

“Comment protéger la famille au complet”

Exploring the lived experience of North African immigrant
parents with Québec’s child welfare system: Understanding
the distress around Youth Protection involvement

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“Comment protéger la famille au complet” Exploring the lived experience of North African immigrant parents with Québec’s child welfare system: Understanding the distress around Youth Protection involvement

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Table of Contents

Supervisory committee.....	2
Table of contents.....	3
List of abbreviations	7
Abstract.....	8
Résumé.....	9
Acknowledgements.....	10
Dedications.....	11
Chapter I: Introduction	
1.1 Personal interest in the topic: Insider/Outsider status.....	12
1.2 Objectives and rationale of the research.....	13
1.3 Overview of the content.....	15
Chapter II: Literature Review	
2.1 Immigration and sociodemographics of the North African community in Québec. 16	
2.1.1 Immigration and sociopolitical climate in Québec.....	16
2.1.2 North African immigration to Québec.....	18
2.2 Youth protection involvement within the North African community.....	21
2.3 Barriers to youth protection involvement.....	22
2.3.1 Notion of parental authority.....	23
2.3.2 Family dynamics through immigration.....	25
2.3.3 Perceptions of social/public services.....	26
2.3.4 Prejudice and stereotypes.....	27
2.3.5 Ethnocentrism.....	28

2.4 Theoretical framework: Intersectionality and cultural humility in child welfare...	29
2.4.1 What's wrong with cultural competence?	29
2.4.2 Intersectionality in child welfare.....	31
2.4.3 Towards cultural humility in child welfare.....	32
Summary.....	34
Chapter III: Research Design	
3.1 Methodology.....	35
3.1.1 Phenomenology.....	35
3.1.2 Guiding questions.....	35
3.1.3 Participants.....	36
3.1.3.1 <i>Participants' profile</i>	36
3.1.3.2 <i>Recruitment</i>	37
3.1.4 Data collection.....	38
3.1.4.1 <i>Interviews</i>	38
3.1.5 Data analysis.....	40
3.1.6 Trustworthiness.....	41
3.1.6.1 <i>Bracketing</i>	41
3.1.6.2 <i>Reflexive journaling</i>	42
3.1.6.3 <i>Supervision</i>	42
3.1.7 Limitations.....	43
Summary.....	45
Chapter IV: Research findings.....	45
4.1 Themes.....	46

4.2 Child-protection from the parents’ perspective.....	47
4.2.1 Keeping the family together.....	48
4.2.2 Keeping parental authority.....	49
4.2.3 When corporal punishment is justified.....	50
4.2.4 Rights versus obligations.....	51
4.3 Parents’ perception of DYP services.....	52
4.3.1 Emotions affiliated with DYP’s meetings.....	52
4.3.2 Breaking family relationships.....	54
4.3.3 Cultural matching is not enough.....	55
4.3.4 Limited resources.....	57
4.3.5 It’s all about generating money.....	58
4.3.6 Prejudice and stereotypes towards the community.....	59
4.4 Help and services received: expectations versus reality.....	60
4.4.1 Execution of “tasks” versus child welfare.....	61
4.4.2 Family’s role in intervention plan.....	62
4.4.3 Protection needs versus educational needs.....	64
4.4.4 Insufficient family-centered approach.....	64
4.5 Partnerships with resources and bridging cultural distance.....	66
4.5.1 Prevention and raising-awareness for newly arrived immigrants....	67
4.5.2 Cultural matching with resources and foster families.....	68
4.5.3 Beyond the incident: Taking overall parenting experience into consideration.....	69
4.5.4 Empowerment of parents.....	70

Summary.....	71
---------------------	-----------

Chapter V: Discussion

5.1 Overview.....	72
5.2 Discussion of the major findings.....	73
5.3 Implications for research.....	77
5.4 Implications for social work practice.....	78
5.5 Personal reflection.....	79
5.6 Conclusion.....	81

Reference list.....	82
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Appendices.....	93
------------------------	-----------

APPENDIX A: Research Ethics Board Office-Certificate of Ethics.....	94
--	-----------

APPENDIX B: Recruitment advertisement.....	95
---	-----------

APPENDIX C: Participant's consent form.....	97
--	-----------

APPENDIX D: Interview outline.....	101
---	------------

APPENDIX E: French quotes.....	104
---------------------------------------	------------

List of tables

Table 4.1 Themes and subthemes.....	46
--	-----------

List of figures

Figure 3.1 Summary of research process.....	45
--	-----------

Figure 4.1 Child-protection from the parents' perspective subthemes.....	47
---	-----------

Figure 4.2 Parents' perception of DYP services subthemes.....	52
--	-----------

Figure 4.3 Help and services received: expectations versus reality subthemes..	60
---	-----------

Figure 4.4 Partnerships with resources and bridging cultural distance subthemes.	66
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List of abbreviations

CJ: *Centre Jeunesse*- Youth Centers or Foster Group Home

CJM-IU: *Centre Jeunesse de Montréal- Institut Universitaire*- Youth Protection Center of
Montréal

CLSC: *Centre Local des Service Communautaires*- Local Centre of Community Services

CSST: *La Commission de la Santé et de la Sécurité au Travail*- Québec's Workplace Health and
Safety Commission

DPJ: *Direction de la Protection de la Jeunesse*- Direction of Youth Protection

DYP: Direction of Youth Protection

LPJ: *Loi sur la Protection de la Jeunesse*- Youth Protection Act

MIDI: *Ministère de l'immigration, de la diversité et de l'inclusion*- Ministry of
Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion of Quebec

QC: (province of) Québec

YPA: Youth Protection Act

Abstract

The present qualitative study examines the lived experiences of six first-generation North African immigrant parents in QC who received services from the Direction of Youth Protection (DYP). Guided by a phenomenological approach, the primary data collection method was in-depth interviews. The data were coded and analyzed according to the research questions.

The research resulted in four major themes that emerged from the stories shared by the participants: (a) child-protection from the parents' perspective; (b) parents' perception of DYP services; (c) help and services received: expectations versus reality; and (d) partnerships with resources and bridging cultural distance. I analyzed these themes through the theoretical framework of intersectionality and cultural humility practice. The experiences of the parents in this study serve as a framework for discussion about the research and practice gaps that exist in the DYP interventions for immigrant families from the North African community.

This study revealed a gap between parents' perceived and actual role of the DYP. Parents prioritized parental authority, academic performance, and a family-centered approach over child's rights and protection that are emphasized by the DYP. The themes emerging from the research can offer DYP professionals an insight into how to create alliance and foster collaboration between the parents and DYP professionals to work towards the children's best interest. Implications for social work practice and research are discussed.

Keywords: Youth protection, North African immigrants, parents, phenomenology, intersectionality, cultural humility

Résumé

Cette étude qualitative a pour but de développer une compréhension de l'expérience des parents immigrés de l'Afrique du Nord ayant reçu des interventions de la Direction de la protection de la jeunesse (DPJ). Six parents ayant vécu cette expérience ont été rencontrés. La principale méthode de collecte des données consiste à faire des entrevues semi-dirigées et approfondies. Ces entrevues ont été analysées selon la méthode d'analyse phénoménologique.

Quatre grands thèmes ressortent de l'analyse de l'expérience partagée par les participants: (a) la protection des enfants du point de vue des parents; (b) la perception des parents vis-à-vis les services de la DPJ; (c) aide et services reçus: attentes vs. réalité; et (d) partenariats avec des ressources et le rapprochement culturel. Ces thèmes ont été analysés à partir de l'expérience des parents à travers le cadre théorique de l'intersectionnalité et le cadre de la pratique de l'humilité culturelle.

L'analyse qualitative des données met la lumière sur les divergences perçues entre les normes de la famille et celles des intervenants de la DPJ. Les parents priorisent l'autorité parentale, la performance académique, et une approche centrée sur la famille plutôt que sur les droits et la protection de l'enfant qui sont soulignés par la DPJ. Les thèmes émergents de cette recherche peuvent offrir aux professionnels de la DPJ un aperçu sur la façon de créer une alliance et de favoriser la collaboration avec les parents pour le meilleur intérêt de l'enfant. Les implications pour le travail social et la recherche sont discutées.

Mots-clés : Protection de la jeunesse, immigrés maghrébins, parents, phénoménologie, intersectionnalité, humilité culturelle

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Dedications

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Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Personal interest in the topic: Insider/Outsider Status

My interest in the areas of social justice, families, and culturally sensitive interventions came early on in my professional and academic life. My interest in these areas coincided with my first years of immigration to Québec (QC). I grew up in the Middle East, moved to Montréal and a year later I was married with my husband, who is a member of the North African community. I felt belonging to the North African community right away despite the fact that the North African dialects were unfamiliar to me. Yet, through different interactions with members of the North African community in casual social settings and within a professional context, I became more and more comfortable with the culture and the language.

When I started my Master in social work, I was already practicing social work at the Amal Women Center, a community organization that provides social services predominantly for the members of the North African and the Middle Eastern community. I noticed when child protection was involved with the families, that created a “mode of crisis” for the parents as they felt helpless and not sure how to navigate the child protection system. The first impression that families had about child protection was that their children will be permanently removed, which, in my opinion, hinders the chances of collaboration between the institution and the parents. I accompanied parents from the North African community on a regular basis to reach and implement the measures of a voluntary agreement with the child protection worker. Nevertheless, I often felt that parents and the workers lacked a common understanding of why protection measures need to be implemented, what defines/what does not define child maltreatment, and how the parents’ culture of origin can be used as a vehicle of collaboration rather than a barrier to intervention. I made several attempts to find existing empirical studies on

the interaction between North African immigrants and child protection, yet my search efforts yielded only studies on visible minorities in general and immigrants in particular.

I wanted to use the privilege I have, where my social location as a social worker and as a first-generation immigrant to QC, to understand where the parents' feelings of distress about child protection involvement come from. By initiating a qualitative inquiry, I hope to uncover how these families experience the child protection system and suggest new paths for policy to improve intercultural intervention pertaining to child protection and immigrant families from the North African community in QC.

1.2 Objectives and rationale of the research

The aim of the present study was to explore the experiences of first generation North African immigrant parents with the Québec's child welfare system, known as the Direction of Youth Protection (DYP). Articles or studies conducted in Montréal that give voice to immigrant parents to talk about their experiences, to describe what interventions were like for them and what problems they encountered are notably few or absent. What I am looking for is to explore how do the members of that community construct and understand their subjective experiences following their interactions with the DYP. Developing themes from these experiences can be valuable in guiding practice, program and policymaking activities as they incorporate the voices of the immigrant parents (Earner, 2007).

Research suggests that ethnic minority immigrants receive disproportionate services in the QC's DYP system compared to the general population (Dufour, 2013). Over the last two decades, the North African community has emerged as one of the largest newcomer communities in QC, making up 15.4% of QC's total intake of immigrants in 2015 (MIDI, 2015). Yet, despite the large percentage of North African immigrants, and disproportionate representation of

immigrant families in the DYP system, little if any research has explored the experiences of North African immigrants with DYP involvement.

Despite the growing number of immigrants in QC, DYP's approach to child protection is systematic and standardized which can overlook the context and particular circumstances around child maltreatment. Issues arise over how child maltreatment is defined by parents, and the possibility that their definition and that of the DYP may differ. Differences in terms, meanings attributed to the 'problem,' and in corresponding solutions may create a barrier to the provision of adequate services by DYP social workers. On the other hand, the "ethics of care" focuses on the importance of relationship, communication and dialogue between service providers and service users (Dufour, Hassan, & Lavergne, 2012; Parton, 2011). DYP intervention outcomes are improved when there is a consensus on the severity of the abuse and when the DYP worker takes time to understand the family's perspective of the situation. Practitioners need to gain a better understanding of how the process of immigration and experience of living as a minority in QC influences how families respond to DYP interventions.

Through in-depth interviews, I inquire about the experience and the reflections of these families with DYP interaction. These in-depth interviews generated themes and subthemes to highlight the essential core of the lived experiences of parents whose children received services from DYP, through qualitative research as methodology.

By honouring the human experience of the parents who have experienced DYP involvement, I hope to reach a greater understanding of the phenomenon and strengthen the literature to offer more sensitive interventions to these families.

1.3 Overview of the content

Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter of this thesis of why I chose this topic, the rationale behind this research study. This chapter also serves as a guide for the content of the thesis.

In chapter 2, I will discuss the literature review pertaining to the history of immigration and child protection system in Québec, with special attention to the North African community. I will discuss some of the barriers that may hinder a collaborative engagement between the parents and DYP. I will finally introduce the theoretical framework that will guide me through the understanding and analysis of the findings, specifically the intersectionality framework and cultural humility as a model of social work practice.

Chapter 3 discusses the qualitative methodology that guided this study, phenomenology. In this chapter, I will address the research design, recruitment, data analysis, trustworthiness and limitations.

In chapter 4, I will present the findings that emerged from the interviews through a phenomenological data analysis. The emerging themes and subthemes will be presented to highlight the common experiences between different participants.

Chapter 5 will provide a general discussion of the findings, compare it to the findings in the existing literature, and suggest implications for social work practice and research. I finally will discuss my personal reflections that emerged from the process.

Chapter II: Literature Review

2.1 Immigration and sociodemographics of the North African community in Québec

In this section, I will discuss the different sociodemographic, linguistic and cultural aspects that characterizes the North African immigrants in QC. Special consideration will be given to the issues that are relevant to the integration of this particular community in QC.

2.1.1 Immigration and sociopolitical climate in Québec

A thorough discussion of the history of the development of immigration, integration and language policy in QC is beyond the scope of the present thesis. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that with the significant increase of the North African immigrants arriving to Québec, important sociopolitical developments happened earlier in Québec. These developments can influence the perception of immigrants in Québec, and the possible impact that can have on the DYP's intervention with the immigrants families in general, and North African immigrants in particular.

After a series of social, political and economic upheavals in QC throughout the 1960s, the Quiet Revolution was a significant turning point in QC's history due to the religious and linguistic tensions that gave way to that Revolution (Bouchard, 2009). The diminished role of the French language raised a lot of questions about the linguistic and cultural future of QC, which threatened the continuity of the Québécois culture and identity in the province. In addition to the linguistic tensions, other social changes emerged. Notably the separation of the Catholic Church from public sphere (schools, government and hospitals; Gauvreau, 2005), the mandatory enrolment of immigrant children in French schools, greater gender equality in the workplace and education, and drop in the birth rate (Krull & Trovato, 2003).

Improving the status of the French language in QC allowed for the transition of QC's Francophone minority into a majority group, positioning QC as a distinct society than the rest of Canada (Bouchard, 2009). The shift from being a minority into a majority group would ultimately play an instrumental role in QC's immigration and integration policies.

Sociopolitical developments were emerging in parallel in Canada. On a federal policy level, Canada adopted the political framework of Multiculturalism in 1971 (Government of Canada, 1985). Multiculturalism defines Canada as a multitude of cultures and ethnocultural groups with equal standing.

On the other hand, in QC, "interculturalism" was adopted as an alternative political framework by successive governments. According to Dewing (2009), interculturalism can be defined as

"the acceptance and communication and interaction between culturally diverse group, *without, however, implying any intrinsic equality among them*. Diversity is tolerated and encouraged, but only within a framework that establishes the unquestioned supremacy of French in the language and culture of Québec" (p. 12, emphasis added).

In theory, the interculturalism model encourages the diversity of the ethnocultural populations in QC, searching for an equilibrium between assimilation and segmentation (Bouchard, 2015). In reality, QC remains to experience a tension between the reality that it needs to receive immigrants "as a condition for its development, perhaps for its survival" (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008, p.19), and between the desire to preserve its dominant linguistic and cultural identity.

2.1.2 North African immigration to Québec

In the light of the Quiet revolution and sociopolitical changes in Québec, immigration policies in QC were construed as a way to ensure the survival of the French language in QC and to provide manpower given the excessively aging population in QC. As outlined in section 1.2, North African immigrants represent 15.4% of Québec's total intake of immigrants in 2015, where Morocco and Algeria are ranked in the top five countries of birth for newly arrived immigrants to QC (MIDI, 2015). With respect to newly arrived immigrants coming to Montreal, the North African immigrants in total represent almost 20% of the newcomer population in 2016 (Ville de Montréal, 2016). The people from North African countries, commonly known as *Maghreb*, share common linguistic, cultural and religious practices (Belhassen-Maalaoui, 2003). The primary three languages spoken in the Maghreb region are the Arabic, Berber and the French language. The dominant religion of the Maghreb population is Islam (Lacoste, 1995).

In QC, the first mass wave of North African immigration was in the 1990s, primarily due to the civil war in Algeria, human right violations, in addition to the economic and sociopolitical instability of the region (Helly, 2004). Given the history of French colonization of North African countries, social and political developments in the Maghreb countries and in QC, the North African countries became an important source of educated, French speaking immigrants for QC (Aoudia, 2009). In fact, 51.6% of the North African immigrants hold a university degree or certificate, compared to 23.3% of the general population in QC (MIDI, 2014).

One might assume that given the French language policies in QC, acknowledging only the French language as the sole official language in the province, the socioeconomic integration of the North African immigrants in the labour force is ensured (Chicha, 2012). Nevertheless, research findings demonstrate that theoretical policy is far distinct from reality, as demonstrated

in the high, almost double rate of unemployment among the North African community (17.1%) compared to 7% in the general population in QC (7.1%; MIDI, 2014).

These statistics reflect that additional factors, apart from language and education factors that are highly considered by Immigration QC in their selection criteria, need to be considered when discussing the integration of North African immigrants in QC's society. One factor to be considered is the QC society's image and perception of the North African immigrants. Many political events happening in QC and the rest of the world can contribute to the negative perception of the community. In QC, specifically, a series of events to highlight are the *Commission Bouchard-Taylor* (2007), *la Charte des valeurs québécoises* (2013), Québec city Mosque shooting (2017), in addition to global political climate of islamist terrorist attacks in different cities around the world, and president Trump's proposition to ban immigrants from certain Muslim-majority countries. These events have inevitably influenced the perception of QC's society of the Muslim immigrants in QC, of whom a significant proportion are of North African origin.

La Commission Bouchard-Taylor (2007) was set up in 2007-2008 to address the "crisis of accommodations" in QC. Known as *la Commission de consultation sur les pratiques d'accommodement reliées aux différences culturelles*, this initiative emerged from the rising number of immigrants requesting accommodation in the public sphere based on the cultural and religious practices. Examples included the request of Muslim groups to have a "halal" menu in a *Cabane à sucre*, Muslim students wearing hijab during soccer competitions, and Québec's Human Rights Tribunal requesting that the Ville de Laval to stop reciting prayers before municipal meetings (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008).

The goal of the Bouchard and Taylor commission was to investigate the economic and social dimensions of the “cultural integration” challenge of immigrants into QC’s society (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008). Nevertheless, the media coverage of the “crisis” of reasonable accommodation left behind negative perceptions about immigration and immigrants in the eyes of native Quebecers (Centre d’études ethniques des universités montréalaises, 2012). The media coverage fed into the discourse of us versus them, the majority versus minority culture, and that minorities can be a threat to maintaining the common values of the Quebecers’ identity.

