

SCHOOL OF MISSION AND THEOLOGY

“AM I NORWEGIAN ENOUGH TO YOU?”
INTEGRATION AND IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF
ADOLESCENT IMMIGRANTS

MASTER’S THESIS IN GLOBAL STUDIES

MGS-320

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STAVANGER

2016

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The studies and researches in the field of immigration and cultural identity nowadays are of current interest. New cultural settings influence individuals and it causes hybridization and emergence of new identities. But who are these people who hold those new identities? They have always been a part of the earth's population and they are the result of migrations. They are normal people with the usual struggles and pleasure of life. The only thing that differs them from those who have always lived in one culture is different experiences they gained through their life.¹

Experiences in life can play a very big role in formation of identity and personality in general. Different life events may guide a person in his or her life path and choosing his or her belonging. In this project I want to focus on the experiences of people and how it has reflected on their personality and cultural identity. My research will also focus on the experiences from the early childhood times of the respondents, as it may show how those events had later formed the world's perception and preferences in life, how had the first experiences shaped the subliminal perception of the world.

The goal of this project is to throw a light on the challenges the immigrant children have when they move to the host country, to find out how they feel it to be a "new citizen", what are the things they are missing or would like to change and how it is related to their identity formation.

1.1 Inspiration and the Source of the Idea

When I was 22, I had just graduated from university and at the beginning didn't have many job opportunities in my home country. Since I had started to learn Mandarin Chinese at that time I got to know some people from the student Chinese community at the university. One of them introduced me to a friend of him who was working as a

¹ David C. Pollock, *Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing up Among Worlds* (London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2001), xxi.

teacher in a school based in China and I found that as a wonderful opportunity to get a position of teacher there as well. At that time I was completely immersed by positive emotions and excitement, full of hopes and plans. I was very welcomed in my host country and the local people seemed to be very nice and friendly towards me. But after some time, when all the excitement was gradually passing away, I had started to feel that I was different, that I was not like them, and of course, the biggest difference was the language skills. After another few years living in China I have mastered the language and could speak fluently almost on all kinds of everyday topics, sometimes I was even received as a local person if it was a phone talk. Most of my friends were local Chinese people, from whom I learned local traditions, food cooking methods, festival celebration traditions and many more. But every time I met new people, most of the times they received me as something exotic, as something different from them. If at the very beginning of my staying in China it was quite understandable for me, then after some years of living in that society, speaking the same language, celebrating the same holidays, doing all the things as local people did and still was received as an alien, started to be annoying and sometimes very frustrating. Sometimes I was asking myself: “How many years have to pass when they stop call me a foreigner? How Chinese I have to be in order to blend with the society?”. Maybe, if I wasn't received that way, it wouldn't be questioning it and wouldn't be bothered much by this matter.

When I had come to Norway for further studies, after living in China for more than 4 years, I started to feel completely different. On the outside I was closer to the local people, but my inside got a big impact from my previous host country. When I met some people in Norway who were of immigrant background, they were telling me their stories, their life experiences in their host country and how they felt about their role in the new society. I was amazed, as in their stories I could see myself when I was living in China and fighting for my identity. I have heard the stories of similar frustrations and fights, how they live and search for their own identity. This has inspired me to do a research among young adults of immigrant background, who have come to Norway when they were in their 10-15 years old. Although, when I have moved to China I was already 22 and have experienced a lot of struggles within my cultural identity; but these young adults have experienced even more challenges in their life as they had already started to form their identity while being kids and being grown in their families and home countries, as suddenly they had to move into the

new settings, which wasn't that easy for them as they were going through their puberty and personal character changes.

1.2 Previous Research

Before starting to write this thesis I have done an extensive research of literature dealing with identity, child psychology, immigration, integration and stereotypes. It wasn't easy to find any books or article that were dealing with all these spheres at the same time but I found a lot of relevant theories and approaches to do my research.

I have got a big inspiration from David Parker's Book "Through Different Eyes: The cultural Identities of Young Chinese People in Britain", in which David Parker is talking a lot about different Chinese background British youth identities. He also talks a lot about how their identities form as a reflection to racism in their locality and level of inclusion into British society.²

The theory about stereotypes and the nature of stereotypes, described in Ruth Illman's work "Stereotypes: The Symbolic Image of the Other"³, gave me an overview on possible stereotypic perception of the immigrants by the host society and vice versa. Not forgetting to mention Pablo Cristoffanini's "The Representation of 'the Others' as Strategies of Symbolic Construction, where the author discussed stereotypes in power relation perspectives.⁴

Another two authors that were making research on identity and crisis of identity is Jaakko Lehtonen and Diana Petkova. In their book "cultural Identity in an Intercultural Context" they are talking about possible reasons for identity crisis and the stages of going through identity crisis.⁵ Another author, Young Yun Kim, who is herself a Korean immigrant in United States, has written an article, which is called "Adapting to a New Culture: An Integrative Communication Theory"; it gives a good

² David Parker, *Through Different Eyes: The Cultural Identities of Young Chinese People in Britain* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995).

³ Ruth Illman, "Stereotypes: The Symbolic Image of the Other" in *Bridges of Understanding. Perspectives on Intercultural Communication* (ed. Ø. Dahl et al.; Oslo: Unipub/Oslo Academic Press, 2006), 101-114.

⁴ Pablo R. Cristoffanini, "The Representation of 'the Others' as Strategies of Symbolic Construction" in *Intercultural Alternatives* (ed. M. Blasco and J. Gustafsson; Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press, 2004), 79-102.

⁵ Jaakko Lehtonen, Diana Petkova, *Cultural Identity in an Intercultural Context* (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2005).

explanation of integration process of individuals as well as covers identity crisis phenomenon.⁶

1.3 My Focus

My project will be dealing with young adults who immigrated to Norway in their teenage years and how their identities being constructed and reconstructed in the new settings. I have decided to choose this field of studies after seeing which difficulties and identity crisis meet my friends in Norway who are in this category of immigrants. Sometimes they take an advantage of being a product of two different cultures, but sometimes it can be a challenge for them and some struggle to find their place in the society. Some of them want to be called Norwegian and they fight for this right, regardless of their background and the country they were born in. Some others have a strong connection with their home country and they refer to themselves as people of their homeland, saying they will never become Norwegians because of different skin color or some other reasons. Some of them choose to be unique and different from the rest of society, while some of them prefer to blend and never stand out because of their appearance or some special cultural habits. Some are proud of the traditions or religion of their family and parents, some others feel ashamed of their family and even hate them for being different from the local Norwegian families. My goal is to discover the inner world of the adult immigrants, how did the events that happened to them during relocation reflected on them and how they identify their own cultural belonging. All of these questions can be summarized in one main question for my research: What influences the identity formation?

⁶ Young Yun Kim, "Adapting to a New Culture: An Integrative Communication Theory" in *Theorizing About Intercultural Communication* (ed. William B. Gudykunst; California: Thousand Oaks, 2005), 375-400.

Chapter Two

METHODOLOGY

The study investigates the factors from the early memories of respondents that lead to their individual cultural identity and the way they perceive the world and society they live in. Research questions and objectives went through continuous change before all the interviews were collected. According to Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, the fieldwork can suggest a number of potentially important aspects to be identified more thoroughly; over the course of inquiry research questions are identified more precisely, at the same time, such identifications permit new research questions to be posed, or to be formulated more systematically.⁷ Therefore, the number of changes took place in reconstruction of the research questions. After completing the fieldwork and during the process of interviews collection, I got some new ideas on how my research question can be structured and questioned more precisely. The research questions after the fieldwork are decided to be as follows:

- How did the events from the early childhood influence on perception of life of the respondents?

- How did the events that happened during the relocation influence on the respondents' identity formation?

- Do the racism cases reflect on the identity formation? How do respondents identity their own belonging to community?

This research is based on qualitative sampling in the form of narratives. In order to find the answers on these questions, it was chosen to make narrative interviews. The narrative form of research was chosen among all other forms as according to Amia Lieblich, narratives provide us with access to people's identity and personality.⁸ More detailed information about the methodology is given below.

⁷ Martyn Hammersley, Paul Atkinson, *Ethnography. Principles in Practice. Third Edition* (London: Routledge, 2007), 28.

⁸ Amia Lieblich et al., *Narrative Research. Reading, Analysis, and Interpretation* (California: SAGE Publications, Inc., 1998), 7.

2.1 Research Interviewees

The original research population was identified as young adults with foreign background, who came to Norway as immigrants with one of their family member/members in their adolescence. Initially, the idea was to make the research among the group who have moved to Norway in their teenage years, but the majority of the respondents who agreed to take part in the interview were the ones who have immigrated in an earlier age, therefore it was chosen to narrow the research to those who have moved between the age of 10 and 15. Another reason for narrowing the research according to the age, in which respondents have moved to the new country, was the interest to find out how does identity constructs in the age of becoming a teenager, when some years of the childhood have been spent in their home country and then they were forced to move in another settings and to acquire new language, new culture, new society. Younger age seem to be more vulnerable, hence more flexible in cultural sense.

The reasons for the immigration of the family member/members of the respondents vary, although the majority of them have followed their mother, who has married to a person in Norway and moved according to family reunification. Potential subjects have been contacted through my friend's connections as well as through such institutions as Senter for Interkulturell Kommunikasjon (SIK), Misjonshøgskolen (MHS) and Stavanger Expats Facebook page.

For some interviewees it was uncomfortable to speak about their personal lives and issues, as they have never met me before. Respondents who felt insecure while giving an interview were not included in the chosen 6 interviews, as the information given was not sufficient for further analysis. In order to cover all the spectrums of the research group, it was chosen to pick up 3 men's and 3 women's interviews, to see if there are any gender differences. The interviews performed by women lasted longer then the interviews of men. In the process of interviews it seemed that the female subjects reflected their wish to share their experience and to elicit their identification and empathy. As Lakoff states, that making a direct appeal to the listener and using rhetorical questions, are both features of feminine discourse⁹, which was observed in the process of collecting the data for research. The age of the subjects vary from 22 to 37 years old.

⁹ Ibid., 158.

2.2 Research Method

In the search of the most relevant research method I have stopped my choice on narrative research. Narrative research can be stories as accounts of temporally ordered events, or it can be expression of personal identity, it can be stories about the past; narrative research can mean making sense of mental states or emotions, having particular social effects, demonstration of formal linguistic properties.¹⁰ Choosing narratives for my research gives the fuller picture of respondents' life events in chronological position, stories of their past, which can tell about their identity, their position in society and relationship to the others. Narratives can show us the way the life events affect people's understanding of reality and their actions in the world. The narrator can shed the light on the social experiences, which are hard to get through the limited questioning. Lieblich argues in her book "Narrative Research. Reading, Analysis, and Interpretation", that people are storytellers by nature:

Stories provide coherence and continuity to one's experience and have a certain role in our communication with others. Along with its interest in the behavior of humans and animals, and its goal to predict and control, the mission of psychology is to explain and understand the inner world of individuals. One of the clearest channels for learning about the inner world is through verbal accounts and stories presented by individual narrators about their lives and their experienced reality.¹¹

In other words, narratives open up individual's inner world and reveals identity of the storyteller. Therefore, for my research I have chosen narrative approach, as it can show the hidden sides of the narrator's identity. Narration gives the chance to the interviewee to mention exactly those moments that are the brightest in his or her memory and they might be of a special interest for a researcher. I didn't want to limit my respondents with the questioner and get the answers only on the questions I have. Instead, I wanted to give them opportunity to speak and express themselves, talk about their memories, about their experiences and feelings. As once Freud formed the views about mental life, the personality, and its development—from case studies of men and women in psychotherapy—so too can the researcher use this method for conducting self-narratives in order to study identity construction of persons. According to Amia Lieblich, stories imitate life and present an inner reality to the

¹⁰ Corinne Squire et al., *What Is Narrative Research?* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 6.

¹¹ Lieblich et al., 1998, 7.

outside world; at the same time, however, they shape and construct the narrator's personality and reality. The story is one's identity, a story created, told, revised, and retold throughout life.¹² As a social scientist I like this better than looking for the inner world—that stories help the identity construction. Early memories from the childhood of a person sometimes can show some traits of character and personality, which can later be the answers to many life events of the person. The first experiences of moving even within its own country can influence the personality and will reflect in the further life events. Close family members relation can be something to be put attention on, as it can show how sensitive or independent the person become while grows up. All these factors show up individual's inner world and help to interpret the feelings and actions of the person in adulthood. In order to get a deep understanding of the events and to get a rich data, narrative research is the better way to explore it rather than focused questions in qualitative research.

