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Azerbaijani Immigrant Mothers Motherhood Experiences in Norway

Submitted by

Mahizar Zeynalova

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Supervised by

Prizma Ghimire

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Abstract

The primary focus of this study was to examine the motherhood experiences of Azerbaijani immigrant mothers in the Norwegian context. The main research question was how does it differ from Azerbaijani ideals of motherhood versus Norway and what are the challenges they face when navigating between these ideals and how do they navigate them? To explore that the study employed a qualitative research design where a sample group of five Azerbaijani mothers who had been residing in Norway for more than five years were included. Through a snowball sampling strategy, the participants were recruited. A thematic analysis was used to analyze and present the findings of this research.

The research findings showed that Azerbaijani mothers face significant cultural challenges in their motherhood experiences when living in Norway. These challenges result from the clash between their home culture and the host country's culture. Motherhood is seen as a carefully planned and lifelong endeavor, with mothers aiming to contribute to society by raising children as good human beings. Mothers adapt by embracing favorable aspects of the host culture while discarding unfavorable ones. However, this adaptation leads to conflicts in values between mothers and their children, as they are influenced differently. In this study, I also found that gender roles within the immigrant family shift in the new environment, with fathers becoming more involved in parenting. Despite these changes, mothers face challenges in balancing work and family duties due to the enduring influence of traditional gender roles from their home country. Moreover, the absence of support from relatives in the new country can cause stress and isolation. To address these differences, mothers employ various strategies, including engaging in different activities, communicating with people, and integrating positive aspects from both cultures into their lives. Based on these major conclusions drawn from the findings, appropriate policy and practice recommendations, and recommendations in relation to possible further research, are made.

Key words: Immigration and Motherhood, Cultural Clashes, Feminism, Acculturation, New Gender Role, Isolation and Adaptation.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the study

European nations have a rich history of encountering with immigration, however, the large-scale influx of migrants from around the world emerged primarily in the late 20th century (Mol & Valk, 2016; Haas, 2018). The most rapid and transformative phase of migration in the region began in 1990, driven by various factors such as the economic transition of former communist countries, ethnic conflicts, the integration of new European Union member states, and the promotion of open liberal trade policies (Dustmann & Frattini, 2013; Popescu, 2017). Advocates of open immigration have often highlighted the positive impacts of immigrants on the domestic economy, citing increased growth and economic vitality in both receiving and sending countries (United Nations, 2011; Brunow et al., 2015; Bell et al., 2016; d'Albis et al., 2018; Newbold, 2019; Nowrasteh & Powell, 2020). On the other hand, opponents argue that immigration can drive down domestic wages, strain the welfare state, fuel the rise of populist policies, and generate social conflicts (Collier, 2015; Borjas, 2016; Geddes & Scholten, 2016). Notably, from 1960 to 2020, the proportion of immigrants and naturalized citizens in high-income countries' populations tripled from 5% to 14.5% (World Bank, 2023). Furthermore, the availability of inclusive social protection measures has been found to influence the migration process, with immigrants being more attracted to states that offer generous benefits (Josifidis et al., 2014; Kahanec & Kurekova, 2014).

Norway is renowned for its generous welfare system that provides universal access to healthcare (Ringard et al., 2013). On the social front, Norway is known for its commitment to egalitarianism, embodied in the concept of "likhet," which denotes equality or similarity (Gullestad, 2002). This has attracted a significant number of immigrants to the country. According to the latest report, the immigrant population in Norway stands at 852,238 individuals, accounting for 15.72% of the total population (WorldPopulation Review, 2023), compared to only 6% in 2000 (Statistics Norway, 2018). Immigrants in Norway represent a diverse group originating from Europe, Asia, Africa, and other regions (Statistics Norway, 2021). These immigrants vary not only in terms of their countries of origin but also in their motives for migration. The largest proportion of immigrants in Norway are labor migrants, followed by family reunification immigrants and refugees (Statistics Norway, 2021). Since

1990, approximately one-third of immigrants have arrived for employment, one-third for family reunification, one-fifth for protection, and one-tenth for educational purposes (Statistics Norway, 2018).

Research indicates that although immigrants make up less than one-fifth of the overall population, nearly 40% of social assistance recipients are immigrants in Norway (Smedsvik et al., 2021). However, immigrants in Norway face barriers in accessing healthcare services due to language obstacles, and these challenges are further compounded by cultural influences or values, difficulties in navigating the healthcare system, and experiences of discrimination (Arora et al., 2019; Kumar & Diaz, 2019; Mbanya et al., 2019; Straiton & Myhre, 2017; Thyli, Hedelin, & Athlin, 2014). Moreover, the presence of ethnicized cultural discourses and negative perceptions about immigrants in the public sphere has been found to impact their interactions with healthcare providers in Norway (Arora et al., 2019). These findings highlight the vulnerable circumstances faced by immigrants in terms of healthcare, social welfare, and economic aspects in Norway.

In the past decade, Norway has experienced one of the highest rates of immigration among OECD countries, leading to significant demographic changes within a relatively short period (Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2017). It is important to note that Norway transitioned into a pluralistic society in recent decades, particularly after the discovery of oil, which attracted immigrants from diverse ethnic backgrounds (Council of Europe, 2014). The oil-rich cities in Norway and the country's economic prosperity make it a more appealing destination for immigrants compared to other countries (Council of Europe, 2014).

An example of such immigration is observed from Azerbaijan, a transcontinental country situated at the intersection of Eastern Europe and Western Asia. Migrants from Azerbaijan increasingly view Europe and the EU-28 as attractive destinations, with approximately 42,000 Azerbaijanis currently residing in the EU (ICMPD, 2018). Azerbaijan gained global recognition as an oil-producing country in the mid-19th century and started industrial oil production. By 1899, Azerbaijan was the world's leading oil producer and accounted for 50% of global oil production (Onal-Kilicbeyli, Mikail & Çora, 2021). Over time, the diplomatic and economic ties between Azerbaijan and Norway, driven by their oil strategies, have contributed to economic growth and immigration between the two countries. Many Azerbaijani oil engineers, along with their families, have migrated to Norway since the 20th century.

This study aims to understanding the dynamics of motherhood in the context of migration is significant as it provides valuable insights into how migrant mothers navigate their experiences and develop their sense of belonging in different places (Milton & Svasek, 2005). The knowledge gained from the study can inform the development of effective interventions and strategies within social work practice to support migrant mothers and their families. Additionally, policymakers can utilize these insights to shape policies that address the unique challenges and needs of migrant mothers, aiming to create more inclusive and supportive environments for them.

1.2. Research problem

The Norwegian government can be characterized as a welfare regime that prioritizes the well-being of families, implementing comprehensive universal welfare policies (Hantrais, 2004). The country has been at the forefront of promoting children's rights (Hollekim et al., 2016; Hennum, 2014), with a strong emphasis on considering the "child's best interest" in all measures concerning children (Skivenes, 2011). The maternal health services and delivery system in Norway follow a universal approach, ensuring that all pregnant women, regardless of their legal residency status, are entitled to equal access to maternal health services (Mehrara et al., 2022). The services provided by the state not only support citizens but also serve as mechanisms for authorities to safeguard children and ensure that families, parents, and children adhere to the standards of proper and healthy parenting and childhood (Hennum, 2010; Hollekim et al., 2016).

As a result, Norwegian childhood is surrounded by an extensive system of oversight and control (Friberg & Bjørnset, 2019). Various professionals, including health nurses, minority advisors, child and adolescent psychiatry services, and Child Welfare Services (CWS), are expected to support parents in their parental roles (Smette & Rosten, 2019). Parents receive detailed advice and guidelines regarding various aspects of child-rearing, including diet, hygiene, bedtime routines, upbringing, and socialization, starting from childbirth (Smette & Rosten, 2019).

When immigrant women navigate reproductive health services (RHS) in a new country, they often encounter cultural beliefs about pregnancy and childbirth that differ from those in their home countries, as well as a lack of information about available services (Fair et al., 2020). Due to their cultural understandings of childhood and motherhood, migrant mothers may

engage in parenting practices that diverge from the norms of the society they reside in (Jaysane-Darr, 2013). Friberg and Bjørnset (2019) highlight that for many immigrants, the encounter with the Norwegian child welfare system and its norms can be a challenging experience. This holds true not only for non-Western immigrants but also for European immigrants (Korzeniewska et al., 2019). Immigrant women may not always receive optimal care during pregnancy and childbirth due to language barriers, while midwives and other healthcare professionals may have limited knowledge of intercultural care (Balaam et al., 2013; Sellevold et al., 2022). This becomes particularly challenging when interventions in the new culture clash with the women's previous experiences (Bohren, 2019). Raffaetà (2016) points out that public discourses in many Western societies often stigmatize immigrant families as "problematic" due to their cultural practices, disregarding their rational or ideological motivations. Immigrant parenting practices are expected to conform to the host culture's norms and should not contradict the requirements of the new society (Berry, 2005). This clash of preferred parenting standards between the host society and immigrant parents' culture can create problematic situations, as they may have different rules, meanings, and values (Berry, 2005). For instance, according to data from Statistics Norway, immigrant children are 2.6 times more likely to be placed in out-of-home care compared to their Norwegian counterparts (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011).

Based on recent statistics, out of a total of 56,060 newborns in Norway in 2021, 14,394 were born to mothers with an immigrant background, representing 25.6% of all births in the country during that year (Statistics Norway, 2021). A probabilistic forecast for Norway's immigrant population indicates significant growth in the next four decades, with a projected median value in 2060 that is 44% higher than in 2022. Consequently, addressing cultural diversity in Norwegian society has become a crucial challenge for both the government and civil society. The challenges related to migration that this group of mothers faces may hinder their ability to meet the demanding standards of intensive mothering, which require considerable time and resources (Berry, 2013). Difficulties in conforming to this ideal can leave migrant mothers more susceptible to marginalization in the host society and contribute to complex and conflicting emotions regarding their mothering experiences. This raises the question of how immigrants, who have developed within one cultural context, can navigate life in a new context while preserving their traditions, cultures, ways of perceiving the world, and beliefs (Berry, 2003). In particular, immigrant mothers face the dilemma of reevaluating their motherhood based on the new ideologies and practices of the dominant culture, given that the

concept of the "good mother" is deeply rooted in values, customs, and morals that vary across cultures (Hays, 1998; Strier, 1996).

The clash between immigrant cultures and the Norwegian societal norms influences how immigrant mothers perceive the Norwegian ideal of motherhood. In Norway, these ideals are shaped by Western ideology, emphasizing individualism, independence, and egalitarian parent-child relationships, which may differ from the values and experiences of individuals from collectivist cultures or those who have encountered paternalistic dominance (Bø, 2015). The act of raising children is increasingly seen as deeply meaningful, time-consuming, and requiring expert guidance from professionals such as psychologists, pediatricians, and through various media sources like books and television programs (Faircloth, et al, 2013; Jaysane-Darr, 2013; Raffaetà, 2016). Good parenting has thus become associated with specific social, educational, and cultural backgrounds (Raffaetà, 2016).

Given the aforementioned context, it is crucial to acknowledge the existing gaps in knowledge within social work concerning immigrant mothers and children. Often, these mothers display limited proactive behavior in seeking information regarding immigration laws, the situation in their home countries, or their daily experiences (Bø, 2015). Moreover, there is a dearth of exploration into the specific motherhood experiences of Azerbaijani immigrant mothers in their new host country like Norway. This research endeavor aims to bridge this gap by examining how migrant mothers navigate the intricacies of different cultural norms, reinterpret their own realities, and actively make sense of their unique experiences (Bø, 2015). Through this analysis, valuable insights can be gained, offering a deeper understanding of the complexities and agency exhibited by immigrant mothers in their motherhood journeys.

1.3. Research aim

The research purpose is to provide the research evidence which considers the motherhood experiences of Azerbaijani immigrant mothers in Norway and analyze their perceptions of being mother in Norwegian context.

1.4. Research objectives

The general objective is to explore the motherhood experiences of Azerbaijani immigrant mothers in Norway. The specific objectives are:

- To analyze Azerbaijani immigrant mothers' experience parenting practices regarding to the perception of a Norwegian ideals of 'motherhood'
- To have an understanding of how an immigrant mother's cultural history influences their parenting habits.
- To understand how immigrant mothers strike the balance between 'doing parenting' that is more identifiably 'the Norwegian way' versus the maintenance of their own culturally prescriptive style of parenting.

1.5. Research questions

This research project plans to answer the following research questions:

- How do Azerbaijani immigrant mothers define "motherhood"?
- How do Azerbaijani immigrant mothers understand the Norwegian ideals of "motherhood"? How does it differ from Azerbaijani ideals of motherhood versus Norway?
- What are the challenges they face when navigating between these ideals and how do they navigate them?

1.6. Significance

Social workers hold an essential role in society due to their recognition of the value placed on service users' viewpoints. These perspectives serve as a valuable tool for exploring our understanding of parenting, motherhood, fatherhood, and children. The insights gained from such viewpoints have far-reaching benefits for professionals, families, children, and policymakers (Hollwekim et al., 2015). By understanding how clients perceive and engage with the world, social workers can provide high-quality services that are aligned with their needs.

In the context of our increasingly interconnected global community, where individuals are drawn to resettling in foreign countries for various reasons, Norway stands out as a nation that offers immigrants better life opportunities. However, the country's current homogenous culture is facing growing criticism from a multitude of minority cultures. Consequently, there is a pressing need to address the demands of a pluralistic society. To achieve this, it becomes crucial to emphasize policies that prioritize family and child welfare while remaining impartial to the ethnic composition of the population (Dyrhaug & Sky, 2015).

Moreover, it is imperative to conduct research that explores the perspectives of immigrant families, particularly in relation to their adherence to diverse cultural values and the unique challenges they encounter (Studsrod, Willumsen & Ellingsen, 2014). The findings from such research would prove invaluable to social work practitioners, contributing to the advancement of knowledge in the field of working with families and children. Furthermore, this research would facilitate critical self-reflection on professional practices, fostering their development and improvement.

