



“A study on the perceptions of child welfare workers on the use of corporal punishment among immigrant and Norwegian families”

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i. Abstract:

Title: A study on the perceptions of child welfare workers on the use of corporal punishment among immigrant and Norwegian families

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Keywords: Immigrant, Norway, Barnevernet, corporal punishment, UNCRC

The purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of child welfare workers in regard to immigrant and non-immigrant families by using the concept of corporal punishment as a point of departure. There were three main questions and objectives that focused on exploring the expectations and approaches that child welfare workers have when working with immigrant and non-immigrant families. This study was exclusively qualitative in nature. Data collection was done by undertaking semi-structured interviews with seven child welfare workers from the Stavanger and Sola offices. Thematic analysis was used to generate the findings which were discussed with the lens provided by the theoretical framework that included the moral theories of universalism and relativism as well as the theory of street level bureaucracy.

The results of the study indicate that child welfare workers have a child centred approach to their practice. They do not seem to differentiate between children of immigrant and non-immigrant families. Their work is based on the promotion of the rights of the child stated by the UNCRC and the Norwegian law. In addition, it was found that while child welfare workers have a culture blind approach to the use of corporal punishment, they take culture into account to develop a better understanding and relationship with immigrant families. This was explained with the help of a graphic that I called “the bridge of relativism”.

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iii. Dedication

I dedicate this project and the hard work that went into completing it to my mother and father.

- Mum you have given everything to make me the woman I am and I owe you my happiness.
- Dad I miss you every day; I know academia was your dream too.

Le dedico este proyecto y el el duro trabajo que me tomó completarlo a mi mamá y a mi papá

- Mamá usted ha dado su vida para hacerme la mujer que soy y a usted le debo mi felicidad.
- Papá lo extraño a diario, yo se que la academia fue su sueño también.

1 Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Interest in the topic

In early 2015 I had the privilege to experience a number of internships in several social work agencies in Stavanger. These internships were part of the master's degree I am currently undertaking. It was during this time that I became interested in the current situation of the child welfare services with immigrants in Norway. I became aware of the many high profile cases in which the Barnevernet was being accused of racism and kidnapping by immigrant parents, these cases were prominently reported by international media outlets (Hollekima, Anderssen, & Daniel, 2015).

I found that most of the accusations indicated a lack of cultural sensitivity from child welfare workers and the different understandings of what raising a child means in Norway in contrasts to other countries and cultures. The accusations also reflected apprehension against the principles outlined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), such as the banning of any kind of corporal punishment and the promotion of children's participation. Norway has for many years promoted the UNCRC principles which have led to a cultural change in which children are seen as individuals in their own right (Skivenes M. , 2011). However, this might not yet be the case in many other countries in the world, which might explain the reasons behind immigrants disagreeing with the action taken by the child welfare workers of Norway.

What interested me the most was the noticeable bias in the news reports concerning the Barnevernet and the inability of the government agency to comment on the reports due to confidentiality issues. From the classic study by Lipsky (1980) street level bureaucracy it is recognised that child welfare workers are street level bureaucrats whose very role is constituted by the tension between policy aims and demands on the street level. Therefore, I began to spend a considerable amount of time thinking about the position of child welfare workers in regards to immigrant and non-immigrant families. I decided to investigate the perspectives of child welfare workers and focus on the concept of corporal punishment as a way to explore any differences that child welfare workers may experience in their practice with immigrants and non-immigrant families. I believe that learning the perceptions of the workers can provide an opportunity to better understanding the current situation.

1.2 Problem area

Historically Norway has been a mostly homogenous society but in the last 20 years it has changed by becoming more multicultural. By 2015, 12% of the total population in Norway were immigrants from more than 130 different countries (Statistics Norway, 2015). Its strong economy, social benefits and having been awarded several times the title of the "best country in the world to live in" are some of the many reasons why Norway easily attracts immigrants (United Nations Development Programme, 2015). The social benefits are characteristic of its social democratic welfare regime, which consists of a state that provides extensive and wide ranging family support and services that are universalistic in orientation (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Immigration has aided Norway's growth in population, social and economic areas

(Østby & Henriksen, 2014). However, this has also generated problems in Norway as in other European countries.

Immigration does not happen in a vacuum, immigrants come with values, customs, languages and several other cultural traits that influence their life and behaviour in their host society which in turn helps reshape its traditional culture (Berry J. W., 1997). However, immigrants are required to adjust and go through a process of acculturation in order to integrate. This process of acculturation is influenced by several factors such as culture, social status and migration reasons among others; in addition, the legislation of the host country can impact the ability with which immigrants become integrated (Berry J. W., 1997; Berry J. W., 2005). Immigrants arriving in Norway can often face difficulties in adjusting partly due to the homogenous nature of the society. These difficulties can often be experienced by families facing the Norwegian child welfare system which is known for its utmost care and respect towards children as individuals in their own right by implementing and upholding United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Križ & Skivenes, 2010). The understanding of the rights of children and the rights of parents can differ between cultures and this is where immigrants along with child welfare workers can face difficulties.

Children's rights such as participation and the prohibition of corporal punishment have been particularly well discussed and agreed upon in the Norwegian society. In fact, Norway was one of the first countries to recognise and guarantee various legal rights for children (Lundy, Kilkelly, Byrne, & Kang, 2012). The country has made significant steps towards protecting children and their legal rights, for example, corporal punishment of children by parents was outlawed in 1987 and a children's ombudsman was established in 1981 (Lundy et al., 2012). Perhaps most importantly, unlike many countries around the world, Norway has completely incorporated into its domestic law the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC). However clear this may seem, ensuring the protection and wellbeing of families and children is a challenge that child welfare workers face in their everyday jobs, even more so with immigrant families who hold different values and customs in regards to the upbringing of children.

The Norwegian child welfare system has for the last few years been the target of many complaints and accusations from immigrant communities. These criticisms reveal that there are negative perceptions about the way children are typically raised in Norway. Opponents of the child welfare system often reject the Norwegian belief that children are individuals in their own right and claim that the child welfare services impose Norwegian culture on immigrants. (Hollekima, Anderssen, & Daniel, 2015). One of the most common points of discussion is centred in the acceptance or rejection of a slight level of corporal punishment, such as spanking, as a disciplinary tool to properly raise children. Many societies today defend the use of some forms of corporal punishment as necessary for the wellbeing of children (International NGO Council on Violence against Children, 2012; Porzig-Drummond, 2015). In Norway, as mentioned above, the society has been shaped to reject this argument and so it is the responsibility of child welfare workers to ensure no child is subject to corporal punishment (Skivenes M. , 2011). Consequently, culture might not be taken into account in these cases which can lead to families feeling discriminated against and robbed of their children. Child welfare work has always been characterised by being multifaceted and demanding, thus, workers often face complications and negative perceptions from clients (Križ & Skivenes, 2010). However, this is a much more complex matter that requires more empirical investigation in order to reveal how the relation between child welfare workers and immigrant parents unfolds in Norway.

1.3 Purpose of the study

It is important to study the perceptions of child welfare workers because as street level bureaucrats they implement child welfare policies through their interactions with the public (Lipsky, 1980). Lipsky states, that due to the nature of their occupations, street level bureaucrats possess a high amount of discretion when deciding the fate of individual cases. Therefore, child welfare workers are able to reshape state policy aims into street level policy; this might be the case in the implementation of the Norwegian child welfare Act and the convention on the rights of the child (CRC). It is important to assess whether street level policy is implemented differently with immigrant families in contrasts to non-immigrant families.

Street level bureaucrats simplify their jobs by developing routines to help them deal with daily restraints such as time pressure, high number of cases and organizational constrains. Some of those routines might include classifying groups of people and developing mass production techniques (Lipsky, 1980). The purpose of this research is to explore the perceptions and experiences of child welfare workers in regards to immigrant families in contrast to non-immigrant families in the child welfare system by using the concept of corporal punishment as a point of departure. This will be done by focusing on the interpretation and enforcement of the concept of corporal punishment by child welfare workers on immigrant and non-immigrant families.

1.4 Research questions and objectives

The research questions have been formulated with the aim of achieving the objectives of the study.

1.4.1 Main objective and question:

- *To explore the perceptions and experiences of child welfare workers with immigrant families in contrast to non-immigrant families in relation to the use, acceptance and understanding of corporal punishment*

How do child welfare workers perceive immigrant families in contrast to non-immigrant families in relation to corporal punishment?

1.4.2 Supporting objectives and questions:

- *To examine whether child welfare workers adopt different approaches in their work with immigrant families in contrast to non-immigrant families that are suspected to use corporal punishment towards children*

What are the differences child welfare workers experience when working with immigrant and non-immigrant families in regards to the use of corporal punishment?

- *To identify the extent to which child welfare workers promote or expect immigrant families to adopt the Norwegian culture when raising their children.*

What are the expectations child welfare workers have of immigrant families in contrast to non-immigrant families in the child welfare system?

1.5 Significance of the study

This study seeks to explore and communicate the views and perceptions of child welfare workers in regards to immigrant families which in itself carries high significance to the field of social work and child welfare. In addition, it is anticipated that the results of this study will add to the existing body of literature which is currently lacking information from the worker perspective. The findings are expected to create awareness of the use of children's rights in the child welfare system not only of Norway but other contexts. In addition, it is hoped that the finding will help to shed light into the current issues regarding accusations made by immigrant communities on several media outlets about the practice of child welfare workers in Norway. It also provides an opportunity for documenting the experience of child welfare workers in the region of Stavanger.

It is important to note that this research has been developed with the aim of achieving the objectives of the European Masters in Social Work. Particularly to accomplish objective number five, which is to explore perspectives of marginalised families with reference to the cultural, legal and policy issues that affect them.

2 Chapter Two: Literature Review

The following chapter begins with a presentation of the context in which this study has been conducted, including Norway's welfare state, child welfare system and the law and history of the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, a review of the literature available in the English language related to the topic of study has been conducted in order to frame and discuss the need for further research.

2.1 Context-Norway

Located in Scandinavia, Norway has been among the most prosperous countries in the world since the 1970's. Norway has maintained its position with the help of its abundant oil reserves and well renowned system of government (OECD, 2016; Government.no, 2013). Hence, it is comprehensible why it has been consistently named the best country in the world to live in and it currently holds the number one position in the human development index (UNDP, 2015).

The population of Norway has been changing over the last 20 years by leaving behind its nearly complete homogeneity and becoming more multicultural with the arrival of an ethnically diverse number of immigrants. In the 1970s the immigrant population comprised just one and a half percent of the population, in 2015 12% of the Norwegian population were immigrants (Cooper, 2005; Statistics Norway, 2016). Immigrants migrate to Norway for various reasons; in 2014 the majority of immigrants arrived into Norway to work, followed by family reunification and refugee claims (Statistics Norway, 2015). In 2001 Norway joined the Schengen area and opened its borders to a constant flow of tourists and immigrants. The Schengen area agreement resulted in a rise in immigration numbers and in particular the number of working migrants in Norway significantly increased (Statistics Norway, 2011). The ease of migrating to Norway under the Schengen agreement is demonstrated by the fact that Polish, Swedish and Lithuanian people are currently the largest migrant ethnic groups in Norway (Statistics Norway, 2016).

Increased levels of migration to Norway have created challenges and concerns. Non-western migrants have greater difficulties finding employment and often highly depend on welfare benefits. Immigrant children struggle through the education system, they have a higher probability of not attending upper secondary school and if they do they are much more likely to drop out compared to their Norwegian classmates (Taguma, Shewbridge, Huttova, & Hoffman, 2009). Despite the potential issues created by migration in Norway, Norwegian attitudes towards migrants have changed. In 2002 a survey found that 40% of Norwegians felt uncomfortable if their child married an immigrant, while only 17% responded the same way in 2015 (Statistics Norway, 2015).

This study was undertaken in the city of Stavanger in the Rogaland county of Norway. The city which is located in the south west of the country, is known as the oil capital of Europe, it has a large percentage of immigrants compared to national average. 21% of 128, 369 people residing in Stavanger are immigrants from over 179 nationalities which makes this region the most multicultural in Norway. In addition, for over a decade this region has maintained a significantly lower level of unemployment than the national average, which has promoted more prosperity among its people (Council of Europe, 2014). However, the city's dependency on oil revenues has resulted in a transient population of workers directly and indirectly associated

with the industry. The current oil price downturn has significantly affected the city with falling house prices and rising unemployment (Milne, 2015; Stavanger statistics, 2016).

2.1.1 The welfare state

Taking into account the typology of welfare states outlined by Gosta Esping-Andersen (1990) in his book 'the three worlds of welfare capitalism' Norway is classified as a social democratic welfare state. This regime is focused on achieving the highest standard of equality and wellbeing among all its people. It is characterised by adopting and promoting principals of universalism, providing all citizens with non-means tested equal rights and benefits. Accordingly, the Norwegian welfare state focuses on distributing services following the universal principals of human dignity and justice, guaranteeing all its citizens a set of minimum standards of wellbeing.

Compared to welfare states in the rest of the world, the Norwegian system is relatively unique, therefore it is important to look at the features that distinguish the system. Kildal and Kuhnle (as cited by Stamsø, 2009, p. 200) state that the Norwegian welfare state is characterised by three important features:

1. social policies are all encompassing and comprehensive
2. social entitlements are institutionalised and operated by the state
3. Solidarity and universalism underpins social legislation.

The welfare state in Norway provides a wide range of free services such as education, health, and social security to all its citizens irrespective of age, income or any other qualifying factors. The Norwegian system is designed to provide support to families and also to achieve full employment for both men and women. Families only incur minimal costs related to schooling and healthcare for children; if specialist assistance is required for children the state will also incur the costs of these services. Universal service provisions make it easier for both parents to work and raise children. Generous parental leave, monthly child benefits, subsidised and guaranteed day care and paid leave to care for sick children are all protected and provided by the state. State benefits not only apply to traditional family units but also to single parent families in the form of generous economic support (Berrick & Skivenes, 2013).

2.1.2 The child welfare system

In line with the aims of the welfare state, the child welfare system of Norway seeks to provide children and families with comprehensive and proactive services that ensure equality amongst all children while promoting the best interest of the child. Consequently, the child welfare system focuses on a preventive approach rather than simply reacting to problems. The Child Welfare Act of 1992 indicates two main purposes, firstly 'to ensure that children and young persons who live in conditions that may be detrimental to their health and development receive the necessary assistance and care at the right time' and second 'to help ensure that children and young persons grow up in a secure environment'. Additionally, Section 3-1 of the Act clearly states the preventive nature of the child welfare services.

According to Marit Skivenes (2011) the Child Welfare Act sets forth four governing principals for child welfare workers to follow when working and making decisions regarding child welfare cases.

1. The best interest principal states that importance should be placed on actions that are in the child's "best interest". Furthermore, the priority is to provide the child with stable and sufficient contact with adults and a continuity of care.
2. The stability principal seeks to ensure that children have stable relationships with people and institutions such as schools.
3. The biological principal dictates that precedence should be placed on parents and the wider family to provide care to children.
4. The least intrusive form of intervention stipulates that child welfare service interventions should be reasonable and not excessive.

Whilst the principals have been created with the ambition to ensure the best interest of the child, they are written in a vague manner that is very much open to interpretation. The four principals represent potentially different views and scenarios that may sometimes conflict with each other. The principals leave a great deal of discretion for child welfare workers to make important decisions, therefore sometimes the outcomes may seem unjust or exceptional (Skivenes M. , 2011). This goes in line with the fact that unlike many other welfare systems outside Scandinavia, the Norwegian welfare state functions under the assumption of a high level of trust among its people (Johansson as cited in Hollekima, Anderssen, & Daniel, 2015). The Nordic Welfare regime is based on trust, citizens trust institutions and professionals which allows the system to work effectively (Fukuyama, 1995)

2.1.3 UNCRC and Corporal Punishment

In November 1989, the member states of the United Nations established the Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) (Humanium, 2016). This convention seeks to protect all children. There are four guiding principles to the CRC including non-discrimination; adherence to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and the right to participate (Unicef, 2016). Historically, children have been perceived as being less powerful than adults as well as being the property of their parents. The UNCRC challenges those ideals by implementing a different view in which children and adults are both seen as citizens with individual rights (Lyle, 2014). The UNCRC emphasises that children are human beings fully worthy of moral and intellectual respect (Unicef, 2016).

