Gender Dimensions in the Family Reunification and Integration Process: Eritrean Immigrants in Norway

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PREFACE

Philippians 4:13: "I can do everything through him who gives me strength".

This thesis represents a milestone in my life which has taught me discipline, hard work, patience, and above all dedication to any endeavour that we pursue to enrich our lives. I have learned to understand and appreciate the value of guidance as a key to achieving success.

Commencing and producing this thesis will not be possible without acknowledging the role of various individuals who helped in my journey to reach this academic goal. First, I like to strongly thank my Dad (Dr. John Koku Awoonor-Williams) for his unconditional love and support as a father and role model who has taught me the value of hard work. I am very grateful for all the resources you have provided me, both financially and non-financially to be able to pursue this Master's degree. I also say thank you to my mum (Mrs. Sylvana Awoonor-Williams) for her support both emotionally and spiritually which has guided me throughout my entire life. I thank my brother (Ernest Awoonor-Williams, Ph.D.) for being a source of inspiration and leading by example. You have set a high bar and I admire you for that.

A special appreciation goes to my supervisor Ragnhild Overå, who throughout this entire thesis process has been a great supervisor and helped shape my academic skills and knowledge. I am extremely grateful for everything that you have taught me during my study at UiB. Again, I would like to acknowledge all the participants in the study who above all, allowed me into their homes and shared with me their most personal experiences and gave me access to their lives.

Finally, I deeply express my heartfelt appreciation to Ruth Mari Skulbru, for being my emotional support and helping me navigate my life here in Bergen. Without you, my time in Bergen would not be as gratifying. I am very lucky to have met you. I say many thanks to your parents Birgit and Torbjørn Skulbru for warmly accepting me into their home and introducing me to Norwegian hospitality. I have enjoyed many Norwegian traditions and gained memorable lasting experiences that have enriched my life wholly.

Kelvin Edem Awoonor-Williams, 29.05.2020

ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a feminist approach towards understanding gender in the migration and integration process. It examines the dynamics involved in Eritrean families' gender relations after they migrate to Norway and how gender norms in Norwegian society influence their role expectations and social practices. Moreover, the thesis explores how Eritrean immigrants' gender ideologies influence their process of integration, whether women and men are able to renegotiate gender roles in the household, enabling them to participate outside the home thereby eliciting changes to power relations in the household. Finally, the thesis analyses how gender interacts with other social identities that Eritrean immigrants (particularly women) possess and how it influences their integration process.

This thesis required conducting three months of fieldwork in Bergen, Norway in 2019. The study follows an ethnographic methodological approach to understand immigrants' experiences. The empirical findings from the fieldwork have been complemented by theoretical approaches such as the gender concept in feminist theory, social integration, empowerment, and intersectionality. These theories used to analyze the empirical data has enabled the contextual understanding of gender relations within migration and integration processes, investigating the main research question: *In what ways are gender relations in Eritrean immigrant households influenced when they settle in the Norwegian society?*

The thesis argues that gender relations for Eritrean immigrants are influenced by their existing gender ideologies which impact their role performance in the household. Eritrean immigrant men and women face challenges in renegotiating domestic roles and parental labour thus leading to gender differences in their division of household labour and impacting on women's participation in the public sphere in terms of education and paid work. Opportunities for women in Norwegian society leads to their achieving various levels of empowerment, influencing their position and decision-making process in the household. Welfare conditions in the Norwegian society support Eritrean women's empowerment as well as engendering their dependency in the household. Access to resources is influenced by gender relations between women and men which results in gender differences in both material and non-material resources.

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GLOSSARY

Barneværnet: Norwegian Child Welfare Service

'Gual': A girl (Tigrinya)

Injera: A traditional dish made from sour fermented flat bread with a slightly spongy texture/ national dish of Eritrea and Ethiopia

'Kolea': An Eritrean child (Tigrinya)

Kommune: Municipality

'Mera': An Eritrean marriage/ wedding (Tigrinya)

Nafa: Eritrean local currency

Ombud: A commission or agency intended to promote specific interests in society, and which have a professional independence from other administrations.

Sawa: Eritrean national service/ Eritrean compulsory military service

'Sedrabet': An Eritrean family/household (Tigrinya)

Tigrinya: Ethiopian Semitic language and most widely spoken language in Eritrea/ Language of the Tigrinyas of Eritrea and Tigrayans of Ethiopia

'Wedi': A boy (Tigrinya)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EEA   European Economic Area

EMN   European Migration Network

EPLF   Eritrea Peoples Liberation Front (Eritrea)

EU/EEA   European Union/ European Economic Area

IMDI   Directorate for Integration and Diversity (Norway)

IOM   International Organization for Migration

ISU   International Students Union of Bergen (Norway)

KRD   Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development/ Kommunal og Regional Departementet (Norway)

NEUW   National Union of Eritrean Women (Eritrea)

NSD   Norwegian Center for Research Data/ Norsk Senter for Forskiningsdata

UDI   Norwegian Directorate of Immigration/ Utlendingsdirektoratet (Norway)

UNE   Norwegian Immigration Appeals Board / Utlendingsnemnda (Norway)

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines gender in marriage migration focusing on women who migrate through family reunification to join their immigrant spouse in Norway. This is relevant within the migration process as it describes how gender organizes Eritrean immigrant households' settlement patterns and social practices.

According to Statistics Norway (2020) there are a total of 23,075 persons of Eritrean origin living in Norway. Most Eritreans living in Norway have a refugee background and constitute the largest share of refugees granted asylum in Norway — 93 percent in 2013, 95 percent in 2014, and almost 100 percent in 2015 (Røsberg & Tronvoll, 2017: 7). Most Eritrean women migrate through family reunification with their spouse, making them among the individuals with the highest number of family reunions to Norway (Strøm, 2018). Eritrean refugees are largely young males who request for family reunions with their spouse (Røsberg & Tronvoll, 2017).

Generally, Eritrean immigrants do better in integration compared to other immigrant groups on the basis of the target set by the Norwegian government for at least 70 percent of the participants to be in employment or education one year after the introduction program (Enes, 2017). As of 2019, the total number of employed Eritrean immigrants aged 20-66 years in Norway is 10,845 persons representing 7,102 males and 3,743 females (Statistics Norway, 2019b).

Eritrean men generally achieve the target set by lawmakers for successful integration in terms of employment and education compared to women (Enes, 2017). In addition, younger Eritrean immigrants perform better than older Eritrean immigrant participants (ibid.). Married Eritrean immigrant women have a lower success rate than unmarried immigrant individuals (Enes, 2017). There exists a huge gender difference in the integration of Eritrean immigrants in relation to employment and education (ibid.). Eritrean immigrant women entering into the introductory program are much older than their male counterparts because most Eritrean immigrants are young men who come alone, with women often following later (Sandnes & Østby, 2015 in Enes, 2017)

Enes (2017) suggests that most female migrants are married and in some cases arrive with children. Migrant women also have an exceptionally high birth rate during the first three years after they arrive (ibid.). This creates conditions where they tend to have more responsibilities in the home such as child caring. Based on cultural ideals, Eritrean women are expected to

perform the bulk of household and parental labour and coupled with integration into the Norwegian society they face extreme challenges that constrain their participation in areas such as paid work (Enes, 2017).

In order to investigate the gender dimensions in the reunification and integration process of Eritrean immigrants in Norway, I continue this chapter with a description of gender in the context of migration and integration as a background to the thesis analysis.

1.1. Gendered migration

Gender is a constitutive element of migration because "gender permeates a variety of practices, identities, and institutions" (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2000:117). Family migration processes involve gendered structures by typically assuming the movement of the man who is often followed by the woman with children if present. This practice has usually opened up differential consequences of migration experience for male and female migrants in the context of being couples and as a family. As noted by Palriwala and Uberoi (2008) migration underlie the gendered mobility of the woman following the man as a feature of the patriarchal kinship system that asserts male authority over women in the family. This assumes the 'male breadwinner' ideal that reinforces hierarchical gender relations in family migration.

Feminist scholars have explored how migratory processes have both reinforced and challenged hierarchical gender relations (Kim, 2010: 719). Gender role theory, which maintained that women and men learn to play out different gender role scripts, emphasizes women's performance of domestic roles as hampering their external mobility and men's public sphere ties as facilitating their migration, ultimately perceiving gender as a rather fixed feature, not a changeable process (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2000: 114). Indeed, migration theories using the gender role concept under stressed and overlooked issues of power relations and social change as reconfiguring migrants' gender relations (ibid.).

In relation to marriage migration as an avenue for challenging hierarchical gender relations, some scholars argue that women are often empowered through migration, as it constitutes opportunities for economic independence and transforms repressive gender roles and unsatisfactory gender relations at home (Tyldum, 2015). Feminist theorization of gender in marriage migration identifies two contrasting experiences: marginalization and empowerment (ibid.). Concerning marginalization, migrant men often seek reunification for their wives in the

host society as a way of maintaining traditional norms (Kofman et al, 2011). Thus, migrant wives may encounter new gendered challenges in their transforming of conventional domestic relations of power (Charsley, 2014: i). Conversely, such movement creates the conditions for women to achieve a measure of social and economic mobility towards empowerment (Palriwala and Uberoi, 2008). Migration then involves social transformation with individuals re-evaluating their roles in the new society in terms of norms regarding gender roles for what men and women assume to be their roles, how they fulfill them, and what comprises appropriate behavior (ibid.).

Highlighting how gender impacts marriage migration, within family life, women's agency is vital for the socialization of the family in the receiving society (Baluja, 2003). Women are crucial for decisions concerning how marital roles are fulfilled outside the sending countries (Kim, 2010). According to Baluja (2003: 1) "women are often responsible for socializing children, providing ideological linkages between the origin and destination cultures and helping the family navigate the integration process". Yet, women carry out such duties when they are present in a different gender context, where mainstream norms ascribe changes to women and men's role expectations and encourage egalitarian relations. Such shifts in the gender order may affect the household structure in terms of gender roles about the household division of labour and norms about the appropriate roles for men and women (ibid.).

Migration has considerable effects on familiar relations in the receiving societies which change perceptions of gender roles for women and challenge the authority of men within the marriage dispensation (Palriwala and Uberoi, 2005). Marriage migration is identified as having the potential to transform the culturally defined normative sexual division of labour within the family (ibid.). Hence, "migration opens up some new opportunities for women and also creates new inequalities" (Jones and Shen 2008: 21).

An effect of migration in most situations is the "doubling" or "tripling" of the migrant woman's workload—as a working woman, parent, and wife (Palriwala and Uberoi, 2005: xxi). In opening up new opportunities, "migrant women may have changing and varied prospects for their new lives and their links with sending societies, tied to their marital life, family relations and obligations, and plural projects of modernity" (ibid: xx). Also, migrant women's desire to settle into the culture of receiving societies underlies valuing their escape from hegemonic and authoritative imageries describing their origin societies, yet with their male partners, they may long for familiar relations and take delight in performing their duties to them (Palriwala and

Uberoi, 2005: xxi). Women may gain an improved socio-economic position or may become dependents in the extreme case in the receiving countries (ibid.).

In this thesis, I explore gender in both the sending and receiving society. To gain insights into changes in the lives of immigrant women and men, the analysis of gender in both the sending and receiving societies is relevant for interpreting their social practices (Lutz, 2010).

1.2. Family migration to Norway

Family migration in this thesis focuses on family reunification for spouses which is illustrated in the diagram below (Figure 1). Family migration is an "administrative category referring to people granted residence permits on the basis of familiar relationship" (Eggebø, 2012: 11) Family migration in Norway constitutes two main forms: family formation and family reunification. Family formation or 'family establishment' refers to "couples who are settled in two different countries at the time of marriage" (ibid: 13). Family reunification or 'family reunion' on the other hand refers to "family migration in the basis of already established familiar relationship" (Eggebø, 2012: 13). In Norway, family reunification means that a family member abroad reunites with one or more members of his or her family already living in Norway (Utlendingsdirektoratet, 1997: 3). For instance, if an Eritrean woman applies for family migration with her Eritrean spouse who has been living in Norway over a few years, this would be classified as family reunification.

"The main preconditions for family reunification to Norway are that the marriage is formally legal, that the relationship is 'real' and that the couple lives together"—it is valid according to the regulations of the home country or the country in which the marriage was entered into (Eggebø, 2013: 777). These include "how long the spouses have known each other, whether they speak a common language, their age difference and whether the marriage is atypical according to the traditions of the immigrant's home country" (ibid: 778). According to Norwegian statistics, the conventional form of family migration in Norway is by married couples (Eggebø, 2012). The diagram below represents the principal administrative categorization of immigration as noted by Statistics Norway (2019a).

Figure 1. Administrative categorization of immigration
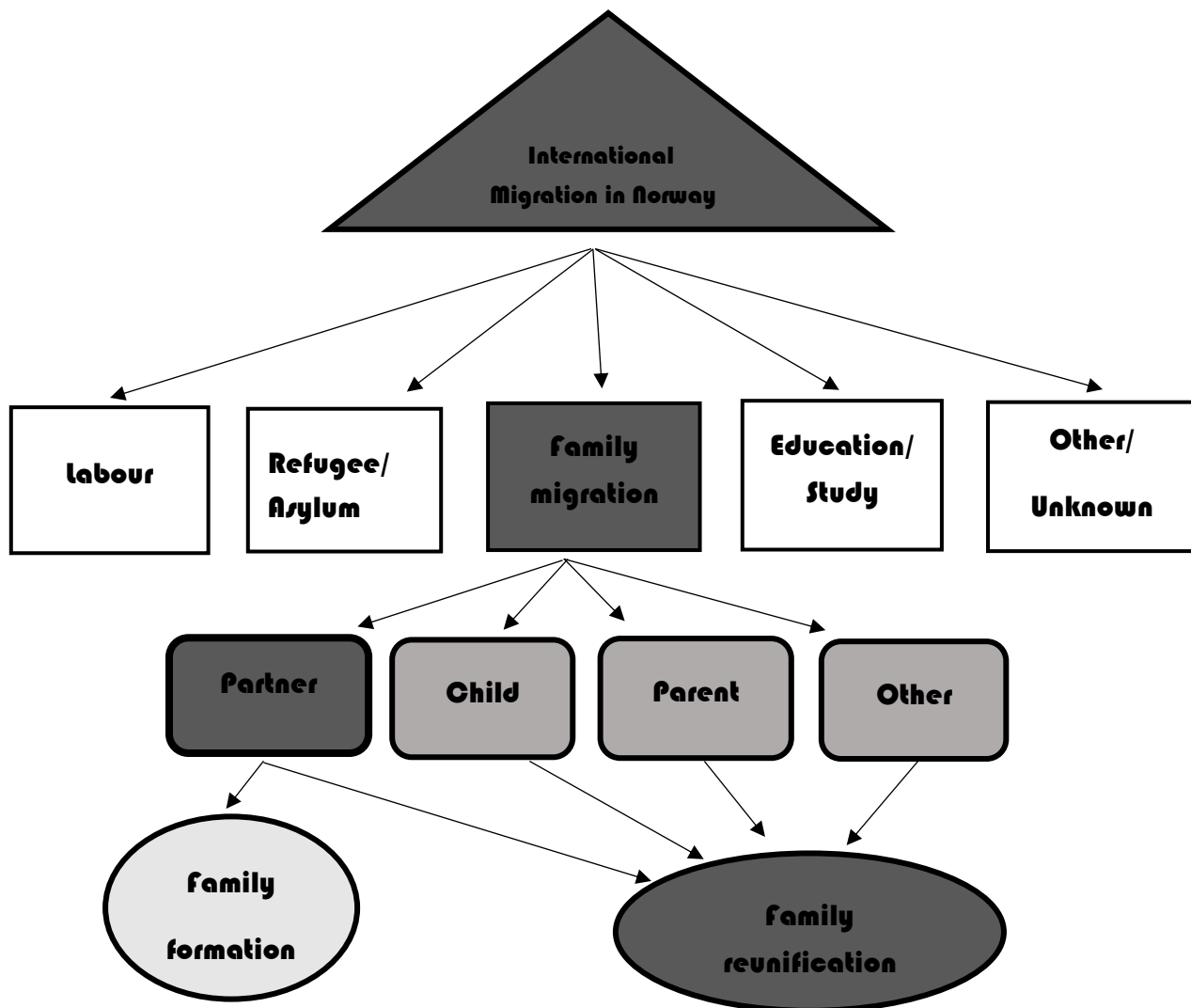
Source: Adapted from Eggebø, 2012

Family reunification is considered the most common reason for immigration into Norway (Dzamarija, 2018). Since 1990, the total number of persons involved in family reunification has been 325,412 persons (Statistics Norway, 2019a). Between 1990 and 2014, 6 out of 10 family immigrants came to be reunited with close family already living in Norway (Sandnes, 2016). 41 percent of family reunification in Norway involves individuals of immigrant backgrounds (ibid.). Women account for the majority of persons immigrating to Norway as applicants for family reunification (Sandnes, 2016). From 1990 to 2014, 164,000 women from non-Nordic and non-Western countries immigrated to Norway for family reunification as compared to 84,000 men (ibid.). Family reunited migrants in Norway largely represent immigrants from Eritrea, Somalia, and Iraq (Sandnes, 2016). As Figure 2 below illustrates, family reunification was the most common reason for immigration to Norway during the last three decades.

Figure 2. Immigrants by reason for immigration
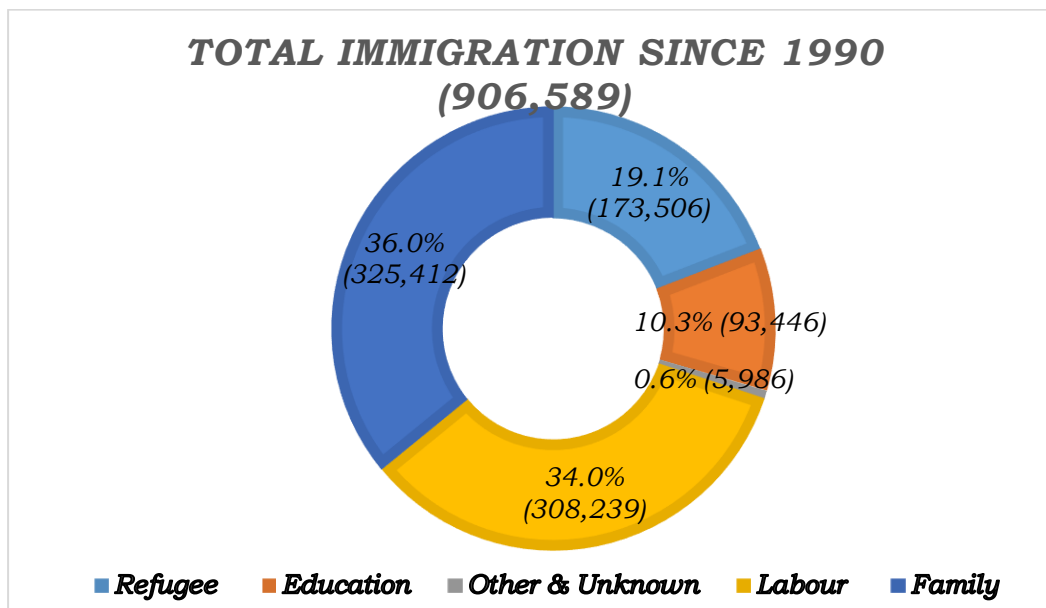
Source: Statistics Norway, 2019a

1.3. Public discourses on family migration in Norway

Family migration to Norway is shaped by gender and national background, gaining considerable interest from the government (Eggebø, 2012). In the past decades, asylum seekers and refugees were given more attention in public debates due to a large number of refugee immigrants to Norway (ibid.). Asylum seekers are those who apply for asylum, and who are granted a stay in a country depending on decisions made by immigration authorities (Rispling & Norlén, 2018: 22). Attention towards asylum seekers saw policy changes that resulted in fewer asylum seekers being accepted (ibid.).

However, from the 2000s, the changing dynamics of migrant inflows towards increased family migration shifted public attention and debates to family reunification (Hagelund, 2008). Public debates and policy changes focusing on family immigration regulations are closely related to a growing problematization of migrant families within public discourse directly linked to integration, multiculturalism, and ethnic relations (ibid.). Narratives within this discourse point to problems like forced marriage, arranged marriage, patriarchal immigrant cultures, family structures, genital mutilation and honor killings, domestic violence against women and children, and marriage of convenience (Hagelund, 2008; Eggebø, 2012). Moreover, family migration issues highlight the "narrative of gender and generational relations within immigrant households as discussions turns to the limits of tolerance and the art of balancing between

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recognition of difference and equality of rights" (Hagelund, 2008: 71). These issues bring to the front, the distinct cultural orientation that immigrants possess and the process of integration towards achieving a diverse society (ibid.).

Consequently, family migration has become the primary focus of migration and integration. In terms of the former, it defines and determines who the family is and what members it should entail, more or less defining the quality of migrant households and prescribing legitimate modes of life, thus structuring family life as to how family life should be lived, or how households should be organized (Strasser, et al., 2009). The latter pertains to conveying the requirement of the family being economically active by stressing the importance of active participation of migrants in the society, promoting the sense of autonomous citizens. This intends to ensure the migrant household as an independent social and economic unit, thereby eradicating dependency on the primary migrant (ibid.). Similarly, Kraler (2010: 7) outlines "dependency as a central issue for family migrants". Gendered forms of dependency, which family migration is commonly perceived to encompass, is generally attributed to immigrant households, where female members are often thought to be economically inactive, or if active, employed as less skilled labour. Such conceptions of migrant women construct them as dependent on the man reinforcing the idealized notion of the "breadwinner male" (ibid: 7).

1.4. Regulation of family reunification in Norway

In recent years, changes to family migration regulation have been motivated by pointing to the need to limit new arrivals of asylum seekers to Norway to encourage integration and self - sufficiency among immigrants and prevent forced marriages (Grønningsæter and Brekke, 2017). There are two different sets of rules for family immigration: the general rules (Immigration Act 2008 chapter 6) and the rules according to the European Economic Area agreement (EEA agreement). The EEA-rules are applicable to EEA citizens exercising their freedom of movement, and family members (Eggebø, 2012: 22). For this study, I discuss the general rules that regulate family reunification for non-EU/EEA nations.

The "sponsor" who is a foreign citizen residing in Norway is the person who the applicant requests to be reunited with and thus the benefactor to the application for family immigration (Grønningsæter and Brekke, 2017). To qualify as a sponsor, the foreign citizen must have a permanent residence permit. Individuals who have become beneficiaries of supplementary protection recognized as refugees also fall under this category according to Norwegian

immigration law and are allowed to apply for family immigration given the same rules as convention refugees (ibid.). An important aspect of the family reunification process is the requirement of the sponsor to meet some demands (Eggebø, 2012). This is necessary for the applicant to be granted a residence permit and as a main rule, the sponsor must document sufficient means of subsistence usually NOK 264 264 and fulfill the requirement of adequate housing (Grønningsæter and Brekke, 2017; Utlendingsdirektoratet, 2018).

However, the subsistence requirement does not apply to sponsors granted refugee status in Norway (Grønningsæter and Brekke, 2017). This usually follows the requirement that the application should be submitted within one year after the sponsor was granted residence permit (ibid). Exemptions to this rule are made where the applicant was prevented from submitting an application for reasons beyond the applicant's control and also where the applicant is the spouse of a refugee (Grønningsæter and Brekke, 2017). After the rise in the number of asylum seekers in 2015, due to a large number of refugees from Syria seeking asylum in Norway and Europe, many revisions were made to family immigration regulation in Norway with some regulations still under consideration (ibid.). For family reunions, this involves reducing the waiting period in which the sponsor who has been granted refugee status may apply for family reunification (Grønningsæter and Brekke, 2017).

Specific documentation is required based on the applicant's origin country, and all applications must include valid identification documents: passport, national identification, and birth certificate, a marriage license, papers supporting the fulfillment of housing and subsistence requirement, and a copy of the sponsor's passport (Eggebø, 2012: 23-24). Residence permits for family immigrants are generally valid for at least 12 months, entitling them to receive social benefits and services to the same extent as Norwegian citizens, and are insured through the Norwegian social insurance scheme (Grønningsæter and Brekke, 2017). To obtain a permanent residence permit, the family immigrant must have held a temporary permit for a minimum of three years and completed 600 hours of language and social studies classes (Eggebø, 2012: 24). Family immigrants granted a residence permit can also work just as their sponsor under the same rules (Grønningsæter and Brekke, 2017).

1.5. Integration among family reunited migrants

The concept of integration is primary to the scholarship of family migration as it denotes narratives on social cohesion, national identity, and frame policies on migration (Bonjour and

Kraler, 2015). As illustrated in figure 3, "integration is not a single process but takes place across a series of domains" (Spencer and Charsley, 2016: 4).

Figure 3. Integration as a multifaceted process involving different societal domains
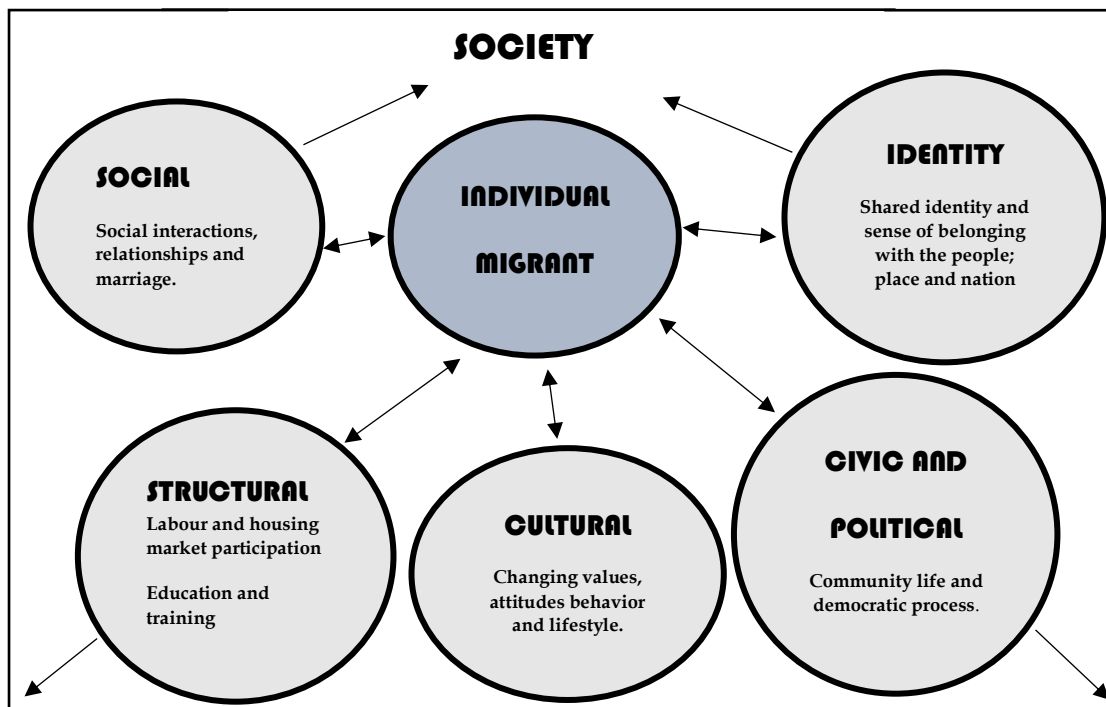
Source: Adapted from Spencer and Charsley, 2016

Integration emerges out of the process of a minority's incorporation into a host society (Tharmalingam, 2013). Integration in this thesis recognizes the relationship between majority and minority individuals through the migration and settlement process. Specifically, it refers to participation in shared institutions in society, linked with the conservation of group identity and relative cultural distinctiveness between the different groups (Eriksen, 2001). Therefore, the concept of integration in Eritrean immigrants' family migration is relevant to understand their settlement patterns in the various domains of society.

