5   Thinking through generation

On parenting and belonging among adult children of immigrants in Norway

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Introduction

Lubna and Latif are a married couple in their mid-30s; both were born in Norway to parents who had migrated from Pakistan. They were active and engaged parents to three kids between the ages of 6 and 12. A couple of years ago they moved to a majority dominated middle-class area on the outskirts of Oslo because they wanted their children to grow up "as part of Norwegian society, not in a minority dominated enclave". They spoke of themselves and their generation as being both Pakistanis and Norwegians but said it was important that their children saw themselves as Norwegians. After attending a social gathering with mothers of her son's classmates who had talked about how their older children had started dating and going to parties, Lubna started worrying about how she would tackle "these things" when her children grew older. Would it still be possible for her children to feel "at home" in their neighbourhood if they experienced different rules and norms from their peers? Would her son manage to keep his friends even if he did not drink alcohol or have girlfriends? And how would - and how should - she and Latif react if their son got a girlfriend, went to parties, or drank alcohol? In other words, she was struggling with how to be both a Muslim and a Norwegian mother to soon-to-be teenage children.

Lubna and Latif belong to the first generation of adult children of immigrants to Norway post-WWII. As children of migrants, they are establishing their lives as adults and as parents in structural and cultural contexts that are different from the ones their parents migrated from. Norwegian society, which provides universal and inclusive welfare arrangements and sees gender equality, individualism, and nuclear families as dominant ideologies, poses challenges to, and requires transformations from, families with more explicit complementary gender roles and generational hierarchies. This chapter investigates how questions of belonging are renegotiated and dealt with in new ways when this generation enters parenthood.

Questions of generation and belonging

Theories of generations have a long history in studies of social and cultural change. In *Studies on the Germans,* Norbert Elias (2013 [1989]) argues that tensions and

conflicts between generations are "among the strongest driving forces of social dynamics" and that it would be to underestimate them if they are understood "primarily as conflicts between parents and their children or children and their parents" (p. 344). In the context of migration, the notion of migrant generations is central in the measurement of "migrant adaption"; that is, how migrants integrate into new societies and what kinds of transnational connections they uphold (Crul & Vermeulen, 2003; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Particular significance is attached to children of immigrants, the so-called second generation, which is often referred to as a litmus test for integration (Brocket, 2020; Henriksen & Østby, 2007; Skrbiš, Baldassar, & Poynting, 2007). How well they do in the education system, job market, housing, and family life, as well as to what extent they display trust in and solidarity with the majority society is seen to define the success of the integration process. Thus, the life choices and life chances of the second generation are at the heart of the question often raised about the consequences of migration for advanced welfare states, that is whether migration will undermine or contribute to welfare state sustainability.

While concepts of migrant generations are widely discussed in the research literature, they are also contested. The term "second-generation immigrant" is criticised for marking people as immigrants over generations, implicitly indicating that they do not quite belong to and are not fully included in the nation-state (Rumbaut, 2004). Researchers also discuss whether it makes sense to speak of migrant generations in situations of continuous ongoing migration (Waters & Jiménez, 2005) or with continuing transnational connections (Levitt & Schiller, 2004).

The scientific discussion is complicated by the fact that generation is a folk concept dense with different meanings. Several studies highlight how many children of immigrants use terms like "second generation" or "our generation" when talking about themselves and their peers (Jacobsen, 2011). The term "second generation" can also be used to underline how growing up with parents who have immigrated from a social context different from the one they now live in may create specific experiences and positions in terms of, for instance, cultural and social resources (Andersson, 2010). As such, this term may challenge the homogeneity of ethnic categories by illuminating diversity within and similarities across such categories.

In sum, generation, like other concepts in the field of migration, is a messy and problematic concept that conflates "categories of practice" and "categories of analysis" (Brubaker, 2012). It is linked not only to ideas of social and cultural change but also to questions of belonging (Skrbiš et al., 2007). That is, to questions of where one fits in, where one feels "at home", where one's solidarity lies, certainly, but also to questions of the politics of belonging understood as the "specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging in particular ways to particular collectives" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 197).

