10. From helicopter parenting to co-piloting: Models for regulating video gaming among immigrant youth in Norway

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ABSTRACT How do immigrant youth with non-western backgrounds in Norway and their families approach and negotiate video game regulation? This is the central question this chapter explores with the aim to establish sources of conflict and models for conflict resolution from a family perspective. The data collected through qualitative methods and analyzed through "discourse theory", indicate that the most harmonious models are those that engender dialogue, trust and the participation of both parties.
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10.1 INTRODUCTION: VIDEO GAMES AS A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

Video games have had an exponential growth over the last decades (Siwek, 2007). The EU Online report 2 (Livingstone et. al., 2011) indicates that 86% of all children who used the internet also used it to play video games. The report shows that almost all homes have a computer and games are more easily accessible than before, a fact supported by studies on immigrant youth and families (Dralega and Corneliussen, 2018a). Video games are becoming mainstream cultural products, according to Børsum (2012), some of the games such as World of Warcraft (WoW) garner millions of players (Ask, 2011) which has been noted in both the media and academia (Corneliussen and Rettberg, 2008). WoW belongs to the genre Massive Multiplayer Online Roleplaying Games (MMORPG), which is characterized by gamers interacting through avatars in a virtual world, collaborating to achieve collective goals.

Video games are like a double-edged sword – with both a good and bad side. Studies of MMO-gaming show how gaming can contribute to building friendships, develop complex structural and organizational skills as well as strategy capabilities, all of which contribute to building specialized knowledge and language as part of the virtual game (Ask, 2011; Børsum, 2012). Video games have been described as a “magic circle”, with a different set of rules than in reality (Huizinga, 1938). In this magic world, the gamer is able to experiment with identity and fantasy (Turkle, 1997), something also experienced among youth with immigrant backgrounds (Dralega & Corneliussen, 2018). Steinkuehler and Williams (2006) describe video gaming as a third dimension, a space for informal socialization and for developing social capital outside of the home and work (Steinkuehler and Williams, 2006).

Despite their positive attributes, video games also have a negative side to them. For instance, parents have complained that video games compete with presence and communication with family members outside of the games. Video games and online presence is seen as conflicting with family life and obligations (Medietilsynet, 20161; Linderoth & Bennerstedt, 2007).

Ask (2011) posits that, in its relatively short history, video games have generated negative attentions among the topics that have raised intense debates about violence (Anderson & Dill, 2000; Dill & Dill, 1998) and addiction (Chappell, Eatough, Davies, & Griffiths, 2006; Griffiths 2005; Handlingsplan, 2016–2018). The underlying arguments of the negative attentions seem to support the stereotype of a typical gamer being an isolated, young, white male (Børsum 2012; Ask 2011). These negative developments surrounding video games create concerns among authorities and parents (Handlingsplan 2016–2018; Medietilsynet, 2016b; Børsum, 2012). In Norway, the concerns, largely, revolve around extensive “time-use” on video games (Børsum, 2012; Medietilsynet, 2016, Dralega and Corneliusen, 2018a). The concerns for “addiction” are a major subject of debate in the Norwegian public sphere (Handlingsplan, 2016–18; Medietilsynet, 2016a) and academia (Børsum, 2012; Ask, 2011).

