UiA Universitetet i Agder | AURA

Author’s accepted manuscript

Bønnhoff, H. E. D. (2020). Fostering ‘digital citizens’ in Norway: experiences of migrant mothers. Families, Relationships and Societies.
https://doi.org/10.1332/204674320X16047231238221.

Published in: Development in Practice

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1332/204674320X16047231238221

AURA: https://hdl.handle.net/11250/2725852

Available online: 25/11/2021

This is a post-peer-review, pre-copy edited version of an article published in Families, Relationships and Societies. The definitive publisher-authenticated version Bønnhoff, H. E. D. (2020). Fostering ‘digital citizens’ in Norway: experiences of migrant mothers. Families, Relationships and Societies, is available online at:
https://doi.org/10.1332/204674320X16047231238221.

Fostering ‘digital citizens’ in Norway. Experiences of migrant mothers

Author information:
Heidi Esma Dahl Bønnhoff
PhD student at the University of Agder, Norway

This is a post-peer-review, pre-copy edited version of an article published in ‘*Families, relationships and societies’* and must not be cited. The definitive publisher-authenticated version ‘Bønnhoff, Heidi E.D. (2020) ‘Fostering ‘digital citizens’ in Norway: experiences of migrant mothers’, *Families, relationships and societies*: 1-15’, is available online at: https://doi.org/10.1332/204674320X16047231238221

Abstract:
I argue that the fostering of ‘digital citizens’ in Norway is a societal project involving many actors, including parents, kindergartens and schools. The present article explores how migrant mothers in Norway experience handling their children’s use of digital media. Through institutional ethnographic exploration, I discover the ideals and conceptual terrains of what I have identified as the ‘digital *Bildung*’ discourse, consisting of dominant understandings of education, parenting, digitalisation and citizenship in Norwegian society. When performed in educational institutions, digital Bildung is formalised and organised by ruling texts, like government policies and curricula, but a main part of children’s digital Bildung is confined to the private sphere and entrusted to the judgement of parents. The findings indicate that migrant mothers may find it especially difficult to live up to, or challenge, the dominant understandings and practices of digital Bildung.

Key words: digital Bildung, migrant mothers, digital citizenship, institutional ethnography

Introduction

This article provides insights into how the fostering of 'digital citizens' in Norway can be interpreted as work coordinated between parents, children, teachers, welfare state workers and policy makers. Digital skills are one of five basic skills that school pupils in Norway are supposed to attain, along with literacy, numeracy, reading and oral skills (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training 2012). Digital skills are conceptualised in a broad sense in public documents such as policies and curricula, and are often referred to as 'digital Bildung', as visible in the political plan *The Strategy for Digitalisation of Basic Education*:

> Digital skills include being able to use digital tools, media and resources expediently and responsibly to solve practical tasks, retrieve and process information, make digital products and communicate. Digital skills also involve developing digital judgement through acquiring knowledge and good strategies for online use. Schools, pupils and parents must therefore deal with digital Bildung in everyday life (Ministry of Education and Research 2017: 18). (author's translation)

In this article, I do not explicate *'Bildung'* as a general concept, rather I explore the more limited concept of *'digital Bildung'*. Other researchers have argued in favour of using the concept of digital Bildung to emphasise how digital literacy requires an overall intercultural competence, and a broader form of digital education, that is not restricted to mechanical skills or narrow forms of functional competence (Buckingham 2006, Gran et al 2019). The goal of digital Bildung is thus seen as more than the development of digital skills and 'netiquette' (online etiquette), it encompasses the fostering of 'digital citizens' who understand their role in, and the risks of, a digitalised society (Dotterer et al 2016, Gran et al 2019).

As this article is built on institutional ethnography (IE) as its analytical framework and methodology, the research is not based on pre-defined theories of digital Bildung. Rather, I explore it as a dialogue formed between lived practices and specific conceptions of children's needs, parenting, citizenship, and digital use. The dominant conceptions of digital Bildung in Norwegian society constitute what I explore as a *discourse on digital Bildung*. Discourse, in the IE usage, refers to a conceptual terrain that renders some opinions and actions preferable to others (Smith 2005). I began my research by interviewing migrant mothers who came to Norway as adults from societies they themselves describe as much less digitalised than the Norwegian context, in both the public and private spheres. Since they are former 'outsiders' to Norway, their experiences have been useful in spotting discourses that may influence

parenting and institutional practices related to children's digital Bildung. Their experiences also illustrate how migration may promote new parenting opportunities and challenges related to having greater access to the digital world. The guiding research question is: How do the migrant mothers' experiences of handling their children's digital media use reflect dominant institutional understandings and practices of *digital Bildung* in Norway?

Context of the study

Living in contemporary Norway, migrant mothers interact with an increasingly digitalised society. Public and government service have largely switched from analogue and paper-based solutions to digital systems (Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation 2016). Statistics show that 98 percent of the population has access to the internet at home and the vast majority use different kinds of digital media, such as PCs, cell phones or tablets on a daily basis (Statistics Norway 2019). Kindergartens and schools play an important role in implementing Norwegian digitalisation policies by teaching children digital skills. Supported by different professionals, such as health clinics and school nurses, they also convey values regarding digital use to children and parents (Jæger and Sandvik 2019, Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training 2012, 2017, Norwegian Directorate of Health 2019).