Furthermore, there exists a significant gap in English literature concerning immigrant mothers' experiences of motherhood in Norway, specifically from the perspectives of Azerbaijani mothers. Addressing this gap through research would yield substantial insights and understanding, benefiting both immigrant families and society at large. It would provide valuable guidance for immigrant families to navigate the expectations of Norwegian culture and gain a deeper understanding of effective parenting practices within that context.

2. Literature Review

In order to explore relevant literature, Bryman (2016) recommended utilizing databases such as the "Social Science Citation Index," "Scopus," "Google Scholar," and "Sociology Collection." These databases were searched using keywords such as "immigrant," "refugee," "mother," "culture," "motherhood," and immigrants," "culture and parenting," "parenting practices," "welfare services," "acculturation," and "Norway" or "Nordic countries." Additionally, the UIS (Oria.com) online library was also searched using the same set of keywords to discover further literature. It should be noted that the existing empirical research on the experiences of immigrant mothers in the Nordic countries is limited. Therefore, this section also includes discussions on the motherhood experiences of immigrants in other countries which would be substantial to enhance our understanding the issues from a broader perspective.

2.1. Immigration and Motherhood

The increasing rates of immigration worldwide have made the intersection of immigration and motherhood an increasingly relevant topic. Immigration is a complex process that presents various challenges, including adapting to a new environment, questioning values and norms, and reevaluating parental roles (Este & Tachble, 2009). Parenting practices and experiences can vary across different cultural contexts (Kim et al., 2013), and the differences between immigrants' child-rearing practices from their home country and those dominant in the host society can lead to parental stress and tension (Yakhnich, 2016). As a result, immigrant individuals may question their parenting style and adjust their child-rearing practices based on their experiences in the host culture (Nesteruk & Marks, 2011; Kim, 2018).

Among the migrant population, immigrant women constitute 48% (migrationportal.com) and face unique challenges due to their gender and mothering responsibilities. Previous research has shown differences in parenting experiences between mothers and fathers (Cabrera et al., 201, Simons & Conger, 2007) and how gender interacts with parenting (Locke & Yarwood, 2017; Nygren et al., 2021; Shirani et al., 2012). When considering the intersection of gender and parenting in the context of migration, the challenges faced by immigrant women become even more complex. Immigrant women who move to a new country often encounter difficulties in adapting to new social norms, cultural differences, language barriers, and new mothering practices (Abrego & Schmalz-bauer, 2018; García & Schmalzbauer, 2017; Lyberg

et al., 2012; Heyman et al., 2013). These challenges not only impact their mothering experiences but can also have implications for their children's lives.

For example, language barriers and lack of knowledge about the host country's healthcare system can make it challenging for immigrant women to access prenatal care, delivery services, and postpartum care (Barclay & Kent, 1998). Additionally, difficulties in accessing social services, education, and employment opportunities can affect their ability to support their children (Barclay & Kent, 1998). It is important to note that these obstacles are not unique to immigrant women and can also be influenced by socio-economic status (Barnett, Matthey, & Boyce, 1999). Furthermore, the concept of cultural capital and motherhood capital, as highlighted by Lo (2016), provides insight into how low-income immigrant mothers can navigate the challenges they face. Cultural capital refers to the knowledge and understanding of cultural norms in the new country, while motherhood capital encompasses the skills and knowledge gained through mothering that can be applied in different contexts. However, these concepts alone do not fully explain the challenges immigrant women face as mothers in diverse contexts.

Pulido (2009) emphasizes the impact of immigration policies on mothers and their families, suggesting that such policies can have significant implications for children's well-being. The author argues that immigration policies should prioritize mothers' rights and protect children's welfare, acknowledging the role of socio-economic factors in shaping mothering experiences. These policies should aim to provide adequate support to mothers facing challenges and promote the well-being of their children. The subsequent sections will delve deeper into a detailed discussion of the challenges faced by immigrant mothers.

2.2. Immigration in The Norwegian Context

Norway, recognized as a highly esteemed country, ranks among the top nations globally in terms of quality of life and child-rearing opportunities. Until the late 20th century, Norway was predominantly considered an ethnically and culturally homogeneous nation, with limited emigration. However, present-day migration patterns reveal a significant increase in ethnic and cultural diversity (Andreassen, Dzamarija & Slaastad, 2013). Statistics Norway (2015) reports that in 2014, there were 633,100 immigrants and 126,100 individuals born in Norway to immigrant parents. The major causes of immigration include employment opportunities, family reunification, refugee status, educational pursuits, war, and poverty.

In terms of general attitudes towards immigrants in Norway, Bolm (2012) highlights a predominantly positive view. There is a belief among 80% of Norwegians that immigrants make important contributions to the country's working life, and 86% support equal work opportunities for immigrants. However, on social and political levels, opinions are less positive. While a majority (67%) believe Norway should continue admitting refugees and asylum seekers, one-third of the population believes that most immigrants abuse the welfare system. Additionally, 43% of Norwegians feel that it should be more challenging for refugees and asylum seekers to obtain residence permits. Although the majority is accepting of having immigrants as neighbors, one-fourth would feel uncomfortable with an immigrant son- or daughter-in-law. During normal times as well as in times of crisis, immigrants have been found to be particularly vulnerable in foreign countries. This vulnerability has become even more pronounced during the global COVID-19 pandemic. In a study conducted by Smedsvik et al. (2022) that identified four main issues experienced by immigrants: a sense of stagnation, perceptions towards government and health authorities, the boundaries between "us" and "them," and coping strategies. As the number of immigrants continues to rise, Norway has witnessed a surge in debates surrounding integration, immigration policy, multiculturalism, and national identity.

In conclusion, immigration has become a crucial issue for Norway in recent years, impacting its social, economic, cultural, and political landscape. While certain provisions have been beneficial to immigrants, it is evident that they face discrimination when accessing proper services compared to native individuals. Therefore, there is a need to reassess immigration policies and make them more inclusive.

2.3. Motherhood Experiences of Immigrant Women

Motherhood holds great significance for women, playing a pivotal role in shaping their identities and daily lives, regardless of their geographical location. From a broader perspective, the role of motherhood is deeply intertwined with human connections and is a matter of concern for all, as it relates to female reproductive capacity and societal expectations regarding childcare and domestic responsibilities. Across various cultures and historical periods, these aspects have been linked to women's subordinate status (Chavkin, 2010). Migration, as a significant factor, can have a profound impact on the experiences of motherhood. The process of migration often brings about changes in family structures, social

support networks, and cultural values and practices, thereby influencing how women adapt to their roles as mothers in their new country.

One prominent theme in the literature is the mothering practices of immigrant women, which can be shaped by their cultural backgrounds and the norms and expectations of the host country (Vesely et al., 2019; Liu, 2019). Recent research has found that while mother-child attachment and nurturance align with their cultural values, immigrant women also face challenges in balancing these ideals with work demands and other responsibilities in their new context (Vesely et al., 2019). For example, Liu (2019) discovered that Chinese immigrant mothers in Australia adapt their motherhood practices by combining traditional Chinese values of filial piety with Western emphasis on individualism and self-expression. Similar findings from related studies emphasize the intricate negotiations that immigrant women engage in to reconcile their cultural heritage with the expectations of the host society, resulting in varying mothering practices based on cultural background and host country expectations (Park, Patil, & Norr, 2016; Benza & Liamputtong, 2017; Vesely et al., 2019; Liu, 2019). For instance, Korean immigrant mothers in the United States were found to apply authoritarian parenting styles to promote child obedience and maintain Korean cultural values, while Zimbabwean women in Melbourne prioritized their children's education and engaged in discipline and guidance practices aligned with Zimbabwean cultural values (Park, Patil, & Norr, 2016; Benza & Liamputtong, 2017). These findings demonstrate that immigrant women's mothering practices are influenced by their cultural background and the cultural expectations of the host country.

Another significant theme pertains to the impact of immigration as a potentially stressful and disruptive experience, which can affect women's mental health, well-being, and consequently, their ability to parent effectively. For instance, Benza and Liamputtong (2017) discovered that Zimbabwean immigrant women in Australia experienced high levels of stress due to financial insecurity, lack of social support, and cultural isolation, which hindered their ability to parent effectively. Similarly, Chinese immigrant mothers in Australia reported language barriers and social isolation, negatively impacting their mothering practices and ability to seek social support (Liu, 2019). Latina immigrants in the United States also experienced acculturation stress, which influenced their mothering practices and relationships with their children (Vesely, Letiecq, & Goodman, 2019). However, in contrast to these findings, Park et al. (2016) highlighted that Korean immigrant mothers in the United States expressed greater satisfaction with their parenting role compared to their counterparts in Korea, attributing it to

the increased autonomy and support they received in the new country. This suggests that the impact of immigration on motherhood experiences depends on individual, social, and cultural factors.

While there is growing attention to the experiences of immigrant women in motherhood, there are still gaps in the existing literature from a broader aspect. For instance, Zhu (2020) discovered that Chinese immigrant mothers encounter significant difficulties in accessing lifelong learning opportunities including various forms of learning such as formal training programs, adaptability, and active participation in a changing world, which hinders their ability to enhance their parenting skills and improve their social and economic mobility. This highlights the unique challenges they face, such as navigating their children's education in a new cultural context. Additionally, a meta-synthesis conducted by Benza and Liamputtong (2014) revealed that immigrant women from diverse cultural backgrounds encounter similar challenges related to language barriers, social isolation, and racism, which require further attention. These studies emphasize the need for more research on the structural and systemic barriers that immigrant women encounter while navigating their experiences of motherhood in a new country.

Taking into account these findings, it becomes evident that the motherhood experiences of immigrant women are shaped by various factors, including cultural values, social support networks, and the influence of migration. The literature suggests that immigrant women engage in intricate negotiations as they strive to reconcile their cultural heritage with the expectations of the host society, and the process of immigration can both facilitate and constrain their ability to parent effectively. However, further research is necessary to address the existing gaps and challenges that immigrant women confront while navigating their journeys of motherhood in a new country.

2.4. Being Immigrant Mother in Norwegian Context

Following the increased influx of immigrants to Norway, immigration has become a significant phenomenon accompanied by various challenges, particularly concerning the experiences of immigrant women in motherhood within the Norwegian context (Schmidt, 2018). This literature review aims to explore the challenges encountered by immigrant mothers in Norway and other similar contexts.

Hollekim et al. (2016) highlight that contemporary discourses on children and parenting in Norway emphasize "good" parenting practices aligned with Norwegian cultural norms. However, immigrant mothers may have different parenting styles and cultural practices that do not align with these norms. This disparity in child-rearing practices can lead to misunderstandings and tensions between immigrant families and the services provided. Consequently, immigrant parents may feel pressured to conform to Norwegian parenting practices, leading to stress and strained relationships with their children. Herrero-Arias et al. (2020) discuss the language and cultural challenges faced by Southern European immigrant mothers in accessing maternity care services in the Norwegian context. Language barriers, lack of information, and cultural differences pose obstacles for these mothers. Sundsbo (2022) further highlights the challenge immigrant mothers face in accessing inclusive parenting support services. Existing parenting support services may not be inclusive of different cultures, creating barriers for immigrant mothers to seek support. The absence of inclusive parenting support services can significantly impact the mental health, well-being, and development of both immigrant mothers and their children. Nadim (2014) explores the challenges faced by second-generation Pakistani immigrant women in Norway in reconciling motherhood and paid work. Gender norms and cultural expectations shape the experiences of these women. The study reveals that the cultural and institutional context of the Norwegian welfare state facilitates the transformation of cultural and moral understandings, supporting mothers' participation in paid work.

While the Norwegian Child Welfare System is designed to protect children, Christiansen and Anderssen (2010) note that it can present challenges for immigrant parents. Immigrant mothers may have different cultural expectations for parenting, leading to misunderstandings and conflicts. As a result, immigrant children are placed in out-of-home care 2.6 times more often than their Norwegian counterparts, which may contradict their families' cultural values (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011). In addition to these cultural challenges, immigrant families face economic and social barriers in Norway, which can increase the stress of parenting. Poverty and social isolation experienced by immigrant mothers impact their ability to provide for their children's basic needs and participate in social activities with other families (Dyrhaug & Sky, 2015).

In response to the challenges faced by immigrant mothers, Norway has implemented policies to provide support for these mothers and their families. The strong welfare state in Norway offers financial assistance and services to all families, including immigrant families.

Furthermore, the Norwegian government has implemented policies that promote multiculturalism and diversity, aiming to foster inclusivity and value immigrant mothers within Norwegian society (Bø, 2015). However, Bacallao and Smokowski (2007) argue that the specific challenges faced by immigrant mothers can vary across countries, influenced by factors such as immigration policies, cultural norms, and economic conditions. They suggest that policies may not fully address the unique challenges of immigrant mothers, including issues related to integration, cultural adaptation, and the stress of the immigration process itself. For instance, while immigrant mothers in Norway may struggle with integrating into Norwegian cultural practices and expectations, immigrant mothers in the United States may face challenges related to legal status and accessing services (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007). Mexican immigrant families in the United States, for example, often experience stress due to their legal status, which can hinder their access to services and their full participation in their communities. In contrast, Norway's welfare state and social policies provide financial support and services for all families, including immigrant families. Nonetheless, these policies may not fully address the challenges specific to immigrant mothers, as Križ and Skivenes (2011) highlight the lack of cultural competence among child welfare workers in Norway and England when working with minority parents.

Recent cases involving immigrant parents and their children being placed in out-of-home care by the CWS have sparked protests and diplomatic issues between Norway and the countries of origin of these immigrants. Statistical data from Dyrhaug and Sky (2015) and previous research (Bratberg et al., 2017; Staer & Bjørknes, 2015) indicate that immigrant families are overrepresented in the CWS system, often due to economic support, voluntary parental guidance, and the automatic entry of young unaccompanied asylum seekers. While Norwegians generally have high levels of trust in the government and the welfare state, immigrants in Norway exhibit higher levels of trust in the political system but lower levels of relational trust with others compared to Norwegians. Immigrants' perceptions of the Norwegian welfare system are generally positive, particularly regarding the quality of education and healthcare services, but there appears to be a level of mistrust in their interactions with professionals in these services (Friberg & Bjørnset, 2019; Gjerstad et al., 2015). Tensions have arisen between the Norwegian Child Welfare Services (CWS) and various migrant groups in Norway, leading to fears, a "crisis of trust," and concerns about custody cases, care orders, and the overrepresentation of migrant children in child welfare (Bratberg et al., 2017). However, the causes of these beliefs and the extent to which cultural

sensitivity, ethnic discrimination, or other factors contribute to distrust remain unclear. Previous studies have mainly focused on migrant parents engaged with the CWS or on the perspectives of child welfare officers, with limited exploration of broader migrant communities or digital and transnational networks.