In 1990 Norway signed the CRC and ratified it in 1991 and in doing so became one of the first countries to adopt the convention. The incorporation of the treaty in domestic law came later in 2003 and today Norway is regarded as a pioneer in the field of children's rights (Hollekima, Anderssen, & Daniel, 2015; Lundy, Kilkelly, Byrne, & Kang, 2012). Accordingly, in Norway people from all backgrounds are obliged to comply with the principles established by the CRC. It is the responsibility of the child welfare services to ensure all children are cared for and that their best interest is always promoted (Child Welfare Act (Norway), 1992).

However, even before the CRC treaty Norway had already advanced in the protection of children by amending article 30 of the Children Act 1981 which stated "The child must not be subjected to violence or in any other way be treated so as to harm or endanger his or her mental or physical health". This was the start of a cultural shift in the country in which the use of

corporal punishment on children was and still is negatively perceived. The Act was further amended in 2010 and it now states

“The child must not be subjected to violence or in any other way be treated so as to harm or endanger his or her mental or physical health. This shall also apply when violence is carried out in connection with upbringing of the child. Use of violence and frightening of annoying behaviour or other inconsiderate conduct towards the child is prohibited” (The Children Act (Norway), 1981).

Consequently, the Norwegian society has for decades adjusted to a culture in which children are respected and protected even from their own families if needed (Skivenes M. , 2011). This perspective is not always agreed upon by other societies with different cultures. This is the case of several southern and eastern European, Asian and African societies where slight corporal punishment such as “spanking” is still culturally and legally accepted as long as it is performed for the wellbeing of the child (Porzig-Drummond, 2015). This topic is still controversial and highly discussed but not in the child welfare system of Norway. Parents in Norway are completely forbidden from using corporal punishment on their children irrespectively of their culture as stated in the Children Act mentioned above.

Corporal punishment as an effective form of discipline is a controversial subject which has been defined by Litzow & Silverstein (2008) as “the intentional infliction of physical pain with the purpose of deterring unwanted behaviour”. Spanking is amongst the most debated forms of corporal punishment. There have been several studies demonstrating that any kind of corporal punishment, even spanking, can be negative in the long term for the wellbeing of children (Ferguson, 2013; Freeman & Saunders, 2014; Knox, 2010; Litzow & Silverstein, 2008). For example, for older children, corporal punishment has been associated with drug abuse and an increment in the use of violence while corporal punishment on small children increases the risk of injuries to the child (Litzow & Silverstein, 2008). However, several of these studies have been dismissed as not being valid or reliable due to their methodology which has aided the controversy of the topic (Rohner, Bourque, & Elordi, 1996).

Supporters of corporal punishment argue that it is an effective and innocuous tool to prevent poor or aggressive behavior in children. However, their opponents assert that corporal punishment risks inflicting physical and psychological damage on children. In addition, it provides encouragement to children to solve conflict with aggressive responses. It is argued that cognitive, non-physical disciplining strategies with children are effective in producing immediate compliance and lasting behavioral change (Porzig-Drummond, 2015).

Although corporal punishment often results in immediate compliance, its harmful long term effects outweigh any short term gains it produces (Porzig-Drummond, 2015). A considerable amount of research indicates that physical punishment and the anxiety it causes, inhibits children’s learning processes and results in children repeating the same undesired behavior (Gershoff, 2010, 2013 as cited in Porzig-Drummond, 2015). Gershoff’s (2002) (as cited in Porzig-Drummond, 2015) meta-analysis study into the effects of physical punishment on children suggest that even mild physical punishment results in a decline in the parent child relationship. The form of punishment was also found to reduce children’s ability to understand the moral message parents wished to convey and it leads to a decline in internal behavior control of children. Therefore, it should not be surprising that corporal punishment has been

found to increase aggressive behavior in children over time (Porzig-Drummond, 2015; International NGO Council on Violence against Children, 2012).

Despite significant evidence indicating the negative effects of corporal punishment, supporters of employing a “well deserved” spanking on children remains strong. Many societies believe that it is the only method for children to learn to behave in an acceptable manner (Arosen, 2002; Bell & Romano, 2012; Knox, 2010). There is also the argument that parents should have the autonomy to discipline their children which is in itself contested. The use of corporal punishment has been said to be embedded in religions and cultures but this is not always exclusive (Benjeta & Kazdinb, 2003). Studies where adults have been asked about their thoughts on corporal punishment have revealed that adults who were physically punished as children are more likely to accept and enforce corporal punishment on their own children, which indicates the cyclical nature of corporal punishment in families (Bell & Romano, 2012).

The discussion on corporal punishment extends to the definition of what kind of spanking should be accepted and whether corporal punishment is in fact a control tool to educate children or result of parental desperation and stress. In addition, when research has included children’s perspectives on this debate, the results are not too different, as it has been found that children grow up to accept their parents’ use of corporal punishment and they are more likely to make use of it in their life (Simons & Wurtele, 2010).

According to a family systems approach, poverty, low parental education and stress contribute to increase the risk of parents using corporal punishment. It is important to note that these factors are generally interrelated and their influence changes according to the type of maltreatment (Porzig-Drummond, 2015).

In order to generate change in parenting behaviour away from the use of corporal punishment of children, it is necessary to understand the reasons why many parents still use physical punishment. Often parents use it because it is a social norm, it is simply an accepted parenting method. Many parents strongly believe that corporal punishment is an effective parenting technique that does not result in any harmful consequences to children. To a large extent parents use corporal punishment because they are unaware of any other parenting approaches (Bell & Romano, 2012; Porzig-Drummond, 2015).

The literature available does not provide a clear answer to this discussion but it is a fact that there is a rise in the number of countries like Norway that have decided to implement the UNCRC and ban all forms of corporal punishment towards children in order to protect them and provide them with better lives.

2.1.4 Immigrants-Their position in the Norwegian society

Travelling from one society to another always presents challenges for the immigrants as well as for the host country. Immigrants of all cultural and socio economic backgrounds are required to go through a process of adaptation and acculturation in order to properly fit into the host society (Berry J. W., 2005). For instance, they might currently live in the cold Norwegian climate but prefer to live in a warmer environment. Immigrants may be required to speak Norwegian but would rather speak their first language. Parents might prefer to use corporal punishment, as they did in their home countries, but are required by Norwegian law and child welfare services to stop (Arosen, 2002).

Several studies have indicated that the process immigrants face begins with a stage of “cultural shock” which can be defined by Winkelman (1994) as a “multifaceted experience resulting from numerous stressors occurring in contact with a different culture”. Depending on several factors such as culture, migration motive and expectation from the new society, the stage of “cultural shock” can go on and develop into more problematic consequences, affecting the general wellbeing of the person (Walsha, Shulman, & Maurer, 2008; Winkelman, 1994).

This process is magnified when the host country is characterised by having a mostly homogenous society. This is often the case for non-western immigrants arriving to Norway, because navigating through its social and legal landscape can be intimidating and difficult. Charles Westin (2006) argued that immigration policy in Norway has often been designed to promote incorporation rather than integration into the Norwegian society by drawing on an example of the dispersal policy for refugees in Oslo. He argues these types of policies are often “a means to promote assimilation to Norwegian society, which fits the preferred strategy of incorporation rather than integration” (p. 374). This can translate into immigrants facing the need to abandon many of their home countries’ cultural traits to adopt Norwegian ways. However, there are several arguments in favour of Norway’s immigration policy, such as the fact that countries that have had a longer history of immigration are more likely to adopt integration ideals while countries like Norway that have recently opened their borders to immigrants would start by promoting incorporation (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006).

Norway has several policies in place to assist migrants in adjusting to life in Norway and for dealing with ‘culture shock’. Under the Introduction Act amended in 2005, certain immigrants are legally required to attend 250 hours of Norwegian language classes and 50 hours of Norwegian social orientation. Under the Act, the following people are legally required to attend free classes:

- Refugees with political asylum
- Resettlement refugees
- Persons with residence on humanitarian grounds
- Persons with collective protection
- Persons who have been granted family reunification with a person within the above mentioned groups.
- Persons who have been granted family reunification with a Norwegian or Nordic citizen.
- Persons who have been granted family reunification with a person who holds a permanent settlement permit.

Work immigrants from outside the EEA have the legal duty to attend the classes but it is not free. The following people do not have a duty to attend the classes but if they wish to attend they will have to pay for them:

- students
- au pairs and others with temporary permits that do not form the basis for a permanent residence permit
- Nordic citizens
- persons with an EFTA/EEA (EU) permit

It is interesting to note that it is not a duty or a right of EU citizens to attend the classes, potentially large numbers of European immigrants are missing out on valuable services that will assist them in Norway. It could be argued that by missing out on the classes immigrants are less likely to know about the strict demands of the child welfare service.

In addition to the classes mandated by the Introduction Act, many state funded libraries around Norway are offering special services to immigrants. Unique initiatives for immigrants undertaken in various libraries include, language meetings to practice Norwegian, reading circles for Adult immigrant women to improve reading skills and the library of Tromsø even has an adult learning centre for immigrants incorporated into it (Gundersen, 2011). Consequently, one can argue that although Norway's policies are thought to promote mainly incorporation, there are extensive services to facilitate the process of acculturation for immigrants.

2.2 Immigrants- Their perceptions in regards to the child welfare system

In reviewing the literature available in regards to client's perspectives on the child welfare and child protection systems, it is evident that there is much disagreement in opinions. Drumbrill (2006) mentions that studies focusing on reports of service satisfaction, show parents' perceptions on the child welfare services in a largely positive manner while in-depth qualitative studies of parental perceptions reveal a predominately negative experience. This is evident in an open ended survey study conducted across 12 municipalities in Norway which found that 40% of parents who have had contact with the Child welfare system report only positive experiences while 30% report only negative experiences (Studsrød, Willumsen, & Ellingsen, 2014). However, these studies do not always mention specific differences between immigrants and non-immigrants.

Some of the literature that specifically studies the perceptions and experiences of immigrants and minorities have found that there are several cultural disagreements on how to raise a child between immigrant parents and child welfare workers, mainly in regards to the use of corporal punishment (Clarke, 2011; Maiter & Stalker, 2011; Sawrikar & Katz, 2014; Chand, 2004). For example, in the United States a study that included in depth interviews of west African immigrants found that parents felt they were not able to properly raise their children due to different definitions on child maltreatment. Parents felt powerless and threatened by the child welfare system because their children could easily be removed from home on the basis of abuse when trying to discipline them (Rasmussen, Akinsulure-Smith, Chu, & Keatley, 2012). Similarly, in Canada, a study conducted with Asian immigrant parents found that parents felt child protection workers and other health workers lied to them and pretended to create rapport in order to report them for child maltreatment (Maiter & Stalker, 2011). These studies indicate the low level of trust that immigrant parents have towards the child protection system.

The case of immigrant parents in Norway seems to be similar, there is a large number of media reports indicating the negative perceptions that immigrants have in regards to the child welfare system of Norway. In fact, just by doing a simple google international search of "Barnevernet", the Norwegian term for child welfare, the first three pages of results only refer to negative remarks about the work done by the welfare workers and the system in general. These accusations have become very relevant in the study of immigrant families within the child welfare system. Accusations are often grounded on the belief that child welfare workers

practice from a culturally insensitive and even racist position when dealing with immigrant families.

In an enlightening study by Hollekima et al. (2015), discourses in media texts relating to immigrant families' encounters with the Norwegian child welfare services were examined. It was found that the child welfare services position on children being individuals in their own right was heavily criticised in the media. In this context, claims of racism and the violation of cultural rights of families appeared, despite these claims it must be remembered that the concept of children as individuals is enshrined in the UNCRC. Similarly, the study found that many immigrants feel that individualistic views are forced upon them and child welfare workers do not understand and recognise collectively oriented families. Criticism was also directed towards the agency due to the lack of foster care placements within the child's own culture and language. The study is revealing in that it helps to demonstrate that not all the criticisms are grounded on the child welfare worker's individual views. Much of the criticism seems to be towards elements of the UNCRC and not necessarily due to a purely racial bias of the child welfare service.

There have been studies indicating that race is an influential factor to the decisions of child welfare workers, often there is higher risk associated to minority families which results in greater intervention from the welfare services (Dettlaff, et al., 2011; Fusco, Rauktis, McCrae, Cunningham, & Bradley-King, 2010). However, Rivaux et al. (2008) found in the United States that when assessing levels of risk, child welfare workers were not influenced by race. In fact, their results indicated higher risk was allocated to Anglo Americans. This study was done by reviewing a large number of closed cases and using statistical tests to analyse them. Thus, a qualitative study would have been helpful in understanding the reasons why even though in all indicators Anglo Americans were rated with higher risk, there is an over-representation of minorities in the system. Additionally, other researchers have found that race is not a strong indicator for decision making among child welfare workers (Font, Berger, & Slack, 2012; Williams, 2005).

Overall, the literature around the perceptions of immigrant and minority parents towards the child welfare services reveals mostly negative experiences but it is not clear that this is due to racial bias or cultural insensitivity from the workers.

2.3 Child welfare workers

Child welfare work is carried out in a complex environment that is affected by significant societal, professional and individual values. Child welfare workers must operate in highly emotional situations and deal with moral questions about how society should best protect children. It is in this highly charged environment that workers must carry out and enforce child welfare policy as required by law. This is the case of child welfare workers in Norway as they are the enforcers of the child welfare Act of 1992 as described earlier.

Often child welfare workers must face strong public criticism about the decisions they make when dealing with families. There are several examples in Norway about the criticisms that child welfare workers receive particularly from immigrants (Hollekima, Anderssen, & Daniel, 2015), for instance in the last year there have been protests and other demonstrations against the child welfare system of Norway. Accordingly, child welfare workers require a high level of education and training to help deal with the realities of their job. In fact, a review conducted

in Oslo and Bergen revealed that 90% of child welfare workers had higher education in social work or child pedagogy (Skivenes M. , 2011). These two degrees have in common an ethical code that ensures better practice among the profession. Although their work is very important and demanding, there are few research studies in Norway (in the English language) that focus on the views and thoughts of child welfare workers and even less studies that explore their views in regards to their immigrant clients.

Some of the few studies that have focused on the perceptions of child welfare workers seek to understand not just their relations with clients but also the public policies they are required to enact. These studies generally view child welfare workers primarily as street level bureaucrats who enjoy discretion in their jobs and constitute public policy in action (Križ & Skivenes, 2014; Križ & Skivenes, 2013). Street level bureaucrats possess a high level of autonomy and power to create policy when practicing directly with people (Lipsky, 1980). This perspective is important in understanding how the level of discretion child welfare workers possess influences their daily decisions at work and in part the outcomes for their clients such as immigrant families.

In a comparative study by Križ & Skivenes (2014) on the issue of over representation of minority children in the child welfare services of Norway, Britain and the United States; street level bureaucracy theory was utilised to examine the actions of child welfare workers. It was found that the Norwegian child welfare workers possess a high level of discretion that results in the creation of street level policy. According to the research, the decision making process of child welfare workers is highly influenced by a child focus/child's best interest principle and to a lesser extent the family preservation principle. This was found despite the fact that the Child Welfare Act also states the stability and the least intrusive principle as governing codes for child welfare workers to follow when making decisions (Križ & Skivenes, 2014).