Most children in Norway go through similar education. 91.7 percent of children aged one to five attended kindergarten in 2018 (Statistics Norway 2018). The year children turn six, they start ten years of compulsory school consisting of primary and lower-secondary education. Thereafter, youths attend three years of upper-secondary education. This is voluntary but is completed by 75.3 percent of pupils. It is thus included in the thirteen years of what is called "basic education" (Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity n.d., Statistics Norway 2019). More than 90 percent of children attend public schools (Statistics Norway 2018).

The majority of Norwegian children have highly rated digital skills (Ministry of Education and Research 2017). This is regarded as important in government policies because it gives them access to information and societal participation (Ministry of Education and Research 2017, Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation 2016). The aim of fostering 'digital citizens' can be understood as linked to neoliberal images of citizens as informed, productive, self-governed and contributing to the community both socially and financially (Schou and Hjelholt 2019). Signs of this mentality appear in The Strategy for

Digitalisation of Basic Education, which states that: “Pupils should have digital skills that fully equips them to manage everyday life administration and achieve success in education, labour work and societal partaking” (pp. 12) and further:

> In line with the school curriculum, pupils acquire basic digital skills throughout the daily work of learning in subjects from the first year of primary school. Pupils practice their ethical and digital judgment and the ability to make reflected choices about the use of ICT to enable them to master daily life and be active participants of society in a digital citizenship (Ministry of Education and Research 2017: 12).

Moreover, the importance of having access to digital tools at home is recognised in policy documents (Ministry of Education and Research 2017). School policies state that parents are important supporters of their children’s education (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training 2017, 2016). This is an ideal of the general parenting discourse as well, which promotes ‘attentive’ parenting, parents’ active involvement in their children’s education and cooperation between home and school (Dannesboe et al 2018, Stefansen 2011).

Previous research

A study of how Norwegian pupils perceive and learn digital *Bildung* indicates that they view skills in using digital tools and netiquette as important and something they expect to learn in school (Gran et al 2019). The pupils see the benefits of digital media for learning and many other purposes, such as communication, yet their experience indicates that teachers view digital media as useful mostly in the school context. The pupils report that during school hours their digital use is heavily monitored and is limited to educational purposes. The degree to which their parents talk to them about online risks and set rules for digital media use during their leisure time varies.

Research from the US indicates that parents view their children’s digital skills and access to digital tools as important for their success in education, the labour market and society in general (Clark et al 2005). Parents also have several concerns, for instance regarding how access to digital entertainment discourages a focus on education. A study comparing parenting across Europe shows that many parents develop strategies to handle their children’s digital use from the time their children are very young (Livingstone et al 2015). Their findings indicate that parents with higher income, education and level of digital expertise tend to be more actively engaged in and less restrictive of their children’s online activities. Research

about family relationships and internet abuse in 25 European countries indicates that parenting characterised by high levels of dialogue may work as a protective factor of internet abuse for children (Rivera et al 2020). Other researchers point to how a reversal in the parent-child knowledge hierarchy may arise in families where children have more digital expertise than their parents (Grossbart et al 2002).

When it comes to migrant parents, an Australian study finds that they perceive technology as useful in assisting with children's education (Tour 2019). The findings indicate that the views and practices of migrant parents are shaped by their desire for their children's social mobility and are reinforced by their interpretations of what is valued in schools.

I have not found studies exploring migrant parents' views on their children's use of digital media in the Norwegian context. However, several Norwegian researchers highlight migrants' parenting and children in general. Findings indicate that these parents often report having a lack of knowledge of and skills in parenting norms of their settlement context and that their opportunities to challenge such norms are limited (Lidén 2017, Smette and Rosten 2019). While their children quickly begin to learn the norms and language of the country though kindergartens and schools, many migrant parents initially have a limited right to work and access welfare services, and thus they may begin this learning process later (Lidén 2017). However, a study of Polish migrant children's experiences of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)[1] in Norway, indicates that not all the children get the support they need to attain language and play competence belonging to the culture of destination (Sadownik 2018).

One study finds that refugee parents include in their parental practices impulses from their context of origin as well as from their settlement context (Bergset and Ulvik 2019). Other studies find that migrants in Norway feel a pressure to 'prove' that they abide by dominant ideals of parenting in order to avoid negative attention from kindergartens, schools and, ultimately, child welfare services (Paulsen et al 2014, Smette and Rosten 2019). Findings indicate that migrant parents feel excluded and disempowered from achieving and defining what is best for their children by several institutions of the welfare state (Tembo et al 2020).

As little is known about how migrants' experience their children's digital use, especially in a Norwegian context, there is need for research on this topic. This article provides new

knowledge about migrant mothers' experiences related to the ways digital Bildung unfolds in their everyday lives and their conditions for contributing to their children's digital Bildung.

Analytical framework and concepts

IE can be understood as a methodology designed to uncover the macro-institutional ideals and practices that influence and organise the experiences of people in local everyday settings (Smith 2005). Dorothy Smith, who originally developed IE, refers to such social forces as 'ruling relations' of which discourses and texts are a part. She describes how ruling relations impose certain views from within a discourse as unitary, universal and 'right', in contrast to the way people's everyday lives consist of many varying perspectives (Smith 2005).