La Charte des valeurs québécoise or Bill 60 was proposed in 2013 by the Parti Québécois (2012-2014) to ensure religious neutrality in public institutions, restrict wearing religious symbols and to provide an official protocol of how requests for reasonable accommodations are handled (Quebec National Assembly, 2015). Similar to the Bouchard and Taylor commission (2008), this proposition about religious neutrality and the media coverage of the charter brought back the common debates of secularism, religion, gender equality, language, and separation of QC from the rest of Canada. Although this project was not implemented, the media coverage and discourse about minorities particularly Muslims still contributed to the current perception of immigrants and the debates of QC’s sociopolitical development.

The recent shooting that targeted worshippers at a mosque in Quebec city in January 29th 2017, where the shooter killed six people and injured another nineteen received a lot of attention from social media and mainstream media. The media coverage of the event has continued to contribute to the debate about QC identity, radicalization and emerging far-right movements and inspired violence in QC and the rest of Canada. The public rhetoric about the event had implications with respect to anti-Muslim sentiment (Perry & Scrivens, 2018).

These events indeed contribute to systemic discrimination against the Muslim immigrants in QC. I discussed these political events to raise questions and reflections about how these events influence the perception of North African parents towards DYP workers in particular, and DYP institutions in general, and vice versa. I found these developments to be relevant to highlight as the sociopolitical context of interaction between the DYP institution and the families immigrating from the Maghreb countries.

2.2 Youth protection involvement within the North African community

As mentioned in the previous section, the significant increase in the waves of immigrants to QC's society entails a myriad of sociopolitical debates centered around the future of QC's identity. These debates did not only raise concerns and challenges on a social level, but also in the public sector's institutions including the healthcare system, social services, and legal and education system. The changes in the sociodemographic profile of the QC's population has inevitably impacted the profile of the service users of the child protection institutions especially in Montréal, known as *Centre Jeunesse de Montréal, Institut Universitaire* (CJM-IU).

In QC, the Youth Protection Act (YPA), *la Loi sur la Protection de la Jeunesse* (LPJ) was adopted in 1977 and the Direction of Youth Protection (DYP) existed since 1979. The YPA defines a range of situations that can compromise the child's development or security, where the intervention of the DYP is needed (Lajoie, 2006). Professionals from different backgrounds including social workers, educators, psychologists, criminologists, and lawyers have to deal with the reality that the children under the care of youth protection are becoming more diverse. Youth protection is already complex due to the interplay between the legal mandate of child protection, family law, in addition to the professional's mandate to establish relationship and developing

rapport with the children and the family. DYP's intervention is further complicated when it concerns visible minority and immigrant families

“who may have different views of the private and public spheres, as well as of child abuse and related aspects such as the parent-child relationship, parental authority, and discipline” (Dufour, Lavergne, Gaudet, and Couture, 2016, p. 357)

Although the CJM-IU does not issue official statistics of the ethnocultural origin of the children under the care of youth protection, some studies demonstrate that certain ethnic groups are disproportionate in CJM-IU compared to the general population (Désy, Battaglini & Bastien, 2007; Hassan & Rousseau, 2007; Lavergne, Dufour, Sarmiento & Descôteaux, 2009). Tourigny and Bouchard (1994) identified certain factors that influence the reporting of ethnic minority children to CJM-IU, including the ethnocultural origin, the associated prejudice towards the ethnocultural group, ethnocentrism, the characteristics of the professional, and the differences in values between the professional and the ethnocultural group. Dufour, Hassan and Lavergne (2012) added the absence of culturally adapted or sensitive resources to support minorities families during events of crises may contribute to the disproportionality of minority children in the CJM-IU.

2.3 Barriers to youth protection involvement

Besides the interrelated economic, cultural and social adjustment that immigrants go through, immigration is in itself a process of “radical transition” in the family structure that involves a lot of flexibility and adjustment from the family members. Familial and conjugal roles shift to adapt to the new reality, which may challenge the stability of the family structure (Vatz Laaroussi & Bessong Messé, 2008). Parents may feel that their parenting practices no longer

relevant to the mainstream society they immigrated to, therefore they would negotiate new roles and seek new reference systems.

Child protection involvement can be challenging for immigrant parents and their children. Some of these challenges include the different cultural references in terms of the understanding of the notion of parental authority, family roles and public/social services, in addition to issues of stereotypes, prejudice and ethnocentrism that can arise during their contact with DYP.

2.3.1 Notion of parental authority

The notion of parental authority guides the assumptions and beliefs that shape the parent-child relationship, and the roles assigned to different family members. These assumptions and beliefs are defined according to the cultural practices that guide parents in their parenting practices (Miller & Goodnow, 1995).

Aouattah (2010) discusses the common parenting styles of the North African immigrant families. One of the principles that the author highlights is the “notion of parental authority” or rather *l'autorité du groupe familial*- the authority of the family group as a whole. In addition to the authority of the father, the mother, and the elders in the child's family, the child is subject to the authority of the other members of the society because the upbringing of the child is considered to be the society's responsibility, where the society is expected to reinforce the value of parental authority. The objective of the parental authority is to have the child respectful, obedient, and submissive (Aouattah, 2010), known as *mardi* (blessed child). Corporal punishment or physical discipline of children remains one of the means to reinforce this parental authority (Aouattah, 2010; Hassan & Rousseau, 2009).

In their interviews with North African parents in QC, Hassan and Rousseau (2009) explored the perceptions of parents and their adolescents towards corporal punishment. In this study, the majority of parents and adolescents approved the use of “mild” corporal punishment as a disciplinary practice for correction, as long as it is accompanied by prior warnings and explanation by the parent before resorting to corporal punishment. Adolescents even approved the use of more “severe” forms of corporal punishment (e.g., slap on the face) when they “commit serious offences” such as stealing, smoking, drinking alcohol, consuming drugs or being rude to their parents. These “offences” are defined according to the cultural, familial and religious frames of reference. Adolescents highlighted that corporal punishment can become physical abuse if exaggerated, repeated, and used from the first incident without prior explanation by the parent (Hassan & Rousseau, 2009). In other words, for some North African families, the child protection may be defined by reinforcing the parental authority for the child’s best interest.

Parental involvement at various stages of DYP intervention is central to the approach taken by the Québec Youth Protection Act (Youth Protection Act, 2010). Youth protection legal framework considers the parents to be the first responsible institution to respond to the child’s needs, yet the government can also be involved in this responsibility if the parents fail to fulfill that role (CJM-IU, n.d.). The intervention of youth protection adopts a ‘child-centered’ approach that is based on the protection of the rights, and interests of the child, which may be challenging and foreign for parents who find that parental authority is of paramount importance (Chiasson-Lavoie & Roc, 2000), and may be “inconsistent with their cultural paradigm” (Sawrikar & Katz, 2014, p. 397). In fact, Lavergne and colleagues (2009) discussed that one of the reasons of the disproportionate representation of minority children in the DYP system can be explained by the

different perceptions and definitions of corporal punishment and physical abuse. Larrivée, Tourigny and Bouchard (2007) suggest that ethnic minority families who consider corporal punishment acceptable may find themselves in a situation of *dysnormativity* rather than *dysfunctionality*. The family would be perceived as dysfunctional or dangerous for the child, when it is rather a clash of cultural norms (Hassan & Rousseau, 2009).

2.3.2 Family dynamics through immigration

As mentioned earlier, families immigrate with a considerable hope for a better future for their children. Nevertheless, immigrants may experience “an overwhelming sense of betrayal and hopelessness about their experiences” that do not correspond to their initial expectations (Maiter, Stalker, & Alaggia, 2009, p.33). The problems associated with challenges in entering the labour market and financial difficulties can indeed affect the reality of many immigrant families, which can eventually exacerbate the stress within the family system (Vatz Laaroussi, 2008a, 2008b). This stress can be exacerbated by the loss of extended family support, an important sources of social, economic and emotional support for the parents, leaving the parents therefore less available for their children (Hernandez, 2007).

Another factor related to parenting within the immigration experience is how the parental roles are transformed, enriched and even sometimes complicated with the new cultural norms that parents and children need to integrate and respect (Vatz Laaroussi & Bessong Messé, 2008). In addition to the challenge of adapting to a new environment, parents need to assume new parental roles. These factors may leave immigrant families vulnerable to familial “disequilibrium” and possibly to conflicts that may lead eventually to youth protection involvement (Tourigny & Bouchard, 1994) . Besides the loss of informal support, Maiter, Stalker and Alaggia (2009) highlighted that financial struggles, language barriers, and struggles to

provide for the family can be overwhelming and contribute to situations that prompt DYP's intervention.

Dufour and colleagues (2016) also highlighted that DYP's intervention can be initiated when the risk for the child's development is rooted in the parenting practices considered inappropriate according to the standard of protection. Families constructed the notions of family relations differently from the worker. DYP professionals therefore may need to conduct thorough assessment, adapt their framework of reference and their intervention strategies that corresponds to the complex reality of these families. What may appear to the worker to be *dysfunctional* may be normative and adaptive for the family, given the interplay of factors related to immigration and the adoption of heritage and mainstream cultural values (Hassan & Rousseau, 2009). For example, the DYP professional may face the need to tailor their practice to include the extended family members who also represent authority figure in the family, such as the grandparents (Dufour et al., 2016).

2.3.3 Perceptions of social/public services

Many immigrant parents feel that they have done significant sacrifices to offer better opportunities for their children. In youth protection, or other situations of involuntary assistance, having a DYP professional judging the parenting capacity and compelling them to comply with established service standards can be challenging and can lessen the effectiveness of the assistance provided (Lemay, 2013). For many North African families, traditional family values are the norm and thus the state involvement into their private life, especially when it comes to parenting practices, is nonexistent (Aouattah, 2010; Earner, 2007). Besides the fear, stigma and shame associated with DYP interventions among immigrant families, there is also the perception that the DYP is intrusive and punitive to these families (Hassan & Rousseau, 2009).

DYP professionals and the families may not necessarily share a common understanding of the nature and the intent of the social services offered to them (Dufour et al., 2016). Misunderstanding between the families and DYP professionals can further be exacerbated when the child rejects the notion of parental authority during the DYP's intervention, a notion of paramount for some ethnocultural groups, including the North African community (Aouattah, 2010).

When it comes to the placement of a child into a youth centre, *Centre Jeunesse* (CJ), or with foster families, this placement may not correspond to the cultural reality and expectations of these families. Chiasson-Lavoie and Roc (2000) discuss how challenging, if not damaging for the child to be suddenly removed from the cultural group to whom they belong to when they attempt to construct an identity that corresponds to their cultural 'baggage.'

When these cultural issues are not addressed and discussed between the family and the professionals, feelings of mistrust, anger and anxiety can emerge during the intervention process. This would eventually hinder the therapeutic alliance and trust between the families and the DYP professional, and increase mutual cultural misunderstanding (Earner, 2007).

2.3.4 Prejudice and stereotypes

I discussed earlier the developments in the QC's sociopolitical sphere, and how the media representations of these developments may have influenced the perception of Muslim immigrants in QC, of which the majority are of North African origin (Rachédi, 2008).

Hassan and Rousseau (2007) discussed the fact that in youth protection interventions, it is possible for the professionals and institutions to have the tendency to "culturalize" the child maltreatment, based on certain stereotypes that characterize certain ethnocultural groups. These assumptions about ethnocultural groups may be considered by some professionals to be the

origin of child maltreatment or a source of “non-collaboration” between the family and the DYP rather than attributing the maltreatment to psychosocial circumstances (Vatz Laaroussi, 2008b).

Along with the barriers highlighted earlier, prejudice and stereotypes can hinder professionals from offering effective interventions due to issues of communication and misunderstanding (Manço & Freyens, 2008). The misperceptions of immigrant families can be attributed to prejudice and stereotypes but also to ethnocentrism.

2.3.5 Ethnocentrism

In social work practice, Cohen-Émérique (2000) conducted a research on intercultural intervention, and highlighted the following examples “sensitive zones” that arise from ethnocentrism: (a) the notion of equality between man and woman; (b) parenting strategies that do not permit corporal punishment; (c) child’s rights; and (d) religion and secularism. These “sensitive zones” can be a wheel of judgement towards the “other’s culture,” thus generating tensions between the families and professionals as they directly relate to their cultural identity.

One of the challenges with the current child protection paradigm is that it may favor Western cultural perspective over non-Western ones when defining child protection and prescribing interventions. One of the models that predominate child protection system is “the child rescue model” (Bissell, Boyden, Cook & Myers, 2006, p.10). Children are perceived to be in danger and therefore removed from the danger, sometimes with little consideration of the child’s connection to the family, community, culture or other aspects that are meaningful to the child. It is questionable whether bureaucratized protection models and organized programmes are more effective for child protection compared to informal approaches that emphasize family, community and kinship-based systems (Bissell, Boyden, Cook & Myers, 2006).

Ethnocentrism therefore becomes problematic when it narrows down the options to provide child with protection when there are culturally rich resources and assets that can provide the child with protection, including family and religious affiliations (Bissell, Boyden, Cook & Myers, 2006).

2.4 Theoretical framework: Intersectionality and cultural humility in child welfare

Multiculturalism, cross-cultural competence, and cultural awareness are all constructs that are used in social work education and practice to acknowledge social work's efforts to acquire knowledge and deliver services to culturally diverse service users (Garrahan & Rozas, 2013; Lester, 2009). The National Association of Social Workers (2015) outlined the *Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice*. These standards define cultural competence as a process where individuals and institutions respond respectfully to people of all cultures, while affirming the worth of individuals, families and communities (p.13). Over the past decade, a plethora of cultural competence training models emerged in child welfare services to guide professionals when interacting with children and families (Ortega & Faller, 2011). The construct of cultural competence remains nonetheless ambiguous as it needs to go beyond just offering services that are culturally congruent to the service users, but considering the influence of power and privilege when interacting with service users (Abrams & Moio, 2009).

In this section, I will introduce the framework of intersectionality, and practice model of 'cultural humility' (Ortega & Faller, 2011). I will be using the intersectionality and cultural humility approach to guide my analysis of the experience of families with the DYP system.

2.4.1 What's wrong with cultural competence?

In recent decades, cultural competence has been a prominent professional imperative within social work, human service and healthcare professions in general (Sakamoto, 2007).

There is an emerging need to train social workers to work effectively with any client who is *culturally different* as identified by the Council of Social Work Education (Pinderhughes, 1994). Cultural competence aims to bring awareness of one's own values, biases, limitations and assumptions, knowledge by understanding the *other's* world view, and skills by developing and applying culturally appropriate interventions (Sue & Sue, 2003). However, cultural competence does not recognize the power inherent systems of oppression, including racism, sexism, ageism, heterosexism and ableism (Sakamoto, 2007).

There are ongoing debates on the role of culturally competent interventions when it comes to social work interventions with ethnocultural minorities in the context of child welfare (Este, 2007; Kufeldt, Este, McKenzie, & Wharf, 2003). However, the assumptions underlying cultural competence can be problematic from an anti-oppressive standpoint. The concept of culture itself is viewed as a static entity and that the worker's White culture is the norm while a service user from a different culture is viewed as the *other*. This lays the assumption that the ethnocentric models of social services that is considered a culture-free neutral intervention while any other intervention that is relevant to the service's user cultural needs as culturally competent (Pon, 2009). A cultural competence focus on racial and ethnic differences may convey misconceptions about the ethnic groups in question, where the group is assumed to have a set of predictable traits. This may give the child welfare professional a 'false sense' of confidence and expertise about their knowledge of the culturally different individuals or families (Ortega & Faller, 2011).

The notion of cultural competence hence brings the dynamics of power analysis between the family and the worker into play, an overlapping concept that I will discuss next, and how the

framework of intersectionality and cultural dialogue provides an anti-oppressive ground to social work practice with minorities in the context of DYP intervention.

2.4.2 Intersectionality in child welfare

One of the greatest limitations of cultural competence literature is the lack or inadequacy of power analysis, where the concept of culture is viewed as neutral thus allowing the systems of oppression (including racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, xenophobia, ableism) to emerge under the theory of cultural competence (Sakamoto, 2007). Allan (2006) highlights the inherent historical baggage in the Whiteness of the social work profession, where the workers sought to help those who do not meet societal standards while simultaneously reinforcing these standards. This mechanism has historically reinforced and maintained the colonial dynamic that social work has negotiated with the cultural “others”, including Canada’s Indigenous Peoples and immigrants.

Sakamoto (2007) highlights that the worker should shift the focus from merely trying to understand the cultural other towards interrogating the power-laden contexts in which the process of *othering* occurs, by naming and subverting the dynamics of power to allow for the culturally different to be deemed as “other” in the first place. Sakamoto (2007) calls for a cultural competence model that operates within an anti-oppressive framework, that focuses on the analysis of structural oppressions and power relations that are faced by service users on both a micro-level practice and a macro-level analysis (institutional, policies). One of the promising frameworks is intersectionality.

According to Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012), intersectionality is defined as the “reality that we simultaneously occupy both oppressed and privileged positions, and that these positions intersect in complex way” (p.115). In child welfare, the model of intersectionality can be used to

examine how different aspects of social identity (race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, ability) interact and shape the experience of both the service provider and service user in the context of child welfare (Ortega & Faller, 2011).

As a theoretical approach, intersectionality can assist practitioners in understanding interrelationships between macro and micro levels. On a micro-level, intersectionality can be used to examine how individuals experience their own intersecting social identities. On a macro-level, intersectionality can be used to understand the power systems and structural sources of bias and discrimination (Syed, 2010).

There is a tendency of child welfare research and practice to “downstream,” by looking at cultural values that explain higher rates of child maltreatment in certain ethnic groups, taking out the time, context, history and current social practices. Less frequently, child maltreatment literature looks “upstream” at macro processes, such as disparities in service availabilities that make some service less available to some groups (Weber & Parra-Medina, 2003). Considering the role of both upstream and downstream factors can assist practitioner to understand the sources of inequality in the life of the family, which can lead to different outcomes for children and families (Nadan, Spilsbury, & Korbin, 2015). This approach therefore moves beyond group-specific cultural knowledge to recognize that ethnic minorities hold multiple social statuses that interact together. This approach also recognizes personal, institutional, and cultural forces that can restrict or oppress them from equal access to resources (Ortega & Faller, 2011).

2.4.3 Towards cultural humility

One of the social work practice models that combines intersectional analysis and multicultural practice is the model of cultural humility (Ortega & Faller, 2011). The model of cultural humility draws attention to the diversity of the person, to power differences in

relationships between service users and service providers, and to different past and present life experiences. Rather than drawing only from their existing knowledge, practitioners engage in the process of *self-awareness*, a process of ongoing self-appraisal of biases and stereotypes that hinders the practitioner from learning from service users. The second dimension of cultural humility emphasizes the *openness* of the practitioner. Openness implies the acknowledgement of the experiences of others and how the service-users and service-providers may experience the same situations differently. Openness allows service providers to learn from the service users with whom they aim to help (Ortega & Faller, 2011). The third dimension is the concept of *transcendence*, where practitioners need to embrace the reality that the world is far more complex than one might perceive (Morris, Brotheridge & Urbanski, 2015; cited in Ortega & Faller, 2011). In the context of child welfare practice

“the worker must draw on the cultural expertise of the families with whom they work and even then must recognize that the vastness of cultural experience likely exceeds their capacities to fully understand all that is to be known” (p.33)

In sum, a cultural humility approach allow the child protection worker to be in a learning mode instead of being in a position to maintain power, control and authority over cultural experiences of which the service user is far more knowledgeable (Ortega & Faller, 2011). The practitioner engages in the liberation from cultural stereotypes and limited knowledge about specific cultures and ethnic groups. This allows the practitioner to engage in dialogue with service users that helps discuss and learn across the boundaries of difference and allows for new cultural norms to be negotiated between the service-provider and service user (Sakamoto & Pitner, 2005). This allows the practitioner to place more value on the child and family’ cultural expressions and understanding of the situation, allowing for respect of the unique cultural experiences and internalized cultural meanings of the service users (Ortega & Faller, 2011).

