?
  - What are you talking about?
- What can you learn from Blime?

Friendship
- What is a friend?
- What can you do to be a good friend?

Dynamitt – *BlimE* song from 2021

Original (Norwegian)	Translated (English)
BlimE og syng-dingdingdingdingdingdinding Syng- dingdingdindingdarara Syng dingdingdindingdarararaa	Join in and sing-dingdingdingdingdingdinding Sing- dingdingdindingdarara Sing dingdingdindingdarararaa
Jeg sier hei på deg, har du lyst å bli min venn? Har du lyst til å bli en gjeng, det er plass til fler Eller er du sånn som meg, som kjenner deg fort alene Som kjenner deg som den ene, som ingen ber	I say hello to you, do you want to be my friend? If you want to join the gang, there is room for more Or are you like me, who quickly feels alone Feels like you are the one, that no one asks.
For du Har lenge prøvd å bli noe mer Men bare se på hva som skjer Når du er deg, du er unik Som du er	Because you Have tried to be something more But just look at what happens When you are being you You are unique as you are
Hjertet mitt det går kadonka-donk Det går kadonka-donk Sammen er vi dyna-dynamitt	My heart goes boom ka-boom It goes boom ka-boom Together we are dyna-dynamite
Hjertet mitt det går kadonka-donk Det går kadonka-donk Sammen er vi dyna-dynamitt	My heart goes boom ka-boom It goes boom ka-boom Together we are dyna-dynamite
Jeg sier hei, hallo Ikke vær no' du ikke er Så lenge du er deg sjæl Gjør du no' smart For du er deg, deg, deg Og du må aldri miste tro på, At du finner no' du er god på Det ser du snart	I say hi, hello Don't be something that you are not As long as you are yourself You're doing something smart Because you are you, you, you And never lose faith That you will find something you're good at You'll see it soon
For du Har lenge prøvd å bli noe mer Men bare se på hva som skjer Når du er deg, du er unik Som du er	Because you Have tried to be something more But just look at what happens When you are being you You are unique as you are
Hjertet mitt det går kadonka-donk Det går kadonka-donk Sammen er vi dyna-dynamitt	My heart goes boom ka-boom It goes boom ka-boom Together we are dyna-dynamite
Hjertet mitt det går kadonka-donk Det går kadonka-donk Sammen er vi dyna-dynamitt Sammen er vi dyna-dynamitt	My heart goes boom ka-boom It goes boom ka-boom Together we are dyna-dynamite Together we are dyna-dynamite
BlimE og syng-dingdingdingdingdingdinding Syng- dingdingdindingdarara Syng dingdingdindingdarararaa	Join in and sing-dingdingdingdingdingdinding Sing- dingdingdindingdarara Sing dingdingdindingdarararaa

Karoline Normandbo

NTNU
Kunnskap for en bedre verden