Positive as well as negative sides of gaming have also been discussed in relation to immigrant youth with non-western backgrounds (Dralega & Corneliusen, 2018; Franz, 2015; García-Sánchez, 2010). The population survey “befolkingsundersøkelsen” conducted by the University of Bergen (2016) showed that there is a greater risk of “gaming problems” developing among young men born in Africa, Asia or South and Latin America than young men born in Norway. To the contrary, scholars such as Frøyland et al. (2010), Dralega and Corneliusen (2018a), have argued that gaming would contribute to building social and cultural bonds. In the later research, gaming becomes a space where the youth with immigrant backgrounds negotiate identity and belonging in local and global contexts (Dralega and Corneliusen, 2018a). Diasporic youth co-exist in different cultural contexts (for instance, from cultural influences from country of origin, global culture especially media/video gaming and host country cultures). They also have to contend with what youth generally today experience and that is parents born before the digital explosion. Prensky (2001) explains this parent-youth relationship with the terms “digital immigrants” and “digital natives” that refers to ways of relating to digital technology between two generations of people who were born before and after the rise of digital technology. In the backcloth of this complex set of cultural norms, we would like to look closer at regulatory mechanisms of gaming among non-western immigrant youth from a family perspective. The main goal (rationale) is to gain insights into the different forms of parents–youth relationships when it comes to video game regulation. These insights are presented in models. We also aim to harvest insights and best practices for public policy, theory and society consideration. Also, we believe that the discourses on: “global youth culture” and “digital migrant parenthood versus digital
native youth” enables our findings to transcend the “immigrant” boundaries as these become relevant and useful insights in understanding and responding to discourse on video game regulation. In short, this applies to majority ethnic Norwegian families too.

10.1.1 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What are the concerns surrounding video games among immigrant youth and their families in Norway? What mechanisms are employed to regulate video games within these families? What models of parenting can be extracted from the ways in which families relate to video gaming? What are the best practices (models)?

10.2 CONCEPTUALIZING VIDEO GAMES, CONFLICT AND REGULATORY MODELS

The momentous global growth of video games has been followed by concerns from different quarters. By the end of the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s, parents were concerned that the violent nature of video games was dehumanizing their children towards violence in everyday life (Karlsen, 2001). Although, this concern comes up in current debates, it seems like the key concern has moved towards extensive “time-use” on games and consequences relating to physical and psychological health (Handlingsplan, 2016–2018; Handlingsplan, 2019–2023; Medietilsynet, 2015; Frøyland et al., 2010). Research that shows the most popular games are “online video games” and multiplayer games. Both combat games (such as Call of Duty; Fortnite) and role-playing games (mmorpg games like WoW) enjoy popularity (Ask, 2008; Höglund, 2018) also among non-western youth in Norway (Dralega go Corneliussen, 2018a). The set-up of these games makes them time-consuming which means that the youth will spend large amounts of time playing these games.

In exploring stories about video gaming in family contexts, Ask (2011), shares how parents are worried that their children are captive to these games, which eat into the time for schoolwork, friends, family and other more meaningful activities. Ask and other related studies (Eren & Örsal, 2018; Schleifer & Letter, 2018) focus

10. FROM HELICOPTER PARENTING TO CO-PILOTING: MODELS FOR REGULATING VIDEO GAMING AMONG IMMIGRANT YOUTH IN NORWAY

on general Norwegian discourses and not specifically “non-western youth and their families” experiences – which we do⁴.

In the analysis, we will draw on overarching theoretical understandings from media studies and (new) media regulation. Expressions of concern revolve around the consequences for over-gaming (extensive time use) but also the dangers that might lurk in the virtual world (Brunborg, Hansen, & Frøyland, 2013; Frøyland, Hansen, Sletten, Torgersen, & Von Soest, 2010; Griffiths & Meredith, 2009), or the stigma around gaming relating to identity (Dralega and Corneliussen, 2018a; 2018b) and the negative attitudes towards gaming as a hobby (C. A. Dralega & Corneliussen, 2018b).

10.2.1 MODELS FOR PARENTING YOUTH WHO PLAY VIDEO GAMES

Why is it more important for parents to be aware of video gaming activities today? One reason is the increasing availability and access to video games. Going back some decades, playing video games was an activity that each person had to actively choose and get involved through renting, buying or borrowing a medium holding a game (or even further back: finding the code to plot into a computer). Today, video games are available on targeted and easily available platforms, such as PlayStation. They also present themselves on media platforms that many of us are in contact with daily, like Facebook (Hjorth & Media, 2017; Paavilainen, Hamari, Stenros, & Kinnunen, 2013).