This chapter aims to contribute to discussions on the generation concept for migration research by investigating how adult descendants of immigrants in Norway reflect upon family life and parenthood. It also aims to contribute to

general theoretical discussions on social change by analysing generational relations in advanced welfare states. The chapter draws on empirical material from interviews with and ethnographic fieldwork among adult descendants of African and Asian immigrants in Norway. The overarching question is– and if so – in what ways second-generation parents can be seen as driving forces of social dynamics in welfare states. We approach this question by investigating how belonging, and, by extension, the relationship with the welfare state, is renegotiated and put at stake in new ways when descendants of immigrants in Norway enter parenthood. Public and political debates on descendants of immigrants often imply an either-or hypothesis or argument: their actions and choices are understood *either* as the reproduction of gender and family practices from their parents' country of origin *or* as a rebellion against and distancing from the parental generation and thus becoming similar to, and integrated in, majority society (for discussion on the debate in relation to marriage practices, see Charsley, Bolognani & Spencer 2017; for discussion on fertility and reproduction, see Kristensen, 2009, 2020). We find that the narratives of our interlocutors challenge the premise of an either-or hypothesis of generational change and continuity and thus of belonging. We discuss the implications of this analysis for the welfare state and for descendants of immigrants in the final section of the chapter.

Second-generation parenthood as a vital conjuncture

Narratives of parenting and family life provide a fruitful frame for discussing generational changes and continuities as well as belonging. On the individual level, becoming a parent brings together past, present, and future horizons. As such, parenthood represents what Jennifer Johnson-Hanks (2002) describes as a *vital conjuncture*: "a temporary configuration of possible change, a duration of uncertainty and potentiality" (p. 22). Vital conjunctures arise in situations where previously assumed futures are called into question and may imply a transformation in what social actors see as their trajectories. The concept can therefore be used to grasp and analyse the vital events of human life that cause previously steady trajectories to shift direction and may also lead to the formation of new horizons.

On a societal level, parenting in immigrant families has become central to arguments about the rights and the wrongs of living in multicultural societies (Grillo, 2008). Excessive parental control of girls and young women is of particular concern in the Nordic context as gender equality and individual autonomy are constitutive of Nordic nations' self-images (Røthing & Svendsen, 2011; Smette, Hyggen, & Bredal, 2021).

The literature on the second generation's family organisation in Norway has mainly addressed gender equality ideals and household organisation among adults (Aarset, 2015; Nadim, 2014; Rytter, 2013; Kavli, 2015). Parenting and childrearing have not been central themes (with the exception of Erstad's 2015 study), although there is an emerging literature on immigrant parents' (first and second generation) relationship with child protection services (Handulle & Vassenden, 2020). The second-generation literature has, so far, only been connected with the

vast sociological literature on transformations of childrearing and parenting ideals and practices in the era referred to as late modernity to a limited extent. These transformations involve intensified forms of middle-class parenting (Lareau, 2011), a shift from external to internal disciplining (Gullestad, 1996), and increasing parent-child emotional intimacy (Stefansen & Aarseth, 2011), and what is referred to as responsibilisation of parents (Vincent & Ball, 2007). In this chapter, perspectives from the new parenting literature serve as a reminder of Elias' (2012 [1939]) proposition that social and cultural change is a continuous process in both minority and majority populations.

Generation as thought-distinction and structural relation

The analysis draws inspiration from Karen Foster's (2013) discursive concept of generation, which allows us to approach generation as a "vehicle for thought and action, a concept and a mental structure that provides people with, and limits them to, specific way(s) of understanding, speaking about, and acting in the world around them." (p. 198). Foster uses a qualitative analysis of interviews with Canadians that focuses on experiences from their work life to argue that people talk about generation in two distinct ways in terms of their work experience: as an axis of difference related to attitudes to work, and as a socio-historic dynamic where "generation is drawn into larger narratives about social change and progress" (p. 200).