On the other hand, the cases of Britain and the United States demonstrated that the level of discretion of child welfare workers is not as high as those in Norway, probably due to the fact that Norwegian workers face fewer organizational barriers to implement policy aims. In addition, the street policy aims of Britain are safety oriented and child centred while the case of the United States is safety-oriented and family-centred (Križ & Skivenes, 2014). This results, to an extent demonstrate the particularities of the Norwegian child welfare system as the results differ significantly from the other two countries and higher levels of discretion might allow for more differences between public policy and street level policy.

In addition, from a different study conducted by Križ & Skivenes (2010) with the aim of comparing child welfare workers' perspectives on black and minority ethnic parents in England and Norway. It was found that when asked about the challenges that minority parents face in raising children in Norway and England, Norwegian child welfare workers identified four main challenges, including, cultural differences, language issues, lack of knowledge about the system and different parenting approaches. While workers in England identified three challenges including racism and prejudice, language issues and culture, understood by most workers as parents' struggles to live their lives in England while also pursuing the cultural practices of their societies of origin. The main difference among the workers from both countries seemed to be that in Norway prejudice and racism were not mentioned even though this is a reality in the country that has been documented (Križ & Skivenes, 2010)

The challenges identified by the workers in both countries accurately represent the challenges that immigrant parents face, however, the study found that child welfare workers in Norway

also perceive these challenges as problems that minority parents are responsible to overcome in order to ensure the wellbeing of their children. This is a complex social situation that child welfare workers view as “black and white”, according to their perceptions there are no racist or social discriminating factors that might also influence the challenges that minority parents face in Norway (Križ & Skivenes, 2010).

The literature on the perceptions of child welfare workers demonstrates that their position and practice influences the lives of the families they work with as well as the wider community. Their perceptions on the families they work with influence the outcomes of their work and might provide an explanation to the current situation between the child welfare system and immigrants in Norway. However, as mentioned above, there are few studies that allow us to understand to what extent child welfare workers in Norway influence the life of families.

2.4 Gaps in the literature in English

This literature review reveals that there is a significant lack of English language literature regarding the complex concerns involving the child welfare services and immigrant families in Norway. While there has been extensive reporting in several media platforms the perceptions of immigrant families in regards to the child welfare system of Norway, there are very few empirical studies that have shed light into this issue. However, it is important to mention that there are in fact several studies written in Norwegian language that address this particular topic but could not be used during this study because of the language barrier. Yet, investigating the literature and providing results in English can also add a different perspective to the topic.

3 Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

Theory is an important characteristic of the overall process of qualitative research, it gives the researcher different “lenses” through which to look at the topic of study. Therefore, within this study two theories were chosen to inform the research process. The first one includes the moral theories of relativism and universalism in order to understand the moral position of the child welfare workers in relation to topic of study. The second theory is street level bureaucracy as explained by Michael Lipsky (1980). This theory was chosen as it assists to view the child welfare workers as professionals who have an impact on policy and the community. The following chapter discussed both theories in relation to the study.

3.1 Relativism

Before the twentieth century, philosophers and other thinkers did not see the need to get involved in the discussion of moral relativism (Zalta, 2015). Until then, morality was understood as universal and free from diversity, it was especially ethnocentric and colonialist in the sense that their moral values were believed to be superior to the moral values of other cultures (Jhingran, 2001). This view was challenged as the world expanded and some academics, namely anthropologists, began to study non-western cultures (Ibid). They began to defend the morality of all cultures, all cultures have their moral standards and no one culture is better, more right or wrong than the other (Zalta, 2015). This new view was referred to as relativism, as its name indicates, it is the belief that morals are right or wrong only relative to a framework and not universal (Jhingran, 2001). In order to understand moral relativism, one must first understand the different philosophical positions of relativism, which suggest an empirical or descriptive, a meta ethical or cultural and a normative relativism.

3.1.1 Descriptive relativism

Descriptive relativism implies the empirical fact of diversity in moral values, customs and beliefs (Levy, 2003). Some actions are considered as morally right in one culture while the same actions are considered morally wrong in a different culture. For example, corporal punishment for children might be considered wrong in Norway but it is accepted in other countries. Simply put, descriptive relativism is the obvious moral differences between cultures, those differences can rapidly and easily be perceived when two cultures meet.

However, differences are not always of a moral character because many seemingly moral disagreements between cultures are not really fundamental disagreements about questions of morals and values (Levy, 2003; Jhingran, 2001). For instance, the banning of corporal punishment in some cultures may rest on the belief that spanking a child generates physical and psychological damage on the child. The actual conflict between these cultures and those that accept the use of corporal punishment could therefore be regarded fundamentally not about the inherent rightness or wrongness of corporal punishment but the different factual belief they hold concerning the consequences of corporal punishment. So, descriptive relativism might often focus on moral diversity rather than strict moral disagreement (Jhingran, 2001). Meta ethical relativism seems to deal with those fundamental moral disagreements that cannot be solved.

3.1.2 Meta-ethical relativism

Meta ethical relativism, also known as cultural relativism refers to the basic idea of all forms of relativism which in simple words proclaims that moral judgments are *never* absolutely right or wrong but they are relative to a particular framework such as culture (Tannsjo, 2007; Jhingran, 2001). An action can be morally right in one culture, while morally wrong in another, in this sense a moral statement can be both true and false at the same time (Tannsjo, 2007). Therefore, a statement such as “corporal punishment is morally wrong” can be true relative to the Norwegian society but false relative to another society.

In addition, the justification for moral judgments is as important, the Norwegian society might justify their judgment on medical evidence while other societies might base their judgment on traditional and personal evidence. These standards of justification are also true or false relative to traditions and culture and there is no rational basis for resolving these differences (Tannsjo, 2007). This is why the justification of moral judgments and morality in itself is relative rather than absolute. This relativist position is not concerned with descriptive relativism but with the fundamental moral disagreements between cultures (Jhingran, 2001). This position pretends to define morality as completely relative since fundamental moral disagreements cannot be resolved.

3.1.3 Normative relativism

Normative relativism is concerned with how people should think and behave towards others who operate under a different moral framework, it is wrong to judge or interfere with the moral judgments that one disagrees with or that cannot be rationally resolved (Quintelier & Fessler, 2012). It is mostly concerned with inhibiting arrogance and promoting tolerance. This position on relativism has caused much disagreement among philosophers as some argue this is simply a point of view from within a particular perspective on relativism rather than a philosophical position on relativism (Quintelier & Fessler, 2012). However, it is essential to understand the normativity of relativism but it cannot be assumed that meta-ethical relativism always entails normative relativism.

Undoubtedly, the above described positions on relativism explain the basic foundations of moral relativism and its implications for understanding morality in different cultures. However, moral relativism is strongly contested by moral absolutists or universalists who hold a different approach to morality which is founded on the existence of one universal moral for all, independent of any framework. The following section will draw attention to universalism as a philosophical position on morality that stands on opposition to moral relativism.

3.2 Universalism

Those who do not believe that all moral judgments are relative would say that at least some are universal. They would say that since we are conscious, rational beings sharing human nature, we would also share universal morals determined by our human condition rather than by our diverse cultures.

3.2.1 Kant's universalism

One of the most prominent proponents of moral universalism is the philosopher Immanuel Kant who believed that all rational beings share a universal human reason which acts as the foundation and authority of human morality (Jhingran, 2001). Thus, universalism is not concerned with the empirical certainty of morality but rather the knowledge and rationality all human beings share prior to culture and context. For instance, human beings hold concepts such as reality, pain, object, property, negation among others. In addition, Kant argued that any laws formulated from historical events, culture and experience (and others) should not fall under morality because they do not qualify as universal laws. A universal moral law is one that can be applicable and is valid to all rational beings without exceptions (Ibid). Accordingly, for Kant's universalism, moral law is an expression of universal human reason (Ibid). Moral relativism is completely negated under the position of moral universalism.

3.2.2 Habermas' universalism

This universalist approach has been regarded as absolutist due to its rigid normativity and difficulty to apply in more contemporary societies in which people from various cultures and subcultures live together (Jhingran, 2001). For instance, in situations in which one's consciousness says an action is morally right, how does one make sure others believe the same in order to act morally righteously? It is this question that some philosophers such as Jürgen Habermas who also promote universalism sought to resolve by adding the condition of dialogue to the imperative of Kant (Ibid). In this thesis universal moral laws are not only expressions of abstract human reason but from universal ideas developed through dialogue. Dialogue and communication among rational beings (even from different cultures) can lead to the creation and agreement of universal moral laws (Ibid). One of the most important examples of universal moral laws that have been agreed upon through the use of reason and dialogue is the universal declaration of human rights. Hence, a universalist position does not have to always negate the importance and relevance of cultures but it values human beings as rational beings above cultural differences who share concepts and are able to agree upon one morality.

3.2.3 Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism refers to the predisposition to look at the world primarily from the perspective of one's own culture and the perception that one's own culture is at the centre of everything. Ethnocentric people would judge others in relation to their own particular ethnic, racial and/or cultural background (Zastrow, 2009, p. 380). This position juxtaposes the idea of universalism and it is often understood as the opposite of relativism. Thus, moral relativists argue that the claim of universalism easily transforms itself into a variation of ethnocentrism. This means that they are almost one and indivisible. Accordingly, ethnocentrism presupposes that the relativist account of morality is correct. For that reason, only those who have embraced relativism would consider the existence of ethnocentrism (Cook, 1999, p. 80).

Taking into account the concept of ethnocentrism is of importance, as often what may appear to be based on a universal standard of morality may also be analysed as ethnocentric; particularly if one stands on a relativistic position.

To conclude, within this study, the relativist and universalist moral theories are relevant to help understand the philosophical moral positions from which child welfare workers perceive and

make decisions regarding the use of corporal punishment in the Norwegian society by immigrant and non-immigrant families. Based on the literature review, there is a conflict between the Norwegian culture and that of some non-western immigrants in regards to the rightness of the use of corporal punishment as a way to discipline children. However, this apparent conflict might not be a fundamental moral disagreement and one that might be able to be resolved through dialogue, thus validating the existence of a universal moral law. These theories also assist in identifying the view from which corporal punishment is morally defined by the Norwegian government in legislation. Norwegian legislation can be understood as openly universalistic as it has adopted and implemented the convention on the rights of the child which advocates universal rights for children.

3.3 Street level bureaucracy

Street level bureaucracy is a theory that seeks to explain the role of public service workers in enacting policy through the use of discretion and the impact of their daily routines (Lipsky, 1980). Michel Lipsky, the proponent of this theory, first introduced the concept of street level bureaucracy in 1980 by positioning a variety of professionals who until then were considered to be unrelated, such as police officers, social workers, teachers, child welfare workers and those who interact directly with citizens on behalf of the government, under the same umbrella of “street level bureaucrats”. For Lipsky, street level bureaucrats exercise considerable discretion in the implementation of public policy, this process is in part influenced by public pressure, controversy, professional guidelines as well as personal beliefs and attitudes which results in the creation of what Lipsky refers to as street level policies that impact the citizens who receive services.

Street level bureaucrats have jobs that require constant interaction with citizens, such as child welfare workers (Lipsky, 1980). They sit at the intersection of government policies and the citizens for whom these policies are created; they are the direct representatives of the government at the street level, as Lipsky says “they hold the keys to a dimension of citizenship”. However, due to the nature of their jobs, street level bureaucrats often face criticism, experience pressures and controversy from the community as well as the government and the agencies where they work (Ibid). Lipsky believes that street level bureaucrats are a source for controversy due to their influence on people’s lives. They can use their discretion to choose who receives superior or inferior services and to consciously or unconsciously create mass production techniques that can categorise clients based on their race, age and economic situation among others (Ibid). In other words, street level bureaucrats hold power that affect those who receive their services. For instance, one could argue that the fact that immigrant children are over represented in the child welfare system indicates how child welfare workers as street level bureaucrats use their discretion to target immigrant families more often than ethnic Norwegians. This however does not have to always be negative since street level bureaucrats can use their discretion and autonomy to benefit groups they believe require or deserve more comprehensive services

The capacity to create street level policy is one of the most important elements of this theory. Street level bureaucrats create policy through the use of extensive discretion in their decision making process with individual cases. In addition, when understood as a group, their individual actions combine to create agency policy. Lipsky asserts that the capacity street level bureaucrats have to create policy is directly related to the amount of discretion and autonomy they hold when making decisions (Lipsky, 1980). Taking this into account, it would be fair to

say that Norwegian child welfare workers have an extensive capability to generate policy due to the high levels of trust given to the child welfare system. However, this is not to ignore that street level bureaucrats are required to comply with rules and guidelines as well as undergo evaluations from clients and managers, this is experienced differently among different professions. It is expected that street level bureaucrats exercise discretion based on their knowledge as professionals and taking into account government policy and agency goals.

In addition, it is important to account for the influence of work conditions on the decision making process of street level bureaucrats. As mentioned above, policy created at the street level can be due to the beliefs and attitudes of workers towards their clients as well as the pressures and work conditions they experience on a daily basis. In his book Lipsky (1980) outlines a number of characteristics street level bureaucrats are required to work around and how they influence decisions. They are the following:

1. Resources are chronically inadequate relative to the tasks workers are asked to perform
2. The demands for services tends to increase to meet the supply
3. Goal expectations for the agencies in which they work tend to be ambiguous, vague or conflicting
4. Performance oriented toward goal achievement tends to be difficult if not impossible to measure
5. Clients are typically non voluntary; partly as a result, clients for the most part do not serve as primary bureaucratic reference group

Although, not all public agencies are characterised by the above mentioned points, they represent to an extent the situation in which street level bureaucrats interact with clients and managers. For instance, it is common that child welfare agencies experience fewer resources than necessary to properly attend the needs of their clients, also workers often complain of a higher number of cases than they feel capable of adequately providing services to. In addition, workers are required to spend lengthy periods of time doing paper work, such as filling forms and taking notes. These are clear constraints that influence the decision making process of street level bureaucrats. Mass production techniques and routines are a result of these constraints as child welfare workers feel obliged to process clients as fast as possible with as little resources as possible and to deal with the complexities of their work (Lipsky, 1980). Attempting to reduce resource constraints is a difficult task in public service delivery because the growth of resources in public agencies, generally turns into an increase in demand for those same services (Ibid). The demand is increased by more people requiring services or by current clients who expect more comprehensive attention, which in turn maintains the same level of work constraints for street level bureaucrats (Ibid).

In regard to goal expectations and goal achievement, street level bureaucrats face difficulties due to the nature of their jobs. It is difficult to measure success in human service delivery as goals and achievements are often ambiguous (Lipsky, 1980). For instance, Norwegian child welfare workers practice under the premises of the Child Welfare Act among other pieces of legislation. However, legislation is almost always open to interpretation so managers, clients and workers might have different expectations on what the role and goals of child welfare workers should be, which in turn creates conflict in measuring performance (Ibid). Performance of street level bureaucrats should not be based on the number of cases processed because there is also the issue of the quality of the service and the fact that human beings often require different levels of attention depending on their individual situations (Ibid). Going back to the example of child welfare workers, one cannot assume a worker is performing well based

on the number of children placed in adoption but neither can one say that it is on the number of children remaining in their families because each case is different and in some cases adoption or remaining at home could be the easiest solution rather than the best. This is only one example of the many that could explain the ambiguity of goals and performance measures of street level bureaucrats.

In conclusion, within this study street level bureaucracy theory assists in identifying child welfare workers as creators of street level policy that can negatively or positively impact the families they work with. This theory is essential in understanding the importance of investigating the perceptions of workers in regard to their work with immigrant and non-immigrant families due to their capacity to reshape the ultimate aims of the child welfare Act. In addition, this theory provides a framework to analyse the way in which child welfare workers in Norway have created techniques to deal with public criticism and high levels of trust in the system. Ultimately, this theory defines the position child welfare workers hold in the community of study and the power of influence they have over families and their children.