1.5.1. Integration in Norway

Integration in the Norwegian context is defined as a "strategy where equal opportunities, rights, and obligations for everyone irrespective of origin is combined with the protection of immigrants' specific cultural and religious identities within certain limits" (Kommunal og regional departementet (KRD), 1997 in Hagelund, 2010: 81). This approach focuses on immigrants' incorporation involving their culture and assimilation somewhat in aspects like learning of language and labour participation, education, housing, and electoral participation

and by incorporating facets of multiculturalism as "respect for immigrants' culture and language", as framed by the 1998 white paper on integration (Tharmalingam, 2013: 3).

Equally, integration has been a major term in debates about immigrants in Norway from both public and political arenas which have been fixed on the dimension of culture as a largely problematic dimension in integration policy and deliberations (Hagelund, 2002). This refers to certain immigrants' practices that are centered on women, which are considered to threaten the basic values in Norwegian society (ibid.). Problematization of immigrants' culture as central to the narrative of integration policies can be seen from growing issues relating to gender inequality and rights towards women and children within minority cultural practices (Tharmalingam, 2013). Issues concerning forced marriages and abuse of women and children from practices like female genital mutilation or female circumcision are described as conventional cultural practices carried by minorities from their origin countries into Norway which contradicts Norwegian values of gender equality and rights of the child (ibid.). These practices have produced negative beliefs within the public sphere concerning minorities' cultural practices and increasingly linked to social problems (Tharmalingam, 2013).

Typically, the Norwegian integration policy's fundamental objective is to provide incentives for refugees and other immigrants to participate in the labour market and social life (Thorud, 2017). This is necessary for the immigrants themselves as well as to manage a sturdy and sustainable welfare system (ibid.). These programs involve training to support new immigrants incorporate into the Norwegian society (Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, 2013). The Norwegian government aims for immigrants to qualify for participation in the Norwegian labour market, better use of immigrants' skills and competence, more immigrant women to enter the workforce and immigrants and their children to receive a quality education that is adapted to their needs (ibid: 6). The Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) has a central role in coordinating the efforts to ensure that people with an immigrant background obtain equitable public services (ibid.). The introductory part of the integration process is handled by IMDi. Family immigrants such as spouse and children are usually provided with practical services by IMDi. The Directorate is responsible for implementing public policy concerning refugees and integration. This service is provided for refugees to settle in well and quickly become integrated into the local community.

Specifically, refugees and families who have been granted a residence permit in Norway, have the right to and are required to complete the introductory program. This program applies to

applies to newly arrived immigrants between 18–55 years of age required to obtain basic qualifications. The municipalities within which the refugees settle are required to offer the program within three months after they have settled. The program usually runs for up to two years with exceptional cases leading to three years. Refugees receive economic support whilst participating in the introduction program and an individually adapted plan is generally created for all persons in the program (Integrerings-og-mangfoldsdirektoratet,2018).

In this thesis, exploring Eritrean immigrants' reunification and integration process requires describing both the sending and receiving society to distinguish the context of gender and its interaction with the migration and settlement patterns that are organized.

1.6. The Eritrean society in the study context

Eritrea is a country located in the horn of Africa with a population of around 5,000,000. Eritreans are multi-culturally diverse people with a composition of nine recognized ethnic groups. Eritrea is religiously diverse with the population divided between four categories of religious affiliation: Coptic Christian, Sunni Muslim, Roman Catholic, and Protestant (Pew research center, 2015). The dominant religion is Christianity with 62.9 percent of the country's population (ibid.). The second-largest religious group is Islam with Muslims representing 36.6 percent of the population (Pew research center, 2015).

The largest ethnic group is Tigrinya which constitutes 55 percent of the population (ibid.). The Tigrinya population mainly inhabit the highlands of Eritrea and the Tigray region of Northern Ethiopia with diaspora communities in many countries. The biggest towns including Asmara which is the capital of Eritrea and located in the highlands are controlled by Tigrinya's (Advameg, 2019). The majority of Tigrinya's are Christians with most followers of Christian Orthodox—Coptic Christianity (ibid.). There are also followers of Catholicism, Islam, and Protestantism within the Tigrinya population (Tesfagiorgis, 2011: 337). The Tigrinya ethnic group is the dominant group politically and economically with most of the state and government officials from the Tigrinya ethnic group (Advameg, 2019). The second-largest ethnic group is the Tigre people making 30 percent of the population and occupy large areas in the Western and Eastern lowlands as well as the Northern highlands of Eritrea. Most Tigre's are Muslims but a minor group is Christians (Tesfagiorgis, 2011: 337).

Map 1. Map of Eritrea in Africa (left) and map of major cities in Eritrea (right)
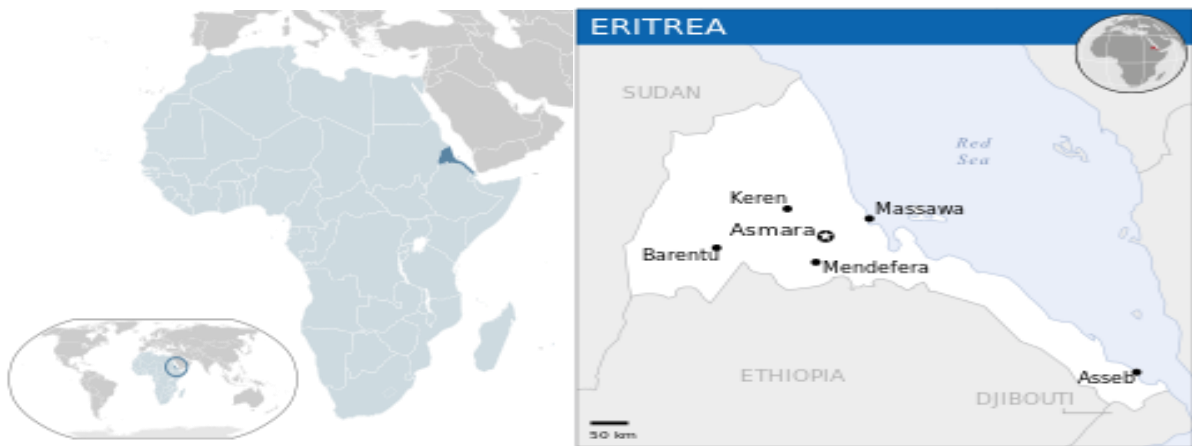
Source: Eritrea AU Africa.svg, 2009; Relief web, 2013

The main economic activity in Eritrea is agriculture with over 80 percent of the population performing subsistence farming, while 20 percent are predicted to be traders and service workers (Advameg, 2019). Gender within the Eritrean society is structured with agricultural production where the division of labor is influenced by custom and women's contribution to agricultural activities is integral but limited to certain tasks like plowing and sowing which are performed only by men (ibid.). Animals are normally herded by young boys whereas young girls support by fetching water and firewood for the household. The relative status of men and women is greatly influenced by traditional gender norms which ascribe an inferior status to women as to men in many communities (Advameg, 2019). In terms of social stratification, Eritrea is divided along ethnic, religious, and social lines (ibid.). In the rural areas, the population is predominantly poor and people live in scarcity. Yet in the urban centers, there is a growing modern elite, comprising high-ranking civil servants, business class, and Eritreans returning from abroad—Europe and the USA (Advameg, 2019).

Marriage in Eritrean society follows customary principles that are distinct among the ethnic groups (ibid.). Girls often marry at a young age—often as early as 14 years. Arranged marriages are most common in rural areas and the majority of marriages are arranged by family groups of interest. In the family unit, people generally live together in nuclear families although, in some ethnic groups, they have an extended family system. The authority figure in the family is the man and is the public decision-maker of the family. The woman on the other hand is responsible for organizing the domestic activities of the household (Advameg, 2019). Child upbringing in Eritrea among all ethnic groups is the responsibility of the parents, close relatives, neighbors, and the kin group who exert a strong influence on raising children (ibid.).

From a young age, boys and girls are expected to participate in household roles—boys as herders of family's livestock, girls as assisting their mothers in domestic work (Advameg, 2019). Children's participation in the formal education system has been increasing, yet education sometimes conflicts with the children's household responsibilities (ibid.). On the other hand, well-to-do families with relatives' overseas attempt to achieve higher education and work for their children by sending them to Europe and North America (ibid.).

1.7. The Norwegian society in the study context

Norway is a multicultural society made up of a population of 5, 367 580 (Thorsnæs, 2020). Norwegian and Sámi are the two official languages in Norway (ibid.). Over the last century, Norway has attracted immigrants from southern and central Europe, the Mideast, Africa, Asia, and beyond (Thorsnæs, 2020). Norway is a religious society and religion has over the centuries been primarily Christian, with the main form of Christianity as Protestant (Rasmussen et al, 2019). 71.5% Norwegians are registered at baptism as members of the Church of Norway, which has been Norway's state church since its establishment (ibid.). Other Christian denominations make up about 4.9% of the population, with the largest being the Roman Catholic Church (Statistics Norway, 2010). Also, Pentecostal, Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Norway, Methodist, Baptist, and Eastern Orthodox (ibid.). Due to the increasing diversity of the Norwegian society, as of 2018, there are about 200,000 Muslims in Norway (Rasmussen et al, 2019).

Norway has a vibrant economy and represents one of the wealthiest countries in the world (Thorsnaes, 2020). This is mostly due to the country's access to energy sources such as water, oil, and gas (ibid.). Norwegian society has a population that boasts a high education level with one of the lowest unemployment rates of about 3.5% (Thorsnaes, 2020). Among the total employed population between the years of 15-74, 69.5% are men and 64.5% are women (Statistics Norway, 2019d). Education in Norway is publicly accessible and generally available regardless of nationality or gender, with the main responsibility for educational policies implemented by the Norwegian state (Diku, 2020).

The Norwegian society is considered as a traditional farm culture which continues to play a role in contemporary Norwegian culture and is visible in the Norwegian language and media. In terms of gender, Norway is regarded as a progressive country that has adopted legislation and policies to support women's rights and minority rights (Moksnes, 1984). Such policies

were introduced as early as 1884, where a group of leading figures in the Norwegian government co-founded the Norwegian Association of Women's Rights (ibid.). They successfully campaigned for women's rights to education, women's suffrage, the right to work, and gender equality policies (Moksnes, 1984). From the 1970s, gender equality gained more attention nationally, through the establishment of a public body to promote gender equality, and evolved into the Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud in 2006 (Lønnå, 2017). Civil society organizations also play a vital role in the women's rights organizations currently organized in the Norwegian Women's Lobby umbrella organization (ibid.).

The Norwegian society also referred to as the Norwegian welfare state is characterized by universal welfare rights which means that everyone has equal rights to welfare goods (Christensen and Berg, 2019). Norwegians with both high and low incomes have the same access to public health services, child benefits, and education (ibid.). The welfare state is one of the reasons why income inequality in Norway is far less than in many other countries (Christensen and Berg, 2019).

Map 2. Map of Norway (left) and map of major cities in Norway (right)
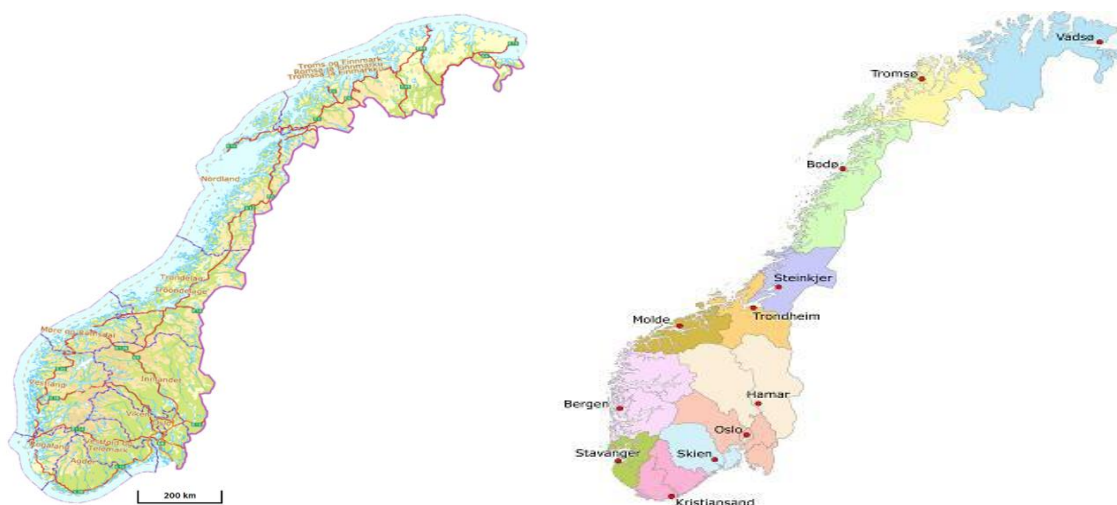
Source: Kartverket, 2020; Kartverket, 2019

1.8. Research questions

This study seeks to investigate how Eritrean immigrant households after been reunited are able to actively participate in Norwegian society given the different sets of gender norms influencing their role expectations constituting their gender relations. I examine the changes that occur within Eritrean immigrant households in terms of gender ideologies influencing

women's role performance and whether women through the integration process can achieve empowerment. Also, I explore Eritrean immigrant households' social practices specifically gender roles, and how it affects women's participation outside the home and vice versa.

The central question of this thesis is: ***In what ways are gender relations in Eritrean immigrant households influenced when they settle in the Norwegian society?*** To investigate this, I have categorized the research question into three sub-research questions:

    i.   How does gender ideology in the home country Eritrea, shape common role expectations for women and men?

    ii.   How does gender ideologies in the Norwegian society influence gender roles and relations among Eritrean immigrants?

    iii.   What role do other social identities that intersect with gender such as class, race/ethnicity, age, national background, and religion play in Eritrean women's integration into the Norwegian society?

This thesis involves undertaking three months of fieldwork in Bergen, Norway where empirical findings were produced by applying ethnographic research methods such as participant observation and semi-structured interviews. To analyze the data that was produced by the use of these methods, the data will be considered with theoretical frameworks such as the gender concept in feminist theory, social integration, empowerment, and intersectionality.

This thesis is structured in seven chapters. Chapter one involves an introductory discussion of the study, including the study topic, descriptions of key themes, and background of the areas related to the study context. Also, it presents the research questions and an overview of the structure of the thesis. Chapter two presents the theoretical background which is pertinent for the study analysis to produce relevant findings in the study. Chapter three discusses the methodological approach used to analyze the research questions. In this chapter, discussions involve the practicalities and challenges of the fieldwork process, positionality, and ethics in research. Also, the data analyses and data quality methods for the study are highlighted. Chapter four analyzes the empirical findings concerning gender within the Eritrean society. Chapter five analyzes the empirical findings regarding gender, family reunification, and integration in Eritrean immigrant households. Chapter six provides a contextual analysis of Eritrean immigrants' gender relations described in chapters four and five with the study's theoretical background. Chapter seven summarizes the study as the final chapter and presents concluding statements based on the research questions.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

This chapter presents a theoretical basis for analyzing the gender dimensions in the family reunification and integration process of Eritrean immigrants' in Norway. In this thesis, gender is seen as central in the migration and integration process which involves different patterns of social practices that organize Eritrean immigrants' participation in the Norwegian society.

2.1. The gender concept in feminist theory

Gender refers to the economic, social, and cultural attributes and opportunities related to being male or female (UNFPA in Marchbank & Letherby, 2014:11). It involves perceptions and societal expectations towards how women and men should think and behave (ibid.).

In the earlier feminist conceptualization of gender, Moore (1988: 12) describes gender analysis as concerning "what it is to be a woman, how cultural understandings of the category 'woman' vary through space and time, and how these understandings relate to the position of women in different societies". For Moore (1988) gender may be viewed from two perspectives: either as a *symbolic construction* or as a *social relationship*, where both aspects are interconnected and cannot be separated. Gender as a *symbolic construction* represents the cultural understandings of gender in the form of symbols that make distinctions between the categories of man and woman. These symbolic categorizations emphasize the distinctions among men and women like nature/culture, domestic/public, and masculine/feminine, thus structuring the essence of gender divisions within a particular society. Gender as a *social relation* on the other hand describes gender as constituted in a wide range of social interactions occurring in the various domains of society like home and work, where gender is considered as a social role, that is what women and men do. Moore (1988) indicates that these two approaches to studying gender are not mutually exclusive and analysis of gender as social relations raises questions about the sexual division of labour, and about the related division of social life into 'separate domains of social practices'.

Kaufman (1994) describes gender as a system of hierarchies between women and men where the hierarchical structure encapsulates the notion that social relations involve overarching structures and power differentials encompassing male dominance. Similarly, Orloff (1996: 52) defines social relations in terms of gender relations involving "mutually constitutive structures and practices" which results in gender differences and inequalities, creating hierarchies with

women and men in their everyday interactions constituting different power structures in different cultures (Kaufman, 1994). Patriarchy refers to the overarching structure (Kaufman, 1994) or "system in which men as a group are constructed as superior to women as a group and so assumed to have authority over them" (McDowell, 1999: 16).

Also, McDowell (1999) suggests that gender as a structure in social relations gives a useful way of analyzing the diversity and complexity of gender relations. In this case, "the structure of gender within social relations are interlocking and integrated where gender is intercut by class, age, ethnicity, sexuality and by other factors that recognize distinctions in human social features" (McDowell, 1999: 21). This indicates the varying nature of gender relations within a social-relational construction of female and male. Using McDowell's (1999) gender concept, analyzing gender in Eritrean immigrants' social relations will involve understanding their everyday interactions and activities as made up of different power structures.

Conceptualization of gender by Dixon & Jones (2006) involves three perspectives in understanding gender within social structures. These are gender as a *difference*; gender as a *social relation*; and gender as a *social construction* (ibid.). Gender as a *difference* involves the context of space that creates different experiences for men and women. This concerns roles and norms attached to men and women within a society that creates a distinction between genders, influencing their everyday processes. Gender as a *social relation* identifies social interactions that connect men and women in complex ways. It involves the structured linkage between gender relations that normally associates their life experiences (Dickson & Jones, 2006). Gender as *a social construction* involves discourses that create distinctions between genders and attaches particular meanings which are either positive or negative or both (ibid.). It reflects the gendered meanings within a society produced and reproduced through languages and everyday social practices. Gendered meanings are socially constructed interpretations about ideas concerning what it is to be male as opposed to female (Dickson & Jones, 2006). It is socially determined and structured within specific places and vary across space (ibid.). In this thesis, analyzing gender will involve the different social contexts of Eritrean immigrants' gender relations and how they interact with each other to shape their social practices.

Marchbank and Letherby (2014: 12) argues that "gender relations are not static but fluid where the system of power goes through continued negotiations within social structures with other structures of power such as class or status". An analysis of gender is necessary to understand

Eritrean immigrants' gender relations, where their social practices involve interactions between different social structures that shape their everyday processes.

2.2. Gender roles

According to West and Zimmerman (1987: 126) gender roles involve a "complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine natures". The theorization of gender as an activity shifts focus from the individual as performing gender to the interactional and institutional settings (ibid). Thus, 'doing gender' involves men and women performing roles as a set of sex-typed behaviors that they learn to display in social interaction (West and Zimmerman, 1987). The performance of gender is a situated activity that is organized in the real presence of others who are thought to conform to the practice (ibid.). Gender roles are "features of social institutions, both as an outcome of and rationale for various social arrangements and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society" (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 126). Essentially, gender roles support the division of labour into women's and men's work as the foundation of gender difference (ibid).

For Wood and Eagly (2002: 701), gender roles emerge from "the different placement of men and women in the social structure yielding gender-differentiated behavior as part of a variety of proximal mediating process, whereby individuals of each gender are expected to have psychological features that equip them for the tasks that their sex typically enacts". These roles arise from the productive work of the sexes: the characteristics that are prescribed to carry out sex-typical tasks become stereotypic of women and men—to the extent that women more than men occupy roles that involve domestic activities like cooking, child upbringing and emotional support (ibid.). Also, men more than women occupy roles in economically productive activities like resource acquisition and production of goods characterizing male gender roles. "Gender roles engaged by men and women guide social behavior; where the guidance is mediated by various socialization processes" (Wood and Eagly, 2002: 701).

In further conceptualization, Marchbank and Letherby (2014) suggest that gender roles are influenced by culture and society, such that roles between men and women are continually evolving based on the context of gender and the diversity among men and women. That through different cultures and social practices, the process of social behavior differs about what it is to be a woman or man (ibid.). This conception of gender roles indicates the difference in gender

relations as a result of the diversity of social processes influencing male and female role performance. Analyzing gender roles in this thesis involves the various role performance in the different social contexts and how it shapes Eritrean immigrants' gender relations in Norwegian society. For instance, how Eritrean immigrant households' roles organize their role performance and whether they are gendered.

2.3. Gender ideology

Gender ideology refers to the "justification of gender statuses, particularly their differential evaluation" (Lorber, 1994: 30). The dominant ideology tends to suppress criticism by making these evaluations seem natural (ibid.). Gender ideology often legitimizes gender inequality through socially constructed norms about appropriate behaviors for men and women within specific social contexts where gender differences in roles are established (Lorber, 1994). Gender ideologies structure society directly and indirectly at the individual and society level (Chatillon et al. 2018). In the former, gender ideology influences roles, choices, and beliefs while in the latter, where interactions are broad, they support the production, reproduction, and legitimization of gendered relations and institutions that maintain inequality (ibid: 219).

In her book *Paradoxes of gender*, Lorber (1994) presents three aspects of gender that provide a basis for acknowledging the construction of gender. These are gender as a *process*, *stratification,* and *structure*. As a *process*, gender creates social differences that prescribe 'woman' and 'man'. That is, "through social interactions of everyday life, individuals learn what is expected, see what is expected, act and react in expected ways thus simultaneously constructs and maintains the gender order" (Lorber, 1994: 32). Gender as a *stratification,* refers to a system that creates structures where men are usually positioned ahead of women of similar race and class according to hegemonic ideals and norms that prevail in most societies. Finally, as a *structure*, gender defines the subject of sexuality and involves the constraints that gendered sexual statuses place on individual sexuality and emotional dimensions (Lorber, 1994). For instance, gendered ideologies in the family like the 'good mother' benefit men's statuses as it legitimizes women's lower position in paid work (ibid.).

Further, Kane's (2000) conceptualization of gender ideology recognizes interconnections between gender inequalities with various forms of inequality like class and race. In his analysis, gender-related attitudes are key aspects of the system of beliefs structuring unequal gender relations (ibid.). Moreover, gender ideologies become reinforced through existing beliefs

concerning gender relations (Kane, 2000). Given the conception of gender ideologies, this thesis draws on the various ways by which gender ideologies structure the social practices of Eritrean immigrant individuals characterizing their gender relations. The idea of a gender dimension recognizes the differences that are produced and reproduced through the performance of gender guided by established ideals concerning gender. These gender ideologies operate in several social settings where the difference is made through social interactions. A significant feature of social arrangements which acts as a force in shaping gender relations is the concept of masculinity.

2.4. Hegemonic masculinity and subordinated femininity

Masculinity as a social construct recognizes the position of men in a gender order (Connell, 2005). It is interpreted as a form of power relations comprising men themselves and between men and women (ibid.). Connell (1995) in her book *Masculinities*, identified four patterns of masculinity in the contemporary Western gender order. These are hegemony, subordination, complicity, and marginalization. According to Connell (1995: 77) "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women". Masculinity hold a higher ranking than femininity in the "gender hierarchy" as a feature of contemporary Western societies (Connell, 1995).

At the highest position on the gender hierarchy is "hegemonic masculinity": the culturally dominant ideal of masculinity focused around authority, physical toughness and strength, heterosexuality, and paid work (ibid.). Only a few men behave according to the ideal of hegemonic masculinity, yet majority men benefit from such masculine ideals and this level is referred to as "complicit masculinity" (Connell, 1995). Beneath this hierarchical category are "subordinated masculinities", the most significant being homosexual masculinity, generally perceived as a form of masculine behaviors which does not completely match up to the macho ideals of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995, 2000). At the lowest in the gender hierarchy is femininities, conceptualized in multiple modes like subordination to masculinity, compliant, or 'resistant' femininity but, mainly subordinated to masculinity (Connell, 2000).

In Connell's (1995) analysis, social changes due to modernity, especially in contemporary Western societies have weakened the gender hierarchy and the positions of hegemonic masculinity within it. MacInnes (1998: 2) suggests that "masculinity does not exist as a

character trait of individuals instead it should be understood as an ideology about men and women to make sense of their lives". Subsequently, Connell (2000: 17) reiterates the idea of masculinities arguing that it "names patterns of gender practice, not just groups of people". Likewise, the idea of masculinities is not to be interpreted entirely as discourses, since "gender relations are also constituted in, and shape, non-discursive practices such as labour, violence, sexuality, and childcare and so on" (Connell, 2001: 7).

Marchbank and Letherby (2014) point out that masculinity underlines gender as comprehensive and integrated, recognizing that men and women are prone to gender cultural script and live in social hierarchies where gender, class, and race interact in dynamic forms. In this thesis, insight into masculinity highlights the power structures that exist within Eritrean immigrant households' which defines their role expectations and how it influences the position of men and women in gender relations. In the subsequent discussions I highlight the gender institutions relevant for the analysis of gender in this thesis where masculinity is a force in organizing gender relations. The three areas I focus on in the study's analysis of gender are the family unit, organization of work, and institution of marriage.