A discursive concept of generation may appear to be in conflict with a view of generational relations as structural relations, which was how Norbert Elias (2013 [1989]) approached generation. Elias' overarching interest was in the structure of social processes, and in how these structures could be uncovered through a study of microprocesses. His main contribution is his theory of civilising processes. The main point in Elias theory of civilization is the connection between changes in the structure of society and changes in the structure of behaviour and psychical make-up (Goudsblom & Mennell, 1998, p. 43). Elias's theoretical perspectives on generations are, as pointed out by Connolly (2019, p. 157), most clearly expressed in *Studies on the Germans* (2013[1989]), where he emphasised the sociological significance of generations and stressed intergenerational tension and conflict as fundamental forces of social dynamics. The empirical fundament for Elias' analysis was what he saw as more or less clearly delineated generations in Germany, more specifically the generations born before and after WWII, and the drastically different ways in which they were positioned in terms of resources and opportunities. Elias saw generations as social positions with different opportunities and values and as *figurations*, that is, as webs of interdependent people. He further emphasised the ways in which individual parent-child relations change in accordance with the generational relations of the wider society. According to Elias,

> the changes in the relations between people in their capacity as parents and children, or even as husbands and wives – in short, members of a family – are quite inseparable from the changes in the relations between people as

inhabitants of a city or as citizens of a state. Family relations are often presented as the foundation of all human social relations. But this is a misunderstanding. The structure of the family, the socially-given form of the relation between man, woman and child, changes in connection with, and corresponding to, the larger society it is part of.

(Elias, 1998, p. 207)

Foster argues that "understanding generation as a discursive, historically contingent 'thought' with 'effects' is as important as understanding its structural form and contents" (p. 195). Foster does not, however, argue that generation is only a mental structure. She argues that "how we think, speak, write and otherwise communicate the idea of generation has practical consequences that social science must examine" (p. 198). Similarly, Elias emphasised the need for personal meaning as a specific generational problem of the middle class in Germany after WWII as the post-war generation experienced an urgent need to distance themselves from the previous one.

Returning once again to Brubaker (2012)'s argument regarding concepts that are both categories of analysis and categories of practice, we claim that descendants of immigrants may use the term "second generation" as a thought distinction to help position themselves with regard to the parental generation. At the same time, the concept may refer to an analytical category that describes a specific structural position with regard to both the first generation and the majority society. Second-generation immigrants must negotiate a sense of belonging in political landscapes where they tend to be considered foreigners (Phoenix, 2019). Thus, descendants of immigrants may carry with them experiences of what Paul Gilroy (1993) terms double consciousness: the double position as minority and citizen characterised by a feeling of being both inside and outside the nation.

The second generation in Norway

The material on which this chapter is based was produced by three studies about parenting, generation, gender, and family life conducted in 2010-2012 (Aarset, 2015), 2018 (Smette & Rosten, 2019), and 2020 (Smette's ongoing postdoctoral project). Data were gathered through in-depth interviews and spending time with families in everyday domestic contexts. More specifically, the empirical cases we refer to here include roughly 50 descendants of immigrants from Pakistan, India, Somalia, and Sri Lanka between the ages of 30 and 45. These subjects are living in the Oslo region and, for the most part, working in lower and upper-middle-class professions. Some were born in Norway, while others came along with their parents as children; and they are part of a second generation in a wider understanding of the term.

Even though this sample was not purposely representative, it reflects the demographic profile of adult descendants of immigrants in Norway to some extent. The second generation, defined as those born in Norway to immigrant parents, constitutes 3.4% (180 000) of the total Norwegian population of 5.3

million (Statistics Norway, 2020). This is still a young generation: four out of five people are under the age of 20 (Molstad & Steinkellner, 2020, p. 5). Post-WW II, immigration to Norway started relatively late as compared to other Western European countries. Labour immigrants from Pakistan, India, Morocco, Turkey, and Yugoslavia comprised the first substantial immigration to Norway from outside the Nordic countries in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Norway passed a temporary immigration ban in 1975 that put stop to unskilled labourer immigration. Migration continued, however, in the form of family immigration. From the late 1970s and onwards, refugees and asylum seekers began to arrive from countries such as Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Iran, the Baltic countries, Iraq, and Somalia.

