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THE MAP OF CHIN STATE



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¹ <http://chinseekingrefuge.com/maps>; site accessed 04 May 2016.

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ABBREVIATION

CNA	Chin National Army
HDI	Human Development Index
NSD	Norwegian Social Science Data Services
SCO	Stavanger Chin Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission
NAV	Ny Arbeids og Velferdsforvaltning
PDI	Power Distance Index
CSUN	Chin Student Union of Norway
NOKUT	Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education
NGO	Non-Government's Organization

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Context of Immigration for the Chin in Stavanger

The first Chin Christians arrived Stavanger on October 14, 2003 (Thang 2014, 36). This happened with the help of the Government of Norway and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Malaysia. Since the Government of Norway has been active in helping refugees, the population of the Chin people in Stavanger have increased to 258 now. Stavanger is therefore the city in Norway with most Chin people, and it is often called by the Chin themselves ‘the capital city of Chin’.

The Chin people are one of the several ethnic groups in the state of Myanmar, and they represent a Christian majority. They live in the west part of Myanmar and count about half a million inhabitants, but there are also another half million Chin who live outside the Chin state. The reason for migration is due to the war between the Chin National Army (CNA: a political underground movement) and the Military junta since 1988. In order to find a safe place, more than 200 000 Chin fled to India and Malaysia under the protection of UNHCR. After that, by the help of the Norwegian Government, some of them were selected to resettle in Norway; not by application, but by consideration of vulnerable criteria according to UNHCR. At the present, there are about 1800 Chin in all of Norway.

“Stavanger is an international city. The percentage of immigrants and Norwegian-born with immigrant parents totals 21,1% of the population whilst the national average is 14,9% (SSB [Statistics Norway] 01.01.14). The population of Stavanger was 130,754 at the turn of the year (2014), of which 27,531 are immigrants.”²

Research Problem

“Research always begins with some problems or set of issues” (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 21). As for my thesis, I will investigate the process of integration of the Chin Christians in Stavanger from the perspectives of language, education and employment. These three sets of issues are regarded as crucial for a successful integration into the Norwegian society. The

² <http://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/stavanger>; site accessed 30 April 2016.

Norwegian Professor Thomas Hylland Eriksen, Oslo University states that “*i det norske samfunnet, slik det ser ut i dag, er språk, utdannelse og arbeid de viktigste inngangsbillettene til deltagelse*”³ (2010a, 278). Based on qualitative research methods, I have interviewed seven Chin people living in Stavanger in order to find out how they relate to language, education and employment in their daily lives.

My first analytical perspective is related to language. I will discuss how the Chin relate to both Norwegian language and the original Chin language at home, in school and in church and discuss this with a view to their cultural background and the integration program of the Norwegian Government. I will discuss different levels of language skills of elderly people who are over 34 years, youth between 16 and 34 years, and children under 16 years. In order to deepen the understanding of the integration process from a language perspective, I will apply some theoretical concepts given in Berry’s model of acculturation strategies such as assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization. Finally, I will discuss briefly the intergenerational shifts of language.

The second analytical perspective deals with education. I will discuss the Chin people’s experiences and difficulties in preschool, primary school, secondary school, upper secondary school and in university. In which, I will discuss how elderly people, youth and children are integrated into the native society and how education illuminates the world for them. Finally, I will analyze if the Chin are integrated in society through education, and discuss intergenerational shifts of education in the future.

The final analytical perspective deals with employment. Here, I will discuss how the Chin are able to participate in employment. In which, I will discuss how the Norwegian government’s integration policy function for the Chin, for instance in the introduction program and the qualification program of NAV. Then I will investigate their attitudes and values regarding employment. Finally, I will analyze the integration process of the Chin from the perspective of employment and discuss the possibilities of intergenerational job shifts.

³ My translation: In the Norwegian society of today, language, education and employment are the most important tickets for participation.

Personal Background and Motivation of my Research Topic

The topic of my research is ‘Integration of Chin Christians in Stavanger’. I use the word Christian to clarify that Chin people who live in Stavanger belong to the Christian faith.

The researcher, myself, is a Chin who came to Stavanger on April 24, 2008. That day was very special, and I will never ever forget it because I realized that I had started a new life together with white people whom I had always respected. Therefore, I asked myself the following question: ‘will I really be able to integrate into this white Norwegian society, especially with regard to language, education and work. And, how will it be also for my fellow Chin people? I actually had both positive and negative feelings because I imagined that life in Stavanger might be good because of the help from the Norwegian Government. I was a little bit worried for the future life situation regarding language, education and employment.

According to the Human Development Index (HDI) 2015, the report done by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), there are 188 countries in total. With regard to the living conditions, Norway ranks the top, and Myanmar rates number 148.⁴ Therefore, *in my opinion*, the Chin represent a less civilized society from the south, and the local people of Stavanger represent the West in a highly civilized postmodern society.

According to Chin culture, the host has responsibilities for helping the immigrant. At the same time, the immigrant also has responsibility to integrate into the society by following the rules of the local people and show humility and loyalty to the host. It means that the Chin have strong willingness to integrate with the local people by leaning on the values of their own cultural background. Therefore, I am proud of myself regarding the attitude of the Chin. This attitude of the Chin has motivated me to write this topic. My aim is to present the Chin and build a bridge of understanding between Chin immigrants and the host of Stavanger. On the other hand, I would like to leave this study for future generations of Chin people, especially to those living in Stavanger.

Moreover, I also consider my research topic as meaningful and significant because of the current refugee crisis in Europe. Therefore, the refugee topic is a hot political issue in Norway as well as in Europe, and it is continuously debated in the mass media, such as on television, in newspapers, in radios and in the social media. For these reasons, I hope that my

⁴ http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2015_Human_development_report_1.pdf; site accessed 28 Januar 2016.

thesis can benefit some local politicians in their dealing with the immigrant situation of Stavanger.

Previous Research

The word integration is popular in Norway as well as in other western countries because of the immigration flow and intercultural studies. Therefore, there exist many studies in this field, but regarding the Chin, I could find only three studies and all of them are master thesis.

First, Espen Thielsen from School of Mission and Theology wrote “Old belief in new country: Challenges related to belief and practices among Chin youth in Norway” (Thielsen 2010). In this thesis, he focused on belief and practices.

Second is the master thesis “Immigrants church and integration” by Helge Kristoferson from Høgskulen i Volda (Kristoferson 2013). His thesis investigated how members of a Burmese Baptist Church in Sandnes, Norway, integrated into the Norwegian society.

Finally, I have read the master thesis “Reasons of church split among Chin migrant churches in Stavanger” by Thawng Hlei Thang from School of Mission and Theology in 2015. His research also has a focus on religion (Thang 2015).

These three researchers did their research on Chin people in Norway, and they all emphasized religious belief. Even though they did not touch upon my research area of language, education and employment, their contributions have been helpful for me in order to understand more about the Chin people. Therefore, I proud myself for being the first person who did the research to Chin people based on language, education, and employment.

A Brief History of the Chin people and their Life Experiences

In Burma, there are eight different ethnic groups and the Chin is one of them. The capital city of the Chin is Hakha. There are a lot of mountains and hills in the country. The Chin state is very special and peculiar because of being a Christian state and having over 40 different dialects (Sakhong 2003, 167).

According to the Chin scholar and politician Sakhong, the British colonists launched their first annexation of Chinram in 1871, which was not completed until the final occupation in 1896 (2003, 129). Afterwards, the Chin faithfully served the British until the end of the colonial period (2003, 160). The Chin fought at the side of the British in the first and Second World War

Therefore, the British officer Stevenson, Superintendent of the Chin Hills stated that “the Empire owe the very great debt to these sturdy hill men (Chin folk) (2003, 196). From this, I have acknowledged that the Chin’s worldview towards the white is positive with respect and loyalty.

The Chin belonged to a traditional religion, but Christian Missionaries from America arrived 13 March 1899. Christian faith spread very fast, and now 90 percent of the people are Christians. Therefore, they used to say that ‘we are a special chosen people of God Almighty as Israel was’. This was a strong feeling to them because they lived among three world major religions; such as Indian Hinduism to the north-west, Bangladesh Muslim to the south-west and Burmese Buddhism to all the other sides.

History of Immigration

There are four major waves in the Chin immigration history. Firstly, Sakhong claims that the Chin immigration begins from China to Myanmar (current Chindwin river valley) in the middle of eighth centuries (2003, 11). According to traditional memory, their remote original place was *Chinlung*, which means a cave in China where, for fear of enemies, they hid there (Sakhong 2003, 2, 3). Therefore, some of the Chin scholars believe that the first Chin’s migration was due to war and conflict.

Secondly, from Chindwin valley to the present Chin State in about 1395. According to Sakhong, the Chin and *Burman*⁵ people lived side by side in that Chindwin valley at that time; however, the Chin had to migrate due to war and conflict between Burman and *Shan*.⁶ In which the Shan built the great city of Kalaymyo with double walls at the foot of what is now called the Chin Hill, and the hardship of the forced labor was said to be so great (Sakhong 2003, 15). From this, we understand that the Chin people are not willing to fight with others, at the same time; they are searching for peace and freedom.

Thirdly, from current Chin State to Malaysia and India since 1988, because of war between Chin National Army (CNA: political underground movement) and Military junta. This civil war killed many lives and affected their lives physically, emotionally and psychologically. In order to find a safe place, more than 200 000 Chin fled to India and Malaysia under the protection of United Nations High Commissioners for Refugees (UNHCR). Here, even though

⁵ Burman people are the majority in current Myanmar, also called Burmese.

⁶ Shan is one ethnic group. They live in the eastern part of Myanmar.

they are living under the recognition of UNHCR, it has a limit, as they are still not safe in Malaysia.

Fourthly, from Malaysia and India to the West by the help of UNHCR from 2000. Even though they were living under the protection of UNHCR, the Chin still faced many problems from local people in Malaysia and India. Due to that unsafe situation, they got a chance to immigrate to the West by the help of UNHCR. In Norway, the first Chin Van Thang Lalbik arrived directly from jail in Malaysia to Moi, Rogaland on 28 November 2002. At the present, there are about 1800 Chin in all of Norway.

Their Life Experiences

There was peace and freedom before the British occupation. In 1948, the Chin joined other ethnic groups and started the country of Union of Burma. From that day on, the life of the Chin has not been happy because of the Military junta. Thus, they fought against the Military junta, finally, many of them left the country, and most of them fled to Malaysia and some of them to India. Therefore, they faced terrible life experiences on the way to Malaysia and India.

My informant Ceu tells me how difficult and dangerous circumstances they had faced on the way to Malaysia. He says, "my journey to Malaysia was terrible, and I even did not dare to think I would survive because I including other Chin people were put in the back part of the car for fear of being arrested, in which we had almost no oxygen and we were about to die."⁷ Here, I would like to point out that this kind of horrible experiences is true, not only for Ceu, but also for all other Chins. Since, they crossed the border and the sea illegally many of them were tortured, arrested and put to jail, killed and raped.

Moreover, the Chin faced many dangerous also in the city of Malaysia. Bawi tells me about life situations in Malaysia. He says, "life in Malaysia was not easy. About 25 people stayed together in a normal house without proper job; and I was afraid to go in the city because of fear of robber and police."⁸ Here, I have found out that their lives in Malaysia was in danger. Some of them stayed in the forest, most of them were in the city, but they had to worry for food, health, robbing and arrest by the police. I believe that almost all have experienced being in the jail for some months, and robbed by the police or by some other gangsters.

⁷ Ceu, Stavanger, 02 November 2015.

⁸ Bawi, Stavanger, 28 October 2015.

Therefore, I would like to suggest that such kind of life experiences seems to have enabled them to have grateful attitudes as they integrate into a new society.

The Stavanger Chin Organization

According to my informants, the list of Chin Christians in Stavanger are as follows:

Age	Total	Remark
0 – 15 (children)	76	Group C Second generation
16 – 34 (youth)	97	Group B First generation
35 – 80 (elderly people)	85	Group A First generation
Total	258	

SCO is a social organization recognized by the Norwegian Government since 2007. All Chin who live in Stavanger become a member in SCO automatically. Every member over 18 years old contribute with 15 kr per month. The money is used for welfare activities. For example, if one of the SCO member's father, mother, brother or sister dies in Burma, the SCO contribute with 2000 kr, and with a prayer meeting according to the ceremony of Christianity.

SCO is very active in initiating integration processes, such as by helping the Chin people to get involved in the ceremony of the Norwegian National Day on May 17 every year. At the same time, SCO has a good relationship with other international organizations in Stavanger. The most important issue SCO is trying to do is to convey original Chin culture to future generations. This is seen in how they every year celebrate the Chin National Day on February 20, by which they underline the importance of Chin language, literature, traditional songs and dances.

SCO is also active in providing humanitarian help to Burma. Moreover, they take responsibility in creating unity among the Chin community in Stavanger. In order to regulate properly, they have also constitutions and bylaws in which they have Executive committee and Youth committee election every second year.

Structure of Thesis

My thesis is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter, the introduction includes some general information about the context of immigration for the Chin in Stavanger, research problem, personal background and motivation of research topic, previous research, a brief history of the Chin, and the structure of thesis.

The second chapter is about methodology and deals with the research method and research ethics. I present how I selected informants and took part in participation observation. I also discuss the procedure of analysis of data material and argue for why I find this research valid.

The third chapter deals with the theoretical approach. In which I will define John W. Berry's model of acculturation. In which the process of integration will be discussed by using the concepts of integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization according to the level of individual's interaction to both cultures (Berry and Sam 1997, 3: 296-297). After that, I will introduce my analytical theories such as language, education, and employment.

The fourth chapter deals with the issue of language. Here I will present the Norwegian Government's integration procedures, such as the refugee sections, introduction programs, interpreters and refugee guides. After that, I will describe how my informants relate to the Norwegian language in various areas of their lives, from a first day experience in Norway to the language course at Johannes learning center, at home and in the church. I will compare some issues in the Chin and Norwegian language to point at some interesting challenges. I will also analyze their actions, attitudes, and levels of competence by dividing elderly people, the youth and children. After that, I will discuss how they relate to the original Chin language by looking at its importance in the church and in the celebration of the Chin National Day. Finally, I will anticipate the possibilities of future generations through Algan's intergenerational shift.

The fifth chapter is about education. I will discuss how the Government of Norway includes immigrants in the education system by creating lower and upper secondary classes for immigrants, and mother tongue teachers at preschool and primary school. In which I will analyze how the Chin children are integrated into preschool, and primary school, lower secondary school, upper secondary school and university.

The sixth chapter is about employment. I will discuss how the Chin integrates into Norwegian society through employment. In which I will discuss how the Chin are able to involve in labor market through introduction program, qualification program of NAV, friend, and online application. After that, I will analyze their integration process by categorizing men, women, educated people, and youth. Finally, the chapter seven will be my conclusion

Chapter Two

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Research Method

In order to study how Chin Christians integrate into the local society in Stavanger, I apply a combination of literature studies and qualitative research method. Here, for my literature studies, I mainly use books such as: ‘Ethnography’ by Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson 2007, ‘In search of Chin Identity’ by Lianhmung Sakhong 2003, ‘Cultural Integration of Europe’ by Yan Algan et al. 2012, ‘*Samfunn*’ by Thomas Hylland Eriksen 2010a, and ‘Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology’ volume 3, edited by John W. Berry et al. 1997. From which, I obtain the theoretical perspectives that will be used to analyze data from qualitative interviews.