Thus, I consider the approach of cultural dialogue to disentangle power imbalances that traditional cultural competence models carry. This model provides empowerment to the service user at all levels through its inherent participatory approach. This approach would allow a collaborative approach between practitioners, families and children in defining important priorities to achieve the child safety and well-being.

Summary

Several sociopolitical developments in the history of QC raised debates over the integration of ethnic minorities in the society. These debates have indeed impacted the provision of child welfare services offered to ethnic minority children and families. Different theories and findings may explain the disproportionate representation of minority children in the DYP system. The primary reasons that may explain this reality is (a) the socioeconomic struggles and multiple stressors that immigrants encounter in their immigration experience (Maiter, Stalker, & Alaggia, 2009); (b) the differences in cultural references and definitions of parenting strategies, discipline, and maltreatment (Lavergne et al., 2009); and (c) barriers arising during the interaction between the families and DYP professionals, notably prejudice, stereotypes and ethnocentrism (Cohen-Émerique, 2000).

Different models to address cultural diversity within child welfare system have been proposed. One of the frameworks that I found appropriate to foster a working relationship between the service users and service providers is intersectionality when analysing the professional's involvement with minority families. Practitioners are called to integrate cultural humility as an approach to foster a helping relationship that considers the empowerment of the service users and the power imbalances between service user and service provider (Ortega & Faller, 2011).

Chapter III: Research Design

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Phenomenology

I chose the qualitative approach in this study as my focus is on exploring the experiences of a group of individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013), namely the experiences of the North African parents with the DYP intervention. The decision of studying this phenomenon with qualitative methodology emerged from the gaps and scarcity of studies that examine this population's lived experiences with the DYP. Using a phenomenological approach will allow the voices of these parents to be heard, therefore creating a better understanding of the phenomenon for DYP service providers.

3.1.2 Guiding questions

The present research is considered a timely study given: (a) the significant increase of North African immigrants choosing to settle in Québec; (b) the significant increase of the number of minority immigrant families who receive DYP interventions; and (c) the predominant stereotypes about immigrants in general and Muslim immigrants in particular. The sociopolitical environment is likely to affect the parents' experiences with DYP intervention from a micro-level in their direct interaction with DYP workers, to a macro-level when examining the role of policies of immigration and child welfare.

The central research question of this study is "how immigrant parents from the North African community experience child protection services in Québec?" Key sub-questions addressed how are North African immigrant parents perceive the process of DYP intervention in the way:

1. ... they define discipline and child maltreatment?

2. their parenting practices were changed since their arrival to Québec ?
3. ... their perceptions towards DYP were created upon their arrival?
4.they experienced DYP intervention process, both positively and negatively?
5.they would change any aspects of the DYP system if given a chance to do reforms?

I kept the interview questions relatively open and broad to allow participants to bring up unforeseen responses. The interview questions dealt with immigration, personal experiences with DYP, and parents' recommendations to improve DYP's interventions within the current context of waves of immigration from North African countries to QC.

3.1.3 Participants

The study involved six participants who met the following criteria (a) first-generation immigrant parents from a North African country (Morocco, Algeria, or Tunisia); (b) the family is currently receiving or has received services from the DYP in the past for at least one of their children; and (c) the parent speaks French, English or Arabic.

By targeting participants who shared common experiences, I was able to gain a profound understanding of the interplay between the parenting practices and immigration experience as it pertains specifically to the interaction of these families with the DYP intervention.

3.1.3.1 Participants' Profile

All the six participants in this study are first-generation immigrants from North African countries and they are all Canadian citizens (5 females, age range 36-65 years). Four families are of Algerian origin, and two are of Moroccan origin. One participant is a single (never-married) adoptive parent, while the other five parents are married. The parents' length of residence in Canada ranges between 8 to 20 years.

All families arrived directly from their country of origin to the city of Montréal and have never moved out of the province of QC since their arrival. All of the families were selected in the economic immigration category, except one parent who came to Montréal as a refugee due to the political situation of the country of origin. Five participants completed a university degree from their country of origin, and one participant completed high school. Four of the participants are employed full-time (two are self-employed), while one who receives CSST benefits, and another participant is a student.

All families speak Arabic or Kabyle dialects. Families had varying degrees of French fluency. Three interviews were conducted in French only, and the other 3 were conducted in Arabic and French simultaneously. Interviews lasted between 68 to 108 minutes.

Three families have 4 children, one has 2 children, and two have 1 child. In terms of the DYP intervention, the DYP was involved with one child per family except for one family, where both children received interventions. Four families had the DYP intervene with their daughter(s), and two families with their sons. The age of the children ranges between 11 and 15 years when the DYP intervention started. The duration of DYP intervention lasted between 3 months to 2 years. During the time of the interview, three families had their DYP files closed while the other three are still receiving interventions to date.

3.1.3.2 Recruitment

In this study I used purposeful sampling – particularly *criterion sampling* (Creswell, 2013). By implementing a criterion sampling strategy, I ensured that the respondents had rich knowledge about the phenomenon under study (Duan, Green, Hoagwood, Horwitz & Palinkas, 2013).

I obtained ethics approval from the McGill Research Ethics Board Office on May 8th 2017 (Appendix A). For recruitment, I identified a list of community organizations that offer social services for immigrants in general, and to the North African community in particular. All the community organizations I identified were temporarily not offering services for families during the summer period, in addition to families being away during the summer holidays. I began reaching out for participants as of September 2017 after I contacted the identified community organizations (Appendix B). Despite the openness of service providers to identify eligible participants and contact them directly for participation, the process was challenging than I initially anticipated. Many parents contacted by their service providers declined to participate given the sensitivity of the interview topic, their desire not to re-live and discuss that “traumatic” experience, and their concerns about confidentiality despite the providers’ efforts to reassure them about the confidentiality measures of this project. Another concern that participants highlighted is my status as a social worker and their concern about the consequences of sharing their experiences with a social worker.

On the other hand, parents who agreed to participate in the research project were all service users of the same community organization that advocates for and supports North African parents in contact with the DYP system. The participants had strong ties and positive experience with that community organization and were willing to share their experience to raise awareness about the needs of the North African immigrants in the DYP system.

3.1.4 Data collection

3.1.4.1 Interviews

I personally conducted all the interviews. Data collection consisted of one-on-one interviews with one parent from each family. These in-depth interviews allowed me to highlight

the “common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences” (Creswell, 2013, p. 75-76). This “common-meaning” is reflected in my research questions as I am trying to understand how these families lived, experienced and understood DYP interventions within the context of immigration from North African countries to Québec.

I used two phases in the interview process to allow for a developing rapport between the participants and myself. Initially, I contacted the participants who consented to participate by phone to introduce myself, explain the nature and context of the study, in addition to answering all their questions particularly regarding confidentiality measures that I will take. During the initial phone conversation, I would set an appointment to meet the participant in person, often in their place of residence. Only one participant chose to do the interview over the phone.

When I met the participants, I explained the informed consent form before they signed and the interview commenced (Appendix C). Each interview was audio recorded in their entirety using Samsung digital voice recorder. The true nature of each interview was designed as a natural dialogue. Basic topics were covered throughout the interviews (see appendix D for interview outline). However, it was important to avoid leading or influencing the participants’ answers, so I allowed participants the space for variation and to elaborate further on points that were of particular importance to them. This would ensure that the true essence of the lived experience of the respondent would come across instead of limiting their responses to specific themes or concepts.

The first interview portion consisted of sociodemographic information about the participants’ immigration history, family composition, educational and professional history. The second portion of the interview discusses the parenting practices, particularly a reflection of how parents experience the differences between parenting in their country of origin and in Québec,

and if they had any preconceived knowledge about the DYP system upon their arrival through their contact with other parents from the North African community.

The third and fourth portion of the interview focused on the parent's personal interaction with the DYP, including the context of intervention, how parents experienced the intervention in terms of factors that facilitated or hindered the DYP intervention with the family. The interview specifically focused on the positive factors that facilitated DYP intervention, and the cultural and systemic barriers that families may have experienced during the intervention. The fifth portion of the interview focuses more on the "macro" aspect of the DYP interventions. In that portion, parents highlight their recommendations to improve the DYP services, specifically pertaining to the context of minorities in general and North African immigrants in particular.

3.1.5 Data analysis

All interviews were transcribed verbatim in French using Microsoft Word to facilitate data analysis and interpretation. Arabic phrases were translated to French. All the names and identifying information (e.g., child's name, neighbourhood) were removed from the transcripts. The names used throughout the thesis are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants. All collected data (audio and transcripts) were stored and managed in a password protected files on my personal computer. Only my thesis supervisor and I had access to the data.

I based my data analysis on Moustakas (1994; cited in Creswell, 2013, p. 193) guidelines for the analysis of phenomenological data. First, I started by reading each transcription and extracting the "significant statements" about how each participant experienced the topic under study, also known as horizontalization (Creswell, 2013, p.193).

Second, these significant statements were assigned different codes. The codes I identified were in vivo codes (emerging directly from participant's words, e.g., parental

authority), emotion codes (e.g., fear and helplessness), and theoretical codes (e.g., child's best interest; Padgett, 2016; Saldana, 2009).

Third, I grouped different codes under the relevant theme or “meaning units” (Creswell, 2013, p. 193). Finally, I progressed from the classification to the interpretation of data by developing textural and structural descriptions in order to acquire the “essence” of the participants' shared experiences (Padgett, 2016). The textural description of the experience highlights “what” happened, using verbatim examples drawn directly from the participant's transcript. The structural description highlights “how” the participants experienced this phenomenon by exploring the context and the setting in which the interaction with DYP interventions took place.

This structured analytic approach was applied to the four themes found in the data to represent the “essence” of the experience by incorporating both the textural and structural description of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

3.1.6 Trustworthiness

The study followed the guidelines of a phenomenological framework to allow for the reflection of the unique yet common stories of participants to be captured. In an attempt to ensure the trustworthiness of the methodology and the findings, I implemented the strategies of bracketing, reflexive journaling, peer debriefing and supervision.

3.1.6.1 Bracketing

As an insider and outsider to the North African community, I felt a great ethical responsibility in reproducing an accurate description of the experiences of the participants. My past experiences and my professional interaction with the population of study on regular basis has definitely provided me with preconceived assumptions in the way I perceived the

phenomenon I study. Therefore, I attempted to adopt a “reflexive stance” to understand my biases and “position” myself when designing the research questions, conducting the interviews and transcribing the participants’ stories.

During the data analysis process, I started with the “epoche” approach of making an explicit effort to be self-aware of not letting my personal experiences “to interlude on the essential aspects of the participant’s personal accounts” (Moustakas, 1994; Padgett, 2016, p. 41). In addition, I restricted myself from viewing academic journals or books discussing the phenomenon under study in order to avoid an external influence on my interpretation of the transcripts. Finally, for ethical reasons and to enhance the rigor of the study, I abstained from recruiting participants that I knew on a personal or professional level. Although these participants fit my inclusion criteria, I preferred to interview participants that I did not know to avoid leading participants with questions or influencing the data collection/data analysis process.

3.1.6.2 Reflexive journaling

To guide my experience and anchor myself in the research process, I wrote a reflexive journal to evaluate my assumptions that can influence my understanding of the phenomenon. I also wrote reflections following each interview about how the meeting with the parent affected me personally. The journal allowed me to maintain the “reflective stance” I adopted through bracketing.

3.1.6.3 Supervision

The supervision experience was significant in assisting me with the process of interpreting data and how to represent the experiences of the participants. My supervisor and I were engaging in discussions about the findings and to ensure that the conclusions I drew were directly related to the data collected.

3.1.7 Limitations

Recruiting participant for a study that discusses DYP intervention was complex given the confidential and personal subject of the research. Many potential participants declined participation in this study due to the sensitive nature of the topic (as outlined in section 3.2.3.1).

The number of participants was limited to six, allowing only for a small proportion of the population who experienced the phenomenon to discuss their experience. Bell (1999) highlighted that marginalized and those perceived as “problematic” are less likely to participate and share experiences. Many parents who received DYP services may not feel comfortable discussing their relationship with the services, and they may not feel empowered to speak about their experiences.

In this sample, the issue of underrepresentation of the fathers was clearly demonstrated, mirroring the trend in other studies in child protection research (e.g. Palmer, Maiter & Manji, 2006). Another point to highlight is that the experience of parents in this sample was heterogeneous. Specifically, two parents sought services directly from the DYP for their children, thus the DYP’s involvement is considered “voluntary.” On the other hand, the other 4 participants I interviewed could be considered “involuntary” service users as the DYP service was initiated by a third party report (e.g., school, police, a parent of the child’s friend).

On the other hand, those who participated in the research study may have had unsatisfactory experiences and had a strong need to articulate them. All participants were recruited from a single community organization that has a mandate to advocate for and empower parents involved with the DYP system, particularly parents from North African/Middle Eastern background. Despite my effort to reach out for other community organizations, parents declined to participate. It is possible that parents who participated in the research felt empowered about

the experience and wanted to have their voices heard through participation in this study, yet interviewing parents who felt disempowered or distrustful of the system may have possibly yielded markedly different responses.

Another potential limitation is the length of residency of these families in Montréal, which ranges between 8 to 20 years. According to Hassan and colleagues (2011), the trajectories and vulnerabilities that immigrant families face may vary depending on whether they are newly arrived immigrants or not. In fact, most of the participants in this study do not experience language barriers and have stable employment, which may not reflect the reality of many immigrant families especially newly arrived immigrants.

Limitations associated with cross-language qualitative research may be pertinent. Three interviews were conducted in both Arabic and French simultaneously, and the transcription was conducted entirely in French to follow McGill's university language guidelines of thesis writing in English and French. Due to the lack of financial resources to hire a translator and my comfort level with both the Arabic and French languages, I found that the advantages of conducting and translating the interviews myself outweigh the possibility of some linguistic errors on my part.

The restricted time-frame of the study and the fact that a single student was conducting all the research tasks, I did not have a chance to review the findings with parents and to conduct a phone follow up for member checking. It was challenging and time-consuming to set up appointments to meet with the parents for the initial data collection interview, therefore the data collection phase involved a longer time-frame than I originally anticipated.

Despite my efforts to minimize bias and selecting my participants purposefully, it is possible that the participants in this study may not represent the norm. Therefore, I do highlight that the findings I represent in this study are not representative of the studied population as a

whole and my intention is not to over-generalize the findings to that specific population, yet it might uncover significant implications for DYP practitioners who interact with North African families.

Summary

In this thesis project, I chose a phenomenological approach to reflect the lived experiences of the parents from the North African community who received DYP interventions. I introduced the guiding interview questions that were refined throughout the research study. Figure 3.1 outlines the project's timeline and the research process of the Master's thesis from the project conceptualization phase until the thesis writing phase.

In this chapter, I outlined the measures I took to ensure the trustworthiness of the data presented to ensure that I represented the voices of the participants in the most faithful way. I explored some of the methodological and technical limitations that I encountered throughout the research process.



Figure 3.1 Summary of research process

Chapter IV: Research findings

This chapter presents the findings that were generated from the data analysis of the transcribed interviews from the six participants. The themes along with and sub-themes are

discussed. Direct quotes from participants are presented to support the themes and to reflect the participant's lived experience. All interviews were transcribed in French. The present quotes are translated from French to English (original quotes in French are available in Appendix E).

The experience of the participants is characterized into four major themes:

(a) child-protection from the parents' perspective; (b) parents' perception of DYP services; (c) help and services received: expectations versus reality; and (d) partnerships with resources and bridging cultural distance. Each theme is characterized by subthemes (Table 4.1).

4.1 Themes

Table 4.1 Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
Child-protection from the parents' perspective	Keeping the family together Keeping parental authority When corporal punishment is justified Rights versus obligations
Parents' perception of DYP services	Emotions affiliated with DYP's meetings Breaking family relationships Cultural matching is not enough Limited resources It's all about generating money Prejudice and stereotypes towards the North African community
Help and services received: expectations versus reality	Execution of "tasks" versus child welfare Family's role in intervention plan Protection needs versus educational needs Insufficient family-centered approach

Partnerships with resources and bridging cultural distance	Prevention and raising-awareness for newly arrived immigrants Cultural matching with resources and foster families Beyond the incident: Taking overall parenting experience into consideration Empowerment of parents
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4.2 Child-protection from the parents' perspective



Figure 4.1 Child-protection from the parents' perspective subthemes

Responses from participants highlighted the dilemma they face as many of them immigrated with considerable hope to secure a better future for themselves and their children. Nevertheless, they experienced pressures in terms of how the society in general, and a governmental institution, specifically DYP and school influence their family life. A number of

participants in this sample expressed a sense of disappointment and betrayal in terms of how their family life and relationship with their children were changing since the DYP's involvement.

I asked parents what child-protection and child-welfare meant for them and what values were highly important for them to reinforce in their family life. Parents highlighted cultural understanding of what the concepts of child-protection and child-welfare may entail. Parents acknowledged that the notions of discipline, child maltreatment (neglect and abuse) may in times contradict with that of the DYP or other institutions, such as the school or their local CLSC.

4.2.1 Keeping the family together

Hajer talked about the importance of keeping the child with the family for the child's best interest. She shared the story of DYP intervention with one of the children who attends her daycare. She found that the DYP "does not care" when they remove children from their family

Hajer: "I felt sorry because the little girl, she was just 1 year old.. she still needs her mom... in fact her mom called me she said she does not sleep at night because they took her daughter but they (the DYP) do not care .. the child is in a foster family but even a foster family..."

Khadija discussed how she was hesitant to seek help from social workers when her husband was terminally ill. She did not want him to be hospitalized and wanted the family to "stay together." Yet the school has put pressure on Khadija to hospitalize the father otherwise their younger child will be reported to the DYP and possibly removed.

Khadija: "I felt a lot of judgment (from social workers) especially because I took a lot of care of my husband .. I felt judged (by the social workers) that I did not take care of my children .. I did not want my husband to be hospitalized .. I wanted the family to be together ..even if my husband is just physically available .. "

Saleema spoke about her perception of the DYP services before their (voluntary) involvement with her child. From the stories she heard from other parents, she had a preconceived perception that the DYP "is an institution that takes away your children if they ever

perceive something," which to her contradicted with the notion of child protection and child welfare.

4.2.2 Keeping parental authority

Amin highlighted that in his country of origin, parents have the ultimate authority over their children and that only the parents can decide what strategies to adopt to address the issues they deal with their children.

Amin: "Over there (in Algeria), there is no authority beyond that of parents, there is no government intervention ... You have the ultimate power over your children ... When it comes to their upbringing, no one who will tell you no it's not like that there is no fear that there is another institution that will intervene in your choices.. if there is a problem there is no other agencies or other authorities that will intervene on your behalf. "

Rabia discussed that they never used corporal punishment with their children. However, when the parents felt that they are losing their parental authority, they resorted to corporal punishment for the first time and the DYP was involved right after that incident.