In Paul Thompson's book "The Voice of the Past" he touches the topic of narratives and the oral histories can be used as a data for different research goals. In his book he talks about the children and how their family and the past can reflect on the identity: "Study of children's own family history can provide an effective way of linking their own environment with their past."¹³ He suggests that the child's own knowledge of his or her family can open the window for researcher to learn the identity and reality perception, as well as how it constructs the behavior and understanding of the society.

In my interviews I was focusing on all the life stages of the subjects. That means, that the respondents started their interview from the very early memories of their childhood. Paul Thompson notes out that the process of memory recollection can be challenging for some respondents, he argues that it may be quite difficult to remember simple day-to-day life details.¹⁴ Sometimes it is almost impossible to know the person's history from his or her own narrative which covers early ages of childhood, as children up to the age of four have very little long-term memory, Thompson also claims that many children—more than a half retain a photographic type of memory.¹⁵ Some of the respondents of my research have confirmed this theory

¹² Ibid., 7.

¹³ Thompson, 1978, 9.

¹⁴ Ibid., 112.

¹⁵ Ibid., 112.

of Thompson and many of them didn't remember the events that happened before they were at the age of 4-6 years old. Some of them, although have mentioned narratives of their family members, from which they know the approximate conditions and events of their early childhood.

Thompson is also pointing out that some traumatic life events fall deep in the memory of individuals. This phenomenon recognized by psychologists as "life review": a sudden emergence of memories and of desire to remember.¹⁶ This means that the events that have reflected the subject's identity most likely will be mentioned in the interviews as they are selected by the memory as traumatic or some important events.

For my research it has been chosen to apply constructivist approach. This type of research deconstructs the phenomena in the best way, as it shows how the meanings are socially constructed, what conditions and constructs self-representation and identity.¹⁷ The choice of constructivist approached may be explained by a wish to be more focused on the subjects' perspective of reality and the reflection of life experiences. In this kind of approach the result of the research is not known yet but it will be created through analysis; for this case the theory is identical with the eye that beholds and the analytical perspective with which the empirical research takes at its starting-point.¹⁸ That means that as a researcher, the data shall be processed with an opened mind and researcher has to be sensitive even to the small details of the data. In order to fulfill this task the qualitative research method is chosen to conduct the interviews. Within constructivist theoretical approach, culture is taken as something that is constructed by individuals themselves in situated contexts.¹⁹ Study of cultural identity constructs may be conducted with combination of such fields like psychology, anthropology, and sociology. In my research I will use perspectives from all these fields, therefore narrative method for interviews is picked up.

But how can narratives of some individuals give us a definite understanding of immigrant society challenges in integration? Sometimes, even the most personal narratives do not talk only about individuals, but they also give us a picture of social

¹⁶ Ibid., 113.

¹⁷ Hanne Løngreen, "Method and Intercultural Communication Studies" in *Bridges of Understanding. Perspectives on Intercultural Communication* (ed. Ø. Dahl et al.; Oslo: Unipub/Oslo Academic Press, 2006), 123.

¹⁸ Ibid., 119.

¹⁹ Ibid., 118.

world and community within the generation they speak²⁰; narratives is a window onto a particular socio-historical moment, and a way of understanding that moment's meaning for the narrator, is, then, the first formulation of the connection between stories and their wider contexts.²¹ Within my research, the data might not give the present condition of the immigrant youth in Norway, as by the time of data collections they have turned into young adults, but it foreshadows the common traits of identity formation and integration process.

2.3 Data Collection

One of the most important conditions for conducting interview was the place and the relationship between the subjects and me. The experience have shown that the best place for interviews were homes of the subjects or homes of their friends, were they felt more safe rather than somewhere in public places like cafes or libraries. Another challenging thing in the interview was relationship between respondent and me; the respondents I knew from before tended to talk more, rather than those I've met for the first time. As the method I have chosen for the interviews are narratives of the subjects, they were supposed to talk more than me, without any prepared questioner or any special question guide. Some of the respondents didn't show a will of being very talkative due to distant relationship between them and me. In order to get minimum information for the research, more additional questions had to be asked to make the subjects to feel more comfortable and guide their narratives. After the fieldwork was over, 9 interviews have been conducted in total. In this work I am not going to include all of the 9 interviews, due to the vast content, instead, I have picked up 6 interviews which would fit the analysis the best

For recording the interviews, an Ipad was chosen with a recording application in it, although, Paul Thompson argues that even note-taking, let alone tape recording, may arouse suspicion in some people and the best equipment to be chosen for recording is none.²² Every time before starting the interview I had to notify the respondent that the recorder will be used in order to save the data for further analysis and if they don't feel comfortable by being recorded they can tell about it and they

²⁰ Lieblich et al., 1998, 7.

²¹ Squire et al., 2014, 84.

²² Thompson, 1978, 172.

can retreat from giving interview at any time. All of the respondents were positive about me recording them. Thompson says in his book:

Most people, however, will accept a tape recorder with very little anxiety, and quickly lose any immediate awareness of it. The recorder can even help the interview. While it is on, people may be a little more likely to keep to the point. And quite frequently, when the recorder is switched off, some highly significant additional facts may be given, which could have been help back if there had been no recorder at all.²³

Indeed, some respondents felt a bit cautious about the recording at the beginning of the interview and were asking the questions like “Is it recording now?” or “Please, don’t use this part, as it is too personal”, but after some time they were not paying attention of the Ipad and were more concentrated on telling their story.

Each interview lasted for about 40 minutes to 3 hours. The most talkative respondents were women. Thompson clears out that some interviews may be more chatty than others, and it can draw out an informant in such way; informants may vary from very talkative, who need just few questions or some specific questions to be asked every now and then just to clarify some points, to the relatively laconic informants, who with encouragements, broad open-ended questions and supplementary prompts can reveal much richer memories than at first seemed possible.²⁴ For some of the informants it wasn’t clear how much information they are supposed to give, especially it seemed for those whom I have met for the first time, at some moments they would feel embarrassment or felt uncomfortable giving all the information about them at once without knowing anything about me and what kind of person I am. On the contrary, some of the respondents I knew were very opened and comfortable sharing even the most embarrassing and difficult memories and life experiences.

Every time before starting the actual interviews and letting the respondents to sign the informed consent, I was giving them a piece of paper and a pen and asked them to imagine their life as a story. The story should have a chronological form and it has chapters; the respondents had to give a name to every “chapter” of their life and

²³ Ibid., 172.

²⁴ Ibid., 169.

write it down on the paper I gave, and then they had to write the age/ages of their life in front of every chapter. Every respondent started from the earliest age of their life they remembered, some of them, though, started from 0 or 1, as they wanted to share during the interview the stories their parents told about the time they were little. Some of the informants had more chapters some of them had less, they could write as many as they feel the best to describe their life. To guide the respondents in their narratives I have asked them to focus on some main questions of every stage:

- What people or friends have surrounded you at that period?
- What kind of person were you at this stage?
- Who were significant people or model roles for you at this time?
- To which of the countries you felt more related at this time?

Some additional questions were also asked if the respondent didn't know what to tell more or felt "stuck" in one of the stages. If at some moments informants felt sad or uncomfortable they had an option to take a break and stop the recording, and then continuing after a short pause.

According to A. Lieblich the use of narrative methodology results in unique and rich data that cannot be obtained from experiments, questionnaires, or observations.²⁵ The challenge of making these interviews, however, was the vast data material, which was recorded on tape, but because of the limited time it cannot be fully transcribed.

Within the data collection some potential limitations have come out. One of these limitations was the language. No one's of the respondents' native language was English, although all of the interviews were planned to be in English. Arranging Norwegian interviews were not considered, as there were not enough language skills for me to make the translations afterwards.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

There are some ethical issues surrounding social research, which the researcher should keep in mind. One of such concerns is informed consent. It is often argued that people must consent to being researched in an unconstrained way, making their decisions on the basis of comprehensive and accurate information about it; and that they should be free to withdraw at any time.²⁶ Indeed, it is very important for both

²⁵ Lieblich et al., 1998, 7.

²⁶ Hammersley, 2007, 210.

researcher and informant, as some personal information might be used in the data analysis further and the informant should be aware of it. Signing the informed consent means the agreement of the informant to usage of the information obtained at the time of the interview. It is important to include in the informant consent whether the names and the places will be used as it is or it will remain anonymous. Informed consent gives the information about how and where the data will be kept and who will have access to it.

Keeping privacy of the data obtained from interviews is an important issue. Sometimes, the invasion of privacy by researchers is justified on the grounds that since the account will be published for a specialized audience neither the people studied nor anyone else related to them would read it.²⁷ But is it always the case? How can it be guaranteed? There is no guarantee for that, especially if the work published somewhere everyone has access to. Here comes out the question of data privacy of the informants. For this, the informants who took part in the interviews and whose quotations from the interviews are published in this work had an option to look through the text of their interview before publishing and make sure if they agree to publish it or something should be changed. It is always important to have a trust relation with the informants throughout the project in order to avoid any possible disagreement between the informant and researcher.

Above all the problems and considerations I have mentioned before, it is also important to remember about the stress that can happen while taking an interview with sensitive information. It may lead to a continual sense of insecurity. Such situations involve living simultaneously in two worlds, that of participation and that of research. In covert research there is a constant effort to maintain one's cover and at the same time to make the most of whatever research opportunities arise.²⁸ In my interviews I have tried to be a person who is willing to hear the stories and who is ready to listen to problems or challenges the persons have faced in lives first, rather than neutral researcher who has a task of doing these interviews just for the sake of research and this helped me to obtain rich in content and comprehensive data.

²⁷ Ibid., 212.

²⁸ Ibid., 89.

2.4.1 Presenting the Data for Analysis

To present the data for analysis I have decided to present it in categories. In each of the categories I have collected excerpts from the texts of complete interviews where respondents talk about the events and memories that are witnessing the phenomena I am analyzing. I was trying to find common traits and phenomena through all of the 6 interviewees but in some categories I had an example only of few of them. When I was transcribing the interviews I have tried to reflect the speech of each respondents, therefore there were made no changes in those texts. The parts that were not important to mention were omitted and indicated as “[...]”. When interviewee was stopping in a pause, I have indicated it as “...” in my transcriptions. As some of the material taken from interviews is very personal and sensitive, I have chosen to make up fiction names for all of my respondents as well as their places of origin. To escape revealing the countries of origin, every time the respondents mentioned the name of their country I have changed the word for “my country” or [the country], in some cases I have just changed it into the part of the world the person is from, like Africa, Asia, South Asia etc. For some towns in Norway the respondents were talking about I have made up fiction names such as Blakstad and Haslum. When the person was naming his or her background I have changed it into [the nation] or [the ethnicity]. To keep their names anonymous, I have ascribed fiction names to each of them, they are as follows: Kelly, Nazma, Rutna, Kevin, Wit, and Quan.

Chapter Three

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the search of existing theories, which can be used for my research I have found out that there are many aspects that should be counted. The questions, which are of current interest, were about integration, family relation, cultural and social identity and language. After clarification of research problems the new ideas were coming out. For my research I have decided not to choose a particular theory and then prove it or deny, but rather I want to have a theory developed out of data analysis. The theories in this work will be used just for orientation in social phenomena, as it is made in “grounded theorizing”.²⁹ Therefore, the theories I am referring to in this work are just for orientation in the field but don’t act as a precursor to research. The central injunction of grounded theorizing is that there should be constant interplay between data and ideas throughout the whole research process. Ideas emerge from experience in the field and from the preliminary analytic reflections of researcher on the data.³⁰ The grounded theories for this research are theories about cultural identity construction, integration, relationship between language and cultural identity, stereotypes.

My research focuses on each individual and how his or her identity is constructed in multicultural contexts. Along with globalization came complexity and equivocation.³¹ Hanne Løngreen says that what is right for one person is wrong for another—not just generally speaking, but also in relation to the same social context.³² The way individual expresses herself of himself and is positioned in a concrete social context means that research redirects his focus from relation to individual and to how identity is constructed. This shift acknowledges that culture is not homogeneous or merely heterogeneous, but it is constructed. With focus on identity, and the

²⁹ Ibid., 158.