While many of these games are easy and less time-consuming to play, some of them, especially with in-game buying options, can also turn into a costly affair. With new arenas and genres such as e-sport that offer spectator possibilities – video gaming as a social activity is continuously evolving into new levels (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017). Thus, we can see gaming as playful, creative, an escape from everyday life, dangerous, harmful, or even representing an occupation – all these different perspectives together make video gaming a complex activity to understand. These different aspects of and developments in video gaming also presents new challenges for parents when deciding and negotiating on the limits of gaming activities for their children and youth.

⁴ The focus on “non-western” youth and their families was a direct response to a research call from the Norwegian Media Authority – who financed this research undertaking. In this article, we explain what (extent) implication the “non-western” aspects means in terms of video game regulation.
10.2.2 PARENTING AND VIDEO GAMES – EXISTING MODELS

Our study aims to understand how negotiation around parenting plays out in the immigrant families that we have interviewed. Is there a negotiation? Who are the negotiating parts? Are parents all-powerful and authoritative, do the youth decide on their own, or do they find a way to reconcile their views? As video gaming enters the private sphere, it affects parenting, thus we need to capture the relationship between the parents and the youth in the process of video game regulation. Shucksmith, Hendry and Glendinning (1995) have developed four models of parenting styles that characterize parent-adolescent relationships. They define the four types: the permissive parents, problem relationships, authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles. The “permissive” style refers to parents who have a good relationship with their children, not appearing critical to their children’s friends or appearance. The other side of this is that these parents seem “less interested” in where the children go and what they do.

“Problem parent-adolescent relationships” is the label for relationships between the adolescent and her parents where the parents appear to be disappointed, critical to her choices, and the relationship considered poor.

An “Authoritative” style refers to a situation where the parents are considered to have reasonable expectations, the relationship to the adolescents is good, and parents want to know where the adolescent goes to influence the choice of activity. An “Authoritarian” style appears when parents expectations are too high, they are critical of friends and appearance, but still having a good relationship, with parents being supportive and interested (Shucksmith, Hendry, & Glendinning, 1995, p. 261). Although Shucksmith et al.’s model gives us a starting point for evaluating how the relationship between the parents and the youths play out, this model is not attentive to the challenges of today’s video game presence among adolescents.

A study closer to our study, is Koning, Peeters, Finkenauer and Eijnden (2018) who investigate parenting practices among youth related to symptoms of “social media disorder” (SMD) and “Internet gaming disorder (IGD). They find that “displaying IGD symptoms seems to elicit ineffective parental responses, which may further exacerbate problematic involvement in gaming” (Koning, Peeters, Finkenauer, & van den Eijnden, 2018). Koning et al. engage with “parental mediation theory”, and suggest that are four different parenting practices in media use including online gaming: the “active mediation” which they define as “having conversations about the use of Internet and share experiences”; “restrictive mediation” defined as “allowance to use particular online applications”; and “social co-use”, referring to adolescents and parents watching the screen together (Koning et
10. FROM HELICOPTER PARENTING TO CO-PILOTING: MODELS FOR REGULATING VIDEO GAMING AMONG IMMIGRANT YOUTH IN NORWAY

Although the categories are not used in a coherent way, the category of “restrictive mediation” is often associated with “less excessive Internet use”, according to Koning et al. In addition, the category of “active mediation” is associated with “lower involvement in problematic gaming” (ibid.).

A fourth parenting practice is suggested, as a “strategy of participatory learning” which “gives a more prominent role to children’s input in parent–child interactions and therefore bidirectional relations between parenting and adolescents’ online behavior” (Koning et al., 2018).

Video gaming has been found to be a large problem in certain Asian countries (Kuss, 2018; Mak et al., 2014). In their study of primary and secondary school students in Singapore, Choo et al. conclude that “it appears that a positive parent–child relationship is essential to the success of parents’ rule-setting for preventing or alleviating children and adolescents’ pathological symptoms of video-gaming” (Choo, Sim, Liau, Gentile, & Khoo, 2015).

