

# **MEMMAS Dissertation in Social Work with Families and Children**



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Universitetet  
i Stavanger

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**Department of Social Studies**

**Word Count: 32,048**

**June 2017**



**Parenting in an intercultural context: Lived and told experiences  
of Ugandan immigrants in Norway**

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**Erasmus Mundus Master's Programme in Social Work with  
Families and Children**

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## **Abstract**

**Title:** Parenting in an intercultural context: Lived and told experiences of Ugandan immigrants in Norway

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**Key words:** Parenting, Culture, Immigrants, Acculturation, Norway

This was a pioneer study among Ugandan immigrants in Norway, aimed at exploring their parenting experiences. Particularly; their perceptions on factors which inform and influence parenting orientations, how cultural shifts are negotiated as well as opportunities and challenges associated with parenting within the Norwegian context.

A qualitative study of narrative inquiry was conducted, complemented by micro-ethnography under the paradigm of social constructivism. Six participants (4 female and 2 male) were purposively sampled through snowballing, under the criteria that the immigrant parents are Ugandan and have resided in Norway for more than 3 years and have children below 18-years, born prior or post migration. The study employed a thematic narrative analysis underpinned by ecology, cultural, social capital and acculturation theoretical perspectives. Findings showed that parenting experiences constituted a mixture of both lived and told experiences, legitimised in the dynamics of storytelling. The study revealed insights on transnational parenting practices. Findings showed that participants kept emotional, social, and economic ties with Uganda, in addition to drawing selectively and instrumentally from the Norwegian context to acquire a balance. Further, it was accentuated that regardless of differences in cultures, the desired end goal of parenting is the same, though it's the means that are debatable, as the end goal can be achieved through different cognitions and practices. Paradoxically differences in sociocultural values, norms, and practices, turn into a sameness that excludes others.

The study had implications for social work theory and practice, regarding the impact of cultural assumptions on perceptions, behaviours, and interventions. Consistent with previous studies on parenting in an intercultural context, this study concluded that parenting is complex and dynamic. Despite adapting, participants' narratives revealed struggles in reconciling the Norwegian and Ugandan cultural values and norms. They faced a dilemma in maintaining their cultural identities of origin, at the expense of inhibiting their children from integrating into the Norwegian society. Disparities in acculturation between parents and children created tensions. In turn, this accounted for interventions by the Norwegian Child Welfare Services, when expectations of modelling behaviour in accordance to respective values and norms were not met.

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## **Acknowledgement**

I am grateful to God for this opportunity to better my career and expand my horizons. I express my profound gratitude to my family and friends for providing me unfailing support and encouragement throughout the process of researching and writing this thesis. In a special way, I would like to thank my inspiration squad; Cornelius Walungama, Josephine Nampungu, Patricia Namitala, Mr and Mrs Kateete, Dora Kakembo and Alex Behakanira. This accomplishment would not have been possible without you.

My immense appreciation to the European Union for the scholarship and all the tutors I have encountered on this informative journey in the University of Stavanger, University of Gothenburg, University Institute of Portugal, and Makerere University. Am grateful for sharing your knowledge and broadening both my theoretical and practical perspectives.

My sincere thanks go to my Supervisor Professor Åse Elisabeth Vagli, for her motivation, enlightenment, and guidance in learning and appreciating the art of knowledge production. I would also like to thank the participants who were involved in this study, for without their passionate participation and input, this study could not have been successfully conducted.

I bestow my work to my late mother Ruth Nsibambi for her words of wisdom, which have enabled me to persevere and aim beyond the limits. Lastly to myself for the zeal of pursuing and relishing this opportunity.

# 1.0 Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter describes the researcher's personal experience, interest in the study, research background, aims, research questions and significance of the study.

## 1.1 Researcher's background

I commence by positioning myself, with a brief description of my own experiences regarding how I was nurtured. Perceptions frame knowledge, therefore by drawing from my own experiences, I reflect on my privilege in the representation and interpretation of research findings. I am Ugandan and hail from the largest tribe in the country; the Baganda. My tribe's culture, despite undergoing transformations due to globalisation, still emphasises obedience, respect, and interdependence and consideration of the other, as key. My childhood was characterised by continuous reminders both at home and school, that good behaviours can advance one in life unlike being wilful and out spoken. Disciplining was by beating and certainly still is, especially if the adult in question deems it fit, in relation to a behaviour deviation by a child. In comparison to other adults, reasons were provided by my parents for rendering a punishment and at times negotiations tolerated, which I attribute to my middle-class background. '*Spare the rod and spoil the child*' is a common bible proverb used by adults and duly, sticks of cane are reserved to implement this. It was inculcated in my nurturing that, generations before disciplined their children similarly. Deviant behaviours are associated with inadequate parenting regarding instilling morals and values in accordance to societal expectations. This is symbolised in the Ganda proverb '*A deviant child, brings shame to its mother*'. So, moral degeneration in the contemporary society is attributed to intermarriages and adoption of variant disciplinary measures. It was my duty as an older child to care for my sibling and assume my gender roles in absence of my mother. It was not peculiar to spend holidays with distant relatives or friends to my mother during my childhood, which was a socialisation process for parent-child separation, as all adults are viewed as carers. To that effect, adoption is a peculiar concept in my culture because, one is a parent by association, marriage and belonging to a clan, hence no need for legal decrees. One is expected to assume responsibility of distant or close nieces and nephews, in case need arises. Notably, as highlighted in the separation practices of socialisation during childhood, I could not fathom the fuss about children suffering emotional distress due to parental divorce not until I gained knowledge on variances in cultures, norms, and values. However, this left me pondering if the end justifies the means, given that not all competent adults are parented and disciplined the same.

## 1.2 Researcher's interest in the study

It is the above background and my immigration to Europe to pursue higher education, that intensified my interest in parenting among immigrants. Despite having knowledge on diversity, the reality was different as discovered during my studies in Norway regarding social policies and child participation. Emphasis was on child rights, individuality, and participation, which was quite different from what I was accustomed to regarding my background. In spite Uganda



being a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC,1989), implementation of this convention remains wanting. The opposite can be said about Norway, where children's' opinions are acknowledged. To my dismay, despite the development in child rights practice in Norway, there are several negative reports in the media, in relation to Norwegian Child Welfare Service interventions. Predominantly removing children from their parents and placing them in foster homes and institutions on grounds of parenting incompetence and maltreatment either by abuse or neglect. A good representation of children removed from their families, are of immigrant background, which captured my interest regarding immigrants parenting experiences within an intercultural context of Norway.

In addition, I was fortunate to meet a few African parents, who provided synopses on parenting within the Norwegian context. Parents emphasised that children top the family priority hierarchy in Norway and if otherwise, one will have an encounter with Child Welfare Services. One mother shared that, once her young son had expressed disapproval of the tone she had used to order him to tidy up and get ready for bed. She queried me whether such an expression of opinion is tolerated back home, given that most African culture values, free expression of views by children is not encouraged. The mother asserted that, what is considered a norm and ordinary practice in one's country, may be perceived as peculiar and criminal in Norway especially in relation to parenting efficacy. Notably, ignorance is no excuse for exemption from attached consequences to deviation from parenting expectations. Therefore, the goal of undertaking this research is to gain an in-depth understanding a taken for granted phenomenon of parenting, by exploring the parenting experiences of Ugandan immigrants in an intercultural context of Norway.

### 1.3 Background of the study

The refugee crisis and immigration have become serious challenges in the contemporary society. Migrations within and across borders are not a new phenomenon, however new ways of thinking, doing and understandings that immigrants encounter in host societies, challenge ingrained attitudes, practices, and norms (Grillo,2008). Immigrant families and populations with immigrant backgrounds are at the heart of debates and public discourses regarding the limits of differences and associated rights and wrongs (Sanagavarapu, 2010). Immigrants are challenged with the complexities of managing family relationships that are linked to several geographical and sociocultural spaces. Immigrants do not relinquish relations with their countries of origin, despite settling and establishing roots in the host countries (Carling, Menjivar and Schmalzbauer, 2012), which has attracted scholars' attention on the proper ways on how migrants ought to conduct themselves. Contexts vary in the outlook of family relations, an implication on immigrants who hold different cultural frameworks. Bornstein and Bohr (2011) argue that migration poses new questions, solutions and challenges taken for granted assumptions like parenting, as associated costs and opportunities of migration transform family structures in diverse ways.

Significantly, parenting has evolved, by taking on new meanings in diverse settings, characterised by shifts in responsibility and accountability and associated with underlying implications that are political, social, and economic, (Lee, Bristow, Faircloth and Macvarish, 2014; Raffaetà, 2016). This evolution cuts across several factors such as rights, health, safety, and children perception, thus putting parenting in a spot light concerning practices and perceptions that denote good parenting. Many aspects of family life such as diet, leisure practices as well as dynamics of relationships, have become politicised. Gillies (2012) notes that parenting is no longer relationship oriented but goal oriented, hence having knowledge on childrearing is viewed as key to becoming a good parent. Variations in cultural norms and practices regarding parenting underline the most suspected cases of abuse and neglect with respective parents claiming having no intention of abuse and neglect, but act out on how they were socialised (Critelli, 2015). These differences in cultural practices and beliefs have attracted researchers' attention aimed at, understanding the processes of transmission of values from one generation to another.

Parenting in the context of immigration is complex in understanding and challenging to parents who depart from known support bases of social structures in which their parenting beliefs, practices and values are enhanced and upheld, to adapting to settings where the same practices are questioned. Parental orientations entail strategies employed to shape children, premised socialisations in their contexts of origin. Raffaetà (2016, p.43) points out that, "In many Western societies, public discourse typically represents immigrant families as "problematic", whose cultural practices are deemed unacceptable for pragmatic or ideological reasons". This signifies that immigrant parenting practices are not only questioned, but as well considered lacking regarding the threshold of good or proper parenting in a respective context.

Norway in the recent years has received attention in the media regarding child welfare cases with immigrants. Many people from developing countries move to Europe and

Scandinavia due to pull and push factors, of which the goal is to secure better lives for themselves and families. As per Statistics Norway (2017), the number of immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrants increased by 15,651 in 2016. By beginning of 2017, the numbers were 724,987 and 158,764 respectively, exclusive of asylum seekers who have not been granted residence. Major reasons for migration among Africans are family reunion and seeking asylum (ibid). Nevertheless, immigrants who bring children with them or have children in the years that follow are challenged with parenting in a new socio-cultural context. Diversity is acknowledged in Norway, though there is zero tolerance to parenting practices that entail violence and abuse (Child Welfare Act, 1992). According to Statistics Norway (2015), children with an immigrant connotation had the highest client rates. Of the 53,150 reported cases to Child Welfare Services in the same year, 5,748 cases involved immigrants and 7850 cases involved Norwegian children with immigrant background (ibid). Lincroft and Resner (2006) argue that despite immigrant families' involvement with Child Welfare Services on grounds of support provision through proactive and reactive measures, inappropriate discipline and care practises remain predominant reasons for these interventions. Likewise, as per Statistics Norway (2015), deficiencies in parenting skills, mental problems among parents and conflicts in homes, respectively accounted for 29%, 17% and 11% interventions of the Norwegian Child Welfare Services. This signifies that there are underlying issues associated with this disproportionality in relation to parenting among immigrants.

Immigrant parents desire to shape their children's behaviours in line with values and practices they want to pass on to them, however so does the context of residence, which exerts forces through modelling behaviour in accordance to the values of that setting, hence posing challenges. With surrounding ambiguities as highlighted above, I seek to understand parenting experiences of Ugandan Immigrants in Norway. For this study, immigrant parents denote persons who are foreign born to Norway, with children that are either Norwegian or foreign born.

### **1.3.1 Aims and Research Questions**

There are 1231 Ugandan immigrants in Norway, as per Statistics Norway (2016). However, despite several studies and research undertaken on parenting among immigrants in Norway (Brochmann and Hagelund, 2011; Habecker, 2016; Johannesen and Appoh, 2016) none focused on Ugandan immigrants; hence this is a pioneer study. Culture and contexts are pivotal in parenting, attributed to the social reproduction articulated in variant parenting practices. Therefore, I aim to gain an understanding of experiences of parenting within an intercultural context of Norway among Ugandan immigrants. Particularly; how they perceive their parenting, what informs or influences their parenting orientations, how they negotiate cultural shifts in parenting, opportunities and challenges that associated with parenting within a Norwegian context as well as adopted strategies. To realise the above aims, I seek to address the following questions;

- How do parents understand their role and parenting practices?
- Which factors inform and influence their parenting orientations?
- What strategies do parents employ amidst parenting in a different context?

- What challenges and opportunities are associated with parenting in Norway?

### **1.3.2 Significance of the study**

Parenting practices are not bound, but involve an interplay between history and biography as they are part of interwoven life course of individuals located in a wider historical framework which necessitates consideration. Promoting, protection and fulfilment of rights and needs of children necessitates use of culturally sensitive frameworks which provide guidance in understanding the influence of contexts and interplay of associated factors on parenting. Study findings will expound on the cultural shifts immigrant families navigate to adapt to new contexts and expose gaps that practitioners need to address in engaging with immigrant parents on grounds of parenting. Practitioners encounter diversity and dilemmas in practice, regarding individual rights versus cultural sovereignty, in addition to weighing appropriateness of advocating for cultural change when rights and safety are at risk. Therefore, findings from this study will deepen existing knowledge on provision of appropriate comprehensive service delivery to immigrant families.

How parents negotiate several challenges and factors that shape parenting within contexts is often overlooked, with focus placed on outcomes than processes involved. Consequently, analysing Ugandan immigrant experiences will enrich understanding of complex processes of negotiating new identities and dominant ideals that are divergent from known. Further, the findings will contribute to the existing knowledge pool for practitioners to understand the different childrearing ideologies, norms, beliefs, and practices, rather than derive meaning of other cultures within their own.

## 2.0 Chapter Two: Literature review

This chapter provides insights on previous work on parenting in the context of immigration. It introduces a conceptual framework through appreciation of a synthesis of earlier studies and research, thus framing the perspective for data collection. The chapter highlights the nuances that underline culture, contexts, and constructions of parenting and childhood, through a review of relevant literature on normative interpretations and understandings of parenting in the contexts of Uganda and Norway, in addition to associated sociocultural dynamics. This knowledge base underlines the background and justification for my research through evaluating what is already known about parenting in the context of immigration and identifying areas that warrant further investigation.

### 2.1 Concept of parenting

Primarily, meanings ascribed to the definition of a parent, either through a biological, cultural, or legal perspective, has implications on accompanying roles and expectations. Societies and legal systems are facing dilemmas in dealing with the reality of increasingly complex family structures, of which parenting is pivotal. Ogbu (1981, p.418) defines child rearing as “The process by which parents and other child rearing agents transmit and by which children acquire the prior existing competences required by the social, economic, political, and other future adult cultural tasks”. With growing discourses on childhood regarding rights, abuse and protection, the discourse on parenting has risen along, since parents are key socialising agents.

Consciously or by default, adults influence their children’s development regarding personality, character, and competence. Baumrind (1978) argues that parenting practices predict children behaviour, thus developed three typologies for parenting styles; Authoritarian, Permissive, and Authoritative. She theorised that parenting styles influence child development, exemplified in the degree of authority, trust and open communication involved between the children and parent relationships (ibid). According to Baumrind (1978), Authoritarian parenting denotes using parental power through reinforcement contingences, attributed to behaviour being a result of negative or positive consequences. Children take a subordinate role with obedience as key, with no room for compromise as deviations from expected behaviour is associated with punishment. Permissive parenting involves parents authorising children to self-actualise and structure their own behaviour with unlimited self-expression and few inhibitions from parents or carers. Parents indulge the child impulses and actions, with minimal responsibility towards shaping the behaviour of the child. Authoritative parenting constitutes parents negotiating with the child regarding behaviours, with emphasis on discipline and autonomy. Despite enforcing the adult perspective by the parent, the child perspective is accorded consideration with reason, power and reinforcement used to shape behaviour. In other words, Authoritarian parenting is parent-centred, Authoritative parenting is child-centred, whereas permissive parenting is child-centred with much indulgence for the child (ibid). Maccoby and Martin (1983) proposed Neglecting as a fourth style where parents are typically uninvolved.

On the contrary, Bandura (1994) highlights that there are contradictory behaviours across people and time, hence individuals do not imitate all behaviour modelled by actions, it is dependent on conformity with self-regulating rules and personal values. Yovsi (2014) claims that parenting is a cultural activity through which values and practices are passed on from one generation to another, hence parenting practices and parent-child interactions are orientated towards specific cultural and socio-economic aspects. Parenting styles differ across contexts, though share common goals of shaping children's lives aimed at becoming responsible and competent adults in given respective contexts. LeVine, Dixon, LeVine, Richman, Leiderman, Keefer and Brazelton (1994) assert that, parental behaviours are guided by cultural scripts that denote ideal standards of child care. Therefore, children are nurtured in accordance to culture-specific concepts basing on developmental realities and economic assessments. Parental roles are rooted in normative understandings of motherhood and fatherhood which equates to caregiving and provision respectively. Society variations in childcare and objectives are reflective of cultural scripts for interactions, expressions, and significant aspects of social behaviour. In this respect, Kotchick and Forehand (2002) emphasize that parenting practices within cultures are influenced by the environment, socio-economic structures, patterns of settlement, parameters of settlement and means of subsistence. So, understanding parenting practices requires understanding cultural dynamics within specific settings, as parents embark on specific cultural socialisations goals through selecting or pursuing behaviour aimed at achieving specific goals (ibid). Therefore, parenting as a concept surrounds social constructs of parenthood, obligations, and the role of several stakeholders in the family sphere.

## **2.1 Concept of childhood**

Article 1 of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC,1989), defines a child as “every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”. However, there is diversity in how societies view childhood, family relationships between parents and children, as well as duties and powers bestowed to them. Some cultures prioritise children participation and expression of views, whereas the opposite is true in others, particularly where children are considered dependant on adults, deficient in knowledge and incapable of making informed decisions. Hofstede (2001) argues that, in large power distance societies, children are expected to be obedient, with respect as a basic virtue and dependence on adults, where as in small distance societies, children are nurtured to become independent, oriented towards gaining control of their lives. Voicing opinion that deviates from what is collective is viewed as having a bad character in the former societies. The African word “Ubuntu”, signifies that all humans belong to one bundle of life, hence we are human because we are inextricably bound with others with whom we belong. Maintaining harmony within one's settings is a virtue in collective societies, where as in individualist, giving constructive feedback and addressing conflict is a norm. Therefore, personality characteristics and behaviours patterns in children are reflective of childhood socialisations.

Munro (2008) argues that the concept of childhood has changed overtime in relation to needs, age of maturity, duties and responsibilities, independence among other key aspects. The endorsement of the UNCRC (1989) and evidence based instances that warrant professional and

policy interventions, have contributed significantly to children's visibility discourse (Reynaert, Bouverne-de-Bie and Vandeveld, 2009). Lewis (2006) attributes heightened concern for children's welfare to demographic changes, characterised by declining birth rates, hence generating a need to invest in active labour and family policies that facilitate balancing the work and family. There is a growing paradox in the current modern-day society regarding social constructions around childhood. Prout (2000, p.304) states,

On one hand, there is an increasing tendency to see children as individuals with the capacity for self-realisation and, within the limits of social interdependency, autonomous action; on the other, there are practices directed at a greater surveillance, control and regulation of children.

With the adoption of the UNCRC (1989), a childhood image of a competent child has become a preoccupation of the academic children's rights discourse, against that of an incompetent child by the child protection discourse (Reynaert et al., 2009). The child rights discourse is against the discourse of an incompetent child image which perceives children as not-yet-being, lack adult competencies and consequently have no responsibility. The protection discourse views childhood as a period of socialization or preparation for adulthood, hence in need of protection due to their vulnerability. The children's rights movement alternative pedagogical model considers children as social actors, active agent, and independent human beings in constructing their lives, therefore criticizing the shield status of the child protection movement. Reynaert et al. (2009) note that the rights discourse under autonomy assigns children the responsibility of realising their own rights, thus children are expected to not only to know their needs and interests but also deal with them adequately just like adults. In turn, this impacts on parenting, because as the position of children in society changes, so do relations within the family.

Article 3 of the UNCRC (1989) calls for prioritising the best interest of the child in actions concerning children. This implies that childhood is no longer a training ground for adulthood, but a social reality where children are active beings capable of interpreting the social world and key contributors. Though, Young, McKenzie, Omre, Schjelderup and Walker (2014a) argue that adults and professionals' interests often are prioritised over children's, under disguise of provision of this article, subsequently limiting them to recipients of adult decision making. This infers that adults are bequeathed with the responsibility for decision making regarding what suits the child basing on their deductions. The relationship between the rights of children and the rights of parents has become a judicial question regarding having clear and well-defined age-related boundaries for children to assume competence for exercising rights autonomously. Significantly, the theoretical constructs of an autonomous individual and the concept of the competent child are rooted in the western thinking of liberal individualism, which fails to embrace other contexts and embedded aspects in which children live, yet crucial to for these rights to be to be realized. Thus, how children are conceptualised has implications on parenting orientations and policies of child protection.