4 Chapter Four: Methodology

This chapter seeks to outline the methodological framework used to develop this study. It begins with the epistemological position and research design chosen to underpin this study. The research design consisting of the methods of data collection and the process of recruiting participants are also discussed. In addition, within this chapter the process of data management and analysis are presented. The chapter concludes with a description of the ethical considerations, researcher's standpoint and the limitations of the study.

4.1 Research Design

This study was exclusively qualitative in nature. Its primary aim was to explore what child welfare workers perceive and experience when working with immigrant families in contrast to non-immigrant families, using the concept of corporal punishment as a primary point of departure. A qualitative research approach was chosen, as it studies people in their natural settings to make sense and interpret a phenomenon in terms of the meaning people bring to it (Ospina, 2004). It also assists in understanding a topic from the perspective of the actors involved, rather than explaining it from the outside (Ibid). In addition, a qualitative approach to research, works towards explaining a phenomenon in great detail rather than just presenting numerical data (Kumar, 2011). Its questions focus on the description and interpretation of subjective meanings attributed to a phenomenon, they also focus on discovering patterns and connections in qualitative data to generate theory (Bryman, 2012).

4.1.1 Phenomenology

The intention of this research, at its inception, was to gather data regarding the perceptions and experiences of research participants about the phenomenon of the use of corporal punishment among immigrant and non-immigrant families. Therefore, phenomenology was the driving qualitative approach to inquiry for this study.

A phenomenological study is concerned with describing the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon (Ibid). This description consists of “what” they experienced and “how” they experienced it, their basic purpose is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence of said phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994 in Creswell 2007). Thus, this study seeks to explore the participant's experiences working with immigrant and non-immigrant families who use corporal punishment, in order to understand the essence of said experiences. In other words, “what” and “how” they experience their work with families that use corporal punishment.

Phenomenology is not only a description, but it is also an interpretive process in which the researcher makes an interpretation of the meaning of the lived experiences (Creswell, 2007; Bryman, 2012). In other words, it is the role of the researcher to describe and find the meaning of the lived experiences of the participants in order to understand the common significance of the phenomenon. Within this research, it was essential that the researcher describe the perceptions and experiences that child welfare workers provided in order to fully understand their common view on the use of corporal punishment among families from immigrant and

non-immigrant backgrounds. In addition, a phenomenological approach to inquiry calls for the researcher to set aside hers or his experiences, as much as possible, to take a fresh perspective towards the phenomenon under examination, this process is referred to as bracketing (Creswell, 2007; Bryman, 2012). However, it is important to note that bracketing personal experiences may be difficult for the researcher to implement because interpretations of the data always incorporate the assumptions that the researcher brings to the topic.

4.2 Methods of data collection

4.2.1 Qualitative Semi-structured interviews

Interviews are considered the most widely employed data collection method in qualitative research, this is due to the fact that qualitative research pays great attention to the interviewee's point of view and it is interested in perceptions and experiences (Bryman, 2012). As a result, qualitative interviews are characterised by being flexible or unstructured in order to allow the interviewee to choose the direction in which to address a question or a topic and to provide the researcher with rich, detailed answers (Bryman, 2012). Often interviews are a rare and rewarding experience for participants who are placed in the position of being 'experts' due to their knowledge and experiences. Kvale (2007) explains the perspective of interviewees 'it is probably not a very common experience in everyday life that another shows an interest in, is sensitive towards and seeks to understand as well as possible one's own experiences and views on a topic' (p. 14). However, it is necessary to note that although interviewees may feel that they are in a position of power, it is important that the interviewer, in this case the researcher, "sets the stage for the interview and controls the sequence" (Kvale, 2007, p. 22). Since the purpose of this research was ultimately to study the perceptions and experiences of child welfare workers in relation to a particular phenomenon, semi structured qualitative interviews seemed the most appropriate method in the collection of data.

Semi-structured interviews are verbal exchanges between an interviewer and an interviewee where the format of the interaction unfolds in a conversational manner (Kvale, 2007). A major advantage of semi-structured interviews is that it permits a relatively free flowing conversation with the interviewer and interviewee (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). It allows the researcher to maintain a general focus on the topic while giving the interviewee the opportunity to explore issues without feeling obliged to disclose information that they would rather withhold or to feel discouraged to deviate from questions which would be the case with structured interviews. The semi structured format gives researchers the opportunity to follow up on potentially important inferences made by the interviewee that may have been ignored using other data collection methods (Bryman, 2012). This method invites the researcher to utilise an interview guide with a list of topics or questions that are specific to the phenomenon of study (Bryman, 2012). However, the interview guide is in no way strict and it is intended that the researcher will expand the conversations when she considers appropriate for the study. This method of interviewing is particularly useful when the researcher has only one opportunity to interview participants which was the case in this study due to the busy schedule of the child welfare workers. The interview guide for this study was created by the researcher, it contained open-ended questions that directly followed the objectives and questions of the study in order to ensure relevant data was collected. The interview guide was approved by the supervisor prior to employing it in the field.

4.2.2 Vignettes

During the study two small text vignettes were utilised when interviewing participants, in addition to the interview guide. The vignettes were used to clarify and gain a better understanding of the perceptions and experiences of participants working with immigrant and non-immigrant families. Each vignette was developed by drawing from experience I received during internships in the child welfare office of Norway in my first year of the master's degree.

Vignettes are often short hypothetical scenarios or descriptions of events that are usually based on real life events or evidence (Finch, 1987 and Schoenberg & Ravdal, 2000 in Jackson, Harrison, Swinburn and Lawrence 2015). Generally, vignettes are in the form of written texts but they can also be presented in a variety of formats such as in pictures, audio or video. The purpose of vignettes is to promote a reaction from the viewer or reader that provides an insight to their thinking or actions in relation to the hypothetical scenario (Ibid). Usually the researcher asks the participants to describe and discuss what they would do in the situation, researchers may ask further questions relating to the vignette to obtain rich data.

Vignettes are widely used in the social sciences, when developed and used appropriately they can be a valuable research tool (Jackson, Harrison, Swinburn, & Lawrence, 2015). The tool is relatively unique in its ability to select and condense real world situations to provide an insight into the individual's perceptions and attitudes of social issues. The form of vignettes offers a non-personal, non-threatening way for participants to respond to and discuss hypothetical situations in a comfortable and often non-judgemental setting (Ibid). However, the use of vignettes is not without its criticisms. Perhaps the biggest issue with the tool is the difference between self-reported behaviour and actual behaviour when participants respond to vignettes (Ibid). It is possible for participants to respond to vignettes in a way that makes them appear positive however, their actual behaviour or views may not match their responses. In addition, vignettes lack the ability to encompass the complex real world realities of communication and interactions that are part of life (Jackson, Harrison, Swinburn, & Lawrence, 2015).

The problems inherent in vignettes can be mitigated by the careful design of vignettes and the interview guide. Since vignettes are often hypothetical, it is essential that they remain relevant and reflective of real world situations, in order to receive quality information from participants (Finch, 1987 in Jackson, Harrison, Swinburn and Lawrence, 2015). Follow up questions are important to clarify, confirm and verify the responses to vignettes

4.3 Sample Size

The sample of this study included 7 participants who were at the time of the interviews working at one of the child welfare offices of Stavanger and Sandnes kommune. It is believed that this number of interviews is adequate to elicit knowledge about the phenomenon of study. In addition, the intent of qualitative research is not to generalize the information but to elucidate details, the particular and specifics of the topic (Creswell, 2007). As Sandelowsky (1995) stated "determining and adequate sample size in qualitative research is ultimately a matter of judgment and experience in evaluating the quality of the information collected (p. 17). In addition, Morse (1994, as cited in Sandelowksy, 1995) recommends 6 participants for phenomenological studies that are concerned with discerning experiences, which is the case of this study.

Three out of the seven participants had an immigrant background while the others were ethnic Norwegians. Although this was not part of the criteria for participation, I believe it is an important characteristic, as the study was focused on the perceptions of participants in regards to immigrant families, which can be influenced by the worker's own culture. However, despite this relative diversity in the participants' background the interviews did not reveal significant differences in the answers from each participant.

In addition, the length of experience in the child welfare services varied but only one participant had been working in her current position for less than one year and had the least amount of experience with families who used corporal punishment. The other participants had at least between 3 and 20 years of experience working in the child welfare services. The variety in length of experience was not pre-planned but it provided a good cross section of knowledge and perceptions which was seen as positive for the study.

Background of participants		
Participant 1	Immigrant	Female
Participant 2	Non-Immigrant	Female
Participant 3	Non-Immigrant	Female
Participant 4	Immigrant	Female
Participant 5	Immigrant	Female
Participant 6	Non-Immigrant	Female
Participant 7	Non-Immigrant	Female

4.3.1 Criteria for participation

The criteria for participation was not extensive due to the nature of the research study. The main question was directed to child welfare workers who have worked with families who use corporal punishment. Therefore, the focus was on contacting directly the child welfare offices in order to ensure only people with knowledge and experience relevant to this study were invited to participate. In addition, potential participants were required to fulfil the following criteria:

1. Potential participants were required to have been at the moment of the interview working as child welfare workers practicing directly with families in one of the child welfare offices of Stavanger or the surrounding Kommunes.
2. Potential participants were required to have had experience or knowledge with families or cases in which corporal punishment had been used.
3. I do not speak or understand Norwegian language, therefore potential participants were required to sufficiently speak and read English language. This was one of the main obstacles in obtaining the initial expected 10 interviewees.

4.3.2 Contacting participants

In order to contact potential participants, I first emailed the person in charge of the child welfare offices of the Stavanger, Sandnes and Sola commune. The initial email was an invitation to participate which contained detailed information of the research study and the criteria for participation. I requested that the email with information regarding the study was forwarded to the child welfare workers. Then I waited to be contacted via email or phone by child welfare workers who wished to participate in the study. Once potential participants made initial contact, they were provided with a copy of the plain language statement to ensure they had a clear understanding of the objectives and implications of the study before agreeing to participate.

The process of contacting participants was not difficult because I simply initiated contact with a formal and polite email but it was long and frustrating as I was required to wait until potential participants made contact. In addition, I did not have control over how long it took for potential participants to receive the initial email. The wait was in some instances longer than expected and some of the persons in charge of the offices had to be contacted several times. However, this process ensured that potential participants had power over the decision to participate which is an important part of undertaking a study. It was essential that participants were not influenced by power relationships at their work place to participate in this study. By giving the participants the power to contact me directly, I believe that it helped to reduce the effect of power relationships from their workplaces in this study.

4.4 The interview process

The interviews began with me introducing myself to the participants. I then briefly explained the content of the plain language statement they had received after the initial contact. In particular, I mentioned the objectives of the study, the expectations I had from the participants and the importance of anonymity of their participation. In addition, they were reminded to try as much as possible to ensure their statements did not contain personal information of others, such as clients or colleagues. Then I asked if they would agree to have the interview recorded to facilitate creating an adequate transcript of the data (Merriam, 1998, p. 87). All participants agreed. Finally, I introduced the consent form (see annex 1) and the participants were allowed time to read it and sign it before beginning the recording and the interview guide questions.

The questions used were open ended in order to prompt explorative and descriptive responses that provide in-depth explanations. These sometimes resulted in generating “markers” that require further inquiry. Weiss (1994) highlights that a marker is “a passing reference made by the respondent to an important event or feeling state” (p. 77). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) affirm that markers are very crucial pieces that add meaningful scope and substance to the research. I was aware of the importance of identifying and capturing markers however; I was careful not to interrupt the interviewee with follow up questions until they had finished their comments. Often it was necessary to ask questions to confirm statements and to further develop markers touched on by participants. As a researcher it was important to balance the need to ask questions with the need to not restrict responses and to encourage fluid, detailed answers to my questions. My experience of conducting interviews was very similar to what Rubin and Rubin (2005) wrote; “the questions you put on your protocol are not cast in concrete and are often changed as you learn of new, important matters about which you now want to ask all your other interviewees” (p. 145).

Dialogues were captured using a recording device, supported by field notes which served for the purpose of documenting pertinent points/markers raised by the participants. However, few notes were taken due to the attention the interviews required. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) supports this decision stating that: “field notes are always selective: it is not possible to capture everything. And there is a trade-off between breadth of focus and detail” (p. 142). Since all the participants had permitted that the interview be recorded, detailed note-taking was not imperative.

4.5 Data Analysis

4.5.1 Data Transcription Process

After recording, the first step in understanding and familiarizing with the data was to transcribe the audio. Bernard and Ryan (2010), have suggested that ‘The first step in systematic analysis is the conversion of audio into digital text’ (p.48). The audio was transcribed verbatim to preserve detail and the context of the interviews however, words such as ‘um’ and ‘ah’ were omitted. The omission of superfluous and crutch words enhances the readability and coherence of the final transcription. It is important to note that repetition; hyperbole and emphasizing statements used by participants were included as they enhance the message that interviewees intended to communicate. I placed careful attention on not including any names or identifiable information from the interviews in the transcriptions in order to preserve the confidentiality of the participants.

4.5.2 Data Analytic tool

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data of this study. Thematic analysis is a frequently used analytical tool that aims to identify and analyze patterns in data (Bryman, 2012). The tool has few restrictions on how it can be applied therefore it is flexible and can be used to analyze both descriptive and interpretative data (Bryman, 2012). Creswell (2007) explains that data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organising the data, in this case the data consists of transcripts of interviews with participants, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding, then condensing the codes and finally representing the data in figures, tables or a discussion.

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. However, it also often goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic (Boyatzis, 1998). Rubin and Rubin explain that conducting analysis is rewarding because “you discover themes and concepts embedded throughout your interviews” (Rubin and Rubin 1995, p. 226). Usually the evolution of the analytical process begins at the relatively simple data description stage and then progresses to interpret data. Although relatively straightforward, the description stage is very important as the researcher must organise data to identify patterns based on semantic content. Often complex concepts must be condensed and given easily identifiable labels that assist the researcher in the interpretation stage. In order to interpret the data, the researcher must have a sound understanding of the patterns identified, in the description stage, and be able to develop a theory based on their significance (Patton, 1990). I aimed at not just describing but also interpreting the experiences of child welfare workers, taking into account the theoretical framework and previous literature.

Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend a six step guide to conducting thematic analysis that was useful in maintaining a structure during the analysis process. I followed the six steps in order to have a clear guide to analyse the data. During the process of selecting themes, I also used the theoretical lens explained in chapter three as well as the main objectives of the study. After the themes were defined, I used them to answer the main research questions. The six steps are the following:

Phase 1: Familiarising with the data: This phase refers to becoming immersed in the data. Immersion usually involves “repeated reading” while the researcher searches for meanings and patterns within the data. This phase provides the bedrock for the rest of the analysis and it was initiated by transcribing the interviews.

During this phase I first transcribed the interviews and read each transcript two or three times in order to familiarised myself with the information and to ensure I understood what the participants had said to me.

Phase 2: Generating initial codes: This phase involves the production of initial codes from the data. Codes identify a feature of the data that appears interesting to the researcher. All the data should be coded and collated during this phase.

In order to generate initial codes, I used highlighters to differentiate each code. I simply read the transcripts and began highlighting features that I found pertinent to the topic of study. In generating the initial codes, I took into account the research questions and objectives. The following is an example of the process I undertook during this phase; each colour represents a different code:

- Red: Corporal punishment
- Green: Lack disciplining tools
- Light Blue: Parent’s experiences
- Orange: Empathy
- Purple: Law
- Dark Blue: Compliance

Yes- for me it is unacceptable and it just shouldn't... it has no place in bringing up a child and it a family life and uhhh I think that emmm... you know what it shows is a lack of other valid tools a parent can use and often parents can themselves who have experience that in their upbringing, they are all the tools they have from your parents and those are the tools that you have. Unless you have consciously thought trough and reflected on your own child hurting and your own upbringing and unfortunately those methods can still come out and also if you are from a culture where those methods are still accepted and widely use then maybe no one really questions. But you know in Norway that has been against the law for a long time and in Norwegian families you know it is not an issue because of parents often now have already grown up with that rule themselves. I am not saying it doesn't happen but it is not the same problem. Then I think if you live in Norway, wherever you are from and whatever rules you have to abide by them so when we meet families who are from other cultures and we are talking about that and sometimes there is a sense of admission that yes something has happened and or they don't hit but they might threat and then you know you have to stop now. Then it is to go further in terms of what other methods you can then help give them so they have alternative ways.