Like dominant research on parenting and video game regulation, Choo et al. are interested in the problematic of excessive – “pathological” – video gaming. In such studies, it is common to emphasis the parents’ role. This is illustrated with such statements as: “Parents could play an important role in the prevention of Internet addiction among adolescents. Lack of parental monitoring is a major factor in addictive Internet behavior” (Mak et al., 2014, p. 725).

The literature focusing on parenting and video gaming or new social media, are predominantly aiming to analyze problematic use of games or new media. While we do respect that “problematic gaming” is a relative category where the scale for what appears problematic changes according to the perspective, we also find that we would hesitate to call all the gaming activities described by our informants as “problematic” or as part of a disorder. Thus, the research or “models” described above are not directly descriptive of our data, however, these insights have been informative when developing our own models of parenting in video games.

10.3 METHODOLOGY

Given the descriptive, analytical and explanatory goal of the research, we will employ an interpretive design with the use of qualitative methods. The research design includes interviews with a selection of video gamers and their families. Ten (10) families were targeted for the study and the criteria for choosing them was that they have a non-western immigrant background5, have gamers aged 13–19

5. See footnote 4.
years and at least had experiences as “big” gamers. The families were recruited from east, west and southern Norway.

10.3.1 INTERVIEWS

The families were recruited through NGOs, existing networks and through the snowball effect where interviewees suggested relevant families. Through the interviews, we were able to listen to how the participants themselves described and reflected around video gaming, conflict and regulation (Kvale et al., 2009). The interviews gave us deeper insights into how video gaming is problematized and regulated from a family perspective but also insights into intersectional perspectives including ethnicity, culture and gender.

10.3.2 SURVEY

Before the interviews, we administered a “survey” aimed at obtaining quantifiable insights into the separate “individual” participants’ experiences as a parent and as a youth. We therefore asked the parents and youth to fill out tailored survey questions on a paper before the interview. In these surveys, we asked parents and youth specific questions around their gaming habits and conflict around it at home. This, we believed, would allow the individual to offer their honest and personal experiences without the “interjection” from a family member and it would produce a point of reference for the following dialogue.

10.3.3 INTERVIEW GUIDE AND SETTINGS

To obtain “family perspectives”, parents and youth were interviewed together in settings that they chose. We believed that self-chosen or familiar space, would offer a conducive atmosphere for the dialog on video game regulation. The interview guide had four main parts in the first section, the interviewees had opportunities to introduce their family, and explain everyday routine and how gaming is situated within the family’s everyday life. In the second section, the youth and parents would have dialogue on the gaming habits. In the third section, the focus was on regulations of gaming and sources of conflict at home. In the last section, the interviewees discussed what their recommendation would be for other families.

10.3.4 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The central theory underlying our analytical framework is Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) discourse theory which interprets the social world as a social construct limited by what we perceive through discourse. Discourse theory is used to analyze our informants’ understanding and experience of the social and cultural space surrounding gaming and regulation. In the first instance, we focus on how informants experience and negotiate regulation in order to extract mechanism that influence the regulation of gaming in the family perspective. Our take on mechanism is an explanatory concept that aims to highlight “the set of elements and their causal links that regularly lead from an initial social state to a subsequent one” (Demeulemaere, 2011). We search for ways in which gaming is regulated in the families as a causal link to the way in which gaming is experienced as part of families’ everyday life. In the next stance, we identify models of parenting in relation to gaming based on the mentioned causal relations between regulation of gaming and experiencing gaming as daily activity. The goal of making the model is to visualize the causal relations behind experiencing gaming as conflictual or harmonious in the families.

We wish to emphasis that this study is based on a limited scope of informants (i.e. 10 families) which does not give a strong basis for generalizability and representation of all non-western immigrant families. That said, we also believe that this study does offer some insights into the discourse on video game regulation from diasporic, family and intersectional contexts, but also for majority, ethnic Norwegian families.