Rabia: "... my younger daughter started adolescence and she started to reject the authority of her father ... even at school she does what she wants .. she does not respect the teachers and she opposes them.."

Karima expressed that the value of "parental authority" is reinforced in her country of origin, both at home and in the other systems involved in the family's life (e.g., extended family and school). She finds on the other hand that in Québec the notion of parental authority is challenged by school and the DYP.

Karima: "The difference in child's upbringing is that in Algeria what is said at home is also said in school. While here what I do at home they undo it at school .. We (QC's society) are ashamed to speak of (parental) authority...It's the wrong message we give to the children because in life there is authority, hierarchy at work, police, everywhere. If in the house they are not already learning to respect the parental authority this child is delinquent, that's where I see the difference ... "

The notion of parental authority was paramount for these parents. They sought to ensure that their parental authority is enforced by social institutions, including the school and DYP. They found that the contradiction between the family norms and the societal norms around parental authority may create confusion and a cultural conflict for the child.

4.2.3 When corporal punishment is justified

When asked about how parents perceive the differences in the parenting styles between the mainstream culture and their heritage culture, parents discussed how they define discipline. Some participants highlighted that corporal punishment is abusive if not used correctly, yet in some instances they have to resort to it for the “child’s-best interest.”

Hajer: "In Algeria it's (corporal punishment) the last step when you hit .. not hit hard but it's as a *correction* for us..even though on the day the DYP was involved we did not hit her"

Karima: "My mother spanked me..when I remember I say that with a laugh, I don't cry ... That's how I talk about my parents, you see. I never talked about being traumatized.."

Another participant, Rabia, compared between “physical abuse” and “psychological abuse.” She discussed how she finds that in QC’s society, parenting practices that are based on consequences (rewards and punishment) can sometimes be psychologically abusive.

Rabia: "You have to hit the child just to scare them not to hurt them.. it's for them to understand that there is an authority ...it's just for *correction* ... on the other hand here when the child does something we immediately give consequences...I see that most of these consequences create a psychological distress .. I did not like the way we raise the children here..it says we must not hit the child .. in Morocco my father never touched me never hit me..We always have a discussion and dialogue we have no tension at the home we were never hit by my parents .. "

Some participants highlighted the nuances between physical discipline and physical abuse. They perceived corporal punishment as an acceptable tool to reinforce parental authority if does not respect that authority.

4.2.4 Rights versus obligations

Participants discussed how they emphasize the obligations that their children have towards the family members especially when they are adolescents. Obligations include unconditional respect for parents and the limits to freedom granted to their children. Parents emphasized that they view that the parenting style in the mainstream society provide a lot of rights to the children, and explain that their emphasis on obligations can be in conflict with that values of the society that their children grew up in.

Hajer: "I work with children and I see how parents behave with their children sometimes I notice that it is the child who decides not the parent .. not like us .. Whenever the child wants something the parent does it .. it's like they manipulate their parents..the child decides to do something the parents obey .. "

Saleema: "I found this problem here in Canada. That's all what children learn in school ..only their rights. You have the right to do this.. You have the right to do that. Parents do not have the right to make you do that.. Parents do not have the right to yell. Parents do not have the right to hit. Parents .. You know? A child will learn to know only his rights.. The parental authority is erased once I hear (from my child) you have no right...(Suddenly we tell) the child you have obligations...Respect your parents .. respect your brothers ... respect your sister .. like us adults .. if we just learn our rights we will like it. You know?"

Karima: "Already for (the concept of) adolescence...in Québec I do not believe it too much ... There is no adolescence in Algeria...I was a teenager too and I did not do such things. (the DYP worker tells me) she's just a teenager, everything is ok everything is accepted ...No..We have obligations towards each other, it is normal for the parent to guide the child. I call it guidance not abuse ... "

Along with the notion of parental authority, participants in this study shared how the notion of obligations towards the family members was not reinforced by the social systems that the child interacts with, including the school.

4.3 Parents' perception of DYP services

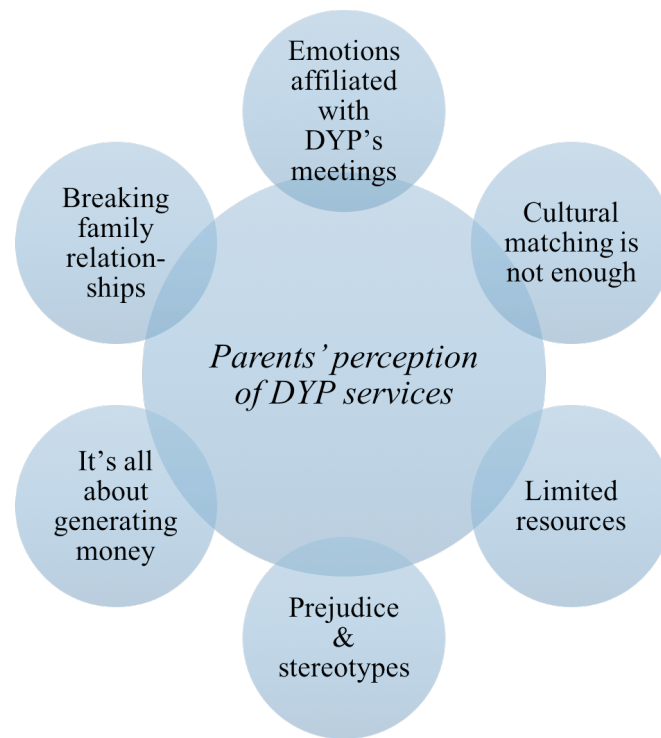


Figure 4.2 Parents' perception of DYP services subthemes

Overall, participants' perceptions of the DYP services were dominated by pessimism. Participants highlighted their feelings of fear, mistrust, dissatisfaction and disappointment in their initial and ongoing contact with the DYP services. Parents were also concerned about their children's experiences during their placement in CJ and in foster families, such as exposure to substance abuse for the first time when they are under foster care.

4.3.1 Emotions affiliated with DYP's meetings

Amin argued that he felt helpless and disempowered in negotiating the conditions and agreement suggested by the DYP professional.

Amin: "They have ultimate power with justice...a social worker told us that you're losing your money (paying private lawyers) because what are we telling the judge is what she is going to do... Indeed every time a (court) decision is made it is really what the DYP asks for.."

Another parent described the day they received a phone call from the DYP to inform them that their child was placed in a foster family until the court hearing. The parent felt a sense of betrayal that the school director called the DYP directly without consulting the parents to hear their perspective about the 'incident.' The parent describes how fearful and anxious they were when they received the initial call from the DYP.

Hajer: "They took our daughter directly from school .. My husband got a call that we have to be at the DYP at 6 p.m. because our daughter is there .. my husband was shocked .. he told me they took our daughter they took her..his face became really very pale .. he started to cry .. saying it's the DYP.. I said ok calm down..my husband said we must say the same thing (version of the incident) because he was scared .. "

Hajer described how she felt disempowered, confused and lost after meeting the DYP professional. Due to the parents feelings' of anxiety they did not reach an agreement with the DYP professional during the assessment meeting. Hajer mentioned not knowing how to navigate the legal system and where to start to obtain legal aid to return her daughter back home.

Hajer: "We were really shocked..we never thought we'd get to that point to see a lawyer and all .. we were lost .. we were really lost .. how are we going to see a lawyer we do not even know where to start I never want to go back to this story .. because it was a nightmare for us..I saw it just in the movies .. Now it happened to me "

Saleema expressed her feelings of dissatisfaction towards the environment at the CJ. She found that she has to deal with new challenges with her child when he returned back home.

Saleema: "My son was 13 years old but he was placed with other adolescents who are 16 17 years old .. my son started to learn things like drug dealing ... before his placement our problems were a lot easier than that now he started talking to us about marijuana .. really I am not satisfied ..until now I'm not satisfied at all (from DYP's interventions).."

The initial meeting with the DYP professionals along with preconceived ideas about the DYP appears to influence the experiences of the participants during both the assessment and intervention process of DYP with their children.

4.3.2 Breaking family relationships

Some participants highlighted that since DYP's involvement in their family, they feel that they lost the parental authority and their ability to set limits for their children. Some parents highlighted that their adolescents became more rebellious since DYP's involvement as the adolescents felt that DYP reinforced their rights of freedom over their obligations.

Amin: "Imagine a child that you take away from his parents ... you know that you can live your life the way you want..a child is not yet of age to decide..he (DYP worker) will do everything to ask (daughter) if she has problems with her father or mother. .It's like we were in an investigation.. It's a very wrong way .. It's like we're strangers .. So they (the DYP) are doing everything to break the family ties ... for me the DYP is a destructive institution for the family"

Rabia: "I saw my daughter (at the CJ) was really shaken and pale .. I saw the hatred in her face towards her father .. despite that fact that they reconciled (before DYP's intervention) .. that's when we felt (the DYP) provoked her against us .. I think they told her things like you have the right you're protected here etc. these are nice things to say but it's for parents who are really violent or alcoholic or drug dealers .. it's nice to tell the kid in this case he is protected "

Karima: "I have found nothing positive with the DYP experience they are absolutely a machine that destroys the family that's it. I lost a lot of money I lost a lot of time. "

Parents described how she felt that their children "manipulated" them when they returned back home following their placement with the foster family.

Hajer: "We lost the parental authority. At one point our daughter started to manipulate us .. If you do this or that I call the DYP .. if you talk to me that way I'll call the police.."

Rabia: "It's like there was no parental authority. It's like Israel can do anything against the Palestinians because they are protected by the United States. it's the same thing for my daughter she feels protected by the DYP, by the police, by the lawyers .. she came with this idea so she did what she wanted and if she wants to report to the police against her father it's still possible .. but with time I explained that no it does not work like that .. she pushed me she yelled at me ... it's like she felt strong with the DYP .. "

Karima: "At that age (adolescence) I have the right to have an idea about her friends. However the judge tells me: you do not allow her to see her friends ... They devalue the parent, the parent does not know nothing. And now when the DYP worker leaves our home she (my daughter) tells me you see I told you: You're dump!"

Khadija discussed her perceptions about DYP's interventions. She highlighted that her overall perceptions of DYP's services has significantly changed after she experienced how empathetic and supportive the educators were to the child and to the whole family. Although the DYP professionals helped her restore a positive relationship with her son during his placement, she also highlighted that in other families that she personally knows, the DYP's interventions can have an opposite effect.

Khadija: "Sometimes i feel that the DYP separates the families..they do not help in some cases that I know .. I hope they work to strengthen the family ties..even when there was a child who deviated..I understand the notion of the freedom but sometimes I find that they give a lot of rights to the child a lot more than the parent..I understand that sometimes my child is right but I find they provoke the child against the parents..that's where our values are not compatible .. "

Similar with the notion of parental authority, the value of keeping the family together was highly important for the parents to ensure the child's best interest. Contradiction between the emphasis on rights and freedom of the child versus the obligations enforced by parents seems to create challenges towards establishing rapport between the family and the DYP.

4.3.3 Cultural matching is not enough

I asked parents if their culture of origin, cultural values and parenting practices were discussed and taken into consideration during the DYP's assessment and intervention. Some parents highlighted that they spoke about immigration history during the initial assessment, but they felt that the way their culture was taken into consideration was "superficial" and in a form of "standardized questions." Other parents were assigned cultural interpreters or professionals from the same cultural background (e.g., psychologist).

Rabia's children were referred to a psychologist from the same cultural background. Nevertheless, she felt the psychologist did not put the family's cultural reality into consideration

and the parents experienced “new challenges” with their daughters following the meetings with the psychologist.

Rabia: "It was done (assessment of immigration history) in a superficial way .. I had the impression that they (DYP) are looking to make immigrants to be like Quebecers .. point final .. it's like brainwashing .. we came here for our children but our children are no longer ours..they are the children of society so they do what they want with them..the (DYP) educator suggested that my daughters go see a Moroccan psychologist..because she has the same culture as us..the same religion etc..My girls went there they came back with another brainwash.I said to the Centre Jeunesse I prefer to have a nun or a priest to guide my daughter because they are going to talk about spiritual nourishment ... instead of just talking about rights and provoking children against their parents..the DYP told me no we can not do that there are so many communities..I just think that their model does not really work .. "

Karima highlighted a similar experience, where she was assigned a DYP worker from her same cultural background. Nevertheless, Karima felt that the worker did not acknowledge her cultural reality and reinforced what the other DYP workers have been implementing.

Karima: "One day they (DYP) brought me a worker..I thought I can talk (openly to her).. They told me she's Algerian like me . Here I told them stop that's not what I want ... she talks like you here. She did not understand anything there you know very well that what she said it's not right. But she is doing that to please her boss. (she told me) you know the adolescence blah blah blah.. I told her I understand your position very well but for me continue to do your little business..go recite your little lesson to have an increase (in salary). It's your job it's your livelihood, but you'll not tell what suits me. That's it everyone knows what's good for them. "

Khadija talked about her positive experience during the DYP's intervention, and how the DYP worker discussed their cultural values and parenting priorities from the beginning. The DYP's educator helped her reinforce the family values and re-establish a strong relationship with her son during his placement at CJ.

Khadija: “the educator who was in charge of my son i see that he really wants to help him .. he wants to guide him more .. he encourages him to respect his values .. he encouraged my son to be a practicing Muslim .. he spoke with him a lot about his values for example the family ties..for example he requested that my son goes out (of Centre Jeunesse) to visit us despite the DYP's initial rejection (that he leaves the Centre)..In my experience I found that the DYP helped a lot..they guided our son during a period of crisis "

Cultural matching may have not responded to the parents' expectations and participants did not have positive experiences when they were assigned professionals from their cultural background. Nevertheless, when professionals had an open dialogue about cultural values with the parents, the latter felt engaged and a collaborative approach was facilitated.

4.3.4 Limited resources

Participants expressed dissatisfaction with the services they received, and dissatisfaction with the fact that they did not receive timely interventions despite the judge's order to provide certain services for the child. Participants also expressed the challenges they faced as the DYP professional changed frequently and they felt that they "start all over again."

Saleema highlighted how the educator involved with her child changed frequently, not allowing the family to follow the developed agreement or strategies suggested by the previous educator.

Saleema: "There was a lot of change. we had an intern educator but she created a lot of problems for us after that the intern left after a few weeks we have not yet had the time to properly apply the agreement. After that another educator came.. the problem with every change of educator they come without knowing anything about our son's record so we start all over again .. I have to explain it all..they do not read the files.. I am really tired of every change every time I have to explain what the other educators have tried "

Saleema discussed how her child was frequently placed at the CJ, and despite that his behavioral issues were aggravating, the DYP did not offer them complementary services to address his issues. The parents requested a follow-up with the psychologist, and after the judge ordered that service for the child, the child still did not obtain it.

Saleema "I did an evaluation (for my son) with a neuropsychologist ... he recommended that we do a follow up with a psychologist because he has oppositional disorder .. I showed this to the DYP and I have repeatedly asked for psychologist but in vain .. they (the DYP) just continued their follow up at home..they told me that because of the budget cuts . we (the DYP) have no budget for that (psychologist)... she (the educator) did not consider that as a priority..Normally the mandate of the DYP is to help the child and

protect him but I do not see that we had the service in line with this mandate.it was just a home follow-up we received.."

Parents requested services different from that offered by the DYP to meet the child's and the family's needs. Budget cuts and limited resources were issues challenging for parents seeking help from DYP which created feelings of frustration and hopelessness about the interventions put in place.

4.3.5 It's all about generating money

Parents expressed their concern that the DYP continues to prolong the duration of interventions provided so that the institution and the foster families continue to receive subsidies from the government. Some participants talked about how the foster families provided the children with "exaggerated" weekly allowance or are less restrictive to make the child "seduced" to stay.

Amin: "the DYP is a company that tries to make money by any means.. they find any way to keep the child with the foster family even if the child says no even if we say no to them (for the placement) they insist on it and then they take our daughter. They break the family ties so that the child stays away from his parents .. The maximum time with them (the DYP) .. that's all"

Karima: "maybe it's the job of a lot of people (foster families) to have allocations to earn money.. That's my opinion..the worker (from the DYP) do these (interventions) as a job to be well seen by their boss "

Rabia: "the foster family gave my daughter \$50 every week. Imagine \$ 50 for an 11-year old .. It's like a seduction..Also the lady at the foster family doesn't care if she does her homework or sleeps..sometimes my daughter sleeps at 11 pm or midnight "

The perception of the DYP attempting to benefit from the child's placement in foster care can create feelings of mistrust towards the services. Some participants expressed that they did not feel that the foster care was in the child's best interest but rather to generate maximum (financial) benefit for the DYP professionals and foster families.

4.3.6 Prejudice and stereotypes towards the community

Some participants spoke about experiencing prejudice from the DYP worker during their initial and ongoing contact. Amin discussed how the DYP did not hear the parents' point of view, and felt that the DYP decided that the couple was not "apt" to raise their children, without conducting a thorough assessment.

Amin: "For them we (North African parents) have the wrong way of upbringing our children. In their mind the way we raise our children is not good ... they have a bad perception about our (North African) community .. "

Karima described how she felt the North African and other visible minority immigrants were overly represented at the CJ when she visited her child.

Karima: "I think it's a targeted community like the Haitian and Latin American ... It means that our (North African) community does not intervene and it means that we are targeted they (the DYP) have the impression that we are harsh... I do not know, but when they talk to a Muslim family seems to be already prejudiced. When working with a Muslim family they think first that they are not fit to raise a child according to Quebec standards .. According to the (charter of) rights of the child, everyone has the right to bring up his child according to his values. So they do not respect the rights of the child. That's what I tell them listen to me I am a good citizen I raise my child according to my values. You do not have to say: she is Québécoise. I raise according to my values (the worker tell me) yes but may be you are too demanding in your community ... "

The experience of prejudice towards the North African community was brought up by participants during the assessment and intervention phases of the DYP intervention. Some participants felt that their cultural reality was not discussed due to apriori conceptions of the professionals about the family's cultural values.

4.4 Help and services received: expectations versus reality

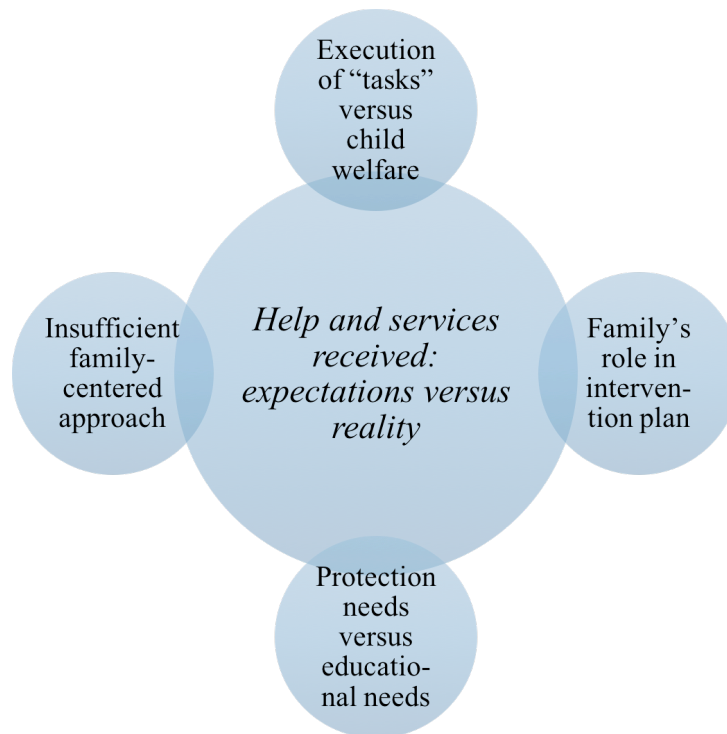


Figure 4.3 Help and services received: expectations versus reality subthemes

The degree to which participants found that the DYP services met their needs varied. Parents expressed the need for timely and practical assistance for the overall welfare of the child and the family, rather than the specific focus on standardized tools that sometimes were not pertinent to their needs. In fact, sometimes parents found that the DYP's intervention plan exacerbated the initial issues they had with their children and created additional challenges in their family life. The gap between the help parents expected from DYP versus that they received created mistrust, which can compromise the potential for a collaborative approach and supportive engagement between the DYP professionals and the family.