Hammersley and Atkinson explain that qualitative research takes place in the field, and studies people based on every day contexts, in which the researcher focus on a few cases, a small scale or group of people in order to study it deeply and bringing it to the process of data analysis. They add that the researcher should participate in the people’s daily life and watch what happens, listen to what is said, ask questions through informal and formal interviews, collect documents of whatever data is available to throw light on the issues that he studies. And then the task of the researcher also is “to gain deeper insight into some aspects of the lives of the people who are being studied, and this includes finding out how these people view the situation they face, how they regard one another, and also how they see themselves” (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 3).

Thus, qualitative research is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations, and that will provide insight into the problem or help to develop ideas or hypotheses. My task is to investigate some aspects of the lives of the Chin people, by doing qualitative interviews to gain their experiences, reasons for acting, their opinion and their motivations.

Moreover, according to Bryman, the relationship between the researcher and the subject is close, the research strategy is unstructured or not limited, the scope of findings are specific, and the nature of data is rich and deep (1999, 36). Therefore, I related to the informants closely by conducting interviews and doing participant observation in order to discover what they were

doing and to understand the world from their perspective (Bryman 1999, 38). In which our conversation is unstructured in nature; and therefore, I often changed the direction of the question when I wanted to ask some more detailed questions. Here, my aim is to obtain rich and deep data.

Actually, my research is primarily based on qualitative research. However, I will put some statistics numbers, grade, percentage and so on; because I lean on the method used by Bryman. He suggests, “great advantages can be obtained by creatively combining quantitative and qualitative method” (1999, 48). I am aware of the fact that even though it is not possible to accurately measure the level of language skill, I let my informants suggest the grade of language skills of other Chin people by ranging their level within the range from 1 – 10. This simple questionnaire is used just to get some insight into how the informants view and range the level of their own language competence.

Selection of Informants

In order to get the right information, selecting informants is very important. I believe that the quality of research is highly dependent upon the quality of informants. Therefore, “selection of informants must be based on the best judgements one can make in the circumstances” (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 108). In which, I gave importance to informants who were especially sensitive to the area of concern and who had knowledge about the information I was trying to get hold of.

For these reasons, I selected three youths who attend upper secondary school and university in order to obtain information about education. In addition, I selected four adults especially for language and employment issues. My aim has been to obtain reliable information from their lives related to language, education and employment.

The average year of my informants is 36.4, year of education is 12 and duration of stay in Stavanger is ten. They are five men and two women. Three student speak Chin language as their mother language, Burmese, Norwegian and English, however four elderly men speak broken English, and broken Norwegian with foreign accent. Generally, all of them are trusted and respected people in the Chin community in Stavanger and therefore I believe that the information that I got from them can be relied on.

Ethical Considerations

Regarding research ethics, I have been given permission by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) to interview Christian Chin people living in Stavanger. Ethics is about Human behavior. According to Kristine Hansen, professor at Brigham Young University, there are three main ethical principles that the researcher needs to follow. These are the following:

- Respect for the dignity and autonomy of individuals requires that participants comprehend the nature of the research, give their informed consent, and participate voluntarily
- Beneficence means the researchers do no foreseeable harm to participants and maximize possible benefits while minimizing any possible harm
- Justice requires researchers to recruit participants so that benefits and burdens are distributed fairly across social groups, classes, etc. (Hansen 2003, 51).

Moreover; even though it is almost similar, I would like to summarize the ethical issues suggested by Hammersley and Atkinson. The researcher should:

- obtain informed consent from participants
- protect their privacy
- minimize the risk of harm to participants
- give something back, in the way of services or payment
- and think consequences for future research. (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 210 – 218)

Therefore, I did my fieldwork carefully by considering the above-mentioned ethical issues. It means that I tried to do well and avoid harm to participants and the society. Before every interview, I made clear the purpose of the interview and got their consent according to the rules of NSD⁹. In which, I assured them I would make their name fictive in my research.

I am a pastor in one of three Chin churches in Stavanger. I realize that my status as pastor could cause difficulties in the present work. Therefore, I chose informants mainly from the two churches in which I do not serve. Only one informant is from my own church. I have tried to be conscious about this fact so that it should not influence negatively the interview process.

⁹ <http://www.nsd.uib.no/nsd/english/pvo.html> ; site accessed 10 September 2015.

The Interview Process

According to Hammersley and Atkinson, interview is an important topic for investigation (2007, 97). Before the interview is started, the researcher should inform carefully about “the reason for the interview, along with reassurance about confidentiality and the right of interviewee to refuse to answer any question to which they would prefer not to respond” (2007, 110).

I started my interview by choosing seven informants and made personal appointments with them by telephone. In order to feel comfortable, I used both my own residence and their own residence for the place to interview. I met them personally and did face-to-face interview. In which the researcher gives clear indication of acceptance to be the sign of following what the informant is saying (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 110). Before the interview was started, I received an agreement from my informants to do both tape-recording and field-notes. Therefore, for later analysis, I took field-notes and the audio recording.

In my interview, I chose “non-directive interview method because it is good to minimize the influence of the researcher to the informant. In which the interviewee is allowed to talk at length in his or her own terms” (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 101). Then, I used my prepared interview guide but also asked follow-up questions when necessary to clarify and deepen my understanding of some issues in the interview. I prepared a list of questions, but I did not follow orderly, at the same time, I asked them other some questions to be able to continue our conversation. Moreover, I changed my questions after doing interview with informant 01, because of reading my relevant literatures changed my mind. Therefore, I did once more time interview with my informant 01 later.

Most interviews lasted about 70 minutes. After interviews were completed, I listened again carefully through the recordings for whatever they had said and made transcription and divided the content into sub-categories. For instance, I put them orderly according to the categories: language, education and employment.

While interviewing, I experienced that using the mother language in our conversations and coming from the same culture is highly beneficial to my research. I am satisfied with my work because we had no misunderstanding and troubles. However, I have strong desire to do once more qualitative interview because my knowledge increase after readings many books and writing so far.

Participant Observation

When it comes to participant observation, the researcher can participate either overtly or covertly in the activities or ceremonies in the informants' lives (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 3, 98). Important data material and details can be obtained through participant observation. Therefore, I have participated in activities such as services in different Chin congregations, the National day celebration and marriage ceremonies. In this way, I have observed how they use Chin and Norwegian languages.

Being a Chin, I feel myself that I have a golden chance because I live among them and communicate with them every day, in which I carefully watch what I see, listen to what they say and apply it to my research and try to analyze it. Moreover, I have a chance to participate in social and religious activities with them. For instance, I participated in a social ceremony called "*Chinram Philh hlah*"¹⁰ organized by the SCO youths, and about 70 attended. In which they sang Chin national songs, the pastor and leaders encouraged them to love *Chinram*¹¹ by contributing with something, to maintain original culture while trying to become good citizens of Norway. In which they contributed with about 100-200 kroner for those who are suffering urgent problems regarding the landslide in *Chinram*. I was given the possibility to observe their attitudes and the situation of Chin youths in Stavanger.

I had also a chance to participate in the New Year ceremony with Chin Christians in Stavanger on 01 January 2016. There, I met with children, youths and elderly people. Moreover, since I live among them, I have heard many conversations for example news about what happens, what is going on among the Chin.

Analysis of Data Material

Analysis of data material is a very important part of the work for my thesis. This process has already began since pre-fieldwork phase and continue throughout the process of writing. After collection of data through interviews, my job is to analyze and to interpret carefully in order to write my findings. According to Hansen, the simpler and the more quantitative your observation were, the more straightforward your analysis will be" (2003, 92). Therefore, in order

¹⁰ My translation : Don't forget your original country

¹¹ My definition : Literally it is Chin country

to analyze straightforward, I will also compare numbers, percentage and abilities of the natives and the Chin so that the reader will be able to imagine the real situation of the Chin.

She suggests that in order to find a final useful conclusion, it is needed to shake or sift through all of my notes and begin seeking a general focus. In which the first goal is to make my analysis illuminate the questions that led me to do the observations. Then, my second goal is to draw some conclusions that provide greater understanding of the people and phenomena that I have studied (Hansen 2003, 92).

According to Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, “formally, an analysis starts to take shape in analytic notes and memoranda; informally, it is embodied in the ethnographer’s ideas and hunches” (2007, 158). In other words, an analytical process starts as an idea in the mind of the researcher and continues to the end. In which data and our idea interplay throughout the research process (2007, 159). It means that ideas are used to make sense of data, and data are used to change our ideas. They claim:

Data analysis involve interpretation of meanings, functions and consequences of human actions and institutional practices, and how these are implicated in local, and perhaps in wider, contexts. What are produced, for the most part, are verbal descriptions, and theories; quantification and statistical analysis play a subordinate role at most.

(Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 3)

Therefore, my job is to think what is said, and analyze the consequences of human behavior and attitude. After the interview processes has been completed, I listened to the tape-records carefully and transcript in my note by dividing into categories, such as language, education and employment. In this way, I decided the final findings to be used for my thesis as the data.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are interdependent because the only reliable data are valid and that valid data comes from reliable information. In order to become a reliable data, that data should be true and genuine. Because, “the aim of the research is to produce the true accounts of social phenomenon. It should not be taken at face value, but treated as a field of inferences in which

hypothetical patterns can be identified and their validity tested” (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 209).

There are two kinds of validities in qualitative research. The first one is interpretive validity and the second one is theoretical validity (Greenfield 1997, 1: 316 – 317). Therefore, firstly, in order to be able to produce the truth, the information given by informants should be genuine and reliable, at the same time; the interpretation done by the researcher should also be valid and reliable. Secondly, theoretical validity is also very important to be considered. Therefore, the researcher should evaluate the theory; for instance, who is the author, when and so on.

I am confident that the data which I have collected from my respondents are reliable and valid because my respondent are highly qualified and sincere people; at the same time I myself is one of the Chin; and therefore, I would like to state that my research is reliable and valid. Moreover, I have confidence regarding my theories because the authors of my theories are considered experts in the field and are internationally recognized professors, such as Martyn Hammersley, Thomas Hylland Eriksen, John W. Berry and Yan Algan.

Chapter Three

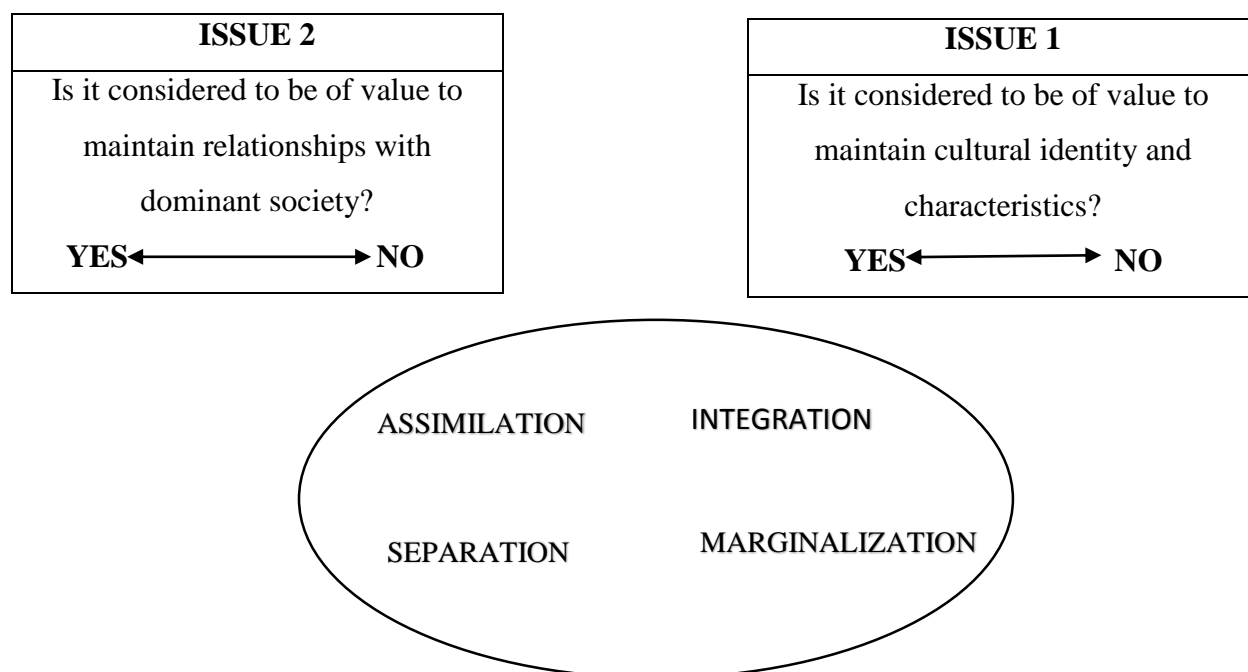
THEORETICAL APPROACH

Berry's Model

John W. Berry is a professor of Psychology at Queen's University, Kingston, Canada. He writes together with D.L. Sam from the University of Bergen. I have chosen Berry's model for my research because I think that his model influences the study of social science of the world. This is because Yan Algan and colleagues also lean on his the model to analyze cultural integration of immigrants in Europe. From this, I consider that his model is appropriate for analyzing the integration process of the Chin people in Stavanger. According to Berry and Sam:

Cultural groups and individual members must deal with the issue of *how* to acculturate in plural societies. Strategies with respect to two major issues are usually worked out by groups and individuals in their daily encounter with each other. These issues are: *cultural maintenance* (to what extent are cultural identity and characteristics considered important by individuals, and their maintenance strived for); and *contact and Participation* (to what extent should individuals become involved in majority culture, or remain primary among themselves). When two central issues are considered simultaneously, a conceptual framework is generated which posits four acculturation strategies. These two issues can be responded to on attitudinal dimensions, represented by bipolar arrows. For purposes of presentation, generally positive or negative ('yes' or 'no') responses to these issues intersect to define four strategies. (1997, 3: 296)

In order to understand more, Berry and Sam also draw a figure as the following.



(Berry and Sam 1997, 3: 296). Based on the above figure, I again formulate the equation as the following to make more clearly the figure that Berry and Sam introduced us.

- Integration = 'yes' to both issue 1 and 2
- Assimilation = 'no' to issue 1 and 'yes' issue 2
- Separation = 'yes' to issue 1 and 'no' to issue 2
- Marginalized = 'no' to both issues 1 and 2

In the book of 'Cultural Integration of Immigrant in Europe', 2012, Algan, Bisin and Verdi also quotes Berry's model and explains about integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization by drawing a figure as the following.

	Majority culture	
	Strong	Weak
Minority culture	Strong	Integration
	Weak	Assimilation
		Separation
		Marginalization

(Algan et al. 2012, 13)

Therefore, my investigation will mainly focus on whether the Chin are *weak*¹² or *strong*¹³ regarding their relation to the original Chin culture, and the majority Norwegian culture. In other words, I will try to find out if the Chin are integrated, assimilated, separated or marginalized in Stavanger. If they are strong both towards the original Chin culture and towards the majority culture, they are integrated; and if they are strong to majority and weak in original Chin culture, they are assimilated. On the other hand, if they are weak toward majority culture and strong in Chin culture, they are separated; finally if they are weak toward both original culture and the native's culture, they are marginalized according to Berry and Sam (1997, 3: 296, 297). After that we have to be noted about the process of integration; "integration process goes through intergenerational shifts" (Algan et al. 20012, 24).

Integration

The word integration means "the process of becoming a full member of a group or society, and becoming involved completely in its activities."¹⁴ According to Berry and Sam, "when there is interest in both maintaining one's original culture while in daily interactions with other groups, integration is the option; here, some degree of cultural integrity is maintained, while at the same

¹² My explanation: He or she wants to maintain original culture and avoid interacting with the majority culture.