10.4 FINDINGS: MODELS FOR PARENTING VIDEO GAMING

10.4.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF INFORMANTS

As shown in the table 10.1 below, ten (10) families were recruited for this study. These anonymously and alphabetically referenced informants from A to J originated from seven countries – Kenya (1), Burundi (1), Iran (3), Iraq (2), Pakistan (1) Vietnam (1) and Zimbabwe (1). Parent, youth, their genders and age are presented along with how much time they spent playing video games. In addition, we briefly sum up the sources of conflict in the table.
**TABLE 10.1 Informants basic information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Gender parent</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender youth</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Time (hours) spent gaming</th>
<th>Source of conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A)</td>
<td>Mother (Ana)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Boy (Alloni)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7–16 hrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B)</td>
<td>Mother (Barbara)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Boy (Bryan)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7 hrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Girl (Eva)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C)</td>
<td>Mother (Sherina)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Boy (Isa)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10+ hrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D)</td>
<td>Mother (Faida)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Boy (Amin)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2–10+ hrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E)</td>
<td>Mother (Zurah)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Boy (Ahmed)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3(^a)</td>
<td>2–5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F)</td>
<td>Mother (Sarah)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Girl (Winnie)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2–5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G)</td>
<td>Mother (Veila)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Boy (David)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1(^b)</td>
<td>3–10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H)</td>
<td>Mother (Irene)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Boy (Rob)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I)</td>
<td>Father (Nkosi)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Boy (Alan)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3+ 10+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J)</td>
<td>Father (Ram)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Girl (Stella)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3–10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) In a week
\(^b\) Daily
As shown in the table 10.1 above, “time use” seems to be the key cause of conflict. Girls use less time than the boys. Parents, who were aged between 34–49 years old, play less than the youth or, not at all, and it is the mothers who mostly showed up for the interviews. Now, we will explore some of these issues in depth below.

10.4.2 REGULATORY MECHANISMS AND MODELS OF PARENTING

As explained earlier, we employ “mechanisms” as an explanatory concept that aims to highlight “the set of elements and their causal links that regularly lead from an initial social state to a subsequent one” (Demeulenaere, 2011). We explore the casual link between regulation and reaction or the experience of this mechanism. From this, we have generated models to help categorize the causal relations behind experiencing gaming as conflictual or harmonious and in-between tendencies. We have identified three regulatory mechanisms of “lack of knowledge”, “trust” and “participation” and what models they represent, which we explain below.

10.4.3 REGULATORY MECHANISMS: LACK OF KNOWLEDGE TO UNDERSTAND VIDEO GAMES AND GAMING

The parents who manifested lack of knowledge and an understanding of video games and gaming used means such as strict verbal use, strict time use on games and restrict practices of unplugging the internet and installation of apps for parental control, in order to take control over gaming habits. Here, parents’ lack of knowledge or willingness to understand video game and gaming is a central mechanism that leads to use of restrictive means for taking control. The youth does not usually have a say.

Thus, when we look at how the youth and their parents talk about each other’s perspective on video gaming, we find youth experiencing frustration from the lack of understanding for their gaming activities. It is a perception of video games as having low value among the parents. One example of the first is 13 year-old Alloni, who laments: “My mum just does not understand that you just cannot stop a game because its dinner… it does not work like that. You have to complete a task, or you lose money.”

His mother does not understand the games, he claims, and therefore she cannot understand his choices to spend time playing.

Another boy (Bryan, age 14) also complains about his mother not understanding video games, but here we rather find traces of a discussion about what video
games really are and whether they are harmful or they present opportunities to learn. “My mum hates when I play video games, she just thinks all games are bad, without understanding what games mean for us [children/youth/gamers] – when I am gaming I socialize, I learn... so it’s not just playing.”

This regulatory mechanism functions as long as the parents are the main source of decision making, though there might be some level of dialogical relationship in regulating how, when and where the youth can play. From this main category, we have been led to two parenting models, which we have called helicopter parenting, and a conflictual model.