³⁰ Ibid., 159.

³¹ Hanne Løngreen, “Method and Intercultural Communication Studies” in *Bridges of Understanding. Perspectives on Intercultural Communication* (ed. Ø. Dahl et al.; Oslo: Unipub/Oslo Academic Press, 2006), 117.

³² Ibid., 117.

ascertainment that globalization as context produces individuals with several identities the concept of culture is challenged. In particular, the globalizing world has witnessed pluralization of national identities. Instead of the previous effective monopoly of state-nations, national identities have come increasingly to take substate, transstate and suprastate forms as well³³. Scholte also states, that many individuals have acquired a plurinational sense of self. Taking constructivism as a science-theoretical category for the research means to be focused on all the factors and types of identity when doing the analysis. That means, such phenomena, as age, gender, power, location and relations should be considered.

3.1 Immigration and Integration

As my work is about immigrants and their integration into the society, I find it relevant to present and relate to some theories within this field. International migration has four components—the in-migration of persons to a country other than that of their place of birth or citizenship; the return migration of nationals to their home country after residing abroad; the out-migration of nationals from their home country, and the out-migration of foreigners from a foreign country to which they had previously immigrated.³⁴

One of the important traits of recent migration research is that it is dealing with social structural changes, which represent theoretical challenge for social sciences. Migration research focuses its attention mostly on problems of social integration and inequality and on the resulting conflicts. It sees the root of the problems in the cultural and social resources of migrants.³⁵ Michael Bommes argues that the mainstream researches are more focused on the migrants themselves rather than the host society. He points out that maybe the research on immigration should be looked at from a different perspective, from the perspective of the society, educational institutions and employers of the country which accept migration.

³³ Jan A. Scholte, *Globalization: a Critical Introduction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 231.

³⁴ George Ritzer, *Globalization. A Basic Text* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 300.

³⁵ Michael Bommes, *Migration in modern society* (Amsterdam University Press: Amsterdam, 2012), 19.

3.1.1 System Theory

In my research I will be analyzing participation of young immigrants in function systems and organizations. The first organization young immigrants have to deal with are schools and education system. By analyzing their integration into such institutions as school can give a better understanding of the assimilation and integration process. For this I wanted to relate this research to system theory of Bommers. According to system theory, individuals are not part of society and therefore also not integrated into it. The conception of the relationship between individual and society from the perspective of social systems as a relation of inclusion empiricises the question of individuals' opportunities and impediments to participation in the function systems and their organizations and thus purges them of overly strong assumptions about requirements, whether of society or of individuals, and also of normative premises.³⁶ Bommers says, that the social system should work both directions, not only from by participation of one individual. Function systems and organizations should develop specific modes of inclusion, which regulate the participation of individuals in the benefits of the system and stipulate the conditions for exclusion.³⁷ Therefore, system theory claims that the relationship of the social systems and a migrant should be reciprocal and the extent of this relationship can lead further to inclusion or exclusion.

3.1.2 Assimilation

Individuals migrate for different reasons, some of them had to flee from their country and become refugees in host country, some migrate to get better job opportunities or better education, some join their family abroad³⁸. Bommers stresses that migrants dealing with immigration process have to deal with the society, rather with some groups. Groups do not provide accesses to labor, treatment, education, and decision of asylum applications. The same is true for society which cannot be addressed as such and which therefore cannot be the reference point for any effort to become similar or dissimilar. Process of assimilation emerges inside the organizations of the important functional realms of modern society; they emerge when individuals start to work or try to get access to goods, education, treatment and so on. Every person who intends to work or to gain access to these commodities must fulfill the expectations that

³⁶ Ibid., 25.

³⁷ Ibid., 25.

³⁸ Ibid., 112.

define the social preconditions for the success of these efforts.³⁹ In other words, in order to fit in the roles in the social structures and organization, the individual have to answer the expectations of organizations for this role. Assimilation, therefore, is the process of developing the preconditions in order to fulfill the roles in the society. Most immigrants, though, as any other individual are dependent on opportunities to get access to and to participate in organizations. In this way assimilation seems to be almost trivial, Bommes says. It belongs to the basic conditions of the mode of individual life in modern society; individuals no longer gain social belonging and social opportunities via birth or lineage. Each individual becomes responsible for herself or himself to find opportunities of access to and inclusion into the social system of society.⁴⁰ This means, that the precondition for social system role corresponding, individual needs to have willingness to participate and assimilate.

At the same time Bommes says that these social conditions are not culturally specific. Multiculturalism and assimilation do not contradict each other; modern organizations can cope quite well with pluralized cultural orientations. Which is not that easy to do for individuals—they may fail in their efforts to find access and inclusion if they fail to assimilate. The main point of reference for assimilation is differentiated social systems, such as: economy, law, politics, education, science, health, but not groups of majority societies.⁴¹

Speaking of social assimilation, Young Yun Kim says that assimilation is a state of the maximum possible convergence of strangers' internal and external conditions to those of the natives. Kim says that for most settlers, assimilation remains a lifetime goal rather than an obtainable goal and often requires the efforts of multiple generations. Individual settlers also vary in different level achieved of their adaptation within different periods of time, and at some points falling at different continuum ranging from minimal acculturation and deculturation to the maximum ones.⁴²

³⁹ Ibid., 112.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 113.

⁴¹ Ibid., 116.

⁴² Kim, "Adapting to a New Culture," 383.

3.1.3 Dynamic of Adaptation

Different stages in life of individual may change depending on how long she or he has lived in the new country. Attitudes change in every stage and it leads to faster process of integration or it may turn into long psychological resistance against the new environment and culture.

Describing the dynamic of adaptation, Kim points out 3 main stages, which are: stress, adaptation period and growth. She talks about stress as a “culture shock”, that it is the stage people experience as a manifestation of the generic process that that occurs whenever an individual’s internal capabilities are not adequate to the demands of the environment.⁴³ In other words, it’s unwillingness of an individual to understand and embrace new conditions of the environment.

Kim claims that the natural tendency of an open system is to resist change and to perpetuate the state of maladaptation and work against its own adaptive change. This tendency can manifest in different forms of psychological resistance. Some individuals, therefore, attempt to avoid the “pain” of disequilibrium by selective attention, denial, avoidance or withdrawal, as well as by cynic behavior and hostility towards the host environment. Others, however, may seek to regress to an earlier state of existence in the original culture, a state in which there is no feeling of isolation.⁴⁴ This stress of dislocation serves as a push force to make the individual overcome it and take him or her to the next stage: stage of adaptation, when individual takes active participation in development of new habits. These activities include aspects of environment that become incorporated into individual’s internal structure, gradually increasing its overall fitness to the external realities. The last stage is growth, which follows the stress-adaptation equilibrium. Stress and adaptation fade out when individual learns how to deal with the problems in the new environment, owing to the creative forces of self-reflexivity of human mentation.⁴⁵

3.1.4 Attachment Theory and Social Relations in Adolescence

Another theory that is relevant for my research is an attachment theory of Bowlby. As I will be comparing the relationships between individuals and family in the childhood with social relations when they became teenagers and adults in the host country.

⁴³ Kim, “Adapting to a New Culture,” 383.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 383.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 384.

According to attachment theory, a child forms a primary attachment to a caregiver (mother) and the attachment figure acts as a secure base for exploring the world. The attachment relationship acts as a prototype for all future social relationships so disrupting it can have severe consequences.⁴⁶

A child's secure attachment with his or her caregiver(s) in the early childhood is linked to his or her ability to trust people and self in the future. According to Bowlby emotional support in the early childhood is very important in a development of individual's psychological health.⁴⁷

My work is dealing not just with immigrants, but the immigrants who have moved in their adolescence. Therefore it is important to present some of behavioral peculiarities of this age.

James Dobson was studying behavior of children and teenagers; he claims that teenagers are in need of respect and dignity from people around them, especially from their peers.⁴⁸ He says that not being accepted by peers can play a major significance to those who already see themselves as fools and failures. Dobson is also talking about the school years, especially junior high school and the challenges teenagers can experience there. The junior high years are the most critical to the development of a child's mental health, he says. Is it usually during this period of self-doubt that the personality is often assaulted and damaged beyond repair. Junior high school students are typically brutal to one another, attacking and slashing a weak victim.⁴⁹ It is important to look at the integration process of a teenager immigrant from all possible perspectives: alienation because of cultural differences, alienation because of self-doubt of the individual, or alienation as a result of insecure attachment between the child and his/her caregiver in the early childhood years.

3.2 Stereotypes

In my work some part will be dedicated to the stereotypes and racism. As my respondents were mentioning the cases of racism in their daily life when they have

⁴⁶ S.A. McLeod, "Attachment Theory;" available at www.simplypsychology.org/attachment.html; site accessed 11 April 2016.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ James Dobson, *The strong-willed child: birth through adolescence* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1978), 191.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 190.

moved to Norway. It is of special interest to me how have those stereotypes affected the respondents and if it in any way have influenced their identity formation.

In intercultural communication stereotyping is a very common phenomena. As my work is about immigrants and communication within different cultures, this phenomenon took place in some situations. But what is a stereotype? How does it evolve? Ruth Illman says that stereotypes are the product of our mind that helps us to categorize the world and perceive it in a more simple way⁵⁰. Illman claims that aided by stereotypes we sort people into groups according to some characteristics these group members are perceived to share and which distinguish them from others. To refer to such group membership, we ascribe them certain qualities and characteristics.

Such categorization is poor in details, once the whole group put in the same mould, we no longer may see the different traits of separate persons of the same group. Sometimes our own experience is easier to change than the stereotype guiding our view. Stereotypes also contain a clear power dimension: the “auto-stereotypes” we use to define your own self-images are often based on the assumption that our culture is superior in comparison with others.⁵¹ But then it becomes hard to define the “own” culture when the person becomes an immigrant, especially in the early stages of life, as there is a transfer from one culture into another. The stereotyped thinking arouses when the person just comes into the new place and meets the new people and their culture at first. The same comes to the receiving country, where the immigrant has come. The people might have some misconceptions and stereotypes about the other cultures.

Cristoffanini argues that stereotypes may constitute inadequate way of representing others. First, because they isolate certain aspects, behaviors and inclinations, which are removed from their historical and cultural context and attributed to all the individuals in a social group. Second, they ignore or put a slant on certain central aspects of the identity of victims of stereotyping, or on their culture or social life.⁵²

⁵⁰ Ruth Illman, “Stereotypes: the symbolic image of the other” in *Bridges of Understanding. Perspectives on Intercultural Communication* (ed. Ø. Dahl et al.; Oslo: Unipub/Oslo Academic Press, 2006), 102.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁵² Pablo R. Cristoffanini, “The Representation of ‘the Others’ as Strategies of Symbolic Construction” in *Bridges of Understanding. Perspectives on Intercultural Communication* (ed. Ø. Dahl et al.; Unipub/Oslo Academic Press: Oslo, 2006), 86.

Stereotypes as knowledge in human brain function as self-fulfilling prophecies creating the very objects they assume to exist⁵³. Presenting facts therefore seldom changes our stereotyped views as our perception of what should count as facts is guided by attitudes and interpretations. The central point of the stereotypes, however, is to emphasize differences and boundaries⁵⁴.

New research in social psychology and rhetoric has seriously questioned the cognitive comprehension of the thought process and representation and is sowing serious doubts about the inevitability of prejudice and stereotypes in the process⁵⁵. It is necessary to see the attitudes, beliefs, prejudices, and stereotypes in the broadest context as tied to ideologies; symbolic constructions permit us to learn, evaluate, or communicate a reality⁵⁶.

3.2.1 Stereotyping as Cognitive Strategy

Cognitive perspectives are influential when we talk about research on stereotypes. By using generalizing stereotypes, it is argued, we make the overwhelmingly complex world around us easier to manage.⁵⁷ In other words, people tend to make stereotypes because it saves them time and effort to deal with every person individually; it makes our world easier and saves us from loads of different information that we might not need.

The context-bound interpretative perspective emphasizes the need to reassess the question of why we need stereotypes. Greater attention should be given to questions of meaning creation and identity construction. Stereotypes offer a way to reach socially and ideologically defined goals as well as they contribute to the maintenance of hierarchies and power relations.⁵⁸

In the interpretive branch, stereotypes are seen as more than cognitive models: they are seen as meaning creating models closely attached to social contexts, communication, individual interpretations, emotions and values. Even though context and cognitive functions guide our perception, we are still active, conscious being

⁵³ Illman, "Stereotypes", 103.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 103.