Phase 3: Searching for themes: This phase involves sorting the different codes into potential themes, and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes. Essentially, during this phase the researcher begins to analyse the codes by considering how different codes may combine to form an overarching theme.

After highlighting potential codes in the text I created boxes in which I collated the initial codes into themes. This process is exemplified with the following box:

Code	Extract
Child centred approach	Participant 1:
	<p>1) it only really needs to happen once for the threat and the fear to be instilled in a child</p> <p>2) then you confront them with the things that the children have said</p> <p>3) But then also you have to think well how is it? Are those parents able to empathize with that child? Put themselves in that child's position? As in how is it for them when I do this?</p>
	Participant 2:
	<p>1) I have been speaking to children, and I sense that they are afraid of what would happen, that worries me and they can be afraid even if there is only been a lot of threatening.</p> <p>2) What we would have in focus is how do the parents describe the reactions of the child; do they sense his feelings? We would ask a lot of questions about that. Is the child afraid and do the parents see that?</p> <p>3) We also ask the children if the parents have been using a stick for example, or something else and then we find it more seriously if they have been using something like a stick once or twice.</p>
	Participant 3:
<p>1) We talked to the parents and the father denied, that is not really unusual, I had a case the week before, they were Norwegian and they said they had never hit their children and we said well the children said that you hit them, we believe children, yes we work with children so we believe them</p>	
Participant 4:	
<p>1) It depends on what they say and what Sayed says but if Sayed says that he is afraid to go home because his dad is going to hit him, then we wouldn't send him home</p> <p>2) I would try to find out from her [the child] and how we are supposed to go further</p>	

Phase 4: reviewing themes: During this phase, the researcher is required to review the third phase. It will become evident that some candidate themes are not really themes,

while others might overlap each other. Other themes might need to be broken down into separate themes.

This phase was a revision of the themes I created and the codes I allocated to each theme. It was simply reading and rereading the themes and codes in order to make them more understandable and reflective of the interviews.

Phase 5: defining and naming themes: This phase requires ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme. In particular, this phase is about identifying the “essence” of each theme. The researcher should clearly understand what each theme encompasses.

This phase was intertwined with phase number 4 as in reviewing the themes, I found it beneficial to make brief notes on each theme detailing the relevant information I had. This process allowed me to identify what information was relevant and necessary to each theme and thereby assisted me to discover the essence of each theme.

Phase 6: producing the report: The final phase involves the writing of the report. In this study three major themes were identified, each with subthemes to provide a better explanation of the findings. The final themes are discussed in the following chapter.

4.6 Ethical considerations

4.6.1 NSD Approval

The Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) is the “Data Protection Official for Research for all the Norwegian universities” (NSD, 2016). The NSD has the responsibility to assess research projects in accordance with the Personal Data Act and the Personal Health Data Filing System Act of Norway. They also follow up on project changes, extensions and completions. There are several conditions for which a researcher should seek ethical clearance from the NSD, such as collecting and recording information about individuals via interviews. Therefore, ethics approval was obtained before beginning the process of contacting and interviewing participants of this study. Approval for the research proposal was granted by the official in March, 2016, with the reference number 47043 (see annex 4). The name of the research project was changed in early May to better reflect the results and the purpose of the study, a confirmation of the change has also been added as an annex.

Adherence to the guidelines outlined by NSD serve to improve the research integrity and credibility. However, ethical research does not only imply seeking the approval of the ethical board. In fact, Bryman (2012) mentions that reoccurring discussions about ethical principles in social research revolve around several issues which I considered during the whole process of this study from inception to completion. In addition, as a social worker I also adhere to the code of ethics outline by International federation of social workers (IFSW). The specific issues primarily refer to harm to participants, inform consent and invasion of privacy.

4.6.2 Harm to participants

At the inception of this study, I considered the topic of study and the participants position to anticipate potential harmful consequences of undertaking face to face interviews. In particular, situations that might be disturbing or emotionally damaging for the participants. Therefore, I did not make direct initial contact with potential participants, as mentioned above, the child welfare workers had power over initiating contact when interested in participating in this study. After the initial contact each potential participant was provided with a plain language statement which contained clear and detailed information about the project as well as what was expected from them (see annex 3). In addition, the interviews were conducted at the participants' work office which represents a familiar and safe environment. The location and time were decided by the participants as they were often busy. During the interviews I reminded the participants of the voluntary nature of this study and they were able to abstain from answering any question they did not feel comfortable with. However, all participants expressed confidence and comfort with the questions and topic during the interviews.

4.6.3 Informed Consent

During human research it is important that participants consent to being studied, as clearly noted by Atkinson and Hammersley (2007) "people must consent to being researched in an unconstrained way, making their decision on the basis of comprehensive and accurate information about it; and that they should be free to withdraw at any time" (p. 210). Therefore, I created a consent form (see annex 1) which was given to each participant to sign before initiating the recording of the interviews. In addition, as mentioned above, I also gave a brief explanation of the project to the participants to ensure they had understood the content of the plain language statement of the study. It was of great importance to me, that participants clearly understood the purpose of the study and what was expected from them. I also clearly stated to participants that their involvement was entirely voluntary, hence withdrawal at any time would be uncontested.

4.6.4 Confidentiality and Anonymity

As O'Leary (2004) stated "anonymity goes a step beyond confidentiality and refers to protection against identification from even the researcher" (p. 54). As a result, during this study confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by omitting the names and any identifiable details of the participants in any of the transcripts as well as in the final report. In addition, before each interview began I reminded participants to not mention personal and identifiable information about themselves or others. The offices in which the participants work are mentioned in the report but no personal information is given as to link the participants and their work offices.

The interviews were recorded using a digital recorder that was only available to the researcher at all times. Each interview was transcribed and deleted from the device within a day of undertaken the interview by the researcher. The written texts were stored on a personal computer secured with username and password and accessible only by myself and my supervisor.

4.7 Quality assurance

According to Seal (1998, p.8) in order to ensure high quality data, researchers undertaking qualitative studies should pay very close attention to the methodical and philosophical considerations of the study. Researchers may do this by truthfully and clearly explaining the approach and techniques for gathering and interpreting data as discussed in the methodology chapter. It is important that researchers strive to provide 'thick descriptions' of their data (Denzin, 2001 p. 53). Denzin (2001 p. 53) explains that thick descriptions have three layers; the first provides a context of an act or phenomenon, the second should detail the intentions that initiate action and finally the researcher should discuss the progression of the act or phenomenon. Thick description is contrasted by thin description, which should be avoided by researchers. Thin description merely states facts without consideration or explanation of the context or issues surrounding the subject of interest (Denzin, 2001). It is clear that researchers should examine all evidence and to consider the layers of meaning in the responses provided by participants. In addition, researchers should interpret and discuss the findings with reference to the field of study and previous research.

The research that I have conducted, has been developed with the aim of fulfilling the highest methodological and philosophical standards possible. At all stages of the project I have attempted to maintain strict ethical and moral principles. Data from the interviews have been analyzed in a manner that reveals important details and sheds light on the subject and its context.

It is essential to note that this study took several steps to help eliminate social desirability bias. This research bias occurs when participants do not present an accurate description of themselves or their actions to the researcher in order to preserve a positive image. Research that does not sufficiently take into account the dangers of social desirability bias risk using flawed and undermined data (Chung & Monroe, 2003). I tried to eliminate the bias by designing an interview guide that consisted of questions and vignettes that prevented excessive positive self-descriptions. Follow up questions allowed me to seek further clarification to their responses to potentially cut through hubris. Interview participants were selected from two different offices in the Stavanger region which helped to reduce excessive social desirability bias. Similarly, each individual participant had different work experience and three of them came from different cultural backgrounds, the diversity of participants is likely to have minimized the effect of the bias. An important indicator that the research was not affected by social desirability bias is that the findings are mostly consistent with previous, well regarded, academic research conducted in the field (see next chapter).

4.8 Researcher's standpoint

As a researcher it is very important to be aware of my own perspectives and thoughts on the research issue and to clearly articulate them to prevent them from affecting my research. This is a phenomenological approach called bracketing as explained by Creswell (2007). Although I come from Colombia, a country that permits the use of corporal punishment, I do not believe in using any form of corporal punishment on children. My social work studies in Australia and Europe have further strengthened my views on the practice. My long experience of living as an 'outsider' or immigrant in other countries may have influenced my thinking and ability to understand the perspectives of both immigrants and non-immigrants. In addition, the fact that

during my studies I have been exposed to several child welfare and child protection systems provides me with a more unbiased position to research the child welfare system of Norway.

During the interviews with participants I was very aware of how I appeared, as an outsider, to them and how it could affect the research. I understood how they may have felt uncomfortable talking to an international student from a collectivist culture about problems they encounter with immigrants. In order to make them feel at ease, I attempted to set aside my cultural background and inform them that I am a social worker, educated in several developed, relatively individualistic countries. In addition, I also emphasized that I have spent time living in Norway and studying at the University here. During the interviews I suspected that participants would talk well about immigrants due to my background however, I do not believe that the participants adjusted their responses based on my presence.

Interviews were conducted in English, although they had very good English skills, it was not their first or preferred language. As a researcher I came to the interviews prepared with English to Norwegian translations of key words for them. As an English as a second language speaker myself I knew how to communicate in a way that they could understand. Although there was a language barrier, I do not believe that it affected the research as meaning was clearly communicated between interviewee and myself.

4.9 Limitations

The largest limitation of this research was time, both the researcher and the child welfare workers had large time constraints that affected the research. The structure of my master's program and initial research design difficulties only allowed me the month of March to conduct interviews. Unfortunately, Easter fell in March this year which further limited data collection opportunities for me.

The child welfare offices seemed to be experiencing a busy period that was further exuberated by the Easter holidays. In addition, some participants had less than one hour to be interviewed that contributed to time constraints. More time would have allowed me the opportunity to alley their concerns and further inform them of the potential benefits of the research. Despite this, I believe that the information collected from participants is broadly representative of the child welfare workers in Stavanger and reflective of the views and perceptions of workers. The responses from participants provided interesting details and insights into the approaches workers take when working with immigrant and non-immigrant families.

In addition to time constrains, the language barrier was an obstacle in conducting the research. If I had a solid command of the Norwegian language, I would potentially have been able to access and analyse a larger amount of research written in Norwegian language on the country's child welfare system. The participant recruitment and interview process may have been easier and faster if I had been able to communicate using the Norwegian language. However, the nature of my master's program requires students to undertake studies in three different countries in English, therefore it was not possible for me to learn Norwegian in time for my thesis. Despite the language barrier, I believe that I have a strong cross section of texts in my literature review. Furthermore, the interviews with participants went smoothly, with almost no language issues and the data that I obtained was relevant and insightful.

5 Chapter Five: Findings and analysis

After thematic analysis, three themes and several subthemes were identified, the first theme identified a child centred approach from which child welfare workers practice, it also includes an analysis of the impact that participants as street level bureaucrats defined by Lipsky (1980) generate. The second theme reveals what I term a culture blind approach, which is employed by participants when dealing with families who use corporal punishment, in particular at the beginning and end of the intervention. The third and final theme refers to the process of understanding cultural differences and providing guidance to generate change among families. In referring to the interviewees, I give each of them a number and thus refer to them throughout in the chapter as “participant 1, participant 2...” (see chapter 4 for a presentation of them)

5.1 Theme One: A child centred approach

A child centred approach recognises children as individuals with rights and needs that should be promoted and protected, including the right to participate in major decisions about their own life (Munro, 2011). This is a theme that ran across all the participants and it was prominent almost at all stages of the interviews which reflects findings from earlier research undertaken in Norway by Križ & Skivenes (2014). During the interviews the participants did not differentiate between the children of immigrants and those of non-immigrant families. The standard for the wellbeing of children did not seem to be influenced by the cultural background of the families. Intervention seemed to be based on the level of concern for the safety of the child rather than the cultural traits of the family.

5.1.1 Listening to Children

The child welfare workers often expressed the importance of taking into account the rights, position and feelings of the child and how parents should see their actions through their children’s eyes in order to ensure better parenting independently of cultural background. The following quotes have been extracted from various sections of the interviews, particularly when the participants discussed the initial process they follow when dealing with families who use corporal punishment. This process was discussed several times as participants gave examples of their work with real cases they had experienced. Participants 1 and 2 said:

...But then also you have to think well how is it? Are those parents able to empathize with that child? Put themselves in that child’s position? As in how is it for them when I do this [hit them]? (Participant 1)

...What we would have in focus is how do the parents describe the reactions of the child; do they sense his feelings? We would ask a lot of questions about that. Is the child afraid and do the parents see that? (participant 2)

Respect and the importance of listening to children were also practices widely mentioned by the child welfare workers. As the participants mentioned, attending to the needs of children is always their principal objective. For instance, throughout the interviews as participants discussed examples of cases they had in the past, they made statements highlighting

participation and respect. “We have to respect the dignity of children” participant 3 claimed. Similarly, two participants underlined respect and involvement:

...Respecting their dignity, respect the child as a grown up. A little person, a little human being, that has thoughts and opinions. Children are not stupid. They understand a lot (participant 5)

...Talking [with the child] about how things are, just to make sure the child is ok, because that is the main thing (participant 7)

When participants were given the second vignette (see annex 2) which was about a 14-year-old girl who contacts the child welfare office because she is unhappy with a situation at home, their statements also reflected the importance of respecting and listening to children, participants 5 and 4 said respectively:

...The first reason is that she [the child] needed help, we should not ignore that, it is important, you need to treat her with respect (participant 5)

...I would try to find out from her [the child] and how we are supposed to go further (Participant 4)

To participant 6, what was important was to ensure the child felt respected and to provide a good role model:

... If I get the consent of the girl, I would contact her parents. It might not be a case but just one meeting. When they [children] call us we have to take them seriously. We need them to know that we take their calls seriously. When children call it is very important to take seriously (participant 6)

... if we treat her with respect, she is going to have a role model for respect. She is a person... (participant 6)

Although, not all participants explicitly mentioned trusting or believing in what children say, they did imply it in their conversations and often contested the opinions of parents based on what children say. Child welfare workers appear to place major importance on the opinion of children and sometimes above the opinion of the parents, at least in cases where the use of corporal punishment is suspected which was the focus of this study. Believing in the voices of children is another characteristic of the use of active listening and respect. However, this does not imply that child welfare workers do not believe in the opinions of parents, rather they take into account the children when dealing with parents.

The reason for this, as the participants, explained, is that parents are more likely to deny using corporal punishment due to fear. Parents require more time to accept their actions. However, four of the seven participants stated that Norwegian parents are more likely to keep on denying the use of corporal punishment throughout the intervention. I extracted a few quotes from the transcripts where the participants explicitly talked about how parents tend to deny their actions, these quotes came from examples that participants used from their experience to explain their work:

... We talked to the parents and the father denied, that is not really unusual, I had a case the week before, they were Norwegian and they said they had never hit their children and we said well the children said that you hit them, we believe children, yes we work with children so we believe them. (participant 3)

...So when you first meet them they deny it like if it never happened and then you confront them with the things that the children have said and then you meet with them several times and then things start to unravel and then hopefully attitudes also unravel... (participant 1)

5.1.2 Representative of the children

During the interviews, participants often used examples of cases they had in the past. This was done in order to express their views and experiences with families who had been found or were suspected of using corporal punishment. Most of these examples revealed the focus child welfare workers place on the child, but most importantly the way in which they place themselves in the child's position.