## **2.3 Parenting in Uganda**

### **2.3.1 Ugandan context**

Uganda is a land locked country located in Eastern Africa, with English as the official language, though Swahili and other local languages are widely spoken across the country (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Uganda has a rapid growing population of approximately 36.6 million people with an annual population growth of 3 percentage as per 2016 estimates (ibid). It is endowed with forty-five diverse cultural tribes, with shared similarities regarding values, though characterised by unique customs, norms, and practices (Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development-Uganda,2017). The diverse ethnic groups have different cultural backgrounds, reflected in dialects spoken and socio-economic structures across regions. However, they share commonalities in social structures of family, marriage, and child-rearing. Ethnic groups constitute sub-groups known as clans, that can be traced back via blood relations and extended family systems.

### **2.3.2 Role of culture in parenting**

Tylor (1871, p.1) defines culture as the “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. In the wake of the HIV/AIDs pandemic and globalisation, the foothold of culture in Uganda has been impinged upon, though still influential with parenting closely linked with cultural dynamics rooted in practices, beliefs and norms that are passed down from one generation to another. Babatunde and Setiloane, (2014, p.250) note that,

Whether parenting is learned from the perspective of the individual as the unit of analysis or the community is seen as the core of parenting, each culture aggregates values, norms and rules to construct the unit of analysis of its worldview and mobilises the salient elements of its institutions to enthrone that construct.

Santrock (2006) argues that parental practices both desirable and undesirable, entrenched in cultural values are passed on and maintained through generations. Past behaviour is a good predictor of the future through assessing what happened and what is taking place, hence likely continuation of a specific behaviour or practice. Reality lies within attached meanings, henceforth in many African cultures, one does not need to be of direct blood line, to be family member as, kinship is through ancestry, marriage, affiliations, agreements, and laws (Amos, 2013). In spite, ongoing transformations, highlighted by migrations and industrialisation, the duty of child rearing and domestic work continues to befall women, while provision of the family is a man’s responsibility (Crompton, Lewis and Lyonette ,2010; Esping-Andersen, 2009). Mothers are considered the primary socialisation agents of the child in the traditional African societies (Nyarko, 2014), with their key role encompassing nurturing a child to become socially competent. Girls and boys are socialised as per cultural expectations and failure to conform to norms is considered deviance. It is through conforming to these expectations that each gender learns disparate skills and acquires qualities. Amos (2013) contends that older children in most African societies are used as substitute carers especially girls, which



circumstances in other contexts would be considered parental neglect punishable by law, yet in African societies it is a form of socialisation. This resonates with study findings of childcare and culture in Kenya (LeVine et al.,1994), where parents rely on their children for economic competence through domestic labour, responsibilities of siblings and household tasks.

### **2.3.3 Children, discipline, and self-construct**

Wadende, Fite and Lasser (2014) argue that children are perceived as a measurement of success in an African family, through whom the clan lineage is sustained. Children are a revered possession, though occupy a lower position in the community hierarchy as they are perceived to be in a not yet status, hence need guidance. (ibid). Nurturing well socialised children signifies continuity and stability, thus men are encouraged to have several children through polygamy, which is an acceptable, sacred obligation and norm. Regarding discipline, respect of elders is expected, obedience demanded, with punitive action for any deviations and threats and proverbs are utilised to shape behaviour. Typical of African patrilineal cultures, fathers are perceived as family superiors and disciplinary masters whose opinions are rarely questioned and have the duty to impart similar perceptions in the boy child (Ndofirepi and Shumba, 2014).

Unlike western societies where the self-construct is self-centred, reflected in the value of independence, the interdependence construal of the self prevails in collective cultures, characterised by regulating one's opinions, views, and interests to the primacy of others (Beattie, 1980; Markus and Kitayama, 1991). Interdependence and inhibition of expression of individual needs is emphasised with value for consideration of other's needs. Children are taught behaviours that ought to be reproduced when need arises basing on physical, social economic and cultural demands of a context. Further, Article 31 of the African Charter of the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1999) states that, children have responsibilities towards societies and families as well as preserve African cultural values of their communities. This article is rooted in the belief that despite children having rights, they also have responsibilities. Through intergeneration transmission of knowledge by elders in communities, who are viewed as experts by experience and ancestry, parenting practices, values, and norms are learned and sustained.

## **2.4 Parenting and acculturation in the context of immigration**

Societies become multicultural due to immigration, as people from diverse cultural backgrounds come to live together in diverse cultures. Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936, p.149) assert that "Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups". Negotiating two worlds which differ in norms and practices is challenging to parents and children, due to dilemmas encountered in finding a perfect fit with the new society and maintaining identity of origin, embedded with practices, expectations, norm, and values (Berry, 2005). In immigration, parents carry with them orientations which constitute expectations, aspirations for their

children with strategies to attain them. Parenting practices of country of origin and the new country may contrast each other, particularly in gender roles and disciplining, although Sam and Berry (2010) note that immigrants enter the acculturation process either voluntarily or involuntarily having made a choice to move to a new society.

Berry (1997) argues that acculturation varies in causality, level of difficulty as well as outcomes influenced by mobility, voluntariness and permeance. The host country impacts on parenting orientations, since parents act as filters of either holding on to former orientations, adopting or rejecting new orientations and forming opinions of what they consider appropriate or not by either making modifications through making meaning of new practices. Ochocka and Janzen (2008) argue that individuals are not just recipients from contexts, but they too shape and influence their contexts. Individuals or groups employ strategies in parenting, aimed at guiding children, basing on orientations learned and developed in their original contexts. However, Berry (1997) notes that amidst immigration, these strategies are calculated and targeted towards acculturation, inform of cultural maintenance, contact and participation with others or rejection. He argues that individuals assimilate if they do not wish to maintain their cultural identity, hence seek interaction with others, whereas others may separate if they avoid interaction with others and maintain their original cultures. Integration occurs if there is a balance of maintaining ones' culture with interaction with other social groups, unlike marginalisation, which is attributed to limited intent to maintain original culture and willingness for interaction (ibid). Acculturation influences parenting practices as immigrant parents who are more oriented towards cultural values, practices and customs of the host country are more likely to adopt existing practices (Yaman, Mesman, van IJzendoorn and Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2010).

Roer-Strier (1996) coined coping strategies; Kangaroo, Cuckoo, and Chameleon, that immigrant parents adopt in raising their children within new contexts. The '*Kangaroo*' also known as traditional strategy, entails nurturing children as per the culture of origin attributed to the external influence as a threat, hence to protect their children. The '*Cuckoo*' or culturally disoriented strategy emphasises spontaneous assimilation with the new context, thus cultural heritage, continuity, and cohesion is risked. The '*Chameleon*' or the bi-cultural strategy pertains parents adapting to the new environments by learning values, behaviours, and norms with emphasis on ensuring children cope adequately. Roer-Strier (1996) argues that the choice of strategy is dependent on perceptions of origin and new cultures, motive for immigration, cultural differences, as well as socio-economic and political policies of the new society. In addition, Berry (1997) emphasises that attitudes and behaviours towards adopted strategies vary in accordance with influences of national regulations and programs which may segregate, integrate, or marginalise the non-dominant groups within societies. It is upon immigrant parents to determine whether values of culture of origin are more attractive than values of the dominant culture, which influences imitation or rejection, though the former may be motivated to facilitate integration and latter pursued due to the complexities of the dominant culture. Correspondingly, parents' possession or lack of knowledge, may enhance or inhibit their children from navigating new spheres. If immigrant parents are more concerned about maintaining control of their children within a new context and preserving their culture, they become more sceptical of the new country's values regarding children's rights and freedom of

choice and expression. Therefore, the demands and psychosocial issues encountered in the host country, has implications on immigrants' family functioning (Critelli,2015).

Findings in international studies on parenting and immigration (Critelli, 2015; Ryan, 2011; Nesteruk and Marks, 2011; Yaman et al., 2010) show that choice of acculturation strategy impacts on parenting. Despite immigrant parents expressing concerns pertaining parenting practices that contradict their core values, they continuously endeavour to balance between preserving some cultural aspects, at the same time ensure their children assimilate into main stream societies (ibid). Menjivar, Abrego and Schmalzbaeur (2016) argue that intergeneration's tensions emerge as parents and children simultaneously negotiate shifts which creates power imbalances, given that children usually integrate quicker than their parents, due to frequent interactions with peers at schools. Therefore, children are likely to manipulate their parents to gain an upper hand in negotiations, attributed to being more knowledgeable of social norms and values than their parents, through socialisation with peers within the new context (ibid). In addition, Kiang, Glatz and Buchanan (2016) claim that immigration impacts on gender relations and expectations of behaviour as new roles and practices become necessary to adapt in given contexts. Conflicts may arise when some family members strive to hold on to their previous gender roles, whereas others embrace norms of context of settlement.

## **2.5 Norwegian context**

Contexts influence meanings attached to behaviour, hence making sense of parenting practices necessitates understanding how it is interpreted within a specific context (Bornstein, 2012). Norway and other Scandinavian countries are characterised by strong concern for equality, rooted in values of solidarity, legitimacy and individuals' ability and willingness to respect such social values (Brochmann and Hagelund, 2011). According to Esping-Andersen (1990) welfare state classifications, Norway is categorised under the social democratic regime, orientated towards de-familiarisation and low stratifications aimed having a classless society based on equal rights and universalism. Citizens depend on welfare state and trust the state to secure their rights and interests, thus high levels of taxation and economic redistribution. The state provides welfare services to children and families, illustrated in parental leaves, child care and other extensive investments in children welfare services(ibid).

Child Welfare Services plays a vital role in the country's family welfare services, aimed at prevention and addressing social and emotional behavioural aspects that deter children from realizing their full potential. Child Welfare Services is mandated under the Child Welfare Act (1992) to ensure children and young people's protection from harm, by intervening to address and provide effective and efficient support, aimed at securing and enhancing child development and safety. Skivenes (2011) maintains that the Norwegian child welfare system entails four basic principles that include best interest of the child, stability regarding the child surroundings, biological principle which favours biological parents as care providers and the least intrusive form of intervention which emphasises rationality and necessity pertaining interventions .The Norwegian Child Welfare Act (1992) applies to all children in Norway, regardless of their background, religion, nationality, or residential status. This is consistent with Article 2 of the UNRC (1989) which conditions that, the state in which the child resides has a duty to protect

children, in accordance to its legislation. Norway has legal mandatory reporting of child maltreatment with emphasis on rule of law for children and family intervention.

Significantly, children are recognized as persons with own views about life, who are not only recipients of occurrences but key contributors to what happens in their day to day transactions. Skivenes (2011) argues that in Norway, self-interest, reliance, and autonomy are more valued during socialisation and parenting is more authoritative aimed at fostering independence with less emphasis on obedience. Article 6-3 of the Norwegian CWA (1992), which states that,

A child who has reached the age of 7, and a younger child who is capable of forming his or her own opinions, shall receive information and be given an opportunity to state his or her opinion before a decision is made in a case affecting him or her. Importance shall be attached to the opinion of the child in accordance with his or her age and maturity.

Therefore, children have a right to express their views and participate in matters that pertain their lives. However, this does not signify that children have a final say in the decisions, but denotes the right to have their opinions considered and acted upon. Johannesen and Appoh (2016) argue that the Norwegian parenting ideals are rooted in Bowlby's attachment theory (1969) which emphasises children's innate need for love and protection which ought to be met by emotionally warm and sensitive caregivers to stimulate physical, emotional, and social development. In other words, parenting focuses on compromise and negotiations between parents and children with the former guiding the latter to realise autonomy by tapping into their agency. In line with the above, immigrant parents have limited prospects of defining their own parenting practices, other than adapt to context specific orientations.

## **2.6 Immigrants' challenges in Norway**

Parenting among immigrant families constitutes how parents support their children to assimilate to an unfamiliar culture while maintaining an ethnic heritage. Kiang et al. (2016) state that cultural parenting self-efficacy is a key component of perceived parenting competence in given contexts, credited to distinctive opportunities and challenges associated with parenting in a disparate cultural environment. Du Bois (1903) coined the social philosophical concept of 'double-consciousness', which describes viewing oneself through the eyes of others, owing to having more than one social identity, thus a dilemma of self-identity. This concept pertains living in two worlds that constitute how individuals perceive and identify themselves in one and how others perceive and identify them in another. This binary consciousness creates internal conflicts of two warring ideals of self. This concept is of pertinent to parenting in an intercultural context of Norway. Festinger (1957) argues that individuals encounter conflicts when their cognitions about behavior or attitudes clash, hence alter, justify, trivialize or add new cognitions to counteract the dissonance. Bornstein and Bohr (2011) argues that immigrants experience dissonance in acculturation, because cultures frame what is consonant or not, hence an implication on parenting, as cognitions inform attitudes and behaviors in complex ways. Immigrant parents worry that acceptable disciplinary measures employed in foreign contexts are not sufficient to produce the same desired behaviour, instead

breed spoiled children, unlike physical punishment (Hartas, 2014) In the Norwegian culture, as discussed earlier, adults show love and respect children and promote expression of self and ones' goals as well as encourage directness and validation of internal attributes. In contrast, parenting among immigrants particularly of African origin, emphasises promotion of others' goals, indirectness, restrain and adjusting internal attributes to maintain harmony.

Parenting is challenging when expectations from parents and society clash, as the moral environment of parenting entails rights, responsibilities, and expectations. Lack of contextual competence impacts on parenting, due to differences in culture and moral contexts. The Norwegian value system empowers children to negotiate their rights and obligations, while rendering parents that are new to this system powerless, attributed to opposing values. Johannesen and Appoh (2016) argue that it is challenging for African immigrant parents to contribute to socio-cultural parenting or question the Norwegian values due to their subjective position in the social context. Immigrants perceive the European way of parenting as too permissive, whereas the immigrants' way of parenting is perceived as lacking, with aspects of abuse and neglect as per the European standards, hence a cultural clash. Findings of studies to unravel dynamics of ethnic disparities in involvement with Child welfare services (Staer and Bjørknes, 2015; Staer, 2016), indicate that non-western children are more likely to be involved with the Child Welfare Services than their Norwegian peers. Further, findings revealed that single parents are more liable to involvement with Child Welfare Services, attributed to time constraints that arise from multitasking as carers and providers, thus a deficiency in adequately meeting needs of self and their children(ibid). In addition, associated strains of parenting in new contexts, such as finding appropriate toys for children, attending several school activities which not only require physical presence but are also costly in terms of time and finances, bares challenges to immigrant parents. Critelli (2015) notes that immigrant parents find it demeaning to have their child rearing skills questioned by authorities, yet similar practices are a norm in their home societies through which competent adults have are nurtured. Further, they are fearful that the Child Welfare Services make wrong deductions, thus uncertain if service staff are competent to address their families' challenges or make their circumstances worse(ibid).

The above literature review supposes that, culture similarities and culture specific parenting pertaining cognition and practices exist, an implication of globalisation through mass media. However, the emergent question is, what constitutes a normative parenting threshold, upon which parenting practices ought to be assessed? In most cases, an ethnocentric view has been employed as a benchmark, hence undermining what is peculiar, yet critical and vital to comprehending parenting.

## 3.0 Chapter Three: Theoretical Frameworks

The Acculturation model, Social capital theory, Ecological model and Cultural-Ecological model are the theoretical frameworks for informing and guiding this study. These pertain outcomes from social influences within contexts and interactions of culturally different individuals and groups in relation to parenting.

### 3.1 The Ecological model

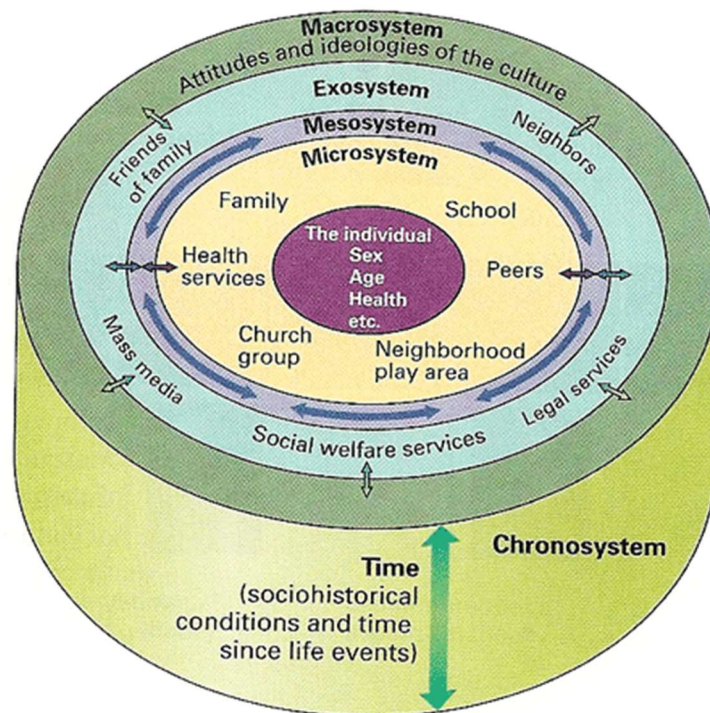
Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979) maintains that the ecological environment entails settings that affect individual immediate interactions implicitly or explicitly depending on interconnectedness among settings. The ecology theory of child development (Santrock, 2007) illustrated in *Figure 1*, highlights five ecological systems; micro, meso, exo, macro and chronosystems that reference each other, yet each is unique with significant influence. The micro system denotes relations between individuals and their immediate surroundings which encompass interpersonal connections, family members and settings that are primary points of reference. These settings involve daily experiences, socialisation, parenting practices and vary in form of compositions and interactions overtime. The meso system constitutes networks of microsystems which represent connections, interactions, transactions with peers and is a linkage between microsystems. The exo system incorporates social settings such as support networks and neighbourhoods that have may indirect impact on individuals. The macro system is the arch in which other subsystems are entrenched and include; social values, cultural belief, political ideologies, laws, and customs. These aspects influence several outcomes, choices, and practices of individuals within sub-systems. As per Bronfenbrenner (1986), the chronosystem constitutes changes overtime in form of transitions such as, migrations, duration of stay in new society, and developmental changes among family members.

Correspondingly, parenting occurs within an interplay of several factors embedded in micro, exo, meso and macro systems within social settings. Within these settings is an interplay of forces that frame and influence parenting. Lives of immigrant children are shaped by parenting practices and family dynamics rooted in the microsystems in which family structures and social capital have profound influence. Parents have expectations and optimism for their children which they pursue through their parenting practices. Exo and meso settings constitute migrant communities, associations and networks which serve purposes of social capital on one hand, and constrain exposure to the wider society on the other. Paat (2013) argues that group affiliations and characteristics influence parental attitudes towards acculturation, as parents may encourage their children to associate with other immigrant peers within their settings to strengthen family values and act as a source of social capital. Further, the religious and cultural affiliations within these settings, can be utilised as significant cornerstones for moral support and authority. Berry (2005) argues that immigrants are more likely to adapt better, if the new society support pluralisms, however segregate and isolate if the mainstream society is against it. It is within the macro system that parenting take place, thus migration policies and society values embodied in this setting may either hinder or enhance adaptation and social mobility. Additionally, Paat (2013) notes that life transitions impact on individuals varyingly, as prior-

migration children and post-migration children differ in acculturation and social transitions, attributed to differences in time frames, exposure, and experiences.

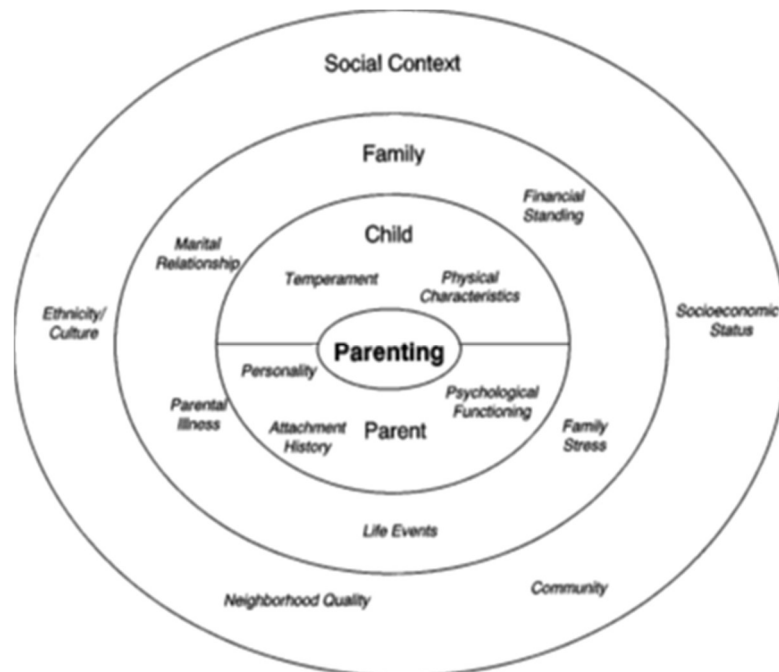
Not only do contexts vary, but so do parenting practices among individuals within given similar contexts, depending on how they compromise demands and goals. Bronfenbrenner (1979) argues that roles, demands and supports that emanate from settings influence effective childrearing. Parents' self-efficacy and perceptions of their children are related to several aspects within settings of existence. Interactions in form of frequency, inclusion, availability, and supportiveness among families and communities, reflect perceptions which are highlighted in social cohesion or exclusion. As illustrated in *Figure 2*, Forehand and Kotchick (2002) accentuate in their ecology of parenting, that social and contextual factors shape parenting processes through dynamic evolution, stirred by interactions among parents, children, and their environments.