In Smith's view, discourses do not exist or act on their own but are produced by peoples' concerted activities (Smith 2005). The spreading through texts of understandings and ways of organising human action by authorities is part of these activities. Smith's concept of 'text' refers to words, images and sounds that are given material form. She points to how most institutional arrangements are textualised in modern welfare states through white papers, web pages, curricula and so on, which are written within a discourse with specific understandings and concepts. As such texts are read, heard or seen by people at different times and places, they can coordinate their consciousnesses and actions trans-locally. These texts may also contribute to subordinating individual needs and experiences, making them invisible.

This standardising or ruling effect comes from the fact that texts are the same for each reader (Smith 2006). However, texts do not determine thoughts and actions, as people can interpret and respond to them differently. Smith argues that research should start from a local standpoint in people's everyday lives, aiming to explore how their daily work is wrapped up in – or resistant to – ruling relations. 'Work' is understood in a broad sense, including unpaid emotional, physical and cognitive daily labour within family relations (Smith 2005). In this article, I explore 'parenting' as work done in relation to institutions, such as kindergartens and schools, from the standpoint of a group of migrant mothers in Norway.

According to Smith, people who participate in institutional relations often describe their work using the language of the institutions instead of referring to their own experiences. One important challenge for the institutional ethnographer is to recognise when this shift is

happening (Smith 2005). I illustrate in my study how the mothers' accounts can be interpreted as a dialogue between the requirements of discourses, the other perspectives derived from their everyday lives, as well as their own intentions. Texts and discourses are not always known to the participants of a study, but researchers doing IE can explore them to obtain further knowledge about ruling relations (Smith 2005). I have analysed and discussed how texts like white papers and curricula promote certain digital Bildung practices that may influence the everyday lives of my research participants through their engagement with institutions.

Research participants and methods

The research begins from the experiences of sixteen migrant mothers from Africa and Asia. Primarily, non-governmental organisations assisted in recruiting participants, but four mothers were recruited through contacts in my own network. All were given information prior to participating and signed a consent form.[2] They had resided in Norway for between six months and twenty years when the interviews were conducted and were between 25-49 years old. All had dependent children between the ages of 0-19 and had experience with different educational institutions. Fourteen were married, while two were single mothers. The mothers expressed that they had different levels of experience in digital media use depending on socio-economic family background, level of education and their own interest in digital media.

I have explored my research question by: 1) conducting in-depth qualitative interviews with the mothers to explore how they experience handling their children's digital use, and 2) exploring what factors may influence these experiences, mainly through analysis of texts that appeared to shape them. To reach a better understanding of the participants' contexts and what texts might be relevant to analyse, I also interviewed an employee at the adult education programme for migrants in Norway. All the participants attended this programme to learn about the Norwegian language and society and, for some, to complete their basic education.

For this article's purpose, I focus on findings from interviews with *six* of the mothers, whose real names have been changed for anonymity. The interviews were chosen because they render particularly visible a general finding in my data analysis, namely that there is a dominant discourse on digital Bildung in Norway that the mothers and the professionals at different institutions seem to relate to.

Analysing the data – discovering a discourse on digital Bildung

The analysis is inspired by Rankin's description of how researchers who do IE can map institutional relations from the standpoint of the research participants (Rankin 2017). I also used the approach of 'interviewing' the interview material (McCoy 2006). That is, I began by asking what the interview material could 'tell' me about how the mothers experience handling their children's use of digital media, what skills are needed for this purpose and what challenges and opportunities the mothers face. Through this analysis, it became evident that they point to certain common concepts, which I marked, like the benefits of 'early' digital education and the importance of engaging in a 'dialogue' with children about online 'risks'.

I further looked for ruling relations by 'asking' the interview material what people and institutions their parenting is done in relation to, what the mothers learn about parenting and digital practices from them and if there is any disjuncture between what the mothers learn and how they themselves perform or want to perform their parenting. I mapped the text-mediated plans, curricula and policies that organise the institutions. I switched back and forth between the texts and the interview material to obtain a better understanding of the conceptions of children's digital use that the mothers and texts refer to. Through this analysis, I discovered that the mothers' experiences reflect a trans-local institutional discourse on digital *Bildung*, where the goal is to foster digital citizens capable of mastering the present digitalised society. The mothers did not use the term *digital Bildung* themselves, but I further identified two key concepts within the discourse that are similar in the texts and the mothers' responses, namely:

1) *Early digital education:* Children should learn digital skills that enable them to experience life coping mechanisms and happiness in education, the labour market and societal participation, and 2) *Developing digital judgement:* Children should develop awareness of online risks and the beneficial and legal use of digital media when it comes to ethically acceptable communication, amount of use, source criticism and protection of privacy.

These concepts can be traced back through a hierarchy of texts, following the IE notion that so-called higher-order texts are organising frameworks for lower-order texts produced to implement their values in local settings (Smith 2006, 2005). The 'boss text' in my study is the white paper *Digital Agenda for Norway,* which discusses how public services will be increasingly digitalised, and citizens are included in this digitalisation (Norwegian Ministry of

Local Government and Modernisation 2016). The concepts of early digital education and digital judgement are further found in the *Framework Plan for Kindergartens*, stating that employees should facilitate children's playful learning through digital tools and "exercise sound digital judgement and help the children develop an early ethical understanding of digital media" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training 2017: 44). Similar concepts appear in the *Strategy of Digitalisation of Basic Education* (Ministry of Education and Research 2017), as stated in the introduction of the article, and the *Action Plan against Gaming Problems* (Ministry of Culture 2015). Both state that digital media can be beneficial for pedagogical purposes, but if they are used extensively for non-academic purposes or in unethical or illegal ways, they may distract children from education and cause them harm.