In conclusion, immigrant mothers in Norway and other countries encounter various challenges related to integration, cultural adaptation, economic conditions, and access to services. While policies and services aim to support these mothers and their families, there is a need for further efforts to comprehensively address their unique needs and challenges. Cultural competence and sensitivity among service providers are essential for delivering effective support and services to immigrant mothers and their families.

2.5. The experiences of Azerbaijani immigrant mothers

The articles discussed above shed light on the difficulties faced by immigrant women, highlighting the challenges they encounter in their new contexts. Azerbaijan immigrants encounter a wide range of challenges when residing in a foreign country, influenced by the conservative outlook on gender parity and the ongoing transformative phase of cultures and values in their home country. A recent study conducted by Shahin et al (2021) focused on migration and integration issues faced by Azerbaijani immigrants in the United States. The study identified several challenges experienced by these immigrants, including feelings of nostalgia and homesickness, a sense of distance from family and friends, language barriers, personal and cultural differences leading to culture shock, difficulties in social integration and building interpersonal relationships, adjustments to gastronomic differences, high cost of living, obstacles in job searches (such as protectionism or difficulty finding work in their field), concerns about the quality and affordability of medical care (including insurance), and experiencing an "immigrant complex." The "immigrant complex" refers to a psychological pain or a feeling of being considered a second-class person in comparison to the local population, which can impact self-esteem and well-being (Shahin et al, 2021).

While there is a lack of literature specifically addressing Azerbaijani immigrants, Dedeoğlu (2012) conducted a study on Azerbaijani immigrant women working in Istanbul's industrial sector. The research revealed that these women had to employ various survival strategies to cope with the challenges of being migrant workers. Some adopted a stoic attitude towards their work, while others found solace in their faith. These strategies involved accepting unfavorable working conditions, low wages, and limited opportunities for advancement.

Additionally, many experienced discrimination and harassment in the workplace, which hindered their career progression and ability to secure better working conditions. Although this article does not specifically address motherhood challenges, it highlights the overall difficulties immigrant women face at every stage of the immigration process.

In summary, there is a lack of sufficient literature on the specific circumstances of Azerbaijani mothers residing in Norway. However, existing studies suggest that migrants in Norway are treated differently based on their economic, cultural, and political involvement. In order to gain a deeper understanding of how Azerbaijani women experience motherhood in Norway, it is crucial to conduct comprehensive research that explores their experiences in detail. This research can contribute to the development of policies and initiatives aimed at improving the well-being of Azerbaijani immigrant mothers and their families in Norway.

3. Theoretical Framework

This section presents a discussion on the theoretical frameworks chosen to comprehensively understand the research topic, which focuses on motherhood within the context of immigration. The selected frameworks include acculturation theory, feminist theory, and resilience theory, which collectively contribute to the conceptual understanding of the research themes.

Acculturation theory offers a contextual perspective by examining the cultural dimensions of immigrant parenting and the influence of the acculturation process on parental behaviors. Several studies have adopted acculturation theories to explore the challenges faced by immigrants in various contexts (Gaviria et al., 2019; Kayama & Yamakawa, 2020; Zulfqar et al., 2021). Feminist theory, on the other hand, provides a framework to analyze the research topic within a broader social context, highlighting the gendered nature of parenting and the impact of societal norms and expectations on the experiences of mothers. Therefore, it is crucial to consider the intersection of gender with other factors such as culture and immigration status when studying motherhood experiences (Bonifacio, 2012; Hyndman, 2010; Nawyn, 2010). Given the pertinence to our study, these theories are extensively explored in the subsequent subsections, delving into their intricacies and implications.

3.1. Acculturation Theory

Acculturation has been defined as the process of individuals adapting to a multicultural environment, particularly when they migrate or build a new life in a different society (Berry, 2003; Cheung-Blunden & Juang, 2008). It involves reciprocal cultural and psychological changes in immigrants as they interact with a new culture over an extended period (Sam & Berry, 2010; Hasanoviü et al., 2020). Chirkov (2023) suggests that Alfred Schutz's concept of the "stranger" can provide a better understanding of the acculturation process. The stranger, as an outsider, relies on their existing knowledge and experience to comprehend and adjust to the new culture. Through social interactions and experiences, the stranger gradually develops a more nuanced understanding of the new culture.

In cross-cultural studies, researchers have examined the outcomes of the acculturation process. Ward and colleagues (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1994) distinguish between psychological and sociocultural effects of acculturation. Psychological adaptation, described as "feeling well," refers to the individual's well-being, while societal adaptation,

described as "performing well," refers to their ability to function in the new society. Berry (1997) notes that psychological and social adaptations occur at different rates and can be predicted by different factors. Psychological adjustment, related to "feeling well," is more variable over time and influenced by personality traits and social support. On the other hand, sociocultural adjustment, related to "doing well," is predicted by factors such as cultural knowledge, level of contact with the new culture, and intergroup attitudes. Depending on the specific target group, sociocultural adjustment can also include indicators like learning achievement or work adaptation (Jouda, 2022).

In summary, acculturation theory offers a valuable framework for comprehending the intricate and multifaceted process of adjustment that takes place when individuals or communities come into contact with a new culture.

3.1.1 Acculturation strategies

According to Berry (2003), acculturation is a bilateral process involving two acculturation orientations towards the host and home cultures, resulting in four acculturation strategies: assimilation (embracing the host culture and rejecting the home culture), separation (rejecting the host culture and clinging to the home culture), integration (accepting and bridging both cultures), and marginalization (rejecting both cultures). Berry suggests that integration tends to be the most adaptive strategy, while marginalization is considered the least adaptive. This model has been widely used to investigate acculturation in various empirical studies, exploring its associations with mental health, family values, ethnic identity, and other factors (Constantine, Okazaki, & Utsey, 2004).

It is shown that these four acculturation strategies are related to the psychological and sociocultural adaptation of migrants. Integration has been found to be the most adaptive strategy, especially in societies that promote multiculturalism, whereas separation and marginalization tend to predict negative outcomes (Swagler & Jome, 2005). It is important to note that the success or failure of the acculturation process is not solely determined by the immigrants' choice of strategies. The attitudes of the host society towards immigrants also significantly impact the process. Acceptance of immigrants by the host society facilitates their integration, while rejection can lead to the marginalization of newcomers.

3.1.2 Emotional, behavioral, and cognitive aspects of acculturation

Acculturation encompasses emotional, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions that influence individuals' adaptation to a new culture (Berry, 1997). Emotionally, individuals may experience anxiety, stress, and depression as they strive to adjust to a different cultural environment. Behaviorally, acculturation involves changes in various aspects of individuals' behavior, such as their eating habits, clothing choices, and communication styles, in order to fit into the new culture (Berry, 2005). Cognitively, acculturation entails alterations in individuals' thoughts, values, beliefs, and attitudes as they adapt to the new cultural context. Research on acculturation and self-management indicates that increased engagement and adjustment to the host culture are associated with better health outcomes and disease control (Cramm & Nieboer, 2019).

In the context of student mobility, several studies have identified an initial phase known as the "honeymoon" period, characterized by excitement, fascination, and optimism, where students may not critically reflect on the complexity of their experiences (Anukrati, 2016; Ritchie, 2009; Kim, 2001). However, research also highlights that many international students initially experience distress and cultural shock, feeling disconnected from their home culture (Pyvis & Chapman, 2005; Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008; Belford, 2017). Furthermore, both students and social workers engaged in field practice with different cultural groups, either locally or abroad, have reported intense emotional responses such as anger, guilt, frustration, anxiety, and a sense of being misunderstood and silenced (Barlow, 2007; Lough, 2009; Matthew & Lough, 2017).

Considering the research findings suggest that people employ various approaches to adjust to a new cultural setting, and coping mechanisms and parental effectiveness are significant factors in the process of adapting to a different culture. A thorough comprehension of these aspects of acculturation can assist individuals, families, and communities in effectively managing the difficulties associated with cultural transitions.

3.2. Feminism Theory

Feminism, as defined by Hooks (2015), is a movement aimed at ending sexist oppression. This theory highlights the significance of social, political, and economic structures in shaping societies and emphasizes the need to consider gender when examining power dynamics and the effects of oppression and domination (Kabeer, 2009; Grosz, 2010; Kemp & Brandwein,

2010; Abromovitz, 2012). The core belief of feminist theory is that women's inferior status is a result of societal inequality, where their personal standing is influenced by political, economic, and social power relations. Feminist analysis helps women understand their oppression, inspiring them to work towards broader social change (Turner & Maschi, 2015). Feminist social work is characterized by a strong focus on connection and the power of mutual relationships (Jordan, 2010). Activists advocating for sexual and reproductive rights, affordable childcare, and equal pay for equal work address powerlessness and domination while demanding their rights as human beings (Turner & Maschi, 2015). Feminist theory addresses various factors that shape the experiences of men and women, including historical, political, economic, and ontological conditions, with the aim of transforming existing social systems and structures (Grosz, 2010).

The recent evolution of gender and migration literature heavily draws on gender relations theory, particularly in understanding how gender dynamics change through migration and settlement (Connell, 2002). Connell's framework identifies four dimensions of gender relations (power, production, emotional, and symbolic relations) that interact within social institutions, each institution having its own gender regime influencing individual gender performance. While not all sociological research on gender and migration explicitly employs gender relations theory, many studies incorporate its fundamental elements, exploring how gendered practices are challenged, maintained, and reconstructed (Nawyn, 2010). In examining the integration of gender into daily operations and institutional structures such as labor incorporation, ethnic enclave businesses, citizenship, sexuality, and ethnic identity, researchers shed light on how gender is incorporated in society (Nawyn, 2010).

In brief, feminist theory offers an invaluable framework for comprehending and addressing the unique challenges and gender-related issues experienced by immigrant women. It acknowledges the significance of adopting intersectional approaches that prioritize the concerns of women belonging to marginalized groups and challenge the patriarchal systems that perpetuate their oppression.

3.1 The Empowering of Women and Eclectic approach in Feminism Theory

Empowerment is a prominent aspect of feminist theory, aiming to liberate individuals from internalized oppression and equip them with the power to confront external obstacles (Brown, 2018). It seeks to enhance the personal, interpersonal, and political power of marginalized populations for individual and collective transformation (Lee, 2001; AlMaseb & Julia, 2007). Feminist practice emphasizes the importance of individuals taking action to bring about change in their own lives, fostering connections with community groups, and encouraging participation in social movements (Todd & Occhiuto, 2022). Feminist social workers assist clients in feeling less isolated, gaining control over their lives, and experiencing collective empowerment (Todd & Occhiuto, 2022). The empowerment approach assumes that clients are best positioned to understand their own problems and possess strengths that can be built upon. It recognizes that racism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism contribute to societal ills and impact clients' lives (Lee, 2001).

In the context of feminism, an eclectic approach acknowledges the complexity of gender-based issues and advocates for a combination of theoretical and practical approaches. This approach emphasizes reflexivity, critical analysis, and self-awareness in research, drawing from various perspectives and theories to comprehend and address the diverse experiences and challenges of women (Dominelli, 2002). Given the diverse client groups encountered in social work, feminist practitioners employ a range of theories based on the client, presenting issues, and clinical setting. The aim is to reduce power differentials between clients and social workers, fostering a strong therapeutic relationship that promotes empowerment (Todd & Occhiuto, 2022).

In summary, feminist theory encompasses two notable approaches, namely empowerment and eclectic, which aim to empower and liberate individuals facing oppression. When applied to the context of gender inequality, these approaches can be utilized to examine the specific dimensions of inequality that disproportionately affect women. Social workers can employ these approaches to empower immigrant mothers who are grappling with challenges in environments where women's perspectives are disregarded or overlooked.

Overall, these three theoretical frameworks recognize the significance of social and cultural factors in shaping individuals' experiences and outcomes, with a particular emphasis on understanding how gender interacts with culture and immigration status. This understanding

can inform the development of more effective interventions and policies aimed at promoting the resilience and well-being of immigrant mothers and families.

4. Methodology

This chapter describes the methodological framework of the study where the study site and sample are described, aspects of the data collection and relevant epistemological issues are generally discussed, as well as data analysis and ethical considerations are considered in this part.

4.1. Research Design and Approach

The primary focus of this study is to examine the experiences of immigrant mothers in the Norwegian context and gain insights into their perceptions of being immigrant mothers. Specifically, the research question seeks to explore how Azerbaijani immigrant mothers understand the Norwegian ideals of motherhood and how it differs from their own cultural ideals. Due to the nature of the research question, a qualitative research design is deemed appropriate as it allows for the analysis of individuals' experiences and the meanings they attribute to those experiences (Bryman, 2016). Qualitative research aims to grasp the "reality" of individuals and their lived experiences (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). By employing a qualitative approach, the researcher aims to empower participants to share their stories and amplify their voices, while minimizing power imbalances between the researcher and participants. Qualitative research also enables the exploration of the social and contextual aspects in which participants navigate their lives, be it their home, family, or work environments (Creswell, 2013). Given the research's main objective, a qualitative research design is well-suited to provide in-depth insights into the parenting experiences of Azerbaijani immigrant mothers in Norway, fulfilling functions of social investigation that are contextual, explanatory, evaluative, and generative (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Furthermore, previous studies have also adopted qualitative research designs to investigate the challenges faced by immigrant mothers in Norway and other contexts (Sim et al., 2021; Arcos et al., 2018; Rodriguez et al., 2023).

4.2. Selection of Participants

The study included a sample group of five Azerbaijani mothers who had been residing in Norway for more than five years and were proficient in both Azerbaijani and English languages. The researchers employed a snowball sampling strategy to recruit participants.