On the other hand, when both the parents and the DYP professional agreed on intervention plans and the family perceived that the DYP professional put the family values and

well-being at an utmost importance, these elements resulted in a positive relationship and overall improvement in child's self-esteem.

4.4.1 Execution of “tasks” versus child welfare

Amin talked about how he did not feel that the DYP took into consideration their overall “parenting experience and efforts” with their children. He found that the DYP professionals on the other hand emphasized the isolated ‘incident’ or what he defines as ‘accident’ and therefore applied standardized interventions that did not contribute to the child's well-being.

Amin: "They are not humans they are machines they have procedures to follow and then they apply them like machines..even if there is an incident it is important to see the other side of what the parents do with their children ... they should not just focus on this incident ... you have to see all and study the other elements and balance it out.. if for example the child has experienced several problems several times .. we will say the maltreatment and all this yes absolutely but if it's an incident once .. well, you must not remove the child immediately like that .. "

Hajer discussed how the DYP interventions were “a waste of time for her.” She felt that educators repeated the tools that she already applies with her child and with the children who attend her home-owned daycare. She also highlighted how the initial contact with the DYP created a barrier for her to accept their services and collaborate with their meetings. Her only objective was to comply so she can terminate DYP's involvement with her family.

Hajer: "But it's the same thing that I do with the children in the daycare.. how to punish your child..i do the same thing with the kids .. you have to take away the things she likes the most ..I shouldn't hit her.. when the educator visits us it makes me stressed.. and I can't wait for her to leave .. she shows us how to raise my daughter..it was insane..I felt it was like their daughter not my daughter..They decided to remove her .. Besides it's all that I have (my daughter).. There are a lot of immigrants who come here just for their children.”

Other participants talked about the weekly visits done by psychoeducators, and how these meetings involved asking the parents questions without offering “actual tools” for them in return.

Parents found that sometimes the “agreements” set between the educator and the adolescent “disrupted” their family functioning.

Rabia: "Just a weekly follow up .. she (the educator) asks how was the week..were there any issues? what did she (the child) do during the week? activities, outings? .. once she finishes her questions she calls my daughter ... after that she said ok we'll put down an agreement .. she asks my daughters: what do you want to do? More outings? .. I find that the follow up has disrupted the routine at home ... for example, their father once said that will limit summer outings for only 2 times a week..the educator said no 2 times not enough. It's not enough..We are in the middle of summer..They (children) have to do some activities..We (parents) said ok we will allow 3 times outings..then they became 5 outings .. it's like we do not decide for our daughter .. "

Saleema: "The intern had no experience so he (my child) started to manipulate her.. the educator did an agreement with him, what to do when he comes back from school, for example... in the agreement that she (the educator) created with him, she gave him a lot of privileges ... she was not professional .. I trusted her because they (the DYP) are more expert than us (the parents) .. but finally I noticed that the son does not respect the instructions .. he does not make his homework...he provokes his brother the way he wants .. despite that he still gets 2 or 3 hours of internet everyday as in the agreement..when they (the educators) come for the follow-up of the week what do they do? They always ask me: tell us what you did during the week .. what he (the son) did .. what was his reaction (son) .. what was your reaction (parents) .. what you (parents) did or did not apply (as a tool) but since I asked (the DYP) for help that is because, I really need help ... where is that help? it's not coming to ask me what we did during the week ... they did not even ask my son why he acts like that why he has that anger towards us"

Some participants found that the application of the standardized tools did not address the underlying causes of their child’s issues (e.g., oppositional/aggressive behavior) and therefore perceived the DYP’s follow-up as not responding to their needs.

4.4.2 Family’s role in intervention plan

Some participants felt that DYP services did not understand their cultural reality, and therefore they sought to meet their “family” needs through other community services. Parents highlighted the role of some community organizations that respected their cultural values and accompanied them throughout the DYP’s intervention process.

Amin: “the worker from this (community) organization came to our house or followed-up with us by phone she helped us a lot..even with my daughter they contacted her and then they

tried to talk to her .. they do everything while respecting the parental bond and respecting our values.. like giving us tips how to prepare (our meeting) with the lawyer with the judge.. with the child how to work with her to restore the parental authority we lost .. that's it they did a huge job with us that it was really appreciated.. without them we know nothing"

Hajer described how the DYP's interventions at home did not meet her needs, so she attended workshops with a community organization that provided her with solid tools to address her needs, especially regarding having a stronger relationship with her child's teacher and how to navigate the school system as an immigrant.

Hajer: "In the workshops I attended they talked a lot more about the school .. about parent-child (relationship) how to do it .. what do you do when for example your child come home with a message in the agenda .. because it's true when my daughter was in this school she comes back with messages every time I panic what's this message ... (for immigrants) it's a cultural change they're embarrassed to ask professor of the child how is my child in school how does he behave .. they are really shy so they do not ask .. They go to school to pick up their kids so do not even ask .. she (the worker) asked us if there are any activities (in school) to go and attend them"

Khadija discussed how she worked in collaboration with the DYP's educator and CLSC social worker to help her son and the entire family that was going through significant distress and grief due to the father's terminal illness.

Khadija: "He (DYP's educator) wanted us to work together to prepare my son .. my son was not even able to name the word "death" .. we work together in parallel I speak with my son as his mother and them as specialists .. in addition he (the educator) constantly reassures me the educator came to my house the last time he asked me to have peace of mind (that my son is doing well) .. "

Parents discussed the importance of prioritizing their needs as well as that of the child for a better family functioning and the best interest of the child. Focusing only on the needs of the child was not congruent with the expectations of the parents.

4.4.3 Protection needs versus school performance

The theme of school performance as a priority for the parents came up frequently. Parents felt that their ‘long-term’ priorities to have their child successful in school conflicted with the DYP’s priority to provide the child with immediate protection.

Amin: "Before she was brilliant at school..but it is hard to be (placed) at the DYP and attend school at the same time .. she couldn’t really study... she missed school a lot so I had to pay for private lessons all that for her to catch up .. despite all this, at the DYP, the school is not really important, they only care about my daughter.. what is important for them she seeks freedom she tries to experiment things that are not good for her .. and that’s what she is looking for .. "

Saleema: "I asked her (the worker) that my son goes to school (during his placement), especially since it was exams period I explained to them that it is his last chance to make the exams tomorrow but no they did not let him leave Centre Jeunesse .. when I spoke with the worker she reassured me that everything is arranged between Centre Jeunesse and the school.. but finally my son received zero in his exam ... finally I regretted my decision to let him (be placed) at Centre Jeunesse and that I followed the advice of the worker ..I noticed that DYP workers are not doing what is in the child’s interest Overall I see that since his placement at the Centre Jeunesse his grades are declining and I was not able to re-register him in the international school. He began to consume (marijuana) and he had no more respect for his school.. "

Karima: "That's what the DYP did with her.. Her grades became ten percent, fifty percent. Her school performance declined..she was really good at school (before).. and when she was with them (DYP) the school sent me a letter to tell me your daughter has a learning disability. A ten percent bulletin means she does not study..why should she study anyways. I brought her back home I started again and she got 100%. (we spend) all day (writing) on the whiteboard, and I teach her myself. "

School performance was of utmost priority for parents beyond the child’s needs for freedom and autonomy. Some participants expressed disappointment that their attitudes towards school performance was not prioritized during the child’s placement under foster care as parents would have desired.

4.4.4 Insufficient family-centered approach

Some participants talked about how their perspective was not heard during the DYP’s assessment. They wanted that the worker put into consideration their “understanding of the

situation” and work together as a team for the well-being of the child and the family, not only the child.

Amin: "... They wanted to remove my daughter .. and afterwards they realized that there is a problem with our daughter...a problem of self-esteem ... then bullying at school .. At first ... the problem was us (the parents) .. it's us the problem but eventually they understood then they said we will do everything to help you restore your (parental) authority and offer the daughter sessions with a psychologist"

Khadija discussed how she faced pressure from the school and the CLSC to place her younger child. She mentioned feeling that the emphasis was only on her son's well-being regardless of the well-being of the whole family. Although she requested financial and instrumental help (transportation and daycare services) from the CLSC, the worker brought up the possibility of placing the child in a foster family in order to “help the mother” as she is going through cancer treatment.

Khadija: "She (the social worker) offered me to place my young child with a foster family..I was like what...I was really shocked... I'm sick I'm going through a difficult time..I would like my son to be with me...she said no no no we just wanted to help you but no I did not find that sensitive of her.. I ask her for help, help me to find it (the help I need)..I am talking about positive help on the other hand .. "

For Karima, she requested voluntarily the DYP's intervention when she faced challenges with her child. She felt the intervention was based on listening to her child's needs while not taking the parent's perspective into consideration. Karima felt that her parenting practice were judged and did not know how to reach an agreement with the DYP.

Karima: "The tone when they (DYP) address my daughter is different. The child was me not her, and her opinion (daughter) was listened to. When I give my point of view, it's never the right one, my answer is always wrong. They said that (my daughter) is overprotected. Imagine a 10 year old and half. (they tell me) But ma'am you want to stop her from playing? Normally she cannot go out without my permission...Another parent who lets their child outside you say he's negligent he does not think about the safety of the child and exposing the child to danger. Whatever the parent is doing (they are judged)... "

Saleema felt disempowered with the frequent change of the educators assigned to her child and did not know how to deal with his issues. She wished the DYP could orient her towards workshops or services to equip her as a parent.

Saleema: ".. from my experience I noticed that the workers do not help us .. I have not found the help I wanted .. at least (to offer) workshops for me and for my son .. at least for parents to learn how to handle child's behaviors and all that..some orientation ..we had no orientation even during the month that my son spent at the Centre Jeunesse..the educator met us maybe once .. "

Parents sought to be involved with the intervention plan and to be offered services themselves to be equipped to address the issues they face with their child. The feelings of judgement of their parental practices along with the strong emphasis on child's right created barriers of collaboration between some of the participants and DYP workers.

4.5 Partnerships with resources and bridging cultural distance

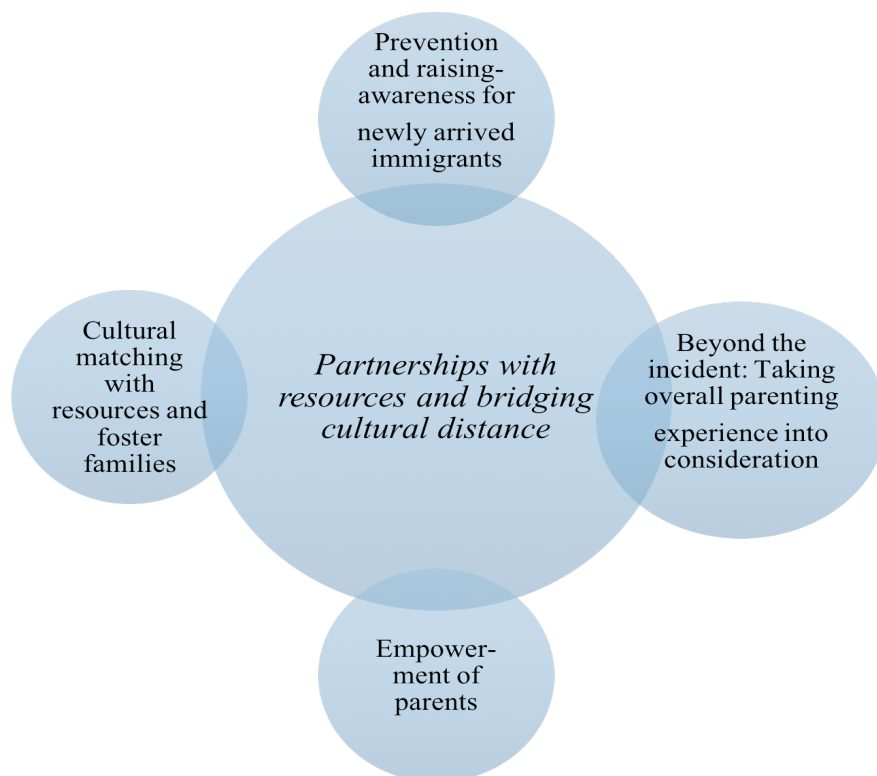


Figure 4.4 Partnership with resources and bridging cultural distance

Participants talked about different recommendations and improvements that the DYP can adopt on an organizational and professional level to address the disparities highlighted in the previous themes.

4.5.1 Prevention and raising-awareness for newly arrived immigrants

Some participants shared that they were not aware of the existence of the DYP services before their involvement with their family, and other participants were not aware about the extent of intervention of DYP and the collaboration between DYP and the school. Participants recommend that the DYP reaches out for the newly arrived immigrants and sensitize them about the mandate of DYP as a measure of prevention.

Hajer: "I hope there will be more and more awareness so that parents do not fall into the trap ... there are parents who do not know ... there are parents who come here they do not even know they have no right to hit your kids like refugee families families who come from the context of the war .. they are traumatized..you must really sensitize the North African community because our community here is lost .. (provide) workshops in mosques ... to talk about the DYP... to show parents what to do with children here .. because there are really a lot of parents here who are lost they are caught by the pace of life and the work .. especially here the lifestyle is very stressful .. you have to do things quickly .. you come here it's like you're starting your life from scratch .. you have to study you have to work at the same time to pay for studies .. you have to follow up with your children .. so stressful that incidents (parent-child conflict) can happen to anyone .. so they (DYP) really have to do some workshops. "

Khadija recommended facilitating dialogue sessions between the DYP professionals and parents to discuss their cultural values and parenting practices, as a way to sensitize both the parents and professionals about better interventions with families immigrating from North African countries. She also highlighted the need of immigrant parents to be flexible with their children when “imposing” certain cultural values.

Khadija: "Workshops ... to sensitize the parents .. openly discuss the values we have from our culture of origin .. I discovered a big difference between the way how we raise our kids compared to here .. it's good to always keep the same values but let's just see how we explain these values. And (for parents) to learn how to raise

our children. everyone is trying the best for their children... but honestly I see that parents (from North African community) have a lot of problems a lot of challenges .. we bring with us values and traditions that do not work here .. we want our children to be like us ... but it doesn't work ..the child he needs guidance but also we need to compromise sometimes our values .. a little flexibility on our part .. it will create a lot of differences for children and a lot of confusion because at home it's a culture at school is another culture in addition to their peers..so parents must consider that. "

Community based prevention measures are proposed by some participants as a measure to avoid DYP's involvement if the parents are aware of how the DYP defines child protection/child maltreatment upon their arrival. Cultural dialogue between the families and DYP professionals was also proposed to help de-mystify misconceptions about cultural values adopted by families and professional practices adopted by DYP workers.

4.5.2 Cultural matching with resources and foster families

Parents highlighted the need of the DYP to consult with culturally sensitive services when they intervene with minority families. Most of the participants shared painful experiences with foster families and CJ. They recommend that the DYP seek to sensitively match the children with potential foster families and reach out for more minority families to become foster families. For example, one participant highlighted the importance of "cultural continuity" for the well-being of the child, where the foster family continues to practice the same cultural and religious values as those in the biological family.

Amin: "if the DYP can work in collaboration with a community organization that represent each (minority) community.. and to take into account the recommendations of this organization .. because these people they understand the community they understand the our challenges they know easily how to work with the community and the culture they understand all that because they come from that community"

Hajer: "We need to have enough Muslim family as foster families so that we can place the child in a Muslim family if anything ever happens .. "

Cultural continuity was important for parents when their children were placed under foster care. Some participants call for liaison between DYP and culturally sensitive organizations that understand their cultural reality as a way to facilitate DYP's involvement.

4.5.3 Beyond the incident: Taking the overall parenting experience into consideration

Some participants suggested that the DYP does not only emphasize the 'incident' that called for the DYP to intervene. The participants emphasized that these incidents can be isolated and do not reflect the everyday parenting practices of these families. Yet the participants find that the DYP professionals put most of the emphasis on those incidents while ignoring the overall "positive" contributions the parents do with their children.

Amin: "I think that the DYP can be much more positive if they do the opposite .. if a child is in a difficult situation if parents are normal in a normal home then they should look a little bit more at what his parents are doing with his kids ... they (DYP) have to build the parental bond then to build parental authority...and above all...for the workers to establish a (collaborative) relationship with the parents first to help the child "

Hajer: "Do not take the kids the first time you have to see first if the parents are really violent if they have the habit of hitting their children and to consult with school .. not the first time to take a child like that .. and suddenly place him in a foster family.. go to court go see a lawyer ..I find that abusive .. for the first time - you have to try to understand ..we lied (to the worker) out of fear ... the worker (during assessment) needed to reassure us of the consequences of what will we say and share. "

Rabia: "I began to realize that these people (the DYP) do not recognize corporal punishment as a correction or as a method of discipline..I understood (from the DYP's assessment) that my husband he did something really serious ... the worker emphasized the fact that he hit her .. she repeats the question many times .. how he hit her .. there I understood .. especially when I saw the police..but anyway my husband is not someone who is violent"

Parents called for the acknowledgement of their efforts with their children and the strengths that exist already within the family by the DYP professionals. They wished the DYP

professionals would assess their parental contributions beyond only the reported incident to assess the degree of child maltreatment.

4.5.4 Empowerment of parents

Participants recommended that the DYP accompanies and equips the parents with tools to help the child deal with their challenges. Parents discussed the importance of working collaboratively with the family to empower the parents to build healthy relationships with their children.

Amin: "the priority is not a child it is the family .. it is not how to protect a child against his parents..but normally it should be about protecting the whole family .. if there is a lack of tools to do it they should equip everyone parents and children .. but we will not target (just the child)"

Khadija: "I do not think placement is a solution .. it's going to aggravate the problems. even when the child comes home after placement I do not think children will stay the same for sure that the child will change ... even if there is violence or something you always have to work to build the relationship. it's not my field but that's my perspective..you need to have a dialogue between the members of the family then try to find solutions while keeping the family together .. "

Saleema: "I wish that since the beginning DYP was involved to give a lot of guidance for parents for example which workshop can parents attend to be better equipped to help their adolescent..and to give advice not just follow up .. "

Rabia mentioned the importance of DYP professionals to highlight both the rights and the obligations of the adolescent, instead of only putting the emphasis on their rights.