**Figure 1-** Ecological theory of child development



Source: Santrock (2007)

**Figure 2**-Ecology of Parenting



*Source:* Forehand and Kotchick (2002)

### **3.2 Social capital theory**

Social capital is defined as real or potential resources which are connected to possession of durable networks of relations (Bourdieu, 1986). According to Coleman (1988) social capital constitutes structural resources in networks, characterised by obligations, power, and values, whereas Putman (1995) defines it in terms of properties of social organisations, which increase society efficiency and facilitate collective action. The focus about social capital, put forward by the above scholars in their definitions surrounds production and maintenance of relations embedded in trust, social consensus, and structural features. Social capital is characterised by obligations and expectations which are dependent on trustworthiness within social environments, reinforced by information flow, norms, and associated sanctions (Bourdieu,1986; Coleman, 1988; Putman, 1995). Networks vary in size and functions, thus through mutual obligations, norms are established and maintained.

Normative structures have implications on transactions within contexts. For instance, in collective societies, unattended children will be looked after by neighbours, while in individualistic societies the same action is questioned. High levels of obligations signify more social capital to draw from which is useful in increasing action. To that effect, norms are established to minimise externalities, but maximise the benefits of individuals within specific social structures. Putman (1995) claims that social capital is both expansive and inclusive as well as closed and exclusive, illustrated in bridges and bonds respectively. He asserts that, bonding social capital mobilises solidarity, whereas bridging social capital links members.



How Individuals bond and bridge varies across dimensions of class, religion, age, proximity, education, and ethnicity, hence accounting for divergent outcomes that are positive, negative, or mixed (ibid).

The social capital theory provides a deeper conceptual understanding of the impact of social structures on parenting among immigrants, by illuminating how relationships and identities are socially constructed. Children depend on both their parents' social resources and the resources that stem from their parents' relations (Bourdieu, 1986), which has an implication on immigrants' integration and social mobility. The norms that serve some groups are the same norms that inhibit other groups, through categorising them as outsiders. Immigrants vary in their social capital, because networks are established and dissolved overtime, due to changes in associated functionalities, such as gaining contextual cultural competence. Extended family in new contexts of settlement is a significant form of social capital to immigrant families, however these ties may inhibit integrating into the mainstream society by constraining creation of new networks. Grillo (2008) claims that immigrant families have strong bonds with people of the same ethnicity, but weak bridges with the wider community, which is associated with adoption of segregation as an acculturation strategy.

### **3.3 The Acculturation model**

Acculturation denotes the process of cultural and psychological changes that occur when two or more cultural groups and their member individuals come in contact (Berry, 1997). As elaborated in the literature review, ecological and cultural contexts influence human behaviour, though differences exist among individuals. By migrating, individuals bring along practices, beliefs, behaviours upon which they are met either with similar or different practices. Individuals associate with others after categorising them into groups, hence identify with or excluding from groups. Berry (1997) notes that individuals vary in acculturation as time and context influence ones' preference for acculturation strategy given the prevailing macro policies which may constraint or enhance ones' preferences. Sam and Berry (2010) argue that individuals experience acculturation stress, when they experience incompatible behaviours and fail to adjust psychologically to new contexts. Contexts impact on relationships illustrated in characteristics of dominance, hostility, or mutual respect, thus portray how people in different cultures represent themselves, either as persons belonging to a group or independent in nature. People adapt by responding to the demands wherein the environment and letting go of one's previous cultural practices that may be no longer appropriate in the new context (Berry, 1997).

Keller, Lohaus, Kuensemüller and Abels (2004) define cultural contexts as "ecological contexts with a shared understanding of desirable and points of development that are contingent on contextual demands" (p.27). It is essential to understand the attitudes of the society of settlement for immigrants and policies in place pertaining support for or against pluralism since it impacts on immigrants' acculturation strategies. Berry (1997) maintains that sociodemographic characteristics of individuals such as; gender, education, and economic status, influence respective behavioural outcomes. In addition, self-perception varies among individuals, time, and cultural contexts, therefore individuals adopt socio-cultural orientations of individualism and communalism through socialisation and in turn transmit values and norms

of independence or interdependence as social goals to their children. Therefore, culture similarities or dissimilarities in relation to language, practices, values, and norms triggers the need to negotiate or adjust accordingly, thus impacting on choice of acculturation strategy.

### 3.4 The Cultural-ecological model

Ogbu's cultural-ecological model (1981) entails understanding competences within real life contexts instead of using ethnocentrism as a benchmark. The cultural-ecological perspective is rooted in the assumption that child rearing is a mechanism through which instrumental cultural competences are shaped and acquired, hence accounting for child adaptive adult categories that stem from these practices in specific populations. Like Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979), this model provides a framework for acknowledging environmental influences in acquisition and sustainability of competences. Competences are defined varyingly, with an objective that underlines children abiding and meeting socially and cultural expectations. Parents and caregivers have the obligation to culturally inculcate competences in children that may range from linguistic and behavioural to social and cognitive. Ogbu (1981) alludes that available resources facilitate culturally competent values and folk theories, that guide parental practices perceived to be vital in fostering child behaviours.

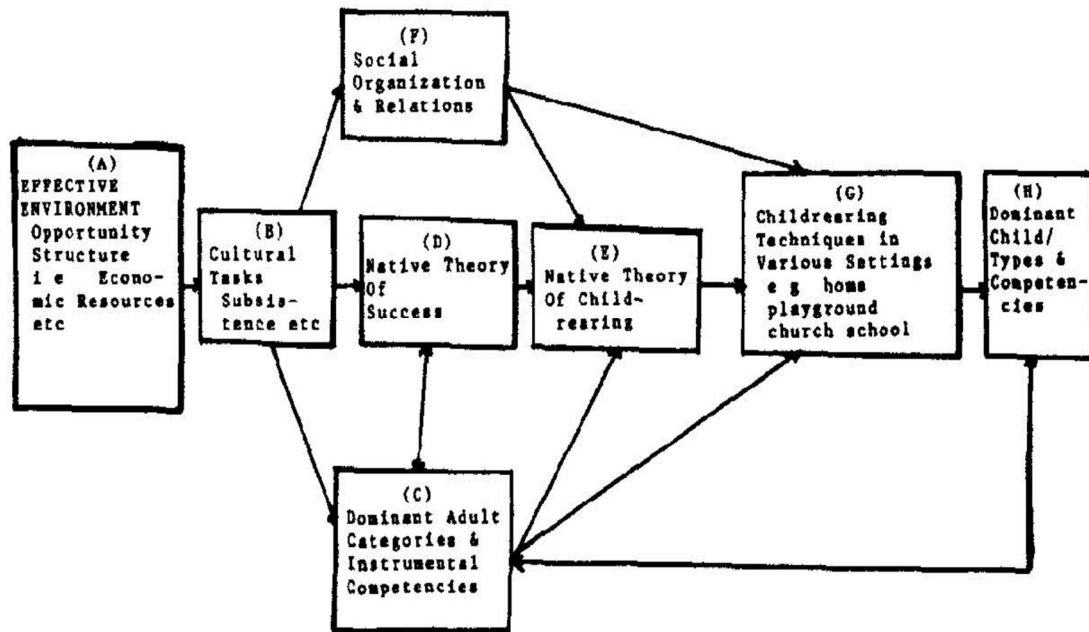
Societies adapt their child rearing techniques and competences to meet their needs, which are culturally defined as per their classifications, social relations, and organisations. According to Ogbu (1981), the objective in most societies is to raise children into competent men and women, nevertheless each society does so along respective culturally standardised techniques that are employed to produce these competences. Further, he argues that parents and caregivers neither invent new ways of parenting nor invent new competences, however techniques and competences are culturally predetermined or sanctioned by social changes (ibid). The native theory of success assumes that societies have theories of success based on past experiences in relation to cultural tasks, costs, and rewards, which are reinforced or altered over time (LeVine et al., 1994). The images of these successes are revered, utilised, and sustained as foundations for guiding parents and caregivers in the obligations.

The model in *Figure 3*, illustrates that, Effective environments(A) which are interconnected with survival and protection, influence resource exploration(B), so Adult competences(C) are dependent on subsistence strategies and native theory of success(D). It is this theory that guides the child rearing values, highlighted in the native model of child rearing(E). How people organise their subsistence activities influence the organisation of raising their children inform of parenting techniques(G), as they constitute culturally organised strategies(F) that are dependent on forms of instrumental competences that parents and carers are obliged to instil. The dominant child type and competences(H) are the outcome of childrearing within a given culture. The model suggests that the transmission and acquisition of competences in the context of cultural demands, ought to be evaluated with no verdicts on what is right, adequate, or deficient. Ogbu (1981, p.426) maintains that,

...child-rearing ideas and techniques in a given culture are shared by the home/family and other institutions or settings containing the child in such a

way as to make child rearing a kind of culturally organised formula to ensure competence and survival.

Figure 3-The Cultural-ecological model of child rearing



Source: Ogbu (1981)

## **4.0 Chapter Four: Methodology**

In this chapter, I address issues of representation, interpretive framework, representation, data collection and management, ethical considerations as well as legitimisation.

### **4.1 Interpretive paradigm**

Research is not conducted in a vacuum. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) assert that, researchers, position themselves within distinctive interpretive frameworks which configure their research process, shaped by ontology, epistemology, and methodology beliefs. Ontology considerations question what is considered as reality; epistemological considerations denote nature and origin of knowledge and methodology considerations query processes and languages of research. Different ontological perspectives correlate with various ways of acquiring knowledge and methodologies used. Research is done to address issues or understand phenomena in society, both known and unknown, in which uncertainties are sieved out of beliefs we hold to arrive to certainty. Therefore, explaining events requires accounting for causation of social structures and forces. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that it is vital to acknowledge one's theoretical position, since assumptions about reality lie within individuals. Social constructivism is the interpretive framework for this study. Burr (2003) accentuates that, to make sense of the world, knowledge is constructed than created, henceforth reality is socially defined. It signifies that perspectives, experiences and meanings are socially produced and reproduced. In relation to this study under the social constructivism interpretive framework, parenting constitutes multiple realities of experiences. Further, the study epistemology is co-constructed between participants and the researcher, because my choices of data collection, data construction and focus of analysis, frame how participants' experiences are represented in interpretations and derived meanings.

### **4.2 Methodology approach**

Qualitative research methodology was employed, aimed at exploring lived parenting experiences among Ugandan immigrants in Norway. Bryman (2016) defines qualitative research as a method of inquiry employed to understand the social world through examining how its interpreted. Qualitative research serves functions of social investigation that are contextual, explanatory, evaluative, and generative through examining accounts for existence and operation of phenomena (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). Qualitative research unfolds unique patterns of events overtime, thus depicts processes, and captures several elements of social settings such as views, values, and attitudes. In line with the aims of the study, qualitative research was suitable to explore in-depth accounts of parenting experiences of Ugandan immigrant parents in Norway. Exploring experiences signifies the need to have past events recounted, hence use of narrative inquiry as a designated method of research to realise the purpose of this study.

### **4.2.1 Study of narratives**

Narratives are lived, told, negotiated modified and re-created experiences of individuals (Clandinin and Connelly, 1998; Creswell, 2007). Individuals create and maintain meaningful worlds through language and conceptualise different aspects of their lives to what can be understood in form of narratives. Narratives serve overlapping purposes that include justifying, engaging, negotiating, mobilising, entertaining, though can as well be misleading (Riessman, 2008). Knowledge lies within individuals as they are the experts of their lives, therefore in quest for making meaning of their lives, individuals formulate and reformulate their narratives (Czarniawska, 2004). Narratives reveal processes and facts about events, experiences, and perceptions through which, embedded meanings are captured, and are intertwined with time and memory, as well as revised and re-edited to construct identities. Macías Gómez-Estern and De La Mata Benítez (2013, p.349) state that,

...narratives constitute a privileged semiotic tool for the construction of identities in migration situation...because of their properties of expressing and elaborating emotional experiences, as well as their capacity for tracing a bridge between cultural and personal dimensions of identity.

Narratives provide an avenue of sense making process on how individuals position themselves, either as passive or active, victims or perpetrators, illustrated in how they shape their lives through strategic communication and storytelling. Under the epistemology bearing of social constructivism, experiences shape character and perceptions, since individuals' experience similar events differently. Riessman (2008) argues that individuals actively construct reality by choosing what is accorded attention in lived experiences, hence narration is embedded with gaps between lived and told experiences, with meanings shifting during disclosure and interactions. Further, Clandinin and Connelly (1998, p.160) accentuate that, "We live out stories in our experiences, tell stories of those experiences, and modify them through retelling and reliving them. The research participants with whom we engage also live, tell, relive, and retell their own stories." Subsequently, what is known or how it is known is an avenue for evaluation by the researcher, as individuals negotiate uncertainties about their own criteria for acquiring knowledge through clarifying contexts, processes, significances, and consequences. Therefore, facts fit individual narratives in accordance to questions one may choose to ask and answers one chooses to believe. Utilising narrative inquiry was objectified towards eliciting detailed aspects of how parenting experiences are framed by immigrant parents.

## **4.3 Research design**

### **4.3.1 Participant selection**

I purposively and conveniently selected participants. Purposive sampling aims to ensure that samples selected are of relevance to the study objective and are still liable to objective, unbiased and independent scrutiny (Bryman, 2016; Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). I used snow balling, a sampling technique which entails identifying an eligible participant, through whom a researcher is linked to other participants that fit the study criteria. I relied on networks developed earlier, while I was in Norway. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) argue that

negotiating access requires balancing between ethical and strategic considerations in accordance with the research purpose, timeframe, and existing circumstances. I contacted a Ugandan parent, who upon explanation of my research objectives, linked me with other eligible participants. The eligibility criteria of participation, was limited to Ugandan immigrant parents who have resided in Norway for more than 3 years and have children below 18 years, born prior or post immigration, with no consideration of having specific parenting experiences.

### 4.3.2 Participants’ profile

Six Ugandan-born immigrant parents, who were willing to share their experiences, were selected for the study. Kvale (2007) highlights, that the sample size is dependent on the research purpose in addition to available resources. The participants varied in their duration of stay in Norway, age, gender, socio-economic status, and educational background, hence enhancing interpretation of the study findings through the ecological, acculturation and the cultural-ecological theoretical frameworks. As highlighted below in Table 1, four participants are single parents (1 male and 3 female), whereas 2 participants are a couple. Of the single parents, 2 mothers (Joyce and Alice) moved to Norway as children under family re-unification and the all other parents migrated as adults, for political, economic, and personal reasons. All children to participants were born post migration except for one child among the couple’s children. Participants socio-economic status is depicted in their occupations that ranges between students and working class. Their ages range between 28 to 51 and five of the participants were of the same tribe, except one, who despite belonging to a different tribe, was raised in the central region occupied by the Baganda, which accounts for her assimilation into the culture.

**Table 1: Participants Socio-demographic characteristics**

Name (Pseudonym)	Parenting Status	Number of Children	Duration of Stay in Norway	Occupation
Ruth	Single	1	5	Student
Alice	Single	2	18	Student
Joyce	Single	3	22	Stay home mom
Geoffrey	Single	2	13	Health worker
Mr and Mrs Williams	Married	3	15	Distribution and Health worker(respectively)

### 4.3.3 Data collection methods

#### 4.3.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

Kvale (1996) states that, interviews are intersubjective interactions through which meanings of experiences of subjects are explored. Semi-structured interviews were employed for the study, premised on Bryman’s (2016) argument that they encourage more exploration and guarantee that participants are not guarded. Kvale (2007, p.21) argues that “The interview gives access to the manifold of local narratives embodied in storytelling and opens for a discourse and negotiation of the meaning of the lived world”. Interviews are reflective of

context, historical and cultural constructions of social reality, intertwined inform of narratives. I choose to use semi-structured interviews because they are open and flexible in pursuing new ways of seeing and understanding the topic at hand. Henceforth, facilitated exploration of information on parenting experiences through generation of personal accounts, and facilitating understanding of complex processes and sensitive issues regarding parenting.

Kvale (2007) notes that pilot testing is crucial in identification of flaws, limitations within the interview design and facilitates redress prior to implementation of the study. Accordingly, a pilot interview was conducted with an African immigrant mother, aimed at testing my interview guide and skills for eliciting narratives. Generating narratives relevant to addressing research objectives, necessitates formulation of clear questions that unfold explicit narration of a phenomena (Miller and Glassner, 1997; Flick, 2006; Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick, 2008; Riessman, 2008). The pilot interview aided in self-reflection on my role as an interviewer, regarding my own assumptions on the topic at hand as well as clearing ambiguities pertaining questioning. During the pilot interview, I realised that despite not asking, the participant wanted to first share about herself and how she was brought up, instead of immediately getting into the subject in question, thus included the prompt in my guide about participants lived parenting experiences while in Uganda. In addition, I incurred a misinterpretation of a question put forward attributed to my framing and leading content. Respectively, I made necessary changes in my interview guide, particularly warm up questions that put participants at ease and prompted narration of participants experiences in the process of immigration, including factors that influenced immigration. Then later asked about experiences of parenting within Norway, parenting orientations, plus associated opportunities, and challenges

I shared with all eligible participants an information letter about the study, supplemented by a phone call for clarification and later set up appointments for the interviews. Participants were given the liberty to choose a venue of convenience and conducive to facilitate open dialogue. All participants opted for the personal settings of their homes where they felt comfortable. The interviews lasted between 90 minutes to 2 hours, inclusive of follow up interviews on issues that necessitated clarifications such as; gender roles and the difference between family advisers and caseworkers, which initially I presumed meant the same. In addition, participants had the opportunity to choose a language of communication they felt comfortable with, either Luganda or English, as the former is my mother tongue and likewise for 5 participants. Though, not all participants shared my culture, they all spoke and understood Luganda very well, therefore both languages were used in the main and follow up interviews objectified at encouraging free expression. Legard, Keegard and Ward (2003) note that an effective working relationship between a researcher and participant is facilitated through expression of interest and attention, allowing participants to tell their stories through establishing that narratives are neither wrong or right and time management. I established informal meetings before actual interviews, which provided an atmosphere of ease and open dialogue. In addition, interacting with participants after interviews, provided an avenue of more reflection on the topic, thus elicited more narratives and supporting verifications, to which mental notes were taken.

During the interviews, I actively listened with positive body language that communicated interest in participants' narratives. Miller and Glassner (1997) point out that by agreeing to partake in an interview, participants expose themselves to revealing their perceived world, on grounds that the other person expresses genuine interest. I encouraged participants that there were no right or wrong answers and that they should feel free to share any information that has connotation to their lived parenting experiences. Articulation of one's version of events and experiences necessitates providing a platform to tell one's story (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997; Davies and Dodd, 2002), hence participants were given the liberty to recount their experiences with minimal interruptions in form of clarification probes, aimed at eliciting further explanation and descriptions. However, since interviews were conducted in participant homes with children present, though did not partake in the interview, breaks were permitted especially when participants wanted to quickly attend to their children, particularly availing snacks, and drinks. Legard, et al. (2003) and Flick (2006) argue that not every individual is good at narration, therefore probing facilitates attaining depth in exploration and explanations during interviews, through use of content mining and mapping questions regarding the investigated phenomena. Consequently, riding on the premise that individuals accord similar phenomena different meanings, I probed on aspects that participants assumed I was aware of, particularly parenting practices in Uganda. Participant interpretation was paramount as I explicitly availed opportunity to convey meanings, through encouraging explanations and prioritized self-awareness by not taking for granted respondents' statements. Labaree (2002) emphasises that it is vital to pay attention to one's previous knowledge assumptions and status, as entry constitutes continuous negotiations for every new action undertaken in research.

All interviews were audio-recorded for purposes of allowing me actively pay attention to participants' accounts, other than pausing to take notes, which could distract both the interviewee and interviewer and impact on the interaction. I noticed that participants were conscious and somewhat guarded about being audio recorded, having informed them at the commencement of the interviews and within information letters. However, upon switching off the recorder, participants spoke more freely and disclosed more about their experiences, which I took note of mentally and sought their consent to include the information in the study. Flick (2006) argues that interview situations ought to be analysed to determine if interviewees are consciously or unconsciously influenced to provide biased versions of their experiences. Thus, utilised field notes which I noted immediately after each interview in reflection of observations, thoughts, and ideas on how the interviews transpired, aimed at verification, and complementing data analysis and reporting. For instance; I observed that all participant homes, had children activity timetables, which highlighted what was supposed to be accomplished on specific dates and times, such as birthdays, recreational activities, and classes. I was informed upon inquiry that schedules were vital in juggling responsibilities, planning and prioritising. Further, I noted that the children were not surprised by my presence, because their parents had informed them beforehand about my arrival and purpose. In addition, before commencement of one interview, a teenager requested me to provide more clarification about the intention of my research, which I provided.