2.5. The family unit

The family is essential to the institution of gender. According to Glenn (1987: 348):

"Family is the primary institution for organizing gender relations in society. It is where the sexual division of labour, the regulation of sexuality, and the social construction and reproduction of gender are rooted. Families are ideal social institutions to examine gender because gender hierarchy is created, reproduced, and maintained on a day-to-day basis through interaction among members of a household. Through everyday interactions, people negotiate gender, confirm and disconfirm each other as women and men, sustain or change gender meanings, and form strategies".

The family is embodied in cultural assumptions and gender relations involving practical, material, and ideological notions in its construct (Bielby, 2006). Within the family, gender is structured through distinct role performance with men often having the leadership position and assumed to be the economic provider, and women being prescribed the caring role for children and spouses (Marchbank and Letherby, 2014).

However, during the shift towards modernization, Young and Willmott (1973) argued that the increased affluence and geographical mobility and the growing volume of women working externally had influenced a change in the family division of labour with men participating

more in domestic labour and childcare and women participating more in making financial and other principal decisions. Hence, the family was becoming more symmetrical with less segregation of roles in the home (ibid.).

Nevertheless, the symmetrical view of the family became increasingly contested with the indication of the "family more or less a site of inequality where women are subordinated and the gender division of labour perpetuated" (Marchbank and Letherby, 2014: 357). Also, there exist individual differences between men and women and how they perform emotional work and despite ongoing inequalities in both the private and public domain, it is popular for women in the western world to engage more in the public sphere regardless of their family life and for men to be involved in caring (ibid.).

Aboim (2010: 52) argues that though modernity has led to a reshaping of gender-related attitudes, "femininity is still closely related to motherhood, and the negative effect of employment on infant children is often perceived as affecting women's right to paid work and public life". Bielby (2006: 393) implied that "the reason there continues to be a deep gender division in the family is due to the enactment of gender which lies in symbolic and practical definitions of individuals in their fulfillment of sex and gender-linked rights and obligations within the family". Their continual symbolic display of gender in terms of motherhood and fatherhood lies in the social constructs of masculinity and femininity (ibid.). Analyzing gender in the family, I explore Eritrean immigrant households' gender relations and whether the performance of roles is influenced by patterns of masculinity and femininity.

2.6. The organization of work

According to Fenstermaker (2002) work is based on the assumption 'who does what', in the market and the household. Analysis of work in terms of gender has been posited on the "set of work relations that operate within the household and are determined by the unexamined domain of household productive capacity" (ibid: 105). For Fenstermaker (2002: 106) "the division of household labour depicts a process whereby both gender and work interact and are shaped by each other".

To analyze work as a gendered process, I present Catherine Hakim's (2000) *lifestyle preference theory*. The lifestyle preference theory suggests that women in modern societies have the prospect to make real-life choices concerning family and work that is unconstrained by factors

that prevailed previously or elsewhere (Hakim, 2000). Particularly, significant changes like availability of contraception; gender equality and equal opportunity policies, increase in white-collar jobs; relevant changes in attitudes, preferences, and ideals in society, have contributed to favoring women's position in the labour market. Thus, women can make decisions concerning work and family careers though it does not deny the effect of social, economic, and institutional factors (ibid.). She categorizes women into three groups. *Work-centered women,* representing a minority of women who are focused on competitive activities in the public sphere and gain qualification for paid work, where family life and marriage are fitted around their work and most often remain childless. *Home-centered women*, also a minority group of women who choose to focus on private and family life after they marry, having large families and avoiding paid work unless the family is going through economic difficulties. *Adaptive women* refer to majority women who prefer to couple housework and paid work not giving an absolute focus to either one, engaging in part-time work to make time for family responsibilities (Hakim, 2000: 6).

McRae (2003a) in her conceptualization, found broad similarities in a longitudinal study supporting Hakim's preference theory but also noting some distinctions. According to McRae (2003a: 328) "all women face constraints in making decisions about their lives". Also, "women with essentially similar choices for work and family can experience very different results as they make choices considering circumstances in which they experience as women, wives, mothers, and workers" (McRae, 2003b: 586). She identifies the "constraints as normative and structural where the former relates to women's identities, gender relations in the family and husband partner attitudes and the latter includes job availability, cost and availability of childcare" (McRae, 2003a: 329). Applying the lifestyle preference theory in this study is relevant for analyzing the ways by which Eritrean immigrant women's participation in paid work is influenced by their domestic roles and how gender norms in Norwegian society shape their division of labour.

2.7. The institution of marriage

Marriage is an "institution that influences gender roles, inequality, and change" (Jackson, 2012: 1). Marriage involves intrahousehold relations within a gender structure which underlie the essential axis for the subordination of women (ibid.). Jackson (2012) suggests that marriage is an evolving and dynamic organization, where masculinity is considered in relation to marriage

as a means to reshape insights of gender inequality in marriage.

Previous conceptualization of marriage illustrated it as structured by descent and lineage control as is the case for migrants where the institution of marriage is structured under the kinship system involving the patrilocal arrangement of the union (Bielby, 2006). In the later period, marriage has become more aligned with the western ideology of love and companionship which shifts from intergenerational power relations and hierarchical gender ideologies (Jackson, 2012). That is, women's identity as wives and mothers in the domestic sphere structured their domination and subordination to patriarchal relations, and now involve women agency and empowerment through gender-based equality (ibid.). A shift in gender ideologies is experienced through migration particularly, in this study with external mobility which stretches conventional gender ideologies that are experienced, and often weakening strong masculine identities that characterize typical gender roles (Jackson, 2012).

Locke et al (2012) note that migration as a process exposes the distinct ways through which distance impacts gendered norms of marriage. Migration necessarily involves the reconfiguration of marital and familial relations and this entails changes in the pattern of social security (ibid.). In Locke's (2013: 1874) analysis, "feminization of migration through modernity has attended to a reshaping of social provisioning, meaning the renegotiation of social production of migrants and their families has reimagined gendered well-being and outcomes of gender relations". Indeed, migration raises new risks and vulnerabilities in sustaining and performing social reproduction (ibid.). The reason is that migration is often instigated by the need to protect the social reproduction of households, but concurrently presents unique challenges to social reproduction. Family roles and relationships are renegotiated and reformed due to migration effects on systems of formal entitlement (Locke et al., 2013). In this process, "performance of expected social roles are reshaped, drawing on various relationships and institutions" (ibid: 1876).

Further, Jackson (2012: 5) suggests that "marriage involves dependency within gender relations where the dependence between spouses especially relating to conventional gender ideologies is critical to power relations in a marriage". This corresponds to marriage migrants whose relations are often shaped by patriarchal gender ideologies involving the male "breadwinner" which relies on the man being successful in meeting such ideals to maintain power. Yet, the man is faced with shifting power dynamics if he is unable to meet existing social roles mostly due to social norms and structures contradicting typical gender relations.

Thus, "marriage poses a great threat to patriarchy and is a potential site of resistance to male control" (ibid: 5). Significantly, power within marriage is accumulated to the spouse who is less dependent and can be economically independent in the case of divorce, which emerges from intrahousehold relations (Jackson, 2012). Gender differentials in conditions of marriage disintegration spur intrahousehold power relations (ibid.).

Given the above, it is relevant to examine the process of Eritrean immigrants' marital relations in their integration process in Norwegian society, and how power relations are reshaped in the household. A significant feminist approach for analyzing gender relations in the migration process is the empowerment concept.

2.8. Empowerment

Within migration studies, empowerment theory highlights the dynamics within a patriarchal gender structure concerning the differential effects of migration. It demonstrates whether migration reshapes gender hierarchical relations towards gender equality or reinforce patriarchal gender relations. Noting scholars like Pessar (2003) and Foner (2002) who argue that women are able to improve their social status post-migration and challenge culturally expected roles in the marriage and family. Other scholars have provided a contrasting view, suggesting that migration both challenges and reinforces gender inequality for migrant families noting other structures like class and race as equally relevant in producing gender inequality (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1999; Espiritu, 1999). Thus, to understand the empowerment framework and apply it to this thesis, it is necessary to distinguish the contexts of empowerment that is relevant to Eritrean immigrants' circumstances. That is, whether Eritrean immigrant women in Norway are able to achieve empowerment through their mobility leading to egalitarian relations or if gender inequality is reinforced.

Empowerment in feminist literature on migration has usually focused on women and girls, with less recognition for the behavior of men (Silberschmidt, 2009). This according to Pessar and Mahler (2003) creates a one-sided analysis, being that migration constitutes a relational and dynamic process through which gender relations facilitate or constrain both women and men's immigration and settlement. Empowerment in this thesis examines the changes in the gender relations between Eritrean immigrant women and men in the Norwegian society, and how their integration process affects their social interactions and practices.

The conceptualization of empowerment is seemingly ambiguous with various meanings and consequences (Parpart et al., 2002). Scholars have often used the empowerment notion to depict change and achieve the power to effect that change (Collins, 1990; Held et al., 1999). A foundational concept for analyzing empowerment is the idea of an individual and collective participation (Parpart et al., 2002). Noting Collins (1990) who argues that empowerment often is realized in the private and personal space of an individual woman's consciousness, points to the process of participation as a way of challenging hegemonic systems to stimulate self-understanding and action in women's private and public lives. Other feminist scholars have contested this theorization, suggesting that participation involves differential burdens (Phillips 1999). In this case women's involvement in decision making is affected by resources of time and money which hinder their participation in collective action towards empowerment (Parpart et al., 2002).

Critical understanding of the concept of empowerment lies in Rowlands's (1997) framework of empowerment which draws from Lukes (1974: 23-4) notion of power, "basically not just control over institutions and resources, instead power is exerted by controlling the agendas and thinking of others". According to Rowlands (1997: 13) empowerment in the gender context is a "concept of power as a process: 'power over', 'power to', 'power with' and 'power from within' which together constitutes different meanings for empowerment". 'Power over' refers to a controlling power over others, usually hegemonic masculine ideals which gives men control over women and in some cases other men who possess subordinated masculinity. Sometimes, individuals respond to this power structure with resistance, weakening its impact, or manipulating it. 'Power to' constitutes a generative or productive power (often incorporating or manifesting as forms of resistance or manipulation) which creates new possibilities and actions without domination. 'Power with' provides a sense of the whole being greater than the sum of the individuals, especially when a group tackles problems together. Finally, 'Power from within' concerns the spiritual strength and uniqueness that resides in each person as a trait of humanity. Its basis is self-acceptance and self-respect which aims for gender equality.

As Rowlands (1997) suggests, empowerment has generally focused on 'power over' which places a strong emphasis on participation in both political and economic structures towards decision making in both spheres. However, from a feminist perspective, empowerment is more than 'power over', that is participation in decision making, and must also include the processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions (ibid: 14).

Therefore, feminist understanding of empowerment includes 'power to' and 'power from within' which recognizes the full range of human abilities and potential (Rowlands, 1997).

Further, Rowlands (1997: 14-5) developed three central dimensions of empowerment: personal, collective, and close relationships. Personal refers to a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity and undoing the effects of internalized oppression. Relational is defined as developing the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of a relationship and decisions made with it. Finally, the collective is where individuals work together to achieve a more extensive impact than each other could have done, involvement in political structures, and collective action based on co-operation rather than competition. Thus, using Rowlands's (1997) theory in this thesis acknowledges the extensive dimensions of power relations between migrants in the household and how it transfers into their decision making processes.

Another framework for empowerment was explored by Kabeer (1999) who argues that power is the ability to make choices, where being disempowered involves being denied choice. According to Kabeer (1999: 437) "the concept of empowerment is naturally bounded with the condition of disempowerment and refers to the process by which those who are have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such an ability". Empowerment involves a process of change (ibid.). She identifies empowerment as made up of three dimensions which are "indivisible" and are essential to achieving its validity (Kabeer, 1999: 452). These three dimensions are 'resource' which measures as an indicator of empowerment and relies on the validity of the choices made by an individual with the potential to utilize or control the resource. 'Achievement' which recognizes the individual involved and the extent to which the achievement transforms dominant inequalities in resource and agency rather than reinforcing or maintaining them. 'Agency' which measures the consequential importance in terms of women's strategic life choices and the extent to which it has life-changing power.

In summary, analyzing Eritrean women's empowerment process involves examining the diverse forms of change in their immigration and settlement process. This will focus on women's and men's role expectations in the Norwegian society and how economic, political, and social structures within the society create the process of change and power contestations leading to women's empowerment. Some scholars recognize the role of external factors in empowerment as either preventing (cultural values, machoism, and male breadwinner roles) or encouraging (egalitarianism, social group support) the empowerment process (Rowlands 1997; Kabeer, 1999). It would be relevant to examine how Eritrean women given the various

conditions in Norwegian society can adopt strategies to reconfigure gender relations for achieving empowerment. Using this theory would enable exploring migrants' empowerment process in the context of gender between the sending and receiving society.

2.9. Gender inequality

In this thesis, the central point of analysis of Eritrean families' migration and integration is the difference that is experienced as a result of their performance of gender roles, based on gender ideologies from the Eritrean society and gender norms in the Norwegian society influencing their gender relations. The difference made is referred to as gender inequality.

According to Legerski and Cornwall (2010) the gendered division of household labour is a powerful site for gender inequality where a shift towards a more gender-equal process of domestic labour is impeded by institutional, interactive, and individual-level processes. At the institutional domain, change is hampered by the lack of well-paying jobs and the continuous gendering of domestic work. At the individual level, it relates to challenges to gendered identities reassuring the maintenance of traditional gender ideologies. At the interactional stage, women's responsibility for care work and the definition of paid-work for unemployed spouses prevent the renegotiation of chores (Legerski and Cornwall, 2010: 447).

Gender inequality constitutes the criteria of social practices that are gendered in nature and whereby the performance of gender is conceptualized as a structure. In light of this, Risman (2004) argues that conceptualizing "gender as a social structure" enhances the understanding of gender as embedded in and pervading society at all spheres. Analysis of gender inequality in this study follows the structural conceptualization of gender which involves various social processes as contributing to gender inequality which is conceptualized as intersectionality.

2.10. Intersectionality

Feminist theory addressing the pervasive systems of power and hierarchy characterizing gender inequality involves the intersectionality framework (Scarborough, 2018). Gender inequality in its broad form is mutually embodied with alternative structures of inequality such as race, sexuality, and nation. (ibid.). Intersectionality identifies how "multiple systems of oppression including racism, patriarchy and capitalism, interact with gender to disseminate disadvantage

to and institutionally stratify different groups" (Robinson, 2018: 69).

In earlier theorization, Crenshaw's (1989) intersectionality focused on interpreting how black women's "doubly disadvantaged" gender and racial status, made them vulnerable to gendered violence and capitalist exploitation. She challenged the single-axis analysis that distorted women's experience. Crenshaw (1991: 1242) argued that "women's experiences cannot be understood in separate terms of race or gender, instead, it should involve interactions between the two identities", which in her account should regularly reinforce each other.

The subsequent intersectionality approach involved an extensive theorization of gender that recognizes everyone, irrespective of position. In this conceptualization by Collins (1990), intersectionality is defined as a "matrix of domination" where systems of race, class, gender, sexuality, and performance of oppression converge to situate and either inhibit or enable individuals based on their multiple intersecting positions. Collins (2000) argues that cultural patterns and social structures are not merely interconnected but are composed of intersecting systems of race, class, and nation. The term "matrix of domination" describes the overall social organization within which intersecting oppressions originate, develop, and are contained (ibid.). This approach provides the means of addressing the pervasive systems of inequality posited on social identities like race, gender, and class (Collins, 2000).

In this thesis, intersectionality involves exploring Eritrean immigrants' experiences of the dimensions of inequalities they face from both an individual and societal level and how their identities at home intersect with identities outside the home in the Norwegian society.

2.11. Social integration and inclusion

According to Martiniello (2013) the concept of integration is expressed within post-migration situations where it considers what occurs when migrants enter a new country and settle there. "Migration and integration are strongly related and the situations by which migrant's mobility operates have an influence on the range of opportunities of integration in the new country" (ibid: 8).

Feminist scholarship on migration draws to the concept of inclusion as a more preferred term to integration and its application aims to address the social exclusion of other marginalized groups, therefore putting migrants at the forefront (Spencer & Charsley, 2016). This is what Bosswick and Heckmann (2006: 2) refer to as social integration, "inclusion of immigrants in a

system, the creation of relationships among individuals and their attitudes towards the society. Social integration involves four aspects underlying inclusion. *Acculturation* relates to individuals acquiring knowledge, cultural standards, and competencies needed to integrate successfully in a society. *Placement* refers to individuals' gained position in a society essentially becoming a citizen. *Interaction* involves the formation of relationships and networks, by individuals who share a mutual orientation. *Identification* concerns individuals' identity and recognition within a social system (Esser, 2000 in Bosswick and Heckman, 2006: 3). Consequently, social exclusion in immigrant integration concerns two main axes, social inequality, and social differentiation—the different patterns of social relations along socially relevant lines in the division of labour and immigrants group formation (ibid: 4).

Penninx (2004: 141) implies that "integration for newcomers means that they have to acquire a place in the new society both in the material sense such as home, job and income, access to education and health services, and the immaterial sense such as social and cultural adaptation". Therefore, integration can be perceived as three distinct dimensions of social inclusion. The legal or political concerns individual migrants' legal status and accompanying rights designated to them and its consequent effects on their behavior and their attempt to integrate. Socio-economic pertains to migrants' access to labour market and the welfare economy. Cultural and religious rights involve immigrants' cultural, ethnic, and religious recognition and their access to comparable facilities (Penninx, 2004: 139-41).

Spencer & Charsley (2016: 5) conceptualize integration as significantly occurring in multiple dimensions. *Structural,* as in participation in the labor market, education, and training. *Social* involves migrants' social interaction, relationships, and marriage. *Cultural* involves changing values, attitudes, behavior, and lifestyle. *Civic and political,* as in participation in community life and the democratic process. *Identity* refers to processes through which individuals develop partly a shared identity and some perception of social inclusion within the immediate and broader society and with people among who they live. Hence, integration involves different domains of social practice where experience in one domain may affect those in another (ibid). They suggest that integration begins with the initial period of engagement for the newcomer through transnational contacts with family and friends, socialization expectations and, in pre-entry integration programs (Spencer and Charsley, 2016).

According to Ager and Strang (2008) factors like language and cultural knowledge; safety and security referred to as "facilitators" are interpreted as removing "barriers" to integration which

draw from concepts of inclusion and exclusion. Likewise, Spencer and Charsley (2016) use the term effectors as impacting on the integration process. These effectors are recognized in five categories of social integration. These are education and language proficiency, cultural attitudes and job motivation, families and social networks, labour and housing market, policy interventions, and transnational relations (ibid: 7-8). Also, Bosswick and Heckmann (2006: 10) refer to such factors as "indicators of interactive immigration: language competencies, social networks, friendships, partnerships and membership in voluntary organizations which in their account are core elements of integration".

The categorization of integration, describe the "dynamics of integration as a continuum and an ever-changing process shaped by multiple factors implicit or explicit to migration process" (Spencer and Charsley, 2016: 9). Not only does the possible significance of family relations become reinforced, but the centrality of gender and life course events becomes evident highlighting migrant families' integration (ibid.). At the household level, marriage, family life, and social practices are inherently gendered. Thus, decisions concerning integration processes like employment are often influenced by gender roles and relations that structure division of labour. This influences internal practices like caring and domestic work and external practices like social networks, and participation in introductory programs (ibid.).

Anthias and Pajnic (2014) argue that integration processes are influenced by gender, where differences among migrants are constructed along with gender ideologies which tend to structure patterns of social inequalities and hierarchies. Such differences create distinct experiences, opportunities, barriers, and vulnerabilities for migrant men and women in the integration process (Spencer and Charsley, 2016). Again, gender stereotyping and discrimination may impact migrant's likelihood of social and labour market integration. Gender stereotypes of 'breadwinner' for migrant man and 'caregiver' for migrant woman and discrimination in the lines of ethnicity, race and structural processes of host society's institutions characterized by non-recognition of migrant and minority identities captures the essence of an intersectional recognition of the role of gender in the integration process (ibid.).

Given that gender ideologies influence migrants' social inclusion process, it is relevant to examine the ways through which Eritrean immigrants' gender roles are shaped through their integration process in Norwegian society. In the Norwegian society, gender norms related to immigrants' integration is influenced by the welfare system which recognizes the role of the state in structuring immigrants' integration process and shaping gender relations.

2.12. Welfare states and gender

Welfare states are central to the context of gender as they impact gender structures both on an individual and institutional level transforming gender in distinct ways. According to Laperrière and Orloff (2018) welfare states shape and transform gender relations as a result of strategies that the state adopts to improve gender equality. In feminist theorization of gender within the welfare state, centrality has often been placed on the gendered power relations that exist within the socio-economic domain. In this thesis the welfare state is relevant for analyzing immigrants' gender relations as it influences their social practices and shapes their participation in the private and public domain.

A gendered analysis of welfare states had their roots in feminist literature on patriarchy (Laperrière and Orloff, 2018). In Pateman's' (1988) investigation of the patriarchal welfare state, he identified how states construct masculine and feminine domains by recognizing the specific types of households and assigning differentiated welfare entitlements and regulations to their gendered activities. Further, Lewis's (1992) analysis of the welfare state implies that there exists a strong relationship between the state and its involvement in the family's private and public domain. The state generally supported the "male-breadwinner model" as a feature of capitalism which strongly pushed women into the household domain and their motherhood status (ibid.). Through this process, gender division of labour was unequally positioned as women became dependent on their husbands for welfare entitlements within the family, justifying their gendered status (Lewis, 1992).

Scholars have become increasingly aware of gender issues and inequalities within welfare states. Orloff (1996: 51) mentions that "gender relations embodied in the sexual division of labour, compulsory heterosexuality, gendered forms of citizenship and political participation, ideologies of masculinity and femininity greatly shape the character of the welfare state". Feminist interest in the welfare state has often been in the potential for social provision to foster gender equality. Welfare states consist of institutions of social provision—the set of social assistance, universal citizenship entitlements, and public services that affect gender relations in a variety of ways (Orloff, 1996.). In this vein, Esping-Anderson (2002, 2009) argues that social policies for states should reflect principles that promote gender equality interpreted as men and women engaging in more balanced life course obligations in both employment and care. Feminist analyses challenge the unequal division of care and housework responsibilities as well as their social devaluation (ibid.).

Scholars have questioned the conceptual division between the public and private sphere in which they identify the extent to which welfare states rely on women to perform domestic roles and acknowledge the associated barriers to women's opportunities for paid-work (Laperrière and Orloff, 2018). In the domain of care-work within the family, women continue to perform the bulk of care and housework responsibilities even when they are employed as a result of the deeply gendered "normative guidelines" attributing women to care work (Folbre et al., 2013). Even when egalitarian norms and social policies adopted within modernized states that aim to change the unequal division of care work and promote women's paid work, there remains an imbalance in this process though success has been gained (Laperrière and Orloff, 2018). Although, men in modern societies have improved their share of domestic labour as a result of state's provision of policies towards improving a "dual breadwinning household", the division of domestic task remains gendered with women dedicating more time to routine and time–consuming care, and alone with their children (Coltrane, 2000).

Care work and women's association with performing caring roles continually contributes to the gendered gap in their representation in paid-employment (ibid.). Given that there are state interventions through the provision of policies that promote women's employment and family economic support, aimed at facilitating men's and women's involvement in both care and paid work, redistribution of household labour continues to persist even in egalitarian societies (Coltrane, 2000). Analysis of gender and the welfare state in the Eritrean immigrants' settlement process explores how the state's social provision for immigrants' well-being and social inclusion shapes their gender relations in several ways. Furthermore, it will be relevant to explore how welfare conditions interact with Eritrean immigrants' role expectations both in the private and public sphere thus influencing gender relations in their households.

2.13. Summary

This chapter has provided a theoretical foundation for the study involving gender in migration and integration. Further in this thesis, I will explore how gender impacts the family reunification and integration process of Eritrean immigrants' in Norway. This chapter is followed by a methodological framework to provide a practical procedure for examining the research problem.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodological approach of the master thesis. First I define qualitative research and introduce ethnography as the main methodology used, justifying the choice for this approach by explaining the relevance of this method for the study. Also, I discuss the various methods used in gathering the research data. Finally, I explain the data analysis processes and conclude with the ethical considerations in the research process.

3.1. Qualitative research design

This study adopts a qualitative research design following an inductive approach to examine the research area and develop theory from the fieldwork process and findings. This approach is necessary for examining and interpreting the gender dimensions in Eritrean immigrant households' social practices following their migration to Norway. Qualitative research "accurately attempts to answer questions by investigating multiple social settings and the individuals who reside in these settings, especially how humans organize themselves and their settings, and how inhabitants of these settings perceive their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, and social roles" (Berg and Lune, 2012: 8). For this thesis, I focus explicitly on the qualitative method for analyzing the gender dimensions in Eritrean immigrants' reunification and integration process in Norway.

Holdaway (2000: 166) argues that "the basis of qualitative research is to interpret adequately the richness and diversity of meanings people attribute to phenomena". Therefore, analysis of the research area involved interacting with Eritrean immigrants' and understanding their different social practices to appropriately illustrate their migration and integration process. This involves the application of ethnography in qualitative research.

3.2. Ethnography in qualitative research

"Ethnography as a qualitative research method is suitable for attempting to describe and interpret social expressions between people and groups" (Berg and Lune, 2012: 197). In this thesis, ethnography was appropriate for understanding the social practices of Eritrean immigrant families. The fundamental basis for this practice tries to understand another way of life from the native perspective (Berg and Lune, 2012). Ethnography puts great emphasis on

exploring the nature of particular social phenomena, primarily engaging with unstructured data without having any set hypothesis, and particularly "analyzing data that involves explicit interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions" (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994: 248). Ethnography in this study was both a method of practice and product (MacDonald, 2001), where the former involved the methods used in the fieldwork process and the latter involved the research data from the fieldwork methods. Adopting this approach was relevant for analyzing the research questions and addressing the thesis topic adequately.

Applying the ethnographic methods yielding information about Eritrean immigrants living in the field location of Bergen was coupled with information accessed through secondary sources. As noted by Atkinson et al. (2001) fieldwork comprises multiple research methods and ethnographic research may include accessing textual materials as sources of information and insights into how individuals, groups, and institutions represent themselves and others. Using ethnographic methods in understanding the research phenomenon extensively involved combining secondary data sources with discussions with various Eritrean immigrants as my sample group. This informed the interpretation of gender relations among Eritrean immigrants and their role performance in Norwegian society.