¹³ My explanation: value to interact with majority culture.

¹⁴ <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/integration>, site accessed 18 March 2016.

time the individual seeks to participate as an integral part of the larger social network of a multicultural society” (1997, 3: 297). It means that the integrated person answers *both* ‘yes’ to issue 1 and 2.

The Home Secretary of UK, Roy Jenkins summarized integration policy in 1966 and we can study his opinion of integration. According to him, the immigrant needs not to melt into the native’s melting pot, besides he or she even can be still strong in original culture. He defines integration, therefore, not as a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance (Manning and Alan 2012, 261).

Therefore, I would like to state that the integrated person is like a two-edged sword or the one who can balance two different cultures, because he or she is active in both the original culture and the majority culture. However, “the integrated person is not simply sensitive to a variety of cultures, rather, this person is always in the process of becoming *a part of* and *a part from* a given cultural context” (Paige 1993, 59). Finally, I agree with Algan et al.; they state that the level of integration by the minority is highly dependent upon the reaction of the *dominant* group to the minorities (2012, 18). For this reason, we will need to consider firstly the integration program contributed by the native in my research.

Assimilation

According to Berry and Sam, “assimilation is defined when individuals do not wish to remain in their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures” (1997, 3: 297). It means that he or she answers ‘no’ to issue 1 and ‘yes’ to issue 2. Algan et al. claim that assimilation strategy is built upon three central features.

First, diverse ethnic groups come to share a common culture through a natural process along which they have the same access to socio-economic opportunities as natives of the host country. Second, this process consists of the gradual disappearance of original cultural and behavioral patterns in favor of new ones. Third, once set in motion, the process inevitably and irreversibly towards complete assimilation. Hence, diverse immigrant groups are expected to melt into the mainstream culture through an inter-generational process of cultural, social, and economic integration. (2012, 24)

Here, before assimilation is acquired, the process goes through integration first, and then to the assimilation level as generations pass by. This assimilation level of cultural change may be the desired outcome or expectation from the part of the native; on the other hand, it is a great threat for immigrants groups, because their identity of minority disappear. For instance, the people of second or third minority generation totally forgets their mother language and speaks the majority's language without accent.

Moreover, “the assimilation strategy has a single dimension: either minority individuals assimilate completely into the culture of the majority or they do not, remaining as members of the minority group” (Algan et al. 2012, 14). In which, Algan et al. claim that “the size of the minority is crucial; because when the minority is initially small, the long-run outcome is full assimilation” (2012, 4). However, even if the original language disappears; “full assimilation will be impossible if the minority has a different skin color; because the distinguishing marks of the minority cannot be removed” (Eriksen 2010b, 298), whether or not its members wish to do so.

Separation

According to Berry and Sam, “separation alternative is defined when the non-dominant group places a value on holding onto their original culture, and at the same time wishes to avoid interaction with others” (1997, 3: 297). It means that the separated person responds ‘yes’ to issue 1, and ‘no’ to issue 2. As a result, he or she gradually moves away from the majority culture, and finally he or she can be negative for the society.

Moreover, Paige also defines that “separation is the intentional erection of physical or social barriers to create distance from cultural difference as a means of maintaining a stage of denial” (1993, 32). This kind of approach is opposite to integration because while an integrated persons tries to interact with the native, the separated person avoid it and try to separate from the majority culture. The aim of avoiding to interact with the native is to avoid assimilation while preserving their original tribal, religious, language etc., at the same time.

Here, if “the size of minority is large, unique long-run equilibrium is the initial distribution, that is, full cultural separation” (Algan et al. 2012, 15). Therefore, it is clear that this immigrant group will be negative for the natives.

Marginalization

According to Berry and Sam, “when there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss), and little interest in having relation with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination), that is defined as marginalization” (1997, 3: 297).

Here, the marginalized person does not try to keep his own language and culture, and he just survives without interest in his own fellows. As a result, he or she will not be active to interact with his own people. At the same time, he or she is also not active in interacting with the native. Therefore, he or she answers ‘no’ to both issue 1 and 2.

Analytical Perspectives

The subject of integration is wide and interesting. Generally, social scientists divide integration into four categories, such as economic integration, legal integration, political integration and social integration. According to Algan et al.:

The first category economic integration is associated with integration process in market relationships. These include integration in the *labour market* (my emphasis) in residential location, in *education* (my emphasis) and training in skills, which are valued in market interactions. The second category, legal integration, relates to the evolution of an immigrant’s status and its implication for his (or her) condition of stay. The third category is political integration. Finally, cultural integration is associated with the social and cultural sphere and concerned cultural habits, values and beliefs, religion, and *language* (my emphasis). (Algan et al. 2012, 21)

Here, I realize that the subject of integration is wide and large, however, out of all these; I will discuss the issues of language, education and employment because I believe that these are the most important keys for integration as Eriksen claimed (2010a, 278). Moreover, when I read the book ‘Cultural Integration of Europe’ by Algan et al., I realize that they also give importance to these three factors.

Language

In order to be able to integrate, first, communication should take place between them. In which, the level of their communication is based upon how far they understand each other, and that understanding comes from language competence. Therefore, according to Danish Professor Anne Holmen, “language learning is a rational, goal-oriented task concerned with the pragmatics of everyday life, and efficient language learning is in the interest of language learners as well as society” (Holmen 2006, 197). Because of this kind of ideology, the Government of Norway provides a language course named ‘Introduction Program ‘for two years for immigrants in Norway.

I would like to state that the level of their language skill could be seen as the level of integration for language and culture are not separable. Because, “language is a part of the complex and dynamic processes of social membership, culture, and identity, and language learning is not only a matter of individual capability, but also of opportunities for interaction at the micro social level and of power relations and linguistic norms at the macro-social level” (Holmen 2006, 197).

Moreover, I would like to point out the opinion of some other social scientist related to language. Language is seen as “indicator of cultural integration” (Vigdor 2012, 288), “a marker of social identity” (Holmen 2006, 209), and “a key to enter into society” (Eriksen 2010a, 278). At the same time, language has deeper meaning than just learning and talking. Because “linguistic competence cannot be separated from the competence of intercultural communication” (Byram 1997, 22). After that, as mentioned above, “there is power relation in language” (Holmen 2006, 197) and “sociocultural knowledge” (Mohanty and Perregaux 1996, 2: 224). Therefore, it is sure that the more we can speak the native language, the more we integrate, and at the same time, the more we tend to forget the original language, the more we assimilate into the native society. Because, the level of language skill indirectly points at the level of integration, and the assimilation level.

Mohanty from India and Perregaux from Geneva state that “language shift is the result of assimilative type of orientation” (1997, 2:237). According to Eriksen, “in US, most immigrants groups have historically become assimilated; usually they lost their mother tongue after two generations” (2010b, 298).

Language benefits immigrants not only for communication and cultural reasons, but also for economic reasons. “if one has problems with the English language, it is likely to be very hard to assimilate into British culture and one is very likely to remain economically disadvantaged” (Manning and Georgiardi 2012, 279). Algan et al. add, “the adoption of the dominant language has beneficial effects in the labour market” (2012, 18). There are other advantages and disadvantages of language, and I will discuss this further in chapter four.

Education

The issue of education I find very interesting because education is not an easy issue for natives either. I just imagine how difficult it will be for the Chin students among the Norwegian students without understanding language properly and different background situations.

According to classic view, “education is an essential, liberating process that opens the way for its participants to move from ignorance to enlightenment, empowering them with a unique repertoire of cognitive resources to understand the world in ways that are inaccessible to non-literate minds. In short, literacy provides them with a torch that will illuminate the world for them” (Serpell and Hatano 1997, 2: 344). Therefore, there exist fundamental differences in cognitive capabilities between literates and non-literates, because “education empowers a person for personal development as well as integration in the society” (Frønes 2010: 117). Moreover, Frønes added that education has a great meaning for social likeness and economic development (2010: 118). Here, even though the Chin come from the south with refugee background, they can gain the same social status and economic conditions if they succeed in education. According to Algan et al.;

- cultural integration is associated with education achievement
- educated people are better able to adapt to different customs and culture
- minority students view educational achievement as an indication of acceptance of the dominant culture
- strong attachment to traditional family values (live with parents,) may well promote educational achievements
- a large number of children may delay the process of Human capital. (2012, 28-30)

The children of Chin Christians are allowed to attend Norwegian school according to their age and basic knowledge. The Norwegian school is actively involved in understanding cultural differences and work to accept diversity and shape a multicultural society. At the present the Chin student may lack in language, have different worldview, identity and moral reasoning; but if they are able to follow the education system, finally their world will be changed. It is because, I agree with Serpell and Hatano; they claim that “perception, cognition, language, identity and moral reasoning arising from the Particular patterns of literacy and education” (1997, 2: 342).

Employment

As mentioned above, involvement in the job market is a very important tool to understand the level of integration because “the desired outcome of Norwegian refugee policy is that refugees should participate in the labour market and to be independent as soon as possible.”¹⁵ Here, we can consider involvement in employment as *economic integration*; and seen as the key to equal participation in society. Here, Algan et al. suggest that economic integration has been viewed as the process by which the immigrants come closer to the natives (2012, 26). Thus, we can say that one of the most important criteria for integration is ‘independence’ or ‘job’.

Actually, immigrants lack skills, language, educational qualification, or general information about how to behave in the host country. However, with time spent in the host country, immigrants will tend to acquire the missing skills and information and catch up with the natives (Algan et al. 2012, 26). Eriksen also claims that “minority people often do not reach in the competition for work because they lack informal networks or someone to call” (2010a, 77). For this reason, many immigrants are surviving without proper job and income. Even if they get a job, it seems like the simple jobs they get hold of do not demand language and skill, competence, or education, such as a cleaning job. For this reason, generally “immigrants have earnings which are significantly below those of native” (Algan et al. 2012, 26).

¹⁵http://www.udi.no/globalassets/global/forskning-fou_i/beskyttelse/evaluation-of-the-norwegian-program-for-resettlement-of-un-refugees.pdf; site accessed 11 May 2015.

Chapter Four

LANGUAGE

Introduction

In this chapter, I will present Norwegian integration program such as the refugee's section, Johannes learning center, interpreters and the refugee guides.

After that, I will discuss how the Chin relates to Norwegian language by dividing subtitles such as the first day experience, language course at Johannes learning center, comparison between Chin and Norwegian, their actions, Norwegian language at home, and in the church. Moreover, I will discuss different level of language competence by elderly people, youth, and children.

On the other hand, I will also discuss how the Chin people relate their mother Chin language at home, in the church, and in the celebration of Chin National Day. Thereafter, I will try to anticipate when the Chin language can possibly disappear here in Stavanger.

The Norwegian Government's Integration Program

“The main goal of the integration policy is for immigrants and their children to be able to make use of their resources and contribute to society. The key to integration in Norwegian society lies in taking part in working life and having a good knowledge of the Norwegian language.”¹⁶ This goal is articulated by the Government. Therefore, the Government of Norway invests a lot of money, and creates programs such as *Flyktningeseksjonen*¹⁷, the introduction program, and provides interpreters. On the other hand, the Non-Government Organization (NGO) like Red Cross also contributes with refugee guides for newcomers.

¹⁶ <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/asylum-regulations-in-norway/integrering/id2343461/>; site accessed 29 April 2016.

¹⁷ My translation: Refugee section

The Refugee Section

Stavanger municipality has an office named ‘*Flyktningsseksjonen*’ for newly arrived refugees. From this office, a refugee or a family gets a contact person, and he or she has the responsibility for helping out and giving information regarding family issues, health, economy, housing and job.

This contact person is very important for the Chin because there is no other way to survive in the new society without him or her. Bawi says, “I feel welcomed in Stavanger, because as soon as I landed at Sola airport, that contact person met me and helped me to enter into the Stavanger city”¹⁸ Because, whenever the new refugees arrive in Stavanger, that contact person has the responsibility to pick them up at the airport and bring them to the city.

The contact person is very helpful for newly arrived families because he arranges for them not only houses, but also everything that is necessary for the family. For example, bed, television, sofa and many other needed items. Ceu claims, “the contact person helped me to get a house with a very low rent, and then she bought everything we needed for surviving. I will never forget it. I am thankful to her, to the Government and to God.”¹⁹ It is very special for the Chin because they never ever experienced such kind of help from the Government. Therefore, they feel welcomed and consider the Norwegian people as a kind and helpful people.

Introduction program and language courses at Johannes learning center

In order to sustain the integration process, the Government of Norway decided in 2008 to run an introduction program for immigrants. The aim of this program is to facilitate newcomers with Norwegian language, and at the same time introduce them to the society so that they can speak Norwegian and get involved in employment as soon as possible.²⁰

Norwegian language is taught in this program for two years. Ceu tells me about his experiences and feelings: “I enjoy the class because my teachers is good in teaching as well as in social relationship. I think I get special favor from my teacher because of my attitude and performance in the class.”²¹ According to Ceu, I have discerned that the Chin willingly learn the

¹⁸ Bawi, Stavanger, 27 October 2015.

¹⁹ Ceu, Stavanger, 02 November 2015.

²⁰ http://www.samfunnskunnskap.no/?page_id=259&lang=en, site accessed 24 February 2016.

²¹ Ceu, Stavanger, 02 November 2015.

Norwegian language. This is a positive sign regarding integration because it indicates that they try to overcome negative attitudes towards Norwegian people as well as to the language. The informant gives an impression of self-confidence. It is likely to believe that this possibly helps him to be a good student and therefore, he is favored by his teacher.

During that language-learning period, immigrants in general are given a chance to participate in the *language practice* program in a work place context. Due to this participation, many of them improve their language skills, and then they can make contacts with the employment community and get a job later. Not only language courses, but also different kinds of courses are offered in this program. For instance, traffic theory course, upbringing and communication course, and 50 hours of social studies etc.

Moreover, while the introduction program is going on, the participants get enough financial support to cover living costs because the government of Norway recognizes and sees this program as a kind of job. Therefore, one of my informant Cung says, “the Government of Norway is like a good parent who care for their children and supply all their needs. Every month, about over ten thousands kroner is coming to my bank account. It is a lot of money that I never ever had. So, I want to say ‘thank you so much’ to the people and to the government of Norway, but I don’t know how.”²²

This reflects that the Chin are active in learning language. Moreover, they are satisfied and have a grateful attitude towards the Government and the people of Norway.

Interpreter

In order to build a bridge of understanding across cultures, the government of Norway offers the service of interpretation by using NGO’s, such as: Hero, *Tolkenett*, and Semantics etc. The interpreter is used mostly when Chin people go to meet with the refugee section, doctors, NAV, child welfare services and schools. Those who work as interpreters, translate from Chin to Norwegian as well as from Norwegian to Chin.

My informant Bawi says that “in the beginning I used an interpreter so many times whenever I met with offices like the municipal, clinic and NAV etc.; they were very helpful to me, but after three years in Stavanger, I no longer use an interpreter because I can speak broken

²² Cung, Stavanger, 28 February 2015.

Norwegian and can solve the problems by myself.”²³ Therefore, an interpreter is a useful instrument for integration. However, after two or three years, most of the Chins need no more to be assisted by an interpreter.