Even though most descendants of immigrants in Norway are still young, statistics indicate that significant changes are taking place between them and the parental generation. Studies show substantial intergenerational progress in education, employment, and income level (Hermansen, 2016; Reisel, Hermansen, & Kindt, 2019), though studies also show that descendants of immigrants experience discrimination in the Norwegian labour market (Midtbøen, 2016). When it comes to family formation, descendants of immigrants marry later, have children later, and have fewer children than their parents (Molstad & Steinkellner, 2020; Tønnessen, 2014). Second-generation immigrants also seem to express strong support for gender equal work-family practices (Kitterød & Nadim, 2020).

Parenthood as vital conjuncture: ruptures, continuities, and belonging

This section first explores how people use generational thinking in their reflections on ruptures and continuities in their own parenting and family practices and then goes on to discuss how they renegotiate belonging through narratives of generation and parenting.

Generational ruptures and tensions

Experiences of conflicts with parents in childhood and adolescence were prominent in some narratives. Such negative experiences from their own childhoods were described as having contributed to how these individuals try to be parents today by some of the research participants. Several mothers, as well as some fathers, framed their efforts to establish emotional closeness in their relationships with their children in this way. One example was of a mother of Somali background who emphasised her continuous efforts to build a close relationship with her teenage son. She described that she wanted her children to know that they could always come to her with what was on their minds. She also let the children know that she was simultaneously teaching herself to disclose her emotions to them. She contrasted her approach to that of her parents, who had been emotionally distant and had not shown interest in what was going on in her life when she was a child. Therefore, she had not been able to share things that had troubled her

with them. She described these experiences as formative in terms of her approach to parenting:

> I think that … because of what I've been through where I did not have the possibility of discussing things with Mum and Dad. So… in a way that has taught me the importance of talking with my child, right … and being as honest as possible.

For this mother, her negative childhood experiences were something that she could learn from. She also stressed her entirely different approach to gender equality from her parents, who had exercised strict control over her and her sisters, while her brothers had enjoyed much more freedom. Her sense of injustice regarding this unequal treatment led her to emphasise that her two children – a teenage son and a younger daughter – were to share the same responsibilities and that the brother was not to control his young sister. In this and other narratives, generation served as a tool for understanding both one's own childhood – what was good and what was painful – and for explaining the rationale behind one's own transformed parenting practices and ideals. In other narratives, the concept of generation served to explain transformations in everyday practices by the new generation of parents. One example concerned proper forms of socialising. One woman with Indian background described how her generation installed new conventions for weekend visits:

> For our parents, visiting was like Friday, Saturday – and it started around 7 pm with a type of fried snack – very heavy stuff. So, you're full. Then they serve the main course around 11:00 – 11:30 pm. By then they [the kids] are totally beaten. Then they leave right after they have eaten because it is so late that nobody wants dessert or anything. But we have moved on to a more Norwegian type of visiting that starts around four o'clock. We are finished with dinner about half past six. We watch the children's programme on TV and everybody leaves about 8:30 – 9 pm. That suits us better.

The mother contrasts visiting as practiced by the parental generation with the form of visiting that her family and, we infer, her generation prefers. These new forms of visiting are adapted to the needs of parents with small children as well as to the needs of the children themselves regarding meals, activities (television), and bedtimes. Her narrative describes how practices that had been a source of tension between generations within individual families are being transformed. Generation here is described as a collective source of empowerment for parents who want their own and their children's needs to frame how families, including grandparents, should socialise. At first it could appear as if this narrative of distancing from the parental generation and their values inherently entails aligning oneself with the majority society's requirements, thus confirming the "become like us" hypothesis of what will happen to the second generation. However, while this mother did label the new form of visiting "Norwegian", identifying