Snowball sampling involves initially selecting a small group of individuals who are relevant to the research questions, and then relying on their recommendations to identify additional participants who possess similar experiences or characteristics (Bryman, 2016). This process continues as each participant suggests others, creating a chain-like sampling method. Snowball sampling is often utilized when probability sampling is not feasible, particularly when attempting to access hard-to-reach populations due to the absence of a sampling frame (Noy, 2008). In the context of surveys involving refugees and asylum seekers, who face similar challenges, snowball sampling has been used in approximately 11% of cases (Isernia & Urso, 2018). The data collection exclusively focused on participants from the Azerbaijani community, as a significant number of immigrants engage with community organizations, facilitating access to mothers from various cities in Norway. Mothers who expressed interest in participating in the study underwent a screening process based on selection criteria, including age, duration of immigration in Norway, and employment status.

4.3. Data Collection Tools

Semi-structured interviews were employed to gather data from immigrant mothers, allowing for an exploration of their lived experiences in Norway within the framework of phenomenology. This type of interview method was selected to ensure a non-hierarchical relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, avoiding power imbalances (Bryman, 2016). Semi-structured interviews provide an opportunity for both the interviewer and interviewee to delve deeply into individual experiences, perspectives, and understandings of a phenomenon, generating meaningful and robust insights (Bryman, 2016). The use of semi-structured interviews enables participants to express themselves openly and allows for flexibility in exploring new perspectives and understandings of the research topic (Bryman, 2016). Prior to commencing the data collection process, the researcher met with the immigrant mothers to discuss the research and provide guidelines. Informed consent was obtained from the participants, and all interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed.

The principal investigator of the study developed and piloted an interview protocol consisting primarily of open-ended questions. The interviews were conducted in the Azerbaijani language, using layman terms to ensure clarity and understanding. As the principal investigator was a native of Azerbaijan, they possessed a deep understanding of the cultural nuances and local context, enhancing the effectiveness of the interviews. The interview

protocol encompassed various sections, including gathering demographic information and exploring topics such as the participants' experiences of motherhood, emotional challenges they encountered, their social support networks, and the composition of those networks. Additional questions and probes were incorporated as necessary to delve further into specific areas of interest. Furthermore, informal observation and field notes were utilized to collect data pertaining to the participants' physical and social environments. By employing multiple methods of data collection, the researchers were able to engage in data triangulation, enhancing the credibility and comprehensiveness of the analysis (Carter et al., 2014).

4.4. Data Collection Process

The researcher contacted the immigrant mothers and conducted the interviews at their homes as per the scheduled dates. Prior to the interview, the researcher read out a verbal assent statement, explaining the purpose of the research and the potential use of the collected information. To establish rapport, the session began with some casual conversation. Demographic questions, such as age and education, were then asked, along with other questions from the interview schedule. Additional probing questions were also employed when the interviewer felt it was necessary. In most cases, multiple sessions were required to complete the interviews, and multiple interviews were conducted with each participant to ensure the desired depth of exploration in line with the phenomenological approach (Padgett, 2017). Throughout the interviews, the participants' comfort level and satisfaction with the session and conversation were frequently checked. Informal observation and field notes were also utilized to gain insights into how the immigrant mothers interacted in their social environments, including their interactions with friends, acquaintances, and strangers, as well as the vulnerabilities they faced in their physical and social surroundings. Individual interviews, field notes, and informal observations collectively contributed to capturing a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences. Prolonged engagement with the participants, along with the collection of detailed and descriptive accounts, were strategies employed to enhance the validity and rigor of the phenomenological analysis.

4.5. Data Analysis

Following the interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed as an initial step in the analysis process. Transcription is a time-intensive task that requires careful planning (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The researcher opted for a full-transcription approach, ensuring that no parts of the audio recording were omitted and that the transcriptions accurately reflected what was said. The translation process took into account cultural nuances, the meaning of expressions, and the conversational contexts. In phenomenological studies, the analysis of interview data aims to identify the essence or common themes within participants' experiences (Padgett, 2017). Full-transcription was deemed appropriate as it treated the recording as a conversation where every word was considered important for capturing the informants' accounts. Only sounds like "yah" were omitted to enhance the readability of the written text. Parentheses were used to indicate instances where a word was omitted by the informant during the interview. If clarification was needed to understand a quotation, the interviewers were contacted. The transcripts aimed to faithfully reproduce what was said by the informants during the interview, without paraphrasing every word (Bryman, 2016).

The transcripts underwent analysis using the Thematic Analysis (TA) technique, following the six-step process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2012). TA is a systematic approach that involves identifying, organizing, and gaining insights into patterns of meaning (themes) within a dataset. By focusing on meaning across the dataset, TA enables researchers to understand and interpret collective or shared meanings and experiences. The choice of TA for this study was motivated by its accessibility and flexibility as a methodological approach.

The thematic analysis conducted in this study focuses on understanding the experiences of Azerbaijani immigrant mothers in Norway. These mothers encounter specific challenges as they navigate their roles both as immigrants and as mothers. The primary objective of the analysis is to identify and delve into the key themes that arise from their experiences. By doing so, the study aims to provide insights into their perspectives, the difficulties they face, and potential areas where support could be beneficial.

To initiate the thematic analysis process, a diverse range of qualitative data sources was gathered, such as interviews, focus groups, and personal narratives, from immigrant mothers residing in Norway. These sources offered a wealth of valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of these mothers. Subsequently, a systematic review of the collected data was conducted, and initial codes were generated to capture the fundamental concepts and ideas

expressed by the immigrant mothers. These codes served as the foundation for the subsequent thematic analysis. During the third stage, a thorough examination of the initial codes was undertaken to identify recurring patterns, shared experiences, and commonalities among the data, which then led to the emergence of several potential themes. The analysis focused on identifying overarching patterns rather than individual instances or occurrences.

In the fourth stage, the identified themes were carefully reviewed to ensure their coherence, internal consistency, and relevance to the experiences of immigrant mothers in Norway. Themes that were redundant or less representative of the overall dataset were eliminated, resulting in a refined set of themes. Subsequently, in the fifth stage, the remaining themes were given descriptive and meaningful names that accurately captured their essence. Each theme represents a distinct aspect of the immigrant mothers' experiences in Norway, providing insights into their challenges, aspirations, and perceptions. The finalized themes are Cultural Adaptation and Identity, Parenting in a New Environment, Support Systems and Social Networks, Employment and Economic Challenges, Access to Healthcare and Social Services, and Empowerment and Resilience. Based on these themes, the findings of the analysis were synthesized into a comprehensive report that presents the identified themes, their descriptions, and supporting quotes or narratives from the collected data.

4.6. Ethical Considerations

Prior to commencing the research, the researcher sought approval from The Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD), which serves as the Data Protection Official for Research at Norwegian universities, responsible for reviewing and approving research proposals. Ethical considerations are of utmost importance in qualitative research designs, particularly concerning confidentiality, informed consent, and anonymity. The ethical principles outlined by Bryman (2016), including avoiding harm to participants, ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, and avoiding deception, were taken into account. During information sessions prior to participant agreement, immigrant mothers were provided with comprehensive information about the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Verbal assent was obtained from each participant, with the verbal assent statement read at the beginning of each interview session. In terms of informed consent, it was ensured that all information provided was clear, and participants were given the freedom to participate or withdraw from the research without any restrictions (Bryman, 2016). To maintain privacy

and confidentiality, participants' identities were kept confidential, and sensitive information was securely stored with password-protected documents. Participants were also safeguarded from harm during and after the interview process. Informed consent was obtained as a prerequisite before conducting any interviews.

4.7. Study Limitations

Participant recruitment posed a significant challenge in this research project. Despite the presence of a sizable Azerbaijani community for potential participants, it was difficult to find available individuals who were willing to participate in the interviews. Furthermore, logistical constraints arose due to participants residing in different cities throughout Norway, making it challenging to coordinate and schedule meetings. As a result, participant recruitment proved to be a time-consuming and arduous process.

Another limitation of the study was the potential for misinterpretation. Although the researcher and participants shared the Azerbaijani language, the need to transcribe and interpret the information in English introduced the possibility of inaccuracies. Some words or sentences may not have exact translations or may lose their original meaning when expressed in a different language, leading to potential misinterpretations and misunderstandings. However, the researcher made efforts to mitigate these challenges to the best of their ability.

The process of conducting interviews with immigrant mothers presented emotional challenges for the researcher, particularly due to the personal connection and empathy evoked by the mothers' stories of suffering and the difficulties they encountered. Being a female researcher, it was challenging to remain emotionally detached while listening to these accounts. Many of the mothers expressed a strong attachment to their traditional methods of mothering, which further complicated their adaptation in a new environment. The researcher found it difficult to hear the heart-wrenching descriptions provided by the mothers, but maintained professionalism throughout the interviews.

Another limitation of the study was the presence of a power imbalance and hierarchy between the researcher and participants. Given that the participants were older and had lived in Norway for a longer period, they may have felt hesitant to fully respect the researcher's position and research ideas. Moreover, there may have been a perception that the researcher could not fully

empathize with their experiences, potentially demotivating participants from sharing their motherhood experiences and perceptions about being mothers in Norway.

5. Research Findings and Analysis

5.1. Theme 1: Motherhood

5.1.1 The perception of “being mother.”

All informants emphasized the significance of being a mother in their lives and how they desired to be mother. The third informant mentioned that it is very important to have planned child to understand the “being mother” because if the child is unplanned, it can influence your understanding of motherhood. She highlighted the empowering character of becoming mother in her statement that is an enriching status that contributes to human and society growth.

Someone plans, someone doesn't plan to have children. But I also planned to have two children by myself, I mean I chose to be a mother willingly. The choice is our own. In other words, we wanted that the child to be a good person for this society, when you understand that why you are planning to have children, what is your goal, it makes easier to understand the concept of being mother (Informant 3).

Considering the statement, the second participant also supported this idea that being a mother is mostly about how you are bringing up the child for society, and it makes difficult sometimes to take this responsibility.

You raise a person in this society, you raise he\she for the society, for a while the child will be in your family's member, but as he\ she grows up, they will become a member of the society, at the end of the day, we give this child to the society and we have to take responsibility for them (Informant 2).

The fourth participant added that being mother is not just for us, you are responsible for your child future personalities, and she has two sons that she wants to raise them not typical traditional Azerbaijani men and see them as modern, well-developed men who cares more family and support her ideas. Because for her, it is also a contribution of her to society.

As a meaning, I want to leave something after myself, I want to raise them well-developed and unlike Azerbaijani men, I want to see them more caring. For example, I contribute to society, to world, and humanity. Maybe it's selfish, but for me, I see my child as meaningful in my life, in the future I don't know how they will

grow up and what kind of person they will be, but I will try to make them a good person, and I think this is more about to be a good person, and to be a useful or beneficial to the society (Informant 4).

Participants indicate that “being mother” is one of the important decisions in our life if we consider how, it has a profound impact and shapes the family and especially women’s lives. It affects their perspectives on reality and influences the decisions they make. To support this statement, the fourth informant again mentioned:

Motherhood is about having children and taking care of them. It is like an instinct of woman, but fatherhood is not formed as like this. During a certain period, fathers don't understand what fatherhood is. Motherhood, I think, is the protection of the child (...), it means to protect in every sense, to protect physically, to go and save that child who comes to mind first in any dangerous situation. Second, feeding them, taking care of them, I don't know, preparing their milk or what they don't eat, spending good time with them, being able to take responsibility for them as well (...). That is, I mean to meet their physical and emotional needs (Informant 4).

The second and third informants also highlighted the importance of taking responsibility of the child both physically and emotionally that also defines another aspect of being mother.

Because motherhood brings with it a sense of happiness as well as a sense of responsibility. But every once in a while, those little things that you do, you see that you did it right, it makes you feel proud. But it is okay also to do something wrong, we learn from these mistakes (Informant 3)

You have an age gap with your children, and it is necessary to put yourself in a child's shoes and act like that and also you should support them emotionally. You must be strong, yes. You should support the child in such a way that the child does not feel that you are under stress (Informant 2)

The fifth informant took a different perspective of being mother and explained that is happening during the time. She moved to Norway when her children were in the teenager period and she talked about it was difficult period in her life and no one teaches you how to act but you find your way of “being mother”.

It was something that came with the period. I liked more being mother when the children are infants, I mean when children are 100% dependent on you, it is both

easy and difficult, but still everything is in your hands. It is easier when they are fully dependent. I loved motherhood until I moved to Norway, and in Norway it was very difficult because the children were grown. One was 16 years old, the other was 14 years old. New language, new culture, everything was new for them. And of course, this brought difficulties. In fact, I did not expect so many difficulties, when I see that they face challenges here, I was also under a lot of stress. I was a bit stressed until they found themselves and their place in my society (Informant 5).

On the other hand, first and fourth informants highlighted that “being mother” is privileged position and they place importance to the establishment of a new kind of relationship with their children that brings them power and satisfaction. It means they value having a career and personal projects, at the same time they consider motherhood a status that offers them satisfaction, happiness, strength, and personal growth. Motherhood is not seen as an oppressive institution. However, they focus on the empowering character of mothering. Despite motherhood being desired, informants are aware of the efforts that it supposes.

Yes, it seems to me that being a mother is very rewarding at first. Because for certain reasons, health etc., not everyone can be a mother, and that's a big chance for me as a woman (Informant 1)

My children add joy and meaning to my life, that is, I understand that with them, my life is more joyful, and meaningful (Informant 4).

5.1.2 The mothering practices

Although the five informants experienced a desired motherhood, the relationship they establish with their children is influenced by how they understand their role as a mother, and their conceptualization of childhood and filiation. These understandings are shaped by mothers' gender, age, culture, race, and class. Cultures are composed by values that help societies to adapt and that guide generations to face a phenomenon. In terms of mothering, cultures provide mothers with values to handle their new reality. Mothers referred to mothering as embedded in a culture and mothering practices representing a societal, national and cultural values.