For instance, when I asked participant number 2 what her thoughts on corporal punishment were, she replied with the following:

I have been speaking to children, and I sense that they are afraid of what would happen, that worries me and they can be afraid even if there is only been a lot of threatening. For example, "if you don't do this, you will be hit" sometimes they have been hit only once and they know it can happen again. Sometimes the threats use so much of the children's thoughts that they cannot concentrate on school because they are thinking at school what would happen when they come home, "is it going to happen today? maybe, I don't know". That is also serious even if they have not been hit often. Because the quality of life for the child is destroyed because they use so much energy just to survive (participant 2)

Another example of participants placing themselves into the child's position is when I asked participant number 4 to tell me about the last case she had that involved corporal punishment, she mentioned an example of an immigrant family and then went on to state the following:

I feel that corporal punishment in Norwegian families it is more systematic; they [children] never know when they are going to be hit or beaten. It is more like "oh my god is daddy angry now? is he going to do it now?" When they have been drinking or using drugs. The difference with the other cultures, when I speak with the kids, they know when it is going to happen, it is going to happen when I don't listen to my mum or when I don't do what she tells me to do (participant 4)

5.1.3 Comment:

This finding sheds light into the street level policy that child welfare workers as street level bureaucrats defined by Lipsky (1980) are creating. The Child Welfare Act of 1992 in Norway, as described in earlier chapters, sets forth four governing principals for child welfare workers to follow when practicing and making decisions regarding child welfare cases (Skivenes M. , 2011). However, it seems that the child welfare workers in this study widely focus their practice

on the principle of the child's "best interest" and to an extent the biological principle while leaving behind the other two principles. Thus, it could be argued that child welfare workers have used their discretion to generate street level policy that focuses on two principles of the four stated by the Child Welfare Act of 1992.

In addition, the statements of the participants resonate on some of what the Article 12 of the UNCRC states:

"to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views in all matters affecting the child, the view of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child"

For the participants, it appears that respecting and listening to children implies taking action, which also echoes findings from various studies on the importance of seeing the child as an active participant (Cossar, Brandon, & Jordan, 2014; Toros, Tiko, & Saia, 2013; Cashmore, 2002; Bell & Romano, 2012; McLeod, 2008). It is important to note that it seems that the participants are aware of the relationship between respect and children's self-esteem as outlined by McLeod (2008), children's self-esteem and confidence is dependent on the level of respect and importance that child welfare workers demonstrate, particularly for children who have been subject to violence.

In relation to the findings that indicates that participants seem to believe children's statements over their parents, research studies demonstrate that the opinions of parents and children often differ when describing corporal punishment and its consequences. Participants mentioned that parents often believe that spanking children "softly" does not hurt them and it doesn't affect their relationship. However, Breena, Daniels and Tomlinson (2015) recount that findings from studies that focus on parent's perspectives about corporal punishment paint a picture that is very different from that of children. Parents define spanking as "a gentle tap or a loving smack" that happens always under controlled circumstances, that is, parents do not feel angry or emotionally out of control. On the other hand, children defined the same spanking as a "hard hit" or a "very hard hit", that happens while parents are very angry. Also, children display high levels of confusion in trying to make meaning of their parents actions and their own understanding of corporal punishment (Breena, Daniels, & Tomlinson, 2015). Therefore, it is important to listen to children and to act based on their opinions and experiences in order to obtain a clear picture of the context and circumstance of the use of corporal punishment.

In addition, the quotes shown are examples that revealed the focus child welfare workers place on the child, but most importantly the way in which they place themselves in the child's position, they act as being representative of the children. Also, they often discussed the cases from the perspective of children, that is, how corporal punishment affects children in the short and long term. Placing themselves in the position of the child is interpreted as taking on the role of "representatives" of the children's best interest. This role seems to be one of importance for child welfare workers as it provides a motivation for working with parents to achieve change and ideal parenting skills.

Skivenes and Standbu (2006) explained that there are two main positions that child welfare workers generally adopt when working for the wellbeing of children. The first one sees children as vulnerable and requiring protection from adults due to immaturity, while the other one sees children as independent human beings who are bearers of individual rights. Based on the interviews, I believe that participants see children, not as "humans becoming" who need help

from adults to reach maturity, but as fully aware persons with rights and responsibilities that should always be taken into account. An excellent example of this is encompassed in the following statement by participant 5:

...Respecting their dignity, respect the child as a grown up. A little person, a little human being, that has thoughts and opinions. Children are not stupid. They understand a lot (participant 5)

5.2 Theme two: A culture blind approach

The interviews appear to reveal that child welfare workers, in the beginning stages of intervention, practice with what suggests a culture blind approach. The participants seemed to focus on the effects of corporal punishment on children rather than the differences in opinion between cultures about corporal punishment. The views of the child welfare workers convey the impression that they believe in equality for children, independently of cultural background. In fact, child welfare workers explicitly stated that culture should not influence the way in which they perceive the damage that corporal punishment causes to children.

During the interviews, I asked each participant to tell me their experiences with families who use corporal punishment and whether there are any differences in their work with immigrant and non-immigrant families. All of them responded to most questions with examples from their personal experiences working in the child welfare services. I have extracted some quotes from the transcripts that illustrate what appears to be a culture blind approach when dealing with families who use corporal punishment. For instance, participant 2 clearly expressed her thoughts on the use of corporal punishment:

It doesn't matter. Corporal punishment is corporal punishment. You cannot say that immigrants are used to it, no! No! No! we do not say that. (participant 2)

Participant 2 also demonstrated a culture blind approach when responding to the vignette number 1 (see annex 2). She explained that the process of contacting parents is equal for any family:

...Because if we have the same case for example, we have this case [a child who reported at school being hit by his parents], we go to the school, we talk to the child and then we go back to the office and we give a call to the parents and say you need to come to our office today, as soon as possible. We do that with Norwegians too (participant 2)

In addition, another participant expressed that even though working with different cultures is not easy, the safety of children is priority:

We had a case that was very serious with two boys who had been hit very badly. This was very serious violence; they were from a different culture. Those are difficult cases but there is no reason to not make a child safe because of cultural reasons. (participant 3)

When I asked participants to tell me about their experiences working with immigrant families who are suspected or have been found to use corporal punishment, they narrated the examples

by describing the interactions they had. In addition, I asked about the expectation they had from the families as immigrants in Norway. In their narrations child welfare workers often mentioned the fact that in Norway corporal punishment is illegal, which in itself is blind to immigrants' cultural background. All children have rights that need to be protected which as mentioned above is a major driving force for the participants. For instance, participants 1, 3 and 4 claimed the fact that they have to abide by the Norwegian law and cultural background should not influence that:

...Then I think if you live in Norway, wherever you are from and whatever rules you have to abide by them (participant 1)

...Because if we have reasons to believe the children might be harmed, we have a duty by law to take them out of that situation (participant 3)

...The father, who had been hitting them, said that this is accepted in his religion or culture, I think he said something about his religion but we have to work by the law. (participant 3)

I expect them to understand that they also have to understand and respect that they are living in another country – there is another set of rules and they have to live by them (participant 4)

5.2.1 Expectations: Corporal punishment and change

The interviews indicated that child welfare workers' expectation from parents are the same with both immigrant and non-immigrant families. Parents are simply expected to change, to adopt new ways of parenting that follow in line the promotion of children's rights. This was in fact mentioned several times during each interview and it was explained as the ultimate positive outcome from the families. As mentioned in theme number one, the main focus of child welfare workers is the child. Thus, what is expected from parents, independent of culture, is to ensure children live in an overall healthy environment free from violence. This was reflected by participant number 7 when she expressed that families who use corporal punishment are required to change whether they agree or not, it is a matter of time:

...if the caseworker had gone through and if they had concluded that this family needs to change. Which of course if they use corporal punishment we think that is bad. All depending on what slapping it is, ok things need to be changed here. How can we do it? The case worker would work together with them, sometimes it is yes, help us, please do, we would like to do something right away. Others 'no we don't have trouble' then they work longer, it is about having motivation to want to change as well (participant 7)

The case workers in child welfare services, they work with families, when they see that they want them [families] to work with change... (Participant 7)

Participant number 6 also mentioned that change is perhaps one of the main aims for the families, "But most of our work is change and helping families to change and we always do that first – unless it is very severe cases with violence and sexual assault", she mentioned.

In addition, participants expect parents to accept and adopt the opinions and advice given to them by the child welfare agency. Parents from immigrant backgrounds are expected to learn the Norwegian standards and way of doing parenting in order to be accepted as competent parents. The Norwegian standard in this situation refers to the mores of respecting and promoting the rights of children as stated in the UNCRC. It is important to note that Norwegian parents, like immigrant parents, are equally expected to perform the same parenting duties and responsibilities and are both held accountable. However, participants emphasise the case of immigrant parents who have not integrated into the Norwegian society. The following quote from participant number 3 is a reflection of this position:

... 'you are not allowed to spank your child, that is violence'. Then sometimes they would not agree with us, we would say that 'if we are worried that you will spank your child again, we are obliged by law to talk to the police.' We want you to take our advice, get help, you can stop, you can use other methods to talk to your child but not punish. (participant 3)

5.2.2 Comment:

For the participants, initiating an intervention does not seem to be influenced by cultural background because if there is concern that a child is being maltreated they are required by law to investigate. In addition, corporal punishment as a tool to raise children is perceived as wrong from a universalistic perspective, that is, all children from all cultures should not experience corporal punishment in their upbringing. Similarly, the expectations that participants have of families who use corporal punishment appear to not be influenced by cultural backgrounds. All parents are always expected to change, that is, to stop using corporal punishment and to adopt other tools to discipline their children. These tools are those that child welfare workers offer as alternatives.

The statements of the child welfare workers follow the findings of past research undertaken by Kriz & Skivenes (2010) who concluded that Norwegian child welfare workers embrace a racism-blind and individualistic perspective when dealing with minority parents. Kriz & Skivenes (2010) indicates that Norwegian child welfare workers do not take into account cultural differences when assessing the challenges that minority parents experience, rather they see them from an individualistic perspective.

The fact that child welfare workers employ a culture blind approach to working with families, challenges the accusations that have been made in several media outlets about the child welfare services being prejudiced and even racist when dealing with immigrant families (Hollekima, Anderssen, & Daniel, 2015). In addition, the findings of this research seem to demonstrate that child welfare workers follow legislation, which is not tolerant of the use of corporal punishment because of the negative effects it has on children. Participants generally stated that corporal punishment is more often used by immigrant families and less so by non-immigrants due to various reasons, including the parents upbringing. Therefore, child welfare workers work more often with immigrant families, which could help explain the perception that they are targeting immigrant families due to cultural differences.

In addition, the expectations of the participants while not being influenced by culture, they are seen from an individualistic perspective as mentioned by Kriz & Skivenes (2010). An individualistic perspective means that child welfare workers do not take into account external

influential factors for the problems that families might have. It is the parents fault that the child welfare services need to intervene in the family life, therefore it is the parent's responsibility to change and solve their problems with the assistance of the child welfare service.

Similarly, in their study of decisions regarding out of home care in the Norwegian child welfare services, Christiansen and Anderssen (2010) explain that the child welfare workers seemed to expect that the parents should be attentive to and accept the opinions of the child welfare workers concerning what constitutes the problem, and that the parents themselves were to blame for the problems. Furthermore, the parents were expected to agree with child welfare workers' treatment proposals. (Christiansen & Anderssen, 2010)

Although this finding is not too surprising due to past research, it emphasises the social equality that the universal welfare regime promotes among the Norwegian society. The focus for child welfare workers is equality in wellbeing for children. The culture of the parents is not an influential factor as they should nevertheless ensure the wellbeing of children as outlined by Norwegian legislation.

5.3 Theme three: Understanding and guiding to facilitate change

During the interviews participants narrated their interactions with families; based on this I found that after the initial contact with immigrant families, participants demonstrated cultural competence in order to foster an empathetic and understanding relationship. Participants referred to the need to understand the reasons behind the use of corporal punishment and parents' life experiences. Child welfare workers seem to believe that past experiences and cultural norms influence the way in which immigrants raise their children.

I have selected some quotes that demonstrate cultural understanding. These quotes are from various sections of the interviews. For instance, participant number 7 when giving examples of her experiences mentioned that culture was important so I asked her how did she take cultural differences into account when dealing with families, she answered:

But each family has their different cultures, even in Norwegian cases, we have to get to know them. Every parent does something for a reason, what is behind that, what is the thought behind it, what is your reflection of how you live your life. We have to get to know them, who are you, how do you choose to live your life, how come it has been like that, is it a reflection that led to this thing or is it something you have from home. It could be different things. immigrants come here and really rely on the old way of doing things in their home country or they can really block the whole thing about their home country away and want to be Norwegian. No family is the same, so getting to know them and trying to, we have to have a good relation to be able to work with change (participant 7)

Participant number 4 expressed her belief based on understanding parents' actions when I asked her about her thoughts on corporal punishment:

I am against it [corporal punishment], but the most important thing - that we have to understand [is] why they do it. I can understand, it is different to say that it is ok and to understand it because I can understand some of the parents that come to Norway they were born with it they were raised with it. (participant 4)

Similarly, participant number 1 stated that when she meets parents who use corporal punishment, she is interested in understanding the parents' life experiences and how that influences her work:

Often we ask, how was your own upbringing, what did you experience? And you know there will be a strong difference because some people would say "I had that [corporal punishment] and I didn't like it and I don't want it for my own children" and other people it would be "oohh it was part of my upbringing and it taught me this, this and this" (participant 1)

Participant number 5 comes from an immigrant background which might influence her perceptions of immigrant families. She explained that it is important to understand the parents and not adopt on a judgmental position:

Culture differences is one of the biggest issues in this picture [case], and how would I meet the other person? Do I meet the other person based on my own culture? No. I totally agree that it is not ok [corporal punishment] but I understand you [the parent], why you do it. It is very important to approach the parent like that instead of saying this is wrong, this is bad! What kind of parent are you?! This is not the right way. I can understand why they do that but let's have a talk, that is not ok. Maybe we can give knowledge to each other basically. (participant 5)

Child welfare workers seek to encourage parents to change their attitude toward the use of corporal punishment of children. For that to happen, it is important to understand the reasons and circumstances in which parents accept and use corporal punishment. Research has revealed that the most common reasons are related to social norms, to the belief that physical punishment is an effective and harmless parenting strategy and a parent's right. In addition, it can be related to fear of prosecution if parental physical punishment were to be banned, and a perceived absence of alternative parenting strategies (Bell & Romano, 2012).

For instance, participants mentioned several times that often parents who experienced corporal punishment in their own upbringing are very likely use it on their children as this is the only disciplining tool they know and believe in. Therefore, in order to address this issue, the child welfare services reach out to immigrants by providing awareness campaigns that include information about the detrimental effects of corporal punishment on children, as well as other effective disciplining tools. As one of the participants mentioned during her interview.

...I went to the centre for language learning and we gave a talk about that [the negative consequences of corporal punishment and the law in Norway] to a group of students who were from all different places [countries] to explain how we work (participant 1)

In addition, child welfare workers seemed to place importance in understanding feelings that parents experience when being approached by the child welfare agency. Fear of the child welfare services was mentioned several times but also the general difficulty of having to adapt to a different culture. Fear generated by media reports on child welfare decisions is one of the

main problems that participants mentioned when narrating their experiences with immigrant families. Parents are scared of coming into contact with the child welfare services, they feel judged and believe their children will be taken away from them. The participants mentioned that explaining their aims of helping the family and ensuring the wellbeing of children is a lengthy process that does not always result in the immigrant families overcoming their fears.