with Norwegian conventions for visiting should not be read as a statement about belonging in its own right. Vassenden (2010) argues that even if people use categories such as Norwegian or foreign to label themselves – or their practices – this does not necessarily mean that identities or boundaries between categories are fluid. It, therefore, becomes necessary to distinguish between categorical distinctions (Indian and Norwegian forms of visiting) and symbolic boundaries between first-generation, second-generation, and majority Norwegians. This means that one may, at the same time, be categorically non-Norwegian yet culturally (almost) Norwegian. It may also mean, however, that as one becomes more like the majority, for instance in terms of concrete family and childrearing practices, factors that may contribute to marking belonging to the parents' homeland may assume renewed importance.

Generational continuities

Many of the parents alternated between describing their lives as being just like "any other family life" and talking about elements that made their lives different from those of majority Norwegians. In general, parents across the three studies agreed that it was important that the children had knowledge about their origins.

Several of the mothers of Tamil origin were recruited from Tamil language and cultural centres. These centres were established as voluntary organisations by the tightly knit networks characteristic of the Tamil diaspora in the first generation (Fuglerud & Engebrigtsen, 2006). These schools offer extensive courses in Tamil language and culture as well as extra instruction in regular curricula and help with homework. Parents living in different parts of the city bring their children to the school on weekends and socialise while they wait for the children's classes to end.

The mothers described the language school as an important part of their childhood experience. However, many stressed the friendships they had established, some of which they still retained, as more important than the proficiency they had acquired in the Tamil language. One mother described the language school as a place where she had been able to discuss the everyday challenges of living, "with two cultures and having legs firmly placed in each."

There were different motivations, mostly related to the value of learning the language, for these mothers to take their own children to the language schools on weekends. Knowledge of the Tamil language would enable their children to communicate with family and relatives living in different countries in their own lingua franca. This ability to communicate with others from the same background would, for the mothers, provide them with a sense of belonging to a transnational Tamil community. Belonging was understood here in the concrete sense; people mentioned examples of relatives who could not speak the Tamil language and were, therefore, left feeling very isolated at transnational family gatherings. The sense of belonging offered by language was also more abstract, existing as a gateway to knowledge of Tamil culture. However, none of the mothers mentioned belonging to the Tamil nation, which was a principal motivation for establishing language and culture centres by the first generation (Bruland, 2012).

Several studies show how nostalgic family narratives of homeland identity and cultural tradition strengthen collective bonds and identities in migrant families (Rumbaut, 2004). For the descendants of immigrants in our studies, inculcating in their children skills in and knowledge of their parents' or grandparents' language and homeland were important to connect family members within households, between generations, and across national borders. Other motivations were also involved, such as providing children with the ability to master several languages. These motives for taking children to the language school were largely shared, as were the key premises of the whole venture; the children wanted it, showed signs of enjoying it, and had a say in whether or not to go on with it. This point may have been stressed partly to counter the narrative of overly ambitious and pressuring immigrant parents, and Tamil parents in particular, in the Norwegian public sphere (Kindt, 2018). The emphasis on language skills as a generalised resource can be seen as reflective of an aspect of late-modern parenting often referred to as cultivational (Lareau, 2011), which centres around parents' responsibility to ensure that children develop and optimise their abilities. In this sense, what primarily came across as generational continuity was also reflective of concerns to resource the child, in ways that resemble middle-class childrearing logics.