Such understandings are carried forward by lower-order texts, such as the political campaign 'snakkomspill.no' (talkaboutgaming.no), which parents and teachers may engage with directly. The campaign encourages parents, children and schools to talk about the positive and negative consequences of gaming and to agree on gaming rules to avoid conflicts (Norwegian Media Authority and The Norwegian Gaming and Foundation Authority 2016). Parents and teachers may also relate to 'expert opinions' in media, like school nurses who state that parents' cell phone use can create a distance between them and their children (Jensen 2017). On schools' homepages, parents can find articles regarding how they should set examples for their children concerning netiquette (Foreldrepulsen 2017, 2017). Parents' responsibilities are thus extended from regulating children's digital use to becoming role models.

In the findings, I present the migrant mothers accounts of handling their children's early digital education and development of digital judgement. Thereafter, I discuss how their everyday lives can be understood as embedded in ruling relations and how their experiences can be recognised as their interpreting and balancing viewpoints and practices they have been exposed to both within and outside of their current living context.

Findings

Early digital education, from the mothers' perspectives

All the participants have high ambitions for their children's education. They convey that one of the reasons they came to Norway was to provide better opportunities that would allow their children to become 'whatever they dream of'. Their experiences attending adult education and

seeking employment in Norway, in addition to their experience as mothers of children in kindergarten and school, caused them to quickly realise the importance of digital skills. The mothers praise how their children learn digital skills much earlier than they themselves did, as most of the mothers started this learning as adults. They explain that their children have better access to digital education as part of another generation growing up in a highly digitalised society. Elisabeth, who has two children and three stepchildren says:

> They [the children] practise from a very young age. And in a way that is a good thing, because that is how our society is, and we cannot change it. They must have good computer skills. If not, they fall outside [of the society].

Elisabeth expresses that she 'cannot change' Norwegian society, indicating that she considers it a necessity to have digital skills in Norway. Several of the mothers express the same understanding and tell how they try to adjust by supporting their children's digital education as they want them to succeed in Norway. Some have chosen to actively teach their children digital skills related to schoolwork, navigating the internet, or using different digital tools.

However, the mothers also convey that they find their children's early exposure to digital media challenging. It has been especially challenging for the mothers with fewer digital skills than their children to actively support early digital education. Kunthea bought an iPad for her daughter when she was a toddler. Now, she feels her daughter has caught up with her, challenging her authority. She says: "I feel it was stupid of me to buy it and teach her. Because they learn so quickly! And sometimes I even learn things from her". This statement illustrates that the relationship between mother and child may change when the child masters digital media in a society where digital skills provide benefits. Similarly, Feven experiences that her daughter has a more "natural" way of using digital media than she does, but her account demonstrates primarily how mothers may find it challenging that children's digital media use is time consuming. She says:

> Everything is touch for her. [Her primary] school is part of an iPad-project […] about learning to use an iPad [for writing] first, and then learning to write with a pen. So, for her, it is totally natural to use it […] I am thinking, this is the time we live in, so she must keep up with the times. […] But I do not want her to spend so much time on it.

The quote illustrates an ambivalence all these mothers have regarding their children's early digital education – they see it as both a necessity and a challenge. According to the mothers,

their children's use of digital media in kindergarten and school causes them want to use digital media more at home. The children have digital homework, and some of them bring the school's tablets home, but they want to use them for entertainment as well. The mothers find this slippage hard to avoid. Children's formal education is thus organised digitally, influencing how they behave at home and the relations within the family.

The mothers especially have concerns about the interference of their children's digital media use in their education. Amina has three teenage children and says she is less worried about the digital use of her two youngest children, as they have "control", do well in school and participate in sports. She is worried about her oldest son, however, as he spends considerably more time on digital media in a way that seems "out of control" to Amina. She thinks that this use is part of the reason he struggles at school and did not attain the grades he needed to be admitted to his preferred higher education programme. When Amina sought advice from his teacher, the teacher answered in a generalising way that gaming is something "all youngsters do". Amina did not find this helpful or supportive. However, like most of my research participants, she has little extended family or others to turn to for support in Norway concerning such issues.

The impact of greater access to the digital realm has been especially evident for mothers who had children before migrating. Amina says that her children's use of digital media has escalated since they came to Norway, and that this disrupts her relationship with them. Carina, who has six children, compares her life in Norway to that in her country of origin:

> In [my country, most] families do not have stable wi-fi, so the children do not [have access to wi-fi] either. […] But in Norway it is [almost] open access to wi-fi. […] It is a challenge in a way because there are no limitations. […] In other places it is easy for children to go out and be creative and play or do something else. But in Norway, it is the way it is, and it is a challenge.

Parenting in Norway creates new worries for the mothers, as their children have greater access to the digital world. Carina's account is in line with general findings from the interviews, namely that the mothers find that digital entertainment takes time away from activities they consider to be more beneficial for their children's development, such as interacting with family, engaging in outdoor activities or sports and playing. In the next section, I present the mothers accounts of how they handle their worries regarding the digital world.