⁵⁵ Cristoffanini, "The Representation of 'the Others' ", 81.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 81.

⁵⁷ Illman, "Stereotypes", 103.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 106.

involved in creating our own reality.⁵⁹ Therefore, the stereotypes can tell a lot about ones own perception of people and culture, how such stereotypes have been constructed and what relationship it has with the past experience.

As Ruth Illman says, stereotypes are mental strategies adopted as a way of simplifying and also coming to terms with the multi-faceted world around us. Stereotypes are, furthermore, evaluative frameworks that create meaning. Knowledge is seen as inseparable from attitudes; the facts we embrace are formed by the attitudes and emotions we bring with us into communication event.⁶⁰ We can say, that stereotypes help us to orient in the world and understand it better; it guides us through life and helps us to perceive the reality. It also helps us to know and learn the boundaries between different cultures and different groups of people.

Understanding of stereotypes, integrating both cognitive and interpretative, as well as both social and personal dimensions, can be explained by the concept of symbol. Taking a symbol concept to describe the nature of stereotypes gives us a better understanding meaning creating aspect of it. A symbol is a complex, dynamic unity of emotional qualities, interpretations, experiences, hopes and fears that can take several forms.⁶¹ Symbols in our everyday life may have an extended meaning, which is understood differently for each individual; the symbols can also be a source of emotions and feelings.

As Ruth Illman argues, that within communication perspective, individual become involved with symbols in a space located between “external world and internal reality”.⁶² From this we can understand that the internal and external side of the symbol can be found at the same time—where the external is the common shared dimension and the internal one is a personal understanding and vision of the symbol. The external symbol, though, is filled with meaning, which can be shared by culture and embraced through learning or through the process of socialization.⁶³

Not all of the symbols are product of society and learning; the meaning can also be influenced by inner personal factors. From the inner reality perspective, symbols from the outside are taken in and treated in their own personal ways: new impressions are

⁵⁹ Ibid., 106.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 107.

⁶¹ Ibid., 107.

⁶² Ibid., 108.

⁶³ Ibid., 108.

joined to the previously modeled memories and experiences—the personal reflective process plays its role in creating new meanings.⁶⁴

Trying to understand stereotypes as the symbols of everyday life, gives us a clearer understanding of how stereotypes are constructed. Stereotypes are not stable, but dynamic, and can change over the time, can add new meanings to already existing ones. The first understanding of symbols individual receives from social context and from education as well as personal interpretation; later the symbols reconstruct the meanings due to new experiences.

3.3 Identity

As a result of assimilation and different life experiences, identity of individuals is changing over time—it is continuously constructed. My work will represent the self-identity of individuals and formation of their identity.

Our sense of self and of human identity is bound up with how the physical body is understood. This is one of the solid aspects of identity, and central to our understanding of the self because the body encompasses us, and provides our individual boundaries. We are who we are because of the world and the context we live in, which, in its order, insinuates itself into our being. This “being” includes the body, its characteristics, and of seeing and recognizing the world; and the way we look, how we feel, and what we do with our bodies proves who we are.⁶⁵

3.3.1 Individual Cultural Identity

Lehtonen writes, that individual identity is always built and shaped in relation to the social belongings of the individual⁶⁶. For example his or her participation in a given ethnic, religious or national community predetermines to a great extent his or her self-awareness. In this respect individual and collective identities strongly mingle and interfere with each other because the individual sense of self is always socially and culturally embedded. It cannot be detached from the collective identity that also gives the idea of the social and the cultural.⁶⁷ Therefore, we can see that individual identity is based not only on who the individual is but it is strongly depended on the belonging

⁶⁴ Ibid., 108.

⁶⁵ Tony Schirato, Jen Webb, *Understanding Globalization* (London: Sage, 2003), 140.

⁶⁶ Lehtonen, 2005, 12.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 12.

of different social groups. Individual identity is in a close relationship with the social identity and gets influenced by the society the individual lives in.

Most often individuals experience some feeling of attachment, love or satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the object of identification. This also means that people tend to identify themselves not with an abstract social category but rather with some certain beliefs, symbols, values shared within the social group.⁶⁸ These beliefs, symbols and shared values are culture; therefore individual identity is closely intertwined with the cultural identity of the whole social group.

Nowadays most individuals belong to a number of cultural and social communities in such a way, that their cultural identity represents a symbiosis of several cultural allegiances. Sometimes, though, those allegiances can be even opposing and rival identities relating to quite different communities.⁶⁹

Scholte talks about such blend of identities as hybridization. He argues that a hybrid self might encompass several nationalities, or might be of mixed race, or might have a multifaceted sexuality, or might combine different class contexts. Hybrid identity can give strong emphasis to several types of being and belonging, with the result that, for instance, national loyalties, religious bounds, and gender solidarities could compete and conflict.⁷⁰

Every individual has a need for a strong cultural identity. This correlates high self-esteem. That is why quite often individuals look for arguments to sustain their cultural identity. This means that the identity is not a stable and unfinished product, instead, it transforms, evolves and going through crisis. It is exactly in this process of identity development that individuals question, conform or reject their image of community and themselves.⁷¹

3.3.2 Identity Crisis

Lehtonen points out 3 stages of cultural identity development:

- unexamined identity
- cultural identity search
- identity achievement

⁶⁸ Ibid., 15.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 52.

⁷⁰ Scholte, 2005, 252.

⁷¹ Lehtonen, 2005, 18.

At the first stage individuals live unconsciously and don't question their cultural identity, they do not feel any need to explore it. In the second stage, culture identity search, individuals start to show interest in their cultural community and traditions; at this stage they feel the need to know more about it. In the last stage, individuals become highly aware of their culture and they acquire much knowledge about it. They also find comfort and stability in their identification of themselves with their cultural community. Some individuals may smoothly go through all these three stages, while some never go to the second stage and never question themselves about their cultural identity. In some cases going from one stage to another may cause serious personality disturbances, and the individuals that fail to find their cultural self-attitude end up with identity crisis.⁷² So every individual has his own way of finding his own identity and in the case of failing doing so, the person is in stuck in crisis of identity, which means some mental disturbances of the individual.

In the case of the individual being related to multiple identities, there are two main ways of overcoming identity crisis. The one way is when individual gives all his or her allegiances equal importance; the individual finds peace in its harmonious equilibrium. In this case none of the cultural allegiances seen as primary and basic. These allegiances are mixed, yet not assimilated, in a specific and unique compound. The second possibility to overcome crisis of identity, is to define one of the individual's cultural allegiances as primary and more important. In this case all other affiliations become secondary.⁷³

Therefore, once the individual questions his or her identity at some point of life, he or she goes through the stages to find out his allegiances and cultural identity. In the case when individual is stuck between the stages and comes to identity crisis, there are two possible ways of overcoming it: one is to accept of his or her cultural allegiances as equal to each other and find a peace in its mixed coexisting; the second is to take one of his or her cultural allegiances as the primary one, the rest of the allegiances in this case become secondary and of less importance.

⁷² Ibid., 53.

⁷³ Ibid., 55.

3.4 Language in Educational Context

The big part of children's life is spent in school. Therefore it is important to see and analyze how socialization constructs at schools. Choosing a school for a child of immigrant family can be challenging both for the child and his or her family. Pollock says that choosing a national school may be one of the best educational options for the child, enabling him or her to become immersed in the culture easier, learn the language faster and become bicultural⁷⁴. However, Pollock argues, that the challenge is the child should speak enough of the local language before entering such school, in order to function comfortably. If the kid is put to the classroom before any prior language skills acquiring, two weeks of absolutely no communication may feel as an eternity to a child. Besides that, another thing to consider is the degree of animosity to the child's nationality in the host culture. If negative perceptions exist, the child might be designated as an outsider and find the school situation intolerable.⁷⁵

Language is a part of the complex and dynamic process of social membership, culture, and identity; language learning is not only a matter of individual capability, but it is also an opportunity to interact at the micro-social level and have power relations and linguistic norms at micro-social level.⁷⁶ Therefore, for some minority groups, language is a big part of their identity and depending on their affiliation to culture, the corresponding language is chosen as the first and primary.

Philip Riley says that every language has its culture-specific forms of language, which are called communicative practices; they are the ways in which members of a community exploit their linguistic resources.⁷⁷ Speaking and communicating in cultural and group-specific ways proclaims membership of that culture and group.⁷⁸ In this way, only learning and being able to use communicative practices of a given social groups identifies a person as part of this group.

When talking about language phenomenon in school settings, when students may use two languages while talking, Anne Holmen says, that it can be a display of

⁷⁴ David C. Pollock, *Third culture kids: the Experience of Growing up Among Worlds* (London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2001), 226.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 226.

⁷⁶ Anne Holmen "Finding a Voice in a Second Language—a Matter of Language Learning or Intercultural Communication?" in *Bridges of Understanding. Perspectives on Intercultural Communication* (ed. Ø. Dahl et al.; Oslo: Unipub/Oslo Academic Press, 2006), 197.

⁷⁷ Philip Riley, *Language, Culture and Identity: an Ethnolinguistic Perspective* (London: Continuum, 2007), 93.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 93.

their double identity⁷⁹. She claims that such phenomenon is common among people in multilingual metropolitan areas in many different countries.

From this we can see that the language sometimes can be a key to integrate the culture, moreover, growing in a multicultural environment can reflect in its best way on the child's personality and development. As Theo J. Weele says:

The multi-language ability development sets a pattern for the rest of child's life. Early childhood exposure to various languages effects also later language abilities.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Holmen, "Finding a Voice in a Second Language—a Matter of Language Learning or Intercultural Communication?" 207.

⁸⁰ Theo J. v. d. Weele, "Life As a TCK – How different Is It?", in *Third Culture Kid in Focus: Nordic Conference, Danvik 26.-28. aug., 1994* (IBAN: Oslo, 1994), 1-16, 4.

Chapter Four

ANALYSIS

In this chapter I will present the material and give my comments with analysis along in the text. I have formed some categories to analyze in order to answer my research questions, which are as follows:

- How did the events from the early childhood influence on perception of life of the respondents?
- How did the events that happened during the relocation influence on the respondents' identity formation?
- Do the racism cases reflect on the identity formation? How do respondents identify their own belonging to community?

4.1 Family Members Relations in Childhood

In this part I will discuss the early memories of my respondents and their relations with other family members. I have picked up the parts of the interviews, where respondents were talking about their family when they were children. The category has been chosen to show the possible connection with the events in adult and teenage life with the family relations. This category is made to support Paul Thompson's theory of childhood family relations linkage with adult's present environment.⁸¹ Another reason why I think it is important to present the information about the childhood of respondents is that the family relations find a reflection in a child's character and social relations. According to Bowlby and his attachment theory, a child forms a primary attachment to a caregiver (mother) and the attachment figure acts as a secure base for exploring the world. The attachment relationship acts as a prototype for all future social relationships so disrupting it can have severe consequences.⁸²

All of the 6 informants were talking about their family relations. Some of them had very big families, where everyone was treated equally; some of them didn't have contacts with their parents when they were little children.

⁸¹ Thompson, 1978, 9.

⁸² McLeod, "Attachment Theory."

When Kelly was talking about her family during interview, she was saying that her family was very big:

I grew up with many relatives, siblings in the house... because ... I mean... my father and my mother could afford to have so many persons in the house and also because my mother's big sister was abroad in Europe and she could send money to... you know...to feed the kids. So we were just huge family, we were not this... how can I say it... they have names for different kind of families.. we were just huge African family. [...] I had a lot of sisters and brothers. I was taught to call everybody for sister or a brother something, because according to my parents we came from the same, we had the same blood and going through our veins so it was the same thing...⁸³

This means that the child was exposed to extended family close relationships from the early childhood. Since the early ages Kelly was taught to treat cousins the same as blood sisters. We can also see that it has influenced her as a part of big family and has developed good social skills. From Kelly's words we can also see that it was something normal that one members of the family were responsible for the others while their parents were away and lived in another country. This makes an impression of a big community that helps each other and receives new members continuously to include in their houses.