#### 4.3.3.2 Observation

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) argue that the world cannot be viewed in its entirety, as seldom do participants provide totality of their actions, however provide accounts for their actions in form of explanations and description. Kvale (1996) puts forth that a researcher ought to acquaint oneself with knowledge on phenomena arranging from literature, theoretical studies to surroundings and practices as it illuminated on what is communicated in interviews. Use of observation in my study was objectified towards legitimizing told lived parenting experiences acquired in the semi-structured interviews. Adler and Adler (1998) argue that observations provide an opportunity to yield new realities, insights attributed to its flexibility and avails deeper comprehension of the studied phenomena if combined with interviews, hence enhancing validity. Observation in this stance denotes use of my senses of sight, listening, memory, as well as my verbal and non-verbal communication to correlate with participant narratives regarding what constitutes parenting and deemed vital in parenting. Unquestionably, everyone has a story, however it is important to establish the context in which these stories are produced and what they represent, concerning construction of meaning of the social world. Through observation, I witnessed both scheduled and unscheduled events which were not shared in participant narratives, inclusive of practices that transpired within my settings, thus utilised these insights during my interview probes and verifications. For instance; I noted how parents assertively negotiated with children on matters pertaining meals and ascribed time for play.

Riessman (2008, p.26) argues that “Working ethnographically with participants in their settings overtime offers the best conditions for storytelling”. The gatekeeper asked one participant if I would stay with her while conducting my research to which she agreed. I sought and gained permission to utilise my stay as an observation opportunity for my study, thus stayed for 5 days, during which I interviewed other participants. I similarly sought oral permission from other participants to let me get a first-hand glimpse of parent experiences within the context in question by spending time with them post interviews, which lasted between 5 to 6 hours. I treated the study interviews as interactions, rather than a pick up and leave session. In addition, I offered to baby sit for 6 hours, for a participant who had failed to secure a baby sitter. This availed me a miniature hands-on experience on parenting, because I participated in picking up children from kindergarten, partaking in their routine of; playing, reading, having meals, and getting ready for bed. Vagli (2009, p.51) argues that,

...the ethnographic methodology position provides access not only to the other’s way of experiencing the world, but also to the researcher’s implicit life world knowledge. This knowledge provides insights into the knowledge of field by recognising and reflecting on the active forces or influences working in the situation.

Notably, during one interview I noted a participant give her sons hugs to which she informed that, it is a communication tool that signifies care and availability. This observation brought to light my own taken for granted perception that a hug is a form of greeting as practiced in one of the cultures in Uganda. In addition, I utilised Adler and Adler’s (1998) recommend stages of observation; select and familiarize with a setting, focus on specific aspects to observe, narrow down and move into deeper context aspects of observations. I selected to observe

interactions of parents and their children in their home settings, particularly parent-child communication during the semi-structured ethnographic interviews, since they were conducted in participants' homes with their children present. Altheide and Johnson (1998) assert that contexts provide a framework for interpreting meanings, within which researchers place themselves reflexively to gain deep awareness of the research process. I choose these aspects because of the limited period and I did not want my presence to impinge of families' day-to-day relations and activities. For instance; I observed participants offer praise to their children when they ate their meals or solved a puzzle. I utilised mental notes during my observations, which I later noted down in text. I pondered on what meanings were embedded in what I saw and heard in social interactions of the participant families that I observed.

For naturalist observation, I focused on adult-child interaction. I kept a journal for field notes pertaining my thoughts and reflection on what happened around me regarding parenting, such as; while taking a bus or train, walking down a street, mass at church, and at the kindergarten outside my residence. I observed teachers and parents getting down to speak with children, not talking down to them but gaining equal footing through either kneeling or squatting to acquire same level and eye contact with the child, which implicated active listening. Observations are susceptible to bias, due to relying on ones' subjective perception and interpretation (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007), therefore conducted validation checks with participants and other lay people, to ascertain if my interpretations and observations were in accordance to the actuality. I asked an acquaintance who works at a kindergarten to clarify on what I witnessed with teachers involved in children play activities even beyond the school premises and she informed me that learning goes beyond the class, hence children are encouraged to explore through which their cognition is enhanced.

### **4.3.4 Data analysis**

#### **4.3.4.1 Transcription**

Upon data collection, all the audio recordings were transcribed. Transcriptions denote language which represents the real world, meanings, and perceptions as well as serve as sense making tools for qualitative researchers (Kvale, 1996; McLellan, Macqueen and Neidig, 2003). Transcription is a key form of representation of narratives, in which spoken language is transformed into written text. McLellan et al. (2003) argue that transcription guidelines assist researchers generate systematic data in addition to minimising risks of compromising data and data analysis delays. De-naturalised transcription was used, as it entails tapping into meanings with less emphasis on analysing talk. Transcription of collected data was verbatim, however for coherency, paralinguistic features such as voice intonations, involuntary vocalisations and non-verbal implications were eliminated to produce legible texts, though preserving participant narratives. Oliver, Serovich and Mason (2005) argue that one's choice of transcription reflects implicit or explicit assumptions. Therefore, my interpretive choice of de-naturalized transcription was aimed at obtaining embedded meanings and perceptions within narratives, instead of getting into mechanics of language associated with naturalised transcriptions. I allocated eight hours of transcription per one hour of recording, with each recording re-listened to, in correspondence with the respective transcript, to ascertain accuracy.

#### 4.3.4.2 Thematic analysis

Analysis denotes a systematic meaning-making process within a social context, associated with objectivity and subjectivity, aimed at discovering, understanding, explaining, distinguishing, comparing and describing phenomena (Kvale 1996; Holstein and Gubrium, 1997; Bryman, 2016). Thematic narrative analysis was employed as an analysis method for this study. Riessman (2008) states, data in thematic analysis is interpreted through intricacies of meanings with emphasis on told events and cognitions to which language refers. Thematic analysis is flexible, as it permits revisiting themes and subthemes regarding significance and prevalence to research question through reflecting and uncovering reality (Bryman, 2016). I utilised Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6-phases of thematic data analysis, which includes; familiarising with data, identifying initial codes, seeking themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming designation of themes and producing a report. I initially worked with each single interview transcript, by critically reading the transcript and locating sets of experiences and insights by identifying contextual aspects and interpreting it with focus on processes and unique meaning-making units and descriptions of narratives. I later evaluated all the five interview transcripts together, through identifying significant phrases and statements in relevance to the parenting experiences within, from which interpretations were derived. I assigned codes to words which represented aspects of the research objective and from these codes, themes were emerged inductively through identifying explicit or implicit similarities, frequencies, co-occurrences, as well as variations of identified codes from participants' transcripts as illustrated in the Appendix E. Bryman (2016) defines themes as patterned responses identified through selected codes in transcripts that are pertinent to the topic under consideration.

Riessman (2008, p.50) argues that, "By our interviewing and transcription practices, we play a major part in constituting the narrative data that we then analyse". Analysis posed a challenge particularly, balancing subjectivity and objectivity. I faced a dilemma between explicitly portraying participant narratives and objectively representing embedded implicit accounts in interpretation and reporting. Therefore, to give credible accounts, the analysis process was recursive, characterised by back and forth reflection and re-examination of data, guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6-phase analysis below.

- a. Re-read transcripts to uncover meanings in narratives for accuracy purposes.
- b. Employed data-driven coding with an objective of retaining accounts irrespective of their divergence from the topic of study to uncover associated aspects.
- c. Linked codes with sub-themes, main themes, and varied themes.
- d. Reviewed developed themes in comparison to the data.
- e. Organised data into outstanding projections, in correspondence with respective narratives and accorded names that were precise and communicative of the data.
- f. Accounted for narratives in an organised textual display, as illustrated in the next chapter that pertains to representation of findings.

## **4.4 Ethical considerations**

### **4.4.1 NSD Approval**

Ethics are procedures and guidelines of conduct, that outline expectations of practitioners aimed at regulating and maintaining professional identity (Banks, 2012). Bryman (2016) maintains that special attention should be given to avoidance of occurrences of ethical dilemmas before, during or even after research, with the ‘do no harm’ principle upheld at any point in time. I sought approval for my research execution from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). The NSD serves as a data protection authority body, with the mandate of regulating, sanctioning, and approving research ideas. The intention of ethical review is to protect participants from harm as they constitute a valuable aspect of the research process and not merely a means to an end. Further, the review protects the researcher and communicates that the study to be undertaken is genuine and that the researcher is willing to adhere to ethical standards, hence enhancing likelihood for participation. Ethical approval for this study was granted in February 2017, reference number 52450, as attached in Appendix B.

### **4.4.2 Consent**

Informed consent pertains acquiring permission to partake in a study, upon clear comprehension and appreciation of associated facts, implications, and consequences (Bryman, 2016). For ethical purposes in relation to credibility, I informed participants about the gatekeepers referral, details of the intended research and outcomes of the collected data. Kvale (2007) asserts that ethical decisions largely depend on an individual’s integrity, since research processes entail executing spot on decisions, whose impact goes beyond participants, to the value of research knowledge produced. Participants’ written and oral consent for participation and recording of their voices was sought before commencement of research to elude deception. In addition, the participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and at any time they could opt out by withdrawing their consent without stating any reason. Further, they were notified that in case of withdrawal all their availed personal data would be made anonymized.

### **4.4.3 Confidentiality and anonymity**

Initially, I had planned to conduct my research in my town of residence in Norway, however when some eligible participants declined participation, it came to my attention that there were few Ugandans within the scope, thus my study was likely to impinge on participants’ privacy. On grounds of ethical considerations, I sought referral through a gatekeeper in another town within Norway, which has a higher Ugandan immigrant population, to which I travelled and conducted interviews with two-thirds of participants who had expressed interest to partake in the study. Participants were clearly informed that all personal data would be treated with confidentiality and that all recordings and the transcribed data would be stored in a personal computer and secured. In addition, they were informed that data would only be accessed by my supervisor and I. Participants anonymity was protected by masking their identities, using pseudonyms in reporting; hence no personal data was used that could reveal their identities. Participants were availed an opportunity to read through their indirect identifiable information

that was to be published as a research dissertation. Approval was secured when participants confirmed with representation of their narratives, to which one participant requested that I anonymise some information that was earlier provided, as associated details could reveal her identity and another participant provided more information for clarity.

#### **4.4.4 Researcher's positionality**

As highlighted in chapter one, my personal interest and experience underpins my research on lived parenting experiences of Ugandan immigrants in Norway. For this study, I occupied a space between an insider and outsider. I was an insider because of my nationality as a Ugandan, hence an opportunity in gaining access to respondents, attributed to my social similarities with participants, characterised by race and culture. However, at the same time I was an outsider and socially distant regarding parenting and immigration purpose, status, and timeframe. Labaree (2002) argues that insidership is embedded with hidden dilemmas which requires negotiation of accuracy and maintenance of objectivity through questioning one's presumptions of truthfulness. Participants were willing to share their experiences, because of the assumption of shared distinctiveness and understanding in comparison to outsiders who view them through glass windows. However, this was embedded with potential to deter participants from explaining in detail based on assumptions that I already have the knowledge. I self-reflected by separating my own experiences, perceptions, and prior intimate knowledge on the topic under consideration, by not taking for granted understandings of those being researched. Particularly, I evaded assuming I was familiar with what was communicated during the interviews, especially when statements like '*You have been there, you know what am talking about*' were used in narratives, to which probing questions were applied to elicit their meanings. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) argue that, what is crucial is not ones' position, but the researchers' credibility and authenticity in expression of interest in participants experience and respective accurate representation.

### **4.5 Reliability**

Reliability pertains consistency of findings in yielding the same responses at any time (Kvale,1996). Accentuated in this study is the prevalence of emphasis on participants' narratives, articulated in detailed account of parenting experiences. Reliability was ascertained in questions asked that were aimed at unfolding narratives and not leading participants to disclose narratives that are oriented towards the researcher's interests. Holstein and Gubrium (1997) assert that respondents are not just deposits of sought after answers, however are authors of facts and associated experiences. Therefore, my role as a researcher was to serve as an instrument of obtaining knowledge and ensure integrity is upheld as the research process is liable to influence of my knowledge, assumptions, and experience. Each interview was unique in a way, because elaborative probes were used basing on participants accounts, though under guidance of the same interview guide. I examined the basis upon which my interpretive judgements were ascribed to collected data, by taking into consideration that I was seeking to uncover and understand and not to support and conform preconceived assumptions.

## 4.6 Validity

Validation entails critical analysis through checks by the researcher to explicitly state one's perspective on the phenomena studied and processes undertaken to counteract biases in interpretation (Creswell, 2007). Kvale (1996, p.231) states that "There are multiple ways of knowing and multiple truths, and the concept of validity indicates a firm boundary line between truth and nontruth". Validity is ascertained by questioning credibility of knowledge claims, strength of empirical evidence and interpretation. Altheide and Johnson (1998) claim that reflecting and conceptualising phenomena under investigation and capturing social reality is complex to validate in qualitative research. Valid knowledge in this stance concerns narratives provided on parenting experiences acquired from participants' consciousness and observations to language.

Acknowledging my position helped me appreciate that I was not detached from the study, but incorporated within by listening, transcribing experiences into written text and interpreting underlying meanings. The socio-demographic characteristics of participants as detailed in participants' profile had an impact on participant narratives as explicated in findings, which illustrate convergences and variations on key aspects within parenting experiences. Theme development emerged from participant narratives, however the probing questions I used, aimed at elaboration, explanation, and clarity, are likely to have influenced emphasis on aspects such as; context and culture. For instance; I covertly asked participants about their parenting experiences within different habitats, hence accounting for emergence of Contexts and culture, Child Welfare Services, Acculturation, Childhood conceptualisation as pertinent issues regarding parenting experiences. Significantly, the selection criterion did not condition participants to have had encounters with Child welfare Services.

A researcher's characteristics and skills in executing research, impact on research outcomes, henceforth understanding aspects that might compromise research, is critical (Flick, 2006). Objectivity in this study is related to concerns of truths which denote visible representation of participants' narratives as the focus of data analysis. Chung and Munroe, (2003) argue narratives are liable to social desirability; a tendency of giving socially desirable responses, aimed at defending oneself regarding events that transpired either by over or under reporting. This impacts on interpretation and representation of accounts in research. However, I utilised appropriate content mining probes to elicit meaning as well as observations through micro-ethnography to gain meaningful insights on the subject matter. Further, I shared transcripts with all participants for validation, aimed at determining if meanings and perceptions underpinned in their narratives regarding; statements describing experiences, contexts of these experiences, overall thoughts, and essence of these experiences, were captured. Respectively clarifications were provided by 4 participants and 2 participants were content with the depictions of their narratives.

## 4.7 Study limitations

Recruitment of participants was not as easy as preconceived, specifically given that my topic of interest is perceived sensitive in the Norwegian social context. Four eligible participants

thought I was undertaking undercover spy research for Child Welfare Services, and had to consult their peers, to establish implications of participation, despite my ethical approval and assurances on confidentiality and anonymity. I urged them to take time to make informed decisions, having availed them detailed written information about the study, to which they declined participation, on grounds of personal reasons.

Qualitative research is associated with a limitation of inability to generalise findings (Bryman, 2016), as studying a few parents does not warrant conclusions concerning parenting experiences among immigrants. However, the aim of the research was to gain a deeper understanding of parenting experiences of Ugandan immigrants in Norway, hence qualitative research was best suited to meet this objective. Additionally, Bryman (2016) argues that data obtained from this methodology approach is difficult to replicate, because it is unstructured and relies on the researcher's ingenuity. Therefore, impossible to conduct a true replication since there is no standard procedure to follow. I concur with Creswell (2007) that, it is improbable for research to be entirely bias free, because several aspects influence researchers' decisions in choosing topics to investigate and how investigations are designed. Nonetheless, revealing the social world of participants regarding their parenting experiences, takes precedence in this study.

## **5.0 Chapter Five: Findings and Analyses**

Study findings are presented in four segments. First, I present narratives of 4 participants, secondly my participant-observation experience, thirdly the themes that emerged from the analysis and lastly, I address research questions. I chose narratives of 4 participants acquired in 3 interviews, because of their uniqueness in profiles, regarding gender, immigration dynamics and class. The variations in these narratives illuminate the male perspectives on gender relations and roles, nuances of life transitions in migration such as; age of migration, family background and influence of social class in parenting among immigrants. These narratives as well bring to light shared similarities of values, and practices. Further, the co-constructed narratives represent the contexts and time-frames that might have shaped participants' personal accounts and within which I situated interpretations and derived meanings. Riessman (2008, p.187) argues that "a narrative is not simply a factual report of events but instead one's articulation told from a point of view that seeks to persuade others to see the events in a similar way". The narratives I present below are not just through the interviews but, as well encompass my interactions with participants, particularly clarifications I sought from the miniature observations, inclusive of follow ups to elaborate on specific aspects. In addition to the narratives, I present my participant-observation experience, employed to gain a deeper insight to parenting experiences. In relation to participants' narratives pertaining their parenting experiences in Norway, four interrelated themes were identified; 1) Contexts and Culture, 2) Childhood conceptualisation, 3) Norwegian Child Welfare Services, and 4) Acculturation. These are embedded with meaningful variations highlighted within sub-themes. These findings within these themes are later used to address research questions.

### **5.1 Participants' narratives**

#### **5.1.1 Joyce**

I came to Norway 22 years ago as a child, on grounds of family re-union with my father. The moving was very awkward, because I came to meet a stranger who I did not have a relationship with, because he always travelled for work and later sought asylum in Norway. I grew up with a single mother in poverty, raised among relatives, hence food, shelter and clothes were the basic needs and nothing like emotional love. Moving to Norway was a life transforming opportunity to start life all over again, because when I was academically struggling when I was in Uganda. I was a slow learner, so moving gave a second chance to better my intellect by re-learning most things.

Despite moving to Norway as a child, I was typically raised in a Ugandan way, spanked, and ordered around, though later my father adjusted when my step-mother warned him that such measures were against the Norwegian laws. I kept company of Ugandan friends, not Norwegians, except for a family friend who tried teaching us about the Norwegian practices. I can say my father was green about parenting as often dressed me like a boy, and one time asked me to cut off my hair, he did not know what do, because my step-mother let him parent me. I



did not mind, provided I had food, clothes, and a shelter, since that is what I was accustomed to as having a good childhood.

I never planned to be a parent, it is because my father pestered me to move out of his house as per the Norwegian culture when a child turns 18-years old. Hence found myself moving in with someone and the next thing I know am pregnant. I was excited about the whole situation, because all I wanted was a family of my own, since no one motivated to aim better or pursue higher education after high school. The father of my child, who is African, though not Ugandan, was later deported after the birth of our son because his documents had expired. I moved back to Uganda, we got married and moved to my husband's country to raise our son. However, I was disappointed because, 3- years into the marriage with two sons, our relationship with my ex-husband was not what both of us expected. I wanted to settle with a modest living, yet he wanted to be wealthy at any cost, as well as have a well-educated wife.

Due to un-reconcilable differences, we divorced and I decided to move back to Norway to pursue a better life for my sons. I enrolled in school to pursue nursing and got a part time job. After a while, I got involved with someone who was deceptive, as he abandoned me when I was only 3 months pregnant with my now 3-year old daughter and left for his country back in Africa. Amidst all that, I was doing fine and it was not until both my sons started school, that I started facing challenges. Both my boys were very stubborn, disruptive in class and often teachers complained. My family in-law had warned me against taking their grand-sons back to Europe and promised that I would not handle them, because in their family, children do not part with their ancestry. The boys had seriously changed when we moved back, they were calm at home, however would get out of order once they went to school. I sought Barnevernet support but in vain, it was not until the teachers contacted Barnevernet about failure to handle my sons, that they intervened.

I felt abandoned by the Barnevernet system, because cases kept on compiling, with so much exaggeration by case workers, yet no concrete help was given. I was helpless and afraid, as the help Barnevernet provided through family advisers was insufficient, because I could not give my children emotional love as needed. When teachers' complaints escalated, my children and I, were moved to an observation house, under 24-hour surveillance for 3 months. At the end of which, experts within concluded that, the boys needed to be fostered, because the whole family was traumatised. The expert reports portrayed my boys as extremely hyperactive with a mother who was unfit. All friends to my sons had been taken by Barnevernet, so my friends and family advised me to take my children to Uganda, because it was a matter of time that my children would as well be taken. However, I persevered with God's help and decided to stay. I was blessed with another family adviser who after examining my case, threatened to sue Barnevernet, if my situation was not rectified. This was after his evaluation and conclusion that Barnevernet had done more harm than good regarding my case. Out of experience, when Barnevernet makes mistakes, all they do is say sorry and nothing more, so you face the consequences.

Both my sons were put in special schools for challenged children, and I was enrolled in parenting courses and advised to quit school and work, to focus on my children, since I was to be availed welfare support. The parenting courses were very helpful and I believe that is what

I needed initially, when I sought support. I learned how to communicate with my children, gained confidence and learned firmness in decision making in accordance to the Norwegian way of parenting. One cannot win by resistance when involved with Barnevernet, because by the time one is in their system, there is something wrong and the only option is to comply, which in my case I did and it is helping, though am still under evaluation.