In a similar vein, practices that may appear to identify with traditional parenting ideals and a focus on homeland belonging may, upon closer inspection, come across as being in line with highly modern forms of parenting and be directed at maintaining children's dual belonging. One example is parents who pay for online Quran courses for their children. Aarset (2016) discusses these practices with regard to both cultural continuity and modern parenting ideals. She argues that while the desire to ensure that children acquire knowledge of the Quran, Arabic, and Urdu may reflect a preoccupation with cultural continuity, the choice of online courses reflects the modern parenting ideals with which the parents identify. For example, online courses enable parents to closely monitor what is being taught and said during the class as opposed to letting children attend an ordinary Quran school in a mosque. Online classes also enable parents to fit them in between other activities, thus allowing them to engage in a cultivating parenting style. As one father described it:

> Now they [the children] get an effective half hour. It is part of a new trend: making everyday life easier by buying services. The kids are at home, use the facilities they have, and get what they need.
>
> (Aarset, 2016, p. 445)

For some, and on one level, the choice of online Quran courses may be understood as an expression of belonging to Pakistan, as the companies and the teachers they used were based there. At the same time, it was also a reflection of their daily lives in Norway and an expression of belonging to the local Norwegian context. Furthermore, giving their children religious education and therefore emphasising their religious identity can be understood as an expression of a transnational way of belonging to a global or European Muslim community.

Belonging to what?

Many of the parents referred to an imaginary community of the pioneers of the "second generation" in their interviews. This way of locating themselves in relation to their own parents and extended family was used both in reference to children of immigrants from the same ethnic group (e.g. second-generation Pakistanis) and a shared community of children of immigrants from various countries, cross-cutting national and ethnic background (e.g. second generations in Norway).

One of the ways in which narratives of generation and parenting entailed a renegotiation of belonging was through the conceptualisation of the second generation as pioneers. The parents of Pakistani and Indian origins conceptualised the second generation as pioneers manoeuvring between different and often conflicting understandings and practices in the intersections between the parental generation, Norwegian society, and transnational social fields. As pioneers, they were conscious of how their life choices, successes, and failures could impact their younger siblings, cousins, and future generations. In this sense, they were "moving in unploughed ground", contrasting their generation with both their parent's generation and their own children, younger siblings, or cousins.

The second-generation identity among adults of Tamil origins was also linked to the notion of being a pioneer. One young man (not yet a father) described how sons and daughters in the close circle of families that socialised on a regular basis during his childhood had become almost like brothers and sisters. They had supported each other in negotiations with the parental generation and he believed that their joint efforts had resulted in moving the parental generation in a more liberal direction regarding issues such as premarital relationships and arranged marriages. These efforts had, in his opinion, benefitted the younger siblings in the families. He himself was in a long-term relationship with a majority Norwegian girl. This was not fully accepted by his parents, but he was hoping that he would make it easier for those who would make similar decisions after him. In a similar vein, several others in our studies referred to "us" in the second generation as a community of pioneers operating within and across ethnic barriers and, therefore, securing easier transitions to adulthood for future multi-ethnic generations in Norwegian society (see also Rosten, 2015).

However, as the literature on the second generation makes clear, the concept of the second generation is far from clear-cut. Thus, becoming a parent could also entail a reinforced sense of belonging to the parental generation and their homeland, and thus a sense of disconnection from others, including younger siblings also identifying as second generation for some. One illustration of the messiness of generational boundary-making is how a mother of Somali background, for example, placed herself somewhere in between the parental generation and her young siblings in what she saw as a gradual transformation from Somali to Norwegian. She referred to differences in clothing as she described the differences in ethnic and national identification between herself, her mother, and her daughter:

> My mom wears those big jilbabs, Somali-like, while I wear a simple hijab. But not with trousers, of course. None of us are wearing trousers yet, but I imagine my daughter will. That will be the norm in her generation.

The mother also described, however, that her younger sisters would wear trousers from time to time and that her younger brother had married "a Norwegian", something that she herself "would not have done". What particularly accentuated her sense of belonging to Somalia and to her parents' generation, however, was her deliberations over whether to move back to Somalia to look after her parents:

> I don't want my mother to live in Somalia alone, it does not make sense. And I know my siblings would never go there. They just, "Somalia?! Are you crazy!" They do not even understand what I'm talking about. But for me it is different, I have lived there much longer than they have. And I have a different perspective [being a parent myself] (…). They just "whatever, they [the parents] are adults, they have to take care of themselves." They have that Norwegian mentality. While I am more like in both camps. I too can have an individualistic perspective on things but not in all areas.