One of the other important aspects was a role model Kelly has chosen while being a kid. Talking about her father she said:

Well, when I was at that stage... all I was thinking about was being a teacher, like my parents. I have always been like that... "I will be teacher, just like dad!", and my dad is my huge role model... I saw... I really looked up to him when I was growing, he was always, I don't know where he has been to this day today. But it seems like he had lived a life full of adventures, like he was always... he could speak a lot of languages from our area in Africa. He has never explained why, how. [...] I think he wanted me to be a doctor or something, because that's all every parent dream. So, he wanted me to be something huge, but I was like "No, I wanna be just like you...a teacher"...⁸⁴

⁸³ Pers.com. Kelly, 07.10.2015

⁸⁴ Ibid.

From this part we can see that the respondent had tight and good relationships with her parents. While growing up she saw them as her role models, especially her father. We can see how fascinated Kelly was by her father and wanted to be like him when she grows up. We can see how crucial it is for a child to build up good healthy relationship with parents to be a secure and happy adult in the future.

The importance of having parents when the child is growing we can see from the interview with Nazma, who says that it was hard for her having her father away from home for most of the time:

So there was that period when my mom travelled back to Norway, as my father was back and forth. Actually he was living apart for the most of the time, cause he was living in North of my country and working with a project and then suddenly he travelled to Norway. So we used not to have him at home and I remember sometimes I had a fight with my grandma and then I would go to my auntie and she used to say that, oh, your dad is here and I used to come running to see and find out that he wasn't there. And it was really hurtful. I was missing him, so, every time he was coming it was like a God, I was so happy and wanted to spend more time with him. And he was the one who taught me about religion and taught me to pray.⁸⁵

At this point we can see that again, the father became as a role model for a child, as she wanted to learn the religion from him. Even though grandmother and her aunt were taking care of her, she wanted to spend more time with her mother and father. Then Nazma is saying that it wasn't something common in her family to talk about her worries and how she feels about her parents being away:

We never spoke about the feelings, that I miss my mom or my dad or the family... [...] But my grandmother was very loving and caring, she was like a mom, She would never raise a voice, she was always kind and nice. But still it's not like your parents... My mom was away for a year, but it seemed like years, like many many years.⁸⁶

Here Nazma points out that no matter how good the relatives can be and take care of the child, it is still very important to have parents by one's side.

My other respondent's story, whose name is Rutna, was more complicated, when talking about family relations. The relationship between her father and mother

⁸⁵ Pers.com. Nazma, 11.10.2015

⁸⁶ Ibid.

were not good from the very beginning, so the child was growing up knowing who is her father but the family had to separate:

My father was gambling a lot and didn't come home when he was supposed to come home. So my mom said that she decide to, she didn't plan to have my little brother but it was an accident. [...] They were separating when my little brother was born. She was waiting for him to change but he didn't.⁸⁷

After the child had experienced her parents' separation, she had to adapt to a new environment and place, to which her father and mother took to:

My father took me to my auntie in the North. I was around 4 years, I started preschool there. I went there with my cousin, he is 3 months older then me. My auntie was breastfeeding me, because my mother didn't have enough milk. It was the first year of my life when my mother stayed close with her family.[...]So my mother moved there because I had to get milk and then we moved back to East.⁸⁸

From the very early age the child has experiences continuous moves and changing of environment. Growing up with her aunt who has provided her with food might not be enough for the happy well-being of the child. The people who were taking care of her were changing from time to time. When asking about the relationship between Rutna and her mother she said:

She lived by herself, with her friends, she didn't take care of me and my brother. And my father had 100% of custody. So she didn't have any responsibility, she just took me to my auntie place. And later just brought my brother. So I lived with my auntie and my brother lived 20 min away from me, he lived with grandparents, from my mother's side. So we were very split family. I never new much about my father's family.⁸⁹

For a child of a young age is hard to have an image of a family when the family is so split and it becomes even harder to understand the family roles within the family, as was in the case of Rutna. When Rutna grew a little older she didn't understand what is the real role of mother in family, as she grew up with her aunt and saw her mother only from time to time:

⁸⁷ Pers.com. Rutna, 23.10.2015

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

I don't know my mother, I just saw her sometimes when she visited us, but she was visiting like 1 time in a year. I just remember she smelled good and she didn't look like other moms in that area, because other moms looked like really old and my mother took care of herself, she had curly hair, she put an oil in it and she was wearing earrings, I never see a woman dress like her in our town and then she had like Lewis jeans and t-shirt really tight. And I was 13 at that time and she showed me pictures of her life in that city where she was living with me and my brother before, her life is like so much fun, she said... "I am working and I am driving scooter with my friends when I have free time...and sort of nice"...But inside me...How can this woman be my mother? Why would you have spend time with your friends but you don't have time to take care of your children...? But, I don't know, whom I should talk to... A lot of questions in my head but I didn't know who I can talk to...because I don't understand this woman... Who is this woman?⁹⁰

Rutna had mixed feelings every time she met her mother. At the age of 13 she was already capable of comparing other mothers with her own mother. As for a young teenager it is quite hard to understand why other parents behave differently and why one's own mother cannot take care of her children and have a very different looks from other mothers.

When talking about her father, it seemed like Rutna had much more positive memories about him, then about her mother:

I have more positive memories about my father. He was always come when there were festivals and holidays [...] I remember he drives big motorcycle, not moped, but big, big motorcycle, driving for 6 hours to meet us. And those motorcycle cost a lot... And I don't understand that lifestyle... But when is holiday like a month or almost 2 month, he used to come and take me with my little brother to the capital and we could see the city. But we didn't went out a lot, we were staying a lot inside and playing video games but still that connection, like to be with a father, oh, it's like heaven, it's like most like...precious thing we were looking forward every summer, when he can come and pick us. It was almost like a Disneyland, like a fun park. He used to take us to water park, it was so much fun!⁹¹

Rutna's relationship with father was closer then with mother, as she spend more time with him; while her mother just came to visit her once a year, her father used to

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

take her and her brother for holidays and spend time with them. She also says about the connection and the feeling of having a father, which shows that she didn't have that connection to her mother as to a parent.

When Rutna was talking about her brother, it made an impression that she took a role of mother and was trying to be a best sister for him. She has also felt the responsibility to protect him:

[...] At that time I felt like I was his mother, because our mother wasn't living with us... [...] And my brother used to say that they always bully him. And I was there and I was fighting with them, I remember a lot of times that I was winning, so happy. I hit them so hard, because they were bullying me and my brother because we didn't have parents to defend us. And their parents used to say that we are problem children, that we have attitude... but I didn't care. But I don't show them, I used to go to my auntie and cry, but I feel I am a big sister and I had to protect my brother.⁹²

As for a child it was hard for Rutna to grow without her parents, seeing like others spend time with their mothers and that she couldn't relate it to herself and her little brother. So she was trying very hard to become like a mother to her little brother, as a try to fill the emptiness for her brother that she has experienced:

I remember when I had some money that I was saving and it was my little brother's birthday, his birthday is the same day with mother's day in my country, so I think it's hurtful for him. And this day is so big in my country, because the queen has a birthday on that day and everyone is making jasmine flower from paper for their mother. But for us it was my brother's birthday, we don't have a mother. [...] I asked my auntie where I can order like European cake. [...] I paid that but I got so disappointed because they write my brother's name wrong... And I want him to know that I try so hard to make him happy because we don't have our parents there... And he was like, oh, when I came to my grandparent's place, he said "My name is written wrong... how could you..." I tried my best, you know... I tried every year, almost every year...⁹³

Because of the responsibility for her little brother and all the tries to substitute a mother for him, from the early ages Rutna didn't seem to have a childhood like other children had. She tried it so much that it seems that if a small thing went wrong, or

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

she couldn't make her brother happy, it hurt her. From these words we can see that child grew up in insecurity.

Some of my respondents grew up without a father, without ever knowing or seeing him, like Kevin:

In that time I lived with my mother only. But I had 3 brothers and 2 sisters, but we were not living together, we met on vacations. We lived near to our uncle and he had children and I was best friend with one of his kids. So I was most of the time in their house, because my mother's aunt who is like a grandmother for all of us, she was very nice to us so we liked to be there and stuff like that. No father. Father...yeah, relation with the father was unknown in that time.⁹⁴

We can see from the interview that Kevin grew up only with his mother, but it was enough for him to build a healthy relationship with her and feel secure as a child. As according to Bowlby's attachment theory, a child forms only one primary attachment and that figure acts as a secure base for exploring the world.⁹⁵ He also mentions good relationship with other members of the family. He talks about his father as someone, who was unknown to him; as he has never saw him or knew anything about him, he didn't play any role in Kevin's upbringing.

Then Kevin explains how difficult life became to him when at the age of 5 his mother had to move to Norway. The life has changed for him, making a small boy to adapt to new life with another family members:

Then my mother got married with a Norwegian guy when I was 5, she moved in Norway, and it was a little bit difficult for her to take children. I was sent to my aunt [...] my aunt is very strict. And life was a little bit difficult. I remember I was often sick. Still full of energy, playing everywhere but often sick. And I learned a lot of things when I moved actually, because I think I was kind of spoiled when I lived with my mother, I had a lot of freedom. Even though my mother wasn't rich, I could see we were poor, but I was free, I got what I needed... and when I moved to my aunt then I understood that it's not that simple. It was time that I could feel that I was hungry. It was new experience, actually. Because with my mom I could just say I am hungry and I got what I needed, but now it was complicated. [...] Many children at home, she had children too. And we had to work for living.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Pers.com. Kevin, 22.10.2015

⁹⁵ McLeod, "Attachment Theory."

⁹⁶ Ibid.

As Kevin had already built a family relationship with his mother before he was 5, it was difficult for him to be left without her. The conditions he lived in have also changed, he could not feel that care he got from his mother and he understood that the life without his mother is not that simple. At the early age he had this change and experience of understanding the life with his mother's care and how the life can change by living with his aunt with many other children.

In Wit's story about his childhood, he mentions that he had stable relationship with both parents but he still remembers that his parents didn't have peace between each other⁹⁷. Before the age of 4 the child already has built secure relationship with parents. But then his parents had to separate:

I remember my mom and dad arguing, from the day we were moving. And actually I was living with my mom and dad till the age of 3 or 4. And then when I was 5 my mom moved out in the other side of the city. And I was living with her until I was 10 and my dad was coming to visit me often. But then I had to move again. To my grandmother first and my father was coming to visit me. Actually he was kidnapping me but I wanted actually to go with him. He was coming very early in the morning around 4 am and was asking if I wanna go with him and of course I wanna go with my father. But at that time my mom was in Norway already. At that time I was around 12.⁹⁸

Although Wit's mother and father were separated, he had a good relationship with both of them. When his mother moved to Norway he had a warm family feeling to his father and that is why he wanted to see him often and spend time with him. The father also seemed to be interested in taking care of the child and spending time with him, and that is very important for the child.

Wit grew up in a bicultural family, as his parents were of different cultural background from Asia, so from the early childhood he was acquainted with different traditions and languages that comes from his families:

I lived with my dad for 2 years. I lived with the family from my father's side. It was actually [the minority]⁹⁹ family. We slept without

⁹⁷ Pers.com. Wit, 23.10.2015

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Wit was born in one Asian country, but his father was a representative of another cultural minority in that country.

mattress, we just had some blanket and that's it. We were not really close with my mom. And then one day she said she moves to Norway. I was actually close with my aunt, she was like my mother. Sometimes, when I was with my father's side family. When I am with my mothers side family I feel like part of their culture, when I visit my fathers side, I feel like I am a little bit Chinese, you know. Because when I am in my fathers side family, they talk to me like to Chinese. They still have that influence from my grandfather and grandmother. They have Chinese name for me, Chinese nickname for me. They actually converted my last name from Chinese into the local language for the papers.¹⁰⁰

My 6th respondent, Quan had a lot of memories about his childhood and family. Most of the years of his childhood he spent with his grandmother, aunt and uncle. His mother moved away when he was 3, so he might not remember much about her from his childhood, his grandmother was taking care of him mostly:

My mom moved away from we when I was 3, she moved to Norway when I was 5. When I was 3 she moved to South and was working there for 2 years. Then moved to Norway when I was 5 and married with my stepfather. [...] I stayed with my grandmother and my uncle and sometimes my aunt. But mostly I lived with my grandmother. When I was 9 or 10 I moved to my uncle and aunt. I moved there because I felt more free, they lived in the town and I could go play games and hang out with friends. While my grandmother lived out from the town, in a village.¹⁰¹

Although Quan found the life with his grandmother comfortable and happy, he was comparing himself with the children from other families who had both parents and it made the child confused. As was the case for Rutna, he did not understand the role of a mother and a father in a family:

Actually I don't remember much. But of course I was like where is my mother, where is my father? Everyone has mother and father. But I used to live with my grandmother. It was kind of awkward for me, but I understand that my mother had to go somewhere [...] I never saw my father. I've heard a story from my grandmother. That after ... like my mother and father was girlfriend and boyfriend, then my mother got pregnant, my father moved somewhere else. He was really

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Pers.com. Quan, 30.10.2015

a bad man. I don't really care about him. My aunt is like second mother to me. She really cared about me like her own son. They had only one daughter and they took care of me. We ate good food every day. They live a good life my uncle and aunt. They don't have a boy in their house so I was like their son. Always nice to me, always take care of me. Actually all of my cousins are like my brothers and sisters at that time...¹⁰²

Quan is saying that his aunt and uncle were taking care of him and he mentioned that they had a good food every day, he also says that he preferred to live with them rather than with his grandmother because he enjoyed the environment there. But he has good memories about his grandmother and his aunt with uncle, who were substituting parents for him while his mother was away in Norway.

