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**Title/ Título:** Encounters between Somali parents and teachers in the Norwegian School – Challenges and possibilities

Encuentros entre padres somalís y profesorado en los centros docentes noruegos. Retos y posibilidades

**Topic:** Cultural, technological and multicultural aspects of school, family and community partnerships

Aspectos culturales y multiculturales de las relaciones que se establecen entre las familias, los centros docentes y las entidades y servicios sociales comunitarios

**Presentation time/Día de presentación:** Session in English. Friday 16, 12:15-1:45 p.m. Room 2, Third Floor

Sesión en Inglés. Viernes 16, 12:15-1:45 p.m. Sala 2, Tercer Piso

### **Abstract**

The number of minority pupils is increasing in the Norwegian school system, and a lot of schools have to handle the fact that many pupils and their parents belong to a different cultural, religious and linguistic reality than the majority. In the Norwegian primary school, more than 40 000 pupils have a minority background, and this is about seven per cent of the pupils in the Norwegian school system. Many of these children achieve good results, but research results point out that the number of minority pupils who achieve the expected results is lower than the majority pupils (Bakken 2003). Parental involvement in school is very important for children's learning success. Research results indicate that a supporting environment outside school contributes to increase the pupils learning profit, and that involvement of parents is one of the most important factors, even more important than class background (Epstein and Sanders 2000). Focusing on minority people as one group is a large simplification of reality. In this paper I have chosen to focus on Somali parents and teachers in the Norwegian school system. The purpose of the paper is to discover the challenges teachers and Somali parents have to handle in the Norwegian school. How can teachers and Somali parents collaborate to give Somali children the best learning conditions possible so that the somali pupils can meet the educational system with the same "school capital" as the majority? An adequate learning environment is an important precondition for learning in school. The learning environment in school and home may be experienced differently by minority and majority groups of pupils according to social and cultural capital. This paper draws on Pierre Bourdieu's theories of cultural capital. The relationship between the Norwegian school system and Somali parents are analysed as encounters between different cultures according to structural variables such as religious, geographical and cultural background.