3.3. Choice of case study and field area

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) selecting the field and case-setting plays an important role in shaping how research problems are addressed. It is a matter of identifying and selecting the location for research that will be most appropriate for examining the research problem, as currently formulated (ibid.). Moreover, it is vital for access to knowledge through interviewing individuals with experience of the case and who can be contacted without difficulty and possible visits to the field area covertly or overtly (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). The choice of Bergen as the field area was due to factors such as adequate knowledge about the area as a resident of the city and having gained numerous contacts in the city who were key in providing me useful information in identifying and reaching my sample group. In this thesis, my sample group involved Eritrean immigrants living in Bergen who have in most cases reunited with their spouse of Eritrean background and also Eritrean immigrants living in Bergen for at least three years who arrived in Norway as refugees and asylum seekers.

Bergen is the second-largest city in Norway with a total population of about 283,929 as at

2019 and constituting an immigrant population of 42,169 individuals with backgrounds from 180 countries (Statistics Norway, 2019c). Significantly, 13.1% of the immigrant population in Bergen are of African descent (ibid.). Among the African immigrant groups in Bergen are Eritreans, and form part of the highest group of African immigrants in Norway. Therefore, choosing Bergen as my field area provided the setting for identifying and approaching my sample group who are adequately represented in the city.

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 37) suggest that "no setting will prove socially homogenous in all relevant respects, and the adequate representation of the people involved in a specific case will usually involve some sampling". Thus, conducting this study involved identifying and approaching Eritrean immigrants through sampling. This was necessary for gaining the relevant contacts for the study and being recognized by them, making it possible to obtain research data. Additionally, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) note that sampling improves the research process enabling the researcher and the researched to develop a mutual understanding of the research goals and enabling access to the researched participants. The fieldwork in Bergen was conducted from July 2019 to September 2019 and I provide a map illustrating the various locations in the Bergen municipality where the fieldwork was performed. Areas with red markings also indicate fieldwork locations.

Map 3. Map of Bergen showing the fieldwork locations

Source: Google map data, Bergen (Norway, 2020)

Fieldwork locations in Bergen included Fyllingsdallen, Fantoft, Minde, Vadymra, Nipedalen, and Bergen Sentrum. These locations served as ethnographic sites as part of the fieldwork

process and for accessing the study participants. Indeed, the field area of Bergen improved my fieldwork process as it enabled my access to the sample group due to my familiarity with the area which I discuss further in the subsequent sections.

3.3.1. Accessing the field and sampling of research participants

According to Berg and Lune (2012), all field investigations commence with the problem of gaining access. The issue of access involves consideration of who the research group or participants are and the nature of the settings, where access is negotiated and renegotiated throughout the research process (ibid.). Access is situated on the sets of relationships between the researcher and the researched, established throughout the project, and represents an essential part of the research (Burgess, 1991). Access in this study was complex especially with regards to the sample group, as it involved immersing myself into Eritrean immigrants' lives, to derive meanings to their social practices and interpret it as accurately as possible.

Recounting my experience of access to the sample group, I met all of the participants in Bergen and my initial contacts with Eritrean immigrants' was at Fantoft where I resided. My access commenced through my usual participation in social events organized for students by the International student's union (ISU), located at the Fantoft student housing. At these programs, I met a few Eritrean individuals who were also students residing at Fantoft. After numerous interactions with a few of them, I developed friendly relationships with three of the Eritrean individuals, two women and a man, who I discovered were immigrants and I informed them about my research. They were eager to assist me both as informants and also providing me with access to other Eritrean immigrants in Bergen. Thus, they told me to inform them when I was ready to begin my fieldwork so they can introduce me to their Eritrean contacts. In light of this, I prematurely considered success in gaining access to my sample group because of my established contacts with these Eritrean individuals when in reality, it was a more complex and difficult process than I imagined. This is discussed by Feldman et al (2003, vii) suggesting that the issue of gaining access usually comes as a "rude surprise" to researchers who have not considered the challenges that the field settings may have for the research. "Gaining access is an entirely practical affair which comprises drawing on the intra and inter-personal resources and strategies that we all tend to establish in dealing with daily life" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 41).

Due to difficulties in communicating with all three of my established Eritrean contacts, I

decided to rely on my personal network to gain access to the sample group. This proved useful as my friends aided my entry into the field through introductions to their known Eritrean contacts. During this process, I made contact with an Eritrean immigrant woman by a friendly introduction, and after discussing my research with her, she aided my access to more members of the sample group through snowball sampling.

Snowball sampling is a "non-probability sampling method which is similar to convenience sampling and is occasionally the best way to find research participants with specific characteristics essential to the study" (Berg and Lune, 2012: 52). The primary strategy of snowballing requires first identifying various people with suitable characteristics and interviewing or having them answer a questionnaire and after requesting for referrals, names of other individuals who possess similar characteristics as the participants, in essence, a chain of subjects derived by the referral of one correspondent to another (ibid.). Using snowball sampling in this research begun with talking to a 28-year-old Eritrean immigrant woman who I met at an Eritrean church service at Minde through my contact, who then provided me with several referrals to other Eritrean immigrants in the church who fit my sample.

Using this sampling method in the fieldwork, it was necessary to consider variety among research participants to gain multiple interpretations of experiences. Also, awareness of bias in research data as a limitation to snowball sampling made me take precautions to how I presented my research topic to participants, providing them all the relevant details to get their accurate responses for quality of research data. Beyond getting referrals, I tried to identify individuals who fit the criteria of my sample to ensure relevant information obtained from them. Having these contacts was important to the sampling technique because their status improved the research and flow of information as research data. A vital contact I developed was an Eritrean pastor who also worked for the 'Bergen Kommune' as an integration counselor for newly arrived Eritrean immigrants in Bergen.

Additionally, I used the convenience sampling technique which involved recruiting research participants randomly in public by asking about their background, and if they met the research group, then I introduced them to the study. This was extremely beneficial as I was able to gain access to various Eritrean immigrant individuals, who provided me with relevant research data from their shared personal experiences about gender relations in Eritrea. As part of gaining access, I decided to learn about the Eritrean culture to improve my interactions with the sample. This was necessary as my Ghanaian background differed widely from the Eritrean background.

I often kept an active communication with some Eritrean immigrants' who I noticed had numerous contacts with other Eritreans immigrants who fit the sample group. This improved my access to several Eritrean immigrants. Through the convenience sampling technique, I was able to gain more information to support existing knowledge gained. As noted by Berg and Lune (2012) this technique relies on available subjects who are easily assessable and helps provide preliminary information about some research questions quickly and inexpensively. As described, gaining access was challenging in the initial stages of the fieldwork which involved making negotiations, and reorganizing my fieldwork process to identify relevant individuals who fit the sample group, using both snowball and convenience sampling techniques to improve access to the sample group.

3.3.2. Positionality: negotiating the insider and outsider status

The position of the researcher in the field determines his/her ability to interpret certain situations which also depends on the researcher's characteristics (Dowling, 2005). Mullings (1999: 337) argues that a "researcher's knowledge is always partial, because his/her positionality — that is, perspectives shaped by his/her unique combination of race, class, gender, nationality, and sexuality among other identifiers, as well as the location in time and space will influence how the researcher views the world and interprets it". Moreover, as researchers, we produce "situated knowledge" as a way of accounting for our observations and witnessing various forms of occurrences and happenings (ibid.). The positionality of the researcher is vital during the entire research process, which constitutes the choice of research topic, research methods, data collection, and interpretation of research data. Once the researcher is aware of his positionality in the research, he can reflect on it in an effort to produce more accurate knowledge referred to as critical reflexivity (Dowling, 2005).

According to Dowling (2005: 27), critical reflexivity means researchers' "acknowledging rather than denying their social position and asking how their research interactions and the information they collect are socially conditioned". Critical reflexivity allows researchers to identify and reflect on how their social roles may influence their interaction with research participants and how they produce data from information and insights gained from the research approach (ibid.) In this study, I recognized the various identities characterizing my social position: black, male, higher education, Ghanaian, unmarried, and foreigner, which all influence the study. Being aware of my social position made it suitable to determine my

perspective as having an impact throughout the entire research process, which also shaped how knowledge was produced and represented entirely in the fieldwork. For instance, discussions with Eritrean immigrant women about gender relations could indicate certain characteristics of my social position as similar to Eritrean men. This relates to my background as a black male originating from Africa with similar gender ideologies regarding patriarchal relations and this could suggest associations of power dynamics to such an affiliation (Kearns, 2005). Also, talking to Eritrean immigrant men could reveal power dynamics due to my status as a young and single male, which could affect the process of knowledge sharing regarding their marital relations. I present in detail how I negotiated my positionality during the entire fieldwork process.

Carling, Bivand, and Ezzati (2014) note that in migration research, the positionality of the researcher constitutes a definitive form of either an insider or outsider positon. An insider being a member of the migrant group under study, whereas an outsider relates to the majority population in the area of study (ibid.). These two positions are a complex actuality in the research process which researchers must relate to in order to maneuver through the research process (Carling, Bivand, and Ezzati, 2014). In my research, both "insider" and "outsider" statuses were core in the fieldwork process involving the research data.

Commencing my fieldwork, I assumed an insider status, due to my various social identities as black, foreigner, African background, and Christian. From my numerous interactions with young Eritrean immigrants, I gained substantial information about the Eritrean society. My assumption of an insider position made me confident in gaining access to the Eritrean community. Particularly, my foreign and racial background was similar to the sample group which enabled my access to previous interactions with Eritrean immigrant individuals, thus reflecting an insider status advantage suggested by Kacen and Chaitin (2006) that having an insider status gives the researcher familiar knowledge of the context and allows for easy access as compared to an outsider. Yet still, an insider status could be disadvantageous as "prior knowledge and understanding" may prevent the researcher from being objective and unable to see things differently, thus would not be able to gain new insights into hidden details from interpretation, that still has to be discovered (ibid: 212).

My perception of insider status was however limited in reality as I did not have much interaction with older Eritrean immigrants' but mostly with young Eritrean immigrants. Specific areas where my insider status was limited was inadequate knowledge of the Eritrean

culture which I experienced during interacting with other Eritreans for the first time after being introduced through some friends. During such interactions, one of the first things they did was to exchange pleasantries in Tigrinya which I did not understand, and this instantly changed their reception towards me, identifying me as an outsider. However, some participants who realized I was not from Eritrea, interacted with me in English. In gaining access to the Eritrean immigrant community, I would often experience an outsider position. Most Eritrean immigrants I interacted with were in doubt of the study's aim and often when I explained the study to them, they did not seem comfortable participating in interviews.

Further, inquiring about gender relations in Eritrean immigrant households was a sensitive topic, because they presumed I was requesting information about their marital relations which they did not like to disclose and it restricted my access. Being aware of my shifting positionality and its relative effect, I tried to change my status to get more access to knowledge. This I did by searching for events and activities organized by the Eritrean community from my Eritrean contacts to attend. The idea was that, through participating in their activities and establishing rapport, it will allow me to change my position as an outsider, bridging the gap between an outsider and an insider position.

Moreover, this reflects Mullings's (1999: 340) assumption that the insider/outsider position is not fixed but rather highly unstable and no individual is fixed to the single category of insider or outsider but instead transitions through both positionalities "in time and space". Gaining an insider position could affect the research because I might get too involved to the extent that it prevents me from seeing things clearly and ignoring other perspectives (Berger, 2015). In light of this, I often kept some distance during my participation in Eritrean events to avoid attracting attention. Also, I was often accompanied by an Eritrean friend who helped explain activities. When some Eritrean individuals saw my association with other Eritreans and participation in their events, they welcomed me and offered English translations to make me feel comfortable. Thus, I gradually transitioned towards more of an insider status as I got access to experience events with acknowledgment of my presence in the setting.

In some instances, I decided to attend some of these events alone to get a different feel without having someone explain happenings to me. This situation exposed my outsider status due to the language barrier. The language barrier was a major challenge in establishing rapport and gaining access. On one occasion, at an Eritrean church service that I attended, I sat through the entire service without understanding anything. An Eritrean man sitting close by realized this

and approached me immediately after the service. He asked my reason for attending the service since he noticed I did not understand Tigrinya. I informed him about my research and the reason I came to the church. He commended me for my effort to take part in these events and was especially content with how I presented myself both physically and verbally. He introduced me to his wife and they both agreed to participate in the research and also introduced me to other Eritrean couples at the church who might be willing to participate in interviews as well. This corresponds with Mullings's (1999: 340) suggestion that "the process of self-representation is an important component of the search for establishing a shared positional space, where researchers' representation of themselves to the research group has an effect on them gaining access or being denied access".

Once I gained more access as a 'relative insider', I also changed how I presented my research to participants, by constantly informing them about my student status, and this made most Eritrean immigrants more willing to support the research. Another important aspect of my positionality was my age. Many of the participants who I interacted with were keen to know my age because they assumed that for me to understand their experiences I should be within their age group. Also because of my unmarried status, they presumed that I was young. Some made comments like "I don't know if you will understand what I am talking about", indirectly referring to my age. I always explained my position, that through their assistance, I can adequately understand their experiences. Eventually, I negotiated this process, though it was challenging sometimes with failed attempts.

My gender status as part of my positionality was dynamic and took different forms. In my interactions with Eritrean immigrant women, gender was barely an issue in terms of denying me access to information about their experiences and gender relations in Norway. However, when talking about gender relations and gender norms in Eritrea, issues of power relations and patriarchy usually emerged, and in some cases made the conversation tense. One particular situation was when an Eritrean woman told me: "African men are too controlling and always want to decide everything". Hearing this made it clear to me that she perceived me as equally similar to an Eritrean man due to my identity. This made me uncomfortable because I assumed that her information would be biased based on her characterization of 'African men'. I negotiated through this by not giving an opinion about such issues, expressing empathy, and trying to keep the conversation about them and their experiences to avoid tensions. When interacting with Eritrean immigrant men, my gender status emerged in discussions on gender roles in the household. For most men, concerning gender roles, they emphasized the important

role of men within the African context, reiterating the overarching ideology of a male gender hierarchy in social practices. Statements like "a man has to be strong and firm", and has to "take care and provide for his family" were common in such conversations. Sometimes, they even indicated to me that "I should know what a man's role is" and "I know what position a man should have in the household", referring to my male status. This was sometimes unpleasant and I often smiled just to maintain the rapport. In essence, my positionality involved negotiations of insider and outsider statuses. At no point in the research did I possess a fixed position of an insider or outsider and being aware of that made me critically reflexive of the data production process.

3.4. Data collection process

According to Baxter and Eyles (1997) to obtain in-depth knowledge about the study, one needs to clarify the ways by which the methodology and methods are carried out, through elaborating the methods of collecting data. Beyond using ethnographic fieldwork as the main method for data collection, I also incorporated other methods in the data collection process such as in-depth interviews, informal conversations, and participant observations. The use of multiple methods enables triangulation which aims to achieve a more in-depth and rich description of research data and produce more rigorous results (Baxter and Eyles, 1997). Triangulation adds to the certainty of the data produced which increases the validity of the research data (ibid.). This section describes the various methods used in the data collection.

3.4.1. Semi-structured interviews and informal discussions

The process of conducting interviews in research involves careful planning and detailed preparation to achieve relevant information (Dunn, 2005). It requires the negotiations of sampling informants and making "research deals" (ibid: 79). The use of interviews in this study was necessary for gaining an in-depth understanding of the gender dimensions of Eritrean immigrants' social practices in Norway. The study involved informal and semi-structured interviews, which allowed participants to freely disclose information while explaining in detail their outlooks, providing a range of discussions. According to Dunn (2005), an interview design involves how the interview is organized based on the strategies that the researcher employs to achieving relevant and appropriate findings. In this study, the interview guide was

used which involved a semi-structured interview with a list of carefully formulated questions, to help focus on the main areas that the study examines, and to ensure certainty in the articulation of the pertinent areas for better comparisons of data produced from participants (Dunn, 2005). The interview guide also involved informal discussions with participants and this was useful for generating both background information and supporting data produced from the semi-structured interview.

In using the interview guide for Eritrean immigrant women, it was important to organize the interview session in a familiar place because most of the women interviewed were married. I sought advice from the women on where they would be most comfortable for an interview discussion. Most women preferred to be interviewed in their home when their spouse was present and did not want to be seen out in public with another man. Eritrean immigrant men who were willing to take part in the study with their spouse, also requested for interviews to be done in their homes when their wife was present. The interviews focused on gender ideologies and gender relations in Eritrea and Norway. Interview questions included demographics on the family, educational, ethnic, and religious background, children, and marriage. Discussions on the Eritrean society involved gender ideologies and gender roles in the home and outside the home. The other part of the interview involved gender relations in Eritrean immigrants' household in the Norwegian society, with questions regarding the domestic division of labour, child upbringing, role expectations between women and men in the Norwegian society and integration processes such as paid work and social networks.

Using the interview method produced vast amounts of information in the form of interview transcriptions to keep track of as research data. Moreover, I combined taking notes of interview discussions with audio recordings which I later transcribed. This provided clarity on issues discussed during the interview to ensure the reliability and validity of data. Interview discussions often lasted between one and two hours. I aimed to be as precise as possible when tackling the central issues in the study and also being conscious of time schedules. I normally informed the participants that they could always interrupt the interview discussion for continuation at a different time if they had other responsibilities to attend to. I tried to be flexible since most participants had infant children. I was sometimes invited subsequently when the interview discussion was not completed and this was to my advantage.

Picture 1: An Eritrean immigrant home where an interview session was organized.

3.4.2. Participant observation

Observation in social science research primarily serves three main purposes: counting—referring to an enumerative function for observation; complementary observation—collecting additional descriptive information before, during, or after other more structural forms of data collection; and contextual understanding—constructing an in-depth interpretation of a specific period and place through direct experience (Kearns, 2005: 193). In this research, observation served two main purposes. First as a complementary means of obtaining and collecting supplementary information to provide a more descriptive means for interpreting Eritrean immigrants' gender relations. Secondly, for contextual understanding, by allowing me to immerse myself partly into the socio-temporal context of Eritrean immigrants' private domain to gain first-hand observations as a vital source of data production. (ibid). These two methods were used simultaneously throughout the fieldwork process.

According to Berg and Lune (2012: 223) "much ethnographic research involves getting into the settings of a group and simply watching and listening attentively". However, since it is impossible to listen to and watch everything, it is important to determine specifically what is important to observe that which is relevant to the research and focus accordingly (ibid). Using participant observation was a major part of the research method in the study. As noted by

Hammersley (1992: 11-2) "to rely on what people say about what they believe and do, without also observing what they do is to neglect the complex relationship between attitudes and behavior, just as to rely on observation without also talking with people to understand their perspectives is to risk misinterpreting their actions". As a participant-as-observer, I was exposed to a multitude of interactions and activities from the participants in the study. Having access to various social practices and interactions, it was important to identify and determine the relevant activities and interactions that were useful as research data for analysis. This underlies the essence of ethnography: observing and taking part in everyday interactions and activities of the participants over a given period, listening to their conversations, observing their interaction, asking relevant questions to that effect and also learning about their experiences and record information about their lives (Bernard, 2006).

Also, participant observation does not only involve "gaining access and immersing oneself in new social worlds but also generating written accounts and descriptions that bring versions of these worlds to others" (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 2001: 352). In using this method, I immersed myself in the Eritrean community where I observed their interactions and social practices through roles and activities performed by participants both in the private and public sphere. I engaged in covert observations of Eritrean immigrants' in public as a way of understanding their external social practices. During observing such happenings, I recorded and also took notes as part of the ethnographic process. I took notes during informal discussions and interactions as a means of presenting a valid account of such interactions.

Picture 2 and 3: Illustrations of Eritrean immigrant homes as ethnographic sites for participant observation.

3.4.3. Characteristics of the sampled research participants

This study was conducted using an intensive qualitative methodology. This involves interview-based research involving a small number of respondents that will facilitate a close association of the researcher with the research participants and enhance the validity of thick, substantial, in-depth investigation in realistic context (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006).

The study includes formal and informal interviews with 19 Eritrean immigrants: 11 women and 8 men. Two key informants were also interviewed: a Norwegian individual working with immigrants' integration such as Eritreans living in Bergen and an Eritrean counselor who provides integration support for Eritrean immigrants. 12 formal interview sessions were conducted with 13 Eritrean married immigrants in Bergen. These interview sessions were in-depth and involved both spouses together and also individual interview sessions with one partner, usually women. Thus, five in-depth interviews were conducted where the couple was present for interview discussions. Besides, seven in-depth interviews involved four Eritrean immigrant women and three Eritrean immigrant men as individual interview sessions. Such interview sessions were organized to gain women's and men's perspectives on gender relations in the household. The eight other interview sessions were informal discussions with mostly women and a few men. These sessions were usually organized in public settings like cafes to get more background information on the Eritrean society and were informal. All interview participants were adults living in Bergen.

Since the study focuses on gender and marriage migration, it was necessary to include individuals within a certain age who have extensive knowledge about gender relations in the Eritrean society. I did not interview Eritreans' below the age of 21. The age range of the sample group provided a diversity of experiences from different generations both from Eritrea and Norway (see Table 1).

Table 1: Age group and gender of sampled Eritrean immigrants

Age	Men	Women	Total
21 – 29	3	4	7
30 – 39	3	5	8
40 – 49	2	2	4
Total	8	11	19

Source: Field data, 2019

All of the participants arrived in Norway as refugees and also through family reunification. The men usually arrived as asylum seekers and later requested for a family reunion with their spouse (see Table 2). All the sampled informants belonged to the Tigrinya ethnic group.

Table 2: Year of immigration of sampled Eritrean immigrants

Year of Arrival	Men	Women	Total
1990-1999	1	1	2
2000-2009	4	3	7
2010-2015	3	6	10
Total	8	11	19

Source: Field data, 2019

Most of the participants were married. A few women also arrived as asylum seekers, especially divorced women (see Table 3).

Table 3: Marital status of sampled Eritrean immigrants

Marital status	Men	Women	Total
Single	1	1	2
Married	7	8	15
Divorced	0	2	2
Total	8	11	19

Source: Field data, 2019

The participants were diverse in terms of educational background (see Table 4).

Table 4: Educational level of sampled Eritrean immigrants

Educational Degree	Men	Women	Total
Basic level Degree (Basic education usually up to 10 years)	--	5	5
Secondary Level Degree	--	2	2
Tertiary Level Degree	2	1	3
Professional Qualification	6	3	9
Total	8	11	19

Source: Field data, 2019

While most of the respondents were in various forms of employment, either full-time or part-time, a few of them were pursuing an education while in part-time employment (see Table 5). The various employment types of the participants were cooks, waitress, taxi drivers, bus drivers, house-keeping staff, hospitality guides, health workers, engineers and administrators.

Table 5: Employment details of sampled Eritrean immigrants

Type of Employment	Men	Women	Total
Unemployed	0	2	2
Part-time employment	3	6	9
Full-time employment	5	3	8
Self-employed	0	0	0
Total	8	11	19

Source: Field data, 2019

One important demographic data that I focused on was the number of children. Although not all of the participants had children, most of them had children in Norway (see Table 6).

Table 6: Number of children of sampled Eritrean immigrants

Children	Men	Women	Total
0	2	4	6
1	2	2	4
2	3	4	7
3	1	1	2
4+	--	--	--
Total	8	11	19

Source: Field data, 2019

In obtaining accurate demographic data of the sample group, I was sometimes challenged by a lack of information because some inquiries often required a level of trust and co-operation to gain information, which ideally should have involved a long period of research. Thus, time constraints were a major factor in obtaining accurate demographic data on the sample group.

3.5. Data analysis

According to Cope (2005) doing qualitative research in geography involves thinking and writing critically about methodologies and this concerns how we evaluate, organize and make sense of our research data. It requires the researcher to interpret data based on observations, interviews, and other ethnographic methods of research by collating all information and refining it to produce relevant and meaningful data that reflects the context of the study.

This study was one such tedious process of having extensive amounts of data based on formal and informal interviews and participant observation, which left me with the need to perform data reduction for data analysis. Almost all research data obtained was recorded either electronically or written by hand. I had to handle excessive amounts of sound recordings coupled with personal notes from the field mostly about what I observed. For me to critically analyze the data, I had to rearrange the data both by hand and computer as a way of structuring the content of the data. This process is known as coding (Cope, 2005). The coding process used here was descriptive coding which pertains to organizing ideas and information into category labels for analysis (ibid.). The aim was to identify and represent themes and patterns regarding gender and social relations among Eritrean immigrant households. Using descriptive coding helped to answer "who, what, where, when, and how" kinds of questions (Cope, 2005). Performing coding by computer was done by organizing the transcribed recordings as text into

categories, making the data follow a thematic pattern for answering the research questions. Using coding in the study was vital as it enabled data reduction, data organization, and development of exploratory measures and data analysis (ibid.).

3.6. Data quality

Quality in qualitative research involves methods and processes applied in the research that ensures the quality of research data (Flick, 2007). To ensure rigour in qualitative research, the research process must be subject to quality issues and simultaneously make quality an issue for designing qualitative research at the planning stage, fieldwork and analysis stage, and in the final writing stage of the research (ibid). The process of quality in research involves three fundamental concepts namely *reliability*, *validity,* and *transferability*. I discuss these fundamental concepts as part of my research process for producing the research data.

According to Kirk and Miller (1986) *reliability* deals with the extent to which research data is objectively represented, irrespective of quality issues. In other words, *reliability* refers to establishing the trustworthiness of research data as a means of ensuring rigour (Bradshaw and Stratford, 2005). Since qualitative research involves using ethnographic methods that deal with sharing, interpreting, and representing people's lives, data obtained is a re-interpretation of people's lived experiences which are subjectively shared. To ensure that what is reinterpreted is representational of the received data, the researcher must adopt appropriate checking procedures at all stages of the research process (Bradshaw and Stratford, 2005). One method for appropriate checking is through triangulation. This process involves using multiple methods for obtaining research data (ibid.). In the study, the *reliability* of the research data was through informal discussions, semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and secondary data sources. This provided concrete and reliable data that is highly interpretative of the research settings. Further, it allowed me to accurately represent data by corroborating findings with secondary sources, also checking back with research participants to make sure that what is interpreted is accurately described.

Validity is the degree to which the research data is interpreted accurately (Kirk and Miller, 1986: 20). This concept of validity represents the idea of whether the research data produced properly addresses the problem of study (ibid). *Validity* in this research was an important criterion because data obtained should be in line with what the research was interested in investigating. Therefore, answers to the research questions had to be appropriate to validate the

findings. Also, I had to ask the right questions as this is the main cause of most validity errors (Kirk and Miller, 1986). The problem of *validity* deals with research data being valid to the research settings to ensure the replicability of research findings under similar conditions. Approaching this method, I always had a brief discussion with the participants about the study topic before each interview to give them clarity on what the research aim was. On certain occasions, I provided participants the interview guide before interviews, to inform them about the research questions. Also, I asked follow-up questions during interviews to improve my understanding of the participants' shared experiences and this helped enhance the validity of the research.