Looking through the narratives, these universals are present but two mothering-practices models can be identified: in the first, mothers put the focus on protection, in the second, mothers give importance to their children's freedom and participation. Another pattern in the narratives is the fact that informants identified Norwegian mothering practices that differ

from Azerbaijanians. They gave their opinion about both and valued them as more or less appropriate for their children wellbeing. Those who represent the protection-focus model agree with the identified Azerbaijani mothering practices, whereas informants who take the children's participation model speak highly of the Norwegian.

For example, whereas second and fourth informants accept that to listen to the children's opinions, and respect their individuality is important, their personal experiences from childhood sometimes makes difficult to follow up this practice

As logical, I am aware of that I should listen to them before making a decision, because each child is different and has different personalities, perspectives and needs. You can't talk or behave to them in a same way, because they are too different. For example, I have two daughters, but I have different communication styles with them. To communicate is necessary because they need to be empowered by parents which helps them to build themselves as an adult for the future. But sometimes, it can be very difficult with Azerbaijani cultural background which needs protective mothers rather than flexible. They have a voice for their life style, even for instance, school choosing, friends or something but of course, if she wants to move to other home alone or with someone , I can't let her to do it (Informant 2).

The fifth informant also supported this opinion that our cultural background and motherhood experiences from home country doesn't allow her to follow this child rearing practices in each case.

Before being a mother, I have told myself that I will not be the same as my parents and will follow up different practices. Actually, I do, but still sometimes I see that I use some words, phrases like my mother did to me or behave like her as a mother. It is unconsciously. But I should say that there is still huge difference between me and my parents' child-rearing style.

5.2. Theme 2: Dealing with Issues of Cultural Clashes

5.2.1 Giving independence to the children.

Most of the informants mentioned about the freedom of “Norwegian children” which is very complicated concept that confuses them that it should be given to the children or not.

Informant 1, 2 and 4 talked about more that they are aware of that it influences in a positive way to build a healthy communication with the children and will assist children to take responsibilities when they are adult. However, it is sometimes difficult to follow up this style, considering Azerbaijani parenting practices.

So, we moved to Norway in 2018. This year will be our 5th year that we are here, but I am still learning new things about Norwegian parenting ideals. I want to give an example from my first experience that we were new here, and we went to the entertainment place for our children, and I met Norwegian child-upbringing style there for the first time. At that time, my son was three years old, he was super active, he was a very hyperactive child, he was running around. So, I was so worried about him and of course, I was watching him everywhere, and I kept saying that "slow down, you'll fall like this." I was always trying to figure it out if I saw a risk for him (...). But I saw the Norwegian parents that even their children were 3-4 years old and very active, they don't try to be too protective for the children and let them to fall and learn from these mistakes (...). Even though it was a shock for me, I should say that I understand and love it more now. I think showing our worriedness can demotivate the children to express and aware of their self-esteem, which we learned in Azerbaijan from our parents. Norwegian mothers are also worried about to protection of the children, but they give every time a space for the child to choose their way, even for meal, clothes, friends etc. (Informant 1)

Informant 4 also gave the similar example from her experience and mentioned that Norwegian mothers' flexibility and approaching the children as individuals for making their decisions about themselves.

I have a son and when he falls in the park or somewhere, even though I feel very worried inside, I change my face and keep smiling at him. When he sees that I am smiling at him, he stands up by himself and doesn't cry. I realized that giving independence and controlling your protective side develops a child's self-confidence

(...). I realized that Norwegians let children to make mistakes now when their mistakes are also little, it will help them to improve their decision-making abilities in the future when they really need to aware of what they are doing (Informant 4).

However, the other informants who have the teenager children pointed that to follow up this style of parenting makes a big challenge for them because during the teenager period, it is very difficult for them to give a freedom to the children.

When I look at myself, for example, mostly through the eyes of children, children always say that you are a very overprotected mother. I have a children with 15-16 years old and I try to explain them that they should not cross the limits although I give a freedom to them. For example, here Norwegian mothers believe their children more. I also believe my children, but I feel that I need to control them as calling where they are, what they are doing, when they will back to the home (...). Because we have seen it since childhood, we grew up with that kind of upbringing style. I'm trying to keep it under control. There is such anxiety in myself that something should happen suddenly, therefore I still think that a mother should always keep things in check, children are in control, at least till they grow up and make the right decision (Informant 3).

To supporting this idea, Informant 5 also gave an example from her life experience in Norway that when she moved in Norway, her children were 14-16 years old, and she explained how it was a challenging period to adapt herself as a mother here and give a freedom to her daughters.

I moved here with my daughters when they were 14-16 years old which is a very risky period generally and everything in Norway was new for them and me too. I was so surprised when I see that teenagers can drink alcohol, smoke and they are talking about sex in the class, and it is accepted as normal in the society. I remember that I was shocked and try to be more protective for them, but they couldn't adapt the society with following my rules and when they tried to fit the society with doing the same that other teenagers do, had big conflicts with me at home (...). Also, in Norway, after 16 years old, you don't have access to your child health journal, or you cannot talk with their teacher in the schools as a parent because they are not going to tell you anymore what is happening with your child at this age. For them, he or she is an individual and you have now limited to control them (Informant 5).

5.2.2 Active Mothers.

Participants also mentioned that how cultures put big responsibilities on mothers' shoulders, especially when they discuss the differences between Azerbaijani and Norwegian parenthood ideals.

I don't know what I can say about Norwegian ideals of motherhood, but I know that there are a lot of differences. In Azerbaijan, the ideal mother is the person who feed the children, cooking meal for them, clean their clothes and provide all their needs. In our culture, to be an ideal mother is so demanding and you never feel enough. But in Norway, mothers are more flexible and relax, because the culture doesn't put a lot of pressures on them, and mothers mostly prefer more to meet their emotional needs than their daily needs here. They care more about to spend time in different activities more than cooking at home or cleaning their clothes (...). As an Azerbaijani mother, I have to say that we sacrifice ourselves for our children, such as our sleeps, wants and activities and put the children's needs first, therefore sometimes we feel more depressed and stressed, because we couldn't find any time to spend with ourselves and sometimes even don't know how we can spend quality time with children either (Informant 4).

This statement was also given as a similar version from another informant who is also complaining that the mothers don't have time to take care of themselves and focused on more physical needs of the children.

As mothers, we have learned from our culture that mothers should be more involved in the process of upbringing of children. My children are still little, my youngest girl is 3 years old, and it is difficult for me to manage their meals, cleanness and also find activities for them. Unconsciously, I put their physical needs in the first place than emotional, and if I can't provide them with healthy homemade food or see that they are playing outside in the winter, I feel uncomfortable and stressed for them that they can be sick. But when I join to the activities, I see that the places are full of Norwegian mothers, and they care more how their children are emotionally happy and active in the society. I mean they focus on mental health first. You can see that they do hiking, tours and a lot of things with their children which is a little bit away for us That is why, I realized that their children are more relaxed to express themselves in the communication with others than ours (...) Additionally, I think, when the mothers are happy and feel relaxed, it also influences the children.

To take a lot of responsibilities and keep both ideal mother styling makes us burn out at the end of the day (Informant 1).

Another woman participant add that they learned being active mother in Norway, before came here, it is not common things that they do with their children.

I have married with Norwegian man here and it was a little bit difficult for my daughters to see new person in the home, but I should say that when I saw my father and mother-in-law were playing with my girls, it was a big shock for me. I have never seen in Azerbaijan that adults or elderly people are playing with children, during these years, I observed that Norwegians like to spend more time with the children. Joining activities, hiking, tours helped my daughters to adapt to the family and accept new realities. But I need to say that even in Azerbaijan, when I was working and didn't have time to spend more time with my children, I didn't miss the chances and spent my all-free time with them always with dancing, reading and doing something together (Informant 5).

5.3. Theme 3: Adapting to new family structures

5.3.1 Traditional gender roles and balancing work-family responsibilities.

Informants emphasized that men are still following the Azerbaijani traditional family gender roles and put the main responsibilities on women to take of the children and they involve in the process mostly to provide financially and when the mothers need their help.

We have learned unequal gender roles in Azerbaijan. My husband was not very helpful with taking care of the children. I was awake during the whole night when the children were infants, but in the morning, we were going to the work together and he believed that it should be like this, how he can help to feed and clean the child. But in Norway, he observed other families and now he is more involved in the helping and caring the children (Informant 1)

Informant 2 also supported this idea that they are still struggling with sharing the child-upbringing practices with their spouses but in Norway, they changed their approaches more.

I remember that my oldest daughter was born in Azerbaijan and all needs of her was provided by me and other women in the family, but my youngest girl was

born here, in Norway and my husband took parental leave and had more time to spend with the child. When I was working, he fed her, cleaned her clothes, and provided what she needs and now, I should say that they are so close to each other emotionally than my oldest girl. Because infant period is also necessary for fathers to build a relationship with the child and in our country, it is not very much observable. However, we are “eastern family”, fathers involve in practical things, like to take them from school or go with them to the gym, generally, I take care of their all needs such as find activities to them, talking with their teachers, controlling their schedules, and cooking for them every day (Informant 2).

Informant 3 gave similar statement from her motherhood experiences in Norway that while they live here, family structure is still based on the Azerbaijani culture.

In our family, the help of the man is limited. For example, maybe in the beginning, he used to help a little bit in children’s studies, but over time, it disappeared too. I used to help a lot in my son’s classes, my husband used to come to the parent meetings, but later he didn’t come too much, it is my responsibility to contact the children’s teachers, their lessons, activities, and others (...). In our family, there are “good police” and “bad police”. For example, fathers should be a little bit strict in our country. I am very soft compared to him; I can accept compromises. If we talk about the important thing, that one of us should be treated seriously, for example, if we say no, then he will make rules and the other one should be gentle. In our family, when the children are sick, he will take care of them, although he was not as involved in child upbringing as I was, he is more in controlling position (Informant 3)

5.3.2 Adapting new gender roles and new cultural context

The participants talked about their expectations from their spouses in Norway and try to make themselves and partners to adapt new family roles. For instance, the Informant 4 talked about that she is trying to give direction to her husband what to do with the children sometimes and while it helps a lot to improve the emotional connection with father and children, it also takes time to explain to the men and demands effort from mothers again.

My husband was grown up in Azerbaijan and of course our tradition influenced to us a lot, especially in the family’s gender roles. But my husband tries to help me with housework, also taking care of the children. I have a little son and my

husband got his parental leave and today, I am at work, but he is now with our son. However, he still needs to learn a lot of things, I sometimes explain him that take our older son and do something together; it will help to improve your relationship with him, and you are a man model for him, and he grows up with observing you. I also read a lot of books, articles about child upbringing practices and discuss it with my husband with giving arguments and examples that how it is important to the child with spending time with father too, but as you know, it takes a lot of time from us (Informant 4).

The Informant 1, highlighted in the interview that she wants to work soon but when she considers that who will take care of the children, or will her husband be conscious that she can also be late from work and need help from him, it gives a lot of stress to her.

I was an active young woman. But here, I am getting older, I have a family, I have three children, which means that I don't have any extra help. Because as much as I try, I want to be an adequate and "good" mother who understands my children, and to be involved in all the process related to them but sometimes I don't have the same energy. In other words, I don't have the energy even to care for myself, for example, neither for my education, nor for my work, nor for myself. My husband was a good person, a very good worker, a good father, a good partner in general. But as I said, traditions of Azerbaijan have affected us a lot, so it makes me a little worried that if I can improve myself again as a person after this age, I mean if I found a job or something, will I get any help from him as I do? Because he works and I take care of the children alone and I can take the motivation only from my husband and family, which sometimes isn't enough. I am so glad that we are here, since there is more equality here between men and women in every aspect, and maybe my husband will understand my responsibilities and pressure on me, and we can share family and work responsibilities with each other. In Norway, people's independence, loyal approach to each other, makes me to think that my future will be more comfortable here, that is, and we should respect and understand our roles in the family (Informant 1).

5.3.3 Coping with feelings of loneliness and isolation

The immigrant mothers mostly emphasized that how it was difficult to move, adapt new context and to be alone as a mother. Some of them gave birth in Norway and didn't get any

help from the family members because their all relatives live in Azerbaijan, therefore, they felt very stressed and lonely.

One of the challenges of being immigrant mother is being alone in the process of upbringing children. Especially, if it is your first experience, you don't know if you're doing good or not. You have every time suspicious about yourself, and you need to fix also house works and all stuff related to the home, because men don't care about it. Of course, all these responsibilities make you feel alone if you don't do it in time. But I feel lucky, because when I gave birth, I had Azerbaijani friends who have the experience as mother, they helped me (Informant 2).

Another participant also commented about being alone and amateur when you gave birth for the first time in a new country.

While my mother spent three months here with me to take care of my first child, it was still difficult to do everything after she left. I felt very lonely and disappointed. I remember how it was so difficult to manage everything alone, honestly, still it is. You have to go to the job, take care of children, their lessons, gym, problems, also home, husband (...) it is really too much for a mother and time consuming (Informant 3).

Informant 3 also highlighted that you don't have time to spend time with yourself as a person here. You are full time worker.

For example, If I live in Azerbaijan, I will have chance to say to my family to take care of my children for a while when I should go to the event or do something. But here? It is impossible! You need to do everything by yourself, and it is expensive to ask baby sitter to come to your home, even if I cannot let someone who I don't know very well to contact with my child. I would be worried and stressed (Informant 3).

5.4. Navigating cultural differences

5.4.1 Different strategies of balancing cultural differences

Azerbaijani immigrant mothers who participated in the interviews mentioned that it is not easy to use methods to navigate the cultural differences as they don't have specific ways while they apply interesting strategies to adapt host society and make their child to find a place for themselves as a new member in the new place. For example, Informant 1 explained that to involve in the different activities, especially which are held at the school and gym, helps them to understand the society's child rearing practices, different mothers' treatment to the child and their culture. She pointed out that it has quite positive impact on her and children to analyze dominant culture and integrate easily with feeling as a part of society in Norway.

As a mother, I have strategies as being positive and active with my children. I started a day with them shouting our slogan that "We are happy, We are nice and We are powerful". It influences them positively to start the day, going to school, eating breakfast, and helping each other. Also, involving different activities, such as gym, assists them to grow up in health, and me where I can observe people, communicate, and understand their mothering practices. I should say that while it is difficult to be patient during the integration process to the new system, being able to be active makes all processes much easier (Informant 1).