The childhood of all my respondents have developed in different ways, but all of them have one trait—all of the children were separated from their parents at some time. The only exception was Kelly, who lived with all of her family and who had close relations with all the members of her family. It is quite important to know if the respondents had a secure attachment with their caregiver(s) in the early childhood, as it is linked to their ability to trust people and self in the future. According to Bowlby emotional support in the early childhood is a key moment in a development of individual's psychological health.¹⁰³ Quan and Rutna had a little more challenges than other respondents in their childhood, as they grew up without their parents from the very early age and couldn't identify for themselves a classic family model. Kevin seemed to be in a similar situation, but his mother was with him till the age of 5 and in the interview it is clearly seen that he was already in conscious age, because the difference of the life with his mother and aunt was quite notable for him.

4.2 Moving as a Child

Another common characteristic that is shared by all of my respondents is moving from one region or city to another in their childhood, which might have been reflected in their identity formation. To analyze this, I have picked up a theory of Illman about symbols. Stereotypes and our vision of "Other" is based on our knowledge and experienced, which can be referred as symbols. A symbol is a complex, dynamic unity of emotional qualities, interpretations, experiences, hopes and fears that can take

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ McLeod, "Attachment Theory."

several forms.¹⁰⁴ Symbols in our everyday life may have an extended meaning, which is understood differently for each individual. Therefore, the more symbols we perceive, the fuller image of “Other” we have. The interviews show us that the respondents had multiple experiences of “Otherness” by changing their places of living. This in turn could expand their vision of reality and make them less prejudice to the “Other”.

From the interviews of my respondents I have picked up carefully the passages when they were talking about their relocations before they eventually moved to Norway.

When Kelly was talking about the new place she moved to with her family when she was 10, she talks about it with positive emotions and as about something new and exciting:

So when we moved there... things kind of changed... I came to a new environment, bigger, and everything was big, so I started at a private catholic school, [...] I started there and we moved to a neighborhood that was also like... how can I say it... In construction... like almost all the neighbors were building the houses so everything was eh... been constructed kind of, so it was a new... new area that people were moving to for realize their dreams of whatever, they were building their own houses. So but, so life in the capital was like a new life.¹⁰⁵

From the interview we can see that the first experience of Kelly was full of excitement and for her relocation meant a new better beginning of her life, the new place was associated with new dreams and better life for her family and everyone in the neighborhood.

A new stage of my life where I was discovering how it is to live in big city and get to know diversities because when I was growing up in South it was more like limit. [...] So it was more like, OK, now I can do what I want, I can feel free. [...] I think that's when I start to get interested in diversity... because I was like “oh,ok, I really like this person is like doing what he wants” and something like that. And I remember when I moved to the capital there were a lot of prejudice about diversities, people from different places and you could here like... “oh, people from North they are doing...”, they... they...

¹⁰⁴ Illman, “Stereotypes”, 107.

¹⁰⁵ Pers.com. Kelly, 07.10.2015

really, how can I say... they were calling it “sanguinaire”, it’s a French word, it’s more like they like blood, like literally , like they could kill for anything. [...] so, there were prejudices all over city and... I started to think what... why would someone talk like that, they don’t even know that persons, so I started to challenge myself like going around and getting friends from different tribes, different ethnic groups...¹⁰⁶

Kelly is talking a lot about the experiences she had during her relocation, especially about the prejudices of people and how she tried to understand diversities herself. Despite all the prejudices people had and talked about, she wanted to find out her own way. This place was new for her and she was curious to discover this place and the people who lived in there. It shows that Kelly from the early age was open to diversities and different cultures, and had a positive attitude to learning something new from it.

When Nazma is talking about her experience after moving, she was mentioning diverse religions the most:

We started going there, and when my parents bought a house we had to move... [...] So I went to Catholic school, both girls and boys were going there. While my sister was going to a Catholic school, where only girls were there and the teachers there were all nuns. Because there are so many religions in my country, the biggest is Buddhism, and then we have Catholicism, Hinduism and Muslims.[...]Where I went it was Catholics and Hindus, I guess. But then the thing I remember that they included everyone, there were other Muslims as well. But I never found them excluding me because I was a Muslim...¹⁰⁷

From this passage we can see that the experience of moving didn’t bring any difference within the society and location, but the respondent points out that the main differences she has experienced in her new school. The accent was made on religion and how she experienced the diversity of religions in Catholic school. She mentions that she didn’t feel excluded because of her religion and that it taught her to be tolerant to others, as well as being accepted by different members of society with different background.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Pers.com. Nazma, 11.10.2015

Rutna was moving from place to place from a very early age. In her interview she was mentioning many relatives and the events that were happening with her more than the environment she was living in:

My father took me to my auntie in the North. I was around 4 years, I started preschool there. I went there with my cousin, he is 3 months older than me. [...] So my mother moved there because I had to get milk and then we moved back to East... I started 4th grade and my little brother moved. My mother said, I need to come. I need to come from East coast, because she was working there, and has to go again to the place I was born because my little brother is there and my father moved him from East coast to the North, to his little sister who don't have a child.¹⁰⁸

As these events happened in a very young age, she didn't pay much attention on the society around her except of her family members. She got used to her aunt family very early and throughout her childhood she had to travel from one part of her country to another for many times.

Kevin was talking about a change in his life, when he had to move together with his aunt's family to the capital of the country. In the interview he was saying that the new conveniences made his life more comfortable after relocation:

We lived at that place for 6 years then my family moved to capital in 1999 and I was there until 2002. Life changed... Life was easier, we didn't have to walk that much, now we had a water at home. [...]

-Did you feel it was harder for you when you moved?

-I've lost the connections but it wasn't difficult to find new friends. [...] We went to play football on the streets, went to school, grew up together. So it was transition from the city in South. Capital wasn't a big deal, it was more convenient. But also we didn't have a chance to say "Good bye" to that place, because we went in vacation and then the parents just said ok, we got a job here so we are going to stay...¹⁰⁹

Kevin talks said that the hardest thing for him was that he didn't have a chance for farewell with his friends from the previous town, he moved with his family unexpectedly. But then he says it was easy for him to find new friend even at the new place. So relocation brought him new experiences of life in capital and new friend, although it was hard to lose the contacts with all of his old friends.

¹⁰⁸ Pers.com. Rutna, 23.10.2015

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

As it was mentioned already before, Quan was living with his grandmother and aunt, changing a house he lived in. But before he travelled to Norway he had to move into another city and stay with his other relatives before his long trip. He talks about his experience from family relations point of view:

After I finished the school, on my way home I met my aunt, she came to pick me up from school and she told me, oh, Hong, you are going to Norway! I was really surprised; I was like “What?” I wasn’t expecting that coming! So I was packing for 1-2 days and then the day after I had to say bye to my family in my country and going to the South, the biggest city of my country, to live with my uncle there for one month before I go to Norway because of some paper and stuff. So I lived with my uncle there for 1 month. He was mostly all the time at job, because he worked as some kind of military. [...] I lived with his wife, my aunt. She was always yelling at me and her children, when I lived in there. Always yelling. It was kinda awkward to live with her, always trying to pick up a fight... crazy woman.¹¹⁰

Wit talk about his relocation times as about the times he was concentrated about his studies most. From the previous passage from the interview with Wit we could see that he enjoyed spending time with his father and felt quite comfortable and happy with him. Here, he mentions that first he lives with his grandmother and aunt and then moved to his father’s place:

So while I was living with my grandmother and my aunt, my father used to come and take me, while my mom was already in Norway and then I moved with my father to his family and stayed there for 2 years. I was busy with school when I lived with my dad, so I didn’t pay much attention on things that were happening. I was just busy with school and friends. I didn’t have close friends at that time because I lived with my dad just for 2 years and I was moving all the time.¹¹¹

As a conclusion to this part we can say that the relocations in early life could have a potential influence on the respondents and their perception of the new environment and surrounding. Although, some of the respondents were talking more about the new environment, school, new friends, diversities and religion, while others were more focused on relationships within a family and were not bothered by the differences they have experienced when they moved to a new place.

¹¹⁰ Pers.com. Quan, 30.10.2015

¹¹¹ Pers.com. Wit, 23.10.2015

4.3 “And then I came to Norway”

This section collects the parts of the interviews in which respondents were talking about their experiences of moving to Norway. What was their attitude to the new society and the country in general?

When Kelly had just moved to Norway, the news about her relocation wasn't something surprising for her, she was expecting that she would move to Europe sooner or later so she was psychologically ready for this change. On the other hand, she was not prepared to see what she saw when she came to Norway, as she was imagining Europe in a different way:

So, when I moved to Norway, we came and we were living in a place called Blakstad... [...] it wasn't what I was expecting when I was thinking about...you know, Europe and stuff... So I moved to Blakstad and came to a new school with a new language... Everything was new. [...] it wasn't easy the first month to... ehm adopt into the changes and the society and stuff like that, but...eh... As the person I was, like always challenging myself, I was... I was giving myself, how can I say...deadline: 'I have to speak Norwegian, before Christmas. I have to be able to say this and this and this'. I was like... that's how I started to learn things and maybe integrate, because I was challenging myself. [...]It was more focusing on my course, then on challenges.¹¹²

In the interview, Kelly was mentioning her tries to integrate into the new society. She says that everything was new to her and it wasn't that easy. She was trying to find her way to adjust herself to the new society. She was trying to become a part of this system, whether it was at school or society in general. This illustrates Bommès' theory about integration, that in order to get the commodities, the person must fulfill the expectations that define the social preconditions.¹¹³ And that is what Kelly was trying to do, her first task was to assimilate and become a part of this new society:

I was really excited to move to Norway. I was really excited, the first month, I was really like «Yeah, cool!», but it was, it's like...They are saying, like, you cannot.. you can have everything but still not feel... be happy like this thing. So, I am not saying that I was sad, but I had everything that a kid from a country like mine, you know, dream of... but I was still like... but I miss my country... I miss my...

¹¹² Pers.com. Kelly, 07.10.2015

¹¹³ Bommès, 2012, 112.

whatever, my fruits, that I just get when I want, I am missing the forest, I am missing everything! I was like, Ok, I have everything here, nice shoes and stuff, but, I actually miss my country...So in the beginning it was like that. And then I was like, you have actually moved to a new country, you have started a new life, so just focus on that... think like what you don't have in here and because you can still afford to travel back, and, you know, we still have a culture to relate to, so...¹¹⁴

We can see how Kelly first had the mixed feeling of missing her country and adaptation she has to go through in her host country. At that time Kelly was asking many questions to herself to find out what she needs the most at that time: to go back to her comfort zone, or try to discover the new place and become a part of it.