Refugee Guide

The Red Cross has an arrangement of volunteer refugee guide for immigrants. The refugee guides are: “ordinary people – not support workers or therapists; they are someone to talk to, as well as someone immigrants can ask for advice and assistance with practical matters. They are simply fellow human beings who provide support for people who want help along the path to what they call a completely normal life”.²⁴ In which the refugee and guide may get together to enjoy activities such as walking, visiting somewhere or eat together. Because of these activities, they might automatically become friends. In Stavanger, many of the Chin apply for a refugee guide to Red Cross and because it is difficult to find a friend for the Chin as well as for other immigrants. Bawi says, “my guide is more than a guide, because we have become like brothers or good friends. He helps me to drive a car freely and give me good advices in every areas of our family lives.”²⁵

Therefore, I would like to claim that the refugee guides given by Red Cross are useful instruments for integration because through this program the Chin get more familiar with the society, they get friends and have the opportunity to speak Norwegian.

Relation towards the Norwegian Language

Under some sub-titles I will present data that are related to language issues, discuss with theory and analyze them finally. Therefore, it will be mostly about the Chins’ weak and strong points related to the Norwegian language. If their actions, attitudes and performances are positive towards the Norwegian language, they might be in a process of integration or assimilation.

²³ Bawi, Stavanger, 28 October 2015.

²⁴ <https://www.rodekors.no/red-cross-in-english/red-cross-care-activities/>, site accessed 24 February 2016.

²⁵ Bawi, Stavanger, 28 October 2015.

First Day Experiences

As mentioned above, the first 14 Chin people arrived in Stavanger on 14 October 2003. As a newcomer, everything is new to them and they are like a baby in this new society. Therefore, they need a lot of information about transportation, shopping, bank, police, traffic, bills, housing, food, health, school and many other things. However, in practical it was not possible to inform about all these things at once because of language problems. Therefore, they confronted misunderstandings, and uncertainties in their everyday lives.

My informant Cung states, “I was both surprised and excited about the Norwegian language, because I just thought that all the white people speak English, but it was not so. So, I enjoyed listening to this new language even though I understood nothing from the very first day.”²⁶ Ceu also says, “I were like a mad man and I can do nothing without the Norwegian language; so I want to know the language as soon as possible and was very excited to learn.”²⁷ From Cung and Ceu’s experiences, it can be suggested that the Chin people are very interested in the new language and they want to learn as soon as possible. It is a positive sign for integration. It means that they want to become part of the native’s society.

After that, Ceu told me about his misunderstandings and experiences because of the language. He says, “I along with all of us had no mobile telephone at that time, because I didn’t know where to buy it and how to use it. Therefore, I tried to use a public telephone and needed to put coins on it. Then, I asked the Norwegian woman by body language about how to use it and how many *kroner* is needed to pay. But she couldn’t understand what I meant, and I returned back home without ringing the telephone.”²⁸

Here, since they are new in the society they have no knowledge about the system, culture and face difficulties even in this kind of very small cases. Moreover, even if they ask for help to someone they meet by using body language, misunderstandings usually occurred and the problem was not solved. Therefore, I agree with Vigdor when he claims that “language is an indicator of cultural integration” (2012, 288).

²⁶ Cung, Stavanger, 03 November 2015.

²⁷ Ceu, Stavanger, 02 November 2015.

²⁸ Ceu , Stavanger, 02 November 2015.

Language Courses at Johannes Learning Center

According to the rules of the introduction program, Chin people aged between 18 – 56 years old are admitted as a student in a Norwegian language class at Johannes learning center. In which the school divided into classes according to student's qualifications. They become fulltime student, Monday to Friday from 8.00 AM to 15.00 PM, for two years. Bawi tells me the general situation of he himself and for other Chin in Johannes learning center, "it is fantastic; the students are from many countries with many colors. I really appreciated to the Government of Norway for helping us. I also appreciated the teachers because of their excellence in teaching. I did all my homework regularly. I tried my best and tried to learn by heart Norwegian new words every days. I was proud of myself of being a Chin, because the Chin get a good name and are appreciated by some of the teachers."²⁹

By evaluating Ceu's word, I understand that the Chin are appreciated by the teachers. This is possibly because they understand and respect the assistance that they have received from the Government. Because of this grateful attitude, the Chin seems to be positive, active in the class and find favor from the teachers.

The Chin enjoy learning Norwegian language not only in class, but also outside the class, especially at lunchtime they discuss and talk about the Norwegian language together. Bawi states, "we enjoy discussions and expressions of knowledge about language at lunch time. Sometimes, we even argue with each other how the sentences should be and, if there are some disagreements, we used to ask our teachers later and find out the best answers together."³⁰

Here, by seeing their discussion and asking questions to the teachers show that the Chin are studying Norwegian willingly and interestingly. For this reason, I would like to state that they choose to interact with the native, and therefore the answer to Berry's issue 2 (is it considered to be of value to maintain the relationships with the dominant society?) is 'yes' for the Chin.

²⁹ Ceu, Stavanger, 02 November 2015.

³⁰ Bawi, Stavanger, 27 October 2015.

Comparison between Chin and Norwegian Language

Chin literature was invented by Major Arthur Newland (British Army) based on the *Roman alphabet* (Sakhong 2003, 166), it means that the alphabet of the Chin and Norwegian are similar. Therefore, my informants feel that the Chin have a golden opportunity related to learning Norwegian language due to their similarities in alphabet and it helps them to feel more comfortable. Because of this, similarities in alphabet enable them to read Norwegian literature somehow even before they start learning. Especially, similarities in vowels a, e, i, o, u; but Norwegian *å* is *aw* in Chin. However, the Chin has no vowels for the Norwegian special vowels *ø* and *æ*; but it is not a big problem for them. As a result, the Chin has no problem in pronunciation.

For this reason, my informant Cung states, “we are lucky in learning Norwegian language because our alphabets are similar, and it makes me more familiar and strengthen my will. I think we are better than other Asian countries like the Thai and Vietnamese in Norwegian language; it is because of similarities in alphabet.”³¹

Here, I agree with the statement done by Anne Holmen. She states, “language is a part of social member ship, culture and identity” (Holmen 2006, 197). It means that the similarities in alphabet helps Chin to feel more closer, being included and get courage to confront a new language. In fact, that similarities in alphabet help them to produce correct pronunciations and it makes them feel confident.

On the other hand, there are also some difficulties for them especially related to grammar because the Chin has no special system to change the past, present and future tense as Norwegian has. Moreover, the structure of sentences is also almost all opposite, and the Chin face double difficulties. In the following, I will compare the picture of how Chin and Norwegian sentence syntax are opposite. For example;

Norwegian: *Jeg skal gå til skolen*: I will go to school (Subject, verb, preposition, object)

Chin : *Sianginn ah ka kal lai* : School to I go will (Object, preposition, subject, verb).

Because of this difference in the grammar system, Norwegian language is very difficult for the first generation elderly Chin people. Therefore, Ceu states, “I try as much as I can, but it is

³¹ Cung, Stavanger, 28 October 2015.

impossible for me to speak Norwegian language without mistakes. For me, Norwegian sentences are very complex. Even if I try, I will never ever be perfect. It is still difficult for me even after nine years of living in Stavanger.”³² Here even though the similarities in alphabet help them in a positive way, however differences in grammar generally becomes an unsolvable problem for the Chin. In which I have found out that Norwegian language is very difficult for the first generation over 34 years; but they are still trying as best as they can to improve their language competence. For this reason, generally it seems that they try as much as they can, however struggling in Norwegian will exist as long as they live in Norway for the first generation of elderly group of people.

On the other hand, I have found that there is more possibilities for people who has a basic English knowledge, because Norwegian and English grammar are similar. My informant Bawi has university education from Myanmar, and he has English grammar knowledge. He says, “it is difficult, but it is possible for me if I try. I think that Norwegian grammar is similar to English. Therefore, I acknowledge that my pre-knowledge of English helps me somehow.”³³

For this reason, the Chin with long education experiences seem to have greater chances for integration, however, they are very few and could not affect the general situation of the Chin.

Actions towards Norwegian Language

“Any one can say that he has integrity, but action is the real indicator” (Maxwell 1999, 4). For this reason, action can be considered as one of the important issues to analyze the integration level of immigrants.

Here Ceu adds how he is trying to cope with the Norwegian language. He argues, “I try to learn by heart at least five new words every day and not to be absent in the class. I was selected on behalf of the school to be interviewed; the aim is to evaluate immigrant’s language skills by one organization (not known exact name of office or organization) from Oslo.”³⁴ If we evaluate Ceu’s action, he is active, sincere and very fond of learning Norwegian language even though he is about 50 years old. All other Chin may not be active like him; however, it somehow reflects

³² Bawi, Stavanger, 27 October 2015.

³³ Bawi, Stavanger. 27 October 2015.

³⁴ Ceu, Stavanger. 02 November 2015.

the general situation of the Chin. Therefore, I would like to argue that the Chin has strong desires to interact with the majority.

Another important action by the Chin is self-studying. According to my informants, most of them seem to enjoy self-studying. Bawi says, “most of them watch films with Norwegian text, some of them listen to the radio, a few of them try to read newspapers and Norwegian literature.”³⁵ Here, I would like to argue that the Chin are not separatist because in separation the minority avoid to study the majority’s language. In fact, the action of self-studying is a sign of willingness to interact with the natives; and therefore, I would like to claim that the Chin answer ‘yes’ to issue 2. Because it is sure that as long as they practice self-studying, the more they will improve their language competence and as they are improving in language skills the more they become integrated. Therefore, they are on the way to integration according to Berry.

Norwegian Language Competence of Elderly People over 34 years

When the introduction program is over (after two years), most elderly people over 34 years start to be able to communicate with the natives by speaking broken Norwegian. Generally, if the Chin speak complex and long sentences, it is difficult to understand by the native, on the other hand, when the native speaks long and complex sentences, elderly Chin people do not really understand.

Par is an upper secondary student and she evaluates the general situation like this. She says, “actually, elderly people are weak in language and some people still need an interpreter, but I appreciate their performance, because they try as much as they can.”³⁶ Ceu also says, “Norwegian people are very good because they can understand even though I cannot speak properly.”³⁷ After that, I let my seven informants give the grade of elderly Chin people’s language skill level. In which ten is maximum and one is minimum. My informants give different grades such as four, five and six. Therefore, the average grade for this group is *five* according to my informants. I know that the language skill is not possible to measure, because I have not done quantitative research; but I just try to show the picture of their language skills.

³⁵ Bawi, Stavanger, 28 October 2015.

³⁶ Par, Stavanger, 12 November 2015.

³⁷ Ceu, Stavanger, 02 November 2015.

Therefore, I would like to summarize that the first generation elderly people are still weak in language, but it is not a problem to them because they can manage themselves in their daily lives with their broken Norwegian language. However, some of them still needs help and use interpreters when they have a meeting with offices like NAV, hospital etc. Therefore, I agree with my informants when they give the grade five, which means they can have conversations with Norwegian people, but they will not be able to discuss what they mean in the political debate; at the same time they understand the letters from offices, but they will not be able to write such kind of letters.

According to Vigdor, “language skill is an indicator for cultural integration”(2012, 288). For this reason, I would like to suggest that the level of language skill could be considered as level of integration. Therefore, the Chin elderly people are integrated, however it is not fully yet.

Norwegian Language Competence of Youth between 16 – 34

Language ability of this group is different from the elderly group as just discussed above. Generally, this group arrived Stavanger when they were aged between 10 and 25, and they joined directly the primary school or the lower secondary school at Johannes learning center. Therefore, they are involved in education and interact a lot with the natives, besides they have more abilities as they are young. For these reasons, they can communicate with the natives without a problem after two years of being stay in Stavanger.

Par has been in Stavanger for six years. She says, “Norwegian language is still difficult also for me; however I will continue to try and it will be okay.”³⁸ Pi is a master student. He also says, “I still struggle with the Norwegian language, but it is not a problem.”³⁹ After that, I try to find out an average level of the youth’s language skills by giving the grade. In which an average grade for the youth is *seven* according to my informants.

Therefore, my findings for language competence level by the youth is that they can communicate with the natives, but not perfect; they can pass their exams but struggle a lot with difficult words. For these reasons, I agree with my informants when they give them grade *seven*. It means they know Norwegian and can speak good Norwegian, but something is still missing.

³⁸ Par, Stavanger, 12 November.

³⁹ Pi, Stavanger, 03 November.

As a result, I believe that the Chin youths are able to enter into the native society, but not as the natives relate to the society. It means that they are strongly affiliated related to the majority culture; and therefore, they are in a positive integration process.

Norwegian Language Competence of Children under 16

This group is also called second-generation because most of them are born in Norway and some of them arrived Stavanger under age ten. Their parents belongs to the Chin culture; however, the second-generation children are raised up under the influence of Norwegian language and culture; especially at school and through Norwegian friends. Therefore, they belong to a mixed-culture; and speak both Norwegian and Chin.

Par says that “children under 16 years speak perfect Norwegian language, foreign accent is not heard when they speak; and they are totally like Norwegian people.”⁴⁰ On the other hand, Ceu, he is a mother tongue teacher in preschool class (*barnehagen*), claims that “even though they can speak without accent, they are not able to listen to the longer sentences and hard words when the teacher tells them some history or episodes.”⁴¹ Therefore, my informants give them the grade *nine* to this group.

My finding for the children under 16 years is that they can speak Norwegian language fluently and without a foreign accent; but they are still lacking with regard to difficult words. Therefore, I would like to claim that they are nearly fully integrated from a language perspective, because their Norwegian understanding is nearly fully perfected.

Norwegian Language in the Church

For the first five years (2003 – 2008), the Chin worshipped together with Norwegian people at Stavanger Baptist Church. However, the Chin started their own Chin church in 2008, and separated from the native’s Christian community. The reason was mostly due to language problems. Mr. Cung says, “Norwegian Christians are good; they love us and take care of us. We know that it is good to be together with them always. But, we started our own Chin church because our language skill is not enough to achieve satisfaction of our soul.”⁴²

⁴⁰ Par, Stavanger, 12 November 2015.

⁴¹ Ceu, Stavanger, 02 November 2015.

⁴² Cung, Stavanger, 28 October 2015.

According to Cung, I acknowledge that the separation of the church is due to lack of language and feeling of their soul. Here, I would like to point out the time. At that time the first Chin had been in Norway for five years, but most of them are only 1-3 years, and average length of stay will be about two and half years only.

Moreover, we can see another sign of integration in the church. Sui adds, “there is communication problem in Sunday school (under 12 years) services, because children can understand only half the messages when the teachers use Chin language for teaching; on the other hand, it is not possible to teach with Norwegian by the teachers for it is difficult for them.”

⁴³ It means that the teachers are weak in Norwegian and strong in Chin; on the other hand, children are weak in Chin and strong in Norwegian. According to this episode, I have found out that there is a huge gap between first-generation and second-generation.

On the other hand, some elderly people still need help regarding Norwegian language. Sui says that “sometimes, the Chin leaders invite Norwegian pastors to preach the gospel in the church, and someone interprets it. Because some of the elderly people do not understand it.”⁴⁴ This indicates there is still a huge gap between the native and elderly people.

Norwegian Language at Home

In order to improve their language skills, the Chin are encouraged to use the Norwegian language at home by their teachers and some other people who work for them, but they do not generally do so. It means they use Chin language at home mostly. Cung states that “I know that using Norwegian language at home is good, but, we the parents do not speak Norwegian at home; only my two small daughters speak Norwegian.”⁴⁵

While I conducted the qualitative interview in the home of Cung, I was able to observe how he communicated with his wife and two daughters. My observations confirm Cung’s reflections. The children spoke Norwegian to their parents, and the parents spoke Chin with their children. Their conversation was a mixture of two languages. This indicates that the parents improve their Norwegian skills, while children also learn Chin through their conversations at home; in other words, they mutually influence one another.

⁴³ Sui, Stavanger, 14 November 2015.

⁴⁴ Sui, Stavanger, 14 November 2015.