Nevertheless, I, unfortunately, experienced some misunderstandings during interview discussions. For example, during one of my visits to an Eritrean immigrant household for an interview, they had also invited another Eritrean woman who I had met previously and conducted an interview with earlier, and I was not informed of this. Just as I was ready to begin the interview, they mentioned that they had invited a friend to join in the interview. I had initially planned on having a discussion with the couple but the man also insisted that he had to attend to some urgent business that came up abruptly but he could have a short discussion with me before he leaves since I came a long way. I agreed and had a one-on-one interview because the wife insisted she would wait for the friend arriving shortly. After the discussion with the husband, the friend soon arrived and we began the interview. During the interview, the wife would refer to her friend asking "what she thinks" and the friend would act as a translator and provide responses on behalf of the woman. A few instances, the friend would interrupt me and take over the discussions where both women would interact in Tigrinya. This situation threatened the validity of the research as I could not make out the wife's actual responses. However, I was able to take control of the interview session by changing the interview structure to a group discussion where I would ask both women each the same questions to get their responses and this helped to separate the information gained, allowing me to validate the research data.

In treating the issue of *validity*, it is essential to discuss the two types of validity and how both were achieved in this study. These are *internal* and *external validity* (Kapborg and Berterö, 2002). To support the research data as authentic and truthful, the research findings needed to have both *internal* and *external validity*. *Internal validity* concerns the researcher's ability to establish that the data obtained, that is statements and descriptions made in the study is from research subjects and sources and that the data can be directly linked back to them to

demonstrate the authenticity of research data (ibid.). This follows a true illustration of the reality of research participants through quotations and statements from their interviews (ibid.). As noted by Kapborg and Berterö (2002: 54) *internal validity* in qualitative research carries a "high priority". This study illustrated *internal validity* by including direct quotes and statements made by the research participants. Although I could not provide all the statements, and sometimes I had to summarize quotes, I was aware of how such interpretations could be taken out of context. Longer quotes were often used as a way of increasing the *internal validity* and aiding the reader to establish the authenticity of quotes (ibid.).

External validity, on the other hand, concerns the *transferability* of the research findings and that the research findings produced are relevant for other similar situations (Kapborg and Berterö, 2002). As mentioned by Lincoln and Guba (1985 in Kapborg and Berterö, 2002: 54) *external validity* in qualitative research is "extremely difficult to establish, because it is very specific to a particular context". Moreover, the reader has to determine whether the data produced from the particular study can be transferred to related situations characterizing generalization of the research (ibid.). The issue of generalization of research data is usually applicable with large sample size and though I aimed to demonstrate *external validity*, using a smaller sample size in this study aimed to "establish the characteristics of the sample group as a goal of qualitative research" (Glasser, 1983 in Kapborg and Berterö, 2002: 54).

3.7. Research ethics

A key aspect of any research involves the code of ethics which guides the given field of academic study. Ethnographic research requires seeking permission from relevant bodies, institutions, and individuals concerning the settings for which the study will be investigated, applying to all members within a society, and purports an important ethical consideration (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Firstly, I formally contacted the Norwegian center for research data (NSD) which is an ethical body responsible for ensuring that all academic research follows set ethical guidelines. When I notified NSD about the proposed research, they reviewed the research project to validate the ethical considerations and approved the study. This entire process made the research ethically guided which I discuss in this section.

According to Hay (2016), ethical considerations within research involves both moral and practical arguments towards research behavior that protects the rights of individuals, communities, and environments involved in or affected by our research. Thus, "all research

must be interested in helping to increase benefits and minimizing harm to the world to assure a continued and friendly environment for the conduct of scientific inquiry" (ibid: 31). One major idea that is most important within ethical behavior in research involving human beings is "fully informed voluntary consent" (Gregory, 2003: 35). Thus "every code of ethics designed to guide research involving human participants gives primacy to the requirement of fully informed consent on the part of the individuals concerned" (ibid: 35). Before interviewing participants, I made them fully aware of the entire study, informing them of all the various aspects, benefits, and harms as well as their right to withdraw from the study, allowing them to personally decide their willingness to take part in the research. This was mostly done by providing them with an information letter noting all the details of the study including a consent form that they had to sign to signify their acceptance to participate. Participants who did not fully understand the content of the letter requested more clarity, which I provided and this enabled them to make an informed decision. Some participants preferred to give oral consent which was also appropriate in the study.

A major aspect of consent was during interview sessions where I had to make audio recordings of the interview discussions. I always informed the participants when I began recording and made them aware that they could prompt me to stop the recording at any moment if they felt uncomfortable with what was being discussed to be recorded. This was very important as a substantial part of the discussions involved their private life and this was a way to protect their privacy. While this was not often the case, it helped to create a mutual understanding between the participants and me and made them fully aware of their rights in the research. Providing informed consent helped to structure interview sessions as it improved dialogue and communication between the participants and I. Although, I did not experience many ethical dilemmas due to constant awareness and practice of ethical behavior, some situation brought about ethical concerns which I had to address accordingly.

One particular instance was when I approached a female informant in public and her husband was nearby. After going over to talk to her, her husband showed up with an unfriendly look, gazing at me with hostility. I realized the situation and immediately apologized to him and tried to explain to him my research and the purpose of approaching his wife. He did not seem convinced and this was expressed in his voice. He turned to his wife and they traded words in their ethnic language. I did not want to escalate the situation any further so I made another apology and left the scene. Going through this experience made me aware of how to approach my participants, especially since most of them are married and as such, approaching them in

public could be misread. I did not want my research to cause harm to any participant.

In terms of confidentiality which is closely associated with the principle of consent (Gregory, 2003), the study aimed to keep the informants from being affected negatively by the information that they provided as research data. Thus, all the statements and quotes provided by the participants used in the study are anonymized. Besides, certain quotes and statements used in the study are altered to both improve the comprehension and make it academically acceptable. As part of the ethical behavior in research, a researcher has the due obligation to ensure that the confidentiality of his/her informants is duly discharged to achieve anonymity for participants in the research (ibid.). Following this, the names of participants are replaced with codes and this is a major aspect of confidentiality in the study. Again, in instances where I provided pictures of the interview sessions, I, first of all, sought consent from the participants and also replaced their names with pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.

In essence, the ethics undertaken in this research are part of ensuring that the research, as well as the research process, has been carried out under conducive, thoughtful, reflexive and, informed behavioral practices that aimed to maximize benefits for all the parties involved.

CHAPTER 4: GENDER IN THE ERITREAN CONTEXT

This chapter present empirical findings related to gender in the Eritrean society. To understand the gender relations of Eritrean immigrants' in Norway, the chapter pertains to specific research questions that underline the study: How does gender ideology in the home country Eritrea shape common role expectations for women and men? This question explores gender roles and gender relations in the Eritrean society towards understanding how gender ideology structures the normative role expectations and social practices for women and men.

In an interview with a 24-year-old Eritrean immigrant woman who is married and living in Norway for eight years, she described the gender relations in the Eritrean society noting that:

"Eritrea is a masculine society like any African society, and even though there are no written rules concerning what a woman can and cannot do, there are soo many limitations for women and this is as a result of societal norms about how a woman should behave and what she can do".

In my interviews with Eritrean immigrant women in Bergen, this assumption became more evident, describing the gender structure in the Eritrean society. To understand how gender ideologies, shape common role expectations for women and men in Eritrea, it is important to first of all, establish a background of gender relations in the Eritrean society.

Eritrea before independence was classified as a "feudal or semi-feudal society with stringent gender distinct roles" (Campbell, 2005: 378). Women faced numerous challenges in terms of gender differentiation and gender-roles in the pre-colonial Eritrea, which was exacerbated and re-enforced under the Italian colonial rule (ibid.). "Gender differences became embedded in societal structures like education, employment and marriage with men having leading roles in these domains and women being relegated to the domestic sphere" (Campbell, 2005: 383).

According to interviews with Eritrean immigrants, the Eritrean society represents a culturally dominated sphere where gender difference is produced and maintained through varieties of social structures ranging from division of labour, education, marriage, and the Eritrean national service. As noted by Asgedet (1997: 660) "the Eritrean society follows a traditional family structure which is hierarchical, patrilineal and authoritarian with a strict sexual and generational division of labour". Men dominate most areas of the society especially in the public sphere and through this, they gain more power to shape gender relations in the household. Favoli and Pateman (2003) mention that women's position within the Eritrean society is distinct depending on their ethnicity or cultural belonging but they do not hold the same status as their male counterparts in terms of roles, duties, and rights.

A dominant feature in the Eritrean society is religion. Religious practices produce gender differences based on religious beliefs concerning gender roles in social practices. In light of this, a 32-year-old Eritrean man living in Norway for 11 years describes religion in Eritrea:

"Religion works for us and plays a big role in our lives. We go to church as part of our culture and when we go home, the way we do things is similar to our culture. When we left Eritrea, we still have religion as our culture".

Among the Tigrinya people, the Orthodox Christian religion is an essential part in shaping gender relations. Especially in the highlands areas, the Orthodox Church is the dominant faith with all households expected to adhere to religious norms by the church which organizes the household gender roles and gender relations. Even when individuals in the household decide to shift their religious beliefs away from the Orthodox Church, they are not only rejected by the family but within the society, the entire family is shunned by the church. In this way, religion is a significant part of the Eritrean culture which influences the social roles of gender. A 30-year-old Eritrean woman living in Norway for 10 years explains this clearly:

"The Orthodox church is the culture in Eritrea. If you look at how people live their lives in the home and the society, everything is about what the church wants and what the church says is right. The society is soo much involved in the church and everything we do follows the Orthodox Church. It is a ritual".

Religion deeply influences marital relations among Eritreans in the sample group. Based on interview discussions with Eritrean married immigrants, religion is a substantial aspect of the household which shapes their gender relations. As suggested by a 32-year-old Eritrean man who is married and living in Norway for 11 years: "We believe in the Orthodox Church and it is a major influence. Based on the Orthodox Church, the man is the head of the family, so then the woman and man are not equal". Zerai (1994) suggests that typical ideologies concerning women in the Eritrean society draw from religious interpretations that are passed down from generation to generation through tales and stories by word of mouth, which maintains the ideologies of women's subordination within the family and social relations.

Marriage in the Eritrean society is a male-dominated institution with the transaction of marriage been contracted between two men through a form of an intermediary or third party with the woman having no right to decide (Zerai 1994; Campbell, 2005). Marriage in Eritrea is decided between both families as a feature of a patrilineal kinship system. Girls are commonly forced into marriages with men at least 20 – 30 years older than them because younger men could not afford the bride price for marriages (Zerai, 1994). Similarly, a 28-year-old Eritrean woman living in Norway for 14 years explained: "It is common for girls at 14 years old to marry older

men and for most tribes, a girl is considered old if she is not married by then so they are given into marriage as soon as they experience their first period".

In the above discussion, gender in the Eritrean society involves hierarchical relations with men having considerable power over women based on societal structures and norms that support men's position, allowing them to benefit more from social practices. Ideally, it is a social structure that shapes gender differences through patriarchal gender ideologies regarding gender roles that maintain women's subordination in the private and public sphere. To understand the gendered structure of the Eritrean society, the following sections describe how gender difference is structured between women and men.

4.1. Division of labour: household work domain

The household is premised on the role of individuals within the family where the performance of roles and duties are assigned based on the patriarchal structure of the Eritrean society. Men as husbands are the providers and perform the leading role of providing the household income. Socialization of gender roles usually starts from childhood for girls and boys. "Expectations for girls are in the role of daughters, wives, and mothers and their duties are domestic: cooking and caregiving" (Smith, 2001: 7). From their young ages, girls are trained to possess domestic skills to begin to take on domestic and nurturing roles (ibid.). They often begin these duties at the age of six and are required to continue these duties for their entire lives with more duties added on as they get older (Melcamu 1994; Smith, 2001).

According to Zerai (1994), women in Eritrea perform a considerable amount of domestic work and are responsible for the household domain. This context of the division of labour was identified by the sample group with some differences noted among immigrants' household labour division experiences. In my interviews with Eritrean immigrants', they described that household division of labour is gendered according to sexual and cultural categories of gender. Men and women during interviews referred to patriarchal ideologies regarding the household domain which considers men as 'breadwinner' and responsible for providing the household income and women as responsible for domestic and nurturing roles.

Expectations towards the role of a woman in Eritrea is commonly defined within the household domain. Yet, distinctions were made by Eritreans in the sample group that although gender ideology shapes the different roles for women and men in the household, there are differences

in household gender relations between Eritrean highlanders and lowlanders. For Tigrinya's, living in highland areas such as Asmara creates a different experience concerning gender role expectations. Although role expectation for women in the highlands is not completely different from the lowlands, influences from Italian colonization of Eritrea and also transnational ties with Eritreans abroad have transformed gender relations in the major cities. To support this notion, a 30-year-old Eritrean woman living in Norway for 10 years explains women's role expectations in Asmara:

"Growing up in Asmara creates different expectations for women. Girls spend more time in school, do less housework and often marry from 16 years instead of the common practice of early marriage because they spend more time in school and their expectations as wives are influenced by societal norms in the cities".

Similarly, a 42-year-old Eritrean married woman who has been living in Norway for 25 years provided more insights into the different contexts of household division of labour: "Eritreans living in Asmara are mostly middle class and most households have a house-help. There are a lot of young girls who move from the villages to the city to study and they find work as house-helps". Based on this assumption, the domestic division of labour for Tigrinya households in Asmara is influenced by their social status in society. This has resulted in changes in the dynamics of women's role expectations in the household where they are often not the principal performers of housework, but manage the performance of household work.

Housemaids are a crucial part of the household domain in Asmara. This was argued in interviews with Eritrean immigrants regarding the household domain. To exemplify this, a 29-year-old Eritrean man living in Norway for eight years detailed his household experience:

"In Asmara, house-helps are a part of the home, and you do not have to be rich to afford one. Growing up, my mum was the house manager and was responsible for making sure that the house-help did her work. There was less work for my mum to do at home when she came back from work".

Since women in Asmara are often not the principal performers of housework, it gives them the possibility to work outside the home thus reshaping their role expectations to some extent. On the other hand, regarding domestic roles, a 35-year-old Eritrean woman living in Norway for 10 years suggests a generational factor in shaping household division of labour in Eritrea:

"For my generation, there is a huge change in society. In my parents' home, even though we were not rich we had a house-help so my mum did not do a lot of housework, she just managed the house. But now, you have to be rich to afford a house-help, and we could not afford one so I did all the housework although I had a job".

Interpreting this, women's performance of domestic labour is influenced by the household's

level of income and this affects their role expectations as principal performers of housework. Thus, women sometimes combine domestic roles with paid work placing extreme pressure on them as wives since they are still expected to be responsible for the household domain.

4.2. Paid work domain

From my interviews with Eritrean immigrants, paid work is pervasively a male-dominated domain in the Eritrean society. Men generally control the process of income generation with women having a supporting role. According to a 28-year-old Eritrean woman living in Norway for 14 years, she suggests that paid-work in Eritrea is such that "Men are in charge of providing the household income and women try to support men in this process". Women are not encouraged to fully participate in paid work due to societal norms and women who combine paid-work and domestic work are unable to increase their participation in paid work. In illustrating this, a 29-year-old Eritrean woman living in Norway for 10 years describes this situation based on her relative's experience who is married and living in Asmara:

"Working as a woman in Eritrea is difficult especially if you are married because you are also responsible for the home. My sister was lucky to be a home-staying mum because her husband runs his own business. She quit her job because her husband wanted her to support him whiles she takes care of the family".

Again, from interviews with Eritreans immigrants in Bergen, they described differences between the highlands and lowlands, where the paid work domain is different in the highlands. Making this argument, a 48-year-old Eritrean man living in Norway for 29 years provided some historical context of Eritrea to explain the gender difference in the two areas:

"Before independence in Eritrea, women and men fought side-by-side and when they returned to the city after the war, most of the women who fought were given leadership positions in the government. This improved women's involvement in the public sphere especially in Asmara".

Thus, even though men are more involved in paid work especially within government institutions, women are also increasingly involved in paid work. Besides, due to existing norms concerning male and female gender role expectations and gender-stereotypical assumptions, men continue to have more power and this affects women's involvement in paid work. A 31-year-old Eritrean woman living in Norway for seven years had this to say: "In Eritrea, there is a saying that you do not ask your husband about his salary". These cultural norms support male autonomy over economic processes and maintain his position in paid work. Likewise, a 28-year-old Eritrean immigrant woman living in Norway for six years explains: "As a wife, you

are not involved in your husband's work and business and my husband was responsible for the household income and took all the decisions alone". Thus, paid work is a male-dominated sphere and although women participate in paid work and economic activities, they are not expected to make economic contributions to the household income and take part in decision-making processes regarding the household.

4.3. Education in Eritrea

During the pre-independence period of Eritrea, women's involvement in education was seen as inconsequential to the development of the Eritrean society (Asgedet, 1997). This attitude towards women's education inevitably determined gender roles and role expectations for women thus defining their status within the society (ibid.). During this period, sex-segregated schools were introduced during the Italian colonial rule (1886 – 1941), with education being gender-dependent—education was set-up to teach men skills and knowledge relevant for the economic domain, while women were assigned to "women's education" and referred to home economics, teaching and nursing (Campbell, 2005: 384).

Yet, from the 1970s women's education became an important aspect in the Eritrean society under the national liberation struggle against Ethiopia (EPLF) to strengthen the movement by including women in its struggle and the role of education in mobilizing women (Smith, 2001). Women's inclusion in the resistance movement as soldiers and active fighters directly improved their position within the Eritrean society (Asgedet, 1997). The EPLF set-up the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW), an organization responsible for promoting women's familial, and societal position against factors affecting their active participation in education and the economy (Smith, 2001: 6). Women's position became less established after the war and demobilization, with traditional gender ideologies re-emerging (ibid.).

According to interviews with Eritrean immigrants in Bergen, education in Eritrea is distinguished based on gender. Education is a gender-dependent domain with men required to be more actively involved than women. This is demonstrated by a 38-year-old Eritrean man living in Norway for 10 years who shared his household experience on education in Eritrea:

"In my family, there was a big difference between boys and girls and even though we grew up in the same home, all the men were university graduates but the women did not have the same education. The women went to school and everything, but people were not concerned whether they got a good education. The important thing was that they were good girls and they will get married and become good wives and that was that".

In my interviews with Eritrean immigrant women, they referred to cultural norms as influencing women's rights to education. A 24-year-old Eritrean married woman who moved to Norway eight years ago described the cultural norms influencing women's education:

"As a woman, you have a right to pursue an education especially if you live in Asmara, but you cannot spend a long time in school because the society will say that you are becoming a man since you have to marry early".

Similarly, women's participation in education is influenced by political and institutional norms. The Eritrean government creates a difference between female and male education, which insists on boys being in school up to the final grade, which according to the Eritrean education is the 12th grade—16 years or older. Although girls are allowed to study up to the 12th grade, they are not expected to and their participation is based on their families' expectations. The most common level of education for girls is the 8th grade—13 years or older. To clarify this situation, a 30-year-old Eritrean woman living in Norway for 10 years provided more context on female education from her experience living in Asmara:

"If you grow up in a family where both your parents are well educated, they will make you get a good education, otherwise you will marry at an early age. Every family is different and if you live in Asmara you will go to school, but since most people live in rural areas, it is difficult for women to get any education. I grew up in a home where my parents wanted me to be well educated. Because of this, I was able to finish my education in the 12th grade before I got married. This helped my marriage because my husband respects me".

Role expectations in Asmara are often influenced by modernity. Since the majority of girls who live in Asmara pursue an education, their expectations as wives are slightly towards egalitarian relations, although it is strongly influenced by cultural norms. A 32-year-old Eritrean immigrant woman living in Norway for nine years explained this further:

"Being a woman in Asmara is different because you get an education. Although you have more responsibility for the family, you also work outside the home. I do not think it is the same as a woman in the lowlands".

Education impacts women's status in the household. Women earn respect from their spouses when they have attained some level of education and this shapes their role expectations.

4.4. Early marriage in Eritrea

Women in Eritrea are socialized into early marriages and are taught to be responsible, obedient, and adhere to the leading roles played by the men (Smith, 2001). When married, a wife is expected to perform domestic roles as well as bearing and raising children (ibid.).

Based on interviews with Eritrean immigrants in Bergen, early marriage is a well-known practice among families in the lowlands. Among the Tigrinya's, early marriage is not a typical practice, and girls often marry when they are at least 16 years old because of education. A 28-year-old Eritrean woman living in Norway for 14 years had this to say: "Early marriage is a common practice for most tribes in Eritrea and women often marry at age 13. In the cities, girls marry from 18 years old because they have to go to the service".

Early marriages involve cultural norms influencing women. A common ideology was shared by a 26-year-old Eritrean woman who has been in Norway for six years: "If you are a woman and you get married early and have children, then you are a good wife". Girls are expected to conform to these norms for them to be valued in society. Often, girls have no choice in marriage decisions which are organized by their families to meet societal expectations. A 30-year-old Eritrean woman living in Norway for 10 years discussed this situation clearly:

"If you look at the places were early marriages occur, they usually involve families that come together to improve their status within the society. The girl is given to the man's family as an economic symbol and her value is determined by her bride price. The girl is valued as much as her family asked for her hand in marriage".

A notable aspect of early marriages among the Tigrinya is that, although girls are given into marriage at young ages, they do not fulfill the role expectations as a wife. This was explained by a 48-year-old Eritrean married man living in Norway for 29 years in the statement below:

"When a girl marries early, she is not a wife then, rather it is an arrangement between both families so that when she turns 18 years old, she joins the husband. Sometimes, the girl will move to the husband's family home when they marry, but there are no sexual relations between them until they are both ready to start a family. However, in certain instances, some girls experience sexual abuse by the husband's family".

This is a common occurrence according to the above explanation. Although none of my respondents experienced this, they were familiar with this practice among the highlanders.

4.5. Eritrean national compulsory service

Eritrean national service influences social practices and gender relations. According to Campbell (2005: 391), the Eritrean compulsory service began during the "end of the liberation struggle, where the government introduced a mandatory service requirement for all the youth aged 18 and above". The service requires that young men and women work together during the first six months of military training, and then work for another year on government reconstruction projects (ibid). The main aim was to achieve socio-economic change by

improving gender relations within the Eritrean society for the young generations of women and men—young men and women were forced to work together towards gender equality (Connell, 1999). However, the program experienced some resistance among the Muslim population and other lowland areas which were particularly strong against forcing women to enroll in the service (Campbell, 2005). Consequently, young girls as a way of avoiding this mandatory service were forced into early marriages or become pregnant (ibid.).

In my interviews with Eritrean immigrants in Bergen, the Eritrean national service is often mentioned as shaping early marriages and women's role performance outside the home. Three female respondents shared their experience concerning the compulsory service which led to their families forcing them into marriage and their role expectations as wives. In the marriage, women face extreme pressure to meet role expectations of a wife and mother by the man's family and the society at large. A 28-year-old Eritrean woman living in Norway for six years describes her experience of an early marriage to avoid the national compulsory service:

"My family did not want me to go to the military service so I got married when I was 18 years old. My husband was still in the military service because the men must be in the service. His salary from the military was '100 Nafa' which was not enough to even pay house rent. I got help from my family abroad who supported me financially and also my family in Eritrea helped with taking care of the children".

Further, an Eritrean immigrant woman implied that women who join the service, face extreme sexual and emotional abuse from male officers in the service. The 29-year-old woman who has been living in Norway for 10 years describes this situation:

"There is a lot of sexual abuse like raping of women in the service and this is very common. After the service, the government will decide what work you will do and send you where they want you to work. You can study as a doctor or an accountant and they will tell you to work as a teacher. If you are lucky, they will keep you in Asmara or send you somewhere far from the city. If you get married, you are safe".

Likewise, a 31-year-old Eritrean immigrant woman describes women's disadvantaged position in Eritrean society due to societal structures. She points out that when a woman finishes school and is not married, she has to enroll in the service. According to her: "To avoid the military service, you can marry and become a wife and that is the best opportunity for you. There are no open rules for gender discrimination but it is from societal norms".

Women's role expectations are a result of cultural norms that creates differences in their social practices. Therefore, women possess a subordinated position to men in the Eritrean society which structures their gender relations and denies them the right to gender equality in social interactions and social practices.

CHAPTER 5: GENDER, FAMILY REUNIFICATION AND THE INTEGRATION PROCESS AMONG ERITREAN IMMIGRANTS IN NORWAY

This chapter aims to extend the understanding of Eritrean immigrants' role expectations and gender relations by providing and discussing the findings related to the given research questions: How does gender ideologies in the Norwegian society influence gender roles and relations among Eritrean immigrants?, and What role do other social identities that intersect with gender like race, ethnicity, national background, class, religion and age play in Eritrean immigrant women's integration in the society?

First of all, I describe how Eritrean immigrants in the study location of Bergen organize their gender relations and how gender ideologies influence their social practices both in the home and outside the home. Moreover, I explore how Eritrean immigrant women's integration process is shaped by gender differences involving racial, ethnic, religious, and national background, class, and age, which reconfigures their gendered patterns of behavior.

According to Espiritu (1999: 628) through the process of migration and settlement, "patriarchal relations undergo continual negotiation as women and men rebuild their lives in the new country". Thus, what is of significance in examining the process of immigration is exploring the reconfiguration of gender relations (ibid.). More so, principally in the process of how gender hierarchies are reshaped is the change in the relative position of women and men's status in the host society (Espiritu, 1999). For instance, Eritrean women's active involvement in the labour market and economic contribution to the household domain may lead to transformations in their gender relations.

In the following section, I provide an illustrative case of an Eritrean immigrant household in Bergen (see Case 1).

Case 1: Haman and Sarai's household

Haman and Sarai are an Eritrean couple living in Bergen, for 10 years and have two children—boys age eight and five. Haman is 38 years-old and Sarai is 35 years-old and they have been married for 12 years. Haman works as a social therapist and Sarai is a health worker. The interview took place at their home in Bergen.

According to Haman, they view their marital relations as different from most Eritrean couples in Norway and this is because they knew each other quite well before they got married which was their decision. The man argued that he does not assume the typical breadwinner role because he understands the gender norms in Norway for the household. His wife had paid work in Eritrea and it was never an issue for the household. However, he had hoped that when they had a much better household income, he would prefer her to work part-time, so she has some leisure time and can also spend more time with the children. The woman confirmed that they understand the different sets of norms in Norway and so they had to adopt the Norwegian gender norms.

In the home, both agreed that the division of labour was a negotiation between them. Based on their experience in Norway, they know of several Eritrean couples that perform a typical division of domestic labour where the man and woman both have paid work but the woman is still responsible for domestic roles. The man mentions that when they return from work, he goes to the kitchen and prepares food while the woman spends time with the kids. Even for most Eritrean households in Norway, the man in the kitchen is culturally inappropriate. However, he does not see it as culturally inappropriate, rather he has to support the wife in the home.