The idea that she and her husband would consider moving back to Somalia came from her sense of obligation to take care of her parents as they got older and her realisation that she was the only likely candidate among her siblings to do so, as she had lived in Somalia until she was 15. Thus, this mother places herself somewhere in between the generations of her parents and her younger siblings. She describes her younger siblings as potentially having more in common with the generation of her daughter than her own.

For most parents being part of a generation of involved parents with emotionally close relationships with their children was the overarching narrative of generation and parenting. Yet, being part of this broader transformation of parenting practices could still imply ambiguous belongings. One reason for this involves the ways in which Norwegian (or Nordic) parenting in public discourse is conceived as timeless, and, therefore, in that sense always modern, whereas immigrant parenting is presented as obsolete with authoritarian and patriarchal forms of parent-child relationships (cf. Keskinen, 2017). In accordance with this representation of difference, generational changes occurring in the second generation will be understood as a form of a *civilizing process*, to use Elias' term (2012 [1939]). A father, born in Norway to Pakistani parents, challenged this representation. He described how his willingness to accommodate his children's practical needs distinguished his way of parenting from that of his parents but also from the majority of parents from his childhood:

> Growing up, we, like others, received a lot of attention and love, but we also heard that we had to manage things by ourselves. If you were going to training, you had to get there yourself, it doesn't matter where it is. And the matches, if Dad couldn't drive you there, you had to get someone to give you

a lift. That's what it was like then, it wasn't all on the children's terms. But I don't think you need to hear about this change from someone with an ethnic minority background, I think you will find that anywhere.

The father contrasts his experience of having to sort out things himself when he was going to attend a football match with how he himself spends a lot of his free time organising his children's leisure activities – and enjoys it. He claims, however, that this generational transformation is not specific to ethnic minorities but is rather a broad change in parenting ideals in both minority and majority families. In other words, he challenged static assumptions of who "we" are and what becoming like "us" means.

Conversely, for other parents, attentiveness to the fact they will be perceived as "different" because of their religion, skin colour, name, etc. is an integrated part of parenting. They emphasised in interviews that it was particularly important for *their* children to get a good education because they knew they would have to work extra hard to reach their goals and be accepted. One father with a Pakistani background put it this way:

> I think that we place high demands on our children and that we have influenced them a lot … to pursue higher education, an academic education. We tell them almost daily that education is important. And there is a reason for that. The motivation behind it is ... it's a little bit sad saying it, but it is not exactly a good environment in Norway for Muslims these days. And perhaps it'll get even worse in the future.

Excelling in what they do and investing in overlapping belongings could, therefore, be seen as a form of protection, an attempt to compensate for their conditional belonging (Aarset, 2018) to the majority.

Overlapping belongings in advanced welfare states

Lubna, who was introduced at the beginning of this chapter, shared her worries as she stood at the threshold of becoming mother to teenage children. She was grappling with what was right for her children and her family. Lubna questioned how and to what her children would belong but also how she would react if her children challenged values and norms that she had held as important.

Lubna's deliberations illustrate how parenthood is an accentuated form of vital conjuncture for descendants of immigrants. Parenthood stirs up questions of belonging both now and in the future and "the range of identities that could potentially be claimed" (Johnson-Hanks, 2002, p. 872). In this chapter, we have explored how descendants of immigrants like Lubna use generational narratives and generational thinking in their reflections on parenting and family practices. We find that they navigate between broader narratives of generational changes in parenting related to late modernity and more minority-specific narratives of both rupture and continuities in their descriptions of parenting practices and family

life. We argue that these narratives of generational change reflect and constitute overlapping belongings to a late-modern parenthood generation, a family generation, and the second generation.

The parents in our studies, like Foster's (2013) research participants, used phrases like "that generation", "the younger generation", and "my generation" to delineate groups with specific positions and approaches to doing things. Even though the second-generation identity is imagined –"both in terms of parent/children relations and in terms of a particular temporality of migration that generates common experiences" (Jacobsen, 2011, p. 85) – the concept of the second generation may provide an important path to locating oneself in relation (and opposition) to the parental generation as well as to the majority society.