I have selected some quotes that illustrate the way in which participants placed importance on the feelings of the parents they work with. For example, participants number 7 mentions how immigrant families require more respect and understanding:

... But we have to be humble with every family we meet, we have to respect them in so many ways, first of all they probably have a bigger need to be respected for being who they are because they are surrounded in a totally different society compared to Norwegian cases where they are at home still. (participant 7)

Participant number 1 explained the process in which parents are initially contacted by the child welfare services and she recognised that it can be a scary process for parents:

You know that is quite difficult for the parents because obviously you ring them [on the phone] and say you have to come now to the office because it all happens at the same time (participant 1)

As I already mentioned, fear of the child welfare services was mentioned several times. The following quotes are examples of how participants take into account how much fear influences immigrant parents. These quotes were extracted from examples that participants used to narrate their experiences working with families. For instance, participant number 2 mentioned that some immigrant parents are afraid of their children adopting the Norwegian culture:

...and talk to the parents and ask what are they thinking because some immigrants, they are afraid that their children are going to be too Norwegian, so we have to ask what are you afraid of? What do you think would happen? (participant 2)

In addition, participant number 7 mentioned the process of fear that parents go through and the importance of building a relationship with them to overcome the fear:

Many are a lot more scared than we think. Many can build up their front or mask to wear in a way – I am not afraid, if they see that we are afraid [parents], they think it will be worse. If I am afraid it will look like I have more to hide. So it is relation, relation, relation. We have to know the people, if one should help, you have to get them to trust you. You won't get anywhere without that part. But making sure they know this is your life, you are the one doing it, how can I help you? What would you like to be different? 'I would like the CPS to get out of here'. What do we have to do to do that? (participant 7)

Similarly, participant number 4 states that overcoming fear requires a long process from both sides:

I have been working with a family for 3 months now to try to tell one family that we are not here to take away the kids but to make them better parents. So you have to use more time (participant 4)

5.3.1 Guidance

All participants agreed on corporal punishment being negative and some of them mentioned medical references to support their opinions. It could be argued that it was the use of medical consequences that gave them power to stand in agreement with the Norwegian law which has banned the use of any kind of corporal punishment. In referring to the medical consequences of corporal punishment, the participants seemed to believe they help parents understand that it is not a matter of Norwegian culture, rather a matter of the general well-being of children. They appear to expect that most parents do not want to damage their children and upon understanding the effects of corporal punishment they will stop and be open to new, more constructive ways of disciplining.

Participant number 3 and 7 mentioned how the way in which they encourage parents to see that corporal punishment should not be used for the wellbeing of the children:

Sometimes we show them what hitting children does to their brain, how they won't be able to concentrate or how they will not be able to emotionally function well when they get older and it is their fault (participant 3)

...We worked together for a long time working with attachment theory, learning about how we react and how it can affect the brain in so many ways It is like knowledge about what we know today about corporal punishment more than what we used to know because it was an ordinary thing (Participant 7)

In addition, participant number 1 explained that parents not always know the consequences of corporal punishment, thus explaining to them the medical effects it has on children helps promote change:

...they didn't know that it did anything to the brain and actually it was a really good way [explaining medical consequences] because they had a high functioning level that we could talk about what it does to the brain and we could have that conversation in English (participant 1)

Participants number 5 and 6 mentioned research to back up their belief that corporal punishment is bad for all children independent of culture:

... but then again you have the law, you have the studies, you have good back up. Like why we do it this way, why this is the good way [banning corporal punishment], because it can damage the child. Actually there have been studies that constant slapping will cause trauma. It will definitely influence you in other spheres in your life as a grown up. I am really against it. I think that it is not healthy for the child (participant 5)

I don't think it is the right way and I think it does more bad than it does good for the children, there is a lot of research on that (participant 6)

Participants went on to explain that change takes time and it involves a learning process. Participants understand that immigrant parents generally use corporal punishment because that is the most effective method, sometimes the only method, they know to discipline their

children. Parents believe in the effectiveness of corporal punishment, as they place great importance in teaching their children boundaries and to behave in a respectful manner.

For instance, participant number 4 stated the following when talking about her work with a particular immigrant family:

One [parent] told me that, 'if I don't beat him how am I going to get him to listen to me?' and then I told him, you have to talk to him, you have to teach him. They say 'ok you say that we are not allowed to do that but tell us what to do now' I feel that most of them are very open to the parenting guidance and advice (participant 4)

She also mentioned that changing the way immigrant parents think, takes time because they are not familiar with other strategies to raise children that do not involve corporal punishment.

Because you need more time to try to change their way of thinking. Because they [immigrants] are born with it, they think that they are fine [that CP has not damaged them]. You have to use a lot of time to work with them, tell them who we are. (Participant 4)

Another example is presented by participant number 6 as she explains the situation in which an immigrant family did not know how to set boundaries for their children without the use of corporal punishment. They had to have help to learn new ways to raise their children.

It was a family from Nigeria, they were quite upset because they didn't manage their home situation because they weren't able to use the cane. In Nigeria it is allowed to use the cane to make them do what they were supposed to. When the family came to Norway they were told that it was not allowed to use the cane... after a while they got to know that it actually wasn't allowed and that you could go to jail and get punishment for it. So they stopped immediately, the thing that happened was that, they did not have any other tools or methods to handle their children. So the youngest one was 6 years old and starting school after summer. He had no boundaries, he was all over, he could stay up late at night, he was very tired when he was going to kindergarten, the father just went to bed and the mother wasn't able to put him into bed because she didn't know how to because she didn't have any methods. So we helped them with that, we gave them other methods to give them structure in their day to day life. (participant 6)

5.3.2 Comment:

This finding follows in line with the discussion of the importance of understanding the way in which family culture, structure and patterns of authority within a family affect how the family responds to the intervention of the child welfare services. It has been conceptualized by Welbourne (2002) that, in order to effectively improve a child's quality of life, practitioners must be competent in making culturally appropriate decisions about changes that would assist a family to provide enhanced care to the child and how the changes can be most effectively attained. An inability to make decisions and give guidance based on culturally appropriate circumstances may result in difficulties with the family to engage with the changes and consequently a failure to improve the child's wellbeing (Welbourne, 2002).

In order to support parents and generate change, it is essential to provide them with free and convenient access to education about new disciplining strategies. For parents to give up corporal punishment, they need to establish an effective alternative system of instruction and discipline (Arosen, 2002). Child welfare workers often refer to this task as the most important and challenging part of their work, because it is the most effective way of ensuring the wellbeing of children. Once parents have learnt and understood that there are alternatives to the use of corporal punishment to discipline, children may find themselves in a healthy and supportive family environment while maintaining the biological principle as stated in the Norwegian child welfare Act of 1992. As one of the participants stated:

It is very easy for us to tell them no don't do it – we have to show them other methods to reach their kids so they can receive the respect they want to have. (Participant 4)

Despite various services and support on offer to parents to improve their parenting approaches, participants stated that some parents are resistant and unwilling to change. In such circumstances child welfare workers have a variety of measures such as placing children in temporary foster care. Participants stated that they have had to remind parents that they can be prosecuted and put in jail if they continue to use corporal punishment. However, participants did not expand very much on this issue and no distinction was made between immigrants and non-immigrants.

5.4 Summary

This study has found that, overall, participant's expectations of their clients seem to not be influenced by cultural background. However, the strategies they have developed to achieve change and fulfill their ultimate objective of ensuring the wellbeing of children appears to be highly dependent on the individual situation as well as the cultural background of the family. Unlike the initial assessment stages of a child welfare worker's duties, when interacting with and educating families, participants seem to not be blind to culture. In fact, understanding and acknowledging a family's culture assists participants to provide better solutions to their problems.

It must be noted that, participants also spoke about the importance of understanding the individual situations and micro cultures of Norwegian families. Although Norwegian families are in their natural cultural environment, parents also have difficulties that participants try to understand in order to generate positive outcomes.

6 Chapter Six: Research questions and objectives

This chapter places the findings described in chapter five, within the context of the three overarching objectives of the study in an attempt to directly address the questions proposed at the beginning of the study.

6.1 Main objective and question

To explore the perceptions and experiences of child welfare workers with immigrant families in contrast to non-immigrant families in relation to the use, acceptance and understanding of corporal punishment

- How do child welfare workers perceive immigrant families in contrast to non-immigrant families in relation to corporal punishment?

The findings indicate that child welfare workers perceive the use of corporal punishment as an inappropriate way to raise a child irrespective of cultural background. Child welfare workers make no exceptions based on culture for the use of corporal punishment; they seem to adopt a completely universal approach that is consistent with the law. Participants perceive that often immigrant families employ corporal punishment due to societal norms, personal experience, a lack of knowledge about other parenting methods, as well as, limited knowledge about the Norwegian society. In addition, immigrant parents are often perceived to be dedicated parents but unaware of the damage that corporal punishment can cause.

It is interesting to note that three out of seven participants perceived the use of corporal punishment in Norwegian families to be more concerning than in immigrant families. This perception is partly based on the fact that Norwegian families are expected to know that corporal punishment is illegal. In addition, participants believe that Norwegian parents who use corporal punishment have other issues such as drug addiction. Although a small number of participants expressed these perceptions, it is an interesting insight into corporal punishment in Norway.

Overall, the perceptions of child welfare workers towards immigrant and non-immigrant families in relation to the use of corporal punishment is generally the same. Perhaps the major difference is the understanding of the reasoning behind the use of corporal punishment

6.2 Second objective and question

To examine whether child welfare workers adopt different approaches in their work with immigrant families in contrast to non-immigrant families that are suspected to use corporal punishment towards children

- What are the differences child welfare workers experience when working with immigrant and non-immigrant families in regards to the use of corporal punishment?

As stated in the findings, the participants do not seem to make any differentiation between immigrant parents and non-immigrant parents during the beginning stage of intervention. Also, their expectations appear to be the same with any family that is suspected or has been found to use corporal punishment. All the families are expected to stop hitting their children immediately and to adopt new tools for disciplining and setting boundaries. These new tools are those given by the child welfare services. However, participants do take cultural differences into account when addressing the individual needs of each family. Participants seem to believe in getting to know the family to understand the reasons why they use corporal punishment. This is an important process that helps the child welfare workers approach each family from an appropriate manner to generate change.

The participants indicated that working with immigrant families is a longer process due to the fear they have towards the child welfare services. Also, many immigrant families lack knowledge about the Norwegian society. However, immigrant families are often willing to accept the use of corporal punishment which is helpful during the intervention of the child welfare services. Yet, it is more difficult for immigrant parents to stop relying on the use of corporal punishment because they often believe that without it they will not be able to properly teach their children to respect and behave properly. In contrast, the work with Norwegian families in the beginning stage is easier and faster because they already know the system and the law, which makes it easier to begin the necessary treatment to help them. Still, the participants stated that understanding the reasons Norwegian families have for the use of corporal punishment can also take time.

Overall, the approach to working with immigrant families is influenced by cultural differences and the fact that child welfare workers require more understanding and time to help the families. However, no clear difference can be concluded from the interviews because all the child welfare workers described their work with immigrant and non-immigrant families equally.

6.3 Third objective and question

To identify the extent to which child welfare workers promote or expect immigrant families to adopt the Norwegian culture when raising their children.

- What are the expectations child welfare workers have of immigrant families in contrast to non-immigrant families in the child welfare system?

Both immigrant and non-immigrant families are expected to stop using corporal punishment and to adopt the advice given by the child welfare services. Child welfare workers expect all families, including immigrants, to raise children with the upmost care and respect as outlined by legislation that has incorporated the UNCRC.

The findings suggest that the child welfare system does not expect immigrant parents to adopt the Norwegian culture or to raise their children as Norwegians. The requirement of instilling Norwegian values or culture in immigrant children did not seem to be a significant issue for participants. However, if parents employ cultural practices, such as corporal punishment, with their children that are not consistent with the UNCRC, parents would be required by child welfare services to change their behaviour. In summary, it appears that the only expectation

child welfare workers have of immigrant parents is that they adhere to the principles of the rights of the child as outlined in the Norwegian legislation. Individual cultural practices are of little concern to child welfare services.

7 Chapter seven: Discussion

In this chapter I reflect and discuss the findings described in chapter five. This is done in light of the theoretical framework guiding this study. In addition, a graphic representation of the findings is presented and discussed.

7.1 Child centred

As a researcher I utilised the theoretical framework explained in chapter three which includes the moral theories of relativism and universalism, as well as street level bureaucracy as explained by Lipsky in his book from 1980. Studying child welfare workers with a street level bureaucracy lens has allowed me to understand the way in which discretion in the Norwegian child welfare system influences street level policy. In particular, I looked at the Norwegian child welfare Act of 1992 since it was the most relevant Act for the participants and for this study.

Consequently, as indicated in the findings chapter, this study has found that child welfare workers in Norway as street level bureaucrats appear to be reshaping public policy. That is, they seem to be focusing on enacting only two of the four principles stated by the Norwegian child welfare Act of 1992. Promoting the child's best interest is without a doubt the main driver of the participants, in doing so, the biological principle is also promoted. This particular street level policy could be explained by the fact that child welfare workers as street level bureaucrats are often expected to achieve goals that are extensive, idealistic and even sometimes contradictory in practice. These contradictory goals can be seen in their work when they are faced with the responsibility to provide parents with services, support and guidance that can help them better raise their children, while at the same time assessing whether they are competent parents.

Participants work with families towards attaining change as this is believed to be the best way to ensure the wellbeing of children. A child centred approach has also been established by earlier research undertaken in Norway which helps validate the results of my study. Kriz and Skivenes (2010) found that Norwegian child welfare workers focused their descriptions and understandings on challenges that affected the child and how the child would cope in the Norwegian society, they did not view challenges in regards to the whole family. A similar approach was taken by the participants in this study when discussing their experiences with families who use corporal punishment. They focused on discussing the topic from the perspective of children and they seemed to assume a role as representative of children.

In addition, as mentioned above, the biological principle is promoted by encouraging parents to change and adopt better disciplining tools, as it is believed to be in the best interest of the child. As Kriz and Skivenes (2010) also found in their study, child welfare workers in Norway assumed that change was possible, and they expected change from families. They took a change-oriented or pro-active stance with regard to minority ethnic families that assumes that changes in parental behaviour would help children integrate and succeed.

7.2 Contradictory approaches

After analysing the interviews with participants, a contradictory theme emerged in the data regarding whether child welfare workers use different approaches when working with immigrant families in contrast to Norwegian families. The majority of participants stated that they did not use different practices or approaches. However, when they discussed how they work with immigrant families, it was clear that their approaches were indeed different from Norwegian families. Participants, in detail, stressed the need to get to know and understand the culture and background of immigrant families, eliminate the fear they have regarding the child welfare services and to ensure the families feel respected. They seem to be very understanding of the situation that immigrant families find themselves in when trying to adjust to the Norwegian society. In addition, immigrants seem to be generally perceived as loving parents who are naïve about the effects of corporal punishment and its legal status in Norway. These attitudes seem to demonstrate high levels of empathy. Interviewees spent little time, if at all, discussing these issues in the context of working with Norwegian families.

Although, not all participants stated that corporal punishment in Norwegian families is more concerning, I found that most of them seemed to be more judgmental towards Norwegian families than immigrant families. The same level of empathy that was given to immigrants appeared to not be present when participants narrated stories of Norwegian families.

The reasons for the dichotomy in the responses can only be hypothesized without further study, however two explanations may be possible. Participants may have consciously attempted to appear as though they treat immigrants and Norwegians equally and in the same manner. Given the widespread accusations that the child welfare services targets and treats immigrants differently, it is reasonable to expect that participants wanted to present a different image of their work.

Alternatively, the different responses may simply be due to the workers not consciously realizing that they do in fact use different approaches when working with the two groups of people. Irrespective of the reasons for the differences in the data, it must be noted that the different approaches used by participants with immigrant families seems to be simply a way to gain a better understanding of the families. This research did not find that they utilize the different approaches to target or unequally treat families from immigrant backgrounds. The tailored approaches appear to assist child welfare workers to connect and achieve desirable outcomes.