Rabia: "I would like the (DYP) worker to not talk only about the child's rights ... these rights are like a double-edged sword..I do not want them to speak only about rights..for example the last time they have told my daughter if you still want to sue your father you still have time to do it..re-open the file .. why do they say that? .. I want them to consider religion and culture..to invite spiritual leaders..I understand that they are secular but we immigrants are not .. "

Fostering a strong relationship between the children and parents was seen as a high priority by participants. Participants sought that the DYP interventions guide them in that direction by orienting parents towards resources that can help them achieve that objective.

Summary

The present chapter discussed the major themes that emerged from the findings about parents' lived experience with the DYP involvement. Each theme was enriched with powerful language and context.

The interviews with 6 participants revealed four themes related to the phenomenon under study. The first emerging theme was the definition of child-protection from the parents' perspective. Parents defined child protection and child's best interest as keeping the family together rather than removing the child, reinforcing parental authority and child's obligations towards the families members, and resorting to corporal punishment to reinforce these values under certain circumstances.

The second theme was the parents' perception of DYP services based on their personal experiences and preconceptions from the experiences of other families that they met. Participants highlighted the perceptions of DYP's meetings as stressful, and that the DYP's goal as perceived by parents is to break family ties and generate money for the DYP system. Parents also highlighted how they experienced prejudice and stereotypes by DYP professionals.

For the third theme, help and services received: expectations versus reality, participants highlighted the gaps between the DYP's mandate (child protection) and the services provided. School performance and the adoption of family-centered approach were highly prioritized by the parents yet participants desired that the DYP to consider these priorities equally in their interventions.

The final theme discusses partnerships with resources and bridging cultural distance. Participants called for the adoption of prevention measures by the DYP to sensitize parents about the definitions of child maltreatment within the context of QC's society. Efforts to create partnership with other organizations that understand the parents' cultural reality and parenting practices were recommended. Finally, participants called for the empowerment of the parents through orienting them to pertinent resources and equipping them to deal with the child's issues.

Chapter V: Discussion

In this chapter, I will overview the findings of the study and discuss the significance of the findings, while relating them to the findings from other studies in the literature. I will discuss the implications for social work practice and research, and my personal reflection from the research process. I will end this chapter with a conclusive statement.

5.1 Overview

A phenomenological approach was used to explore the lived experiences of North African immigrant parents who received interventions from the QC's child welfare system. I chose this approach to explore the unique and specific experiences of these parents in-depth and to discuss their experience throughout the process of intervention of the DYP with their children.

Four major themes emerged from the findings: (a) child-protection from the parents' perspective; (b) parents' perception of DYP services; (c) help and services received: expectations versus reality; and (d) partnerships with resources and bridging cultural distance. As presented in Chapter 4, each of these themes held a variety of subthemes that reflected the experiences of the parents who participated in this study.

5.2 Discussion of the major findings

Recognition of the need of child welfare services to adapt to the changing demographics of the service users has increased in the social work profession (Dufour et al., 2016). As this topic becomes more prevalent in the literature and practice debates, the need for research regarding the perception and impact of DYP interventions with first generation immigrant parents is critical.

Participants defined child protection to be within the family, not within another institution mandated by the government. Parental authority was a concept of paramount importance for most of the participants, as it related to how the family is organized around parental authority that needs to be maintained and reinforced by different systems, including the extended family, school, and even DYP. Parental authority is defined as one of the aspects that maintain the stability and structure in the family system (Aouattah, 2010).

Most of the participants specified that their parenting style emphasizes the obligations of the child towards the family members especially towards parents. On the other hand, most participants felt that the mainstream society socializes the children since a young age to learn mostly about their rights, such as in the school system, thus challenging the values that parents are trying to instill in children at home. A child-centered approach that is based mostly on the child's rights and interests may therefore challenge the parental authority established at home, and may be difficult for the parents to accept readily and collaborate with (Chiasson-Lavoie & Roc, 2000).

Corporal punishment was brought up as a strategy to reinforce that parental authority if the child fails to show respect for the parental authority. Hassan and Rousseau (2009) discussed how North African parents and adolescents in their study defined corporal punishment to be

acceptable as a discipline strategy under certain circumstances, when the intention is to “correct” the child’s behavior rather than inflicting pain or harm to their well-being. Other studies mirror similar findings. Immigrant parents specified the use of corporal punishment as an action to correct what they perceived as misbehavior rather than a lack of anger management or unprovoked attack from the parents (Earner, 2007). The differences in the perception of corporal punishment is one of the “sensitive zones” as defined by Cohen-Émérique (2000) that can create conflict between child welfare worker and the family. Parents can therefore feel that they are not only being misunderstood by the DYP worker, but also may feel that the worker is judgmental of their culture and that conflict of loyalty between the parents and children can be created (Bell, 1999; Earner, 2007; Hassan & Rousseau, 2009).

Participants’ views of the child welfare system were shaped by their preconceived impressions from stories they heard from their acquaintances upon arrival to QC, and from their early experiences with DYP workers. Engagement with the child protection system was found to be an intimidating, stressful and difficult experience for parents who participated in this study. Unfortunately, findings from the current study along with other studies indicate that parents’ experience DYP workers to be authoritarian, controlling and to be avoided if possible (Dumbrill, 2006). The legal mandate of DYP intervention may represent the reproduction of oppression that minority immigrant families may have experienced, such as in the form of discrimination in the workplace (Eid, Turenne & Magloire, 2011).

Families may sometimes feel that the DYP worker may have had preconceived ideas about the family’s situation and cultural stereotypes, leaving little room for dialogue regarding the interpretation given to the event. Despite the efforts of some workers to convey a partnership between them and the families, families remain mindful about the power imbalance between

them and the child welfare worker and the potential of this power to be used against the parents (Dumbrill, 2006).

One of the objectives of the study was to examine the extent to which families felt that the DYP services met their needs after a period of engagement with their interventions. However, Buckley, Carr and Whelan (2010) discussed the “identification of needs” is based on the assumption that both the service users and service providers have a shared understanding of the definition of ‘need.’ In child welfare frameworks of practice, the definition of needs focuses on the child’s physical, emotional and safety needs and how parents need behavioral changes to address these needs. Nevertheless, this framework does not consider that parents may have other concerns to concur with workers that may hinder them to meet the needs identified by the worker. Such differing perspectives may result in mistrust, this compromising the potential for supportive engagement from the part of the parents (Buckley, Carr & Whelan, 2010).

One example of the needs that parents did not feel were not fulfilled was the incongruence between “intervention plan” and the “tasks” assigned to achieve this plan. In fact, service users in this study did not find that the assigned tasks to be set as a conjoint effort between the parents and the worker to enhance child’s safety and welfare. One example some participants highlighted was their “cultural” matching with workers from their background. Parents felt that their cultural reality was not respected by merely assigning them with a professional who matches their background, yet who does not share the values that are critical to them. Consistent with the findings of Buckley, Carr and Whelan (2010), the “tasks” identified in the intervention plan were seen more as standardized protocols that parents have to comply with to eventually avoid the removal of their children. Some parents identified specific needs that were sometimes urgent such as subsidies for transportation, workshops to help parents manage

their child's behavior, or a follow-up with a psychologist. Some parents were frustrated as the DYP could not provide these services due to the long waiting lists, the limited resources and budget cuts that the DYP is experiencing.

In this study, parents identified their child's school performance to be a priority for them. This may emerge from the parents' desire to ensure a better future for their children after their immigration (Yakhnich, 2015). For two participants in the study, children were placed "voluntarily" at the CJ upon an agreement between the parents and the worker. Parents expressed their disappointment as their children's school performance significantly declined upon their placement. For immigrant parents, school performance may be a significant factor in the successful adaptation of their children in the mainstream society (Yakhnich, 2015). These differing attitudes and expectations from DYP services may create anxiety and frustration, which would impact the collaborative approach that families and DYP workers aspire to have (Buckley, Carr & Whelan, 2010).

On the positive side, some participants identified that when they developed good working relationship with the DYP worker, they worked collaboratively on meeting both the child's and the family's (e.g., parents or other siblings) needs. Parents appreciated the worker's willingness to listen to the family's story and circumstances, and to identify collaboratively the family's needs. Parents identified helping alliance based on the empathy, helpfulness, openness, respect for the family's cultural values and reinforcing these values in the intervention with the child rather than opposing them. These factors have been identified in previous studies and were acknowledged as important in the current study (e.g., Maiter, Palmer & Manji, 2006). These factors have also been highlighted in the cultural humility model, where the worker is called to engage in the processes of self-awareness, openness and transcendence (Ortega & Faller, 2011).

The focus on cultural particularities and child-family-system interactions can eventually address the needs of the family that challenges the ‘one size fits all’ model of child welfare practice (Miller & Gaston, 2003).

Partnership with culturally-sensitive resources and bridging cultural distance were two crucial issues that participants in this study discussed. Ensuring the compatibility between the cultural values of the biological and foster families was a priority for the participants. Ethnic identity is one of the aspect of self-identity that develops early in childhood. It can in fact act as a protective factor against social adversity and discrimination in the context of foster care (Phinney, 2009).

Another aspect that was frequently mentioned throughout the findings was the “empowerment of parents.” Parents highlighted their need to acquire new skills to deal with their respective parenting challenges, and expected the DYP intervention plan to highlight that aspect and the workers to offer them such services or orient them towards other services. Le Bossé (2013) defines the principles of empowerment where the parents perceive that the worker acknowledges their skills, or supports the parents in the acquisition of new skills. Other researchers acknowledge professional practices that enhances parents’ empowerment by exploring the human being behind the parent, and avoiding the emphasis only on the symptoms or the reported incident (Harris, 2012; Lemay, Lussier-Therrien, Proulx, Charest, & Lefebvre, 2015).

5.3 Implications for research

This project is one of the first qualitative studies to examine the experience of North African families with the Quebec’s DYP system. The study will provide a deeper understanding

of the barriers that these families may experience in utilizing DYP services, but also insights into potential interventions to overcome them.

Acknowledging some of these barriers can be a significant step in remedying obstacles to providing DYP services for vulnerable children from visible minority families. Further research can explore how the DYP, both on a managerial level and professional level can ensure the adoption of culturally sensitive practices and policies, and to test the validity of different models of practice to explore the links between parental engagement in DYP's involvement and outcomes for children and family.

5.4 Implications for social work practice

Several child protection systems in Anglophone countries, including Canada, have been moving from the 'traditional' and 'investigative' approach of child welfare towards a 'family centered child protection work' (Connolly, 2005). The participants in this study indicated subthemes that could help foster a positive working relationship between the workers and the families. These subthemes can play a crucial role in understanding how to best engage with North African families who received interventions from the DYP. Parents highlighted that one of the most positive factor in establishing a helping alliance between them and the DYP worker was when they agreed on the intervention plan in a way that takes into consideration the needs and well-being of the family, rather than centering the intervention plan on the rights and protection of the child alone.

Another recommendation suggested by the participants in this study, and has been proposed by Earner (2007) is the "cultural liaison" and mutual assistance between faith-based organizations, and community-based organizations that serve immigrant families and the DYP agencies. These organizations can assist DYP professionals with the family assessment, and

engagement of the family in the intervention plan development (Earner, 2007). Promising programs in this direction exist in New York City (Partners in prevention, 2003). Another project in this direction is also ongoing in Montréal through partnership between the Amal Women Center, faith-based institutions and the DYP institution (Amal Women Center, 2016).

The empowerment of parents and families are critical in facilitating the interventions and ensuring a long-term collaboration. This empowerment can be enhanced through the cultural humility approach, where families take the lead into what approaches fit their cultural reality and what values are significant to them (Ortega & Faller, 2011). This allows a dialogue between service users and service providers to contextualize child protection and rights within a language that is accessible to them (Bissel et al., 2006; Kemp, Marcenko, Hoagwood & Vesneski, 2009).

5.5 Personal reflection

When I started this project, it came from the experience of working directly with families who received DYP services. I have seen their confusion, fear, hurt, and resilience throughout the process of accompanying them in that experience. I have learned from my interaction with parents, adolescents and DYP workers about the challenges the families face in cross-cultural parenting, along with challenges they face when they interact with DYP workers.

When I researched the topic, I noticed that the academic attention on the North African community in QC in particular is growing gradually, so I wanted to contribute to the literature that can offer insight to practitioners in the area of child protection.

The research process was far from smooth. The timeline I have originally set for myself was not followed, due to different challenges I faced throughout the recruitment and data collection process. Understandably, the research topic was sensitive and stigmatizing and many parents preferred not to discuss that experience. However, parents who agreed to meet me were

happy to participate with their time and experience in the hopes that their experience could be helpful to other families in their situations.

The methodology I chose, phenomenology, was challenging especially when it came to applying the bracketing process and taking a reflexive stance during the data collection and analysis. Being personally and professionally connected to the North African community did not allow me to remain truly objective to this study. I felt passionate about the “phenomenon” and about the presentation of the experience of the participants in an academic format. Therefore, I tried to take as many ethical and methodological measures to ensure that I presented and honored the experience of the participants, while remaining cognizant of my personal feelings and biases.

I learned a lot about myself throughout the bracketing process. I couldn’t emphasize how each interview affected me when I left the participant’s house. As a parent and first-generation immigrant myself, I reflected a lot on the “parenting” struggles that the participants shared with me. Taking sometime immediately in my car to write notes in the reflexive journal after each interview was helpful not only for the ethical and methodological aspects of the study, but also as a tool towards self-awareness. Without the reflexive journal, I am sure that the content of the interviews would have affected my personal and family life, dominating them by pessimism and fear about how my children will be raised and the challenges to anticipate as a parent as they grow.

Finally, I enjoyed the process of doing literature review on the topic. As I mentioned earlier, I avoided consulting the literature on my research topic as much as possible to avoid influencing my data collection and analysis process. Towards the end when I immersed myself into reading about different studies and models of youth protection implemented in different

countries. This gave me a lot of hope that better prevention and intervention can also be achieved in QC, while respecting the cultural reality of the population in QC's society today. It will remain a "work in progress" rather than a destination as the society navigates the changes in the society and learns from its history.

5.6 Conclusion

This study contributed to an increasingly rich literature on the experiences of immigrant parents during the process of DYP's assessment and intervention. Social work practice inevitably entails intercultural encounters, and cultural humility can be a powerful approach in building relationships, promoting communication and social justice.

The rapidly changing demographics of the QC's population due to different economic and political instability in different parts of the world may challenge social service institutions to develop knowledge and awareness about cultural diversity and oppression, and to translate that knowledge into actions that facilitate service delivery. The findings in this study suggest different barriers that families have encountered during the DYP's intervention process, but also different recommendations by the parents to help address and overcome these barriers.

I hope this thesis can spark the interest of professionals and researchers about intersectionality and cultural humility in the context of child welfare. Continued efforts by researchers and practitioners are needed to address the needs of immigrants and minority parents in contact with the DYP system to ensure the well-being and best interest of the child.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Research Ethics Board Office- Certificate of Ethics



McGill

Research Ethics Board Office

Tel: (514) 398-6831

James Administration Bldg.

845 Sherbrooke Street West. Rm 325

Website: www.mcgill.ca/research/researchers/compliance/human/

Montreal, QC H3A 0G4

Research Ethics Board II Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

REB File #: 447-0317

Project Title: Exploring the Lived Experience of North African Immigrant Parents with Quebec's Child Welfare System: Understanding the Distress Around Youth Protection Involvement

Principal Investigator: Rana Ahmed

Status: Master's Student

Department: School of Social Work

Supervisor: Prof. Shadi Martin

Approval Period: May 8, 2017 to May 7, 2018

The REB-II reviewed and approved this project by delegated review in accordance with the requirements of the McGill University Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Participants and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.

Deanna Collin

Ethics Review Administrator, REB I & II

* Approval is granted only for the research and purposes described.

* Modifications to the approved research must be reviewed and approved by the REB before they can be implemented.

* A Request for Renewal form must be submitted before the above expiry date. Research cannot be conducted without a current ethics approval. Submit 2-3 weeks ahead of the expiry date.

* When a project has been completed or terminated, a Study Closure form must be submitted.

* Unanticipated issues that may increase the risk level to participants or that may have other ethical implications must be promptly reported to the REB. Serious adverse events experienced by a participant in conjunction with the research must be reported to the REB without delay.

* The REB must be promptly notified of any new information that may affect the welfare or consent of participants.

* The REB must be notified of any suspension or cancellation imposed by a funding agency or regulatory body that is related to this study.

* The REB must be notified of any findings that may have ethical implications or may affect the decision of the REB

APPENDIX B: Recruitment advertisement

PARTICIPANTS RECHERCHÉS

Pour la recherche *L'expérience des parents immigrants de l'Afrique du Nord avec le système de protection de la jeunesse (DPJ)*

Nature du projet :

Le projet de recherche a pour but de comprendre l'expérience des parents immigrants de l'Afrique du Nord ayant vécu l'intervention de la Direction de Protection de la Jeunesse (DPJ- Centre Jeunesse de Montréal).

La recherche portera sur les éléments suivants : les défis rencontrés face à l'implication de la DPJ, les interventions reconnues utiles, ainsi que les facteurs essentiels pour faciliter l'implication de la DPJ. Nous vous invitons aussi à partager vos recommandations pour améliorer les interventions de la DPJ.

Vous pouvez participer à la recherche si vous:

- (a) êtes un(e) immigrant(e) d'un pays de l'Afrique du Nord (Maroc, Algérie ou Tunisie);
- (b) recevez présentement ou avez reçu une intervention de la DPJ auprès de votre enfant(s);
- (c) parlez le français, l'anglais ou l'arabe;

Ce qu'implique votre participation à la recherche:

Vous serez invité à participer à une entrevue individuelle, d'une durée entre 60 à 90 minutes à votre domicile. L'entretien portera sur les thèmes suivants:

- Votre vécu concernant l'implication de la DPJ;
- Votre opinion concernant les services que vous avez reçus (ou auriez aimé recevoir de la DPJ);
- Vos recommandations pour améliorer les interventions de la DPJ;

Les participants recevront une compensation financière d'une carte cadeau de Tim Horton's (20\$).

COORDONNÉES DE LA CHERCHEURE

Si vous êtes intéressés à participer à la recherche ou si vous avez des questions, vous pouvez contacter

Rana Ahmed au 514-855-0330 poste 3 ou par courriel à l'adresse suivante : rana.ahmed@mail.mcgill.ca;

COORDONNÉES DE LA DIRECTRICE DE LA RECHERCHE

Dr. Shadi Martin, École de service social, Université McGill, Tél: 514-398-5399; shadi.martin@mcgill.ca

APPENDIX C: Participant's consent form/Formulaire de consentement

Titre de la recherche : L'expérience des parents immigrants de l'Afrique du Nord avec le système de protection de la jeunesse

Objectifs et déroulement du projet

Cette recherche est réalisée dans le cadre du projet de maîtrise de Rana Ahmed, dirigé par Dr. Shadi Martin, du département de service social à l'université McGill. La recherche a pour but d'explorer et de comprendre votre expérience précédente par rapport l'implication de la Direction de Protection de la Jeunesse (DPJ- Centre Jeunesse de Montréal). Votre participation à cette recherche consiste à répondre à des questions qui vous seront posées dans le cadre d'une entrevue individuelle d'une durée entre 60 et 90 minutes. Les questions porteront sur les éléments suivants: éléments d'informations sur les répondants (ex. histoire de l'immigration), le contexte de l'implication de la DPJ, les interventions reconnues comme utiles, les défis rencontrés face à l'implication de la DPJ, ainsi que les facteurs essentiels pour faciliter l'implication de la DPJ. Nous vous invitons aussi à partager vos recommandations pour améliorer les services de la DPJ.