Developing children's digital judgement, from the mothers' perspectives

The mothers do not use the term digital judgement but speak of teaching their children about the benefits and harms of digital use. They are concerned about the amount of time spent on digital media and what they see as harmful online communication and content. Regarding time use, some speak of their children as being 'digitally addicted' or are worried that they will become so. They try to guide them to a limited and 'controlled' digital use. Most of the mothers say that their children are not allowed to use digital media in bed at night. Elisabeth explains: "Otherwise, it will be difficult to function at school the next day". She thus guides her children to avoid using digital media in ways that will interfere with their education.

Carina tells about how she made agreements with her children regarding time limits, where each child has different rules according to their ages, needs and wishes:

> We had a new year talk where all [six kids] came in [to our room], one after the other, and we discussed how you should use your cell phone. So, my son said, "okay, till 10 p.m., then I'll stop." So, we made an agreement that it is not allowed to use the cell phone in bed while going to sleep.

Most of the mothers say they use dialogue in this way to negotiate with their children, though the other mothers do not describe similarly arranged conversations with their children.

The mothers say that they try to offer their children more educational or 'beneficial' alternatives to digital media. They expose them to the library, sports or cultural activities and tell them to go outside and play. The mothers consider digital media use to lead to a passivity they find harmful for children. However, two of them talk about how digital media is 'useful' to calm the children when they themselves need peace. Feven is one of them, saying: "I can have peace if I want to. […] [I can say] "go watch the iPad in your room". But that is not right." Nevertheless, she says she sometimes finds it hard to avoid such practices during a stressful day, showing she has an ambivalence towards using digital media as a 'pacifier'.

All the mothers say they try to be good role models by limiting their own use of digital media in front of their children. Some state that this process can be challenging in practice and that they spend more time on digital media than they consider to be 'right' for mothers. They are thus ambivalent also about their own digital use. Layla, a young mother who came to Norway a year before we met, says she hardly ever uses her cell phone in front of her toddler, as she

learned about ‘good parenting’ from employees at child welfare services. She says they came to the adult education programme for migrants, which she attends, to talk about their work and how they consider if children’s needs are met at home:

> They said that if the child does not want to come home [from kindergarten, it may be because he thinks]: “My mommy and daddy do not like me, they do not like spending time with me”. Then maybe we [child welfare services] will come and take your child.” […] We [as parents] must […] do all the things [we want] the child to learn from us. When we are at home using the cell phone all the time, the child will grow up, he will marry and have children, and he will use it [the cell phone] the same way.

Layla believes that parents’ extensive use of digital media can make children feel neglected. She thus draws the conclusion that it may lead to interventions from child welfare services. She also emphasises that parents are children’s roles models. This illustrates how the mothers can learn about parenting values through educational institutions in Norway and act on their interpretation of what they learn.

All the mothers say that they continuously learn new strategies to handle their children’s digital use, but not everyone is explicit about where they learn them. Elisabeth, however, explicitly mentions parental network meetings organised at her children’s school, which she found very helpful, as police officers came there to provide them with information about the risks of online communication, such as bullying and sexual abuse. From these meetings, Elisabeth obtained advice regarding talking to her children about such risks and keeping an eye on their digital use while still safeguarding their privacy. She says: “[I] try to add them as friends. On Facebook and such things. Somehow following without sneaking. But most of all to talk to them”. Likewise, Carina says mothers in Norway need to “follow up”:

> Being a mother in Norway, you need to be digitalised regardless whether you like it or not. Because children have access to wi-fi, and if you are a mother here, you need to advance to that level. If the children are better than you, they might do something else [online which you do not approve of].

Carina mentions that mothers may not “like” the digital, while other mothers focus on how parents’ opportunities to obtain digital skills may vary in their country of origin and in Norway. Kunthea’s account of her own attempt at following up illustrates how a lack of experience with digital media can make it challenging to control what children are exposed to:

> Sometimes, strange content is shown on Facebook. A little violent, not like child's play. I try to erase it, but it keeps coming back. […] If she [the daughter] is watching something she knows I am not approving of, she tries to hide it. Then I notice and say to her, "what are you watching now? Do not watch this." [She says], "Ok". But if I forget about it, it keeps coming back. I once removed YouTube from the iPad. […] When she found out that my cell phone has YouTube, she wanted the cell phone.

On the other hand, Elisabeth, an experienced user of digital media, also considers it difficult to protect her children from online 'adult' content as it is easily available. Like several of the other mothers, she is especially concerned about war reports: "I am thinking about war. There are so many examples of that in my homeland. […] And it can be hard for children to see that." Such news can become personal for the families who fled from a country at war as the stories are sometimes related to their homeland and people they know. According to Amina, her son's focus on education and integration into Norwegian society have been negatively affected by all the war reports he reads, because it makes him very upset. This reaction triggers topics of discussion, but she does not always feel capable of giving him answers.

Regarding parental control functions, which is an option on many devices, some mothers say they do not know how to use them. Other mothers, especially those who have older children or teenagers, explain that they prefer counselling or dialogue. Elisabeth says: "I cannot control everything. […] But I choose to trust that they understand what I try to convey." She further says that she talks with her children in a way that her parents never did with her when she was young. Like most of the mothers, she says there are "more taboos" in her country of origin than in Norway. She says:

> The talks I had with my parents [about topics such as sex and war] came only after I turned eighteen. We have these talks when the children are thirteen or fourteen years old. […] It is very scary, but it is important that we have these talks. Because they might get the wrong information from the internet. Not necessarily wrong, but raw information that might be harmful. […] She [the daughter] asks me questions and I try to explain the situation, that everything in the media is not what it seems like.