Concerning integration into the Norwegian society, the woman responded that she struggled in the beginning but with time it became easier for her. Her first problem with integration was the language and it was extremely difficult for her. Secondly, she could not find paid work because she lacked Norwegian social networks. She had to frequently apply for paid work online until she was successful later on. Getting into the labour market was very different from what she experienced. In her comparison, she suggests that in Eritrea, the work culture was completely different and so it was difficult for her to fit in. The man, on the other hand, had a different experience in integration suggesting that it was not as difficult. This is because he has an open personality and knew that if he wanted to have a normal life he had to be well integrated into Norwegian society. He sought help from Norwegian contacts during the integration process and he was lucky. Through Norwegian social networks, he gained paid work. For him, the integration process for Eritreans is very difficult and most Eritreans face challenges. He experiences personal challenges particularly at work where he feels his ideas and contribution are not much appreciated.

Child upbringing was an important part of the interview discussion. The woman mentions that they decided to raise their children as Christians. However, they wanted them to have a normal life so they sent their children to public schools instead of Christian private schools. Their practice of child upbringing involves taking the positive aspects of the Eritrean and Norwegian culture and combining them. Since the children were born in Norway, they provide them the rights as Norwegian children for them to be well-integrated. Also, they both perform child caring roles and take decisions together concerning child welfare and how to properly discipline the children. Choices they make in this case involve how to effectively raise their children to be well-integrated in Norwegian society with cultural values as good Christians. They are extremely particular about socializing their children as Christians and raise them religiously in the Norwegian society context.

This case involves an Eritrean household that has undergone a renegotiation of gender roles in the home enabling both the husband and wife to equally participate in domestic roles and childcare. Moreover, both the wife and husband are actively involved in paid work where they both contribute to the household income. Thus, they have been able to reconfigure their gender relations by adapting to the Norwegian society's gender norms, reshaping power relations in the household towards a more egalitarian relation.

5.1. Eritrean immigrants' entry and pre-integration process in Norwegian society

Immigrants' entry into a new society considers a process generally precipitated by economic, political, and social factors over which the migrants have little or no control (Pessar, 1984). At the point of entry of migrants' in any host society, their first contact involves institutional structures operating in the host society and these aspects create the definitions and notions of their essential social action enabling them to address the demands which they confront (ibid.).

In my interviews, Eritrean immigrants like all immigrant individuals are confronted with Norwegian society socially, politically, and economically. All Eritrean immigrants interviewed in the study expressed their complete surprise about how culturally different the Norwegian society was compared to Eritrea. This they mostly referred to as "cultural shocks". Cultural shocks in this study illustrate the change in society as a result of the migration process and the apprehensive feeling of an unfamiliar way of life between both social environments (Macionis and Gerber, 2010). Elaborating on cultural shocks, a 48-year-old Eritrean male who has been living in Norway for 29 years describes his experience of arriving in Norway, and being placed in Oslo for the introductory program. On his first occasion at Oslo city, a young woman offered him a cigarette and this was his first cultural shock. He had never seen such an occurrence of women out in public areas smoking.

Moreover, he noted that the Eritrean society was traditionally religious such that, even when boys started smoking, they were labeled as street-kids because it was culturally inappropriate. Recounting his second cultural shock experience; at a summer party in Oslo, he saw girls bathe in the sun without clothes. According to him: "Because Eritrea is very religious, the society has different gender norms for how boys and girls should behave". Thus, seeing the different gender norms for girls in Norway was "culturally shocking" to him.

Another male informant described how gender norms in Norwegian society are different from that of Eritrea. The 32-year old who has been living in Norway for 11 years explained:

"We come from a society with strong religious values and a lot of differences between women and men, so it is hard for us to understand how things work here and most of us find it culturally shocking. We see that women have the same rights as men and so it is very difficult for the family".

However, Eritrean immigrant women who were interviewed described the cultural shocks differently. Eritrean women in the sample group described how the different set of gender norms in Norwegian society has a positive effect—emphasizing on the egalitarian norms, which was surprising to them. Among some explanations given, Eritrean women implied that

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women in Norway make their own choices and this was clearly understood as a form of empowerment—women have equal opportunities in paid work under the same conditions as men and also have a right to agency. In an interview with a 24-year-old Eritrean married woman who has been living in Norway for eight years she disclosed that once she got to Norway, she realized that she has the same rights and opportunities as her husband, and realizing women's relative position to men in the society is impressive. According to her: "Here, I have the rights and the Norwegian society has made me more of a woman". In the respondent's statement, she perceives that Norwegian society gives her more power to make her own choices due to the egalitarian norms supporting gender equality.

Contrarily, a 30-year-old Eritrean immigrant woman living in Norway for 10 years described both positive and negative aspects of gender norms in the Norwegian society which she implied are good for women but bad for marital relations based on her religious beliefs:

"In Norway, people are more educated to know that the man and woman are equal. Although there are struggles with it, it is very different to be a woman in Norway than Eritrea. However, as a Christian, I disagree with some of the gender norms in Norwegian society because the woman cannot be above the man in the family".

From the above, it can be interpreted that Eritrean immigrants' process of integration begins with their awareness of cultural distinctions regarding gender norms in Norwegian society. Men and women discover the distinctions in gender relations through social practices where women and men perform similar roles. Thus, while women value these gender norms as it supports their improved status in the society, men perceive the distinct gender norms as challenging their patriarchal ideologies in the household. To interpret the gender dimensions that these different gender norms present to Eritrean immigrants' gender relations, the following section discusses Eritrean immigrants' gender relations in the private sphere.

5.2. Decision-making process in the private sphere

According to Hearn et al (2002: 398-9) "investigating the complex dynamics surrounding negotiations between women and men in relationships regarding housework, parenting, and emotional work is very gratifying as it will be relevant to see whether and how women and men form coalitions through their process of reunification and how gender constellations at 'work' and in the 'private' sphere influence each other". From my interview discussions with Eritrean immigrants in Bergen, I discovered that Eritrean women's integration starts in the private sphere concerning how decision making in the household is organized. Decision

making is a fundamental aspect of gender relations especially concerning how couples make choices regarding domestic and parental labour. What is relevant for analysis, in this case, is how decisions concerning domestic roles shape gender relations in the household affecting women's participation outside the home towards their integration into the Norwegian society.

Eritrean immigrant women and men who were interviewed had different experiences for decision making in the household. The main areas of decision making in the household discussed are in housework, child upbringing, and allocation of household income. Decision making for Eritrean immigrants' is often influenced by their migration patterns. Since men are generally the primary migrant, they control the decision-making process for the household and often take choices concerning where the family will settle, and also the distribution of household income for household expenditures. When women reunite with their spouse, they do not experience the different gender norms in the initial stages of their settlement. However, once they get through the introductory program, they become more influenced by gender norms in Norwegian society, and this impacts on men's decision making power in the household. This involves some women developing consciousness for egalitarian norms and demanding their rights to equal decision making in the household.

Concerning this situation, a 38-year-old Eritrean male living in Norway for 12 years explained that decision making in his home changed once his wife had become more involved in the Norwegian integration process. As a man, he always regarded himself as "head" of the family and had the responsibility of making decisions for the family. He made choices concerning the household expenditures in Norway likewise as he did in Eritrea. Within three years of his wife's settlement in Norway, she wanted to be involved in deciding the household income and expenditures. At first, he disagreed with her and told her: "Because you have started school here in Norway you are trying to be like a Norwegian woman". He mentioned that he and his wife went through some misunderstandings because of this situation, and eventually he had to agree and involve her in the decision-making process.

From my interview with Eritrean immigrants, men are usually unwilling to change their adherence to patriarchal gender ideologies in the household even after they understand the Norwegian gender norms. Although a few men make changes to their gender ideologies by adopting the Norwegian society gender norms and renegotiating gender roles in the household to some extent, most men, however, maintain their patriarchal ideologies. A 24-year-old Eritrean woman who is married and living in Norway for eight years explained how she

demanded from her husband to participate in decision making in the household:

"Even though we have lived in Norway for several years, I see that my husband struggles with the different gender norms. He always takes decisions for the family without asking what I think about it. Even when I started studying at the University in Bergen, he decided for us to move to Oslo because he wants to live there. How does he expect me to move to Oslo when I have not completed my study? I did not want him to think he can continue to decide everything because things are different here in Norway. He still wants to dominate but I do not see that happening anymore, because I will not allow it. We have to discuss, sit down and talk. In Eritrea, it will be impossible to challenge him and I will just have to do everything he says".

In interviews with eight Eritrean immigrant women concerning decisions about housework, five women described that they perform most of the domestic and parental labour. For these women, they continue to be responsible for the housework because of gender ideologies from Eritrea which shapes their role expectations as wives. A 26-year-old Eritrean married woman living in Norway for six years explains this:

"I do not see a problem with doing most of the housework because as a woman I am responsible for taking care of my family. I try to do everything at home because that is how I was raised and it is part of my culture—that a good wife takes care of the home. Since I want to have a good marriage I do that but not exactly like in Eritrea".

In the respondent's interpretation of not doing things exactly like in Eritrea, she explained that because she understood the gender norms in Norway, her role expectations in the Norwegian society differs from Eritrea and performing roles as prescribed in Eritrea would reinforce patriarchal relations giving the husband more power in the household. Yet, based on her existing gender norms, she still performs household labour to emulate a good wife.

Also, in an interview with a 32-year-old Eritrean woman who is married and living in Norway for nine years, she suggested that although her husband understands the Norwegian gender norms, he does not participate in domestic roles:

"In the home, my husband still expects me to do all the housework even though we both have paid work. The cultural 'thing' still follows him because whenever he cleans he thinks it will make me happy since he is not responsible for that. He likes to cook so that is good, but apart from that, everything else is a problem".

On the other hand, Eritrean immigrant men in the sample did not perceive their lack of participation in domestic labour as problematic, and for instance, in an interview, an Eritrean man argued that it is difficult for men to accept the different gender norms. The 43-year-old respondent who is married and living in Norway for 14 years made this argument:

"The reason why it is hard for us Eritrean men to help in the home is because of a lot of things like our culture and religion. At home, we do not help much because we work hard outside the home and expect to be taken care

of by our wives. Even though the woman also has paid work, she is still responsible for the home and taking care of the children. I can say that this is not just for Eritrean men but men in general. I cook and help with housework sometimes because of the Norwegian gender norms. When you see a lot of Eritrean men who decide everything and try to dominate at home it is because of our culture and religion. It plays a big role".

In my interpretation of the informant's argument, most Eritrean men in the sample retain their gender ideologies concerning the division of labour and gender roles. In the description, the respondent refers to both culturally prescribed gender ideologies as well as religious norms justifying their perceived patriarchal relations in women and men's position in the household. Among a few Eritrean immigrant households, some men try to adapt to the different gender norms by performing domestic roles like cooking to gain appreciation from their wives but are unwilling to negotiate gender roles in the household based on male hegemonic ideals.

5.2.1. Child upbringing and decision making

Child upbringing for immigrant families is a fundamental aspect of integration. Decision making concerning child care occurs in the domestic sphere which involves implications for the family's well-being, parenting, and family integration (Pugh, 2009). From interviews with Eritrean immigrants in Bergen, the decision towards child upbringing was compelling as it illustrated variations in Eritrean immigrant households' negotiation of gender roles.

Firstly, Eritrean women recognized that child upbringing in Norway is different compared to child upbringing in Eritrea. This because women have control over their reproductive choices and gender norms in Norwegian society protect against gender discrimination. Moreover, Eritrean immigrant women who have children in Norway described their reproductive choices as a negotiation with their spouse. The women used words such as 'we' and 'us' when discussing their family reproduction regarding the number of children. Women without children also made similar suggestions regarding decisions on having children.

From the interviews, decision making involving Eritrean immigrants' family reproduction in the sample involves negotiations between the woman and man in the household. Based on gender norms regarding child upbringing in Norwegian society, Eritrean immigrants' experience differences in child upbringing due to national laws regulating child welfare by the Norwegian Child Welfare services ('Barnevernet'). Noting the distinct norms involved in child upbringing in Norway, even Eritrean households without children express uncertainties about how they will properly raise their children according to the Norwegian institutional norms

when the time comes. This was explained by a 30-year –old Eritrean married woman hoping to have children soon and living in Norway for six years:

"I worry about how I will raise my children in Norway because there is a lot of interaction between the Barnevernet and the parents having to do with the culture, religion, and language. We have our way of raising children and it causes a lot of collision between us and Barnevernet. We know that our children will grow up with two cultures, so it can affect them".

For Eritrean families with children, they confirmed that decision making concerning child upbringing should involve both the woman and man, having similar responsibilities in the process. Gender norms in Norwegian society regarding parenting suggests that both parents actively participate in child upbringing. A 48-year-old male who is married with three children and living in Norway for 29 years described his household decision-making process:

"When it comes to deciding for my children, I do it together with my wife. This is because the children are not mine alone and my wife also has a say. I do not decide everything, rather we discuss what is best for them. Also because we have a shared family income, I have to do it with her as my second manager".

Most Eritrean households interviewed suggested that they adopt Eritrean norms regarding child upbringing. This is vital for them because of the importance of teaching Eritrean cultural values to their children, but they are also aware of negative aspects like harsh child discipline. A 29-year-old male respondent with two children born in Norway had this to say:

"In Eritrea, the way we discipline our children can be physical but in the Norwegian society, if you do that the child can report you to the Barnevernet and the parents will lose the children. Also, it is challenging for families who had children in Eritrea before they moved to Norway where cultural differences come in conflict with child upbringing from the Eritrean society. When children join their parents in Norway, they learn from other children and also see how their parents treat them, which can bring about some challenges for the family".

In discussions about children's welfare, Eritrean immigrant women explained that they performed most of the parental labour and that the men supported only when they are obligated to. Women often performed the bulk of child-caring roles and took ample time away from other activities including paid work. As this case is revealed, a 31-year-old female respondent who is married with two children living in Bergen described that she took time off from her education to care for her children while her husband continued his education. They did not discuss the division of childcare so she had to assume responsibility for performing the bulk of childcare roles. Her husband only helped minimally.

In interviews with Eritrean immigrant households, when the family receives child welfare support from the Norwegian government, it is allocated to the women and some men often use

this against the women to avoid participating in child caring roles. In an interview with a 30-year-old Eritrean woman who is married with two children, she mentions that because she is the beneficiary of child support from the state, her husband avoids performing child caring roles and would often say: "Since the child welfare money comes to you, it is your job". He insists that she is responsible for childcare since she gains from the child welfare benefits. In this case, the man challenges gender norms concerning parental labour as a result of social policies regularizing child welfare to the mother which legitimizes women's parental labour.

Notably, an aspect of child upbringing that implied an equal decision-making process is the child socialization process. Eritrean immigrant women and men strongly agreed that they wanted their children to have good Christian values. They confirmed that even though they raise their children as part of the Norwegian society, they also teach them Christian values from Eritrea. For them, their children needed to have a Christian upbringing. A 32-year-old married Eritrean man with two children illustrated this argument:

"There are a lot of good sides to raising children in Eritrea. You learn to love God and put family first which is what matters most. So for my children, I combine both the good sides of child upbringing in Norway and Eritrea. I see how Norwegians raise their kids and I have taken the good aspects and combined them to make it my own. So for my wife and me, we have a unique way of raising our children using the two different cultures".

Both women and men in the sample agreed that the decision to raise children, teaching them both cultures is an agreement between them and that it is extremely relevant to ensure that their children grow up as Norwegian citizens, but also they know about their origin. This was explained by a 28-year-old Eritrean woman who is married and has a daughter, suggesting that she and her husband decided that they follow the Norwegian norms and add some religious values. She teaches her daughter the good values of being an Eritrean woman such as hardworking, respectful, and responsible, also making her aware of gender inequality towards women adding that: "As a woman, it is safer to be in Norway". Thus, they combine it with Norwegian values like gender equality, good education, and independence so that their daughter appreciates being a Norwegian with all the good things the society provides.

5.3. Decision-making process in the public sphere

"Migrant women's participation in the labour market hinges on the social, political, and economic contexts in which obligations are negotiated and organized, which affects the power balance in the household and on the sharing of the tasks of social reproduction" (Hardill, 2002:

21). Migrants experience numerous challenges in gaining access to the labour markets (Datta et al., 2007). For Eritrean immigrants, their entry and participation in the labour market rely on their success in the introductory program which determines the opportunities available to them. All Eritrean immigrants in the sample had completed the introductory program and most of them were employed. Also, a few Eritreans in the sample were enrolled in various educational programs for better job prospects.

Significantly, Eritrean immigrant women indicated that having full-time employment involved negotiating household responsibilities with their spouse. Three of the eight Eritrean married women mentioned that having full time paid work affected their husbands' position in the household, because they were no longer dependent on him for income, reshaping gender relations in the home. Some men were supportive of their wives' paid work because they contributed to the household income even though it challenged their position in the home. These men often performed domestic roles, improving the domestic division of labour. Some men helped their spouses gain paid work so they contribute to the household income.

A problematic aspect of Eritrean women's participation outside the home is the issue of transparency by the man. In my interviews with Eritrean women, I discovered that in certain instances although women were contributing economically to the household income, their husbands were not open about their income and it led to conflicts in the home. For these women, the men still wanted to have control over the household income and expenditures. However, due to egalitarian norms in Norway encouraging shared breadwinning in the home, women demanded more rights to be involved in decisions concerning the household income.

Related to the problem of transparency is the financial support that Eritrean immigrants provide to their families back in Eritrea. In my interviews with Eritrean immigrants in Bergen, they all mentioned that they often send money to their family members in Eritrea, because of the economic conditions present in Eritrea. Both Eritrean women and men were responsible for financially supporting their families in Eritrea. Since the family has a shared household income, they also have to make decisions together concerning remittances. Therefore, when the men are not transparent about their wages, it affects the woman's family specifically, due to the situation that the man will usually prioritize his family at the expense of the woman's family in Eritrea. This was a problematic situation for Eritrean immigrant women who discussed this in the interviews but did not elaborate on this practice as I hoped.

The subsequent sections will highlight the negotiation process in decision making outside the

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home for Eritrean immigrants concerning their integration process in terms of language skills, labour market participation, and developing social networks.

5.3.1. Language

Language is a vital aspect of immigrant's inclusion and it determines their participation in paid work and developing social networks. In the study, Norwegian is the official language spoken by every citizen in both formal and informal settings. Eritrean immigrants in the interviews described that their first stage of integration into Norwegian society is through language education, and it was an important aspect of integrating into Norwegian society. All Eritrean immigrants interviewed in the sample were proficient in Norwegian, however Eritrean immigrant men were more proficient than Eritrean immigrant women.

Eritrean immigrants' understood that learning the language will improve their integration and access to opportunities in Norway. For them, the language was their 'entry point' into Norwegian society. A 26-year-old Eritrean woman living in Norway for six years describes her process of learning Norwegian:

"You cannot become part of the society if you do not speak Norwegian. At least you should understand it or else you cannot know a lot of important things in society. My husband helped me learn the language because he could speak it better than me. We practiced every day and sometimes we only spoke Norwegian at home".

In the interviews with Eritrean immigrants, they were aware of the importance of learning Norwegian for successful integration. This was explained in an interview by a 32-year-old Eritrean man who has been living in Norway for 11 years and works as an accountant:

"Everyone speaks English here in Norway, but Norwegian is the identity. Without this, you cannot integrate into society. You do not have to work economically to be integrated, you are paid to go and learn the language, which is a good system and it provides a lot of opportunities for us to make good use of".

Based on the respondent argument, Eritrean immigrants in the sample are aware of the importance of Norwegian in their inclusion into the society and associate language with a sense of identity. Both women and men were very conscious of the role language play in their process of becoming integrated into Norwegian society.

Further, Eritrean immigrant women and men in the interviews discussed several challenges involving learning the language. In describing his experience of learning Norwegian, a 48-year-old Eritrean man who is a counselor and living in Norway for 29 years had this to say:

"Going to language school, my teacher told us that it is not enough that you learn the language in school but you need to practice by speaking with Norwegians. So whenever I took the bus, I told myself that I should try and talk to the people sitting by me when the bus was full. On the bus, I will introduce myself and tell them I am in a language school and my teacher said we should practice with Norwegians but I do not know any Norwegians. Most of them were willing to practice with me. This helped me learn Norwegian very quickly. I knew it was going to be difficult to find Norwegians to talk to, but it did not stop me from trying and it worked."

In my interviews with Eritrean immigrants, I observed that Eritreans' usually speak Tigrinya at home and with other Eritreans. Even when they learn to speak Norwegian, they seldom use it to communicate with each other unless during interactions with Norwegians outside the home. This affects their language skills and sometimes their fluency in Norwegian.

In certain instances, Eritrean immigrants' children born in Norway only speak Norwegian and are not fluent in Tigrinya. This influences some households to speak Norwegian even in the home. From the study findings, learning Norwegian for Eritrean immigrants is crucial to their participation outside the home. Women and men have a similar sense of the importance of learning Norwegian for their integration. Both women and men have similar practices and outcomes in Norwegian and in some cases, men support women's language skills.

5.3.2. Labour market participation

Eritrean immigrant women's experiences in the labour market involve both gender differences from their household gender relations and social differences such as requisite skills, language difficulties, and lack of social networks affecting their participation in paid work. As Knocke (1999) indicates, women encounter difficulties that are part of their status as immigrants, while at the same time being confronted with the social subordination of women and the gender segregation in the labour market.

In Norwegian society, paid work for women is targeted towards their economic independence and promoting gender equality by ensuring that both women and men especially of immigrant background gain paid-work. In the interview discussions with Eritrean immigrant women, several arguments were made regarding their participation in paid work. Eritrean women's participation in paid work involves the negotiation of household labour with their spouses. According to women in the sample, they often find it challenging to be in paid work when their spouse does not equally share roles in domestic and parental labour. They usually have to combine domestic and parental labour with paid work having minimum support from their

spouse. Thus, most Eritrean immigrant women are in part-time paid work. I illustrate this situation from an interview discussion with a 28-year-old Eritrean immigrant woman who is married and works as a health assistant at a hospital in Bergen: "We have two children and my husband has 100 percent work so he does not help much with the children. Since I do most of the work at home I can only work 50 percent".

Also, I discovered from two Eritrean married women who on separate interviews, explained in similar arguments that their participation in paid work is influenced by family choices due to family re-orientation. A 32-year-old Eritrean woman who is married and works part-time as a secretary in a clinic explained that when the family is reunited, there is more pressure especially on the wife to bear children. She revealed her family situation as an example:

"Before we moved to Norway, we did not have children so it was important for us to start a family soon. This affected my integration because I was studying to become a nurse and it became difficult with more responsibilities with caring for the children so it affected my education. I was only able to gain part-time work".

Eritrean women expressed different experiences concerning their entry into the labour market. Three married women in the sample mentioned that they were able to gain full-time paid work since their spouses participated in domestic labour where they shared housework and child caring roles. Also, eight Eritrean immigrant women interviewed, suggested that they faced several challenges in gaining paid work. These women experienced difficulties in entering the labour market due to several factors like competition with the local population for similar paid work opportunities and inexperience in the labour market. According to a 35- year-old Eritrean woman who is married with two children and works as a health caregiver:

"Even though there is a very good system in Norway for us to work, it takes a lot of time for us to speak Norwegian, and have good contacts with Norwegians. I had to find work on my own and it was very difficult. When I started working, I saw that the work environment was different and it was difficult in the beginning".

In interviews with six Eritrean immigrant women in the sample, they explained that due to their low educational background and lack of work experience, they find it difficult to gain qualified paid work. For these women, they are usually involved in lower-paid work such as secretary, teaching assistant, waitresses, and paid caregivers which they can gain once they can speak Norwegian. Their paid work is usually part-time and allows them to combine it with domestic roles. Hence, it supports their participation in paid work and meeting household duties. Three women in the sample explained that they decided to gain educational qualifications for career jobs and so they were mostly unemployed because of their education. They were involved in various seasonal paid work when they have no school obligations.

Eritrean immigrant men in the study access paid work opportunities relatively easier than women, and are often involved in full-time work. All eight men interviewed in the sample had educational degrees from Eritrea. Five of the interviewed men pursued an education in Norway for paid-work and three men who were also pursuing an education in Norway were in part-time work. Eritrean men are employed in health work, accounting, administration, translators, and counseling. Men explained that although their wives had paid-work and contributed to the household income, they still assumed more responsibility for the household income and some men would have several part-time jobs. These men had no specific job options and took available work while they pursue higher education for better-paid work.

In the interview discussions, Eritrean men had similar challenges as women like competition with the local population for paid work. Even though they possess requisite skills for the required jobs, they often do not have relevant work experience in Norway. Thus, they also struggled to access better-paid work opportunities. However, most of the men overcome this by working lower jobs to gain qualifications for better-paid work opportunities. In certain instances, some Eritrean men changed their education to gain paid work. This was explained by a 48-year old Eritrean man employed as a nurse. After earning his degree in radiology in Norway, he was not able to access employment in radiology so he decided to study nursing. Once he completed the nursing degree he gained employment as a nurse.

In interview discussions with Eritrean men, they confirmed that it is an advantage for the household if the woman also has paid work because it improved the household income. However, during an interview with a 43-year-old Eritrean man who works as an interpreter in Bergen, he suggested that although it helps to have a shared contribution of the household income, it causes the woman to expect the man to participate more in domestic and child-caring labour. This is because the woman feels they both make a similar contribution to the household income and have paid work. He added that it often can lead to marital conflicts if they do not come to a reasonable understanding of this. The respondent suggests that the woman has gained enough power due to her participation in the labour market.

5.3.3. Developing social networks

"Social networks for migrants are considered to be their sources of social capital, providing a counter-balance to the disadvantages they may encounter in the host society" (Ryan, 2011: 707). Thus, examining the nature of social networks of migrants in a new society involves the

relationships between the migrant actors, their relative social location and, their available and realizable resources (ibid.). According to interviews with Eritrean immigrants in Bergen, their social networks usually feature ethnic and familial relations and includes other Eritreans and Ethiopian immigrants with a similar ethnic and religious background. These social networks are introduced to them through their immediate and extended familial relations in Norway.

Because Eritreans are deeply religious, they join Christian groups in Norway and develop social networks with other Eritrean immigrants and non-immigrants' who are Christian. In an interview with a 32-year-old Eritrean woman who is a member of the Pentecostal church in Bergen, after immigrating to Norway in 2012, her access to social networks was because of her religious background. Her husband introduced her to the church and the family formed social networks in the church. The church helped her gain paid work. She tried developing Norwegian networks, but it was challenging because she was not very fluent in Norwegian.