Currently, I utilise positive aspects from both contexts of Norway and Uganda to nurture my children. The situation is better since my eldest son stays with his father back in Africa. He was tired of unending interventions, so when he went for a holiday, his father retained him and he is progressing well, yet when he was here, he had been diagnosed as challenged. I remind my children that they will never be fully Norwegian, and will always be questioned about their origin because of their skin color, so they should know and be proud of their heritage.

### **5.1.2 Geoffrey**

I moved to Norway 13-years ago for political reasons and I have two children with different mothers. I grew up in a middle-class background with my dad and step mother and when I was a teenager, my father dismissed me from his home, having clashed with my step-mother, so I was sent to live with my late mother's relatives. I hustled so much, but am grateful that it was a blessing in disguise, as it made me who I am today. However, after that experience I pledged to myself that I will always be there for my children no matter the circumstances.

In Norway, I met a lady, got married and later had baby boy who is 7-years old. She later divorced me, because she wanted to move on. After a while I had a brief relationship with another lady, and we got a daughter who is 3-years old, though we are not a couple, so am a single father. My first parenting experience was in the labour ward when my children were delivered. In Norway, a father is supposed to witness the birth of his children, unlike in Uganda. It was so weird and scary and life has never been the same. In Africa when a woman gives birth, relatives step in to look after her, unlike here where it is an individual matter, so I had to adjust. I realised that I had to learn how to change diapers, babysit and cook, which are all roles of women back home, though a norm here. Am uncomfortable with caring for my daughter, bathing her as girl, in contrast with my son, since we are of the same gender. However, I like the experience, because I have developed a bond with my children, because I know their likes and dislikes, which I never experienced when growing up.

I got to discover that parenting here, is more of democracy, whereas back home it is dictatorship. The downside comes with Barnevernet, which pokes its nose in citizens' family affairs basing on the yardstick of parenting, especially children's rights, which clashes with what immigrants are accustomed to. Little omissions can cause grave consequences. As an immigrant, you try so hard to adjust to that yardstick, or else you lose your child. I believe there are some children who really need interventions, for instance if parents are drug addicts, alcoholics or violent. Ironically, gender equality is sugar coated, because women rights outbalance men's rights in matters of custody or family affairs. For instance, we had a disagreement with my ex-wife and she slapped me, however when I reported the case to the police, officers talked to my ex-wife first, even though I was the complainant. Consequently, I

was thrown out of our apartment, spent a night in prison and ordered not to return to our apartment the next day.

When individuals seek support from Barnevernet, it rarely responds unless it is a concern from a third party. My involvement with Barnevernet came about when I threatened to slap my son for reasons I considered genuine, like not wanting to shower, washing hands after using the toilet. Generally, his hygiene was poor. So, he told his teachers that he was scared to come to my place, because I threatened to beat him. And the child services straight away met with me. I told them they were unfair, because when I needed their help when my son had been taken to Uganda by my ex-wife without my consent, no support was availed to me, but when a report was made by teachers, their response was immediate. The caseworkers during this involvement had no experience of parenting, they told me that I should listen to him and let him be if he does not want to wash up. This was after a one-hour observation of my parenting routines with both my son and daughter to assess our parent-child interactions. But with my Ugandan parenting background, it is weird to let that slide when it pertains hygiene, hence a challenge. I was advised to take parenting courses in International child development programme and the circle of security, to learn how to dialogue with him. I complied and had to use You-tube videos that exposed consequences of poor hygiene, miraculously it worked.

If only immigrants would be employed within the system for cultural sensitivity, because I can explain better to a fellow immigrant about what really happened than a Norwegian who is already biased. The casework can either save or bury you, in my case I was lucky, however a friend of mine was not. The caseworker amplified the case, when her child lied that she had not eaten for 3 days, which was proved a lie after 8 traumatising months and my friend has decided to relocate. Children take advantage of the system by falsely accusing their parents of harmful actions or omissions, thus get away with not fulfilling their obligations such as hygiene. The child welfare system is also unfair regarding fostering children, out of experience I realised that, Norwegians are prioritised above immigrants, even for children with an immigrant background. However much an immigrant meets the criteria and undertakes necessary training, immigrants are considered not eligible due to preconceived perceptions of our parenting.

I think money and materialism are prioritised above religion in Norway, as people here do not lack, since the welfare system provides a safety net to fall back to when one is challenged, so they are very individualistic. In my view, I believe religion is important, as it played a crucial role in my upbringing and some of the successful families that I know. I have tried instilling it in my son, though not yet successful because of co-parenting, as the mother does not value it. I have learned that one must adapt, because any compromises will raise red flags. I believe children should know their African heritage, so I instil that in nurturing my children and ensure that they do not forget the key values of respect and obedience. I mix the positives parenting aspects of both contexts of Norway and Uganda that are in accordance with the laws here. I have held back from pursuing any romantic relationship, having encountered associated consequences of separation, especially when a child is involved. Currently my focus is raising my children, since child support is quite costly.

### 5.1.3 Mr and Mrs Williams

We moved to Norway 15 years ago, in pursuit of greener pastures. We have 3 children, the eldest is almost 17 years old, born pre-migration and the boy and girl; 10 and 11 years old, were born post-migration. Our parenting with our first child was smooth, as we had support in raising her, however that all changed when we moved here. One problem we encounter as immigrants, is that we have cultural practices we want to pass on to our kids, just like the way we were raised which is specific. It is easy to notice that one is from a different culture and if you analyse cities, many people come with their own cultures, and they fail to blend well together.

Life changes when you move to a new place, for instance; gender roles changed when we moved here, in comparison to Uganda where a man only provides financially and the rest is left to the woman. Currently, we share all roles that are considered gender specific back in Uganda, such as cooking, doing laundry, and taking care of the children. Some immigrant men come to this society and remain rigid about adopting some roles, only to realise it does not work. Raising a child here is challenging, because you question yourself if you are doing the right thing or not. Norway has standards on how children must be nurtured, particularly their rights. Children here are told straight from kindergarten that, they are not supposed to be beaten, threatened, or talked to harshly. It is emphasized in school meetings and our children occasionally remind us about it, especially when they are displeased with our voice intonations. Interestingly, this is an open society where people are very inquisitive unlike back home where some discretion is encouraged. Teachers here ask children about what transpires in their homes, so children do not keep secrets. Therefore, we watch what we do or say. Children take advantage of the system to get away with executing even simple responsibilities, knowing they can easily falsely testify against their parents. There are a lot of things we would want to teach our kids, but we cannot, because if we do, the child might share with a teacher who will immediately call Barnevernet, if s/he perceives the act as a threat to a child's wellbeing.

There are few immigrants who escape an encounter with Barnevernet, and for those few, it is just a matter of time before they get a taste of it. Children of immigrants experience contradicting voices, for instance we encourage our eldest daughter to shower daily, but it becomes a problem, because some of her peers do not, which can set off an alarm regarding child maltreatment in case our daughter mentions that we force, instead of encouraging her to take a shower. One time our son and his friends tried to start our automatic car without our notice, to which a neighbour intervened by taking the key from him and immediately called Barnevernet, and within that short time, we were on its' radar. There is no way you can win once involved, we were lucky because we were assigned an immigrant caseworker who advised us to calm down, keep our mouths shut and do whatever we are told. It is frustrating when you have a case with Barnevernet, as they check up on you daily like a patient, with police outside your residence in case the caseworker is suspicious of any violent tendencies among the parents. Sadly, even though the case pertains only one child, you may lose all, because the caseworkers assume all children have undergone the same experience. Barnevernet is deceptive as it will go behind your back and do something without your knowledge. For instance; our daughter was picked from school and taken her to court without our knowledge and later we

were informed about it. Their focus is finding fault with no mention of positives, only portraying a bad parent who has no ounce of good intention.

After residing in a 24-hour surveillance facility for 3 months, an act aimed at evaluating our parenting efficacy, we were advised to take parenting courses to enhance our parenting competence. Amidst all, we have learned and adopted the letting go practice, objectified at conforming to Norwegian norms, by dropping what does not match and continuing with only what is in harmony with the Norwegian laws. The merit of parenting here is dialoguing with children. It is beneficial, because the bond with your child becomes stronger and children can as well teach you something new such as; how to use the latest technology. Our children have picked up some of our cultural practices such as speaking our native language and kneeling while greeting elders at home, among our daughters. There are some Norwegian practices like sleep overs, discos for children who are 15 years and above, which we do not tolerate and our children know. Further, exposing our children to the Ugandan context in summer holidays has given them an insight on why we insist on some behaviours and in case we decide to return to Uganda in future, integration will be smoother. We know it was our decision to migrate and have children in Norway, so we must adjust accordingly, however decisions about separation of children from their parents should be undertaken with caution, as any misinterpretation or misinformation can disintegrate families.

## **5.2 Researcher's 6-hour parenting experience**

I offered to babysit children (2 boys: 4 and 8-year old) of a participant when she had an emergency. This was aimed at enhancing my comprehension of parenting experiences for my study. The single mother sent me a to-do list which included; picking up the 4-year old from kindergarten, ensuring the boys have meals, play with their mates, take baths, and do homework and retire to bed on time. The mother as well informed me that both her sons and teachers had been notified about my role. Notably, this occurred after conducting all my study interviews, so I was equipped with some knowledge on what to do and say in relation to engaging with children.

I was supposed to pick the youngest at 4 pm, but because I was worried that I might be late and cause problems for the mother, I was at the kindergarten by 3:40pm. Instantly the boy recognised me because, we had met before during my previous visit, so he told his teacher, about who I was, particularly that I only speak English and Luganda. I exchanged greetings with the teacher, followed the boy to his locker to change out of his play clothes and we left for home. Once we got home, he immediately got a support stool and pointed to items that he wanted me to utilise in making him a sandwich, since his English was limited but spoke Norwegian to me not knowing I had practiced and could fairly understand what he was saying. We were shortly joined by this elder brother, who communicated fluently in English and requested that I make him a similar sandwich.

Meanwhile, I made references to the availed to-do-list, to ascertain if I was doing everything as instructed. After a while a young boy, about the same age as the youngest, came in and asked if the boys would go play with him at his house to which I agreed, since the mother had communicated that it would happen. The boys agreed to return after an hour and have

dinner. After some time, a young lady with a young boy knocked at the door and inquired if it was ok for her son to play with the boys and I told her that the boys were at a friend's apartment playing. The duo left, however I noticed that the boy was disappointed as it seemed, he often played with the boys. After the agreed upon hour had elapsed, the boys were not back, so I had to go pick them up from the neighbour. I expected them to throw tantrums but to my surprise, they complied and left with me. They had their dinner which was earlier prepared by the mother before she left. The boys guided me through their night routine of taking a bath, brushing their teeth, and reminded me that they go to bed by 7:00 pm, however requested extra 10 minutes to watch TV. Since none had homework, they as well invited me to read a book with them, that required locating items within pictures, which I did after consulting with their mother when she called to check up on us. I later gave them hugs and tucked them in.

As I waited for the mother to return, I pondered on the aspect of mandatory reporting and lack of privacy, that participants had mentioned during study interviews. I later realised that several people had noticed my role that day, including the teacher, the boys, their friends, and respective caregivers, hence an avenue of crucial evaluation of how I interacted with the boys. Similarly, I noted that I had as well partaken in observation of the participants' neighbour, when I went to pick up the boys. This is not peculiar, since in all societies individuals observe occurrences within their neighbourhoods, however awareness that one may have reasonable suspicion of my actions, created some anxiety. The next day, the participant shared that the boys had in detail disclosed everything that happened, including my Norwegian reading skills. I perceived it as a child awareness practice, since it is a common among children to share with their parents about their lives, though not typical of all children in all societies. The boys wished I could babysit again, though were not aware that I had prior knowledge on what to do and say during my interaction with them, so that is why I was "nice and fun" as per their description of me.

## **5.3 Themes and Sub-themes**

### **5.3.1 Theme one: Contexts and culture**

Culture is a component of analysis of parenting, as diversity in contexts and cultural groups impacts on opportunities available to parents which may hinder or enhance specific parenting behaviors. Parenting is rooted in cultural meanings, portrayed in roles and expectations of children and parents to which behaviour is regulated in line with what is recognised as adequate to a specific group and (Ogbu, 1981; Yvosi, 2014). Meanings of behaviour are entrenched within specific contexts which differ (Bornstein, 2012; Keller, et al., 2004; Davis et al., 2014). Participants clearly accentuated that, different contexts have diverse norms, values, and behaviours, hence what works in one might not apply in another. Circumstances that prevail within contexts influence behaviours and in turn people maintain specific behaviours, through conforming to expectations within their day to day practices by relying on that intrinsic cultural logic (Kotchick and Forehand, 2002; Paat, 2013).

#### **5.3.1.1 Indigenous knowledge and upbringing**

Individuals learn behaviours by mastering specific skills through personal accomplishments, observing others' successes and failures, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal (Ogbu, 1981; Bandura, 1994; Amos, 2013). Strier (1996) coined the concept of adaptive adult, which provides a framework for understanding child rearing ideologies and practices, through examining behaviour and attitudes. He maintains that parents rely on the adaptive adult concept in socialising their children which is reflective of cultural contexts and associated physical, social, ethnic aspects and sociodemographic characteristics of parents such (ibid). The adaptive adult is shaped by values, beliefs, customs regarding child rearing and varies across cultures, consequently conflict arises when the adaptive adult image differs from the host culture, despite the other being aware of the difference, which causes misjudgement and misunderstandings. Children are socialised by watching and listening to individuals within their cultures, hence conditioned and modelled accordingly into adaptive adults. It was both explicitly and implicitly mentioned by all participants, that their first source of knowledge of parenting was through observation of how children were nurtured within their contexts of origin. They transmitted what constituted their parenting cognition. This signifies nurturing their children the way they knew how, and through which, their parenting practices have been sustained from one generation to another.

You cannot teach what you do not know, so if it something that you have been taught from generation to generation, you cannot teach anybody something you do not know. So, I was raised the way my mom was raised. --- So, she gave me everything she had and how she was raised and what was in her bones and in her nature and how my grandmother raised her. ---I was lead with the way I was raised, so that played a role in how I raised my first son. (Alice)

For me, my definition of parenting, if you provide food, clothes, bathe the child, that was it. You cannot give out something you do not have ... For me being a parent meant, you give birth, the child is yours, so no problem. (Joyce)

Participants recognised that their upbringing experiences, as well impacted on their native theory of parenting as per the cultural scripts of the contexts of upbringing (Ogbu 1981; LeVine et al., 1994; Wadende et al., 2014). This was well articulated among participants with several references to their upbringing and presumptions that if they turned out as responsible citizens, then the means utilised justify the end goal.

I have been with different people --- but they are the same, they are kind of strict, do not do this, do not do that, in all families they tell you, you are not supposed to talk back when the grownups are talking, or you are supposed to kneel when you are greeting your elder--- in Uganda beating is normal especially during the time we were kids --- when you have done ten wrong things, then you be beaten for those wrong things.(Ruth)

And to me it was engrained in me, it became part of me, that I worked hard, I cleaned, I did everything, and it is not that I questioned it, it is something I did, it is something I grew up with. Something I know I had to do, so it was like, I did not question it, that is how I was raised. And I did not know anything any better, that is what I knew and in my world, that was ok. (Alice)

Further, participants established that they lacked knowledge regarding parenting in Norway, including 2 participants who moved to Norway as children for family re-unification. These 2 participants clearly pointed out that, despite moving to Norway as children, their parents nurtured them mainly in accordance with the Uganda threshold of parenting, with limited consideration of the Norwegian context. Additionally, this was reinforced by keeping company of Ugandan friends which as well inhibited gaining contextual knowledge about Norwegian parenting practices. Berry (1997) argues that integration can be attained through mutual accommodation which entails, non-dominant groups adopting the values of the mainstream society, whereas the dominant groups accommodate the needs of new groups. Excerpts below show that, associating with in-groups curtailed integration of these participants. Goldin, Cameroon and Blarajan (2011) argue that by living in specific neighbourhoods and associating with their own groups, immigrants exclude themselves from the wider society, thus more likely to develop into a socio-economic underclass. In the study on child welfare workers' perception of ethnic minority children in England and Norway, Križ and Skivenes (2011) learned that workers in both countries were concerned about knowledge deficiencies of ethnic parents on how well children should be cared for, supported, and disciplined in accordance to mainstream society values and norms. This was attributed to lack of interest to integrate, instead parents desire to maintain the culture of their previous contexts, hence a clash(ibid).

...good enough I was brought up here[Norway] ... but I was not so much into the system because I always grew up in my clique of Ugandans and I do not have many Norwegian friends here --- And now I was surrounded with people of our own nature, all my friends were in the same situation, same problems, they were single mothers



from Africa. Same group, same kind of people, so from whom would we seek advice? --- because I was not raised in that culture and in that system, it was really difficult to implement those simple things they told me to. Because they were like; “*talk to the child, communicate*”, but I had never experienced that. When I was raised, nobody did those things for me. (Joyce)

Me growing up I did not have Norwegian friends, all my friends were from Uganda and other African countries, so we had the same life, talked about the same problems, the same issues we had with our parents, we had the same rules at home, we laughed about the same things, you know what is happening, what your mom told you or what your dad told you and I did not have Norwegian friends to know how they had it home ... So, that is challenge, you have no references, yet you are supposed to learn, you are supposed to know. (Alice)

Bornstein (2012, p.213) asserts that “... culturally constructed beliefs can be so powerful that parents are known to act on them, setting aside what their senses might tell them about their own children”. Consequently, some participants shared that, upon becoming parents, they tapped into their knowledge base of experience and observation to guide them in nurturing their own children, where as some did not. Those who acted on their experiences, reasoned that since generations before had been raised that way and survived, they didn’t see any problem with it.

I threatened my kid that I would slap him --- in our culture, we do that, you can pick your shoe and threaten to beat and then the kid runs away, but reality is, you are just threatening ... (Geofrey)

We have instilled in our children that they do not go for sleep overs, because in Uganda, we did not do that, how would you say that I have gone to sleep over? So, if we did not do that, why should you go sleep over at somebody else’s place? (Mr and Mrs Williams)

On the contrary, there were some distinct variations in perceptions regarding the parenting practices in Uganda among participants. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) argue that individuals are significantly influenced by the descriptions they ascribe to phenomena which regulate their realities and eventually constitute their values and norms. Some participants acknowledged that Ugandan practices have shortcomings, whereas others justified the means to the goals and outcomes, hence attribute their prevailing success to it. Kelly (1963) argues that individuals develop unique constructs, which they use to make sense of experiences. The remarks below illustrate how participants differ in construction of experiences informed by respective beliefs and understandings. While Ruth perceives beating does not elicit desired behaviour, Geofrey is grateful for the adaptive adult he has become attributed to the means of nurturing, yet Mr and Mrs Williams note that, some measures are needed to instil discipline.

I think not beating is good, because when you are beaten, you get used to it, you say ok, they will just beat me, when I do something wrong, my mom will just punish me, and be done with it ... Kids here are as well disciplined, even some are better than kids that were beaten at home --- because beating does not instil good manners but makes matters worse. When we were beaten, no explanations were provided, but

repeatedly told, do not repeat this again, but never were you seated down and explained that this is it. (Ruth)

That environment in which I grew up, in a way supported me financially, morally, spiritually ... I would not be where I am today. (Geofrey)

We were beaten, and learned through the hard way and we are what we are because of the way we were raised. But for Africans we believe that a child should be beaten, which is not true, but that is what they know, though we believe it is right for a parent to raise one's voice for the child to take it seriously, ... (Mr and Mrs Williams)

### **5.3.1.2 Norwegian parenting**

Taken for granted expectations and standards of parenting form a platform upon which good and proper parenting is judged (Vagli, 2009). Habecker (2016) argues that authoritarian parenting is prominent among African immigrants, characterised by prioritisation of obedience with less acknowledgement of expression of views from children. However, Markus and Kitayama, (1991) claim that this style of parenting does not necessarily signify lack of warmth or love, but aimed at giving inhibiting non-acceptable behaviours like disrespect and disobedience, therefore accounting for cultural clashes. Participants highlighted the aspect of having to adhere to a different benchmark of parenting within Norway, which not only carries different meanings but also contradicts with their perception of good parenting. Therefore, parenting self-efficacy is context dependent (Bandura, 1994; Munro, 2008; Hollekim, Anderssen and Daniel, 2015; Lee et al., 2014). LeVine, et al. (1994) claim that understanding childcare necessitates evaluating how adaptive functions are socially and culturally organised within a setting. In their study of childcare and culture among the Gusii, they found that, children learned through every day experiences that positive emotional attachments are not voiced, however comprehended in an unexpressed acknowledgement in comparison to negative emotions (ibid). Participants put forward that what is approved or considered a norm back in Uganda, is peculiar or criminal in Norway.