For Nazma, the time when she moved to Norway was unexpected in that sense that she didn't come to stay. It was a planned summer holiday, but then, when the situation in her home country got worse she had to stay in Norway with her parents and start her new life:

So we went just for holidays and then my dad he was studying back in Norway and his job was shut down because it was in the North of my country, there was a civil war, so that's one of the reasons he went to Norway and to get a job. He was travelling back and forth. [...] So my mom came, and we travelled to Norway. It was May when we came here. My mom and dad were staying at the small student apartment with 2 rooms and we came there and we were all happy to be with the family, it was really nice to get back again. So we had lots of fun and then it was time to get back. But the school was still close, as it was still war in there and it was getting worse. So my mom was like, you guys have been staying here and have missed school, so she decided us to go to school in Norway. So we started school here and we just stayed.¹¹⁵

At that time she was just focused on spending a good time with her family, as she was missing her parents when she was back in her country. As she didn't plan to stay, in her mind that trip was just a summer vacation journey. But then when she came to know that she will have to stay for much longer she realized that she wasn't prepared for that. She mentioned it with saying she didn't even say good-bye to her friends:

¹¹⁴ Pers.com. Kelly, 07.10.2015

¹¹⁵ Pers.com. Nazma, 11.10.2015

I was thinking a lot about my country later, my friends, I never had a chance to say good buy as I thought I just went for holidays and we lost the contacts.¹¹⁶

Rutna's relocation was more challenging for her. In fact, she wasn't really happy about her move to Norway and she didn't have a wish to move to Europe:

And then I moved to Norway. I told you, I didn't want to move so much. I travelled with my brother, they paid air hostess to take care of us. [...] I remember it was terrible, it was cold, it was February. And my auntie bought Spice Girls sneakers, like very high, like iron shoes and it was so slippery. I felt like I was walking in a fridge, so crazy. And I remember so clear when I came to a town in Telemark and I asked my mother... there were 3 people who came to pick us, they were from my country. And I remember there was a woman and a young man... they came just to take curry paste from my bag. I didn't like them. I thought as they were using me and my brother to carry, as it was so big... And it was nothing like thank you... I didn't like that...¹¹⁷

The first experiences of Rutna once she came to Norway were not the most pleasant once. It was totally different climate and she also felt herself as being used to bring some products to her mother's friends. The next experience was even more frustrating for Rutna. It was the time to find out for her the place she and her family was going to live:

So we came to the town and there was a tall building, so I asked my mother which window is my bedroom. Because when I was living with my auntie she had a big house, like 3 floors and there were so many rooms you can choose where you wanna sleep. But my mother didn't answer me [...] So we went upstairs and I understood it is an apartment. We opened it and it smelled very bad, like tobacco and every room was so small. Only the living room a little bigger. I didn't understand how 4 people could live in there, but maybe because we was, there were 4, 2 kids from my country, 2 son and their parents. And then me and then my mom and my little brother, so we were like 8 people [...] So we had to stay there for few months, it was a terrible experience. We couldn't say to the family in what conditions we were living. The younger son of that family hated me and my brother

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Pers.com. Rutna, 23.10.2015

because we took his room. But we didn't have a choice, it was cold outside. So we lived for couple of months there.¹¹⁸

Rutna was not happy seeing the conditions they had to live in; it was a stage of her life where she has realized that life conditions can be different from what she used to have back in her country. It was a cultural shock for her. As Kim was pointing out the first stage of adaptation, "stress", the stage when people experience an unwillingness to understand and embrace new conditions of the environment.¹¹⁹

Kevin has experienced the similar unwillingness to move to the new country. When talking about his move to Norway, he mentioned that he wasn't psychologically ready for it, but later he realized that it may be a good thing for him:

At that time I was not sure if I wanted to move. But some years later I understand how important it was to move, because of the future, you know. I was comfortable in my country. I went to school, I knew how everything was going...children. And after when I began to think about future and advantages of going to Norway. I would stay with mother and have bigger opportunities for future. My mother came back to my country. It was the second time she came to visit me... In Norway it was the first time I understood the word loneliness. The saddest thing was, 6 months when I came here I started to play football in a club and we were around 23 players and I still felt lonely.¹²⁰

Kevin was not talking much about the exact process of his moving, instead, he was pointing out that his mom came for him and that he had to think about the good things and the opportunities that he can have in Norway. He also talks about the time when he started to feel lonely, which was an indication of his stress and adaptation stage.

When Wit was telling about his first experiences, he was talking about it laughing, saying that it wasn't the most pleasant trip for him, as he was feeling sick at the way when they arrived to Norway:

I got sick, I got flu, it was really bad, with fever. The first day when we arrived. And I hate driving the long trips and they wanted to show me the snow. It was in mountains, I was puking, you know, the car sick...And my brother was "Oh, snow!!", and I was

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Kim, "Adapting to a New Culture," 383.

¹²⁰ Pers.com. Kevin, 22.10.2015

“Blarghhhhhhss”- puking. He was actually 5-6. He didn’t really care.¹²¹

Then Wit told about his challenges at the beginning. He also mentioned the difference of coming to a country where a new language was spoken. He was, however, a lucky one, as he got to know a boy of the same age and he introduced him to other friends:

So yeah, the time when I came to Norway... I couldn’t speak, it was hard to cope. My mom came to my country and picked me up.

It was hard in the beginning. Actually the woman who helped my mom to come to Norway, she actually had a son, two sons. About the same age. And he took care of me, he took me to his friends, introduced me to his friends. We became friends, close friends. We were going to group where we went skating. You know, at that age, when you are 14 you have to express yourself, have to choose what you want to do with friends and I decided to be one of the skateboarders.

-Did you do skating before in your country?

-No. I started it here. I told you, that guy who was taking care of me he took me to the skaters. And I started skating. Actually they were kind. They took care of me.¹²²

As Wit was introduced to a boy from his original culture, it was easier for him to find friends and to be included in the new environment easier. Therefore, we may say that for Wit the “stress” stage was quite short and he almost skipped through it, coming directly to the stage of adaptation.

Quan remembers his trip to Norway as something exciting and at the same time scaring. It was scaring, first of all because of the language issue:

After one month I moved to Norway, to my mother. It was exciting and scaring. I couldn’t speak any English or Norwegian at that time. Only my country language. The trip was really long. I went with 2 really old women, they were the one taking care of me, but it was actually me who was taking care of them, because they were so old. They were some kind of family or friend of my uncle ex-wife. It was really awkward to go with them, they use one hour to go to toilet...¹²³

¹²¹ Pers.com. Wit, 23.10.2015

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Pers.com. Quan, 30.10.2015

Then he remembers the time when he met his mother and how it was for him to meet his stepfather for the first time. He also told that it came to be difficult to live with his mother and stepfather, as they had a lot of fights. Also, he used a generalization for their ethnic group, as all of them act the same way, when he was saying that his parents bothered him about some small things:

Then I met my mother, the first thing I heard from my mom was oh, you are so skinny! I was really black and skinny at that time. Because in my country it's sunny all the time. I met my mother, it was really fun. It was exciting, the time I saw her. I don't know what to say, I was really quite... She gave me a hug and we drove to the house. After I got to meet my stepfather. It was kind of awkward, he doesn't talk much and I don't talk much. We just said "Hi". After a few weeks I moved to Norway, my mom started yelling at me, same as my stepfather, they so complicated to live together. People from our country they always have to think about small stuff and it was really annoying to live with them. My stepfather, he didn't like me, I think he felt jealous. I am son of my mother, so it was awkward to live with him for 5 years.¹²⁴

At the stage of relocation, 4 out of my 6 respondents were talking about the first difficulties they had to face due to new culture and new environment. Most of them were mentioning the language difference and for some it was hard to get along with the thought that they will have to work on themselves in order to successfully be included in the new society. From the interviews we can also see that not all of the respondents really wanted to come and live in Norway, although their parent/-s were already there. As teenagers, it was a period of a lifetime when they started to get new friends while suddenly had to leave and build up their life and relations in a new place. My cases also show different ways of adapting the new environment. For some it was an exciting experience, for others it was a hard time to sleep on the idea that they have to live in poor conditions for some time. In all the cases it was a joy for the children to finally reunite with their mother/family.

4.4 Stereotypes in Daily Life

This part is dedicated to different stereotypes my respondents had to deal with in Norway and how these stereotypical thoughts have reflected on the respondents. In

¹²⁴ Ibid.

my theoretical part, I was discussing how stereotypes appear and how stereotypes can be considered as a cognitive strategy of humans to understand the world. When Illman was describing stereotypes as the way we sort people into groups according to some characteristics these group members share and which distinguish them from others.¹²⁵ And another, less positive and power dimensional representation of stereotypes by Cristoffanini, where he claims that stereotypes and representation of Others can be seen as strategies of symbolic construction that share the rhetorical style of ideologies; ideologies legitimize the dominance of one group over another, and lead to discrimination and inequality.¹²⁶ Here I will be giving examples stereotypical expressions and attitudes towards my respondents and the consequences of it.

When Kelly was talking about her feelings about the people in Norway and the educational system, she was very anxious to talk about how the system in Norway was. She also had a feeling that people were curious to know where she was originally from in order to put her in some categorization box rather than wanting to find out about her personality. She told how people saw her as something exotic, wanted to find out how she came to Norway and how she felt about her new home:

There is something about this place, there were like a place where people were not taking initiative to anything, they were not doing things that were favorizing, maybe, immigrants rights or something.... or... I didn't have a voice in that place, you know, it was more like people seeing you like... "Oooohhh..", they were seeing you like it was your first day you came to Norway. Everything they were talking to you about was more like "Where are you from?", like, you know, I didn't like it, I wanted to move to a place, where can talk about something else then always saying where I am from and how thankful I might be for coming to Norway...¹²⁷

Kelly was very surprised when her sister came from school and told her how her teacher had reacted knowing she came from Africa. The teacher might have been just curious, but for girls of their age it was nonsense and awkward. The teacher was also talking about life in Africa without asking Kelly's sister to contribute:

¹²⁵ Illman, "Stereotypes", 102.

¹²⁶ Cristoffanini, "The Representation of 'the Others' " 96.

¹²⁷ Pers.com. Kelly, 07.10.2015

I remember my sister came from school really mad and I was like “Why are you mad?”. She went like “Can you believe that, my teacher asked me if we eat with spoon and stuff like that in my country!” and... and I was like ... “She asked you that?”, “Yeah, she was talking about how Africa is and blah blah blah and then she were like and they eat with hands and stuff”... and my sister, I remember, she was 10 years and she was so mad and I was like... “Ok, if she experience it and it’s primary school... what?” So it was more something about this place, like people were...¹²⁸

Another similar situation happened to Nazma, when she came to her new school. Her experience is connected with how her classmates reacted on her when she joined the class. They were looking at her as someone exotic and were very excited:

It was fun at the beginning.. There is this new girl who came to study. She is from [the country], another country. And they were like, oh, where is [the country]? Do you have lions running on the roads? So they were asking all those silly questions. [...] And they were asking if we eat with hands, and they were so excited about it. They used to tell others, oh, I was at their place, they were eating some kind of strange food and they were eating with their hands, like aliens! It was only me and my sister in the whole school with another background. So it was kind of strange.¹²⁹

By saying that they were the only ones in the school with another background explains Nazma’s interpretation of how the students were reacting on her. Also, while talking about it, Nazma was smiling as it was just funny nice memories of hers. So these stereotypes that Nazma’s classmates had about her culture in didn’t seem to affect her attitude to the social environment in Norway.

From the interviews I could track out that the stereotypical thinking was mostly going out from the new society, where my respondents were finding their way to fit in. The reaction of the new classmates was a product of their curiosity and a process of learning something new about a new culture follows it. However, it didn’t affect much on the personality of the respondents, except of the case of Kelly’s sister and a teacher, who in their point of view didn’t behave in a right way when was talking about Africa. Here I can agree with Illman, who argues that stereotypes are more than cognitive models: stereotypes are seen as meaning creating models closely attached to social contexts, communication, individual interpretations, emotions and values; even

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Pers.com. Nazma, 11.10.2015

though context and cognitive functions guide our perception, we are still active, conscious being involved in creating our own reality.¹³⁰

4.4.1 Racism

In this part I will be talking about racism as a form of prejudice. As some of my respondents were mentioning this term several times I would like to shed a light on this phenomenon. Stereotyping or prejudice can lead to overt nonverbal actions to exclude, avoid, or distance and are called discrimination; and discrimination may be based on race (racism), gender (sexism), or any of the other identities.¹³¹ Racism as a form of stereotyping and prejudice, based on the appearance also took place in the lives of some of my respondents. For some of them it was a mixed unclear understanding of whether they were dealing with prejudice, jealousy or hatred because of some other reasons. As they were aware that they look different from the locals, they may understand some actions as manifestation of racism.