Likewise, in an interview with a 30-year-old Eritrean woman who also joined the Pentecostal church in Bergen when she migrated to Norway in 2009, she explained that Eritreans do not fully integrate into the Norwegian society because they are slow at forming social networks. "Eritreans are not very good at interacting with people except with other Eritreans because they are skeptical about people with different backgrounds". The women are slower in developing social networks than men because they are not used to having much freedom outside the home due to cultural norms in the Eritrean society. In interviews and observations of Eritrean immigrants, women often struggle with forming social networks than men because of gender ideologies shaping women's and men's position and social roles. For instance, in an interview with a 31-year-old married woman, who works as a health caregiver, she explained that she struggled with interacting and socializing with her co-workers because she felt she did not fit in and was not very proficient in Norwegian: "Even though I speak Norwegian, I do not speak it very well. This made it difficult to interact with others and make friends. Now I am more confident when interacting with Norwegians, but not perfect".

Interview discussions with Eritrean immigrant men generally described their positive experiences in developing social networks with the local population. Nevertheless, men also suggested going through similar experiences as women in socializing with Norwegians. Eritrean immigrant men in interviews explained that they were determined to develop social networks with Norwegians and become integrated into society. Although men had several challenges particularly with the language, they tried to improve their proficiency by interacting

with Norwegians in public. A 33-year-old Eritrean man living in Norway for 10 years describes how he developed his social network:

"Social networks in Norwegian society helps you to know how the 'system' works. The Norwegian society has many unwritten laws that you have to be Norwegian to know. Most of us who live here do not know until we have interactions with the Norwegians and especially the language. It takes time to become part of society but it is very important. It was not easy for me to develop contacts with Norwegians but I kept trying. When I made some Norwegian friends it was good for me and I even introduced my wife to some of them".

Based on the interviews with Eritrean men in the sample, they took advantage of their work environment by interacting with their co-workers who are mostly Norwegian. Eritrean men are aware of the advantages of interacting with the local population in the illustration by the male interviewee. In some instances, the men are faced with several barriers like cultural differences and lack of effective communication and this slows down their socialization with Norwegians. Eritrean men mentioned that they can interact a lot better with other immigrants' mostly Eritrean and Ethiopian, as well as other African and some Middle Eastern immigrants. However, Eritrean men rely mostly on their ethnic and familial relations as their main social networks. Additionally, Eritrean men's social interactions are maintained through religious engagements. A 32-year-old Eritrean man living in Norway for 12 years suggests that Eritrean social networks are a key barrier to their integration into the Norwegian society:

"Most of us Eritreans are interacting with each other and it stops our integration. We get paid work through our Eritrean networks and this represents most of us. I tried to develop social networks with Norwegians and it helped me. Eritreans are skeptical and we do not like to learn new ways of doing things. We are conservative".

In this assumption, Eritrean immigrants' social networking is influenced by their cultural and religious identity. Both men and women rely on their ethnic and familial relations which shapes their social practices. Through their social interactions, they are not motivated to develop networks with Norwegians which impacts on their inclusion into the Norwegian society. Due to strong social interactions with their ethnic relations in these networks, gender ideologies are reinforced affecting Eritrean household's reconfiguration of gender relations.

5.4. Experiencing intersectionality in integration

Eritrean immigrants' integration highlights several circumstances where their various social identities shape their integration process. Interview discussions concerning Eritrean immigrants' social differences involved their age, education, religion, culture, ethnicity, and

national identity. Eritrean immigrants' integration differences are related to gender which involves age and educational background. Women often experienced more barriers due to their age and educational qualification in the integration process. In learning the language, age is a major difference between women and men's language proficiency. Three women, who arrived in Norway between 15 and 16 years of age, confirmed that they were able to learn the language much easier and integrate quicker. However, Eritrean women who arrived when they were 25 years and above, suggested that they were not able to learn Norwegian as effective because, at their age, they had to focus more on family expectations as wives.

Illustrating the issue of age in affecting language skills, a 28-year-old Eritrean woman who arrived in Norway when she was 15 years old confirmed this: "It was easier to learn Norwegian and make social networks quicker because I met many young people to talk to". On the other hand, a 34-year-old Eritrean woman who arrived in Norway at age 25 explained that she was unable to learn Norwegian well due to her marital obligations and family duties. "I am not very good at speaking Norwegian since I did not have enough time to learn, because my husband wanted us to have children as soon as possible after we reunited".

Migration patterns of men in the sample indicated that they moved to Norway relatively younger, often at 18 years-old. During this period, they complete the introductory program and often pursue higher education in Norway to gain access to better-paid work. Also, men in the sample who migrated to Norway from the age of 25 had educational degrees and work experience from Eritrea. An example is a 38-year-old married male who migrated to Norway at age 28 and had an education and work experience in catering from Eritrea. After completing the introductory program, he gained paid work as a chef.

Eritrean women in interviews referred to religion as organizing their lives which shaped their role expectations and gender relations in the home and outside the home. In an interview with a 30-year-old Eritrean woman living in Norway for 10 years, she suggested that the church is a key aspect of Eritreans' social interactions. She added that women are more influenced by religious norms and are discriminated against by the men when they do not adhere".

Within religious engagements, women and men have distinct roles in these events with men often leading these activities. As suggested by a 28- year-old woman who is a member of the Eritrean Church in Bergen: "In the church, men are in charge of leading social events and women are responsible for taking care of the children and organizing the place". Through their performance of different roles in the church, women and men continue to perform gender-

differentiated roles that maintain patriarchal relations in the household. Men's power in the household is legitimized through religious norms that subordinate women position in the household and externally.

Eritreans' in interviews discussed issues of racial inequality in their integration. A 26-year-old Eritrean woman, who moved to Norway with her family at the age of 15, had this to say:

"During my introductory program, I was living in a small town and so everyone knew each other. When I told people I was from Eritrea, they asked me if I have ever seen this or that before because everyone sees Africa as a very poor place. Also because I am black, people will always look at me differently and some will not even talk to me. That was very uncomfortable and I was not happy living there".

A 38-year-old Eritrean man who works as a social therapist described issues of racial discrimination at his workplace and had this to say:

"Whenever I make a contribution at work, no one takes it seriously, instead of when someone else mentions a similar idea then they use it. This has been going on for some time and it makes me feel like I am not a part of them and my ideas are not important. They will only ask for my help when they are not able to fix the problem".

For some Eritreans' in the sample, the media continually portrays a bad image of immigrant societies such as Eritrea, which leads to immigrants' discrimination. A 48-year-old Eritrean man who is a religious counselor argued that Eritrean immigrants' experiences of racial, religious, and ethnic discrimination do not only emerge from the local population but also largely from other Eritreans. In his argument, Eritreans' discriminate against each other based on their religious and ethnic identities. Eritrean immigrants' experiences of racial inequality from some Norwegians are due to a lack of knowledge about the Eritrean culture. He suggests that: "The Norwegian society is very good and so we will have to change how the society thinks of immigrants".

In summary, Eritrean immigrants experience gender differences related to their social identities which affect how they integrate. In the study, Eritrean immigrant women face challenges in the integration process as a result of gender differences that characterizes their social identities and shapes their integration process in Norway. Not only do immigrant women go through gender segregation in the home but also outside the home in their participation in religious engagements and social networks, which reinforces their subordination in both domains.

CHAPTER 6: EMPOWERMENT AND/OR DEPENDENCY? A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF ERITREAN IMMIGRANTS GENDER RELATIONS IN NORWAY

The previous chapter explored how Eritrean immigrant families, once reunited in Norway, organize their gender relations following the different gender norms in Norwegian society. Gender was key in decision-making processes especially involving division of labour in childcare, domestic work, and household income. Also, possibilities for Eritrean immigrant women to actively participate outside the home hinges on the renegotiation of roles and the reconfiguration of gender ideologies regarding gender relations.

In this chapter, I discuss the empirical findings using the theoretical framework introduced in chapter two of the thesis. The idea is to interpret how gender conceptually explains the differential experiences of women and men from migration and how they negotiate and adapt their gender relations and social practices within a different set of gender norms in a new country. Further, I describe the choices that women make in their lives to deal with challenges arising from gender inequalities to achieve empowerment.

6.1. Gendered dimensions in family reunification and integration

From the description of gender relations in the Eritrean society context, women and men in Eritrea are differentiated based on cultural norms. Gender relations in the Eritrean society capture the basis of gender as a symbolic construction, conceptualized by Moore (1988). In the Eritrean society, women are culturally defined as "caregivers" and "homemakers" and are expected to perform roles that involve the nurturing needs of the family thus confining them to the domestic sphere. Men, on the other hand, are symbolized as head of the household, assuming the provider role and associated with the public domain, hence given the status as "breadwinner". Ultimately, gender relations within the Eritrean society is shaped according to the categorization of women and men's gender roles, placing them at different positions in the society and structuring their separation of social practices beginning from childhood, suggesting the role of socialization in producing gender difference as theorized by Wood and Eagly (2002). This describes the Eritrean society as patriarchal, with hierarchical gender relations established in the interactions between men and women influencing their everyday lives (Dixon and Jones, 2006). Based on the study findings, men more than women have an advantage in social processes both in the private and public sphere. In these domains, gender roles are maintained through the division of labour and gender relations are shaped by

differential access to resources leading to gender inequality in society (Connell, 2000).

Individuals in the household conform to societal gender norms with boys and men having the freedom to engage in activities outside the home compared to girls and women. Yet, gender roles in the home differ in the extent to which women and men perform tasks and meet their role expectations, highlighting that gender involves a diversity of roles between women and men based on their social differences as theorized by Marchbank and Letherby (2014).

According to the study findings, women in Eritrea play a substantial role in the economic domain with women in some households participating in activities outside the home like paid work and education but are mainly responsible for the household. Also, women's position in the home is defined in terms of household resources with a significant number of households in Asmara designating domestic roles like cleaning, cooking, and care work to house-helps changing women's role in managing the domestic work. This enables women's participation in paid work but still expected to adhere to role expectations as a 'homemaker'. Women in Eritrea are subjected to gender ideologies that maintain gender difference and affect the possibilities for them to make choices towards their empowerment.

Gender ideologies influence women's position in marriage which restricts their agency through duties like childbearing and family arrangement. This reflects Lorber's (1994) gender construct, where the gendered performance of roles restricts women's agency through its continued practice which structures gender relations. Based on the study findings, I discuss some main aspects of Eritrean immigrants' gender relations in the subsequent section.

6.2. Gender in the household division of labour

An integral aspect of Eritrean immigrants' organization of gender relations underlines their household division of labour. In interviews with Eritrean immigrants in Bergen, although Eritrean households undergo some form of changes with regards to domestic division of labour after living in Norway for some years, gender roles still follow normative ideals from the Eritrean society. Their role expectations follow a 'gendered cultural script' from masculine and feminine ideals about appropriate behaviors assumed for women and men which corresponds with the gender role theory by Marchbank and Letherby (2014). In the Norwegian society, Eritrean women still assume the responsibility for the household labour and perform the majority of the domestic roles even though gender norms in the Norwegian society supports

the equal division of tasks in the home as an ideal of egalitarian relations. Men continue to benefit from patriarchal ideologies and women are expected to conform to these hierarchical gender norms to maintain existing gender relations in the home. Further, women's adherence to traditional gender roles in the household reflects religious norms concerning women's role expectations. In this sense, division of household labour for most Eritrean immigrants correlates with Orloff's (1996) perspective, which suggests that gender relations between women and men involve a combination of constitutive practices such as gender roles which result in gender inequalities that creates their different power structures.

Gender division of labour in Eritrean households illustrates a dynamic process with some households organizing this practice due to their social interactions in the Norwegian society, enabling them to negotiate and transform gender norms, suggesting that gender is an ever-changing process as pointed out by Marchbank and Letherby (2014). Eritreans in the study represent a heterogeneous group in terms of how they organize their domestic labour. Based on egalitarian norms in Norwegian society, both women and men can renegotiate gender roles towards slightly more egalitarian relations, where gender relations are reconfigured (Marchbank and Letherby, 2014). Also, gender norms in Norway support women's agency outside the home by encouraging men to participate in domestic labour. Eritrean women and men in the study are influenced by gender ideologies in the Norwegian society, leading to egalitarian patterns reflecting the "doing gender" and gender performance concept by West and Zimmerman (1987) and Marchbank and Letherby (2014) respectively.

Further, cultural ideals from their home country remain crucial to Eritrean immigrants' gender relations which characterizes their division of household labour. In this way, cultural norms shape the process of "doing gender" as women and men practice gender-typical behavior across social roles (Risman, 2018). Childcare for Eritrean households illustrates this conceptualization where women are more involved in childcare than men due to cultural expectations prescribing this practice. Even when men perform childcare roles, they do it in adherence to gender norms in the Norwegian society concerning parental labour—both parents are expected to equally perform parental labour as a way of promoting the egalitarian family model. Most men in the sample often demonstrate hegemonic masculinity and perceive this practice as a feminine role due to the role expectations from Eritrea. This exemplifies the gender as a 'process' theory by Lorber (1994), that through the everyday performance of roles as a part of social relations women and men structure differences in their social roles which creates and maintains their gender order. Likewise, Donaldson and Howson (2009) note that migrant men often arrive in

a new society with their typical gender ideology concerning masculinity and gender relations. For these men, performing equal child caring roles will mean that their masculinity is subordinated which affects their position and patriarchal relations. Eritrean men who perform childcare avoid revealing their performance of caring roles to other Eritrean men as a way to maintain their masculine gender ideal.

Eritrean men in the study who are positive towards gender norms in the Norwegian society participate in domestic labour and the performance of child-caring roles. They adapt to the social changes in gender norms as they perceive it as beneficial to their position in the household due to their understanding of the role expectations in Norwegian society. This category of men exhibits "flexible masculinity", which according to Chua and Fujino (1999: 408) "expresses a type of non-hegemonic masculinity where men often embrace certain caring characteristics and are willing to perform domestic tasks not because they are effeminate". Rather, they perceive these caring attributes as part of their power and masculinity suggesting a more flexible construction of masculinity. This practice suggests gender relations as a dynamic process and shaped by social practices in the case of certain Eritrean immigrants' performance of child-caring roles (Marchbank and Letherby, 2014).

On the other hand, Eritrean women regardless of gender norms in Norwegian society perform more child caring roles due to their existing gender ideologies shaping this gendered practice. This illustrates how their performance of roles as part of their gender relations impacts on the enactment of specific tasks such as caring as theorized by Lorber (1994). These women enact their role expectations as primary caregivers, irrespective of the distinct norms guiding role expectations in child care. Their compliance with these gender ideologies reinforces their femininity in compliance with patriarchy, thus impacting on their position in the home and supporting men's masculinity as discussed by Connell (2000). Also, women's performance of caring roles can be seen to comply with Norwegian gender norms of "good mothering" considering that women are principally responsible for child welfare. Highlighting Jackson (2012), women's identities as wives and mothers in the household domain dominates understandings of patriarchy and gender subordination.

6.3. Decision making and empowerment

Sassen (2006) suggests that women gain increased control over decision making in the domestic sphere when they gain access to wage employment and greater participation in the

public sphere. Decision making for Eritrean immigrants' in the study involves a gendered practice that represents power relations between women and men in the household shaping their rights and ability to make choices and control resources. Based on gender norms in Norwegian society, women are encouraged to actively participate in the public domain and have equal access to resources as men to encourage female autonomy and economic independence. Thus, Eritrean immigrant women have the agency to participate in education and paid work thereby challenging patriarchal relations and improving their position in the home allowing them to gain power in decision making. Understanding this process of women gaining power in decision making reflects the concept of *'power to'* by Rowlands (1997), implying that women are able to generate power through various engagements involving their agency which enables them to resist or maneuver against domination.

The interviewed Eritrean immigrants' decision-making process occurring in the home concerning domestic labour and child care, influences women's participation outside the home. Women's agency often relies on their household relations where changes to the division of labour emerge from their participation outside the home where they gain power, enabling them to transform their position in the decision-making process. Through women's paid work involvement, they can make contributions to the household income, and this improves their status in the home and decision making power (Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991).

Based on the study findings, Eritrean men are often the first to migrate to Norway and this gives them power over the decision-making process in the household even after they have integrated into the Norwegian society. Given this case, when women are reunited with their spouse, they often do not have power in decision making concerning household resources and repeat their existing gender relations. Again, this condition highlights Rowlands (1997) empowerment theory, that men's patriarchal gender ideologies influence women's participation in the decision-making process in the household. However, as societal and institutional norms support immigrant women's access to resources like education and paid work, they adopt gender ideologies regarding egalitarian relations in the Norwegian society and can gain the power to challenge men's position in decision-making processes.

Even though men's position in decision making is challenged, they are able to adopt strategies to reassert their power in the household. In the study, women's familial relations aid their integration process by supporting their ability to gain language skills, social networks, and paid-work opportunities, corresponding with Spencer and Charsley's (2016) integration theory.

Thus, women's ability to gain power in the decision-making process often requires support from their spouse in the integration process, which shapes gender relations supporting the man's status. This relates to Hondagneu-Sotelo and Cranford's (2006) premise of the contradictions in women's power status that follows migration. Even when women often gain status relative to men in some aspects, men generally benefit from their status as men (ibid.). Thus, Eritrean men are empowered through the practice of aiding their spouse in her integration process which increases their power in decision making in the household.

Differences in decision-making processes among Eritrean immigrant households in the study could also be explained in light of choices and constraints faced by women in the family using Hakim's (2000) lifestyle preference theory. In the study, three of the sampled Eritrean women already had some power in decision making in the household because of their educational background and work experience from Eritrea. This aided their continuation of role negotiations with their spouse in Norway. These women were able to make use of available resources in Norway like pursuing higher education due to relevant educational background from Eritrea. This improved their access to paid work, advancing their gender relations towards the Norwegian gender model like in equal sharing of domestic and caring roles. This category of women is able to participate in full-time paid work enabling them to make contributions to the household income and shift towards a 'double breadwinning' household. Because the women were able to effectively utilize their agency, they gained much power in the household, allowing them to participate in decision making regarding household income, child care, and external decision making. Thus, Eritrean women's agency in terms of resource access exemplifies Hakim's (2000) theory of 'work-centered women'.

A significant number of Eritrean immigrant women in the sample experienced constraints due to gender differences from Eritrea which affected their empowerment in Norwegian society. These women were unable to trigger role negotiation with their spouses. Although generally Eritrean women in the study are able to achieve integration in certain aspects like language skills and paid work, for most women, their level of integration was not sufficient to gain power relative to their spouse and transform decision making in the household. In terms of paid-work, eight of the 11 sampled Eritrean women were in part-time paid work because of role expectations in the household. Hence, they were constrained by a lack of choice and had to couple household obligations with paid work. Due to women's paid work status, they were unable to match the household income contribution of their spouses who are either in fully paid work or working several jobs giving them more control over the household expenditures. This

affects their position in decision making because they are incapable of challenging men's 'breadwinner' status improving his position in decision making. This circumstance describes these immigrant women as 'adaptive women' by Hakim (2000): women adapting to their position in part-time work to make time for family responsibilities.

Eritrean women's empowerment in the household is facilitated by their participation outside the home where they gain access to resources such as income from paid work and social networks suggesting the empowerment theory by Kabeer (1999). Although most Eritrean women have similar opportunities in the Norwegian society, they face different outcomes in decision making both from the private and public sphere, which relates to factors such as their educational background, work experience, number of children, and access to paid work. Referring to the eight sampled women working part-time, their possibility to achieve higher levels of empowerment is constrained by factors such as domestic roles, education, child care, and patriarchal gender ideologies which relate to other studies by McRae (2003a, 2003b).

6.4. Gender reconfiguration of patriarchal relations in Eritrean immigrant households

Migrant individuals undergo changes in their gender relations through migration which weakens their typical gender ideologies and diminishes patriarchal relations from hegemonic masculine ideals pertaining to gender roles (Jackson, 2012). Eritrean men and women are both confronted with challenges to their typical gender ideologies from distinct gender norms between Eritrea and Norway. From their entry process, both men and women are exposed to different sets of norms regarding role expectations in the Norwegian society which prescribes gender relations in the household. As part of their integration, they are expected to adapt to the egalitarian norms towards egalitarian relations. Eritrean women initiate renegotiation of gender roles in the household to enhance their integration. Thus, "migrant families' process of settlement is seen as complementary and functional, in effecting the greater purpose of social cohesion" (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Cranford, 2006: 107).

In the study, Eritrean women are positive towards gender norms in Norwegian society. This is because women perceive the gender norms to be beneficial to their development such as participation in education and paid work enabling them to gain power relative to their spouse in gender relations. Gender norms in Norwegian society influence patriarchal relations in the household. Eritrean wives often contribute to breadwinning and some Eritrean husbands likewise support by participating in domestic labour. Also, Eritrean women often take decisions

concerning the social reproduction of the family (see Locke et al, 2013) especially on the number of children to bear. Some Eritrean men support women gain paid work which leads to a 'double breadwinning household'. This situation describes men's role as integral to shaping the conditions for achieving equality and women's empowerment (see Esping-Andersen, 2000: 70). Men who assist their wives in role renegotiation and gaining paid work achieve empowerment as it leads to double income and better household living conditions.

Although Eritrean men in the study perform child care, most of the men struggle in this role and leave most of the duties to their wives. In explaining this, Coltrane (1996) suggests that even though egalitarian norms influence men to share caring roles with women, men still resist the performance of caring roles as a result of typical gender ideologies. Due to mainstream gender norms in Norway, immigrant men are encouraged to perform child care roles to promote the Norwegian egalitarian model of 'good father', and 'good parenting'.

Five of the eight men in this study performed less parental labour where their share of child care roles was unevenly distributed to meet their household and paid work obligations. While only three men performed more child care roles, sharing similar performance of parental labour as women, all eight Eritrean men were generally involved in parental labour contrary to their performance of caring roles in Eritrea. Some men participated more actively in child care, so women could participate in social activities outside the home. As men continually perform caring roles it gradually leads to changes in gender ideologies regarding care work.

6.5. Gender relations in the welfare state

Gender and welfare draw on the role of welfare states in the structuring of gender relations and roles in the household (Laperrière and Orloff, 2018). In this study, welfare interacts with gender in diverse ways essentially aiding the reconfiguration of gender norms for Eritrean immigrant households and also reinforcing their gender inequality. Welfare in Norwegian society is considered a crucial part of the immigrants' household. Welfare in the form of material resources like childcare benefits and individual social security supplements immigrants' household income. Also, the state implements social policies that support and benefit marginalized groups such as immigrant women to improve their status in society through paid work, enabling them to make choices towards economic independence. Social provisions and policies related to welfare for migrant women help them to gain the power to challenge the unequal division of labour in the private and public sphere (Kabeer, 1999).

Eritrean women through social provisions and social policies in Norway gain access to resources and social services. Through these social provisions, women can gain paid work and achieve some economic independence which translates to their empowerment. This allows them to initiate changes to patriarchal relations in the household especially, in decision making, revealing the significance of women's access to resources for their empowerment as pointed out by Kabeer (1999). Access to welfare benefits supplements Eritrean household income which often decreases women's dependence on the man's income. This affects men's position in the household leading to a reconfiguration of immigrants' gender relations.

Also, through the regulation of social policies by the Norwegian state, Eritrean men in the study support women's participation in paid work by performing domestic roles and care work, although not equally. Thus, Eritrean women can improve their position in the household enabling them to make choices for their development and through this, they gain bargaining power in the household. The regulation of welfare policies influences the renegotiation of gender roles around 'care work' and paid work, which allows migrant men and women to share more of the housework (Coltrane, 2000).

In certain instances, due to welfare policies, some Eritrean men in the sample resist sharing domestic labour with women especially involving child care. This correlates with Laperrière and Orloff's (2018) argument, that through the process of social policies concerning welfare, the gendered division of labour is reinforced through various mechanisms. In the study, women are the main beneficiary of child care benefits from the state. Few men use this condition to challenge the sharing of care work, insisting on child care as women's duty based on their interpretation of the allocation of child welfare benefits by the state. Men by resisting the sharing of care work reinforce their dominance in the household which prompts women's subordination. This situation supports similar studies by Hondagneu-Sotelo and Cranford (2006), that men reassert control over women in new ways post-migration. Indeed, women's access to welfare benefits reflects a practice where gender relations are reshaped in diverse ways through the state's involvement. The findings above imply that gender constitutes contested power relations as indicated by Hondagneu-Sotelo and Cranford (2006).

6.6. Negotiating access: gendered variations in access to resources

In this study, gender differences characterize Eritrean women and men's access to material and non-material resources. Eritrean men in the sample have considerable access to resources than

women due to hierarchical gender relations. Also, Eritrean women's access to resources like paid work and social networks involves negotiations of gender roles in the home, creating the distinctions in their gender relations.

Reflecting on Lorber's (1994) analysis of gender as a social process, access to resources for Eritreans' captures how their social practices shape and are shaped by their enactment of gender roles. Women's access to resources is influenced by their social interactions outside the home, where they learn new ways to enact roles based on the Norwegian's society gender norms. Thus, Eritreans' socialization process in the Norwegian society structures their access to resources where their interactions with either the local Norwegian population or familial and transnational Eritrean relations influence their resource access. In this section, I discuss Eritrean immigrants' access to resources in two main aspects: social networks and paid work.

6.6.1. Access to resources through social networks

Access to resources for Eritrean immigrants' especially women in the sample are influenced by their social networks which usually involve familial relations. Eritrean immigrants' in the study are associated with other immigrants of the same cultural and ethnic background and this underlies their social networks. Thus, the choices and opportunities that they pursue in Norwegian society are gained through their Eritrean social networks. Since most Eritrean immigrant women in the study expressed their reliance on Eritrean social networks for access to paid work opportunities, they are influenced by the same patterns of access to information about paid work that exists in these social networks. Moreover, social interactions in Eritrean immigrants' social networks reflect their typical gender ideologies about role expectations for women and men, which reproduces their existing gender relations in the household.

Regarding Eritrean immigrants' resource access through social networks, men usually have a greater advantage as a result of their vast social interactions which includes Norwegians. This improves their resource access since they can gain more knowledge and information about paid work and become more socially inclusive. This gives them considerable power over their spouses and shapes their household gender relations. Because men control social network arrangements outside the home, it shapes their position in the household allowing them to maintain patriarchal gender ideologies regarding role expectations and thus affecting women's position in the household. Eritrean immigrants' access to resources through social networks describes how women experience social inequalities and gender differences through gender

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ideologies that structure these interactions. Given this, Eritrean women's integration process is influenced by gender as pointed out by Anthias and Pajnic (2014).