I even think our perception of good behaviour differs from the perception of good behaviour here. In Uganda, good behaviour can mean kneeling to greet, greeting people on your way, yet here it is not done. To me good behaviour still means greeting each other, but here it is not in their culture to greet people on streets, which I understand. (Ruth)

If I was living in Africa, my parenting skills would not be lacking anywhere, I would not be told that am wrong, but when you live in Norway, they have laws, lots of laws that protect kids, but at the same time they have a guideline of what good parenting is, they have a standard of what it means to be a good parent. And what is needed for you to be acknowledged as a good parent. Good parenting, here is not only about providing clothes and necessities, but being in present as a parent, participating in a child's life. (Alice)

The above remarks imply that societies are characterised by normative taken for granted parenting values that homogenous with fixed standards that constitute what is right or wrong. It depicts that there is one way of doing parenting within societies, which members within ought to adhere. However, among similarities, differences exist, as societies are fragmented on continuums of polarisations such as; urban and rural, formal, and informal employments, thus hard to create homogeneity. For instance; despite shared values among cultures in Uganda, not all children are raised the same, due to ethnic, education and class heterogeneity. Likewise, Norway is classified as egalitarian with a social democratic welfare (Esping-Andersen, 1990), though through globalisation forces of migration, it has become a plural society, accounting for variation in life domains of citizens. The sociodemographic variables of class and education account for variations in parenting approaches and styles, therefore creating diversity in family practices and compositions. Stefansen and Farstad (2000, p.136) state, “class shapes parents’ care strategies in fundamental ways even in a society often regarded as egalitarian”. As noted in Joyce’s narrative, her social class and education background has implications on her parenting orientations. Therefore, different classes hold varying constructions of childhood which influences their cultural model of care. Particularly for immigrant parents, class status is associated with resources, which are key in facilitating and maintenance of transnational ties.

### **5.3.1.3 Perceptions on contexts**

Investing in children through ensuring that their development and wellbeing is maximised, has become a crucial priority in social, political, and economic policies, in which states have taken a paternalist interest in the family domain. Specific countries have unique policies regarding social attitudes and practices which are rooted in their welfare institutions, hence shape political, economic, and social orientations (Saraceno, 2011). These orientations are not uniform across contexts as they are attributed to variations in historical and cultural trajectories. Remarkably, some countries have the state and families partake a shared role in child rearing, whereas in others, the state only intervenes when there is a deficit or potential of harm, which is reflective of attitudes on parenting. The welfare state in most Sub-Saharan Africa is emergent with limited or no support from states in child care and other family responsibilities (Cerami and Wagué, 2013), in comparison to western countries where states play vital roles in various family life aspects through public service provision. Consequently, family is the key provider of care services with the market as an option for families that can afford.

Across narratives, participants put forth that settings are embedded with challenges and opportunities of raising children, however dependent on individual perceptions which in turn influence behaviour (Furedi, 2008; Sam and Berry, 2010; Kiang et al., 2016; Swe, 2013). Participants had mixed perceptions on parenting roles, attributed to exposure of different values and beliefs within contexts of Norway and Uganda. Some participants viewed the Norwegian parenting orientations as demanding with lax discipline, whereas others associated it to the influence of settings on behaviour, which is associated with benefits and setbacks. Findings resonate with studies on parenting in the context of immigration (Omaji and Sims, 1999; Degni, Pöntinen and Mölsä, 2006; Tajima and Hamachi, 2010; Critelli, 2015) which revealed that immigrant parents acknowledged that, while new contexts are associated with benefits of

advancement in livelihoods in comparison to their contexts of origin, cultural clashes are inevitable.

In Uganda, kids work their lives around their parents, like I cannot go on this day, because mom is working or going to a wedding. Here you plan according to children's activities, on Thursday I cannot make plans with anybody because my son has activities, ... those are my plans too. --- Parenting here is all hands on and it can be tiring, because you are not living your own life, but you are living three lives and it is really scary, ... it's good to know more about your kids, but when they are young, I feel like you stop living your life, ... (Alice)

It is demeaning for an outsider to come and dictate who you should talk to your child, as if one had to seek their consent to conceive and give birth. The good thing or the other side is, (Mrs Smith) I wish I could sometimes sit with my mother, discuss, share with her about here and there. I grew up with a single mother, I did that but not at the level which these kids are. But these kids sit with us and we discuss, and tell you but mum, this was not right, or you shouldn't have done this. You are a mother and a friend at the same time, you have time for every child and learn about each child's likes and dislikes, you can discuss. Back home, we were shouted at, at times you were afraid to speak even when you are hurting. (Mr and Mrs Williams)

I do not think that here it is good that we have to plan activities for children. Here kids do not play in the streets and stuff like that, they do sometimes in the summer, but you can attribute that to weather maybe, but in Uganda, the weather is good, so kids just play anywhere. But here you have to plan, ... to take your child to play, go swimming, yet in Uganda it easy, a child just goes out and plays ball with other children. ---Parents here give their children a lot of time, more than back in Uganda, --- For me what I experienced, ... my mom had seven kids, she did not have time to play with me, she had other kids to take care of ... (Ruth)

Further, central to the Norwegian context, is the aspect of individualism. Triandis (2001) argues that individualism and collectivism rooted in different culture ideals and values is an avenue for interpreting parenting across cultures. Excerpts below highlight participants views on what is typical of Norwegian parenting, in comparison to the Ugandan collective values associated with social support and reinforced by religion through instilling obedience and respect. Despite limited literature on parenting in Uganda, one unique aspect of parenting in the African society, which is also typical of Uganda is that of extended family, which rides on the saying that '*it takes a village to raise a child*'. Therefore, parenting is not limited to biological parents, but includes other members of the society. Participants attributed some of their experiences to the construal of the 'self', which is acknowledged in literature by Markus and Kitayama (1991), Hofstede (2001), Babatunde and Setiloane (2014). Particularly, Alice's remarks below, point out that differences in values elicit different expected behaviours.

In Africa when you give birth, your neighbours look after you, your mother, your parents. ---I got to discover that it is a Norwegian culture that is planted within immigrants that you have to be independent, ... To me I found it weird, because back

home, when you have your mother, she is the one who does everything, but here it you and your husband, the singular part of it. ---The religious part of it would be a good upbringing, ... It's lacking here, ... no one is accountable to anyone. Parents have money, everyone is economically stable, they know where to go, it is one of the things that disorganises the family... because you can divorce over a small thing, because she knows she is going to get money from the state as a single mother and you have pay child support. (Geoffrey)

If I talk about my childhood to any Norwegian, they will look at me as if, how did you get out of that, or how did you manage to get out at all? They see just red lights, flags everywhere going on. Because here, you cannot leave a 12-year old at home [alone] for a week, the neighbour will call social security and you will find that that kid is gone, by the time you get back home, but to me it was ok. I came home, locked myself in, the next day went to school and that was ok, because the neighbours knew my mom was away and they could look in, if I needed something. But here you cannot leave kids by themselves. (Alice)

The above remarks convey that family and informal support play a pivotal role in families, however the complex relationships that stem from reciprocity practiced within, impacts on what characterises individuals as either dependent or independent. Bourdieu (1986) argues that it is within families that social capital is transmitted from parents to children, inclusive of networks and sociability. With changes in demography, new family structures such as single parents and absent parents working outside the home have emerged, in addition to decline in extended households, ethnic diversity, and evolution of what incorporates child care. Family compositions such as having a partner, relatives, job autonomy and working hours among others have impact on parenting practices, however patterns of caregiving are changing in accordance to the shift in family structures. Murphy (2008) argues kinship and networks outside the family are still valued even though the roles vary in contemporary trends. New constructions of the extended family are inevitable in contemporary society with structural changes in the family institution serving as preconditions for the re-construction of social support networks. Further, social changes in cultural dynamics, articulated in emphasis of men and women participation in the labour market, have impacted on socialisation of children and social cohesion. Putman (1995) argues that integration into neighbourhoods is not beneficial, if values clash, since the ties that bind groups are the same ties that keep others out. Therefore, migration and changing family patterns have challenged existence and interaction with kin beyond immediate family.

### **5.3.2 Theme two: Conceptualisation of children**

Intensified attention in child affairs, well-being and rights reflects a tendency of the child upbringing shifting from a private matter to becoming globalised and public (Thelen and Haukaness, 2010). Article 12 of the UNCRC (1989) emphasises respect of the right of expression of views, through participation among children capable of forming opinions pertaining their lives. Accordingly, the emergent childhood paradigm suggests that children ought to be viewed not as passive but active participants in construction of their social lives (James and Prout, 2003). This implies that childhood is viewed differently across contexts and

with globalisation, the view of childhood is becoming more shared than before. Participants pointed out that children in Norway are perceived as individuals whose opinions should be acknowledged (Križ and Skivenes, 2011) versus the view of childhood as not-yet status, where adults know what is best for children (Ndofirepi and Shumba, 2014; Amos, 2013; Ntukula and Liljeström, 2004). Two sub-themes were identified in which participants had mixed views which contained appreciation of embedded benefits, however pointing out associated impediments.

### 5.3.2.1 Child visibility

The endorsement of the UNCRC (1989), has contributed significantly to children's visibility discourse (Reynaert et al., 2009). Child visibility is acknowledged through consideration of children's opinions and providing opportunities to define their interests because they possess knowledge and capabilities of directing their lives (Young, McKenzie, Omre, Schjelderup and Walker, 2014b; Cloke and Davis, 1997; Landsdown, 1997). Participants noted that in Uganda adults expect respect and obedience from children, whereas Skivenes (2011) argues that in Norway children expect respect and love from adults, with acknowledgment through dialogue and negotiation. Further, my naturalistic observations at a church and a kindergarten in my neighbourhood, corroborated this aspect.

I noted that when a child insisted on staying on a swing amidst heavy rains or snowing, a teacher talked to a child about the importance of getting indoors instead of demanding it. At church, parents did not yell at their children when they interrupted mass proceedings by screaming or throwing their toys around, instead talked to them about why they should remain calm and silent and often took them outside for short breaks. (Researcher)

In Norway, ... it is democracy whereas back home, ... the parents dictate to the child. ... here for example; you can go to kindergarten and you have gone to collect your child, and he tells you that, "*am still playing you have to wait for me*" and you have to respect that and you have to wait. Although you have work, you have to wait for the child to be done, maybe he wants to hug all his friends, you have to respect that. But back home you would not do that. That is the yardstick of democracy and not dictatorship ... (Geofrey)

The first time my son told me NO, I was knocked out, I was like, "*am your mom, how dare you?*". But then I was like ... he is a person too, --- it would be contradicting to tell him he can say no to everything else, but he cannot say no to me when he thinks am unreasonable, or whatever am asking of him. (Alice)

The above remarks show that in Norway, children are encouraged to be independent by expressing the self, promote own goals, be direct and validate internal attributes in comparison to the interdependent view of self, where promotion of another's goals, being indirect and restraining internal attributes to maintain harmony is key. However, Markus and Kitayama (1991) note that having an interdependent view of the self, which is typical of collective societies, signifies self-control of inner attributes that antagonise harmony of interpersonal

relations. Though the means in which an interdependent view of self is fostered, inhibits expression of the self as explicated in Ruth's remarks below.

... but they[carers]were like; *“do not this, ... do not talk back to your elders or say your opinion, you just have to be a child”*. You know sometimes grownups make mistakes, you know this is wrong, but you cannot tell them this is wrong, then you are undermining them. (Ruth)

### 5.3.2.2 Children autonomy Versus Parental authority

With emphasis on visibility, children have become bearers of rights on one hand and parents as duty bearers on the other, in which parents are expected to raise their children who have rights to autonomy and self-determination (UNCRC, 1989; Reynaert et al., 2009). The UNCRC (1989) resolves this dichotomy through the construct of the *‘evolving capacities of the child’*, whereby as children become more competent they are considered capable of exercising their rights autonomously, thus parents fulfil lesser parental responsibilities to support them in realizing their rights. Participants reported feeling disempowered and frustrated by the independence of their children as the laws in existence supported them to challenge their parents' authority. This resonates with study findings of immigrants parenting experiences (Lewig, Arney and Salveron, 2010; Degni et al., 2006; Menjivar et al., 2016), which showed that changing roles and expectations of children create tensions between children and parents, because parents fear losing their children to the host country's culture, hence rendering them powerless. Participants in this study pointed out that, though it is beneficial to recognise children's voices, however children misuse the bestowed rights to manipulate their parents into getting their way, under the disguise of the law, hence deterring positive parent-child relations.

The kids have now used the system to challenge the parents. The kids are told about their freedom, money they are entitled to, rights they have and they return and tell other kids and influence them. --- you might tell a child to shower, when the child goes to school, s/he tells the teacher, am forced to take a shower, it is a problem. One of her friends [to their daughter] lied about her parents beating her and she was taken for a short while, but returned because the child had uncoordinated statements and they realised she was lying, ... (Mr and Mrs Williams)

He [son] did not want to cut his nails, wash his hands after using the toilet and brush his teeth. You tell him to go take a shower, he does not want, --- So, he told his teachers at school, that he is scared to go back to my place, because I threatened to beat him. Because they asked him in school; *“is he[father] also tough on your kid sister?”* And he said; *“Yes, he is tough”* ... it's not the same with the sister ... she does all that. (Geofrey)

Berry (2005) states, acculturation process is smoother if it occurs early in life than latter. Likewise, the above excerpts portray acculturation conflicts between parents and children associated with the desire to maintain culture value of unquestionable obedience by parents, amidst the intercultural process of acculturating to a parenting orientation of negotiation and liberalism.

### **5.3.3 Theme three: The Norwegian Child Welfare Services**

Barnevernet is the term participants used in describing their experiences with the Norwegian Child Welfare Services. The Norwegian Child Welfare Services is a public institution which is part of the broader statutory child protection and welfare system in Norway, obliged under the national law to implement the Child Welfare Act (1992). This institution emerged as a major theme, having been cited by participants as a crucial concern. Notably, participants were not questioned about their perception of or involvement with the institution during the interview, however explicitly emphasised it in their narratives as representative of their parenting experiences in Norway. Five of the participants have been and some are still involved with Child Welfare Services, regarding gaps in their parenting skills, except for 1 participant, which is credited to several factors as discussed in the subsequent sub-themes below. Similarly, findings among studies on experiences of immigrants involved with the Norwegian welfare system (Staer, 2016; Križ and Skivenes, 2015, Johannesen and Appoh, 2016) and ethnic disproportionality in child welfare system (Staer and Bjørkens, 2015) highlighted this institution as a crucial concern among immigrant parents.

#### **5.3.3.1 Truth Versus Hearsay**

This pertains the truth about the mandate and interventions of Child Welfare Services versus biased information that sometimes offers a one-sided argument, which usually is negative. Participants shared that, upon arrival in Norway, immediately they were informed about a child snatching institution, without any details of its duties, but the outcome of its interventions which in most cases are negative. The term 'Barnevernet' is equated to a figure that is representative of negative encounters with Child Welfare Services, a construct that is reinforced and reproduced by public discourses, hence creating obscurities regarding what is true and false. One participant who has never had an encounter with child welfare services mentioned that, all advise she has received about raising a child, is from friends with emphasis on the turmoil of Child Welfare Service interventions. Further participants mentioned that, information about child protection is as well amplified by the media, which fosters scepticism and anxiety among immigrant families (Thrana and Fauske, 2014; Staer, 2015). The media plays a key role in orientation of public discourses, hence what is portrayed impacts on parents' perceptions. Remarks below illustrate the impact of social capital in form of information sharing among immigrants and its impact on parenting perception and practices, as determining the truth is a personal initiative.

People say that Barnevernet takes children with no reason, however other people when I read in news, they even come out and say it was good for Barnevernet to take my children, so I do not even know, because it has never happened to me or even anyone I know, but I just hear rumours, ... if the family situation is worse, ... then why would the child stay in such a situation yet Barnevernet can offer support. But I have also been told that children under Barnevernet care, get spoiled, they just learn to smoke, use drugs. I do not know really, ... (Ruth)

Out of 100 immigrants, you might find 1 or 2 people, who have not experienced Barnevernet. All us have had a taste of it, --- there are very few immigrants who have



not a taste of Barnevernet, maybe those who have moved recently, but they will soon get a taste of it. (Mr and Mrs Williams)

They have a bad reputation, everyone told me once they come, they will take your kids. You come in a place where you are afraid, you have a challenge and you do not know how to handle it and sometimes you are even afraid to say the truth you know because you are afraid they are going to judge you.--- So, I feel like that is something they are lacking and they should teach the foreigners why the child should not be beaten, consequences and alternative measures like communication, because most of us do not have the communication.(Joyce)

Migrants' identities are continuously developed and renegotiated in the migration process, as they endeavour to attain a balance between their traditional values and incorporating new values aimed at integrating into new societies (Grillo, 2008). The above excerpts exemplify that perceptions inform attitudes and opinions, which are developed within contexts and interactions that take place within. Miller and Glassner (1997) argue that through affiliation to groups, societies or cultures, individuals participate in narratives by association, in which stories told about social phenomena are shaped and sustained.

#### **5.3.3.2 Contentious interventions**

Diversity management and immigration are key issues in child welfare policies, an arena characterised with obligations to secure children's welfare and power to change attitudes, behaviour and enhance possibilities and potential. Tew (2006) defines power as a social relation that can either enhance or hinder opportunities for individuals and social groups. It involves a productive mode which can be protective and cooperative on one hand as well as entails a limiting mode that is oppressive and collusive on the other( *ibid*). Vagli (2009, p.221) asserts that "The diagnostic and pathological thinking is a dominant power in the field of child protection both as a reason to interfere and as a way to understand the problems of child protection". Deviations from the norm are accorded descriptions in child protection, thus influencing intervention respectively. Participants shared that power played a key role in Child Welfare Services interventions and emphasised that one is already doomed at the onset of an intervention, because immigrants' parenting efficacy is preconceived as lacking in contrast to the Norwegian way of parenting. Consistent with the study conducted by Thrana and Fauske (2014) on emotions of parents who had encounters with Norwegian Child Welfare Services, findings showed that, immigrant parents associated the institution's interventions with anxiety and doom. Immigrants' parenting is perceived as incompetent, due to preconceived perceptions about detrimental practices to child development (Degni, et al., 2006; Križ and Skivenes, 2015). In addition, participants underlined that Child Welfare Service interventions are deceptive, illustrated in the power imbalances between caseworkers and immigrant parents, with the latter ignorant of Norwegian laws on children, hence intimidated to present their side of the story.

What is weird about Barnevernet staff is, after sitting down with them and discussing, they will go behind your back, and talk to the kids at school in your absence. One time we were very bitter, they took our daughter from school, we thought the child

is at school but instead the Barnevernet people took her without our consent to court and then started calling us. Barnevernet is like a divorced mother who keeps inquiring from her child living with her father and step- mother, whether the child is fed or clothed, not looking for anything positive, but only negative. (Mr and Mrs Williams)

Many people are headstrong, claiming this is my child, I have rights over what I do. You cannot win like that, because by the time you are their system. they see something wrong and they will know because you are African, you do not know anything. If you show them that you are knowledgeable, you will see the way they will deal with you and you will end up having your kids taken away from you. (Joyce)

They expect that if you are living here, you should know and you should live by those rules. So, nobody teaches you, but they expect you to read about them yourself, and know about them yourself before you start having kids here and knowing. They forget that if you just came here, you already have your own luggage, your own way of upbringing and you cannot teach what you do not know, you come in a place where by everything you were taught is wrong according to their way of raising kids. --- For Norwegians, it their country, it is their rules, they have been raised that like that, so it falls naturally, but for us, it is a challenge. (Alice)

The above excerpts show that the working methods utilised in interventions create anxiety and fear among parents. It is vital to note that some of these parents have no experience with developed welfare state mechanisms, thus get confrontational about having their parenting practices questions. In contrast, this is also linked to how parents embrace learning about values and norms the mainstream society versus confining themselves to their in-groups. Notably, not all interventions have negative outcomes for the family. Participants remarks below highlight that some of these interventions were beneficial to gaining contextual parenting competence.

We were tested on how we play with kids, I did not know how to play with the kids, I did not know how to talk with the kids, my communication was so limited. And sometimes I would see Norwegians the way they talk to a small baby, I always envied them but I did not know how to do it. Through this course, I learned as I was taught that I have to put words to that emotion. (Joyce)

They [Child welfare service staff] will involve the expert on how to raise kids, who knows what is best for the children. And it is not all bad, sometimes they step in to help, in my case it is more help, which I needed as a single mom, like getting relief, teaching me how to be a better parent. That is how I discovered that --- It is not about physically beating your kid, but raising your voice ... is also child abuse. (Alice)

#### **5.4.3.3 Lack of privacy**

States have taken on paternalist actions of children protection, premised on grounds that families are no longer a safe-haven, exemplified in children experiencing maltreatment by their caregivers. Hartas (2014) argues that with these external interventions create blurring boundaries around families with less consideration for parents' views, but what the spectators consider as standards that need to be upheld in relation to the policy driven field of Child

Welfare. Participants cited lack of privacy associated with mandatory reporting, which entails social responsibility of citizens to notify Child Welfare Services of any suspicions of child maltreatments, aimed at prevention of harm and enhancing child safety. Participants conveyed anxieties about lack of boundaries between private and public lives, because any concerned citizen has the right to raise a concern, in addition to teachers in schools encouraging children to disclose what transpires in their lives. (Hartas, 2014; Menjivar et al., 2016). Participants reported that the modes of interventions and the above practices are an infringement of privacy, because their own children and neighbours are indirectly watchful of their behaviours.