Elisabeth changed her practices after migrating, choosing to talk about topics she previously considered taboo. This change points to a general finding in my study, that the mothers seem to make a great effort to adopt what they perceive to be the norms and values in Norway, including engaging in dialogue with their children to teach them source criticism and 'conscious' digital use. Still, they find it difficult to fully learn such norms and values, especially as they came to Norway as adults and know few parents who are not migrants.

Discussion

The previous analysis demonstrates that the migrant mothers describe themselves as important teachers, role models and guides in supporting their children's early digital education and in helping them develop digital judgement. This work seems to constitute a significant part of their parenting, something which affects the relations within the family. Previous research indicates that parents throughout today's largely digitalised Europe manage their children's digital use in similar ways: by talking to and advising their children, monitoring their use and setting limits (Livingstone et al 2015). This may imply that the digital Bildung discourse is common in digitalised countries in general. However, some of my findings seem primarily related to migrant experiences, such as the mothers' worries about their children's access to online war reports from their country of origin. Also, the migrant mothers seem to find it particularly hard to interpret different viewpoints and practices related to the digital Bildung discourse and to balance them with the viewpoints and practices of their everyday lives.

My findings indicate that the mothers and their children have obtained greater access to the digital world by migrating to Norway, as explicitly mentioned by Carina. The mothers' positive view of digital media for educational purposes could be based on their intention for their children to become well-educated. This conclusion is supported by previous findings on how migrant parents view digital media as a useful educational tool based on their desire for the social mobility of their children (Tour 2019). However, an important finding in my analysis is that the mothers display what I would call a 'digital ambivalence', as they conceptualise their children's digital use as both a good thing and a challenge. In light of previous research (Bergset and Ulvik 2019), this ambivalence can be understood as being based on their experiences of both Norwegian society and their context of origin.

The mothers are evidently exposed to the digital *Bildung* discourse in several ways in Norway. Organisationally, they interact with schools and kindergartens where discourse-based curricula and digitalisation policies seem well implemented, as their children are provided with digital tools for education. Layla and Elisabeth's accounts further indicate that many institutions are involved in mediating these discursive understandings orally, such as adult education, child protection services, schools and the police. My research participants seem to rely heavily on professional advice, perhaps more so than non-migrants, likely because they have little basis for comparison with other Norwegian parents, a smaller network

to rely on and less knowledge about the Norwegian context. This conclusion corresponds with previous findings indicating that migrant parents' interpretations of what is valued in educational contexts impacts their perspectives on their children's learning in digital spaces (Tour 2019). Such conditions may explain why Elisabeth is willing to speak with her children about digital risks even though she was taught in her country of origin that doing so is a taboo for certain topics. The mothers' 'digital ambivalence' could thus be based on the degree to which they value the opinions of professionals in Norway, while also considering the viewpoints from their context of origin.

Discourses are presented as unitary facts that cannot be doubted (Smith 2005). The authoritative manifestation of the digital Bildung discourse is evident as the mothers refer to their children's early exposure to digital media as part of the society that they themselves cannot change. Clearly, ruling relations are involved, as people with authority in the Norwegian society, such as policy makers, seem to have defined digitalisation as inevitable. This perceived inevitability is evident in the organization of the educational system around preparing children for an increasingly digitalised society (cf. Ministry of Education and Research 2017). In light of previous research (Lidén 2017, Smette and Rosten 2019), it is plausible that these migrant mothers are especially limited in their opportunities to influence and challenge the structures of their settlement countries. However, some of their accounts could be understood as criticism of the ways Norwegian society is organised, such as when they highlight how children's extensive access to the digital world makes it difficult to safeguard them against 'adult' information and to facilitate a 'playful' childhood. In this context, they point to the benefits of the norms in their country of origin.

My findings further indicate that the mothers run up against practices in Norwegian society that may be perceived as contradictory. This could produce and reinforce their ambivalence. For example, their children are provided with digital tools at school, some of which can be brought home, but the schools also arrange meetings to teach parents how to talk to children about digital risks. Hence, opportunities and challenges, benefits and risks are simultaneously in focus. However, these apparent contradictions are more likely manifestations of a unitary internal logic of the digital Bildung discourse built on what research has identified as neoliberal images of citizenship (Schou and Hjelholt 2019). The goal of children's digital Bildung at school is to foster educated citizens that contribute to society both financially and socially (Ministry of Education and Research 2017). Hence, any digital media use that

distracts children from education and prevents them from becoming well-functioning individuals in this arena is discursively positioned as unwanted. In line with this logic, the understanding held by the schools seems to be that digital use for entertainment should be reduced and harmful content avoided, as indicated by previous research (Gran et al 2019).

My findings show, however, that the mothers feel it becomes their responsibility to limit their children's use of school tablets to educational purposes and to prevent 'digital addiction'. Tension arises between the mothers and their children when the children want to use digital media more often or for other purposes than those approved by the mothers. The account of Kunthea indicates that children's interests may overrule the mothers' when children are more skilled digitally. Knowledge-hierarchies in families can change when the child becomes the teacher of the parent (Grossbart et al 2002). My findings correspond to a certain extent with previous findings on how the children of immigrants access better opportunities to learn the norms and language of their settlement society than their parents (Lidén 2017). My findings, however, concern the ways that these children better access *digital* education and tools by participating in Norwegian educational institutions, making their digital use more internalised.