⁴⁵ Cung, Stavanger, 28 October 2015.

Therefore, I would like to argue that there is Norwegian culture in Cung's family and they are a part of Norwegian social membership according to Holmen (2006, 197). On the other hand, I would like to claim that Cung's family answer 'yes' to both issue 1 and 2 because they speak both Chin and Norwegian in the family. For these reasons, Cung's family is integrated according to Berry and Sam (1997, 296-297).

Relation towards Original Chin Language

According to Berry and Sam, the integrated person answers 'yes' to both issue 1 and issue 2. It means that the integrated individual gives importance to his or her own cultural maintenance and strive for it while at the same time he or she also value to interact with the majority (1997, 3:296).

Regarding this issue, I have observed that Chin people in Stavanger generally speak more Chin than Norwegian in their everyday lives. Ceu suggests, "even though we are living in Norway, we speak a lot of Chin; because we have a very close relationship and fellowship within our Chin community."⁴⁶

Therefore, my finding here is that the Chin do not interact that much with the native except at school and at their workplace. On the other hand, they have a very good relationship with other Chin fellows. For these reasons, it seems that they are separated; but not really, because in the separation the minority wish to avoid interaction with the native. However, for the case of the Chin it is different from this statement; because they do not explicitly avoid the Norwegians, besides they try as much as they can to interact with the natives. For this reason, it is clear that the Chin feel a strong relationship to the original Chin culture, therefore, they are not marginalized, neither are they separated, or assimilated, however, they are only integrated to some level.

On the other hand, second generation children faced problems with the Chin language. They are born in Stavanger and they attend nursing-care classes (*barnehagen*) and primary schools. Therefore, even though they can speak Norwegian without accent, they face problems with the Chin language. Cung says, "my children know only about 50 percent of the Chin

⁴⁶ Ceu, Stavanger, 02 November 2015.

language.”⁴⁷ For this reason, Chin parents worry that the Chin language will disappear among future generations. I will discuss more about this issue later.

Chin Language in Church

One of the strong point for the Chin is found within their religious affiliation as all of them are active in the church and attend worship services. In the Church they read the Chin Bible, they sing Chin songs and they preach the gospel in Chin. After that, they have a service for children under 12 years, also in Chin language. In which their children improve their Chin language because all the activities are done in Chin in the church. Cung says, “the church is very useful not only for our soul, but also for preserving the Chin language and culture, because second generation learn Chin language mostly from the church.”⁴⁸

From what I have observed and from the stories of my informants, it seems that the church is one of the most important instruments for strengthening the original Chin culture. Therefore, I would like to suggest that the Chin people’s Christian affiliation and Christian fellowship in the church indicate a strengthening of their knowledge of the Chin language. For this reason, I believe that, as long as the Chin are active in the activities of the church in Stavanger, the Chin language will remain strong to the Chin, hence they will not be fully assimilated into the majority culture.

Celebration of the Chin National Day (CND)

Another important ceremony for the Chin is the celebration of the Chin National Day on February 20 every year. In Norway, the CND is celebrated in three prefectures, such as in Rogaland, Oslo and Northern Norway. This year on February 20, I had a chance to participate in the Rogaland CND ceremony, and more than 300 persons attended. They wore Chin national dresses, the leaders encouraged them to love *Chinram*, to keep up their Chin culture in Norway and to be good citizens in Norway. After that, they sang the Chin national song, danced Chin traditional dances, celebrated traditional wrestling, and ate traditional food. Moreover, they have a competition program for Chin poem, article, singing, fashion show and selected ‘Miss Rogaland-Chin’.

⁴⁷ Cung, Stavanger, 28 October 2015.

⁴⁸ Cung, Stavanger, 28 October 2015.

Ceu, the leader of Stavanger Chin Organization says, “I believe that the celebration of the CND ceremony will not cease as long as the Chin are here in Stavanger. Because this ceremony is really enjoyed by the entire Chin community. It enables us to motivate and keep the Chin culture alive even though we are not in *Chinram*.”⁴⁹

For this reason, it is sure that as long as the Chin live in Rogaland, there will be a ceremony of CND, and that ceremony celebration will help them to keep alive the original Chin culture. Therefore, I would like to state that the Chin still have a strong affiliation towards the original Chin culture.

Anticipation for Future Generation

Based on the above analysis, I would like to anticipate that Chin language might disappear in the year of around 2100 AD; it may be right or wrong, but just for anticipation. My argument is based on Algan et al. and Eriksen. Algan et al. argue that integration of minority goes through intergenerational shifts (2012, 24). Then, Eriksen also writes by citing SSB. He says, “*i tredje generasjon vil innvandreres barnebarn forsvinne inn i den generelle befolkningen*”⁵⁰ (Eriksen 2010a, 231). According to Arts and Humanities Genealogy researchers, “one generation is around 30 years in length.”⁵¹ It means the Chin may lose their mother Chin language in the year of about 2100 or after three generations.

According to my informants, I also have found out that the level of Norwegian language skill among *elderly Chin people is five, the youth is seven and children is nine*. Hence, gaps between them is *two*. For these reasons, I believe that there will be no more language gap for the next generation.

Then, when I conducted the qualitative interviews, one informant Sui, 18 years old, told me how she mixes Norwegian and Chin language when she communicates to different generations. She says, “I use Chin language when I have conversation with elderly people; but I mix Chin and Norwegian when I speak with teenagers; again I use Norwegian language when I

⁴⁹ Ceu, Stavanger, 02 November 2015.

⁵⁰ My translation: the third generation immigrant’s grandchildren will disappear into the general population.

⁵¹ <https://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20080811072648AACSAP0>, site accessed 07 march 2016.

communicate with children. I don't know why, but that is how it is."⁵² This indicates that the Chin language have gradually started to disappear. Because of this disappearing process, the contemporary second generation is quite weak in Chin language. Here, weakness in Chin language is the indicator of start of language shift. This kind of "language shift is a result of assimilative type of orientation" (Mohanty and Perregaux 1997, 237). For these reasons, I would like to anticipate that the Chin language might disappear after 90 years or in 2100 AD. It might be true or false; however just for anticipation.

In which, even though they lose their mother tongue, the complete assimilation will not be reached because of the skin color as Eriksen points out. He argues that "complete assimilation did not happen with the descendants of black slaves, since the skin color is an important criterion for social classification" (Eriksen 2010b, 298).

Summary

When the Chin arrived in Stavanger, the Norwegian Government wanted the Chin to integrate into the native society as soon as possible. Therefore, they provided language education through introduction programs for two years by investing a lot of money. In which, the Chin also responded positively. Generally, the Chin participate actively in learning Norwegian. The Chin experience that their efforts are highly appreciated by the teachers. Similarities in alphabet help them to read with good pronunciation, but an opposite sentence structure give them trouble. There are differences between the generations. Elderly people over 34 years have a weak Norwegian competence, while the youth do quite well and the children reflect the best language competence of the three groups.

According to Berry and Sam, the minority group avoid interacting with the majority in the category of separation (1997, 3:297), therefore the Chins are not separatist because they are active in learning language and interact with the natives. At the same time, the Chin are not marginalized because marginalization is understood as a condition where the minority is not active neither regarding the culture of the minority neither of the majority. However, the Chin are active in both Chin and Norwegian.

⁵² Sui, Stavanger, 15 November 2015.

However, minority groups of people are strong in both minority and majority culture in the category of integration (Berry and Sam 1997, 3: 297). I therefore, would like to state that the Chin are in a process of integration, but not fully yet.

Finally, when the minority group of people are not willing to maintain the minority culture and are strong to the majority culture, assimilation is defined (Berry and Sam 1997, 3: 297). Therefore, I would like to claim that the assimilation process has started because children are weak in Chin language and strong in Norwegian. Therefore, I would like to conclude that this seems to be a sign of a Chin language disappearing process and a path of language shift.

Chapter Five

EDUCATION

Introduction

As I have mentioned in chapter one, the natives represent the West with a highly civilized postmodern society, and the Chin represent the South with a less developed society. When these two encounter in one society, there is a huge gap between them. However, the Chin are lucky, because they have the right to take an education in order to change their social condition and integrate into the Norwegian society. “In Norway education for all is a basic precept of educational policy. Children and young people must have an equal right to education, regardless of where they live, gender, social and cultural background or any special needs. All public education in Norway is free of charge, while kindergartens have parental fees.”⁵³

Therefore, even if there is a huge gap between them from the starting point of their encounter, it is possible for the Chin to acquire similar conditions as Norwegians in the area of education. Education is a means by which to empower the individual in every area of life. Because education contributes to the same possibilities, social likeness and economic growth to for the participant (Frønes and Kjølørød 2010, 118). For this reason, for the Chin, education is a golden chance, and the most effective way to integrate into the Norwegian society. Therefore, it is of interest to investigate how the newcomers in the Chin community try to integrate into the Norwegian society through education.

In this chapter, I will present how the Chin try to integrate into the natives' society by engaging in education. I will try to describe the integration process by dividing the discussion into the following sub-titles; Chin pupils education background, mother tongue teacher, integration processes by elderly people, youth, and children. Finally, I will anticipate how the

⁵³ http://www.udir.no/Upload/Brosjyrer/5/Education_in_Norway.pdf?epslanguage=no, site accessed 12 March 2016.

integration of Chin might be in future generations because of education by using Yan Algan's intergeneration shifts.

Chin Pupils Educational Background

Regarding education, the Chin youth who came to Norway at the ages between 10 and 20 suffer a lot because of the refugee life experienced in Malaysia and India. For instance, my daughter lived in India for four years, but she attended only about one year at the school; it means she wasted three years of her life without proper education. Almost all other Chin children who came to Stavanger also experience this story as my own family. Because of their refugee status in Malaysia and India, they missed shorter or longer parts of their basic education in elementary school.

Therefore, when it comes to studying in Norway, they have a double challenge, a poor educational background in combination with having to start a new life situation here in Stavanger. With this background information, I will in the following try to deepen the understanding of their experiences regarding education and integration here in a new country.

A Short Presentation of the Education System of Myanmar

One of the difficulties Chin pupils in Myanmar have faced is regarding the Burmese language. At school, they have to speak Burmese, whereas at home and outside class they speak Chin. Here I want to point out some differences between Chin and Burmese languages, because the Burmese language is regarded as a foreign language to the Chin.

In Myanmar, in order to promote to the next level, students must at least obtain a 40% level in every six subjects at school. If he or she gets only 39 % in one subject, the student must repeat the same class one more year. Especially in grade tenth, it is very difficult because this is the most important criteria for getting a job or continue the career of education. Therefore, the Government prepares difficult exams and only about 15 – 25 % of the student pass the tests. Some of them can pass only after between two and four years of trying to pass the tests, and most of them give up without succeeding.

Bawi was a teacher in Myanmar. He compares the education system of Myanmar to Norway:

I think the biggest different is about freedom or expression of own ideas. In Myanmar, students are under the pressure of the teacher and they can go only up to what the teacher has taught; but in Norway, students are not under the pressure of the teachers; moreover, they go beyond the syllabus and express his or her own ideas. Therefore, there is more freedom, it is more practical and it is easier to pass exams in Norway.⁵⁴

It is interesting to follow Bawi's reflections in that even though there is a language problem in Norway, the Chin student in Norway seems to enjoy studying in Norway rather than in Myanmar. This is because they experience less pressure from the teachers, more freedom and that it is easier to pass exams and so on.

Mother Tongue Teacher

Since Norway has become a multicultural society, the Government tries to integrate immigrants in the education system by giving them mother tongue teaching. This reflects how the Government makes laws that determine the rights to education for pupils from minority language backgrounds. "The revised policy plan called *Equal Education in practice* was issued in February 2007. It is a policy plan for improved learning and greater participation in kindergartens, schools, education and training on the part of language minorities."⁵⁵

Mohanty and Perregaux point out that an acquisition of first language provides an acquisition of second language (1997, 2: 227). It means that the pupils will be able to understand Norwegian better if the Chin understand properly their own mother language first. For this reason, the Government appointed three Chin mother tongue teachers; two of them are responsible for grades 1 - 8, and the third teaches in preschool. These mother tongue teachers have two major responsibilities, such as *morsmålsopplæring og tospråklig fagopplæring*.⁵⁶

Education of Mother Language (morsmåloplæring)

Firstly, the mother language teachers teach Chin language and Chin literature to the Chin pupils. In which every Chin pupil has the right to learn Chin literature 90 minutes (two periods) per week. Ceu states, "this is amazing! I feel loved, accepted and included. Actually, we did not have

⁵⁴ Bawi, Stavanger, 15 November 2015.

⁵⁵ http://www.udir.no/Upload/Brosjyrer/5/Education_in_Norway.pdf?epslanguage=no, site accessed 12 March 2016.

⁵⁶ My translation: Mother tongue teaching and bilingual teaching.

this kind of rights even in our own country. It is what we always longed for.”⁵⁷ According to Ceu, Chin language and literature are not welcomed in the school of Myanmar; however, on the opposite side, it is allowed in Norway. Now, Chin pupils are learning Chin literature and Chin language in their schools by the help of three Chin teachers. This is very precious and greatly valued by the entire Chin community. I would like to suggest here that this Norwegian integration policy overwhelms the heart of the Chin and it enables them to have the desire and willingness to integrate into the Norwegian society.

Education of Bilingual (tospråklig fagopplæring)

Norwegian school system has another program for minority students; it is bilingual. For this program, the Chin pupils have the rights to get 90 minutes (two periods) per week of teaching. In which the Chin mother tongue teacher has the responsibility to help the Chin pupils regarding their subjects. For instance, if he or she has problems in mathematics, the Chin teacher will help him or her for that subject; and then if he or she does not understand difficult Norwegian words, the Chin teacher will help the pupil by explaining it in Chin. Help is provided dependent on the need of the pupils.

Ceu says, “this program is very helpful for Chin students. I know that this program benefits the Chin pupils not only for the subject, but also psychologically and emotionally.”⁵⁸ According to Ceu, I have found out that Chin pupils seem to have a spirit of inferiority because they are foreigners, and they experience some confusions in different subjects. However, when the Chin teacher helps them to understand properly, their self-confidence increase and the feeling of confusion and inferiority decrease.

From this, we see that Chin pupils are helped to integrate into the majority’s education system by mother tongue teachers; in other word, we can say that this integration is due to the Government’s excellent policy program for minorities.

Integration Process of Children under 16

Children under 16 years are also known as *second* generation. Most Chin under ten years are born in Norway; and the rest are children who arrived Stavanger when under the age of ten. This

⁵⁷ Ceu, Stavanger, 02 November 2015.

⁵⁸ Ceu, Stavanger, 02 November 2015.

generation represents three levels in school, such as preschool (*barnehagen*), primary school and lower secondary school. These levels of education are compulsory in Norway.

Preschool (ages 1 - 5)

The Chin children ages between one and five years attend many different preschool classes. In which they meet Norwegian children as well as the teachers. There, they start to learn the Norwegian language, and they are able to speak without foreign accent. This group also has their own mother tongue teacher to help them with their mother tongue. Ceu tells me, “I think Chin children are like the natives’ children in language, psychologically and emotionally. The difference between them is only the skin color.”⁵⁹

According to Ceu, we know that Chin children under five years start to learn Norwegian language, and they are able to speak Norwegian language without accent. At the same time, their interaction influence the way they think and behave in their lives. Because “individuals are not born full members of any culture but learn to become” (Super and Harkness 1997, 2: 3). In addition, Super and Harkness argue that “children’s social behavior is a product of its immediate settings, including the people with whom children routinely interact, the places where they spend time together, and roles they are assigned” (1997, 2: 6).