Avantages et risques/inconvénients possibles

Le fait de participer à cette recherche vous offre une occasion de réfléchir et de discuter en toute confidentialité, de vos perceptions et de votre propre expérience sur l'implication de la DPJ auprès de votre enfant. Votre participation aidera à mieux comprendre les enjeux et les défis reliés à l'intervention de la DPJ auprès des familles maghrébines immigrantes au Québec. Votre participation contribuera éventuellement à l'amélioration des pratiques d'intervention auprès de ces familles.

En raison de la nature sensible du sujet à l'étude, il est possible que le fait de raconter

votre expérience suscite des émotions désagréables liées à votre expérience passée. Si cela se produit, n'hésitez pas à en parler avec la personne qui mène l'entrevue. Celle-ci pourra vous proposer le nom d'une ressource en mesure de vous aider, au besoin. Afin de compenser les frais encourus par votre participation à ce projet de recherche, une compensation (carte-cadeau Tim Horton's de 20 \$) vous sera remis.

Participation volontaire et droit de retrait

- Vous êtes libre de participer à ce projet de recherche;
- Vous pouvez aussi mettre fin à votre participation sans conséquence négative ou préjudice et sans avoir à justifier votre décision;
- Si vous décidez de mettre fin à votre participation, il est important d'en prévenir le chercheur;

En participant à ce projet de recherche:

- Vous êtes d'accord pour que l'entretien, dont vous faites partie, soit enregistrée __ Oui __ No
- Vous êtes d'accord que la chercheuse-étudiante vous contacte plus tard pour clarifier le contenu de l'entretien ou pour poser d'autres questions __ Oui __ No

Confidentialité

En recherche, les chercheurs sont tenus d'assurer la confidentialité aux participants.

A cet égard, voici les mesures qui seront appliqués dans le cadre de la présente recherche:

- Seul le chercheur aura accès à la liste contenant les noms des participants. Les noms des participants ne paraîtront dans aucun rapport. Votre nom sera remplacés par un pseudonyme;
- Un code confidentiel vous sera attribué. Les formulaires de consentement seront conservés dans une enveloppe scellée contenant le code confidentiel, elle même

conservée séparément des données de la recherche dans un classeur barré, dans un local sous clé;

- Seuls la chercheure-étudiante, la directrice de la recherche et les assistants de la recherche auront accès à la transcription après avoir supprimé vos données d'identification personnelle;
- les données seront, conservées dans des fichiers encryptées dont l'accès sera protégé par l'utilisation d'un mot de passe;
- tout le matériel et toutes les données seront utilisés dans le cadre exclusif de cette recherche et ils seront détruits 7 ans après la fin du projet. Vous pouvez communiquer avec la chercheure-étudiante à tout moment pour demander que vos données soient effacées;
- les résultats de la recherche seront utilisés par la chercheure-étudiante pour préparer une mémoire, à publier dans des revues scientifiques et aux conférences et séminaires pour les professionnels de la santé et des services sociaux. Les résultats seront présentés sous forme globale de sorte que les résultats individuels des participants ne seront jamais communiqués.
- ce projet de recherche n'est en aucune façon lié avec à la DPJ, et seuls les résultats finaux sans vos informations d'identification peuvent être partagées dans le cadre du transfert de connaissances;
- L'étudiante-chercheuse est une membre de l'Ordre des travailleurs sociaux et thérapeutes conjugaux et familiaux du Québec. Elle est mandatée de briser la confidentialité dans certaines situations (S'il y a raison de croire que vous risquez de vous faire du mal ou en faire à quelqu'un d'autre)

- Vous avez reçu une copie de ce document de consentement à conserver pour votre propre référence;

Si vous avez des questions ou préoccupations concernant vos droits en tant que participant(e) à la recherche, veuillez communiquer avec Lynda McNeil (le comité d'éthique de la recherche à l'université McGill) au numéro de téléphone suivant 514-398-6831 ou à l'adresse courriel suivante: lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca (REB # 447-0317).

Si vous êtes d'accord, veuillez signer dans l'espace prévu à cette fin. Veuillez signer après avoir lu le document de consentement, et après avoir reçu des réponses satisfaisantes à vos questions.

_____ Signature du participant, de la participante	_____ Date
_____ Signature de la chercheure	_____ Date

Remerciements

Votre collaboration est précieuse pour nous permettre de réaliser cette étude. C'est pourquoi nous tenons à vous remercier pour le temps et l'attention que vous acceptez de consacrer à votre participation

Coordonnées de la directrice de la recherche

Dr. Shadi Martin
École de service social
Université McGill
514-398-5399

shadi.martin@mcgill.ca

Coordonnées de la chercheure-étudiante

Rana Ahmed
École de service social
Université McGill
514 575 3913

rana.ahmed@mail.mcgill.ca

Dans le cas improbable de détresse émotionnelle, je peux communiquer avec la ligne téléphonique anonyme et le centre de soutien FACE À 'FACE: centre d'écoute et d'intervention (<http://faceafacemontreal.org>) au (514) 934-4546.

APPENDIX D: Interview outline/*Questionnaire d'entrevue*

Questions sociodémographiques (prénom, âge, identité culturelle, situation familiale, statut d'immigration, langues parlées, profession, niveau de scolarité);

Questions concernant l'expérience migratoire de la famille

- Pouvez-vous me parler de votre venue ici au Québec ? Pour quelles raisons êtes-vous venus vous installer à Montréal/au Québec ?
- Quels sont les changements que vous avez éprouvé depuis votre arrivée ici au Québec (ex. rôle familial, situation économique ; parcours professionnel, relation avec vos enfants) ?
- Quelles sont les différences majeures que vous avez constaté entre la façon d'éduquer les enfants (attitudes ; valeurs ; religions; etc.) et celle de la société Québécoise?
 - o *PROBE: Avez-vous constaté un changement dans votre façon d'éduquer vos enfants depuis votre arrivée au QC?*
- Lors de votre arrivée ici au QC, avez-vous entendu parler de la DPJ? Quelles sont les histoires/les préoccupations que vous avez entendu les plus souvent dans votre entourage ?

Questions concernant l'implication la Direction de la Protection de la Jeunesse (DPJ):

- Pouvez-vous me parler du contexte de signalement. Rappelez-vous quels étaient les motifs de signalement?
- Quelle place occupe dans l'intervention de la DPJ la documentation de votre parcours d'immigration? Par exemple, l'intervenant vous-a-t-il demandé de votre parcours d'immigration ?
- Généralement, avez-vous relié votre expérience d'immigration avec la situation du signalement?

- Pendant l'évaluation et l'implication de la DPJ, trouvez-vous que votre expérience migratoire a été pris en considération? Donnez-moi un exemple
- En parlant du motif de signalement et perceptions de la maltraitance,
 - o Qu'est qui fait consensus entre votre perception de la situation et celle du DPJ?*
 - o Qu'est qui peut créer des divergences de compréhension?*
 - o Qu'est que vous pensez de ces divergences?*
 - o À quoi attribuez-vous ces similitudes et ces divergences?*

Questions concernant les défis pour collaborer avec la DPJ

- Quels sont les obstacles que vous avez rencontré durant l'intervention de la DPJ?
- Quels sont les changements que vous constatez dans votre famille en lien avec l'intervention de la DPJ?

Questions concernant les éléments positifs dans l'implication de la DPJ

- Qu'est ce qu'il en est des éléments qui facilitent cette intervention?
- Quelles sont les éléments positifs que vous constatez dans votre famille après l'intervention de la DPJ?
- Trouvez-vous que les interventions de la DPJ ont répondu à vos besoins?
 - o PROBE: Besoins financiers, transport, services (médicaux; psychosociaux)*
 - pour les enfants*
- Quels sont les "ingrédients" nécessaires pour établir une relation satisfaisante entre votre famille et les intervenants de la DPJ?

Les recommandations des parents pour les services de la DPJ

- En général, comment votre expérience d'intervention de la DPJ auprès de votre enfant a changé votre perception de la DPJ?

- Quelles sont vos préoccupations par rapport à l'intervention de la DPJ dans un contexte de l'immigration et de la diversité ethnoculturelle?
- Quelles sont les stratégies que vous proposez pour faciliter l'intervention de DPJ auprès des familles maghrébines immigrantes au Québec?
- Si vous avez l'opportunité de faire un changement dans le système de la DPJ par rapport à votre communauté, par quel aspect vous allez commencer?

Souhaitez-vous ajouter quelque chose à cet entretien?

APPENDIX E: French Quotes

4.2 Child-protection from the parents' perspective

4.2.1 *Keeping the family together*

Hajer: "j'ai eu la peine parce que la petite elle avait juste 1 ans elle a quand même besoin de sa maman d'ailleurs elle m'a appelé elle m'a dit qu'elle dort pas la nuit parce qu'ils ont pris sa fille mais ils s'en foutent.. l'enfant est dans une famille d'accueil mais même famille d'accueil"

Khadija: "J'ai senti de jugement surtout que moi j'ai pris beaucoup de soin de mon mari.. je sentais le jugement que que moi je prends pas soin de mes enfants.. je voulais pas que mon mari soit hospitalisé.. je voulais que la famille soit ensemble.. même si mon mari est juste disponible physiquement.."

4.2.2 *Keeping parental authority*

Amin: "là-bas il n'y a pas de d'autorité plus que l'autorité des parents il n'y a pas de l'intervention de gouvernement..tu as le pouvoir ultime sur tes enfants..sur leur éducation il y a personne qui va te dire non c'est pas comme ça il n'y a pas la peur qu'il y a un autre organisme qui va intervenir dans vos choix s'il y a un problème il y a pas d'autres organismes ou d'autres autorités qui intervient à ta place."

Rabia: "... ma petite fille a commencé l'adolescence et elle a commencé à rejeter l'autorité de son père... même à l'école elle fait ce qu'elle veut.. elle respecte pas les enseignantes et elle les oppose.."

Karima: "la différence dans l'éducation c'est qu'en Algérie ce qu'ont dit à la maison on le répète à l'école. Tandis qu'ici ce que je fais à la maison on défait à l'école.. On a honte de parler 'autorité (de parent)..je suis désolé c'est un mauvais message on envoie aux enfants parce que dans la vie il y a autorité, la hiérarchie au travail , police, partout. Si à la maison on apprend pas déjà à respecter l'autorité parentale cet enfant est délinquant, voilà ce que je vois comme différence..."

4.2.3 *When corporal punishment is justified*

Hajer: "en Algérie c'est la dernière étape quand on frappe.. pas frapper violemment mais c'est comme une correction pour nous.. mais elle on n'a pas frappé ce jour-là"

Karima: "ma mère m'a donné la fessée ça je me souviens en disant ça en riant, on dit pas ça en pleurant...C'est comme ça que je parle de mes parents ,tu vois. Jamais j'ai parlé de traumatisme.."

Rabia: "il faut la frapper juste pour lui faire peur pas pour lui faire mal pour comprendre que il y

a un autorité.. juste pour corriger quelque chose ou c'est juste une éducation pour la correction...par contre ici quand l'enfant fait quelque chose on donne tout de suite des conséquences..je vois que la plupart de ses conséquences crée un sort de détresse psychologique..moi j'ai pas aimé la façon d'élever les enfants ici..on dit il faut pas frapper l'enfant.. au maroc mon père m'a jamais touché jamais frappé..on utilise toujours la conversation chez moi toujours la discussion et le dialogue on a pas de tension à la maison on n'était jamais frappé par mes parents..”

4.2.4 Rights versus obligations

Hajer: “je travaille avec les enfants et je vois comment le comportement des parents avec les enfants des fois je remarque que c'est l'enfant qui décide pas le parent.. pas comme nous.. chaque fois que l'enfant veut quelque chose le parent le fait.. c'est comme ils manipulent leurs parents..l'enfant décide de faire quelque chose les parents obéissent.. ”

Saleema: “J’ai trouvé ce problème ici au Canada. Les enfants qu’est qu’ils apprennent à l’école.. C’est seulement leurs droits. Vous avez le droit de faire ça. Vous avez le droit de faire ça. Les parents n’ont pas le droit de faire vous faire ça. Les parents n’ont pas le droit de crier. Les parents n’ont pas le droit de frapper. Les parents.. Tu comprends? Un enfant va apprendre à connaître seulement ses droits..C’est le contrôle parental est effacé une fois j’entend tu as pas le droit..on dit à l’enfant ben tu as des obligations..Respectez vos parents.. respectez vos frères...respect ta soeur.. Pour lui c’est .. mais on dirait même nous les adultes.. si on apprend juste nos droits nos droits ça va nous plaire. Tu comprends? Une fois qu’ils introduisent les obligations...”

Karima: “Déjà l’adolescence au Québec je n’y crois pas trop... Il n’y a pas d'adolescence en Algérie.. moi aussi j’étais adolescente et j’ai pas fait des choses pareilles. (les intervenant me disent) c’est une ado, tout est ouvert tout est accepté...non..on a des devoirs l'un envers les autres, c’est normal que le parent encadre. J’appelle ça encadrement pas abus...”

4.3 Parents’ perception of DYP services

4.3.1 Emotions affiliated with DYP’s meetings

Amin: “ils ont un pouvoir ultime avec la justice un travailleur social nous a dit que vous êtes en train de perdre votre argent parce que qu'est-ce qu'on dit au juge ce qu'elle va faire. Effectivement à chaque fois la décision qui est pris c'est vraiment qu'est-ce que souhaite la DPJ”

Hajer: “ ils ont pris la fille directement de l'école.. On a reçu une appel il faut se présenter à 18 h à la DPJ parce que votre fille est là.. mon mari il a eu comme un choc.. il m'a dit que

sont pris la petite ils ont pris la petite..il est devenue vraiment très pâle.. il a commencé à crier.. c'est la DPJ j'ai dit ok bon calme-toi il m'a dit il faut qu'on dit la même chose parce qu'il avait peur..”

Hajer: “On était vraiment choqué..on n'a jamais pensé qu'on va arriver à ce stade-là la voir un avocat et tout.. on était perdu.. on était vraiment perdu.. comment on va voir un avocat on sais même pas où commencer.... je veux jamais revenir à cette histoire.. parce que c'était un cauchemar pour nous..je voyais ça juste dans les films.. Là ça m'arrive à moi”

Saleema: “mon fils avait 13 ans mais il était placé avec les jeunes de 16 à 17 ans.. mon fils a commencé à apprendre des choses comme trafic de drogue..avant de placement nos problèmes le problème était beaucoup plus facile que le drogué tout ça là elle a commencé à parler de marijuana.. vraiment j'étais pas satisfaite..de départ jusqu'à là je suis pas du tout satisfaite..”

4.3.2 Breaking family relationships

Amin: “imagines-toi un enfant que tu l'enlève de ses parents..tu l'informes que tu peux vivre la vie comme tu veux..un enfant n'a pas encore l'âge pour décider..il (l'intervenant) va faire tout pour la demander (à sa fille) s'elle a des problèmes avec son père ou sa mère..C'est comme on était dans une enquête.. C'est une façon très mauvaise.. C'est comme on est des étrangers.. Alors ils (la DPJ) font tout pour briser le lien parental...pour moi la DPJ est un organisme destructeur de la famille”

Rabia: “j'ai vu ma fille (au centre jeunesse) était vraiment perturbée et pâle.. j'ai vu la haine dans son visage envers son père.. malgré que on a réconcilié (avant le placement)..c'est quand qu'on l'a monté contre nous.. je pense que l'on dit beaucoup de choses comme tu as le droit tu es protégée ici etc ce sont des belles choses à dire mais c'est pour les parents qui sont vraiment violent ou alcoolique trafiquant de drogue.. c'est bien de dire à l'enfant dans ce cas-là que il est protégé”

Karima: “ J'ai rien trouvé de positif chez eux ils sont absolument, Une machine à écraser la famille c'est tout. J'ai perdu beaucoup d'argent j'ai perdu beaucoup de temps.”

Hajer: “on a perdu l'autorité.. Un moment donné elle avait commencé à nous manipuler.. Si vous faites ça ou ça j'appelle la DPJ.. si tu me parles de cette manière je vais appeler la police..”

Rabia: “c'est comme il y avait pas d'autorité parentale..c'est comme Israël peut tout faire contre les palestiniens parce que ils sont protégés par les États-Unis..c'est la même chose pour ma fille on se sent protégé par la DPJ par la police par les avocats.. elle est venue avec cette idée alors elle a fait ce qu'elle voulait et si il veut porter plainte contre son père c'est toujours possible.. mais avec le temps j'ai expliqué que non ça se passe pas comme ça.. elle m'a posé elle a crié sur moi...c'est comme elle se sent fort avec la DPJ.. “

Karima: “À cet âge-là j'ai le droit d'avoir une idée sur ses amis sur ses fréquentations. par contre le juge me dit: vous l'empêcher de voir ses amis...On dévalorise le parent, le parent ne connaît rien.Et puis quand l'intervenante sortait elle (ma fille) me disait tu as vu: T'es nulle!”

Khadija: “des fois je me sens que la dpj pourrait séparer les familles..ils n'aident pas dans certains cas que je connais.. j'espère qu'ils travaillent à consolider les liens familiaux..même s'il y avait un fils une fille qui a dévié..je comprends la notion de la liberté mais des fois je trouve qu'ils donnent beaucoup des droit à l'enfant beaucoup plus que le parent..je comprends que des fois mon enfant a raison mais je trouve qu'ils montent l'enfant contre les parents..alors des fois nos valeurs sont pas compatible..”

4.3.3 Cultural matching is not enough

Rabia : “c'était fait (évaluation de parcours d'immigration) d'une manière superficielle.. j'ai l'impression que ils (la dpj) cherchent que les immigrants soient comme les Québécois..point final.. c'est comme un lavage de cerveau.. on est venu ici pour nos enfants mais nos enfants sont plus les nôtres..ce sont les enfants de la société alors ils font c'est qu'ils veulent avec eux..l'intervenante m'a proposé que mes filles aillent voir une psychologue marocaine..parce que elle a la même culture que nous..même religion etc..mes filles sont allées puis elles sont rentrées avec un autre lavage de cerveau..J'ai dit au centre jeunesse je prefere d'avoir une soeur ou un prêtre pour guider ma fille parce que ils vont parler de l'alimentation spirituelle..au lieu de juste parler des droits et monter les enfants contre leurs parents..la dpj m'a dit non on peut pas faire ça il y a tant de communauté..je vois que leur modèle ne marche pas..”

Karima: “Un jour on m'a ramené quelqu'un j'ai dit peut-être je vais en parler avec elle une Algérienne comme moi en plus. Voilà je leur ai dit stop c'est pas ça que je veux..elle est en train de parler comme vous là. Elle a rien compris là tu sais très bien que ce qu'elle dit c'est pas bon. Mais c'est ses chefs. Vous savez l'adolescence patati patata. J'ai dit ça suffit je comprends très bien ta position mais moi continue à faire ta petite affaire, récite ta petite leçon pour avoir une augmentation (de salaire). C'est ton travail c'est ton gagne pain, c'est pas avec moi que tu vas raconter ça moi je sais qu'est-ce qui m'arrange. C'est ça chacun sait ce qui est bon pour lui la.”