10.4.4 MODEL 1: DICTATORIAL (HELICOPTER⁷) PARENTING AND VIDEO GAME REGULATION

The Helicopter model falls between Scucksmit et al. (1995)’s “Authoritarian” model and Kroning et al. (2018)’s “restrictive mediation” model of parenting and regulating media/gaming for the adolescents. While Scucksmit et al.’s model offers a juxtaposition of very high expectations and is critical to Internet games and media use, these parents are interested and also enjoy good relationship with their children – which is not quite the case for the “Helicopter model” parents in our study. In the helicopter model of parenting and video game regulation, parents adopt an excessively strict top-down and one-way flow approaches in which they dictate what, how much, with whom and where the youth play video games – just like the metaphoric hovering helicopter. The relationship is not good, in fact in one of the cases, the researchers observed clear animosity between mother and son (Family A).

The tension due to the breakdown of communication between parents and youth can be explained in two inter-related ways. Firstly, the parents admit they are what Prensky (2001) termed as “digital immigrants”, different from their children being “digital natives”. They blame their parenting and regulation style to the fact that they were born and raised before the explosion of the digital technologies, pre-video game era and therefore use their own upbringing as a point of reference to raising their own “digital native” children. The second tension-generating factor is a cultural tension in adopting “non-western” upbringing in a Norwegian context, which is arguably more liberal and democratic. Ana, who only came to Nor-

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⁷ The term “helicopter parenting” is used as a symbolism for top-down trajectory for obtaining an overview of what is going on within ones scope of view/control. The act of hovering above gives the sense of authority, power usually unchallenged from below – which has been likened to the relations here.
way six years ago, argues: “no one teaches us how to raise kids these days, I do it the best way I know how” and that is how she remembers how her parents raised her in her country of origin in the 1980s–1990s when she was a teenager. In this context, the youth find themselves in two conflicting contexts. First the context at home, with at least one non-western “digital migrant” parent, and the second context of their friends and age mates, who are “digital natives” with whom they share the same “digital culture”. Their gaming friends belong to the same global culture in which video games are a natural and important part of their socialization.

10.4.5 MODEL 2: CONFLICTUAL AND BINARY

While the helicopter parenting illustrates how the parent makes decisions that give little room for actual negotiation, this next model/type of relationship between the parent and the gaming youth also results in parents voices dominating, at least this model opens up for some negotiation. This related model is a clearly binary approach with two opposing parties. In this case the youth stand-up to their parent’s “over policing” due to disagreements on, for example, undone chores, unmet obligations or un-headed warnings. This develops into a conflictual model that is an escalated version of the above model. Here, instead of trying to understand the workings of video games, the parents take offence that the youth do not listen to them. In punishment, the games, internet connection or cables/codes are disconnected, visa card confiscated causing total inaccessibility to games. Here, it is the parent vs. the youth and the parent is the authority. The youth have no say. This model can be likened to Shucksmit et al.’s (1995) “problematic parent-adolescent relationship” characterized by a poor relationship. In the case of this study, the adolescents are left frustrated and sometimes “violent”. Alloni, for instance; “he becomes aggressive, hisses and calls us names like ‘shit’, slams the door – when we try to limit his video game time use...” says the mother, Ana. From family B, the mother, Barbara, tried installing a parental control app on the computer. This also did not work because she forgot the password to the laptop, which the children use for their homework – so the approach failed. Both parents, Ana and Barbara, were concerned about the excessive time use at the expense of homework and family chores.

10.4.6 REGULATORY MECHANISM: “TRUST” AS REGULATIVE PRACTICE

In the interviews, we met two families (D and F) that had chosen to give youth the responsibility to regulate gaming. They explained their decision around the theme
of honesty and trust. However, these two families have approached this conclusion from different points.