Here, I would like to point out that the Chin children interact with both original Chin culture at home and the majority culture at school. Therefore, they are influenced by both cultures and develop a mixed or hybrid identity. For this reason, Chin children are not separated, nor marginalized, rather they are within an integration process.

Primary School (grades 1 - 8, ages 6 – 13)

The primary level of students refer to children between six and 13 years. In which some of the Chin children get permission to study directly at this level due to their age, or not due to their former school’s document.

My informant Sui arrived Stavanger at the age of 11 and started grade fifth and she says, “the first six months were not easy because of language problems, but gradually I started to understand the Norwegian language, and then it became somehow better after one year. At that

⁵⁹ Ceu, Stavanger, 02 November 2015.

time, I was very afraid of asking questions to the teacher, and I kept very quiet in the class. But that feeling disappeared after two years.”⁶⁰ According to Sui’s word, I imagine how difficult life is for Chin children in the beginning. Therefore, I agree with Paige in that “lack of language skill can lead to social isolation and frustration” (1993. 7). It is true for Sui as well as for all Chin pupils as they are newcomers and lacking Norwegian language skills.

For this reason, it is likely, as Sui says, that they will keep quiet in the class, silent and obey the teacher and feel somehow inferior compared to other pupils. However, as time goes by, they improve their language skills and understand how to behave in the class, and that improvement help them to increase their self-confidence so that they experience fitting in after a few years, as Sui did. This means that the newcomers among Chin pupils are able to start the integration process within about two years.

On the other hand, there is another category of pupils; they attended kindergarten from a young age. They spend two to three years in preschool, and then continued to elementary school. Therefore, they seem to be more integrated than the first category. Ceu says, “I think Chin pupils who have attended school from the level of preschool speak Norwegian language without accent, there is no problem in socialization, they have the same qualifications compared to Norwegian pupils, and the only problem is that they lack the knowledge of some difficult words.”⁶¹

Bawi also talks about this issue. He says, “our children are able to speak fluent Norwegian, but they should be weaker than the native’s children because Chin children are not getting any parental help as do Norwegian pupils.”⁶² For this reason, I would like to argue that the Chin pupils in primary class are integrating into the majority culture, however this is not a complete integration as they lack help from parents.

Lower Secondary School (Ungdomsskole, grades 9 - 10, ages 13 – 15)

The lower secondary school is compulsory for children between 13 - 15 years. In Stavanger, St.Svithun school has a special class for newly arrived immigrants. Therefore, the entire Chin who came to Norway at the age between 13 - 15 years are admitted into this school.

⁶⁰ Sui, Stavanger, 14 November 2015.

⁶¹ Ceu, Stavanger, 02 November 2015.

⁶² Bawi, Stavanger, 27 October 2015.

My informant Pi is one of the pupils who attended this class. He says, “it was hard in the beginning, but it was not a problem because there were also many other pupils from other countries who did not know the Norwegian language. I could follow the class and was appreciated by my teachers.”⁶³

The class circumstances here is different from ordinary classes in Norwegian school, because all the classmates here are immigrants and are in the same situation. Therefore, the pupils do not feel strange or alien. In which, as Pi is able to follow the class and be appreciated by the teachers, the Chin pupils seem to be ordinary pupils. I mean that they are not more intelligent or weaker than others. According to Pi, I have found that the Chin pupils in lower secondary schools are able to integrate with other immigrant students.

Adult Lower Secondary School for Immigrants (Grunnskole for voksne)

In order to be able to integrate into the Norwegian education system, the Government creates special classes at Johannes Learning Center for immigrants over 16 years. In which the immigrant youths learn Norwegian, mathematics, English, natural science and social studies.

The Chin who arrived Stavanger at the age of 16 and older cannot be admitted into a Norwegian public school because of lack of language competence and their older age. However, they are lucky and have the rights to attend this adult secondary school at Johannes school. Par is one of them who attended this class and says that “this class is special; all students are newcomers from around the world. I attended it for three years. Some spend two years and some four years. We often had a test depending on our qualifications. The entire Chin community including me can follow the class and enjoy the subjects, as other students do.”⁶⁴

According to Par, the Chin students are neither weaker nor better than other students from other countries. Normally the lower secondary school (grades 9 and 10) last for two years, but due to language problems and being a newcomer, they used to spend two to four years according to their abilities. The Chin students including Par enjoyed it and could follow the class at school. After completing this class, they are allowed to continue their education at a normal Norwegian upper secondary school (*Videregående*).

⁶³ Pi, Stavanger, 03 November 2015.

⁶⁴ Par, Stavanger, 12 November 2015.

Par adds her point of view regarding this school. She says, “I really appreciated it and would like to give thanks to the Government for it is sure that they include us and give us a golden chance to participate in the education system. They also provide us scholarships for living and free lunch at school. Teachers are also amazing!”⁶⁵ Therefore, here, I would like to state that the Norwegian integration policy is highly appreciated by the Chin pupils, and it will surely help them in the integration process.

Integration Process of Youths between 16 – 34 years

Under this category, I will discuss more about upper secondary school and university. According to my informants, I have found out that the general population of the Chin who are active in education or job are as the following table shows:

Men	Women	Total	Active in education or job	Non-active in education or job
55	42	97	83 85.57%	14 14.43%

If we compare the report done by SSB 2014, we can say that the Chin with 85.57% being active in education or a job show that they are more active than other immigrants generally. According to a report in 2014, immigrants between 16 and 34 years who are active in job or education are 65% while the group of native is 90%.⁶⁶ Therefore, this seems to indicate that compared to other immigrants the Chin are more engaged and active in education and the job market.

Upper Secondary School (Videregående skole Grades VG1 – VG3, ages 16 - 19)

This level of education is not compulsory. Pupils who have completed their lower secondary school has the right to study at this level, but they can choose not to. The ordinary age for this

⁶⁵ Par, Stavanger, 12 November 2015.

⁶⁶ <http://www.ssb.no/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/norskfodte-med-innvandrerforeldre-er-mye-mer-likestilte-enn-innvandrere>, site accessed 09 March 2016.

school is between 16 and 19, but for some of the Chins who arrived Stavanger at the age of 16 – 19, they could not enter directly into this school. For instance, if she or he arrives Stavanger at the age of 19, he or she is not allowed to study at upper secondary class at once. However, she has to attend the lower secondary class for three years at Johannes learning center first, to prepare for upper secondary school. Therefore, he or she will miss between two to four years due to the status of immigrant and the new language here in Stavanger.

For this reason, I would like to point out that the older a person is the more difficult it is to integrate into the majority society. In upper secondary school, students can apply for general studies (*studiespesialisering*) or for vocational studies (*yrkesfag*).

Firstly, I will discuss the case of general studies (*Studiespecialisering*). Those students who apply for general studies can continue their education at university after completing three years of fulltime studies. Here, those Chin who want to study at university may apply for this path. So far, 14 Chin students have already completed this general study and have been admitted at different universities in Norway as well as abroad.

Sui is a second year upper secondary student. She says, “I have almost no problem with the Norwegian language, but since the Chin has no proper dictionary for English and Norwegian, there are some problems in my studies. I can be like a Norwegian student, but it will be almost impossible to become more intelligent than Norwegian students”⁶⁷ For Sui, it is not hard; it means she has integrated with little difficulties except with regard to the issue of dictionary; because she arrived Norway at the age of 12 and she has been in Norway for eight years.

On the other hand, Par is also a second year upper secondary student. She says, “it is hard, but I will try hard and it will be okay.”⁶⁸ For Par, it is hard; this is probably because she arrived Stavanger at the age of 19. Besides, she has been in Norway only for six years. Individuals have different qualifications, but generally, I have found that the Chin who arrived at the age of 12 and younger have a stronger sense of affiliation to the majority culture. It means that, they are more integrated than the youth who arrived when older than 18.

Even though it is hard, Par is active in her studies and she was selected to participate in the competition on behalf of a Sola upper secondary school. There are four persons in Par’s team and two of them are Chin. That competition is called *Entreprenør Utvikling* and was competed

⁶⁷ Sui, Stavanger, 14 November 2015.

⁶⁸ Par, Stavanger, 12 November 2015.

by all upper secondary schools in Rogaland. In which Par and her team wins the competition; and then they continue to the competition for the whole Norway level in Oslo.

Thus, Par says, “since there are two Chins out of four in our team, I consider our team as the team of Chin, and I am proud of myself for being Chin and being a representative of Rogaland.”⁶⁹ Therefore, we know that it is hard for her, but she tries very hard and finally she can even become a winner and a representative for Rogaland. It is a great success. In which she is very strong in Chin as well as in Norwegian. From this, we see that she has acquired a level of integration, according to Berry.

Secondly, I will discuss again about vocational studies (*Yrkesfag*). This study is generally a two year study and a two year program of work training. Most Chin youths select this path for their future, because it is easier to study as well as to get a job. At the moment, many of them have completed their studies and are actively involved in employment. According to my informants, ten of them have received their certificate of apprenticeship (*fagbrev*), some of them are on the way, and a few of them left school.

Sui says, “I think it is difficult for us to select an appropriate subject; because some of them change again after one or two years, and some of them left without completing the studies.”⁷⁰ Here, some Chin youth seems to encounter some confusion and uncertainty when selecting a major subject because of being new in the society even though they get help and advice from the school. Therefore, I would like to claim that the Chin student is still lacking something and they need more to develop in order to gain complete integration.

Adult Upper Secondary School for Immigrants (Generell studiekompetanse, Hero)

In Norway, the degrees that immigrants have acquired before immigrating are not recognized as degrees from Norway. This applies especially to degrees from Asia, Africa and east Europe. Even though the degree is not accepted, the person still has that qualification; and this private adult education for immigrant is one of the classes that opens the door for such immigrants. However, he or she must pass the Norwegian language test “B1 level;”⁷¹ and then he or she must

⁶⁹ Par, Stavanger, 12 November 2015.

⁷⁰ Sui, Stavanger, 14 November 2015.

⁷¹ My definition: B1 test is similar to level 3 test; this level of language skill is demanded when someone applies for a job or education.

start from upper secondary level even though he or she has already received higher degrees from his or her home country. Actually, the length of a normal upper secondary school is for three years, but for immigrant adults it is only 18 months, because they teach the subjects only that are demanded for university enrollment. For instance, “Norwegian 165 hours, English 132 hours, mathematics 100 hours, natural science 100 hours, social science 66 hours.”⁷² These are not easy for foreigners because except English, all other five subjects are taught in Norwegian language.

Here, I myself is one of them who attended this school, at Hero. Firstly, I studied Norwegian language for 18 months at Johannes learning center; and I was admitted to this school after passing the Norwegian B1 test. The situation was not easy, because I understood only half of the lectures given by Norwegian teachers. However, I am proud of myself because I could pass all the subjects within three semesters; and then I had a chance to study at university level.

This study is very heavy for me, but I try as best as I can. In which I often remind myself about one Chin proverb, *tin cu sa yin phaya dawng phit nai de* (if you try, you can even become a god). Here I would like to point out that the Chin community seems to be trying to integrate as much as they can into the local society through education. Therefore, the Chin are not separated or marginalized; however, they are on the way to integration and assimilation. Because in separation the individual avoid to interact with the majority, means he or she does not want to study.

Adult Upper Secondary Education (Evening class)

Stavanger *Katedralskole* also has an adult education program in the afternoon, or evening classes. They teach “Norwegian, natural science, social science, history, English and mathematics, and if the student pass all these examinations, they are allowed to apply for university.”⁷³ Actually, this school is aimed for Norwegian adults, but immigrants also have the right to study here given they have passed the Norwegian language B1 test along with college education from the original country.

⁷² file:///C:/Users/taw13/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/IE/TSWXJE71/Hero-studiekomp-ny2015_forskjerm_ny.pdf, site accessed 14 March 2016.

⁷³ <http://www.stavanger-katedralskole.vgs.no/Utdanningsprogram/Voksenopplaering>, site accessed 14 March 2016.

In this public adult evening class, two of the Chin had studied, but they did not succeed due to language and other personal cases. My informant Bawi had been to this class. He says, “I think it is almost all impossible for immigrants because they teach very fast and there is no special consideration for immigrants, the teachers used also dialect. I left this class not only because of language problems, but also for personal difficulties with family and job.”⁷⁴

Here, as the door is open for all, the Chin also tries to enter through this gate and attend this evening class but unfortunately, he leave the class and do not succeed due to two reasons according to Bawi. Firstly, the class is for normal Norwegian students, it seems to be very fast, and the use of dialect makes it difficult for immigrants. Secondly, I have found out that educational achievement is highly dependent upon the family and economic situation. It means Bawi has four children and he has to work first and help the family, it is first priority.

University

In order to arrive at this level of education it is very difficult for the Chin because of language problems and so many other kinds of life situations. However, after ten years of living in Norway, gradually, some of them have reached the university level. To attain this level it is difficult even for natives according to the ‘Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research’. Only 25% of the Norwegian people have a university degree.”⁷⁵

However, for the Chin in Stavanger, there are 14 university students now, in which four of them are studying for a master’s degree and the rest are bachelor students. This is a good number considering the process of integration. Pi adds, “Norwegian is still difficult for me, but it is no more a problem. Generally, Chin students are silent and active in the class. I think we are normal, and our intelligence quotient (IQ) is also in the middle.”⁷⁶

Therefore, generally, we know that the Chin students are struggling really with the Norwegian language, especially those who arrived Stavanger after being 18 years old. However, they try very hard and are active in the class. Thus, it is most likely that they will produce some

⁷⁴ Bawi, Stavanger, 27 October 2015.

⁷⁵ http://www.udir.no/Upload/Brosjyrer/5/Education_in_Norway.pdf?epslanguage=no, site accessed 12 March 2016.

⁷⁶ Pi, Stavanger. 03 November 2015.

good results within a few years. Therefore, I believe that this level of achievement will illuminate the world for them and empower them as a torch in their lives.

Integration Process of Elderly People over 34

There are about 80 people in this category, in which about 5-10 % seems to have university degrees from Myanmar. However, that is not recognized by the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT). Therefore, if he or she wants to study, firstly, he or she must pass the language test B1 level (*Prøve 3*), and then he or she will be allowed to enter into the adult upper secondary class for immigrants at Hero or at the evening classes at Stavanger *Katedralskole*. In which he or she must pass an examination of English, mathematics, history, social science, natural science and Norwegian to get admission in university. Actually, it takes three years for normal students, but it is only three semesters for adults.

Bawi says, “Five elderly people have tried to study, but only two of them can continue their education.”⁷⁷ Here, three of them gave up; it is not known exactly why. However, generally I have found out that it is very difficult to study for elderly people, especially due to language and economy.

Anticipation for Future Generation

According to Serpell and Hatano, we know that education empowers a person not only for economy, job and rank, but also for “perception, cognition, language, identity and moral reasoning; because these all are arising from the particular patterns of literacy and education” (1997, 2: 342). It means that when minority children achieve education, he also achieves a similar perception, cognition, language, identity and moral reasoning as the majority children receive. Therefore, in other words, we can say that a person who achieves an education also gain more cultural competence, and he or she becomes more similar to the native. At the same time, he or she is more integrated than a person who does not achieve in education (Algan et al. 2012, 28). Thus, I would like to argue that the level of educational achievement is known as the level of integration of that person. Therefore, we can assess the level of integration by the achievement of education.

⁷⁷ Bawi, Stavanger, 27 October 2015.