Informants highlighted also to have good communication with the children and to mix both cultures are one of the best strategies that they have applied in Norway. Particularly, the mothers who have the children in teenager period discussed in the interview that it is highly difficult to say "No" to the children if they don't have give good arguments, since they are given freedom in Norway and parents cannot control them as they want. On the other hand, to assimilate only Norwegian culture doesn't satisfy their motherhood understanding since they have unconsciously settled "mother roles" which is based on Azerbaijani culture. Therefore, they indicated that it is useful to mix both cultures, which means to take good parts of it.

Honestly, it is more difficult than I thought to navigate this balance. But I believe that to build healthy communication is highly important. When you give them

a reasonable argument, children can understand your decision, otherwise, it is impossible to have a day without conflict (Informant 2)

I am trying to mix these two cultures, and to have a general approach based on that. Of course, it is not easy at all. Sometimes, my childhood background tell me to behave differently, since we have totally opposite parenthood experiences from Norway but I am doing my best to control my feelings and adapt my opinions related child rearing practices in Norwegian context with observing the mothers and take good sides (Informant 4)

In my opinion, both cultures have good and bad influences on parental practices but if you ask me, I'm trying to apply both of them to children. Because it is impossible after 20 years in Norway, to think only Azerbaijani side or to follow fully Norwegian ideals. For example, I like the fact that children have a closer relationship with friends here, they express themselves freely and well. While they are having a good integration to the new society, let me say that, for example, we, as a migrant family, always suffer from the fact that there are no mothers, grandfathers, grandmothers, aunts, and uncles as relatives here. But thankfully, we have many immigrant families like us, and these families replace somehow their absence in the children's lives that their place will not be seen too much (Informant 3)

5.5. Challenges of navigating different motherhood practices

Mothers pointed out different kinds of challenges which are the many times emphasized during the interview that participants are still struggling with the understanding of “freedom” in Norway and they don't accept to give freedom wholly to the children while they agree with the idea of seeing the children as individuals. For example, Informant 1 indicated that she agreed to listen and communicate with the children whereas it would be better to follow up their decisions and consider that they are not able to decide enough about themselves.

I just remember a small conversation with a kindergarten teacher when my daughter was 2 years old. She started to eat sand in kindergarten, and I was super anxious about her health while the teacher was so quiet and told me that it is normal because she is child. They are so calm and accept everything as normal as the growing process, but you know, for us it is not like that. Or they give freedom starting

from kindergarten that the child can wear what they want. For example, maybe in the outside, the weather is so cold and snowy, but the child wants to wear summer clothes, they respect the children opinions and wants, they don't try to change it which is super challenging for me (Informant 1)

Informant 3 and 5 shared experiences related to teenager period of their children. They declared that it was highly demanding period for mothers because the children try to find a way to accommodate themselves in the society with applying wrong ways such as smoking and using alcohol to be looked as like Norwegian friends. Whereas it was 'normal' to Norwegian parents if their children have boyfriends\girlfriends, or drink alcohol or smoke, it is still making big issues between mothers and children.

Although Norway is so safe country, this freedom sometimes crosses the borders ("sərhədi keçir"). For example, they started using bus cards from the age of 12 and going to school alone or somewhere by themselves, they started using the phone from the age of 10. When I saw them using the phone, I didn't want to let them, but I did, because all their friends started to use phones and I didn't have enough arguments to say to them "No". Sometimes, their friends hang out till the midnight and drink the alcohol, therefore I don't allow them to hangout very late and it takes a lot of time to discuss and explain them that I am worried that on weekends, especially, a lot of drunk people are outside, and they can lose control, and something can happen. Also, they can move to different home with their boyfriend or girlfriend that I am so worried about it and talk a lot about it that they are still child and maybe after universities, they can think about it. But when I say it, they ask me that "Why should live here as Azerbaijanis, no one is like me among their friends' mothers. I say that because I am an Azerbaijani and the things I grew up with, I try to give you the good sides of my culture (Informant 3).

I had a lot of challenges but the main one was to find proper ways for my daughters to find a place for themselves in society. But the problem is, teenagers can drink alcohol and smoke, which is a big problem in our society, especially for girls. I remember that I had a lot of conflicts related to these issues with my girls. I was trying to find Norwegian friends for them who doesn't drink alcohol and smoke, which is not logical (Informant 5).

6. Discussion

This section addresses the issues highlighted in the findings section, offering a critical analysis of the key themes that emerged throughout the data collection process. During the tenure of my interviews with mothers, I gained a profound and unique insight into the challenges and hardships they face. I have experienced moments of anxiety and disappointment when I learned that mothers, who were not born in Norway and had not received their education in the country, were facing various challenges while trying to adapt to life here. They had moved to Norway due to their husbands' work, and with young children to care for, they were constantly trying to navigate and adjust to their new surroundings. In my observation, mothers go through several phases in their adaptation process. First, they strive to assimilate and adapt themselves to the Norwegian culture and way of life. Second, they work hard to ensure that their children can effectively navigate the Norwegian context. Third, they aim to be good mothers within the Norwegian society. Lastly, they endeavor to harmonize their own adaptation with their husbands', even though their husbands may still exhibit behaviors and mentalities from their home country, like Azerbaijan, even while residing in Norway. This can make it challenging for these mothers to fully integrate and adapt to their new environment. One of the notable challenges for mothers relates to cultural differences, particularly when children reach their teenage years, a critical transitional period where difficulties tend to intensify. During my interviews, a mother with a teenager mentioned the struggles she faced in dealing with her adolescent child, especially in situations where the teenager was adopting behaviors like consuming alcohol, similar to their Norwegian peers. Mothers often express their concerns about losing control over their children, but it's important to acknowledge and commend their efforts to strike a balance and not be overly strict in adhering to their traditional culture. They make genuine attempts to integrate into the new culture, shouldering significant responsibilities, often feeling isolated and unable to share their emotional burdens. In the subsequent sections, I will examine these issues in greater depth.

The major themes of this study are included; motherhood experience of Azerbaijani migrants, cultural challenges they faced in the new country regarding motherhood, adopting with the changing context to raise the children and navigating the changes for better lives in the Norwegian society. The primary discussion is surrounding motherhood, and the experience of motherhood within the context of a foreign country. The initial point emphasized by the respondents of the study that the significance of planning for motherhood to enable mothers

to fully embrace the spectrum of experiences that come with it. It holds true that women with children undergo distinctive life experiences compared to those without offspring. Motherhood is recognized as a dynamic, life-altering process, marking a permanent shift in a woman's life and identity. Pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period are acknowledged as neurohormonal processes. Many women embarking on the journey of becoming and being mothers strive to find equilibrium in this new or renewed motherhood phase. In general, motherhood is described as a profoundly meaningful, humbling, precious, fulfilling, rewarding, blissful, gratifying, wonderful, and joyful experience. Motherhood is characterized by the deep emotional connections, affection, warmth, closeness, and interdependence in the mother-child relationship throughout the course of motherhood (Thomson et al., 2012; Nelson et al., 2014). In this study, I found that most of the mothers sharing similar experience of being mother in their life. It has huge impact on their life including comprehensiveness, completeness, meaning and happiness in life.

However, one particular importance that these mothers emphasized in my study that most of them are well-planned about motherhood. They have specific plan about the children and motherhood. Therefore, these mothers' joyfulness of being mother strongly connected with the execution of planning about their children. It is well-documented that the life balance of women with children can be affected (Fontein-Kuipers et al., 2015; Kuipers et al., 2019). Therefore, in my study it is revealed that many mothers engage in discussions about the importance of planning due to the distinctive nature of the motherhood identity. To most of them, motherhood is that it is an all-encompassing identity that not only shapes a woman's personal identity but also defines her cultural identity within society. Simply being a mother is insufficient; a mother's success is often measured by her child's accomplishments and achievements in life. Similar studies suggest that a child's goodness and success are viewed as reflections of a mother's maternal instincts, thus influencing her value as a human being (Tardy, 2000). Mothers also play a role in managing their children's appearances. These appearances encompass a wide range of factors, including clothing, grooming, habits, surroundings, props, and both verbal and nonverbal actions. Mothers are acutely aware of managing their impressions as good mothers, driven by the fear of incongruences between their presented self and their projected self. Migrant mothers view themselves as responsible for undertaking child-focused and time-consuming practices to ensure their children's well-being. This perception of their motherly role aligns with the concept of parental determinism inherent in intensive parenting, which argues that parents' actions with their children have a

profound impact on the child's future opportunities and development. The findings of my study portray similar observation about the Azerbaijani mothers who see themselves as responsible by raising the children in a good way so that they can be contributing. Even some mothers specifically mentioned that they do not want to raise their boy children like Azerbaijan man who are not caring to others. They want to see their children a good human being and kind person in future.

Parents with different cultural values are presumed to hold distinct parental values and parenting practices. Findings from my study show that there are major concerns regarding motherhood reflected in the statements from mothers is the cultural difference. According to O'Hagan (1999), culture represents the distinctive way of life of the group, race, class, community, or nation to which an individual belongs. It is shaped by the values and perceptions that form an individual's knowledge and understanding of the world. Values can be used to characterize cultural groups, societies, and individuals while explaining the motivation behind human behaviors. Values are beliefs connected to emotions, representing desirable goals, serving as standards or criteria, and prioritized by importance. Most importantly, values can guide human actions. Cultural values significantly influence an individual's perspective on the world and permeate every aspect of daily life. These cultural values have a direct and indirect impact by setting cultural expectations regarding attire, customs, work patterns, education and child-rearing. Conceptually, there are two global constructs of cultural values including individualism and collectivism that align with distinctions between Eastern and Western cultures, marked by variations in historical backgrounds, values, and belief systems (Huntsinger and Jose, 2009). Western culture has traditionally been characterized as individualistic, perceiving the individual as an autonomous entity with a distinctive set of internal attributes, and behavior is largely seen as a consequence of these internal characteristics. In Norway, the ideals regarding motherhood are shaped by Western ideology, emphasizing individualism, independence, and egalitarian parent-child relationships, which may differ from the values and experiences of individuals from collectivist cultures or those who have encountered paternalistic dominance (Bø, 2015).

In such cultures, individuals are considered interdependent, emphasizing the fundamental connections that exist among human beings. While parents in western cultures often stress the importance of nurturing their child's independence and uniqueness. In the Norwegian context, immigrant mothers from Azerbaijan mentioned that their consistently grapple with the clash

of two divergent cultural values, making their journey of motherhood a particularly noteworthy focal point in the field of social work studies.

This kind of parenting represents a strict and highly involved parenting style, where parents are deeply committed to ensuring their children's success (Yeong (2013)). In contrast to the more open and less protective approach to child-rearing in Norwegian culture, non-Norwegian mothers tend to adopt different parenting practices. The findings of my study reflected a deep concern of mothers and repeated confusion about accepting the current culture instead of the culture of the country of origin. It's important to note that immigrant parents face unique challenges compared to parents in the host country. In addition to the typical challenges experienced by mainstream parents, immigrant parents encounter additional difficulties related to migration. These challenges include acquiring proficiency in a new language, adapting to the specific knowledge and systems of the host society, navigating different cultural norms, parenting practices, and social service systems, and experiencing shifts in their perceptions of family roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, immigrant parents may also face separation from extended family members, either temporarily or permanently. Several factors influence how immigrant parents perceive their roles as parents in the context of migration, including their maturity as parents, the number, age, gender, and personalities of their children, as well as their cultural and religious backgrounds. However, their adaptation to and contribution within their new societies are also closely linked to the support they receive.

A common challenge experienced by immigrant parents revolves around grappling with a mix of complex emotions stemming from their lack of familiarity with the host culture. Immigrant parents navigate the process of establishing themselves in the host societies, they often grapple with the fear that their children are becoming strongly connected to the new society, thereby diminishing their parental authority (Abdulla, 2017). Findings from this study also shows that mothers are always showing concerns about their children whether are in the right or wrong path while integrating within the host country culture. Immigrant parents, who were raised in their countries of origin, tend to retain the values and traditions of their homeland while acculturating more slowly to the values and practices of the host societies. In contrast, their children tend to adapt more rapidly to the values and systems of the host societies through their interactions with peers. In my view, this difference in the "pace of acculturation" and intergenerational acculturation is believed to impact family cohesion and result in communication difficulties and distancing between parents and their children. In my interview

with mothers, it was said that transition period of child rearing is during teenage period when differences between immigrant parents and their children reaches to a higher level and the disparity in speed of acculturation in host societies, leading to conflicting perspectives on matters such as family obligations, parent-adolescent relationships, and adolescent rights.

Parenting styles and outlooks of immigrant parents are initially shaped by the culture and values of their native societies. Therefore, upon arriving in host countries, they begin to discern disparities between their parenting views and practices and those of mainstream parents, subsequently adapting to conform to accepted parenting practices in the new society (Osman et al., 2016). However, regardless of whether the impact of migration is considered positive or negative, the roles and responsibilities of parents undergo varying degrees of stability and change before and during the transitional migration process. This instability is significantly influenced by the absence of extended family members who traditionally play crucial roles in child-rearing and care. Furthermore, it is important to note that parents' migration experiences, the effects of their legal status, and their lack of knowledge about the new society's systems and regulations amplify their vulnerability in a migration context, underscoring the importance of addressing their needs when integrating them into the new society. In my study, this situation highlights the susceptibility of Azerbaijani migrant mothers in Norway when it comes to adapting to a new culture and their ongoing struggles with the process of integration, leading to a persistent sense of uncertainty.