In family D, the son of the family, Amin, born in Norway, has been gaming since he was around 3 years old. They explain that the patterns of gaming have changed from extensive hours of daily gaming, to periodical gaming where he lately is gaming around two hours daily. The mother, Faida, who participated in the interview explains the decision on self-regulation of gaming in relation to the age of their son. After years of gaming and concerns around gaming they, as parents, have learned that, they need to create an atmosphere where their son could be honest about gaming.

Faida: “When my son went to secondary school I participated in a parents-meeting where I mentioned that my son could be awake to watch football or play games until 12 at night or more. The teacher said they have to sleep at 8–9 pm. I said I could not just tell him that you have to sleep early when I know he will watch football. Other mothers did not like it and probably thought I am just a foreigner who will not let her children sleep before 12 at night. But, I think I was honest, and I knew that other children who he plays with were also awake since they used to exchange SMS.”

Faida’s story illustrates how she feels squeezed between a situation at home with a son who decides himself when to play and her status as “just a foreigner” in relation to school context where she meets Norwegian parents.

Faida’s son, Amin is, however, also aware that it is gaming that keeps him awake late at night and says: “My mum works very often at night. She knows that if she sends me an SMS at 12 at night, I will reply because I am online and gaming”. But when we ask them how gaming should be regulated if it was up to him, Amin answers as it currently is, while Faida says: “I am not a strict mother. 4–5 years ago I was more restrictive than today. Then I would worry about his school and homework. Now, I know that he decides for his future and I cannot do anything.”

In the family from Iraq (F), the daughter of the family, Winnie, who was born in Iraq, has been gaming since she was 7 years old. The family came to Norway as asylum seekers and her gaming pattern is affected by the (austerity) situation of being asylum seeker. Winnie explains that for some years when they lived in camps for asylum seekers she used to play games only when the internet was available.

Similar to Amin’s mother Faida, Sarah (Winnie’s mother) from Iraq argues that she does not see a need to guide her daughter about gaming, and generally about using the internet. She says that “I have never limited her use of the internet. But
we have discussed daily about issues including the internet.” Winnie confirms: “I cannot remember that my mum has ever told me that something is not good. But she has often asked me what I think about different issues... we talk about issues and then we come to a conclusion... but the issues are not specific issues such as what is good for us. They are general about people.”

While in family (D) the discourse of trust and honesty was used in the absence of dialogical relationship, in family (F) the discourse of trust and honesty is used in relation to daily dialogues between parent and youth. However, in both cases the parents are not willing and cannot decide over the youth’s gaming practices. From this regulating mechanism, we have arrived at a parenting model where the youth are self-regulating gaming.

10.4.7 MODEL 3: SELF-REGULATED GAMING AND NON-INTERFERENCE
Self-regulation for the youth and non-interference from parents is a model in which trust and honesty are key. This is done either through dialogue between parent and youth or without dialogue. In the instance where there is no dialogue at the moment of doing of interview, there have been dialogues through which both youth and parents have a common understanding and point of reference on how gaming is regulated in the household.

This model is close to Shucksmit et al. (1995)’s “permissive” models. Whereas in Shucksmit et al.’s argumentation, the parents are less interested and do not care about the youth’s internet or game use. In our study, the parents’ interest is more on how the youth are able to control their own gaming. Our earlier research has shown that some boys, but more girls, took the responsibility to regulate their own gaming (Dralega & Corneliussen, 2018a; 2018b), giving a picture of the girls as more disciplined and “responsible” compared to the boys. The danger with self-regulation has to do with the lack of trust by some of the parents, especially towards boys who tend to use more time on gaming. Self-regulation was also evident with older youth.

Similar to Faida, Sarah claims that she trusts the daughter’s choices. Since trust is such a central discourse in this model, one could argue that “trust” as discourse in these families does function as regulative practice.

10.4.8 REGULATORY MECHANISM: PARTICIPATION AND WILLINGNESS TO LEARN ABOUT GAMING
While for some families, the dialogical approach and participatory video gaming emerges after a long period of conflict about gaming, for some families the
A tendency, already present and emerging by the end of the interviews was the dialogical approach and participatory turn respectively.