Nevertheless, all the mothers also seem to have internalised some of the discursive language of the institutions in Norway. They use concepts such as digital 'addiction' and making 'agreements' with their children. Even Layla, who came to Norway recently, has learned from child welfare services how to be a role model for her son when it comes to digital use. Her account illustrates how migrant mothers may interpret and respond to professionals' advice in ways that might not correspond to the professionals' intentions. The child welfare workers may not have intended to forbid parents from using digital media in front of their children, but this was the conclusion Layla drew when they talked about 'attentive' parenting.

Other mothers, like Feven, may also draw on such parenting ideals while expressing that there are certain limits to how much digital media is 'right' for mothers to use or let their children use. Even though the mothers say they sometimes fail to live up to these ideals, most of their accounts of their parenting seem to align with the digital Bildung discourse. Layla's example, supporting previous research (Paulsen et al 2014, Smette and Rosten 2019, Tembo et al 2020), indicates that migrant parents may adapt to the dominant ideals in order to avoid negative attention from kindergartens, schools and child welfare services.

Amina’s example demonstrates how ruling relations can come into play; pre-defined discursive understandings of ‘normality’ can become separated from particular individuals everyday lives (Smith 2005). Seemingly, the teacher considered what is ‘normal’ digital use for children within the Norwegian context when addressing Amina’s specific challenges as something “all youngsters do”. Amina, on the other hand, seemed to worry about what kind of digital use was harmful to her son and family. This discrepancy illustrates how professional’s’ responses can make migrant mothers uncertain about what is ‘normal’ or harmful digital use.

Conclusive remarks

Using IE, I have explored migrant mothers’ experiences of handling their children’s digital use and discussed how their experiences reflect institutional understandings and practices of digital Bildung in Norway. The article’s main contributions are in 1) discovering how digital Bildung as a discourse and a practice is being mediated to the migrant mothers by many actors in different institutions, especially educational institutions, 3) illustrating how the migrant mothers are made responsible for ensuring that the digitalisation of their children’s everyday lives unfolds in line with political aims, with the consequence that they must spend a lot of time and energy doing digital Bildung work, and 3) illustrating how the migrant mothers’ ambivalence towards digital use may reflect their struggle to unify and live up to several institutional viewpoints of children’s needs, parenting and digital Bildung.

In this article, I have pointed to some migrant-specific experiences, but my findings make visible the ruling relations which may affect parents in Norway in general. Children’s early digital education in kindergarten and school is based on political aims to foster ‘digital citizens’ who contribute to society socially and financially. However, parents are evidently made responsible for fulfilling much of these political and educational aims, indicating that parenting in today’s Norway may be profoundly shaped by the economic logic of the welfare state. Consequently, the boundaries between the state governance and the private sphere as well as between formal education and parenting may become increasingly blurred.

Migrant mothers may be in a position where they have fewer opportunities to question, influence and live up to the dominant norms of their settlement context. This article can challenge such ruling relations by positioning migrants’ experiences as important in spotting institutional understandings and practices that may be taken for granted by people who have

grown up in Norway. Hopefully, this article can serve as the basis for a diverse and critical discussion regarding the consequences of digitalisation and to what extent, and in what areas, childhood, parenting, education and citizenship should be further digitalised.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the University of Agder, Norway.

I am hugely grateful to the participants who shared their stories to support this research. I would also like to thank Anne Marie Støkken, Carl Erik Moe, May-Linda Magnussen and the two anonymous reviewers for their valuable feedback on my article.

Conflict of interest

There author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

[1] In Norwegian society, ECEC commonly refers to what I call kindergartens.
[2] The the research has been conducted according to university ethical research guidelines and is notified to the Norwegian centre for research data.

Literature

Bergset, K. and Ulvik, O. S. (2019) 'Parenting in exile: Refugee parents' multivoiced narratives', *International Social Work*: 1-13.

Buckingham, D. (2006) 'Defining digital literacy – What do young people need to know about digital media?', *Nordic Journal of Digital Literacy,* 1(4): 263-77.

Clark, L. S., Demont-Heinrich, C. and Webber, S. (2005) 'Parents, ICTs, and Children's Prospects for Success: Interviews along the Digital "Access Rainbow"', *Critical Studies in Media Communication,* 22(5): 409-26.

Dannesboe, K. I., Bach, D., Kjær, B. and Palludan, C. (2018) 'Parents of the Welfare State: Pedagogues as Parenting Guides', *Social Policy & Society,* 17(3): 467-80.

Dotterer, G., Hedges, A. and Parker, H. (2016) *White Paper – Digital Natives: Citizens of a Changing World,* https://net-ref.com/white-paper-fostering-digital-citizenship-in-the-classroom/.

Foreldrepulsen (2017) *Digital kompetanse - foresatte,* http://foreldrepulsen.no/gsarkiv/digital-kompetanse--foresatte/.

Foreldrepulsen (2017) *Nettvett,* http://foreldrepulsen.no/gsarkiv/nettvett/.

Gran, L., Petterson, D. and Mølstad, C. E. (2019) 'Digital Bildung: Norwegian Students' Understanding of Teaching and Learning with ICT', *Nordic Journal of Digital Literacy,* 14(1-02): 23-36.

Grossbart, S., Hughes, S. M., Pryor, S. and Yost, A. (2002) 'Socialization aspects of parents, children, and the Internet', *Advances In Consumer Research,* 29: 66-70.