Besides the cultural differences, immigrant mothers of this study also mentioned that they are struggling to adjust with the new family structure in Norway in three ways. *Firstly*; Mother's prior experience of gender roles in parenting within the context of the country of origin. *Secondly*; current roles of fathers in the host country. *Finally*; motherhood is inherently demanding, and the addition of these challenges can exacerbate maternal feelings of burden. Regarding the first issues that in Azerbaijan, men's participation in various caregiving tasks tends to be lower than women's. In my personal experience, as a national of Azerbaijan, women predominantly handle tasks related to the physical care of their children, whereas activities related to spending quality time with the child are more evenly shared or done jointly. However, Azerbaijan has made considerable efforts to promote gender equality over the past few decades. The country's Constitution explicitly acknowledges the right to equality between all men and women, further reinforced through a series of legislative acts adopted or revised thereafter (UNDP, 2015). Nevertheless, gender inequality continues to influence family dynamics and societal relationships, while women continue to encounter barriers in

participating fully in decision-making in personal, public, and political spheres. A complex interplay of factors, including the interconnections between gender and societal norms and institutions, persistently confines women to their domestic roles, where they are primarily valued for their reproductive capabilities. Given these circumstances, I found in my study that it is indeed challenging to embrace and adapt to the new context of gender roles. While assigning household responsibilities to men within the family can be beneficial for women, it doesn't necessarily result in a fully assimilated cultural dynamic within migrant families. Therefore, it is seen that where some male member of Azerbaijan migrant family had been adopting with the new gender role, others are keeping the typical gender role in the new context of parenting.

Immigrant fathers who have been engaging more with child rearing activities, have contributing to the family in some positive way as per my study findings revealed. In most societies, mothers generally invest more time in the care of young children compared to fathers, with this disparity appearing even more pronounced in LMICs. Recent research encompassing 15 high-income countries reveals a consistent rise in fathers' involvement in direct caregiving and household responsibilities since 1970 (Altintas and Sullivan, 2017). Societal gender norms play a pivotal role in shaping fathers' interactions with their young children, and fathers are often more likely to conform to these norms compared to mothers. As fathers become more involved with their families, there is direct and indirect pathways through which fathers influence their children. My study's results also demonstrated that children greatly benefit from and enjoy close engagement with their fathers, leading to a positive and enjoyable experience for them.

The involvement of fathers in childcare is not only beneficial for children but also for mothers. It is found that the feeling of alienation appears to be a shared experience among migrant mothers, transcending their diverse backgrounds and parenting challenges. The findings of this study is consistent with other studies that have documented the alienation experiences of migrant fathers and parents, which encompass both mothers and fathers. For instance, a five-year case study examining relationships between migrant fathers and their teenage children found that migrant fathers from various backgrounds increasingly felt less alienated from their children over time (Qin, 2009). The reported feelings and experiences by participants suggest that alienation typically accompanies greater parenting challenges, often stemming from a lack of connection and support from various institutions and individuals. These examples emphasize that a wide range of situations, each presenting unique parenting difficulties, can

result in feelings of isolation. Many of the participants expressed the draining nature of motherhood, which is influenced not only by the absence of cultural support but also the absence of a background provided by an extended family. These factors collectively contribute to heightened feelings of alienation and stress in the experience of motherhood and various other activities.

Amidst the various challenges encountered by mothers, there exists a resolute determination to persevere and move forward. In my study it was found that mothers actively employ various strategies to navigate the difficulties. Notably, one approach involves drawing upon the positive aspects of their cultural heritage as a resource to foster their children's upbringing. By recalling values and customs associated with their countries of origin that could benefit their children's well-being, mothers effectively manage negative emotions associated with their current mothering experiences. This practice also serves to reinforce their sense of belonging to their native cultures. This dynamic illustrates the intricate interplay between negative and positive emotions within the realm of motherhood, wherein mothers' encounters in both host and origin societies are influenced by different guidelines for emotional expression and techniques of emotion management. These insights contribute to a deeper comprehension of the complex interplay of emotional processes within the context of migration. Through the active engagement in emotion work, migrant mothers navigate varying emotional guidelines in their host countries, negotiating their sense of belonging to both their host and origin societies. For instance, experiencing a sense of pride and satisfaction when allowing their children to play outdoors fosters a sense of belonging in Norway, while feelings of guilt associated with the same practice tether them to their country of origin. Thus, the emotional experiences of mothers in their mothering roles significantly shape their sense of belonging to both their host and origin societies, influencing the connections they establish and maintain across different locations.

6.1. Relevancy of theories with study findings

This study mainly focused on two theories: Acculturation theory and Feminism theory. The study findings are highly relevant with theoretical framework. These theories provide explanation, understanding and meaningfulness to the research.

Acculturation theory deals with the process of individuals adapting to a multicultural environment, particularly when they migrate or build a new life in a different society. In the

theoretical analysis we discussed that, acculturation is a bilateral process involving two acculturation orientations towards the host and home cultures, resulting in four acculturation strategies: assimilation (embracing the host culture and rejecting the home culture), separation (rejecting the host culture and clinging to the home culture), integration (accepting and bridging both cultures), and marginalization (rejecting both cultures). Berry (2003) suggests that integration tends to be the most adaptive strategy, while marginalization is considered the least adaptive. Taking into account the research results, it appears that Azerbaijani migrant mothers also engage in the process of integration. Respondents indicated that while they are cautious about conflicting values that might lead to exclusion, they actively incorporate effective and beneficial elements from the host country's values. Many of them choose to embrace the most favorable values from both cultures, thereby aligning with the trend of integration as a means of adapting to a new cultural environment and developing coping strategies. A comprehensive understanding of these facets of acculturation indicates the significance of the theory and strongly indicates the importance of the study's findings.

The process of integration is often a challenging one, involving a complex interplay of including and excluding various aspects. Insights from individuals providing information indicate that immigrant mothers experience a greater degree of acculturative stress compared to local mothers. They expressed the need to distance themselves from their own cultural background and embrace Norwegian customs and norms in order to adapt smoothly to life in Norway. The stress stemming from navigating the Norwegian culture is associated with the perception that full integration requires complete assimilation into Norwegian society and a reluctance to disconnect from some aspects of their cultural heritage. The pressure to relinquish one's cultural identity in order to succeed in a new culture, along with the resulting stress, can impact one's psychological well-being, which, in turn, can affect their abilities as parents.

Another theory applied to this study is Feminism which highlights the significance of social, political, and economic structures in shaping societies and emphasizes the need to consider gender when examining power dynamics and the effects of oppression and domination (Abromovitz, 2012). Empowerment is a prominent aspect of feminist theory, aiming to liberate individuals from internalized oppression and equip them with the power to confront external obstacles. The study's findings shed light on the fact that the home country of Azerbaijani mothers is marked by significant gender bias, with women predominantly relegated to the sole role of child-rearing. However, when these mothers migrated to Norway

and experienced motherhood in this new context, they found liberation from such gender-based restrictions. In the Norwegian setting, male family members also play an active role in child-rearing and other family activities, contributing equally. Through the lens of feminism, it becomes apparent that women's status in parenthood is unequal, highlighting the disparities in gender roles. The study also reveals how empowerment is of great significance in enabling women to embrace the full potential of motherhood. Consequently, it can be argued that feminist theory is highly relevant for comprehending the nuances of motherhood and the status of women within the realm of parenthood, particularly in the context of a conservative country like Azerbaijan, when they migrate to a more liberal host country like Norway.

From an empowerment perspective, the mothers in this study have harnessed motherhood as a vehicle for their emancipation from disempowerment and as a force for driving societal transformation. In their countries of origin, the role of "being a mother" was often confined to the domestic sphere, but these mothers now view motherhood as an avenue to actively shape and enhance their society by nurturing their children effectively. They recognize the importance of breaking away from traditional gender norms and advocate for a shared responsibility between mothers and fathers in raising their children, a significant departure from the established norms in Azerbaijani society. The role of motherhood has taken on profound significance in the lives of these informants. It not only influences their daily experiences and decision-making processes but also bestows upon them a newfound sense of independence when it comes to making choices for their children. This empowerment dynamic is further supported by the insights from various studies that highlight the importance of feminist practices. These practices encourage individuals to take the reins of their own lives, fostering connections with community groups, and actively participating in social movements (Todd & Occhiuto, 2022). Within the framework of feminist theory, it becomes evident that many of these informants have transcended traditional gender roles. They have embraced empowerment as a means to achieve equality and are actively participating in shaping every aspect of their children's future, a significant departure from the conventional practices they were accustomed to in their country of origin. This transformation not only liberates these mothers from the constraints of societal expectations but also empowers them to be more engaged, equal, and proactive in their children's upbringing, paving the way for a more inclusive and egalitarian society.

7. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The primary objective of this research is to furnish empirical evidence regarding the motherhood experiences of Azerbaijani immigrant mothers residing in Norway and to scrutinize their perspectives on what it means to be a mother within the Norwegian context. The study seeks to critically examine the parenting practices of Azerbaijani immigrant mothers, particularly in light of their interpretation of the Norwegian ideal of 'motherhood.' This research endeavors to shed light on how an immigrant mother's cultural background influences her parenting techniques. Furthermore, it explores how immigrant mothers strike a balance between conforming to the parenting norms considered more 'Norwegian' and preserving their own culturally influenced parenting styles. Throughout this investigation, several pertinent questions have been identified and explored. These questions include inquiries such as: How do Azerbaijani immigrant mothers define "motherhood"? What is their understanding of the Norwegian ideals of "motherhood," and how does it differ from the Azerbaijani concept of motherhood? What challenges do they encounter when navigating between these ideals, and how do they address these challenges? To attain a comprehensive and authentic understanding of this complex situation, the research involved conducting in-depth interviews with five Azerbaijani mothers who have experienced the journey of motherhood in Norway.

The primary findings revealed that Azerbaijani mothers face numerous cultural challenges during their motherhood in a context entirely different from what they knew in their home country. Nevertheless, to adapt to this new environment, they adopt favorable aspects of the host society's culture and discard unfavorable ones, allowing them to cope with their circumstances. Despite this adaptation, concerns persist regarding the clash of cultural values between these mothers and their children. While motherhood is a meticulously planned and disciplined endeavor, it is also a lifelong experience. Mothers view motherhood as an opportunity to contribute to society by raising children to be good human beings. This fundamental difference in perception and culture between mothers and children arises as mothers incorporate elements from both their home culture and the host country's culture, while children tend to be influenced primarily by the host country's culture.

This cultural disparity and dilemma among mothers contribute to increased tension. There is an internal conflict concerning the acceptance of all aspects of the values pertaining to children's freedom in Norwegian society, leading mothers to become protective of their

children. However, mothers are aware of the benefits of fostering self-confidence in children from an early age. Nonetheless, there is a sense of confusion and uncertainty about being more permissive with children in a foreign country where mothers are less familiar with its culture and values. This study also highlights the conflict between focusing on children's physical needs and their psychological well-being, as well as the impact of a mother's well-being on the parent-child relationship.

Another noteworthy discovery is how motherhood responsibilities become more diverse in the context of a foreign country for Azerbaijani mothers, as gender roles within the family undergo a transformation. While in the past, fathers were less involved in forming close connections with their children, in this new environment, fathers actively contribute and forge strong bonds with their offspring. Conversely, mothers often grapple with the enduring influence of traditional gender roles on their ability to balance work and family duties, especially given the more conservative gender norms in their country of origin.

This change in fatherhood dynamics significantly impacts children, offering them a different parenting experience with new approaches from their fathers in a new country. Despite this, mothers may remain uncertain about these adjustments. Additionally, challenges arise due to the absence of support from relatives in the new country and the reliance on assistance from local friends, sometimes causing stress and feelings of isolation. To bridge these differences, various strategies are employed to balance the cultural disparities. Mothers engage in different activities and communicate with people, seek to understand and explain things to their children, identify positive aspects from both cultures, and integrate them into their lives.

Based on the short insights presented in the above paragraph based on findings of the study, here are some policy recommendations to better support migrant mothers and promote positive parenting practices:

- Inclusive Parenting Programs: Develop and implement parenting interventions and programs that actively involve both mothers and fathers. Ensure that these programs are culturally sensitive and accessible to all migrant families, regardless of their cultural backgrounds. Encourage fathers' active participation in childcare and household responsibilities.
- Promote Gender Equality: Launch initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality in parenting and caregiving responsibilities. Challenge and transform societal gender norms that limit fathers' involvement in childcare. Encourage fathers to actively

engage with their children, providing support for mothers and contributing to more balanced parenting roles.

- Cultural Awareness and Integration Support: Provide resources and support to help migrant parents, particularly mothers, better understand and adapt to the cultural norms and values of their host society. These resources should help parents navigate the balance between their cultural values and the values of the host society.
- Emotion Management and Well-being: Offer support and resources for mothers to manage their emotions effectively. Create spaces where mothers can openly discuss their challenges and experiences, reducing feelings of alienation and isolation. Promote a positive emotional well-being for both parents.
- Parental Education and Awareness: Develop information campaigns and educational materials that emphasize the importance of both parents' roles in child-rearing. These campaigns should promote understanding, empathy, and shared responsibilities in parenting, with a focus on involving fathers in caregiving.
- Community Support Networks: Establish community-based support networks and organizations that cater to the needs of migrant families. These networks can offer guidance, counseling, and connections to essential services, including healthcare and social welfare, to help parents address their specific challenges.
- Cultural Heritage as a Resource: Recognize and promote the positive aspects of migrant families' cultural heritage as valuable resources for parenting. Encourage parents to draw from their cultural backgrounds to enrich their children's upbringing.
- Cross-Cultural Understanding: Develop initiatives that facilitate cross-cultural understanding and interaction between migrant parents and the broader community. Foster acceptance and appreciation of diverse parenting practices and cultural perspectives.
- Research and Data Collection: Invest in research to better understand the challenges and experiences of migrant parents. Regularly collect data on parenting practices, gender roles, and emotional well-being among migrant families to inform evidence-based policies and programs.

- Evaluation and Adaptation: Continuously evaluate the effectiveness of policies and programs supporting migrant parents and be prepared to adapt them based on feedback and changing needs.

7.1. Future implications of the research

Throughout the entire duration of this research project, I have gained valuable insights and developed a deeper understanding of research methodologies, particularly within the realm of qualitative research design. I am confident that these newfound insights will significantly enhance my future research endeavors and the overall research design. In this study, I employed a single data collection method by conducting interviews with mothers. However, I have come to recognize that employing a multi-method data collection approach, including focus group discussions, could have offered a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of how individuals react to and share their experiences, both in individual and group narratives.