The Family (E) is an example of the families where parents have learnt about gaming and sometimes play with their children. In Family E, their son, Ahmed, who was born in his country of origin, plays online games. The mother in the family, Zurah, who participated in the interview, explained that conflict is mostly around time-use especially around dinner. Zurah, also explains that she uses games that force you to do physical activities, and she likes a dance game best.

For family A, the interview was a turning point in terms of raising awareness about the positive roles of games in the child’s life. It was a participatory turn and this happened during the course of the interview, after both parties were able to express their divergent views about gaming. When asked about recommendations at the end of the interview, the boy tells the mother: “let kids be kids, try to understand what gaming means to us”. In addition, the mother admittedly says, she had learned a lot from the conversation, and that dialogue was important perhaps with a “third person present like you” – meaning the researcher.

The family B youth explained that it was best if parents played with their children, then the parents would understand better what gaming is all about so they can stop freaking out about it. The parents concur at the end of the interview. Eva also acknowledges that gaming is important as a subject for learning, but it needs to be done in regulation. This stance concurs with Choo’s (2014) suggestion that parents need to play an active role in the children’s media/game use. According to Koning et al. (2018)’s two strategies of “social co-use” and “strategy for participatory learning”, and Medietilsynet’s campaign “Snakk om spill”8, it seems safe to argue that a dialogical and participatory model is recommended as a best practice.

8.  https://snakkomspill.no/
10.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this exploration of discourses on video games regulation among non-western families in Norway, we were exposed to various mechanisms/models adopted, ranging from Dictatorial (helicopter) parenting to conflictual, to self-regulation (non-intervention) and finally to dialogical and participatory regulation. The models suggested in our study fit in the in-between suggestions by other scholars such as Shucksmitt et al. (1995); Koning et al. (2018), Medietilsynet9 and Choo (2014). Parents with limited knowledge and interest in video games adopted the more dictatorial models. Notions associated with “digital migrant” parenting “digital natives” were also associated with the one-way flows of regulation and on “a trial and error basis”, as Barbara asserts: “no one gives you a manual for raising kids, you do the best you can”.

The nature and extent of conflict varied from family to family; with age, gender and family situation. Parents mentioned that sometimes, when they return from work they are too exhausted to monitor what and how much their children are playing. But some begin to understand that a) it is a different era than when they grew up and that kids today play video games as a conventional extracurricular activity; b) video games are not just bad, they have some positive parts, and c) conflict begets negativity in the family. Video games can be regulated in other more positive ways that involve both parents and youth, and that is dialogue and participation (a co-piloting). This seemed to be the best model and the families where at different places in this journey to the “right” model. We therefore hope that our four theoretical (models) and best practices (co-piloting) offer useful insights for families, organizations working with the target groups, theory, public policy and society.

An interesting observation from the data collection is the fact that the mothers were the available parents for these interviews (see table 10.1). In terms of regulation, the mothers seemed to be at the forefront. This is not to say fathers were not part of the regulation but indications are that the mothers are doing more of the work. This study did not go out to compare the models for parenting video games between Norwegian (or western immigrant families) but rather aimed at gaining insights into how video games were regulated in families with non-western background. The families especially, the parents’ background as immigrants becomes important or relevant in as far as language limitations and limited access to existing information on video game regulation is concerned. Otherwise, the challeng-

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9. https://snakkomspill.no/
ing experiences from being “digital migrants” confronted with “a global digital
culture” make experiences from this study relevant for “the majority” ethnic Nor-
wegians too. This being a limited investigation (10 families), further research
could be undertaken on a larger scale in addition to comparative inquiries between
nationalities, gender, countries and regulatory initiatives. For further recommen-
dations, see the project report.

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FROM HELICOPTER PARENTING TO CO-PILOTING: MODELS FOR REGULATING VIDEO GAMING AMONG IMMIGRANT YOUTH IN NORWAY