Firstly, regarding the educational achievement, the gap between elderly people and the youth is high because the situation between them is different. The youth learn quicker than elderly people do; besides the youth can start their education from lower secondary school without knowing Norwegian language while the elderly people have to pass a Norwegian B1 test first. After that, they must start from upper secondary school. For these reasons, the youths get the chance to study more years and achieve higher levels of degrees than elderly people do. Therefore, achievement in education for Chin people is highly dependent upon age.

There is some difference among the youths. Pi says “generally the youth under 20 years have more capacity than those over 20 years; I don’t know why exactly. But I think it is due to language ability”⁷⁸ I agree with him because the youth who are under 20 years old now arrived Stavanger at between the ages of 10 and 14 year; therefore they started their education earlier, and they have a deeper foundation than the Chin who arrived Stavanger at the age of 15 and older.

Secondly, there is also a big gap between youth and children or first-generation and second-generation. While first generation is struggling with language acquisition and social relations, the second-generation has less problems with this. However, their problem is only with some hard words due to not getting language help from parents. Therefore, I believe that the third-generation Chin pupils will be totally like the native’s pupils, because their parents, those who today are the second generation, will have the ability to help their children at that time.

For this reason, I would like to argue that the younger the Chin immigrants are, the more they achieve in education; and the more they achieve in education, the more they are integrated.

Summary

As soon as the Chin arrived Stavanger, they were allowed to study, however their admission system is different based on their age. The Chin children who are under 16 years old attend directly the public schools. However, those who are over 16 years attends special classes for immigrants (lower secondary) at Johannes learning center. Those older than 24 years are enrolled at adult private classes for immigrants (upper secondary) at Hero or evening classes at Stavanger *Katedral* skole.

⁷⁸ Pi, Stavanger, 03 November 2015.

Generally, for those who are older than 34, it is almost impossible to study because of the admission system and personal weaknesses. Therefore, I would argue that integration according to education perspectives for this group is very hard and is almost impossible.

However, there are more possibilities for those who are between 16 and 34 years old. As mentioned above, 83 out of 97 of them are active in jobs or education; and it is a high score compared to other immigrants. This achievement in education is associated with integration according to Algan et al. (2012, 28). Therefore, I would like to claim that the Chin youths are integrated; however, this is not fully yet.

Finally, the second generation (under 16) seems to be highly integrated according to my informants. Therefore, elderly Chin people are hoping to see an education achievement of the second-generation. It is also known as an indicator of social integration (Vigdor 2012, 288).

Moreover, I observed that the Norwegian language is used quite frequently in families with children under ten years. This indicates that Chin families with children under ten years are more integrated than those who have no children. While the younger children are more integrated than the rest of the family, they also influence their parent towards a positive integration process.

Chapter Six

EMPLOYMENT

Introduction

In order to be able to integrate into the native's society, the individual immigrant must have a *key* to enter into the native's society; otherwise, he or she will become a burden to society. That key is employment, according to Eriksen (2010a, 278). He adds that "*deltagelse i arbeidslivet anses som positivt fordi det styrker den systemiske integrasjonen ved å gjøre nasjonaløkonomien mer robust*"⁷⁹ (2010a, 82). It means that when he or she has a job, he or she becomes a resource for the society because they will benefit the national economy by paying tax while there is no need to receive social help. On the contrary, if a person has not a job, he or she will be like a person who has no key to enter into the society. Therefore, that person becomes a burden for the society because he or she will need to depend upon social help of NAV.

In this chapter, I will discuss the employment background of Chin people, their attitudes towards financial assistance, the introduction program, the qualification program, friends, and online applications. After that, I will discuss the process of integration from the experiences of my informants by categorizing them in groups of men, women, educated people and youth. Finally, I will suggest some possibilities for how second-generation immigrants might take part in the integration process through employment.

Employment Background of Chin People

As Myanmar is a developing country, the Chin who live in Stavanger are peasants mostly; but a few of them were teachers or workers in the government's offices while they were in Myanmar. However, as these people fled to Malaysia, their work situation also changed. In Malaysia, most of the men worked in the industry and in construction companies while women worked in restaurants and shops. Their situation in Malaysia was horrible due to their illegal status, and

⁷⁹ My translation: Participation in the labor market is considered as positive because it strengthens the systemic integration by making the national economy more robust, and because paid work is considered an important source for self-esteem and life quality.

therefore they always worried for being arrest by the police and put in jail. Almost all my informants have also been in jail in Malaysia. Moreover, they worked under heavy pressure of the employer and sometimes they did not receive wages.

For these reasons, my informant Cung says, “working in Norway is easy because we had a heavy training in Malaysia.”⁸⁰ Here, Cung uses the word ‘training.’ For instance, if a soldier has not done training, he will have problems in the battle. Therefore, I agree with this statement: the more you train, the more you prepare for life and it can become easier in your life journey. For this reason, it seems that is easy and enjoyable for the Chin to work in Norway due to previous experiences while being refugees, the Human rights and good relationships at the workplace in Norway, as we shall see.

However, for they speak bad Norwegian and have different skin color compared to the natives, I believe that they might face some difficulties in the labor market; because Eriksen points out that “*Hudfarge (rase) er åpenbart en viktig, og undervurdert, factor i ekskluderings- og inkluderingsprosesser*”⁸¹(2010a, 180). Here it is important to note that Eriksen do not mean discrimination, but it is about including and excluding that individual face in practical daily life as human beings. He adds that many of those who are excluded in the labor market are Norwegian people because of their high, age, gender, sexual orientation or poor exam results (Eriksen 2010a, 181, 182). For this reason, I would like to suggest that as the Chin who have employment are included through labor market; they could also be excluded in other part of their practical lives.

Attitude towards Financial Assistance (sosialhjelp)

This financial assistance is provided by the NAV office to those people who are not able to support themselves through gainful employment or with their own savings. In which a person has to apply by submitting documents such as: tax return, pay slips, bank statements, copies of electricity bills and house rent. This assistance is just for temporary; and the aim is to be able to survive independently and as soon as possible.

⁸⁰ Cung, Stavanger, 28 October 2015.

⁸¹ My translation: color (race) is obviously an important and under consideration.

Bawi says, “this program is very good, it saved me. However, it is embarrassing and not easy for me. Because this assistance affects me both positively and negatively.”⁸² Here, Bawi feels grateful as well as shameful.

The reason is that the Chin never experienced this kind of financial assistance while they were in Myanmar. Therefore, first they are very grateful and even surprised when it comes to the excellent policy of the Norwegian Government. At the same time, they feel very shy because they know that someone who has a job indirectly provides the money they receive and pay taxes regularly. Here, I have found out that living without a job, or surviving based on financial assistance from NAV is negative and shameful for them. Therefore, it seems that this negative feeling regarding financial assistance from NAV enables them to involve in the labor market.

Different Methods to Involve in Labor Market

In Norway, employment is open for all, and figures from some years back in time show that around 90,000 immigrants have jobs (Eriksen 2010a, 181). In order for immigrants to get involved in the labor market, the Government of Norway has a program such as the introduction program, and a qualification program. Moreover, many individuals can get involved in the labor market through personal networks or friends and by applying online.

Introduction Program

In order for immigrants to integrate in the host country, the Norwegian Parliament passed the introduction acts in 2008. The introduction program is for two years and the aim is to improve the opportunities for immigrants to participate in employment. This program is considered a kind of job by the municipality. Therefore, those who are involved in this program, especially the refugees, have a chance to get some financial assistance in terms of a salary. For this reason, in other words, we can say that the immigrants who attend the introduction program get a job at Johannes learning center for two years. The job is to study Norwegian language and Norwegian culture.

While the language course is going on, they also have a chance to participate in language practice programs in terms of work. For instance, they work at preschools, in nursing homes for

⁸² Bawi, Stavanger, 27 October 2015.

elderly people and in shops free. Cung says, “some of them are lucky because they get a job unexpectedly while they are in the language practice program.”⁸³ When they get a job, they have a salary and are able to survive independently. Therefore, we can say that he or she has a key to enter into the native’s society, and become integrated.

Here, I would like to point out the argument of Eriksen. He says, “*kriteriene kan selvfølgelig være hudfarge, aksent, utenlandske navn, ikke kompatibel utdannelse fra annet land eller manglende uformelt nettverk i relevante miljøer* (Eriksen 2010a, 182).⁸⁴ It means that in order to get a job, skin color, accent and foreign name seems to be criteria that immigrants cannot meet, and it seems almost impossible for the Chin to get involved in the labor market according to the above requirements. However I have found that these criteria are not true for all times and for all people, because, some of the Chin can get a fast job even though they have different a skin color, accent, and foreign name.

I, therefore, would like to point out that getting a job by the Chin while learning language in Johannes learning center is an achievement and fulfilment of Norwegian Government integration program because “the desired outcome of Norwegian refugee policy is that refugees should participate in the labour market and to be independent as soon as possible.”

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NAV and the Qualification Program

As Norway is a welfare state, the Government has an office called NAV (*Ny Arbeids og Velferdsforvaltning*). Generally, NAV has the services like “unemployment, sickness benefit, family related benefit, pensions, financial assistance, information, advice and guidance, qualification program, financial advice and debt counselling, temporary accommodation (emergency), employment schemes, health services and occupational injury.”⁸⁶ However, for my work, I will only discuss the financial assistance and qualification program.

⁸³ Cung, Stavanger, 28 October 2015.

⁸⁴ My translation: The criteria may of course be the skin color, accent, foreign name, not compatible qualifications from other countries or lack of informal networks in relevant environments.

⁸⁵http://www.udi.no/globalassets/global/forskning-fou_i/beskyttelse/evaluation-of-the-norwegian-program-for-resettlement-of-un-refugees.pdf; site accessed 11 May 2015.

⁸⁶<https://www.nav.no/en/Home/Benefits+and+services/Information+about+NAV+s+services+and+benefits#chapter-12>, accessed 09 April 2016.

Qualification program is for those who have significantly reduced working capacity and earning ability. This program is for both immigrants as well as for the natives. If he or she gets a chance to involve in this program, he or she gets the opportunity to work in a company, but the salary is provided by NAV. The aim of this program is to be able to get a job by the participant. According to my informant, I have found out that most of the Chin are able to participate in the labor market through this program.

Ceu says, “since we are weak in language, we cannot express who we are, therefore it is difficult to get a job at once. But, as times goes by the employer starts to discern who we are more and more. Finally, the employer usually likes the Chin, because we are simple, sincere, loyal and faithful to the employer.”⁸⁷

According to Ceu, we know that the qualification program is very good and is an appropriate strategy for the Chin because within this qualification program the Chin has a chance to express who he is by his daily actions. Finally, even though he or she could not express himself by his language, his daily attitudes and actions speak to the heart of the employer, gradually. I agree with John Maxwell when he claims that “character is more than talk” (1999, 4). Here, I would like to argue that communication between the Chin and an employer by human language might not be so smooth; however, their heart is connected, and they understand each other after taking some months together within the qualification program.

Therefore, I would like to state that the qualification program enables the Chin to participate in the labor market; at the same time, the Chin are also active in working. For this reason, they are not negative, but positive for the society.

Friend

According to Eriksen, “minority people often do not reach in the competition for work because they lack informal networks or someone to call” (2010a, 77). It is true also for the Chin. As the Chin are newcomers, they have no network to call on except for the introduction program and qualification program. However, one of the Chin’s strong point that I have found is that they can build networks by themselves. It means, the Chin who are able to enter into the labor market can help another Chin person to participate in the labor market.

⁸⁷ Ceu, Stavanger, 02 November 2015.

Ceu says, “some Chin workers get special favor by the Norwegian boss. As a result, many of us can get a job by the help of our Chin people who has already a job; for he is loved by the Norwegian boss.”⁸⁸ Here, I realize the law of magnetism claimed by Maxwell in the book of 5 levels of leadership. He says, “birds of a feather flock together. It is a fact that like-minded people are attracted to one another. I’ve also seen that leaders attract who they are, not necessarily who they want” (Maxwell 2011, 119). What I mean here is that the Chin worker has the ability to attract his or her boss not by talking, but by action.

As a result, the Norwegian boss often likes Chin employees, and thus appoints more Chin people into his or her company because he believes that the other Chin people also will be as good as the first Chin worker. Therefore, what is happening among the Chin people is that they are working now in different small groups. For example, three Chin people work together at *Finøybygg* company, seven Chin people at *Gilde* company, and five Chin people in a cleaning company in Stavanger. It proofs the idea of getting favor of the boss by the first Chin worker who works there.

For these reasons, I would like to argue that the Chin people are able to enter into the labor market not only by the introduction program and qualification program, but also by their own networks or through Chin friends. Therefore, they are not separated neither are they marginalized, but they are moving towards integration through employment.

Online Application

In Norway, applying for a job by online is normal. For instance, www.finn.no and www.nav.no announce vacant jobs and many people apply for it. In which they compete with one another, only those who are lucky and qualified get that job. Therefore, it is very difficult for the Chin when they have to compete with others because of lack of language, skills and their foreign names, as Eriksen points out.

Cung says, “may be only a few of them get through by online application, because the name of the Chin is too long and difficult even for the Chin. After that, even if a person is called to a job interview, he or she may not be able to perform as the employer expects.”⁸⁹ I agree with Cung, because as far as my knowledge is concerned, the Chin are not successful through this

⁸⁸ Ceu, Stavanger, 02 November 2015.

⁸⁹ Cung, Stavanger, 28 October 2016.

process; may be due to lack of skills of application and their very long and difficult foreign names. Eriksen claims that “a person with a Chinese name must submit 92% more applications than those with an Anglo-Saxon name, to be invited for interview in Sydney” (2010a, 181). He adds that this kind of episode are also seen in Norway (Eriksen 2010a, 181); because in an online application the employer do not know who the applicant is. Therefore, “many of them have changed their ‘black’ name to a ‘white’ name; as a result they could involve in labor market faster” (Eriksen 2010a, 181). For this reason, I would like to claim that the online application system is difficult for the Chin as their names are long and difficult.

Here, Cung also points out that even if the Chin are called to do job interviews, he or she may not be able to express himself. Therefore, one of my important findings here is that as the Chin elderly people are weak in language, have no education from Norway and long difficult name, it is difficult to find a job through online and job interviews. However, since they are strong in inwardly qualifications, they need to take time together with the employer for some months. Therefore, I would like to argue that the introduction and qualification programs are appropriate and excellent strategies for the Chin because their real qualifications are inside of their heart, and it takes time to get to know them well.

Integration Process by Differences Categories

Under this title, I will discuss the process of integration from the perspectives of the categories of men, women, educated people and youth.

Men

According to the Chin culture, the father is the head of the family and he has responsibility to provide food for the whole family. I believe that this cultural background helps them to involve in the labor market in Norway because according to my observations and interviews, I have seen that almost all men have a job except those who are sick and are aged people.

Ceu says, “an unbelievable change happened after ten years of being in Norway. In the beginning, I thought that elderly Chin people would not be able to involve in the job market; but gradually, almost all men have a job now. It is wonderful; I cannot imagine how. I believe, it is

by the grace of God and by the help of the Norwegian people.”⁹⁰ The reason why Ceu is wondering, thanking God and the Norwegian people is that he compares the situation of the past ten years and the situation of today; it shows a big difference in employment. For the past ten years, they had no jobs, no money, no houses and no cars; but at this moment, almost all have a job, an income, and therefore they also have their own houses and drive cars. It means that they are now living a normal life as Norwegian people do. Therefore, most of them are independent, and only a few of them depend on social assistance. For this reason, I would like to claim from an employment perspective, that most of them are able to integrate into the Norwegian society.