We were taken to a house, being observed 24 hours... they wanted to see my routines at home, thinking maybe I beat them. --- We stayed there for 3 months, imagine day and night, everything they see they write, they report. And for my kids seeing that they are surrounded by foreign people, they got out of order. --- how can you observe somebody for 3 months? What are you observing? With these kids, just one week, you would know who we are and everything. (Joyce)

Like us, the way we were raised, is like you never disclose what happens at home, but here at school they ask them, what did you do over the weekend? What kind of food did you eat? They do not have secrets, the teacher has to know what happens, so you just have to be very careful. (Mr and Mrs Williams)

The above remarks, depict external involvement into the family sphere as peculiar, yet likewise in collective societies the same transpires in form social support from families and communal concern of the 'other' by the wider community. However, the difference lies in the outcome of the interventions, either aimed at family preservation and cohesion or disintegration, which participants noted that in the Norwegian context, interventions among immigrant families are more likely to impact negatively on the family structure. Strudsrød, Willumsen and Ellingsen, (2012) assert that individuals are active participants in social construction of realities which inform attitudes and opinions, influenced by interactions that take place within contexts of existence. For instance; Alice perceives that, despite parents having no direct involvement with Child Welfare Services on grounds of suspicious child maltreatment, they are usually monitored because welfare support is conditional, thus an indirect entitlement to query how the support is utilised.

It is like, if you are not independent and doing things by yourself, if someone is contributing to your household they have a right too; we are giving you this, "*How are you using it, where is it going, who are you with? --- How come you are alone with your kids?*" ---You have to answer all those questions. --- it feels like you are walking naked in front of someone, because there are advantages to it that you get all that help, but ... that means you give your privacy, you have to open up your house to someone else. (Alice)

#### **5.3.3.4 Case worker dynamics**

Participants who were involved with child welfare services on grounds of parenting incompetence, communicated that a case outcome is dependent on the caseworker's individual

character, experience, and preconceptions about the person under investigation. Participants' narratives represented a consensus that, case workers are usually biased about immigrant parenting, because they make verdicts within their own understanding, with limited room for cultural sensitivity which impacts on decision making (Raffaetà, 2016). This coincides with study findings on parents' perceptions of contact with the Norwegian child welfare services (Strudsrød et al., 2012), in which parents revealed that caseworkers had preconceived verdicts and cited cultural practices as being problematic to a child's development, yet offered no explanations on how they negatively impact the children.

Case workers here are like vampires, they want to take immigrant children. In my case I used their unfairness as a weapon, but they only care when it suits them and not when it suits you. I have heard that they can buy children gifts so that, they say something they want to hear. --- I wish they learn 1 or 2 things from our own culture or recruit more immigrants into the system --- it easier to talk to a fellow immigrant to understand me than a Norwegian, because to them you say am going to beat you, it means you are going to beat, which is illegal in Norway. (Geofrey)

We are grateful for that one case worker who advised us to calm down, keep our mouths shut and do whatever is asked of us. Only that one person helped us, if we can see him again we will only say; *Thank you*, because if it was not for him we would not know... had it been a Norwegian s/he would not have said a word, only would have made a report and left. That foreigner case worker did not write a negative report, because he observed what was happening at home and made a recommendation. --- When we went to their [Child Welfare Service] office after that case worker had given us that advise, the Norwegian staff there, asked why I [Mr Williams] had drastically changed and calmed down. (Mr and Mrs Williams)

One person coming from Barnevernet, writes and when they fail to make a change, in order to recommend to another person, they have to exaggerate the situation, so imagine one person exaggerates and those that come next, and the person who reads the final document will think what kind of person is this? (Joyce)

I can say it depends on their character and their views, because some take into consideration of your views. I have had a condescending caseworker, who showed off her power, because she came only to confirm her preconceived ideas. They vary because, Barnvernet pedagogy workers are focused on the best interest of the child, whereas social workers who act as family advisers, focus on finding solutions and take into consideration of the whole picture including parents. Barnevernet staff investigate and these are the people that use every information as a weakness against you, such as being a single parent or having had a previous diagnosis. There is a power imbalance because they make you feel helpless. (Alice)

Participants convey having experienced a negative encounter with a caseworker, characterised by prejudice and mistrust. The above quotes highlight that individual perceptions and attitudes play a key role in intervention engagements, as illustrated in varying caseworker-parent

experiences. Alice highlights that case workers differ in objectives, whereas Geoffrey and Mr and Mrs Williams concur that, having immigrants among Child Welfare Service staff is beneficial in providing insight on overlooked aspects that are usually judged within Norwegian values. In view of this theme, the question that arises is; Why does the Norwegian Child Welfare Service continue to be a key site of contention, in comparison to other countries with similar institutions? There is no doubt that assessing parenting competence can be challenging, given the complexities surrounding the definition of what constitutes good parenting, which in most cases is contextual. There is a consensus that some cultural practices are detrimental to child development, however the dilemma lies in the appropriate means to combat them, which is one of the contentious issue of the public discourses regarding working methods that underpin child protection.

### **5.3.4 Theme four: Acculturation**

Acculturation denotes outcomes of individuals with different cultures coming into contact (Berry, 1997). He maintains that acculturation processes vary among individuals and similarly the outcomes are influenced by mobility voluntariness and permanence, though integration can be attained through mutual accommodation between both dominant and non-dominant groups (ibid). Although cultural continuity was cited as vital, participants highlighted the importance of integration within the host society (Roer-Strier, 1996; Sam and Berry, 2010; Bornstein and Bohr, 2011), however there were variations regarding how acculturation strategies were endorsed. Participants stated that resistance to adapting to the Norwegian way of parenting which does not tolerate authoritarian parenting has repercussions, as exemplified in the subsequent sub-themes.

#### **5.3.4.1 Adaptation**

People always strive for consistency and harmony in their attitudes and behaviors and once there is a discrepancy, means to reduce the dissonance are devised (Festinger, 1957). Participants acknowledged that the Norwegian context has different values, norms, and behaviour, that out to be conformed to and against which parenting efficacy is assessed. Participants emphasised the need to adapt by compromising and learning parenting practices within the context in question. Literature by Yaman et al. (2010), Critelli (2015), Bornstein and Bohr (2011) and Berry (2005) acknowledges that acculturation behaviour changes are expected to take place when a large cultural distance exists between country of origin and settlement.

I have learned to talk to have conversations with my kids, I talk to them like they are my equals and I talk to them the way I want them to be in the future. I acknowledge their feelings, they are not to be taken lightly. (Alice)

Am living in Norway and this system requires you as a parent to be like them. You have to comply with them, be just like them in order for you to win. And the ways we brought up like beating, screaming at them, it will not work and that is something that I have learned a lot. I have learned the negative part of the system here in Norway and through it, I have learned the positive way of raising up a child. I have learned who a parent is, what is required of me as a parent. (Joyce)

You assess and accept that I came to look for greener pastures, let me bear with the laws for the sake of not losing my children, let me survive but it is horrible as it can be so frustrating but you remember your goal and persevere. It is me who came here, had kids, they are growing up here, so we calm down. (Mr and Mrs Williams)

The above remarks show that, despite participants' reservations about parenting practices that contradict with their core values, they endeavour to adapt to the mainstream society practices. This is exemplified in study findings of experiences of African immigrant parents in the Norwegian welfare society (Johannesen and Appoh, 2016), where immigrant parents reported adopting several strategies to avoid encounters with the child welfare services. These included sacrificing their privacy by letting teachers know what transpires in their lives and paying critical attention to their children's conversations to pick up cues about the Norwegian values and norms (ibid). Likewise, participants in this study acquainted themselves with more contextual knowledge on parenting, through enrolling in parenting courses, as recommended by Child Welfare Services for some participants and personal initiatives for others.

When I became a parent, I started reading about being a good parenting, I read that children should not be praised all the time. --- So, I think parents have unique ways of raising children, but for me it is something I have picked up as a practice basing on what I read, ... because from the way I have observed here, I do not like the way parents give routine praises to their children, because even for something small, they offer praises. In my view, I do not think it is right, I have even observed it in my daughter, because ... maybe because my friends say it to her, or even at school ... Now she has started seeking similar comments every after a shower ... when she asks me if her hair is not beautiful, all the time. In my view, I think it will spoil her because if she does not get it she will feel bad ... (Ruth)

Here luckily enough you can take parenting courses, --- one was a package from welfare office, it was like we are single parents and being home longer, we have to be integrated back into society, so it was a package teaching you how to be a better mother. --- I have read different, methods, techniques many books and everyone swears by whatever they write, that this is the right way. --- Since I have 2 boys who are very different in their temperament, they are different to their way of reacting to things. One will sit in time out if you implement that, the other one won't sit ---. You have what you got from Uganda, what they are telling you in Norway, what you read from there, then you become confused. (Alice)

The above excerpts illustrate that not all parenting theories and practices are applicable. Ruth and Alice's excerpts highlight dilemmas faced in executing new parenting practices which contrast each other in eliciting desired outcomes. Notably, a growing knowledge base from experts on parenting in relation to risky practices and what ought to change, has birthed ambiguity about rearing children and how children should be socially constructed. Experts have amplified this ambiguity as widely seen in the media, through advertising what a happy child and family should look like. With heightened importance of having a dual earner family and spending more time with children, creates conflicting loyalty in finding a balance between work and family. Furedi (2008) argues that in the current contemporary society, parents are

anxious about whether they are doing enough for their children due to public scrutiny of intimate family relations like parenting. However, differences among children and contexts are often overlooked, yet what works for one child might not be suitable for another child (Lee et al., 2014).

#### 5.3.4.2 Gender roles

Focus on fathers in parenting has gained momentum, credited to increasing dual earner families that are associated with incentives such as; father quotas and parental leaves, thus inspiring fathers to participate in parenting (Seward and Stanley-Steven, 2014; Menjivar et al., 2016). Cultures play a vital role in determining society expectation of fathers and mothers in terms of attitudes, behaviours, and social status. Degni et al. (2006), Yaman et al. (2010) and Lewig et al. (2010) argue that migration through structural forces of new contexts impacts on gender roles, by producing new possibilities. Male participants in this study, explicitly pointed out that their indigenous knowledge on traditional parenting gender roles, underlined their parenting ideologies and practices. Participants noted that they had to adjust their presumptions, from gender specific parenting which is characteristic of Uganda, to gender equality that is typical of Norway.

In Uganda, I had never seen my dad staying the labour ward ... but here the man is supposed to be in the Labour ward. It was scary, that was strange for me. I did it, but trust me, life has never been the same --- Here you have to baby sit, --- The males here just have to adjust, like I have to care of my daughter and I do not like because I have to wash her private parts ... oil her body, because if not, she will get irritations ... I do not feel comfortable with that. --- It is ok with the boy, because am a boy, --- I have adjusted, before, I never used to cook, I had to learn the hard way. If she [daughter] is hungry, I know her favourite food, so those are some of the things we have to learn the hard way, which is different. (Geofrey)

We share roles in raising children, because our work shifts differ ... In Uganda, you are a man, everything is done by the woman, and your duty is to provide financially, but when you come here, you are supposed to support each other. I [Mr Williams] can cook, I do laundry and take care of our children. Literally, whatever takes place in Uganda regarding gender and parenting, you have to drop it and cooperate with your wife in parenting here or else you cannot progress. Some men come from Africa and remain rigid, however with time they realise, it does not work, you will go hungry, life will be a challenge. (Mr and Mrs Williams)

The above excerpts infer that roles and expectations of fatherhood and motherhood are defined in contrasting ways which shape behaviour practices within contexts (Kotchick and Forehand, 2002). Not only are gender roles reconfigured in migration, but so are the dynamics of parenting, as relocation involves leaving behind family networks which were vital, hence posing challenges for immigrant parents. Participants noted that, immigration presented them with an avenue to re-evaluate the perceived meanings of fatherhood, associated with both joy and stress. Similarly, in the study on fatherhood and immigration, Roer-Strier, Strier, Este

Shimoni and Clark (2005) found that fathers underlined commitment to playing significant roles in the lives of their children, despite contradictory cultural definitions of fatherhood.

#### **5.3.4.3 Hybrid parenting**

Sanagavarapu (2010) notes that due to clashes between traditional and host country's parenting practices, immigrants adopt hybrid parenting which denotes parenting practices that constitute a mixture of old and new practices. Participants highlighted that irrespective of the fact that adaption is key through adopting context specific parenting practices, it is difficult to transform into new beings, as the past is embedded within the present and future. They pointed out that both contexts of Norway and Uganda have positives aspects of raising children, which necessitates selectively and instrumentally drawing from what is necessary in the Norwegian context, but as well sticking to some core cultural values. Accordingly, participants reported crafting individualised parenting guidelines that they perceive suitable to realise the prospects they have for their children.

I try to teach my son, that he should not forget where he comes from, and there where he comes from, they have respect for parents, you are African, you should have that, ... not calling you and claim, I do not want to talk to you, because some kids here insult their parents, --- I implant the good morals, you learn something good in Norway, ... you take it, but you also do not forget the good part of Uganda and you try to mix it. I pick what is good here and then pick what is good there [Uganda] and try to merge them, not easy, but that is good parenting to me. (Geofrey)

You choose a little bit of everything and mix it together and hopefully I get a recipe to reach my end goal, because everybody is different, everybody's experience is so different and along the way you pick up things. But what you were taught stays with you always. It is how you bring it out. I have learned that not everything that I have been taught is bad, I have to adjust a little bit and put it in the Norwegian context, then you can live in this environment. Am always going to be different, you accept that you are not always going to be 100 percent Norwegian and you are not going to learn the way they parent and or the perfections because You have not grown up here, you do not have your grandparent here, your great grandparents and your parents raised in that way. (Alice)

#### **5.3.4.4 Cultural identity**

Acculturation processes are associated with diverse parenting challenges which may be real or perceived in relation to subjective and objective differences among individuals (Berry, 2005). As parents adapt to an environment contradictory to their world view, they risk losing support for their heritage values, attitudes, and beliefs (Ochocka and Janzen, 2008), however, behaviours that key to parenting within specific contexts are resistant to change, unlike culturally less saturated or pragmatic behaviours (Carra, Lavelli, Keller and Kärtner, 2013). Participants underlined cultural identity as influential in creating modified parenting practices, attributed to the struggles encountered in reconciling their cultural heritage and the Norwegian norms and values. Ochocka and Janzen (2008) argue that repetitive exposure to the duality in unreconciled strivings to achieve a sense of identity can have profound effects for immigrants



Participants reported that despite their children being Norwegian by birth, their heritage will always be questioned attributed to their appearance. Participants highlighted that it is important that their children know about their heritage, objectified at enhancing their self-esteem and appreciating who they are. Respective remarks below depict that, there are definite values irrespective of change of context parents insist on passing on to their children.

But we still try to instil some morals, by negotiating, we try the little we can, ... we try to mix with our culture values in a softer way. They kneel down while greeting, speak Luganda ... I (Mrs Williams) ... take a long holiday of 2 months back home and take all kids along ... to expose them to the Ugandan context so that, they mix with children there. --- They experience that, an adult has a right to correct you when they see you doing something wrong, --- The advantage is that in case we decide to relocate, we won't over stretch, they will be able to fit in. So, mixing them with average children, they learn the norms, values especially children who get hands training on how to become independent and can perform several house duties as well as take care of siblings, which is not possible if they mix with upper class kids. (Mr and Mrs Williams)

Yes, my kids are Norwegian, but I have to remind them that you guys are not really Norwegians ... I have told my kids; you guys are Norwegian on paper, but you have to remember you guys are Ugandans, you guys are Africans. I have to prepare them and tell them, ... they will look at you and ask you where you come from, because you do not look like a Norwegian, in away. I have to teach them that, however much you call yourself a Norwegian and it is ok, but do not forget where you come from, know that you are African and be proud you are African ... (Joyce)

These extracts show how families operate transnationally, reshaped by the dynamism of migration, hence sustain contact with their contexts of origin. Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt (1999) assert that migration is a two-way journey through which immigrants' families become geographically extended through time and space, by maintaining social relations in both new settlements and contexts of origin. Mr and Mrs Williams' remarks demonstrate living dual lives in 2 countries, in which two languages are used and two homes maintained. This impacts on family integration and parenting strategies, informed by an interplay of intertwined opportunities and possibilities. Ryan (2011) argues that "Migrants may not be entirely bounded by the local but neither are they entirely free and unfettered within transnational spaces (p.87). In this study, participants draw from transnational experiences of Uganda and Norway to influence their parenting practices. This signifies that participants' parenting strategies are linked to their countries of origin, as they elicit support in parenting to justify, compare, and contrast practices.

#### **5.3.4.5 Transitions and timespan**

Length of stay and transitions within ecological settings has implications on individual experiences (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Berry, 1997; Riessman, 2008). As per participants' profiles, 5 participants have spent more than 10 years in Norway, hence accounting for variances in experiences, and exposure to the dynamics of the Norwegian context. One participant who has lived in Norway for only 5 years, communicated that she has gaps in

knowledge about Norwegian culture of parenting, but utilised information availed by friends, which as earlier presented pertains hearsay about what is considered typical of Norwegian parenting.

My experience is limited ... I do not know many rules about parenting here, but I know you are not supposed to beat your kid, you are not supposed to force a child I early marriage. I do not know a lot. --- maybe because my child is still young---when I came, I was told that if it is found that you feed your child with your fingers, your child will be taken, it is not true, may be one might have other issues but ... I do not know. My friend advised me never to feed my daughter with fingers because Barnevernet would take my daughter, ... (Ruth)

I have been in the system [Child Welfare Services] ever since my child was in the first grade, and that was 7-years ago, and that is why I say, I know the system, I know how it works. Right now, I can present, argue my case and through this process, it has made to be confident, ... so I know I can defend any case they bring against my children, because I know where they stand and the fear is no longer there, because I have been in the system for a long time, I know what they expect of me and I know what I should do. Before I was so afraid. It has happened to so many parents and because of fear, you do not know their expectations, you do not know what to say and you end up losing your children. (Joyce)

Further, Alice and Geoffrey's remarks below, infer that time and exposure had effect on their prior parenting perceptions, which they held in high esteem and were strong-minded about. However, their attitudes and behaviours changed overtime, credited to contextualising and embracing associated benefits.

Some people do things because of not knowing or because of what they know. If you met me five years ago, I would have argued for everything I stood for, everything I knew and my parenting skills, I would have argued for that and say that is how I was taught and look how I turned out, so this is my parenting skills. But now I put everything into context and there is no such a thing like full proof parenting skills, it is what you choose and what values you have and goals you set, then you find a method which is suitable and you can apply to raise your kids. (Alice)

I see the benefits, because there is a ... natural bonding with your child ... I have never seen my father hug my mom, not even my step mother, I have never seen them hugging in public. But when I take my son to school, I hug him, there is a way you feel, when they say Hi, bye, kiss you on the cheek. You feel a change and if he has not hugged you, you go and say; "hey come and hug papa", then he runs back and hugs you and says bye. There is that natural bonding you have with the child, which I think we missed back home, we rarely had it but it means a lot. (Geoffrey)

With the above findings and analyses, it is coherent that regardless of differences among cultures, the desired end goal of parenting is the same, though it's the means that are debatable, as the end goal can be achieved through different cognitions and practices.

## 5.4 Addressing Research Questions

The narrative analytical framework expounded on the four interrelated themes that emerged in data collection. These themes are further used to address the research questions that underpinned this study.

*How do parents understand their roles and parenting practices?*

Participants' narratives highlighted that they initially defined parenting, basing on their own parenting experiences in Uganda, hence utilised the same cultural scripts in parenting in Norway, only to discover it is quite different. None of the parents considered themselves incompetent, not until they encountered a different parenting threshold, upon which their efficacy was measured and considered lacking. All participants communicated that they had grown up with extended family which implies that despite some divergences in practices attributed to variations in individual characters and prevailing circumstances, the practices converged in aspect of values such as respect and obedience, which as noted in their remarks, they desire to transmit to their children. Further, participants viewed their parenting as a learning processes, ascribed to living in a different context, which has respective expectations of raising children. Lee et al. (2014) note that cultural developments, policies, and intergenerational transmissions have birthed a parenting style that is child-centred, expert guided, emotionally and labour intensive. Consequently, participants highlighted that their parenting is now contextualised to accommodate the laws of Norway, though concur with Ntukula and Liljeström (2004, p.44) that, "Traditional culture should not be lightly thrown into the slop-bucket: it has a part to play in providing roots and a common history and has the potential to support responsible adulthood".

*Which factors inform and influence their parenting orientations?*

Participants explicitly advanced contexts and culture as key determinants of their parenting orientations emphasising that, perspectives on what constitutes good behaviour varies across settings; what is considered vital in one context may be irrelevant in another. The analysis embodied that participants view contextual demands such as; work schedules, policies, and geographical factors like the weather as substantial in influencing what constitutes parenting expectations and behaviour. Bornstein (2012) states that genes and culture are passed on across generation, however the uniqueness of genes may fade with time, though the effects of parenting practices and preparation for the generations to come linger longer. Subsequently, how participants conceptualised children influenced their parenting orientations, either perceived as a social category or childhood viewed as a status, not what it translates to for adulthood. Further, they enlightened that, initially they relied on their cultural internal working models to shape and guide their children, until they were involved with the Norwegian Child Welfare services, directly or indirectly, that their parenting orientations fell under guidance of experts in form of family advisers and caseworkers. As represented in findings, some participants enrolled in parenting courses, whereas others sought knowledge from books on parenting, all aimed at meeting the Norwegian standards. Therefore, it can be deduced that

participants parenting orientations are influenced by a mixture of participants' upbringing experiences, the Norwegian context, and experts.