Elias emphasised the problem of personal meaning as specific to the middle class. Here, we will not go into a discussion on Elias's distinction between the middle and working classes in relation to generational conflicts, or the unique and traumatic situation of the post-war generation of Germans. We find, however, that his description of situations where there is no taken-for-granted path speaks to the situation children of immigrants may find themselves in when establishing their lives as adults and as parents. This generation of descendants of immigrants can, therefore, be understood as a figuration, an interdependent web of people who share experiences and represent cultural shifts that, in part, are both produced by and produce tensions in their relationship with the parental – or first - generation. There are, however, important differences between the empirical base for Elias' analysis and the adult children of immigrants in our material. For Elias' German post-WWII generation, the overall society which they opposed, and the parental generation were one and the same. This led Elias to emphasise *conflict* between two delineated generations as the driving forces of social dynamics. For the participants in our studies, however, the parental generation and the larger society do not overlap in the same way, making the social and structural relations more complex. This might explain why generational *ruptures* and *continuities* both seem to be driving forces in our material.

The either-or hypothesis of generational change and continuity presented earlier leaves no room for the overlapping of different belongings in descendants of immigrants' narratives of parenting. Through this renegotiation, descendants carve out a position that implies a transformation of the parenting ideals and practice of their childhood, and yet offers a way in which Somali, Pakistani, Indian, or Tamil belonging is also possible for the parents today and as potential or possible supplementary belonging for their children. We argue that the holding of simultaneous, overlapping belongings is enabled through their identification with the second generation, even if it is an imagined category (cf. Jacobsen, 2011). Among the parents in our material, second-generation belonging was created partly through shared childhood experiences of "in-betweenness" (Brocket, 2020), partly through joint efforts of changing attitudes in the parental generation, and finally through the sense of being part of a transformation of family life and childrearing that makes them more similar to majority Norwegian families. Shared ideals of childrearing and a good family life meant that the second-generation

parents were *in sync* when they arranged their weekend socialising and when they talked about their rationales for taking their children to language schools on weekends.

The concept of pioneering also underlines the multidimensional and complex nature of diverse belonging, thus broadening the scope of what Norwegian families may be. As discussed, second-generation immigrants are seen as a litmus test of the integration process in welfare states. The concept of integration is, as the Danish anthropologist Mikkel Rytter (2018) points out, unclear and fuzzy; it varies depending on whether it refers to social, economic, political, or cultural integration. Furthermore, the concept is often used to simultaneously refer both to an end, "the utopian horizon of absolute *integration* (whatever that means)" (p. 682), and the process of getting there. Rytter argues that "talk of and demands for integration in public and political discourse rest on, produce, and reproduce specific ideas of the society, the state, the nation, and the relationship between majorities and minorities" (p. 679); the latter is based on a contrasting relationship between an "us" and a "them". This "talk of and demand for integration" does not take into account how categories of "us" and "them" are continuously changing; the "we" of today is different in terms of both who it includes and the practices and values it represents 20 or 30 years ago.

In what ways, then, can second-generation parents be seen as driving forces of social dynamics in welfare states? One answer is that they are pioneers in changes occurring within the minority population. The other answer is that, as descendants of immigrants, they may compel the welfare state - or rather its inhabitants and agents - to take into account the existing complexities in the belongings, living conditions, and everyday lives of its population. The third answer is that descendants are part of and contribute to the broader ongoing transformations affecting both the family and society more generally. Or, as Elias writes in "The Civilizing of parents": "every family relationship is a process. The relationships are ever-changing, and the task always poses itself anew" (Elias, 1998, p. 211). The direction of these continuously unfolding social dynamics will depend on both the descendants' ability to acknowledge the yet undefined belongings of future generations and the ability of the welfare state to incorporate its inhabitants' complex belongings.

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