Additionally, since women perform more housework and child care roles compared to men, it limits their access to resources and they become dependent on men's developed social networks. Eritreans' resource access through social networks complements research findings in Ridgeway and Smith- Lovin (2006: 257): which indicates that "female networks are more densely interconnected while men networks are more extensive and less tightly linked". This relates to similar studies by Badwi et al (2018) on Ghanaian migrants' social networks and their labour market integration in Bergen. They revealed that a person's position in a social network matters in their access to resources that can create competitive advantages (ibid.).

 Eritrean households through religious activities socialize and develop their social networks where religious beliefs shape their gender relations. As noted by McMorris and Glass (2018) women are often more influenced by religious institutions and involved in religious identities than men and are more obligated by religious beliefs culturally. In the sample, women are expected to adhere to religious beliefs that promote male authority and leadership in the home. This advances men's patriarchal relations allowing them to control household resources and shaping their dominant position in social practices within their social networks.

6.6.2. Accessing paid work opportunities

Eritrean immigrants' access to paid work opportunities is characterized by gender differences in women and men's paid work involvement. Women's access is structured by their existing gender ideologies concerning role expectations that affect their agency in the Norwegian society as well as patriarchal relations which maintains an unequal division of labour through their performance of gender roles. Eritrean women and men in their process of adapting to gender norms in the Norwegian society undertake renegotiations of gender roles where in most cases their gender relations are influenced by egalitarian norms transforming the power relations in the household. In their access to paid work opportunities, women are constrained by activities in the household around childcare which affects their paid work involvement. This situation reflects England and Kilbourne's argument (1990 in Bielby, 2006: 394) that "women are disadvantaged from a traditional household division of labour where they possess less skills that are valued in the market for paid work compared to their spouse". Men often dominate women through the unequal division of domestic labour, which benefits their access to paid

work. Thus, Eritrean women are disadvantaged in their access to paid work opportunities, which hinders their empowerment process and eliminating gender inequality.

Moreover, due to the competitive nature of the Norwegian labour market, Eritrean women's access to paid work is affected by their success in gaining language skills and Norwegian social networks. In the study, Eritrean men were more successful in these aspects largely because they have spent more time in Norway and wielding considerable power in gender relations, improving their agency in Norwegian society. However, Eritrean women usually had to adopt strategies to gain some level of power to initiate renegotiations of gender roles to advance their agency outside the home. This illustrates the process of adaptation as an effect of migration where women begin their empowerment process through gaining resources both in the material and non-material sense like gaining skills, knowledge, and abilities; increased awareness of rights, and access to employment (Kabeer, 1999; 2005).

With this in mind, some women in the study gained access to paid-work by adopting the Norwegian gender norms which they used as a 'bargaining tool' to incite reconfiguration of gender relations. Eritrean women in the study explained that once they understood the gender norms in Norwegian society, they used that to challenge men's patriarchal relations and decision-making process. Through their participation in introductory programs and social interactions with other non-Eritrean women, they developed a sense of empowerment and gained encouragement to insist on their rights to make choices and take opportunities for access to paid work. For instance, some women were associated with women's groups in the church where they gained support from both Eritrean and non-Eritrean women and learned more about women's rights in Norway. This provided them the setting where they make informed choices and decisions. This supports Rowlands (1997) empowerment regarding 'power with' and 'collective' process, which recognizes a group effort in tackling problems together. In effect, Eritrean women gained some level of power which allowed them to challenge gender inequality in the home through their ability to demand their rights to make choices outside the home. As shown in this case, women reassert their own gender identities in the face of social and economic change (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Cranford, 2006: 122).

6.7. Gender inequality in Eritrean immigrants' social inclusion process

According to Robinson (2018: 77) "gender involves an ongoing process which is both challenged and reinforced through individual interactions and social exchanges with gendered

effects of inequalities generated through social institutions situated in the private and public sphere". This section analyses the dimensions of social inequality from Eritrean immigrants' participation outside the home and how it impacts women's social inclusion process. The intersection of gender with Eritrean women's social identities like race, class, age, and ethnicity structures their gender inequality which impacts their achieving empowerment and engenders their dependency in gender relations. Women experience a disadvantaged position both from a domestic division of labour and gender inequality in their participation outside the home embodying race, ethnicity, religion, and age. Women's social inclusion involves the interactions between their domestic and public practices where gender intersects with other systems of oppression essentially creating their systematic differences in both social spheres.

In the study, Eritrean immigrant women and men go through different experiences regarding their inclusion in the Norwegian society. Because of patriarchal relations underlying social interactions in the Eritrean society, women are disadvantaged in gender relations which denies them equal participation in social practices and decision making. This has a considerable impact on their empowerment process. Women face disproportionate access to resources because they have to overcome certain barriers involving the impact of their age in developing language skills for access to education and paid work opportunities. Also, women with insufficient educational and paid work experience are less successful in gaining better- paid work opportunities as compared to women with prior educational and work experience.

Although Eritrean women and men experience racial inequality in the labour market, Eritrean women are more affected by these experiences because of their inability to adapt to these situations. Women avoided racial discrimination by mainly interacting with familial and ethnic relations, while men were able to develop social networks beyond their familial networks to include social interactions with the local Norwegian population despite experiencing racial inequality. This improved men's position in Norwegian society and impacted women's integration process, inevitably structuring their social differentiation.

6.8. Summary

Gender encompasses Eritreans' migration and integration process with differences involving how women and men try to renegotiate gender roles to adapt to the Norwegian society mainstream norms both in the private and public sphere. Indeed, through migration, gender ideologies are transferred from the Eritrean society that impacts on women's process of

ideologies empowerment in Norwegian society. Based on the analysis of gender in Eritrean immigrant households', I present a simplified model that encapsulates the gendered processes that define their integration process and shape their gender relations in Norway.

Figure 4. Contextual framework illustrating gendered factors and processes influencing immigrant household's integration
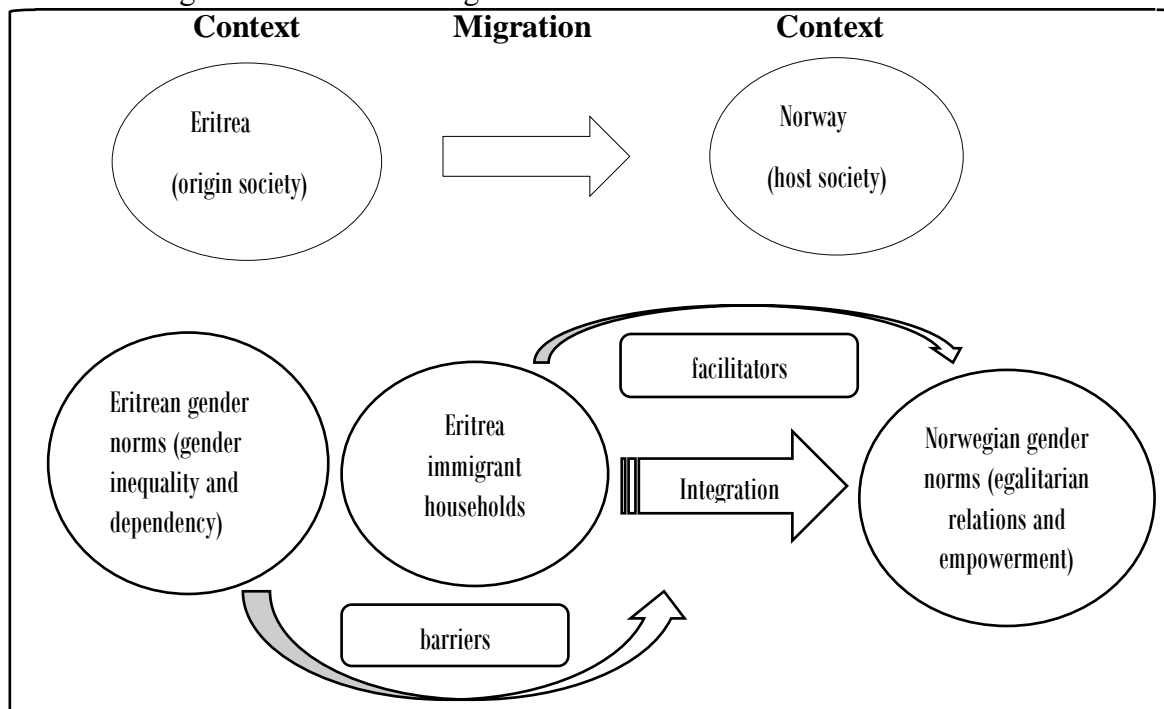
Source: Field data, 2019

Figure 4 illustrates the systematic process defining Eritrean immigrant households' gender relations in Norway. Using the integration concept as described in chapter1 (see figure 3), the illustration above conceptualizes the immigration and integration process based on the context of gender between the origin and host society. Regarding immigrant households', gender relations involve an interaction between Eritrean gender norms and Norwegian gender norms. The process of change in Eritrean households' gender roles and gender relations involves facilitators within the integration process. Facilitators in Eritrean women's integration are previous educational background and paid work experience, welfare policies, husbands' positive attitudes towards gender role renegotiation, Norwegian social networks, and full-time paid work. These facilitators lead to women's empowerment and egalitarian relations. On the other hand, barriers in Eritrean women's integration are age group, patriarchal gender ideologies, religious attitudes in gender relations, language difficulties, social network arrangements, part-time paid work, and allocation of child welfare benefits.

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CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis has been to investigate the gender dimensions in the family reunification and integration process of Eritrean immigrants in Bergen, specifically exploring how gender relations in Eritrean immigrant households are influenced once they have settled in the Norwegian society. Thus, gender is central in Eritrean families' migration pattern, the performance of domestic labour, decision-making processes, child upbringing, access to resources in terms of paid work and social networks as well as women's empowerment process. This thesis constitutes a theoretical framework of the gender concept in feminist theory constituting processes of migration, integration, welfare, and other analytical aspects of gender within the scope of the thesis. The methodology and methods used in the thesis to produce relevant data involve a qualitative research approach using ethnographic methods such as participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and secondary data. Applying these methods provided qualitative data aimed at addressing the research topic contextually.

As described in chapter 1.7, three sub research questions were formulated to investigate the gender dimensions in Eritrean immigrants' reunification and integration process. The main research question was "In what ways are gender relations in Eritrean immigrant households' influenced when they settle in the Norwegian society?". The three sub research questions were examined in chapters four, five, and six where the empirical findings related to these questions, and the main research question was addressed. In the following discussion, I provide a summary of the principal findings and concluding statements.

7.1. Principal findings

The central focus of this thesis has been on investigating the changes that occur in gender relations through the process of migration to a different society and how it impacts on immigrants' social practices. The study addressed how gender norms in a different society influence immigrants' gender roles and gender ideologies leading to a reconfiguration in their gender relations. To examine this process of change, it was relevant to understand the existing gender relations before migration through the research question: *"How does gender ideology in the home country Eritrea shape common role expectations for women and men?"*. In discussing this question, the analysis focused on the Eritrean society and how gender organizes the social, cultural, and economic practices of women and men thus defining their gender roles and shaping their social interactions. The Eritrean society is differentiated particularly by ethnic

and religious lines of stratification where these two aspects dominantly shape the gender ideologies thus defining role expectations between men and women. The study found that gender in Eritrea constitutes patriarchal relations with women and men been differentiated into roles. Thus, women generally perform domestic and caring roles while men are involved in economic roles as well as having leadership roles both in the private and public sphere. Also, women are customarily responsible for parental labour regarding child care. Typically, socialization of children structures the gender difference where girls from a young age are expected to take up domestic roles and are trained to perform household tasks such as cleaning and cooking. Boys, on the other hand, are accorded more freedom which allows them to participate outside the home and expected to pursue an education.

Although Eritrean women experience patriarchal relations, they gain some form of agency outside the home and can pursue an education and secure paid work which improves their position in the household. A feature of Eritrean households in Asmara is the presence of house helps. Since most Eritrean households in Asmara are well-positioned, they often have house helps who are young girls from the rural areas who migrate to the cities to pursue an education and gain paid work as housemaids to earn income. This practice is common among the highlanders such that it influences women's domestic roles. In this case, women are responsible for managing the performance of housework by the house helps, allowing them to perform activities outside the home. However, women who are involved in paid work are still responsible for the home and this maintains their position in the household.

In the Eritrean society, the gender difference is shaped by three key external factors. These are early marriage, education, and national compulsory service. As illustrated in Chapter four, common role expectation for women in Eritrea is shaped by gender ideologies concerning women's participation outside the home which involves social and political structures. In terms of early marriages, based on gender ideologies regarding societal norms, girls are expected to marry as early as 13 years old with gender stereotypes maintaining this practice. Moreover, they are required to perform roles as wives and mothers which structures their role expectations within the household and society. Education in the Eritrean society is gender- segregated with boys expected to pursue education to the highest level in the Eritrean education system. However, girls are not encouraged to have similar participation as boys but instead are expected to go into marriages. Additionally, the Eritrean national service influences women's role expectations as wives as a result of political structures that affect women's agency and produces their subordination through gender-based violence. Women as a way of avoiding

abuse from men in the compulsory service are forced into marriages which shapes their gender stratification within the Eritrean society. Ultimately, the Eritrean society constitutes hierarchical gender relations where men are advantaged based on gender ideologies that support their position both in the private and public sphere. This negatively affects women's agency and participation outside the home, shaping their gender inequality.

The second question: *"How does gender ideology in the Norwegian society influence gender roles and relations among Eritrean immigrants?"*, examines the reunification and integration process of Eritrean immigrants' and how gender norms in the Norwegian society influence Eritrean immigrant households' gender relations once they settle. In analyzing Eritreans immigrants' gender roles and gender relations in the Norwegian society, gender is central to these processes involving gender ideologies from Eritrea, gender norms in Norway, labour market participation, the welfare state, social networks, and immigrants' social differences. The study found out that Eritrean immigrants' gender relations in Norwegian society are influenced by egalitarian norms which impact on patriarchal relations, leading to some forms of reconfiguration in their gender relations. Eritrean immigrant women in Norway are met with egalitarian norms that improve their agency thus allowing them to make choices and take opportunities outside the home such as education and paid work. Through these practices, women are able to make contributions to household income which increases their power in the household towards decision making, translating as forms of empowerment.

However, Eritrean women in the study are faced with several barriers in their process of achieving empowerment from existing gender ideologies that reinforces their subordinated position in the household around domestic roles and parental labour. Gender norms in Norwegian society advance egalitarian relations involving equal sharing of domestic labour and caring roles between women and men. Although Eritrean men contribute to parental labour as a result of welfare policies regarding child care, women considerably perform more parental labour than men because of the allocation of child welfare benefits. Thus, the unequal division of domestic labour shapes women's participation outside the home which impacts their position in the household and hinders their process of achieving empowerment.

Also, the study discovered that Eritrean women's participation in paid work is shaped by the negotiation of domestic roles where differences exist among Eritrean women's paid work involvement. Among Eritrean immigrant households where gender roles are renegotiated, women are able to participate in full-time employment which influences changes to power

relations in the household and decision-making process leading to reconfiguration in gender relations. Again, social networks for Eritrean immigrants involve familial relations where gender ideologies are maintained through religious engagements characterizing their social interactions. Eritrean women often rely on their male counterpart's social networks to gain paid-work opportunities. Men can develop social networks with the local Norwegian population compared to women based on gender ideologies from Eritrea that improves their social interactions. Women through religious engagements with other women (Eritrean and non-Eritrean) gain assistance through collective action enabling their access to resources such as education and paid work opportunities thereby challenging men's position in the household.

Regarding the third question, *"What role do other social identities that intersect with gender such as class, race/ethnicity, age, national background, and religion play in Eritrean women's integration into the Norwegian society?"*. The study findings identify that gender intersects with various social differences that are part of Eritrean immigrants' identities. Eritrean immigrant women experience social differences in their process of social inclusion which is mostly due to gender ideologies that create their segregation in the Eritrean society. This affects their agency and access to resources in the Norwegian society. Eritrean women are affected by factors involving age group, and their racial, ethnic, national, and religious background which impacts their process of achieving social inclusion. Most women who reunite with their spouse in Norway are much older when they arrive in Norway than their husbands were upon arrival, and this impacts on their ability to gain proficiency in Norwegian. In this case, the study found that age plays a significant part in integration, where younger Eritrean immigrant women achieved higher levels of integration regarding proficiency in the Norwegian language, Norwegian social networks, and Norwegian higher education. Also, women due to racial discrimination in Norwegian society mostly interact with familial relations as their social networks which affect their social interactions with the local Norwegian population. Again, religion influences Eritrean women's integration, where their religious beliefs restrict their agency in the household and influence their domestic role performance reinforcing their gender inequality. Eritrean women are faced with several challenges to integration involving social differences from existing gender ideologies which structures their subordination in gender relations affecting their agency in Norwegian society.

7.2. Concluding statements

This thesis has provided a thorough understanding of gender within social relations based on how gender relations are influenced through the immigration and integration process. In response to the main research problem, gender relations involve a continued process of negotiations where women and men organize their social practices based on the context of societal structures. Thus, gender is dynamic involving various structures that produce distinctions in gender relations between women and men as suggested by Marchbank and Letherby, (2014). The study shows that gender relations for Eritrean immigrants' in the sample involve elements characterized as barriers and facilitators (see figure 4) which shapes the different outcomes of gender in the households and women's status.

Eritrean women as a result of migration achieve different levels of empowerment in social practices such as power in the household decision-making process, control of their agency in participation outside the home, but are also confronted with various societal structures in Norwegian society that reproduces their dependency. Reflecting on the processes of empowerment as suggested by Rowlands (1997) and Kabeer (1999, 2005) in the case of Eritrean immigrant women, empowerment can be theorized as diversity in patterns of social change. Women's power in gender relations is enabled through their actions and perceptions underlying their migration to a different social context which provides structures that encourage them to adopt strategies that transform the gendered patterns of behavior. Also, women's empowerment is influenced by men's gender status and their perceptions of power relations which realizes their role in the conditions towards change in their gender order.

This highlights the gender dimensions that are part of social processes where systems of power are inherent. As shown in the study, Eritrean immigrants become influenced by egalitarian ideals characterizing mainstream gender norms in Norwegian society but are faced with barriers from their actual gender structures. As revealed by Ridgeway (2011), persistent gender ideologies and institutionalized constraints often organize gender relations in ways that conflict with the personal values of an individual spouse. This thesis has provided an extensive knowledge of gender in the migration and integration process based on a context-specific examination of Eritrean immigrant households and how their gender relations are influenced through these processes. In summary, migration generates the processes of empowerment which is facilitated by conditions shaped by gender as well as recreating patterns of dependency through barriers in social processes of change.

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I: Interview guide for Eritrean immigrant women

1. When did you come to Norway?

2. Did you have any decision to join your spouse in Norway? If so, elaborate in terms of motivations that followed choices/decisions in movement to Norway.

3. Did issues arise before and during your movement? If so, clarify on the various issues that emerged and experiences from the issues

4. Do you have children?

5. Was/Were child (children) born in Norway or Eritrea? If born in Eritrea, did you migrate with child (Children)?

6. What are you views towards child upbringing?

7. How long have you been married?

8. How did you meet your spouse?

9. Did you have any form of choice/decision to be married to him? If not, what kind of issues did you experience during the period of marriage formation?

10. What is your religious background?

11. Does religion have any influence in your family life? If so elaborate

12. What roles did you perform as a wife in Eritrea? Did you have a say in decision making towards such roles?

13. Were you comfortable with the roles ascribed for a wife in Eritrea?

14. Did you have different role expectations as a woman before and after marriage in Eritrea? If so elaborate on how that shaped the latter role expectations as a wife.

15. Did you have preference for the roles that you would perform as a woman/and or a wife (include mother if she is)?

16. What opportunities are available as a woman and a wife in Eritrea?

17. Do you think your migration experience has shaped your marriage life in Norway?

18. What roles do you perform as a wife in Norway?

19. What can you do where i.e. in the house and out of the house?

20. Have current role expectations influenced your marriage life in Norway? If so, elaborate on such influences on marriage life.

21. Have you encountered problems based on role expectations of being a woman and wife in Norway? How do you address such problems in relation to marriage life?

22. How do you understand integration?

23. Have you had challenges in integration into the Norwegian society? If so, what has been the challenging aspects concerning integration that you have encountered.

24. Do you think the roles, responsibilities and duties as a woman and wife from Eritrea has influenced your integration process in Norway? If so, specify.

25. Can you recollect particular problems that can be linked to such roles and expectations of being a woman and wife from Eritrea?

26. Do you perceive any general problems concerning the integration process in Norway concerning you as an immigrant? If so, what are some of such problems?

27. How do you address this?

28. Do you think your identity, cultural background; religion has influenced your integration into the Norwegian society? If so elaborate.

II: Interview guide for Eritrean immigrant men

1. When did you come to Norway?

2. What do you consider as appropriate roles and behaviors for men and women in marriage?

3. Have these role beliefs influenced your marriage life since you came to Norway?

4. When do you reject typical role behaviors and norms in making decisions about family and marriage life in Norway?

5. Do you make complete decisions about your family and marriage life or do you take decisions together with your wife?

6. What are your views about child upbringing?

7. What is your religious background?

8. Does religion influence your family life? If so elaborate how it does.

9. How do you understand integration in relation to living in Norway?

10. Have you encountered any problem(s) in terms of integration in Norway? If so, what are the problem(s) that you have experienced during the integration process?

11. Do you think role beliefs and behavior as a man from Eritrea are related to these problem(s)? if so, specify

12. How do you address/overcome such problem(s)?

13. Have your experiences in the integration process influenced typical roles and behaviors in family life? If so, how have they shaped your current role performance and behavior?

III. Interview for Eritrean immigrant household

1. How long have you been married?

2. How did you get married? (Was it both your decision to marry each other, if not how was the marriage formed?).

3. What were the role expectations in the household in Eritrea? (Who did what in the home and outside the home?).

4. Did you have children in Eritrea? (if yes, how was child upbringing and child care organized?)

5. Who was the first to arrive in Norway? (Which year did you arrive and how old were you?).

6. What are the role expectations here in Norway? (Who takes decision for the family and how is decision making organized?).

7. Do you have children in Norway? (if yes, how many and how do you raise your children and what decisions are made concerning child care?).

8. What do you understand about integration?

9. What was your integration process experience?

   i. Learning the language
   ii. Developing social networks
   iii. Paid work

10. What are some of the experiences you have in integration into the Norwegian society (Positive and negative experiences?).

IV: Information Letter and consent form for research participants

Are you interested in taking part in the research project?

**Gender dimensions in the family reunification and integration process:
Eritrean immigrants in Norway**

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to seek insights about experiences as an immigrant wife from Eritrea living with an immigrant spouse in Norway. In this letter, we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project
To examine how wives of immigrant spouse are able to fully integrate into the Norwegian society through the family reunification process.

To obtain information about how marriage migration is experienced by women and how movement from a country with a different cultural background to Norway affects and shapes marriage life of immigrant families and their life course events.

Analyse how certain social practices and behaviours that are socially accepted in Eritrea are in contrast to accepted social practices and behaviours in Norway. How do individuals adapt to the new set of practices that presents a distinction from typical practices and behaviours in Eritrea?

The project aims to acquire knowledge about gender roles and expectations that exist in Eritrea and how normal social relations between man and woman are performed especially for particular roles and responsibilities for spouses in marriage.

It also seeks to address stereotypes that exist for immigrant groups based on what they are accustomed to in their home country and how it is perceived in Norway.

In terms of integration, how immigrant wives from Eritrea comprehend the integration process into Norwegian society looking into their participation in the labour market, social networks and common Norwegian societal practices.

This project is for the purpose of a Master thesis.

Who is responsible for the research project?
University of Bergen is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?
Sample selection is based on individual criteria of family reunification with an immigrant spouse from Eritrea living in Norway.

Must be living in Norway for at least three (3) years for the main reason that it provides more information into experiences within the integration process.

Integration process here looking at working in Norway, social contacts especially but not limited to local Norwegian population, language fluency and civic duties etc.

Individuals must be currently married as the thesis concerns marriage life and will involve in-depth understanding of marriage life of immigrant families from Eritrea in Norway.

The selection of Eritrea as an interest population is because of a large percentage of family reunification of African population in Norway from Eritrea.

For the purpose of the project, we require at least a number of ten (10) immigrant families of Eritrea household of which you are included.

Due to the nature of the study and challenge in reaching Eritrean households, we sought assistance from groups or institutions with ties to Eritrean families. Among them are religious bodies, social media contacts related to Eritrean groups, personal contacts with ties to Eritrean immigrant networks

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What does participation involve for you?
Participation is in the form of informal interviews with possibilities of follow up meeting and discussions. This will be necessary for obtaining concise representation of information and complete understanding of experiences in relation to marriage migration and integration process, and how it has shaped your current social practices.

Your information will be recorded electronically via sound using a voice recorder. I will also take notes in a booklet during the interview and moreover may take video recordings and photographs during interviews as part of documentation for the research if necessary.

The interview will take about an hour with the options for break and postponement based on your schedule.

The interview might include some questions related to your life and family and you have the right to decline to respond or answer questions that you deem uncomfortable. An example of such questions might be what your role is as a wife in your marriage.

I wish to also gain information from your spouse about marriage and family life in an interview. It will be information about current marital practices and role expectations for your marital life. I will record the interview and take notes.

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

N/B: Information given will not be shared with your spouse and will be anonymized in publications.

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

Access to your personal data will be available to me, my supervisor and the University as the main institution responsible for the project.

I will replace your name and contact details with a specific code. The list of names, contact details and assigned codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected information and it will be stored on a highly encrypted server provided by the University with access to me and the University of Bergen personnel.

As part of the research conditions, you will be kept anonymous in any publication that might be produced.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?
The project is scheduled to end on 31st May 2020. Personal data collected as part of research regulations will be discarded completely and items such as sound recordings, interview notes etc., will be destroyed without any trace.

Your rights
So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:
- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?
We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with University of Bergen, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?
If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:
- University of Bergen via Kelvin Awoonor-Williams by email Kelvin.Williams@student.uib.no. or by telephone 98002582.
- University of Bergen via Ragnhild Overå, Professor & Project Supervisor - Institutt for Geografi, by email ragnhid.overa@uib.no. or by telephone 55583090.
- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.
- Data Protection Officer, University of Bergen via Janecke Veim by email Janecke.Veim@uib.no.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader   Student (if applicable)
(Researcher/supervisor)

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project Gender in marriage migration.
Examining the family reunification and integration process of immigrant wives from Eritrea
in Norway and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- ☐ to participate in Interviews
- ☐ to participate in follow up interviews and informal discussions
- ☐ to participate in Group Interviews and discussions
- ☐ to allow my spouse provide information related to our marital life and familiar
     relations in individual interviews and discussions.

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx.
30th May 2020.

(Signed by participant, date)