*What strategies do parents employ amidst parenting in a different context?*

According to Roer-Strier (1996) coping strategies, participants' narratives accentuated that, initially some had adopted a traditional strategy of socialising their children as per their cultures of origin, though later shifted to a bi-cultural strategy in which individualised parenting practices were generated, entrenched with both Norwegian and Ugandan parenting practices. The bi-cultural strategy to adaptation in this bearing, entails a compromise between conservative and rapid assimilation strategies. Hoftstede (2001, p.424) asserts that, "The nature of adaptation problems depends on both the sending and the receiving culture. Members of host cultures receiving foreign visitors, sojourners or migrants show psychological reactions that mirror those of the foreigners". The analysis shows that there were conflicts when participants' adaptive adult image contradicted the Norwegian image. However, several factors influenced adoption of a bi-cultural strategy, of which fear of penalties attached to failure in adhering to the Norwegian way of parenting is significant.

*What challenges and opportunities are associated with parenting in Norway?*

Participants identified associated challenges of parenting in Norway such as; not having family support, having their parenting roles disputed by the Norwegian culture. This is illustrated in the individualist parenting in comparison to collective parenting where neighbours serve as social support, yet in Norway, neighbours support may result into encounters with child welfare services. Further, they highlighted that, private routines are amplified into key issues, with simple things such as touching, talking transformed into skills that parents must equip themselves with, through enrolling in parenting courses. External involvement into family affairs was an implication of failure by the family, coupled with many child care responsibilities that require full involvement into a child's life. Participants inferred in their narratives that they experienced stress, due to demands associated with negotiating between retaining cultural identities and adapting, however, the degree to which they conform to the dominant culture through integration, varies with consideration of several interplay of complex factors. Additionally, they noted the acculturation gap or parent-child acculturation conflict, an outcome of children acculturating faster than their parents. Power imbalances were pointed out as another challenge, which manifests in interactions among parents, children, and the child welfare institution, attributed to exposure to an egalitarian context characterised by differences in conceptualisation of childhood and gender roles, in comparison to what they were accustomed to.

Contrary, participants shared appreciation for opportunities associated with parenting in Norway. Communication as an alternative discipline measure to spanking, through dialogue and negotiation, was cited as a benefit which parents utilised to inculcate their expectations of their children. Participants alluded that spending time with their children facilitated having healthy child-parent relationships, characterised by stronger bonds, through which parents learn more about their children's strength, weaknesses, likes and dislikes, therefore support

them accordingly. Across the narrative analyses, participants pointed out the merits of parenting courses through which they discovered and understood their own persona as parents. In addition, participants enjoy the family- friendly welfare system illustrated in gender equality, parental leaves, financial support, free education, child care and allowances, all projected towards having a classless society, characterised by equal opportunities.

Themes discussed may not comprehensively and exhaustively represent lived and told parenting experiences of Ugandan immigrants in Norway, however they illuminate on historical, social, and contextual aspects that are embedded within these experiences.

## 6.0 Chapter Six: Conclusions

In this chapter, I present reflections, implications for practice and recommendations for future research.

### 6.1 Reflections

As explicated in the findings and analyses of this study, several immigrant parenting experiences arise out of changing parenting parameters, which has varying impacts on parents and children, depicted in efforts to maintain the status quo regarding norms and values or adopting new practices. In this study experiences of immigrant parents constitute a mixture of both lived and told experiences, with the later legitimised and retold as reality, in turn influencing perceptions and behaviours. Riesman (2008) argues that perceptions shape experiences of how individuals tell stories in relation to existing narratives, which configure how, when and what is told. Therefore, individuals are victims of social constructs that are associated with assumptions people hold, based on varied sociodemographic aspects. According to Du Bois (1903), the internalizations of how individuals are perceived by others, may lead to doubt, self-criticism and inhibition. Further, he claims that individuals may alter their mannerisms to make those around them comfortable, so that they are not viewed as a threat, at the expense of betraying their inner true self (ibid).

In this study, participant narratives highlighted the double-consciousness encountered in identifying with their cultures of origin and the Norwegian norms and values in parenting, hence a dilemma in fostering a self of identity for their children. Skin color was cited as one of the distinctive identification for being an outsider, hence a perceived reminder that African immigrants can never be totally Norwegian, thus reinforcing how they see themselves in relation to how others describe and perceive them. Notably, findings in this study revealed that public discourses portray the Norwegian Child Welfare Services as an institution associated with separation of children from their parents attributed to the perception that immigrant parenting practices are detrimental and lacking. These perceptions constitute parents' reality and impact on attitudes and interventions. However, embedded within these perceptions, is the polarization of insiders and outsiders, represented in 'our parenting' versus 'their parenting'. Capitalizing on these differences overlooks the shared similarities across cultures, as people hold these conceptualizations and identify themselves as if it is their intrinsic nature. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) claim that to address this pivotal concern, emphasis should be accorded to cultural capital which serves as a source of this conflict in the contemporary society, because it is within this domain that framing and filtering takes place and influences how individuals think and act.

Further, articulated in this study is the aspect of transnational parenting, illustrated in the way parents live divided lives, with a foot in both contexts of origin and settlement. Diverse and efficient means of communication and travel facilitate interconnectivity across space and time. Subsequently, families not only keep emotional, social, and economic ties with their countries of origin, but as well selectively and instrumentally draw from either context to acquire a balance in their day to day lives. Culture is not static and homogenous, rather it is heterogenous, fluid, dynamic and transformative, along dimensions of identity, power, gender,

uncertainty, and time (Hofstede, 2001). The major goal of parenting among participants in this study, is transmitting cultural values to their children, hence culture plays a role in how individuals make sense of their experiences and impacts on their cognition and practices of parenting. Forming networks and building resources takes time and immigrants utilise these resources in negotiating the processes of unlearning or retention of certain norms from their countries of origin. Significantly, within participants narratives, the time dimension depicts how participants are oriented towards the past, present and future, in their respective socialising practices of their children. Hofstede (2001, p.18) points out that,

The cultural component in all kinds of behaviour is difficult to grasp for people who have always remained embedded in the same cultural environments; it takes a prolonged stay abroad and mixing with other nationals there for us to recognise the numerous and often subtle differences in the ways they and we behave, because that is how our society has programmed.

These dynamic and complex relations across borders and participants' socio-demographic characteristics are intertwined, thus accounts for both convergences and diversities in participants' narratives. Menjivar et al. (2016, p.65) alludes that, "Since social class and associated financial resources may fluctuate for families before migration, shortly after migration and in the long-term process of incorporation, these changes are likely to influence parenting responsibilities and approaches". Findings demonstrated that parents of different social classes vary in parenting orientations, through which they convey aspects of resilience, entitlement, opportunities, and coping skills onto their children. Human beings do not live in a vacuum, instead are dependent on each other and need both bonding and bridging social capital as a linkage to others within groups and communities (Putman, 1995). People are active agents who not only mediate the effect of social structures, but make decisions and set goals that shape social structures, hence experiences are linked through networks of shared relationships. While bonding capital may provide emotional and cultural support, through fostering sense of belonging among immigrant families, on the hand it may create dependency and limit access to the outside community. Paradoxically differences in sociocultural values, norms, and practices, turn into a sameness that excludes others.

With evolution of parenting, characterised by redrawn boundaries of intimate relationships, many aspects of family life have become highly politicised and the risk discourse has gained attention (Hartas, 2014). Gillies (2012) claims that semipermeable boundaries exist between family and other domains like schools, with each influencing the other, unlike before where the family was a separate entity. Parenting expectations have risen from simply raising children, to decoding their feelings and behaviour, including providing them with the latest toys and gadgets. Therefore, parents are apprehensive about their competences and whether they are doing enough. As noted by participants in this study, parents are bombarded with controversial expert parenting guidelines from all corners and failure to elicit desired behaviours, signifies incompetence of the parent, with attached consequences to the child. Furedi (2008) argues that, parent training programs in a way empowers professionals by creating a demand, while disempowers parents by blaming them for prevailing situations. When emphasis is on doing parenting than what entails parenting, then bad parenting is equated

to nurturing bad children. It is hard for parents to rely on their own constructs, when they are continuously reminded of the detrimental effects their shortcomings have on their children's development, hence generating a dependence on expert advice. In most cases, debates and discourses focus on visible aspects of phenomena than the invisible, yet the latter creates the former. Parenting practices are print outs of social conditioning characterised by what individuals hear, see and experience. Yvosi (2014) argues that consciously or unconsciously individuals live up to the blue prints of their nurturing, illustrated in their beliefs and habits. It is not easy to change products, however production can be altered or strengthened, because individuals draw from their existence cultural reservoirs throughout their lives

My personal query at the onset of this study was, whether the end justifies the means of parenting, attributed to differences in means yet shared similarities in goals and outcomes. My deduction is that an 'ideal' way of parenting upon which successes and failures can be measured does not exist. Parenting as a concept is multifaceted, because parenting practices and expectations evolve along with children's needs overtime. Consequently, what is key in the present may not be of relevance in the future. By taking for granted that parents have the responsibility to provide security, stability for children to develop and thrive, challenges that parents face in meeting these expectations are unheeded. Gillies (2008, p.112) asserts, "To avoid a policy approach grounded in middle-class privilege, there is need for a much greater appreciation of the varied and situated roles that parents play in caring for their children". In doing so, no single view point is privileged, thus dialogue and critique ought to be embraced as methods of operation for ascertaining and comprehending reality.

## **6.2 Implications for practice**

Parenting has the potential to shape the present and future, through a ripple effect. Healy (2007, p.14) argues that, "The roles and status of women and children in families, communities and cultures are probably the most frequent sources of clashes over social work ethics and human rights between individual rights and cultural traditions". The lens practitioners use, either of scepticism and doubt or of positivity and hope, will influence their engagements with children and families. It is imperative that practitioners assess and re-examine through reflection on how acquired knowledge is applied and how ones' social context and assumptions affect decision making. Welbourne (2012) states that reflection denotes combining knowledge both logic and intuitive to check and evaluate the influence of biases on perceptions and actions. In risk assessments, such as; parenting incompetence, child maltreatment and identifying evidence of behaviours or omissions that are detrimental to a child, it is vital that practitioners are thorough in ascertaining facts and ascribed judgements (Munro, 2008). However, this does not infer that professionals should sympathise with parents who are challenged with child care, since underlying risks might be disregarded at the expense of children wellbeing.

Additionally, how practitioners exercise power impacts on intervention outcomes, either by defending and protecting or oppressing and exploiting (Tew, 2006). Practitioners are bestowed with the power of influencing change in attitudes and behaviour, hence ought to embrace open and collaborative relationships objectified at enhancing capabilities. It is justifiable that practitioners switch from a collaborative to a protective power mode, when a



child's safety is at stake, an action liable to misinterpretation as oppression by the service user, however open dialogue and honesty should be used to clarify the need for employing such an intervention. The dilemma of individual rights versus cultural sovereignty is not peculiar to practitioners in plural societies, attributed to rights and freedoms accorded in international conventions that conflict with cultural or religious practices. A balance between universalism and relativism ought to be employed through examining underlying values of cultural practices and ensure safeguarding of basic rights (Healy, 2007). However, practitioners should be mindful of reinforcing stereotypes attached to cultural sensitivity and its impact on the quality of service delivery, as children are often maltreated under the disguise of cultural sovereignty. Knowledge about groups of people must not be generalised, but reflective attention accorded to in-group and intergroup differences and similarities.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

Drawing from the study theoretical frameworks, supportive ecological systems influence adaptation, therefore the main dilemma lies with provision and protection children at the expense of intrusion on parent's right of privacy and family life. Bornstein (2012, p.219) alludes that,

Assumptions about the specificity and generality of parenting, and relations between parents and children, are advantageously tested through cultural research because neither parenting nor children's development occurs in a vacuum: Both emerge and grow in a medium of culture.

- The Norwegian Child Welfare Service practitioners should adapt their practice to acknowledging associated diversities, which constitute differences between micro systems of migrant and native-born families.
- A pro-active role with effective problem-solving strategies, should be assumed through attaining meaningful connections between cultural contexts by engaging parents in family oriented activities that foster adaptation to the Norwegian context. Early education intervention programs are necessary to address the lack of contextual competences in parenting, given that failure to uphold the law is not tolerated on grounds of ignorance.
- Immigrant parents should be supported by utilising a capability approach, that taps into human struggles to ascertain and address factors that deter parents from meeting the threshold of parenting as the mainstream society (Gupta, Featherstone and White, 2016).
- Cultural sensitivity ought to be embraced by both immigrants and host institutions, through efforts of learning the values and norms of the Norwegian context by the former and accommodating the needs of immigrants by the latter. Further, as recommended by participants, 'qualified' immigrant practitioners should be recruited within the Norwegian Child Welfare Services to act as references for addressing dilemmas that arise due to clashing cultural norms. This can address the challenge of making meaning within one's culture, since it is not feasible to be

knowledgeable on all world cultures and corresponding values, norms, and practices.

## **6.4 Future research**

Most research has focused on parenting among mothers, with a few studies on fathers, however overlooking other stakeholders that are key players in parenting within the contemporary society such as; relatives, teachers, and family advisers. In line with this study, all participants at one point in time, were parented by extended family, therefore future research on parenting within larger family systems perspectives, other than parents can be worthwhile. Further, how cultures moderate parent-child relationships can be explored.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Non-plagiarism declaration

I hereby declare that the Dissertation titled: *Parenting experiences of Ugandan Immigrants in Norway*, submitted to the Erasmus Mundus Master's Program in Social Work with Families and Children:

- Has not been submitted to any other Institute/University/College
- Contains proper references and citations for other scholarly work
- Contains proper citation and references from my own prior scholarly work
- Has listed all citations in a list of references.

I am aware that violation of this code of conduct is regarded as an attempt to plagiarize, and will result in a failing grade (F) in the program.

Date (dd/mm/yyyy): 01/05/2017

Signature: 

Name (in block letters): KABATAUYA, CAROL LYNNET

## Appendix B: Ethical Approval



Åse Vagli  
Institutt for sosialfag Universitetet i Stavanger  
Ullandhaug  
4036 STAVANGER

Vår dato: 16.02.2017

Vår ref: 52450 / 3 / HIT

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

### TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 23.01.2017. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

<i>52450</i>	<i>Parenting in the context of Immigration: Experiences of Ugandan Immigrants in Norway</i>
<i>Behandlingsansvarlig</i>	<i>Universitetet i Stavanger, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
<i>Daglig ansvarlig</i>	<i>Åse Vagli</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>Carol Lynnet Kabatanya</i>

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

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

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

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

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.05.2017, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Hildur Thorarensen

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

Kontaktperson: Hildur Thorarensen tlf: 55 58 26 54  
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering  
Kopi: Carol Lynnet Kabatanya carol.lynnet@gmail.com

## **Appendix C: Information and Consent Form**

### **Background and Purpose of the study**

You are invited to participate in a research project on Parenting experiences of Ugandan Immigrants in Norway. It is a thesis project towards an Erasmus Mundus European Masters in Social Work with Families and Children affiliated to University of Stavanger and due for completion by 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2017. The research aims to explore parenting experiences among Ugandan immigrant parents in Norway with emphasis on factors that influence their parenting orientations, strategies employed amidst parenting in a different context and associated opportunities and challenges.

You are selected as participant, because of you meet the criteria of respondents needed to realise the object of this research project. Analysing Ugandan immigrant lived experiences will enrich understanding of complex processes of negotiating new identities, contexts and dominant ideals that are divergent from their own. Further the findings will contribute to a knowledge pool for practitioners to understand the different childrearing ideologies, norms, beliefs, and practices.

### **What does participation in the project imply?**

The research is qualitative, signifying that data will be collected through semi-structured interviews. Interviews will have a duration of approximately 90 minutes, during which narratives in relation to parenting experiences will be sought. The interviews will be audio-recorded.

### **What will happen to the information about you?**

All personal data will be treated confidentially. The recordings will be transcribed and the transcribed data will be stored in a personal computer and secured with a username and password that is only accessible by the researcher. Notably, data will as well be accessed by my supervisor. Pseudonyms will be used in reporting; hence no personal data will be used that can reveal your identities. The indirect identifiable information will be published; hence you will be availed an opportunity to read through your own information and give approval before publication. The project is scheduled for completion by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017, thereafter which all audio-recordings will be destroyed.

### **Voluntary participation**

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

If you would like to participate or if you have any questions concerning the project, please contact:



Student researcher: Carol Lynnet Kabatanya; Email: [carol.lynnet@gmail.com](mailto:carol.lynnet@gmail.com); Phone Number: 92519125

Thesis supervisor: Åse Elisabeth Vagli; Email: [aase.vagli@uis.no](mailto:aase.vagli@uis.no) ; Phone number. 51834108

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

### **Consent for participation in the study**

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

-----  
(Signed by participant, date)

## **Appendix D: Interview Guide**

### **Guide One: Biography**

- Kindly tell me about yourself

### **Guide Two: Immigration**

- What conditions and reasons influenced your immigration to Norway?

### **Guide Three: Parenting in Uganda**

- Tell me about your own upbringing?

### **Guide Four: Parenting experiences in Norway**

- What is your experience of being a parent in Norway, in relation to roles of a parent, child-parent relationships, and any other aspects?
- What do consider important standards of behaviour and how do you describe your parenting?
- What are your views on existent parenting orientations in Norway?
- How similar or different are they from what you have known?

### **Guide Five: Negotiating parenting in a different context**

- Have your personal parenting beliefs and behaviours changed upon immigration?
- What practices have you take up to negotiate parenting in Norway?
- What Opportunities and challenges are associated with parenting within Norway?
- How have you addressed the challenges and utilised opportunities?

**Note: Would you like to add on anything important in relation to this topic that you feel was not discussed?**

**Thank you for your participation**

## Appendix E: Coding and Theme development

Theme 1: Context and Culture

Theme 2: Conceptualisation of children

Theme 3: Child Welfare Services (Barnevernet)

Theme 4: Acculturation

So, tell me if you come here when you are ready grown or your kids have raised them half way and then you come here and you have all those things compiled, that you have to take your kids out, your kids have to have after school activities, you have to help them have a network, have friends, not isolated. How do you handle that, if it is not something you are used to? Like you do not only make your schedule, but you have four kids, you have four schedules. Their schedules are your schedules and you have to keep them up. Their appointments are my appointments. So, I have my own appointments, things am supposed to do, actually it is like they do not work their lives around you, you work your life around them. In Uganda, kids work their lives around their parents, like I cannot go on this day because mom is working or going to a wedding. Here you plan according to what activities; on Thursday, I cannot make plans with anybody because my son has activities, days he has his plans, I have to follow him up on his plans, those are my plans too. So, that goes in my calendar, that means I cannot have anything around it. Parenting here is all hands on and it can be tiring, because you are not living your own life, but you are living three lives and it is kind of scary, really scary, the way parenting is here. I do not know if its god or bad, it's good to know more about your kids, but when they are young I feel like you stop living your life, it should be about your kids but not that micro managed, you are not supposed to forget that they are involved and everything has to be, there are timetables there, everything has to be run by them. I have to involve them, I have to tell them about my day as I listen, you should listen, tired or not tired or wanting to sleep you should listen about their day and you should comment back. You should have something good to say, feedback is very important. Like they wrote something, welfare services, when I was eating, that I wasn't giving my kids feedback, but I was raised like, when you are eating you do not talk, food might go in the wrong pipe. Because someone wrote to them, questioning my capabilities as a mom, listing stuff that were not in order, like my children were not supervised, they are not clean, they are not dressed well, not well dressed for the weather, they lack clothes, a lot of such stuff. Here, being a parent means not being a paranoid, but as I said not everybody will tell you what you are doing is wrong, it is not their responsibility to tell you, but they will involve the expert on how to raise kids, who know what is best for the children. And it is not all bad, sometimes they step in to help, in my case it is more help which I needed as a single mom, like getting relief, teaching me how to be a better parent. That is how I discovered that for them I beat my kids, but I do not beat my kids, what are you people taking about, I do not beat my kids. Until I start reading and found out the criteria of child abuse, where by screaming is part of that, so it does not matter how much I argue that I do not beat my kids, I seem like a liar. But am not a liar, it is just unknowing, nobody explained to me, like this is child abuse. It is not about physically beating your kid, but raising your voice. Nobody told me, Because I told them that the only thing I do is raise my voice. I had to figure it out on my own, and when I figured it out, I was like, I raise my voice and I read is also child abuse, but I do not physically beat my kids and that I can change, because that is the only way I knew how. If it is not the way then I can change, but then they

pick up on things; where I come from when you eat, you do not talk, food might end up in the wrong pipe, but that was like you are not interacting with your kids while you are eating, they are telling you stories and no feedback. Then am like someone is observing you in your own house, do you think I will be able to act normal and be myself every day? Am questioning myself; what are they looking for? What are they going to find? Or how much trouble am I in? Am I going to lose my kids? It is a scary situation.