Bawi also adds his opinion about the relation between the boss and himself. He states, “I enjoy my workplace. Because the relation between the boss and me is very good. I feel that I am welcomed, respected and accepted, even though I am not good enough.”⁹¹ Here, I would like to point out Hofstede’s model of power relations between them. According to Power Distance Index (PDI), among 76 countries of his studies, Malaysia is the highest with 104 points and Norway is at level 70th with 31 points; in which the lowest Austria is at level 76th with 11 points (Hofstede et al. 2010, 57-59). Hofstede et al. explain that in small–power-distance countries, there is interdependence among the boss and the subordinate and therefore emotional distance between them is relatively small; in which subordinates will easily approach and contradict their bosses. On the other hand, in large power distance countries distance between employees and the boss is large and therefore they are afraid to disagree with their boss (Hofstede et al. 2010, 61).

In Chin, there are three kinds of castes such as the high caste, the middle caste, and slave caste. Therefore, they are coming from high power distance society, and then they have been also in Malaysia for some years where the power distance has been the highest in the world.

Here, through my research, I have found out that, from the opinion of Chin people, the Norwegian bosses are very kind, humble and good. Therefore, they are very happy with their bosses and at their work places. Actually, the boss may not be good enough, kind and humble as the Chin thought, but he is still good for the Chin. Because they have previously experienced high power distance relationships, and therefore some negative experiences in the relationships with the boss in Norway is minor to them. As a result, they never ever talked about the negative

⁹⁰ Ceu, Stavanger, 02 November 2015.

⁹¹ Bawi, Stavanger, 27 October 2015.

side of their bosses, but they always talked about the positive characteristics of their bosses when I conducted my interviews.

I believe that it is due to Hofstede's power distance principle. As mentioned above, the Chin are coming from high power distance society; also, they have been in Malaysia for some years where power distance is the highest. Therefore, they worked under the great pressure of their bosses within power imbalanced relationships. For this reason, their bosses in Malaysia are bad, from a Chin perspective. However, in Norway power distance with their boss is very low, and therefore, their boss and other colleagues are very good and very kind, according to the Chin perspective. Therefore, I would like to state that coming from high power distance societies help them to feel good towards the Norwegian people and culture, and that positive worldview enables them to integrate into the Norwegian society.

Women

“The common trend among most societies, both traditional and modern societies, is that women are supposed to be more concerned with taking care of the home, of the children, and of people in general, to take the tender roles “(Hofstede et al. 2010, 137). This statement seems to be true also for the Chin; however, I would like to argue that Chin women are not only busy in the family, but also outside of the family. It means that they are active in the labor market.

Cung says, “most Chin women have a job; they work as cleaners, shopkeepers and in the caring profession. However some of them may not work as fast; any way they have income.”⁹² Here, the Chin women generally participate in the labor market besides taking care of children and the home. For instance, the wife of Cung works and earns money for the family, besides she takes care of the home and family while Cung, the husband, just works outside the house. Therefore, Chin women seem to be more integrated than men from an employment perspective.

Moreover, Lian is proud of his wife and tells me the attitude of his wife as the following. He says, “within four years of working, my wife never takes a leave, she has been absent only three days because of sickness. She loves her work because of freedom and a good relationship with the boss.”⁹³ According to Lian's wife, we can comprehend the attitudes of Chin women related to job.

⁹² Lian, Stavanger, 01 November 2015.

⁹³ Lian, Stavanger, 01 November 2015.

First, they are faithful. As we all know, all the workers have the rights to take the leave many days; however she never use these chances for her own benefit. It means she is faithful and loyal to the employer as well as the Government. Throughout the history, Chin people are known as faithful people in Myanmar. Moreover, the British Colonel Stevenson also recognized the Chin as faithful people (Sakhong 2003,160). Here, I would like to state that being faithful is a deep cultural value of the Chin people that strengthens their integration process in Norway. I, therefore, believe that, it is why the Chin people who live in Froland won the volunteer prize (*frivilligprissen*) in 2004.⁹⁴

Secondly, she loves her job because of the good relationship and the respect she feels. This means the boss also considers her own interest. Here, I would like to point out the benefit of coming from a collective society to an individualistic society. In an individualistic culture individual employees are expected to act according to their own interests, and work should be organized in such a way that this self-interest and employer's interest coincide. However, in the collectivistic culture, the employee will act according to the interest of this in-group, which may not always coincide with his or her individual interest (Hofstede et al. 2010, 119). I would like to note that when individual workers from collectivistic society come into individualistic society, based on the workplaces they feel respected and feel freedom. Therefore, I believe that coming from a collectivistic society enables them to integrate into Norwegian workplaces.

Educated People

Among Stavanger Chin people, a few of them attended university while they were in Myanmar. Therefore, they were employed as teachers in the schools, as leaders in organization and workers in offices. However, In Norway their education is not accepted for work, except three mother tongue teachers. Thus, they miss a position in society that corresponds to their previous education in Stavanger.

Bawi is one of those. He says, "it was a pain at the beginning because of my social position in the society that has fallen down to the ground; but that feeling has disappeared now.

⁹⁴ https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/aktuelt/forening_for_integrering_vant_frivilligp/id253790/; site accessed 11 May 2015.

Because I realize that, the system of Norway is based on equality. Therefore, I consider myself as a normal person and I can work with whatever the job it may be.”⁹⁵ Here, Bawi’s reflections correspond with what Eriksen says, that employment contributes to both inclusion and exclusion (2010a, 184). Among Chin people, I have seen that some of the educated people are excluded because of the new life circumstances in Norway. The reason for exclusion here is that the education they had acquired from Myanmar is not accepted and he or she miss his or her social capital in Norway.

It may be painful for him or her; however, as Bawi has said, the educated Chin people could negotiate the circumstances and he is able to involve in the job market. Therefore, I would like to state that these educated people are able to integrate; but not as their original social position.

Youth between 16 – 34

According to my informants, there are 55 men and 42 women Chin people in Stavanger; in total 97 people in this category. In which 85.57% of them are active in education or job and 14.43% of them are inactive. It means that some of them are students, some of them are workers and a few of them are inactive in either education or work. Therefore, I would like to categorize by those who are active and those who are not active.

Lian says,” this group seems to have better jobs compared to elderly people, because some of them have received a certificate of apprenticeship (*fagbrev*) from upper secondary school and thus earn a higher salary.”⁹⁶ Here, I would like to suggest that this level of certificate is good to consider as a path to integration because about half the Norwegian people also have this level of education and are involved in the labor market.⁹⁷ At the same time, Lian also tells me about those who are inactive. He says, “I don’t give up for this inactive people, because I know that they have still strong desires to get involved in a job or education. So, they are on the way to be participant.”⁹⁸ Here, it seems that the reason for being inactive within this group may be due to the current labor market crisis.

⁹⁵ Bawi, Stavanger, 27 November 2015.

⁹⁶ Lian , Stavanger, 01 November 2015.

⁹⁷ <https://ssb.no/utniv>, site accessed 28 April 2016.

⁹⁸ Lian , Stavanger, 01 November 2015.

According to the report of SSB in 2014, the number of people who are not active in job or education in the age between 16 and 34 is 35% for general immigrants and 10% for the native Norwegian people.⁹⁹ Therefore, I would like to claim that the first generation Chin seems to be more integrated than the general immigrants because the inactive number for the Chin is only 14% while for other immigrants in general it is 35%. For this reason, I would like to suggest that the Chin are integrated from the employment perspective.

Anticipation for Future Generation

As Algan et al. point out the integration process go through intergenerational shifts (2012, 24). Therefore, under this title, I will discuss the difference between elderly people and youth especially; after that, I will anticipate the possibilities of the second generation.

First, elderly people over 34 years are generally working now with jobs that do not demand any education. Cung says, “I think I am lucky because I have a job. My job may be the lowest level of job in Norway, but I am satisfied with that because I know myself that I can work only with this kind of job due to lack of language and education.”¹⁰⁰ Through Cung words, we can analyze that the Chin elderly people are working in elementary jobs; for instance, in construction, slaughter, grocery store and in cleaning. These kind of jobs are the lowest level of jobs that do not demand fluency in Norwegian, neither education; however, the Chin are satisfied with their jobs because they accept that they are lacking the language and the education as a newcomer.

Second, the situation of the youths are different from elderly people because they have attended school and are able to speak good Norwegian. Lian says, “it is impossible to get a good job for elderly people, but some of our Chin youths are working now as electricians, Mechanists, carpenters and in offices.”¹⁰¹ Here, even though both are in the category of first generation, we see that there is a big difference between the youth and the elderly people. In other words, the elderly people are working at the lowest level of occupation while some of the youths are in the

⁹⁹ <http://www.ssb.no/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/norskfodte-med-innvandrerforeldre-er-mye-mer-liketilte-enn-innvandrere>, site accessed 09 March 2016. Cung, Stavanger, 28 October 2015.

¹⁰⁰ Cung, Stavanger, 28 October 2015.

¹⁰¹ Lian, Stavanger, 01 November 2015.

middle level of occupation. It is called intergenerational shift (Algan et al. 2012, 24). Here, we know that the gap between elderly people and the native is higher than the gap between the youth and the native. Therefore, it is a sign of assimilation (Algan and Aleksynska 2012, 305).

For this reason, I would like to anticipate that the second generation Chin will be fully integrated into the Norwegian society according to the employment point of view because it is sure that the second generation will be able to participate in education; and that education will enable them to participate in the labor market. Moreover, I believe that the second generation Chin will be able to work with better-paid jobs as Algan and Aleksynska point out. They claim, “second-generation immigrants have a significantly lower possibility of performing an elementary job, as opposed to first-generation immigrants (Algan and Aleksynska 2012, 325). In other words, we can say that second-generation Chin are more integrated than the first-generation Chin. From which, we automatically understand that the third generation Chin will be like the native in labor market.

Summary

The Chin Christians who live in Stavanger are generally involved in employment. Actually, they are not good in Norwegian language, they have different skin color, and they have no network except the NAV and municipality, however they have a diamond in their heart. It is hard to get a job by online application, however through the introduction program and qualification program, the Government of Norway’s integration program greatly help them to involve in labor market. These programs are appropriate for the Chin because, after having worked with the employer for some months, the employer start to acknowledge the qualifications of Chin people and he or she appoints them as worker in the company. After that, the Chin worker used to get special favor from the Norwegian boss; and finally, other Chin people also has a chance to work there because of the first Chin and the impression left by this first worker.

From a Chin perspective, working in Norway is easy and enjoyable. They come from a high power distance society and a collectivistic society and their horrible experiences with regard to employment relationships help them integrate in the labor market in Norway.

Elderly Chin people including the educated people are working now in elementary jobs; however, some of the youths between 16 and 34 have completed their education and have started working within better-paid occupations. Therefore, I believe that, the second generation Chin

people will be able to work in ordinary jobs as Norwegians do. Finally, I would like to claim that the Chin community in Stavanger engage in a positive integration process, according to the employment perspective, because most of them are involved in the labor market and are appreciated and favored by their bosses.

Chapter Seven

CONCLUSION

As my research problem is to investigate how the Chin Christians are integrating into the Norwegian society in Stavanger, especially through looking at the issues of language, education, and employment, I have interviewed four adults and three students among Chin Christians who live in Stavanger. After that, I have analyzed if the Chin Christians are integrated, in which I used Berry's model of acculturation strategies such as integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization.

Regarding language, I have found out that even though they are active in learning the Norwegian language for two years in the introduction program, they struggled a lot with syntax. Therefore, elderly people over 34 years are weak in Norwegian; however, they can manage their daily lives such as shopping, work, and a little conversation with the natives. However, the youths aged between 16 and 34 can speak fluent Norwegian with only some small difficulties. Finally, children under 16 years can speak the Norwegian language without a foreign accent, but they still lack difficult words.

In education issues, I have found out that they are able to integrate with some difficulties. In which I acknowledge that it is almost all impossible for elderly people over 34 years to integrate. However, for the youths aged between 16 and 34 there are possible with some challenges, but children under 16 years seem to be the most integrated groups with little difficulties.

Then regarding employment, the Chin Christians appear to have succeed because most of them have a job. Therefore, they are independent and do not depend on financial assistance given by NAV. After that, some of them even get special favor from an employer.

For these reasons, I would like to claim that Chin Christians are integrated into the Norwegian society in Stavanger; because they are not avoiding interacting with the host society; on the other hand, they are active in learning Norwegian language, participating in education, and employment. In which I have found out that elderly people are good, the youths are better while children experience the best integration process. .

Through my research, I have found that the Chin people are worthy to appreciate regarding integration into a new society. I agree with Birthe Ronn Hornbech, the integration Minister of Denmark. She wrote a mail to POLITIK newspaper on 09 September 2009: “*Danmark i år modtager burmesiske frem for irakiske kvoteflygtninge. De er nemmere at integrere. Der er millioner og atter millioner af flygtninge i verden. Der er endog meget gode erfaringer med at integrere burmesere.*”¹⁰² Here, I would like to point out some reasons why the Chin seem to integrate easier in a new society.

The first reason for gaining integration is their *grateful attitude*. According to Chin culture, the one who receive must respect even a cup of water. Here, the contribution given by the Norwegian side while they were in trouble is very great and is unforgettable for them. I, therefore, would like to claim that this grateful attitude enables them to love and to respect Norwegian people.

The second reason is their *good character*. Being a Christian, the Chin are raised up through Jesus’s teaching which is to be humble, meek, hunger and thirst for righteousness, merciful, and peacemaker (Matt 5: 3-8) since they were young. Therefore, I believe that they bring these good characters to Norway and it help them to integrate into the Norwegian society in Stavanger, especially in their workplaces.

Finally, I would like to give the highest credit to the native’s; because the Norwegian Government contributes to language development through the introduction program; and education and employment through the qualification program for immigrants in which also the Chin people benefit. These programs are appropriate and a very effective way for the Chin because the Chin need some years to learn the language and to prepare for employment. My study shows that the Chin would not have been able to integrate into Stavanger if there had not been such a contribution from the natives' side. For these reasons, I would like to conclude that the Chin Christians take part in an integration process in Stavanger due to a combination of the natives’ contributions as well as the Chin community’s positive response to these integration efforts.

¹⁰² <http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Politik/2009/09/09/09064055.htm>; site accessed 18 May 2015.

My translation: Denmark this year receive Burmese rather than Iraqi quota refugees. They are easier to integrate. There are millions and millions of refugees in the world. There is even very good experience with integrating Burmese.

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APPENDIX

Interview guide

1. Do you attend language classes in Johannes learning center? Are you enjoying it? Is it difficult for you and other Chin people? How do you manage to improve your skills?
2. Do you think that your language skill is enough for communicating with Norwegian people, take part in education and employment? Please give the grade of language skills of elderly people, youth and children.
3. Please tell me your experiences regarding language learning. Do you speak the Norwegian language at home and in church? Which language are in use when the Chin communicate with each other?
4. Do you think that the Chin language will disappear in the future? Do you speak the Chin language at home and in church?
5. Do you study? How did you get admission, when and where?
6. Is it difficult? Can you follow and enjoy the classes? Please tell me your experiences in the class. What are the differences and the similarities of education system between Myanmar and Norway?
7. Can you tell me the weak points and the strong points of Chin students? What is your opinion about elderly people, youth, and children in education?
8. What do you do for living in Myanmar and Norway? How can you get this job? How about the other Chin people?
9. How do you think about financial assistance, introduction and qualification program? Please comment the weak points and strong points of the Chin regarding jobs.
10. Are you enjoying your work place, why and why not? Please tell me your opinion about your boss and your workplace.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ I did qualitative interview by Chin language, it is a translation.

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