Moreover, one crucial aspect that became apparent during the course of this research was the challenge of translation. I realized that the translation process might inadvertently omit important nuances of understanding and emotions, potentially compromising the depth and richness of the emotional aspects of the data. This has prompted me to be much more conscientious in addressing these translation challenges in my future research endeavors.

A notable challenge that I encountered during this research was the emotional attachment that developed as I conducted data collection. At times, the suffering and personal stories of my respondents touched me deeply, making it difficult to maintain complete objectivity. This experience has indicated the importance of balancing empathy with objectivity in qualitative research. While qualitative research is inherently open-ended, I have learned that it is equally important to maintain a level of control over the research environment, ensuring that professional and ethical standards are upheld at all times. This balance will be a critical consideration in my future research activities.

In my perspective, this research holds considerable implications for the existing body of literature and the broader topic of immigrant motherhood. Investigating the experiences of Azerbaijani immigrant mothers in Norway has the potential to contribute significantly to the field of research on immigrant motherhood, offering valuable insights into the unique experiences and challenges encountered by immigrant mothers and their families. Here are some of the future implications and avenues of research that can be drawn from this study:

Diversity in Immigrant Motherhood: This research reveals the need for a more comprehensive examination of immigrant motherhood experiences from various cultural backgrounds. Future research could explore the experiences of immigrant mothers from different countries of origin, shedding light on the cultural and contextual nuances that influence their mothering practices and challenges in host countries.

Comparative Studies: Comparative studies between immigrant mothers from various backgrounds can provide a deeper understanding of how different cultural and social factors impact their experiences in a new country. This approach would allow for a more nuanced analysis of the challenges and coping strategies employed by immigrant mothers.

Intersectionality: Future research can examine the intersectionality of immigrant motherhood, considering factors such as race, class, religion, and immigration status. This approach would help uncover how multiple dimensions of identity intersect to shape the experiences of immigrant mothers and their families.

Policy and Support Services: This research highlights the importance of tailored policies and support services for immigrant mothers. Future studies can explore the effectiveness of existing support systems and advocate for the development of more inclusive and culturally sensitive resources to assist immigrant mothers in their parenting journey.

Longitudinal Studies: Conducting longitudinal research can provide valuable insights into how immigrant mothers' experiences evolve over time as they adapt to their new surroundings. Longitudinal studies can shed light on the long-term impact of immigration and integration on motherhood and family dynamics.

Narrative and Qualitative Approaches: Building on the qualitative nature of this research, future studies can explore the narratives and stories of immigrant mothers in more depth. This can help capture the richness of their experiences and emotions, providing a more holistic understanding of immigrant motherhood.

Mental Health and Well-being: Investigating the mental health and well-being of immigrant mothers and their families can be an essential area of research. Understanding the psychological impact of migration and acculturation on mothers and their children is vital for developing targeted interventions.

Community and Social Support: Further research can explore the role of community and social support networks in facilitating the adaptation and well-being of immigrant mothers. This can shed light on the importance of community engagement and integration in the host society.

In summary, research on immigrant motherhood wields a significant influence on shaping the future by providing crucial insights that can inform the development of policies, services, and societal attitudes aimed at cultivating a more inclusive and supportive environment for immigrant mothers and their families. However, it's essential to acknowledge that the findings of this study may not be universally applicable. The experiences of immigrant mothers residing in small towns or villages in Norway, where there is a greater prevalence of social familiarity and the ease of establishing social networks, may differ considerably from those explored in this research. The policy recommendations outlined here are designed to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for migrant mothers and their families, with a specific focus on promoting gender equality, emotional well-being, and cultural integration. These recommendations aim to shape policies and services that are responsive to the diverse needs of immigrant mothers and their families. They also emphasize the significance of considering the unique challenges and opportunities presented by various settings, whether in urban or rural areas, to tailor support systems more effectively. Ultimately, this research serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, service providers, and society at large, offering guidance on how to enhance the experiences and well-being of immigrant mothers and their families, ultimately contributing to a more harmonious and inclusive future for all.

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Appendices

Appendix 01: In-depth Interviews (IDIs) Guideline

Topic: “Azerbaijani Immigrant Mothers”: “Motherhood Experiences in Norway”

Research Question: How do Azerbaijani immigrant mothers define “motherhood”?

1. What does motherhood mean to you? How do you find it (do you like it/don't like it?)
2. What are your challenges about being a mother?
3. Could you describe to me your child-rearing practices?

Research Question: How do Azerbaijani immigrant mothers understand the Norwegian ideals of “motherhood”? How does it differ from Azerbaijani ideals of motherhood versus Norway?

4. What is your mothering experience in Norway? How involved are you in their day-to-day experience?
5. Do you share your child rearing practices with your partner/spouse?
6. In your opinion, what are the differences in the way children are raised in Norway to the way they are raised in your home country?

Research Question: What are the challenges they face when navigating between these ideals and how do they navigate them?

7. What are other cultural differences of being a mother in Norway vs back in Azerbaijan?
8. What is the biggest challenge that you faced as a parent in Norway?
9. Do you have any strategy to keep the balance between these two ideals of parenting?

Appendix 02: Project Information

“Azerbaijani Immigrant Mothers: Motherhood Experiences in Norway”

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to provide the research evidence which considers the motherhood experiences of Azerbaijani immigrant mothers in Norway. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

The research aim is to provide the research evidence which considers the motherhood experiences of Azerbaijani immigrant mothers in Norway and analyze their perceptions of perceptions of being mother in Norwegian context.

The general objective is to explore the motherhood experiences of Azerbaijani immigrant mothers in Norway. The specific objectives are:

- To analyze Azerbaijani immigrant mothers' experience parenting practices regarding to the perception of a Norwegian ideals of 'motherhood'
- To have an understanding of how an immigrant mother's cultural history influences their parenting habits.
- To understand how immigrant mothers strike the balance between 'doing parenting' that is more identifiably 'the Norwegian way' versus the maintenance of their own culturally prescriptive style of parenting.

This research project plans to answer the following research questions:

- How do Azerbaijani immigrant mothers define “motherhood”?
- How do Azerbaijani immigrant mothers understand the Norwegian ideals of “motherhood”? How does it differ from Azerbaijani ideals of motherhood versus Norway?
- What are the challenges they face when navigating between these ideals and how do they navigate them?

This research project will be used for master thesis.

Who is responsible for the research project?

Mahizar Zeynalova as a student and research leader and UIS (Universitetet i Stavanger) is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

In the study, the participant group will consist of six Azerbaijani mothers who have been residing in Norway for more than five years and can speak in both Azerbaijani and English. The participants is recruited from my personal network of Azerbaijani people whom I initially contacted via a Facebook page and a few others through snowball sampling method.

What does participation involve for you?

There is a plan to conduct semi-structured interviews which is selected as the appropriate interview type for the data collection process to avoid establishing a hierarchical relationship between interviewer and interviewee, also semi-structured interview will help us to make more conversational talk and during the interview, the questions will cover the motherhood experiences of participants in Norway and conversation about parenting practicing in Norway. The audio recorder will be used to avoid any word mistakes and misinterpretation, e.g.:

- « If you chose to take part in the project, it will take approx. 45-60 minutes. The interview includes questions about (How does the participant define motherhood? and how do they differ motherhood Azerbaijan versus Norway? Mainly to analyse their cultural and contextual challenges and adaptation as immigrant mothers). Your answers will be recorded electronically».

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

- UIS as the university and institution is responsible for the project, and we have student drive in the system that only the researcher will have access to the data and all data will be locked in safe.
- “There will not be taken any personal information, only I will use audio recording during the interview with your permission”, I will store the data on a research server and drive by protected by UIS, locked away/encrypted.

The participants will not be recognizable in publications and there will not be used any personal information to be known by others.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end in May. The project period is 1.02.2023-05.05.2023. Only collected data about the research project will be anonymised and at the end of the project all collected data and audio recordings will be deleted.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with UIS and Data Protection Services has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- UIS (post@uis.no) via research supervisor, Prizma Ghimire, by email (prizma.ghimire@uis.no) or by telephone: +4751831657.
- Student: Mahizar Zeynalova, by email (m.zeynalova@stud.uis.no) or by telephone: +4792550841
- Our Data Protection Officer: IT department, by telephone, +4751831000, or by email (rolf.jegervatn@uis.no)
- Data Protection Services, by email: (personverntjenester@sikt.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Prizma Ghimire
(Researcher/supervisor)

Mahizar Zeynalova
(Student)

Appendix 03: Consent Form

Consent can be given in writing (including electronically) or orally. NB! You must be able to document/demonstrate that you have given information and gained consent from project participants i.e. from the people whose personal data you will be processing (data subjects). As a rule, we recommend written information and written consent.

- *For written consent on paper you can use this template*
- *For written consent which is collected electronically, you must chose a procedure that will allow you to demonstrate that you have gained explicit consent (read more on our website)*
- *If the context dictates that you should give oral information and gain oral consent (e.g. for research in oral cultures or with people who are illiterate) we recommend that you make a sound recording of the information and consent.*

If a parent/guardian will give consent on behalf of their child or someone without the capacity to consent, you must adjust this information accordingly. Remember that the name of the participant must be included.

Adjust the checkboxes in accordance with participation in your project. It is possible to use bullet points instead of checkboxes. However, if you intend to process special categories of personal data (sensitive personal data) and/or one of the last four points in the list below is applicable to your project, we recommend that you use checkboxes. This because of the requirement of explicit consent.

I have received and understood information about the project (Azerbaijani Immigrant Mothers: Motherhood Experiences and Perceptions of Child Welfare Services in Norway) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in interview
- to participate in the interview while using the audio recording

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. May.

(Signed by participant, date)

Appendix 04: Approval from Data Protection Official for Research, NSD



Notification form / Azerbaijani Immigrant Mothers": "Motherhood Experiences in Norway / Export

Notification Form

Reference number

519216

Which personal data will be processed?

- Name
- Voice on audio recordings
- Ethnicity

Project information

Title

Azerbaijani Immigrant Mothers": "Motherhood Experiences in Norway

Summary

The general objective is to explore the motherhood experiences of Azerbaijani immigrant mothers in Norway. The specific objectives are: *To analyze Azerbaijani immigrant mothers' experience parenting practices regarding to the perception of a Norwegian ideals of 'motherhood' «To have an understanding of how an immigrant mother's cultural history influences their parenting habits. *To understand how immigrant mothers strike the balance between 'doing parenting' that is more identifiably 'the Norwegian way' versus the maintenance of their own culturally prescriptive style of parenting. To take consider of an ethnic plural sample group, the study inspired an awareness of a culturally entrenched parent and similar difficulties faced in adapting to the Westernized ideal model of parenthood based on the modern Norwegian values and system.

If the personal data will be used for other purposes, please describe

We will only use your personal data for the processing for this project's purpose(s), not for other purposes. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

Provide a justification for the need to process the personal data

We will ask only their ethnic\cultural background to identify that they are Azerbaijani or not, because for our research we need only Azerbaijani immigrant mothers. We will not process other personal data. All data will be transcribed anonymously.

Project description

[Reseach Proposal for thesis.docx](#)

External Funding

Not filled in

Type of project

Master's

Contact information, student

Mahizar Zeynalova, m.zeynalova@stud.uis.no, tel: +4792550841

Data controller

Institution responsible for the project Project leader

University of Stavanger / Faculty of Social Sciences / Department of Social Studies

Prizma Ghimire, prizma.ghimire@uis.no, Tel: 51831657

Do multiple institutions share responsibility (joint data controllers)?

No

Sample1

Describe the sample

In the study, the selection group of participants will consist of five Azerbaijani mothers who have been residing in Norway for more than five years. Our participants are immigrant mothers in Norway.

Describe how you will identify or contact the sample

The participants are recruited from my personal network of Azerbaijani people whom I initially contacted via a Facebook page and a few others through snowball sampling method.

Age Group

25-55

Which personal data will be processed for sample {{i}}? 1

- Voice on audio recordings
- Ethnicity

How is the data relating to sample 1 collected?

Personal interview

Attachment

[Interview
Guide.docx](#)

Legal basis for processing general personal data

Consent (General Data Protection Regulation art. 6 nr. 1 a)

Legal basis for processing special personal data

Explicit consent (General Data Protection Regulation art. 9 nr. 2 a)

Justify the choice of legal basis for processing

Information for sample

1

Does the sample receive information about the processing of personal data?

Yes

How does the sample receive information about the processing? Written (on paper or electronically)

Information letter

[information_letter-2 \(1\).doc](#)

Third persons

Does the project collect information about third parties?

No

Documentation

How will consent be documented?

- Manually (on paper)
- Electronically (email, e-form, digital signature)

How can consent be withdrawn?

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

How can data subjects get access to their personal data or have their personal data corrected or deleted?

Data subjects will be given the researcher and supervisor's contact numbers and other contact details (eg., email address) that whenever they want to change something, they will have chance to contact with them and notify the changes or problems. Participation is voluntary.

Total number of data subjects in the project

1-99

Approvals

Will any of the following approvals or permits be obtained?

Ikke utfyllt

Security measures

Will the personal data be stored separately from other data?

Yes

Which technical and practical measures will be used to secure the personal data?

- Continuous anonymisation

Where will the personal data be processed

- Mobile devices
- Hardware

Who has access to the personal data?

- Project leader
- Student (student project)

Are personal data transferred to a third country?

No

Closure

Project period

06.02.2023 - 20.11.2023

What happens to the data at the end of the project?

Personal data will be anonymised (deleting or rewriting identifiable data)

Which anonymisation measures will be taken?

- Personally identifiable information will be removed, re-written or categorized e Any sound or video recordings will be deleted
- The identification key will be deleted

Will the data subjects be identifiable in publications?

No

Additional information

Appendix 05: Non-Plagiarism Declaration

I hereby declare that the Dissertation titled “Azerbaijani Immigrant Mothers Motherhood Experiences in Norway” submitted to the Erasmus Mundus Master’s Program in Social Work with Families and Children:

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

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

Date (dd/mm/yyyy): 14 November 2023

Signature:



Name (in block letters): MAHIZAR ZEYNALOVA