7.3 Bridge of relativism

As previous research has demonstrated, child welfare workers in Norway employ a culture blind approach to working with families. However, this study found that a culture blind approach is characteristic at the beginning and final stages of intervention while the middle stage seems to be greatly influenced by cultural and individual differences. Employing a culture blind approach means being neutral in assessing all families. That is, not differentiating between groups and individuals based on cultural particularities. A culture blind approach also reflects a universalist standpoint on morality because it assumes that independent of culture, the use of corporal punishment for children is wrong. As mentioned in chapter three

universalism refers to a moral system that applies to all humanity independent of culture, race, nationality and any other distinguishing features.

In general, the child welfare system as well as the workers in Norway seem to believe in a universal moral standard, which is evident in the way they explained that corporal punishment is wrong for everyone and all children can be negatively affected by it, this belief seemed to be clear for all participants. However, participants also stated that it is important to take into account cultural factors and how they influence parents to use corporal punishment. The finding of interest is that although child welfare workers seem to believe in a universal morality they also appear to understand the importance of acknowledging the existence of cultural differences and different moral standards; this is interpreted in this study as descriptive relativism. As mentioned earlier in chapter three, simply explained, descriptive relativism refers to the obvious differences between cultures, those differences can rapidly and easily be perceived when two cultures meet. These differences are not always of a moral character because many seemingly moral disagreements between cultures are not really fundamental disagreements about questions of moral and values.

It is important to stress that the type of descriptive relativism that participants appear to use should be viewed as 'light' or 'surface' relativism, that is, they do not believe in relativism but use it as a tool to connect. Although it is the mission of child welfare workers to create positive change in the life of children, they do not necessarily expect to change the morality of the parents. Participant 4 encapsulated the moral difference of opinion that child welfare workers sometimes face with clients *"He told me that he will not do that [use corporal punishment] again but he did not see anything wrong with that. But he was not going to do it because he knew that it was not allowed in Norway"*

The transition between the use of universalism and relativism stages of practice is referred to in this study as the bridge of relativism. A bridge, for the reason that child welfare workers bring together their initial universalistic procedure and their universalistic final expectations by connecting with families from a relativistic stance. It is not clear whether child welfare workers have consciously developed this approach to working with immigrant families. Yet they appear to make an effort in understanding the cultural values and beliefs of families without judging them, in order to provide the most appropriate help they believe will generate the expected change. In the perspective of street level bureaucracy theory, the bridge of relativism could be seen as an approach developed by child welfare workers in order to deal with the pressures of complying with state and public expectations.

7.4 A graphic representation

The following graphic representation illustrates the process child welfare workers undertake when working with families to achieve change and a positive environment for children free from corporal punishment. This graphic demonstrates how child welfare workers utilise relativism to achieve universalistic expectations.

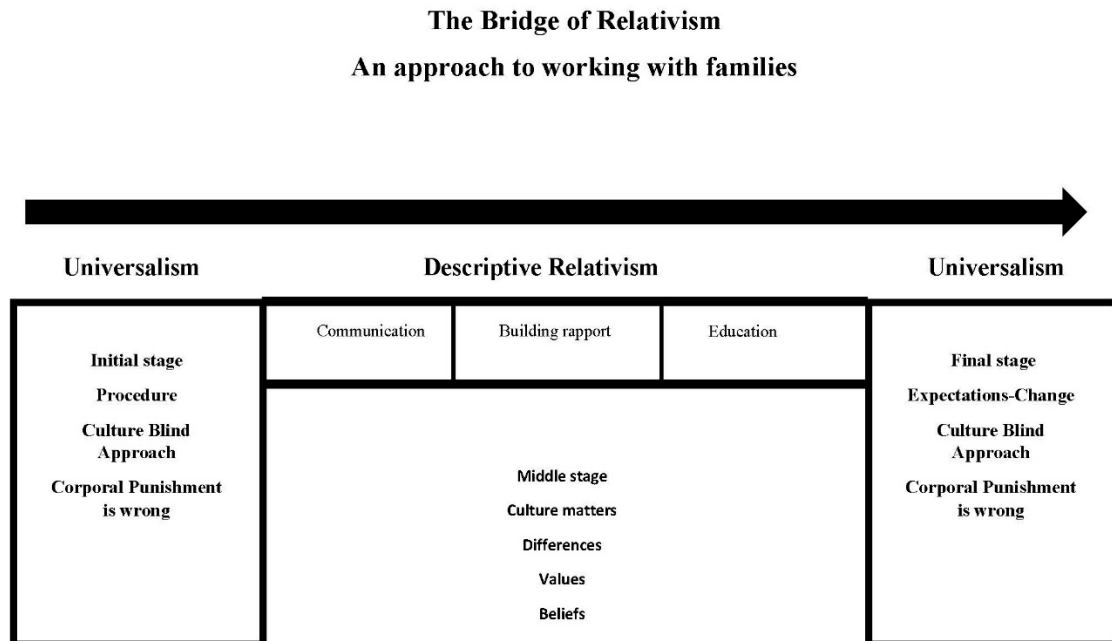


Figure 1: Self developed

8 Chapter Eight: Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of child welfare workers in regard to immigrant and non-immigrant families by using the concept of corporal punishment as a point of departure. Qualitative data was collected from semi-structured interviews with seven child welfare workers from the Stavanger and Sola offices. The participants had a wide range of work experience and three out of the total seven were from an immigrant background.

With the main purpose in mind, I used thematic analysis with the lens provided by the theoretical framework to generate and discuss the findings of the study. I further validated the main themes by using them to directly answer the research questions and objectives. The findings and analysis illustrated the process that child welfare workers undertake to interact and promote change among families. This process was found to be characterised by using a form of relativism as a tool to obtain universalistic expectations. This was explained with the help of a graphic that I called “the bridge of relativism”. In addition, this study found that child welfare workers practice from a child centred approach, which is in line with earlier research.

However, it is imperative to question the extent to which these findings provide conclusive results to the analysis of the work of child welfare workers in Norway. For instance, in relation to the finding that indicates child welfare workers practice from a child centred approach, I believe earlier research has allowed me to validate this as a conclusive finding that clearly indicates the importance child welfare workers in Norway place on children and their rights.

In addition, I have mentioned in the findings that child welfare workers appear to practice from a universalist position in which families, independent of culture, are expected to stop using corporal punishment due to the negative consequences it has on children. I have also mentioned that child welfare workers do not appear to promote assimilation to the Norwegian culture, rather they focus on promoting universal rights for children. Cultural understanding through the “bridge of relativism” seems to be of importance to create a better relationship with families and to guide them to stop using corporal punishment. However, this finding goes in contrast to earlier research on the same topic that uses labels such as ‘cultural instructors’ (Križ & Skivenes, 2010) to tag Norwegian child welfare workers, which points to cultural insensitivity or assimilationist practices.

Perhaps this difference is due to the nature of this study in which corporal punishment was used as the main concept to find the perceptions of child welfare workers. Corporal punishment might be considered a concept that is too “black and white”, that is, hitting a child is clearly defined as wrong by the UNCRC which facilitates the conclusion that child welfare workers are driven by a universalist morality as they can refer back to the Norwegian law, the UNCRC and documented medical reports on the consequences that corporal punishment has on children. It is conceivable that in the case of researching the perceptions of child welfare workers in regards to other less clearly defined concepts that indicate maltreatment of children such as neglect, the results of this study may have differed. It is possible that using the concept of neglect could have allowed issues that resemble ethnocentrism rather than universalism to arise in the findings of the study.

On the other hand, the difference between the findings of this study and those of earlier research might be influenced by the perspective from which the work child welfare workers do is

analysed. For instance, a relativist position would likely dismiss universalism by replacing it with ethnocentrism. It could be argued that the lack of a clear and explicit belief on the existence of a relativistic morality might simply be understood as the existence of an ethnocentric approach to working with immigrant families. However, without further research this issue cannot be concluded.

I consider that this study, while being relatively small, raises important questions in regards to the current understanding of child welfare workers in Norway. The idea that they are 'cultural instructors' needs to be deeply interrogated and more research is required to understand the complexity of the current situation of the child welfare system in Norway and the immigrant population.

9 References

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10 Annex

10.1 Annex 1:

Consent Form 'This Means You Can Say NO'

Title of the research:

The perceptions of child welfare workers in regards to immigrant families in contrast to non-immigrant families in the child welfare system of Norway.

Student Researcher

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I _____, hereby consent to participate in research undertaken by fourth semester master in social work student Nathalia Perez Alfonso from Stavanger university in Norway.

I understand that the purpose of the research is:

To explore the perceptions of child welfare workers in regards to immigrant families in contrast to non-immigrant families in the child welfare system by using the concept of corporal punishment as a point of departure.

I acknowledge that:

- The purpose, methods, confidentiality and anticipated benefits, and possible risks of the study, have been explained to me by the researcher Nathalia Perez Alfonso.
- I voluntarily and freely give my consent to my participation in the research.
- I understand that results of the research will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific journals and academic journals.
- I am free to withdraw at any time during the study, in which event my participation in the research study will immediately cease, and any information obtained will be destroyed

Signature: Date:

10.2 Annex 2:

Interview Guide

- First state confidentiality and the option to withdraw from the research and from this interview at any moment.
- Give consent letter and asked for it to be signed.

1. Objective:

To explore the perceptions and experiences of child welfare workers with immigrant families in contrast to non-immigrant families in relation to the use, acceptance and understanding of corporal punishment

- Could you briefly tell me about the last case you handled? – Expand on the case if relevant

Now I am going to be asking you about corporal punishment and spanking. I would like to define this concept.

It is important for me that you understand all the concepts. This is English and I know it can be more difficult.

- Could you briefly tell me about the last case you handled that involved corporal punishment? – Expand on the case if relevant
- What are your thoughts on the use of corporal punishment such as spanking?

If the interviewee doesn't mention whether the last cases were or not with immigrant.

- In your experience do immigrant families use corporal punishment more than ethnic Norwegians?

2. Objective:

To examine whether child welfare workers adopt different approaches in their work with immigrant families in contrast to non-immigrant families that are suspected to use corporal punishment towards children

- ✓ When handling cases of families suspected of using corporal punishment:
- Do you feel it is important to have different approaches when the families are from different cultures? – Expand on that
- How do you address the use of corporal punishment with immigrant families? Is this different from non-immigrant families?
- Are there any techniques you use when you work with immigrant families that you might not need with non-immigrants? Why?

3. Objective:

To identify the extent to which child welfare workers promote or expect immigrant families to adopt the Norwegian culture when raising their children.

Please comment and explain how would you handled the following scenarios:

Vignette 1:

A school teacher calls the child welfare office to report a possible case of corporal punishment towards Sayed, a 9-year-old boy.

Sayed seems to be well functioning, he participates in class and other activities and up to know there was nothing that trigger any concerns about him and his family. However, the teacher is worried because other children have been saying that Sayed gets physically punished at home.

Sayed's parents have always actively participated in parent-teacher meetings and any other activities related to school. But, when the teacher talked to them about the issue, they defended themselves by saying that they don't hit Sayed hard and this is a normal practice within their culture.

Vignette 2:

Fatima, a Fourteen-year-old girl contacts the child protection office because she wants to maintain a relationship with her boyfriend. Her parents refuse to allow her to make contact with him and have resorted to grounding her. The girl feels that she is being unfairly treated as all her peers are allowed to have partners; she has contacted the office for assistance.

Definitions:

Corporal punishment- "the intentional infliction of physical pain with the purpose of discouraging unwanted behaviour"

Spanking- is a type of corporal punishment involving the act of striking the buttocks of a child to cause physical pain, generally with an open hand. There are other more severe forms of spanking that involve objects or other parts of the body.

10.3 Annex 3

Plain Language Statement *This information is yours to keep*

Research project

The perceptions of child welfare workers in regards to immigrant families in contrast to non-immigrant families in the child welfare system of Norway.

Student Researcher

Natalia Perez Alfonso: Fourth semester Master in social work with families and children student
University of Stavanger

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Supervisor

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Purpose of the study

The overall purpose of the research project is to explore the perceptions of child welfare workers in regards to immigrant families in contrast to non-immigrant families in the child welfare system by using the concept of corporal punishment as a point of departure.

Benefits of the study

This study seeks to explore and communicate the views and perceptions of child welfare workers in regards to immigrant families which in itself carries high significance to the field of social work and child welfare. In addition, it is anticipated that the results of this study will add to the existing body of literature which is currently lacking information from the worker perspective. The findings are expected to create awareness of the use of children's rights in the child welfare system not only of Norway but other contexts. It also provides an opportunity for documenting the experience of child welfare workers in the region of Stavanger.

What would be expected of you?

If you decide to take part in this research you will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview with the researcher face to face. The interview will be about 30 to 50 minutes. The researcher hopes to use an audio recorder during interviews to collect all information from participants. If you do not wish to be audio recorded, please inform the researcher. Audio recordings and all information collected will be destroyed once the interviews have been transcribed. No names will be recorded and the researcher will do her utmost to ensure your confidentiality.

At the beginning of every interview the researcher will state that participation is strictly voluntary and participants can refuse participation at any time. Participants can also refuse to answer and discuss any of the above mentioned areas. All outcomes of the research and the information provided by participants will remain anonymous.

The end of the project is expected to be the 01/06/2016. Data collection is expected to be completed by the 31/03/2016.

Risks

There are no specific risks associated with this study; however, if you feel uncomfortable or emotional during discussions, you do not have to answer any questions or explore areas if you feel you do not want to. Participants have the right to withdraw from the project at any time; you only need to let the researcher know. All interview information and transcripts will be destroyed and no reference to your involvement will be made in the research. This is the right of all participants, and is respected by the researcher and supervisors.

Confidentiality

Complete confidentiality will be maintained of your details; you will be asked to use a pseudonym during interviews. Information from the Interviews will be coded and kept anonymous after data is analysed. Audio tapes will be destroyed once transcripts have been made.

The researcher reminds you of your responsibility for confidentiality towards your clients during the interviews. In addition, you should ensure that personal information about colleagues and others is not disclosed during the interviews in order to preserve confidentiality.

Your participation

The researcher would be extremely grateful if you could participate in this project, however you are free to refuse to participate. Even if you do decide to participate, you have the right to withdraw from it at any stage.

Results of this study

If you wish to see the transcripts of your interview you can be provided with a copy of it. In addition, participants will receive a copy of the final report upon request.

Thank you!

10.4 Annex 4

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS

NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES



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Svein Tuastad

Institutt for sosialfag Universitetet i Stavanger

Ullandhaug

4036 STAVANGER

Vår dato: 07.03.2016

Vår ref: 47043 / 3 / AGH

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 28.01.2016. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

47043 *A comparison on the perceptions of Social workers in regards to immigrant families in the Child protection in Australia and the child welfare in Norway*

Behandlingsansvarlig *Universitetet i Stavanger, ved institusjonens øverste leder*

Daglig ansvarlig *Svein Tuastad*

Student *Nathalia Perez Alfonso*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstillter kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering 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, 31.03.2016, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Agnete Hessevik

Kontaktperson: Agnete Hessevik tlf: 55 58 27 97

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

47043 The Perceptions of child welfare workers in regards to the use of corporal punishment Among Immigrant and non Immigrant families

Responsible

Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Social

Daily responsible Svein Tuastad

Student Nathalia Perez Alfonso

project Administration

Joined 28/01/2016

Project period: 03/07/2016 - 01/06/2016

Legal and treatment basis: Notification of project, ref. The Personal Data Act § 31

10.5 Annex 4

Non-plagiarism declaration

(To be submitted with the dissertation)

I hereby declare that the Dissertation titled *A study of the perceptions of child welfare workers on the use of corporal punishment among immigrant and Norwegian families* 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): 30/05/2016

Signature: *Nathalia Perez*

Name (in block letters): Nathalia Patricia Perez Alfonso