Khadija: “l'éducateur qui a pris en charge le dossier de mon fils je vois qu'il veut vraiment l'aider.. il veut l'encadrer plus.. il l'encourage à respecter ses valeurs.. il a encouragé mon fils à être un musulman pratiquant.. il a parlé avec lui beaucoup de valeur par exemple les liens familiaux..par exemple c'est lui qui a demandé que mon fils sort pour nous rendre visite..Dans mon expérience j'ai trouvé beaucoup d'aide..ils ont encadré notre jeune pendant une période de crise”

4.3.4 Limited resources

Saleema: “ il y avait bcp de changement. on avait une stagiaire éducatrice mais elle a créé beaucoup des problèmes pour nous.... après ça la stagiaire est parti après quelques semaines on a pas encore eu le temps pour bien appliquer l'entente ..un autre intervenant est venu..le problème avec chaque changement d'éducateur il vient sans rien savoir de dossier de notre fils alors on recommence à nouveau.. je dois expliquer tous..ils lisent pas les dossiers..moi je suis vraiment fatigué de chaque changement chaque fois je dois expliquer ce que les autres intervenants ont essayé.. Après cet éducateur il a été changé puis on a recommencé avec une autre éducatrice..puis la dernière a été changé parce que.. on a dépassé deux ans avec la dpj..”

Saleema: “ J’ai fait qu’une évaluation chez le neuropsychologue..il a recommandé qu’on fait un suivi avec un psychologue à cause de ses problèmes d’opposition.. j’ai montré ça à la dpj et j’ai demandé à plusieurs reprises qu’on fasse un suivi mais en vain.. ils ont juste continuer le suivi avec les éducateurs..ils m’ont dit que à cause des coupures dans le budget. on (la dpj) a pas de budget pour ça..elle (l’intervenante) n’a pas considéré ça comme priorité..Normalement le mandat de la DPJ c’est pour aider l’enfant et le protéger mais je vois pas qu’on a eu le service en lien avec ce mandat..c’était juste un suivi comme ça qu’on a reçu..”

4.3.5 It’s all about generating money

Amin: “la DPJ est une compagnie j’essaie de faire l’argent à tous les moyens elle trouve n’importe quel moyen pour garder l’enfant chez eux même si l’enfant dit non même si chez nous on dit non eux ils insistent sur ça puis elle la prend..Ils brisent les liens pour que l’enfant reste loin de ses parents.. Le maximum de temps avec eux (la DPJ)..c’est tout ”

Karima: “peut-être ça fait l’affaire de pas mal de personnes (famille d’accueil) d’avoir des subventions de faire rentrer argent.. C’est mon opinion..les intervenants (de la DPJ) font ça (les interventions) par carrière et pour se faire bien voir par leur chef”

Rabia: “la famille d’accueil par exemple dans 50 \$ pour ma fille et par semaine imagine-toi 50 \$ pour une fille de 11 ans.. c’est comme une séduction.. en plus la madame dans la famille d’accueil s’en fout si elle fait les devoirs ou dort.. des fois les filles dorment à 11 h ou minuit..”

4.3.6 Prejudice and stereotypes towards the community

Amin: “pour eux on (les parents maghrébins) a une mauvaise façon d’éduquer nos enfants.. c’est ça dans leur tête puis la façon qu’on fait avec nos enfants n’est pas bonne... ils ont une mauvaise perception sur nous sur la communauté (maghrébine)..”

Karima: “je pense que c’est une communauté ciblée comme les Haïtiens et les latino-américain...Ça veut dire que notre communauté n’intervient pas et puis l’autre

chose ça veut dire que on est ciblé on a l'impression que nous nous sommes des gens sévères...Je sais pas mais quand on intervient auprès d'une famille musulmane il me semble avoir déjà un préjugé. Quand on intervient auprès d'une famille musulmane on pense d'abord qu'ils ne sont pas aptes à élever un enfant selon les normes québécoises.. dans les droits de l'enfant, Toute personne a le droit d'élever son enfant selon ses valeurs. Donc ça fait qu'ils respectent pas les droits de l'enfant. C'est ce que je leur dis écoute-moi je suis une bonne citoyenne je lève mon enfant selon mes valeurs. Vous n'avez pas à me dire : elle est Québécoise. Relève selon mes valeurs oui mais madame peut-être que vous êtes trop exigeante dans votre dans votre communauté...”

4.4 Help and services received: expectations versus reality

4.4.1 Execution of “tasks” versus child welfare

Amin: “ils sont pas des gens ils sont des machines ils ont des procédures à suivre et puis ils les appliquent comme des machine..même si il y a un incident il faut voir l'autre côté que les parents font avec leurs enfants...elle devrait pas juste voir cet incident...il faut voir tous et étudier les autres éléments et balancer.. si par exemple l'enfant a vécu plusieurs fois plusieurs problèmes.. on va dire la torture et tout ça en ce moment oui absolument mais si c'est un incident une seule fois.. ben écoute il faut pas prendre l'enfant toute de suite comme ça..”

Hajer: “mais c'est la même chose que je fais avec les enfants à la garderie comment tu puniras ta fille..je fais la même chose avec les enfants.. il faut enlever les choses qu'elle aime plus.. il faut pas la frapper..moi quand elle rentre ça me stress.. et j'attends qu'elle parte.. elle nous montre comment éduquer ma fille..j'étais hors de moi..je sentis c'est comme leur fille pas ma fille..ils ont décidé de la prendre.. En plus c'est tous que j'ai (ma fille).. Il y beaucoup d'immigrants qui viennent ici juste pour leurs enfants”

Rabia: “juste un suivi hebdomadaire.. elle (L'intervenante) demande comment s'est passé la semaine..est ce qu'il y avait des problèmes? qu'est ce qu'elle a fait pendant la semaine? des activités, des sorties?.. une fois elle termine ses questions elle appelle ma fille..meme elle a commencé à parler avec mon autre fille..etc.. après ça elle dit ok on va faire des ententes.. elle demande à mes filles: qu'est que vous voulez faire? des sorties?.. je trouve que le suivi a perturbé la routine à la maison..par exemple, leur père a dit une fois qu'on va limiter les sorties d'été pour seulement 2 fois par semaine..l'éducatrice a dit non ça suffit pas 2 fois..c'est pas assez..on est en plein été..il fallait faire des activités..on a dit ok on va autoriser 3 fois des sorties..on est rendu à 5 sorties.. c'est comme on décide pas pour notre fille..”

Saleema: “la stagiaire avait pas d'expérience alors il a commencé à la manipuler puis elle a fait une entente avec lui comme quoi faire quand il rentre de l'école par exemple..dans l'entente qu'elle (l'éducatrice) a créé avec lui, il l'a donné beaucoup des privilèges...elle

n'était pas professionnelle.. j'ai fait confiance à elle parce que ils (les intervenants) sont plus d'expert que nous (les parents).. mais finalement j'ai remarqué que le fils respect pas les consignes.. il fait pas ses devoirs..il provoque son frère comme il veut.. malgré ça il gagne 2 ou 3 heures d'internet avec l'entente..quand ils (les intervenants) viennent pour le suivi de la semaine qu'est qu'ils font? Ils me demandent toujours: racontez nous qu'est que vous avez fait durant la semaine..qu'est que (le fils) avait fait.. qu'est que vous avez fait..c'était quoi sa réaction (de fils).. c'était quoi votre réaction (les parents)..qu'est que vous (les parents) avez fait ou n'avez pas appliqué (comme outil).... mais puisque moi j'ai demandé de l'aide c'est à dire que j'ai vraiment besoin d'aide..où est cet aide là? c'est pas de venir me demander ce qu'on a fait durant la semaine... ils ont même pas demandé à mon fils pourquoi il agit comme ça pourquoi il a cette colère-là”

4.4.2 Family's role in intervention plan

Amin: “les intervenants de cet organisme elle sont venu ici ou par téléphone elle nous aide beaucoup même avec ma fille ils l'ont contacté puis ils ont essayé de parler avec elle.. ils font tout en respectant le lien parental puis en respectant l'éducation..avec la façon de faire des Conseils comment se préparer avec l'avocat avec le juge même avec l'enfant comment travailler avec l'enfant pour la récupérer comment recuperer l'autorité parentale qu'on a perdu.. c'est ça ils ont fait un travail énorme avec nous qu'il c'était vraiment apprécié sans eux on connaît rien là”

Hajer: “dans les ateliers que j'ai assisté elle a parlé beaucoup plus de l'école.. sujet de parent-enfant comment il faut faire.. comment il faut faire quand on par exemple enfant revient à la maison avec un message dans l'agenda.. parce que c'est vrai quand ma fille était dans cette école il revient avec des messages à chaque fois je panique c'est quoi ce message... c'est un changement de culture ils sont gênés de demander à professeur de l'enfant comment il est mon enfant à l'école comment elle se comporte.. elles sont vraiment gênés alors ils demandent pas.. Ils vont à l'école de chercher leurs enfants alors demande même pas.. elle nous a demandé s'il y a des activités d'aller assister”

Khadija: “il voulait qu'on travaille ensemble pour préparer mon fils.. mon fils n'était même pas capable de nommer le mot "mort".. on travaille ensemble en parallèle moi je parle avec mon fils en tant que sa mère et eux en tant que spécialiste.. en plus il me rassure l'éducateur est venu la dernière fois chez moi il m'a dit avoir l'esprit tranquille..”

4.4.3 Protection needs versus school performance

Amin: “avant elle était brillante à l'école..mais difficile difficilement d'être à la DPJ et à l'école au même temps.. elle a étudié difficilement... elle a beaucoup manqué l'école alors j'étais obligé de payer de cours privé tout ça pour qu'elle récupère.. malgré tout ça à la DPJ l'école n'est pas importante c'est elle qui est importante.. mais c'est quoi importante elle elle cherche la liberté elle cherche d'expérimenter des choses qui sont pas bien pour elle..ce qu'est-ce qu'elle cherche..”

Saleema: “Je l'avais demandé (l'intervenante) qu'il aille à l'école surtout que c'était la période des examens ce sont les examens de 2e étape tu laisses expliqué qu'il avait une dernière chance pour faire les examens demain mais non ils ont pas laissé partir de centre jeunesse.. quand j'ai discuté avec les intervenantes elle m'avait dit que c'est arrangé ça entre Centre jeunesse et l'école mais finalement mon fils mon fils a reçu zéro dans son examen...finalement j'ai regretté ma décision de laisser rentrer au Centre jeunesse et de suivre le conseil de l'intervenante..j'ai remarqué que chaque intervenant ne cherche pas le bien pour lui (son enfant)..... en général je vois que depuis son placement au Centre jeunesse ses notes sont à la baisse en plus j'étais pas capable de le réinscrire à l'école internationale. il a commencé à consommer puis il aura toujours l'école il avait plus de respect pour l'école..”

Karima: “voilà ce qu'ils ont fait la DPJ avec eux elle avait des notes de dix pour-cent, 50 % . Elle a perdu au niveau des études elle est rentrée enrichie et quand elle était avec eux l'école m'envoie une lettre pour me dire votre fille a une difficulté d'apprentissage. Un bulletin dix-pour-cent n'étudie pas pourquoi étudier. Je l'ai ramené ici j'ai recommencé des cours et elle a eu 100 %. Toute la journée avec le tableau, Et je lui enseigne.”

4.4.4 Insufficient family-centered approach

Amin: “...elle voulait l'enlever..et par la suite ils ont compris que il y a un problème chez notre fille donc un problème d'estime de soi... puis l'intimidation à l'école.. Au début...le problème c'est nous (les parents).. c'est nous le problème mais par la suite ils ont compris qu'on va faire tout pour vous aider à avoir votre autorité et donner à la fille des séances de psychologue”

Khadija: “elle (la travailleuse sociale) m'a proposé d'enlever mon enfant le petit on m'a proposé de le placer dans une famille d'accueil..j'étais comme quoi j'étais vraiment choquée.. je suis malade je traverse un moment difficile..j'aimerais bien que mon fils reste avec moi..elle a dit non non non on voulait juste l'aider mais personne moi ça j'ai pas aimé j'ai pas trouvé ça sensible..moi je demande l'aide, aide-moi à la trouver..je parle de l'aide positive par contre..”

Karima: “le ton quand ils s'adressent à elle c'est différent. L'enfant c'était moi, et elle son opinion était écoutée. Quand je donne mon point de vue, c'est jamais le bon, ma réponse est toujours toute fautive. Ils ont dit que (ma fille) est surprotégée. Imaginez 10 ans et demi. Mais madame vous voulez l'empêcher de jouer? Normalement elle peut pas sortir sans permission de sa mère...Comment? Un autre parent qui laisse sortir dehors vous dites il est négligent il pense pas à sa sécurité. Quelque soit le parent. L'autre parent à côté il va faire ça tu es négligent tu exposes (ton enfant) au danger..”

Saleema: “.. d'après mon expérience j'ai remarqué que les intervenants nous aide pas.. j'ai pas trouvé l'aide que je souhaitais..au moins des ateliers pour moi et pour mon fils.. au moins pour les parents pour apprendre comment gérer les comportements des enfants et tout ça..une orientation.. on a pas eu d'orientation même pendant le mois que mon fils a passé dans le centre jeunesse..l'intervenante l'a vu peut-être une fois..“

4.5 Partnerships with resources and bridging cultural distance

4.5.1 Prevention and raising-awareness for newly arrived immigrants

Hajer: “j'espère qu'il y aura beaucoup de plus en plus de sensibilisation .avant que les gens tombent dans le piège..il y a des parents qui savent pas..il y a des parents qui viennent ici ils ne savent même pas que tu as pas droit de frapper tes enfants comme des familles réfugiées..les familles qui viennent de la contexte de la guerre.. elles sont traumatisés..il faut vraiment sensibiliser la communauté maghrébine parce que notre communauté ici est perdu.. des ateliers dans les mosquées...pour parler de la DPJ.. pour montrer aux parents qu'est-ce qu'il faut faire avec les enfants ici.. parce qu'il y a vraiment beaucoup de parents ici qui sont perdus ils sont pris par le temps et le travail.. surtout ici le le mode de vie est très stressant.. il faut faire des choses vite.. tu viens ici c'est comme tu refais ta vie de zéro.. il faut faire les études il faut travailler en même temps pour payer les études.. il faut faire le suivi avec tes enfants.. alors les moments de stress elle peut arriver à n'importe qui.. alors il faut vraiment faire des ateliers.”

Khadija: “ les ateliers..pour sensibiliser les parents.. discuter ouvertement les valeurs qu'on a ramené avec nous.. moi j'ai découvert une grande différence entre la façon comment on enlève nos enfants par rapport à ici.. c'est bon de toujours garder les mêmes valeurs mais voyons un peu juste la façon comment on explique ces valeurs là..faut qu'on apprenne comment éduquer nos enfants..chacun fait le plus possible pour que ses enfants soient les meilleurs.. mais entre nous je vois que les parents ont beaucoup de problème beaucoup de défis.. on amène avec nous des valeurs et des traditions qui ne marche pas ici.. on veut que nos enfants soient comme nous... mais ça marche pas..l'enfant il a besoin d'encadrement mais aussi nous on a besoin de compromettre des fois nos valeurs.. un peu de flexibilité de notre part.. ça va créer beaucoup de divergences pour les enfants et beaucoup de confusion parce que à la maison c'est une culture à l'école c'est une autre culture en plus la fréquentation..alors les parents doivent mettre ça en considération..”

4.5.2 Cultural matching with resources and foster families

Amin: “si la DPJ avec chaque communauté elle a un organisme avec qui elle travaille.. si elle prend en considération les conseils de cet organisme.. parce que ces gens-là ils comprennent la communauté elles comprennent les défauts de la communauté ils savent facilement comment travailler avec la communauté et la culture elles comprennent tout ça parce qu'ils sont issus de la communauté”

Hajer: “ il faut qu'on ait assez de famille musulmane comme famille d'accueil comme ça on peut installer l'enfant dans une famille musulmane si jamais quelque chose arrive..”

4.5.3 Beyond the incident: Taking the overall parenting experience into consideration

Amin: “moi je pense que la DPJ peut être beaucoup plus positif s'ils font l'inverse.. si un enfant est dans une mauvaise situation si les parents sont normaux dans un foyer normal puis il m'a dit que je regarde un peu qu'est-ce que ses parents font avec ses enfants...ils doivent bâtir le lien parental puis bâtir surtout l'autorité parentale..puis s'assurer que l'autorité est toujours là... d'établir une relation avec les parents d'abord pour aider l'enfant”

Hajer: “il faut pas prendre les enfants de la première fois il faut voir si vraiment les parents sont violents non parce qu'ils ont l'habitude de frapper leurs enfants voir avec l'école.. pas de la 1re fois de prendre un enfant comme ça.. et brusquement de l'installer dans une famille d'accueil.. d'aller au tribunal aller voir un avocat.. ça je trouve abusive..pour la première fois - il faut chercher à comprendre.. on a menti par peur..alors tu attends que les intervenants t'assure des conséquences qu'est-ce que vous allez dire et partager..”

Rabia: “je commençais à réaliser que ces gens-là (la dpj) reconnaissent pas la frappe comme une correction ou comme une méthode de discipline..j'ai compris que mon mari il a fait quelque chose vraiment de grave... elle a mis l'accent sur le fait d'il l'a frappé.. elle répète la question plusieurs fois.. comment il a frappé.. là j'ai compris.. surtout quand j'ai vu la police..mais quand même mon mari n'est pas quelqu'un qui est violent.

4.5.4 Empowerment of parents

Amin: “c'est la priorité c'est pas un enfant c'est la famille.. comment protéger un enfant contre ses parents..mais normalement c'est comme protéger la famille au complet.. si il y a un manque de façon de faire on va les outiller c'est pour tout le monde les parents et les enfants.. mais on va pas cibler”

Khadija: “je trouve pas que le placement est une solution.. ça va qu'aggraver les problèmes.. même quand l'enfant rentre à la maison après le placement je pense pas que les enfants vont rester les mêmes c'est sûr que l'enfant va changer..même s'il y a de violence ou quelque chose il faut toujours travailler pour construire la relation..c'est pas mon domaine mais ça c'est mon perspective..il faut avoir un dialogue entre les membres de la famille puis essaie de trouver des solutions et essaie de garder la famille ensemble.. “

Saleema: “j'aimerais que une fois le début j'étais impliquée à te donner beaucoup d'orientation pour les parents par exemple vers quelle atelier les parents peuvent assister pour être mieux outillé pour aider les jeunes..et de donner des conseils pas juste un suivi..”

Rabia “j'aimerais que les intervenants ne parle que des droits..ces droits sont comme une arme à

double tranchant..je veux pas qu'ils parlent que les droits..par exemple la dernière fois ils ont dit à ma fille si tu veux encore porter plainte contre ton père tu as toujours le temps pour le faire..re-ouvrir le dossier.. pourquoi ils disent ça?..je veux qu'ils prennent en consideration la religion et la culture..d'inviter les leaders spirituels..je comprends qu'ils sont laïques mais nous les immigrants on est pas..”