Jensen, S. C. (2017) 'Mobilbruk kan være en stille form for omsorgssvikt', *Sykepleien,* 105.

Jæger, H. and Sandvik, M. (2019) 'Barnehagens digitale univers', in H. Jæger, M. Sandvik andA.-H. L. Waterhouse (eds), *Digitale barnehagepraksiser*, Oslo, Cappelen Damm. pp. 11-30.

Lidén, H. (2017) *Barn og migrasjon : mobilitet og tilhørighet,* Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Livingstone, S., Mascheroni, G., Dreier, M., Chaudron, S. and Lagae, K. (2015) *How parents of young children manage digital devices at home: The role of income, education and parental style.*: The London School of Economics and Political Science.

McCoy, L. (2006) 'Keeping the institution in view: Working with interview accounts of everyday experience', in D. E. Smith (ed), *Institutional ethnography as practice*, Oxford, Rowman & Littlefield publishers. pp. 109-26.

Ministry of Culture (2015) *Handlingsplan mot spilleproblemer 2016-2018,* https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/2b4b872673364d5a986164dca96b54c8/handlingsplan_mot_spilleproblemer_2016-2018.pdf.

Ministry of Education and Research (2017) *Framtid, fornyelse og digitalisering. Digitaliseringsstrategi for grunnopplæringen 2017–2021,* https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/dc02a65c18a7464db394766247e5f5fc/kd_framtid_fornyelse_digitalisering_nett.pdf.

Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2012) *Framework for basic skills,* https://www.udir.no/contentassets/fd2d6bfbf2364e1c98b73e030119bd38/framework_for_basic_skills.pdf.

Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2016) *Hva er hjem-skole-samarbeid?,* https://www.udir.no/kvalitet-og-kompetanse/samarbeid/hjem-skole-samarbeid/oversikt/.

Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2017) *Framework Plan for Kindergartens,* https://www.udir.no/globalassets/filer/barnehage/rammeplan/framework-plan-for-kindergartens2-2017.pdf.

Norwegian Directorate of Health (2019) *Helsestasjonprogrammet 0-5 år,* https://www.helsedirektoratet.no/retningslinjer/helsestasjons-og-skolehelsetjenesten/helsestasjon-05-ar.

Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity (n.d.) *Primary and lower secondary schools,* http://www.nyinorge.no/en/Ny-i-Norge-velg-sprak/New-in-Norway/Children--Schools/The-school-system/Primary-and-lower-secondary-schools/.

Norwegian Media Authority and The Norwegian Gaming and Foundation Authority (2016) *Do you talk with your children about video games? ,* https://snakkomspill.no/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Folder-Snakkomspill-F34-web.pdf.

Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation (2016) *Digital agenda for Norway in brief. ICT for a simpler everyday life and increased productivity,* https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/07b212c03fee4d0a94234b101c5b8ef0/en-gb/pdfs/digital_agenda_for_norway_in_brief.pdf.

Paulsen, V., Thorshaug, K. and Berg, B. (2014) *Møter mellom innvandrere og barnevernet. Kunnskapsstatus*: NTNU Samfunnsforskning AS.

Rankin, J. (2017) 'Conducting Analysis in Institutional Ethnography: Analytical Work Prior to Commencing Data Collection', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods,* 16(1).

Rivera, R. G., Santos, D., Grau, M. G. and DeRose, L. F. (2020) 'Family relationships and internet abuse in 25 European countries', *Families, Relationships and Societies*.

Sadownik, A. (2018) 'Belonging and participation at stake. Polish migrant children about (mis)recognition of their needs in Norwegian ECECs', *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal,* 26(6): 956-71.

Schou, J. and Hjelholt, M. (2019) 'Digitalizing the welfare state: citizenship discourses in Danish digitalization strategies from 2002 to 2015', *Critical Policy Studies,* 13(1): 3-22.
Smette, I. and Rosten, M. G. (2019) *Et iakttatt foreldreskap. Om å være foreldre og minoritet i Norge*: NOVA & Oslo Metropolitan University.
Smith, D. E. (2005) *Institutional ethnography: A sociology for people,* Lanham, Md: AltaMira.
Smith, D. E. (2006) 'Incorporating Texts into Ethnographic Practice', in D. E. Smith (ed), *Institutional Ethnography as Practice*, Oxford, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. pp. 65-88.
Statistics Norway (2018) *Fakta om utdanning,* https://www.ssb.no/utdanning/faktaside.
Statistics Norway (2019) *Completion rates of pupils in upper secondary education,* https://www.ssb.no/en/utdanning/statistikker/vgogjen.
Statistics Norway (2019) *ICT usage in households,* https://www.ssb.no/en/statbank/list/ikthus.
Stefansen, K. (2011), Foreldreskap i småbarnsfamilien: Klassekultur og sosial reproduksjon *Institutt for sosiologi og samfunnsgeografi*, Universitetet i Oslo.
Tembo, M. J., Studsrød, I. and Young, S. (2020) 'Governing the family: immigrant parents' perceptions of the controlling power of the Norwegian welfare system', *European Journal of Social Work*: 1-12.
Tour, E. (2019) 'Supporting Primary School Children's learning in Digital Spaces at Home: Migrant Parents' Perspectives and Practices', *Children & Society,* 33(6): 587-601.