Rutna was talking about one incident that happened to her and her younger brother. When she was talking about their bus driver she wasn't quite sure that it was racism or just a coincidence of circumstances:

Me and my brother experienced some racism at that time by the bus driver, but not hurting physically, just breaking really harsh. We lived very far so we had to take a bus. So that young guy always was breaking very harsh and me and my brother hated him very much. And we were like oh no, not this young guy again, we want the old one, he was nice to us. Maybe it's not racist, but at that time it was like racist. At that time we were the only in the class who were Asian and who didn't speak Norwegian.¹³²

This may identify that Rutna felt a little insecure about herself and her background, as she is talking about it with hesitation and makes the conclusion from the fact that only her and her brother were the only Asian children there. Maybe the acts of the driver didn't have anything to do with a racist thinking or prejudice, but Rutna found a possible connection because of her sensitive perception. As it was

¹³⁰ Illman, "Stereotypes", 106.

¹³¹ Judith N. Martin, "Intercultural Communication in Contexts." (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2004): 282; available at <http://www.rasaneh.org/Images/News/AtachFile/15-8-1390/FILE634561743619907963.pdf>; site accessed 13 April 2016.

¹³² Pers.com. Rutna, 23.10.2015

mentioned before, Rutna was brought up without her parents and always had to protect her brother, which could lead her to further feeling of insecurity.

Another memory about racism came out in the interview with Rutna when she was talking about an old drunk lady at the bus stop, an incident that happened years later:

I experienced only one racist thing. One lady asked why don't I go back to my country, some shit... But I try not to remember, because she was drunk, old lady.¹³³

This act was clearly a manifestation of racism, but Rutna tries to forget it and explain it by the fact that the woman was drunk.

Wit was mentioning racism in the interview too. He interpreted the stereotypical excitement of the new classmates that received him as racism:

There were actually, some were racist in the class. Some were excited to meet a new guy from Asia. They were actually kind. Because there was not a lot of foreigners, it was a small town. My mom was the first generation of the foreigners who came to that town. We are actually the second generation.

-But why did you say they were racist? What did they do?

-Emm, I don't know... I just don't care, you know... about the racists, fuck them.

-But do you remember any cases of racism towards you?

-Ah, they were just saying "Go back to your country", just some arguments, something. [...]

There was some racism at that time in the place I was. It was a little hard sometimes.

-Was that from the local people? What did they say?

-They used to say things like "Go back to your country".

-Was that when you were 14?

-Yes, I was 14 at that time. But you know those kids were the same age as me, they were not old people.

-Was that at school?

-In the street also. You know, the people, skateboarding and those who drive the car they don't like each other. They drive up and we skate down, you know. Because skateboarders wear baggy pants and they who drive the car they use tight pants. It's actually a bit of... yeah, they are racist sometimes... Just fuck them... I didn't care.¹³⁴

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Pers.com. Wit, 23.10.2015

When we had a conversation with Wit, it seemed like he had a tendency to interpret the conflicts with people around him as acts of racism. He called the drivers of the car racists, although they could be mad not because of the different appearance or culture. Their anger was a reasoned by the lack of safety while driving. When Wit says that sometimes people were saying, “Go back to your country” was something they could reflect when they were angry. And as the difference in appearance the first thing they see, they use it against the subject. Such attitude can develop hate for both sides. Therefore, intercultural competence is very important for successful integration, both for the immigrants and the host society. Liisa Salo-Lee says that each individual should understand what is the culture and how his or her culture manages own ethnocentrism, also, how the values of their own culture may cause problems in multicultural work life.¹³⁵ In any case, Wit seemed to be not disturbed by such acts.

The results show us that in some situations my respondents have experienced prejudices and racism from the local society, which in some ways have reflected on them, while for some others it wasn't anything they would feel hurtful about. As Illman was pointing out, that such stereotypes and racism might occur due to power dimension; individuals may define their self-image based on assumption that his or her culture is superior in comparison with others.¹³⁶ And according to Cristoffanini, stereotypes and perception of “Others” constitute an inadequate representation of others and stereotypes give us a feeling of order and security, moreover, they are inflexible and they try to cement one particular meaning over others.¹³⁷

4.5 Adaptation Challenges

This part I will be talking more about the ways they were trying to fit in the new society and possible reflection on their self-identity. I will also focus on the language learning difficulties and how the new coming immigrants had to deal with that.

¹³⁵ Liisa Salo-Lee, “Intercultural Competence Research: Focuses and Challenges” in *Bridges of Understanding: Perspectives on Intercultural Communication* (ed. Ø. Dahl et al.; Oslo: Unipub/Oslo Academic Press, 2006), 132.

¹³⁶ Illman, “Stereotypes”, 103.

¹³⁷ Cristoffanini, “The Representation of ‘the Others’ ”, 86.

4.5.1 Social Acceptance

When a teenager comes to the new environment, he or she has a lot of tasks like learning the new language, trying to get the new friends, adjust to the local culture. All that is called a process of integration, but for some teenagers it can be more difficult due to their difficulties perception or a level of insecurity. Teenagers are often desperately in need of respect and dignity, especially from their peers. Dobson says that not being accepted by peers can play a major significance to those who already see themselves as fools and failures.¹³⁸ For my respondents it was crucial to be accepted by other kids, as they were new at school and in Norway. Knowing that they are different could give them a reason of low self-confidence. The reason for low self-confidence, in turn, could be a manifestation of stress or “culture shock”. Stress in an inevitable stage that every immigrant goes through. Kim mentions 3 stages that appear in the process of adaptation, they are: stress, adaptation period and growth. Stress or “culture shock” is the stage people experience as a manifestation of the generic process that that occurs whenever an individual’s internal capabilities are not adequate to the demands of the environment.¹³⁹

When we were discussing the childhood of Kelly, we could see that she had a happy childhood, was brought up by her parents and she was growing as a curious girl, who always wanted to find out things by herself. When she came to Norway, though, it wasn’t that easy as moving from town to town in her own country. However, she had a positive mindset and was trying to do her best to overcome all those difficulties:

Everything was new. Ehm, so... I... it wasn’t... it wasn’t easy... to say that way... it wasn’t easy the first month to...ehm... to...eh..eh... adopt into the changes and the society and stuff like that, but...eh...As the person I was, like always challenging myself [...]
Like... when you come to a new country and you are 15 years old, of course you will meet some challenges. It wasn’t easy to have friends, for instance, stuff like that... eh...but I was aware of that because I couldn’t speak Norwegian, how do you expect to have friends that are Norwegian, when you don’t speak the language and...¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Dobson, 1978, 191.

¹³⁹ Kim, “Adapting to a New Culture,” 383.

¹⁴⁰ Pers.com. Kelly, 07.10.2015

For Nazma it was hard to get friends, not only because of the language difference, but because she has realized that she is in a new place now and she has to build the relations with other kids from the very beginning. She was saying that at times she felt quite lonely and isolated:

Then after few months it was quiet, [...] And I felt so lonely after some time. Because eventually I found out I don't have any friends. There were all those groups and gangs at school, and I was a girl who came so it was hard to fit in. It was difficult. I was very active, social, popular girl, in my country at school, and now coming here become quiet,unsecure girl. I had another character, so it impacted me in the way I was growing. Turning from an active girl into quite and sad. Then I suddenly was very lonely. I was thinking a lot about my home country, my friends, I never had a chance to say good buy as I thought I just went for holidays and we lost the contacts. So, I remember being very sad, keeping things for myself. My friends whom I had at school didn't understand me, as everything was different for them. It was a crisis for me, but it was very strong for me. As when I started the junior high school, when I was 13. That's when for Norwegian kids the older you become, the more you are aloud to do. Like they were like 12-13 years they started to get girlfriends and boyfriends, they would start talking about it and I was not supposed to have...ehh.. not to engage too much with boys at that age. So you kinda live in 2 different worlds. Your society makes opposite of what parents ask you to do.¹⁴¹

Here we can see that Nazma was experiencing mismatching of the two cultures, mostly, because she had to follow her parents' directions. Throughout the story we see that in the early ages of adolescence it is quite important to blend in with others, to be like others, so the child can be accepted. According to Dobson, an adolescent's worth as a human being hangs precariously on peer group acceptance.¹⁴² One of the other important things is to be a part of a "group". Usually individuals of such groups share the same interests, but for an immigrant child it can be more difficult to find such group due to the big differences in culture and way of living. So, as Nazma said, she preferred to live in 2 worlds: at home with her family it was one world and the other world was the one outside home, with her friends. Her position can be explained by the theory of Dobson, who believes it is extremely important to understand and

¹⁴¹ Pers.com. Nazma, 11.10.2015

¹⁴² Dobson, 1978, 191.

believe the child. He argues that by trying to support and understand a teenager is the way to circumvent many discipline problems of adolescence.¹⁴³

From the interview we can see that Rutna was still feeling herself as a part of her original country and she was trying to keep contact with her friends:

-Did you feel that culture and people in your country and here in Norway were different?

-Yes, of course, it's different. People get so more materialistic, the kids, everything, the friendship is built on things. Who have those shoes, have to have the same and mobile phone is very important. I asked my mom if I can have one when I turned, when I started junior high school.

-Did you miss your country?

-Yeah! In the beginning I wrote letters, when we moved from that apartment, the terrible apartment, then I was allowed to write to my friends and I got replies from them. I saved them, I still save them. I would like to see them, I tried to contact some of them in Facebook, but the ugh...they don't reply... Yeah, anyway I miss my friends...¹⁴⁴

When Rutna moved to Norway she still felt herself Asian and her connections with her country were still strong. When she talked about the differences of Norwegian and her culture, it shows her evaluative opinion.

Even though Kevin and other children from preparation class couldn't speak Norwegian well, they still found the way to communicate with each other and managed to become friends. But when he had to go to school, everything changed for Kevin. The reason was not only his poor Norwegian but also some cultural differences:

In my home country just if you meet somebody you don't know, the fact that you two love about the same thing only can make you to be friends. Because you share something in common, just because the kid something funny, you make a comment about it and then you know each other, it's like that. And here, in Norway, you could speak with someone so much, but then Ok, finish today, there is a distance again. And you say hello, they answer hello but they don't want to talk. It's difficult to come in the system, to develop relation, it stops on "Hi! –Hi!", it was like that. So it was difficult, especially because I was assigned to ordinary Norwegian school and because of my language limits I needed to work harder. [...]

-Was that only because of the language or mentality as well?

¹⁴³ Ibid., 195

¹⁴⁴ Pers.com. Rutna, 23.10.2015

-I was thinking, maybe because of the mentality and the age and the language. So I was unlucky actually. Because youth at that age they need something cool.¹⁴⁵

Here Kevin says that to be integrated as a teenager you have to be “cool”. It is hard for a child to be cool when there is lack of communication with peers and difficulties to find connection with other children. This is similar to what Nazma has experienced when came from preparation course to regular school. Exclusion from the society and teenage groups can end up with big disappointments for a child.

Wit was luckier because he get some friends from the very beginning. Because of the boy who was from the same country and the same age, he was already a part of something. Becoming a member of skating group gave a good start for Wit to socially integrate:

-Were your friends also from your country?

-One of them, the one who took care of me. But other skateboarders they were Norwegian. Because when you are a teenager you try to find some group and we just did skateboarding.¹⁴⁶

When we move to Quan’s story, we realize that it can be hard for a child to adjust to the new environment. One of the reasons was the language. To get over the difficulties, Quan preferred to lock himself in his room and spend most of the time playing computer games. Then he suddenly starts talking about his family members and his home country:

I got friends only in school. But when I was at home I just locked myself in room and started playing computer game. Because it was hard for me to be with some friend. Because I couldn’t speak well at that time. It’s hard, really hard to be friends with anyone at that time.

But after 2 years I moved to ordinary classes with Norwegian children. It was kind of hard, as it was still hard to keep with the Norwegian. [...] I remember when I went to Norwegian class, with Norwegian people. It was hard. Some of them are very kind, some of them were bullying. I got bullied in junior high school, but I got over it. Because of my Norwegian. Now I can speak Norwegian normally but not at that time. Because at that time my Norwegian was suck, even after 2 years since I came to Norway, it really sucked, to be honest. So, I over come it and I remember when I was bullied and I

¹⁴⁵ Pers.com. Kevin, 22.10.2015

¹⁴⁶ Pers.com. Wit, 23.10.2015

got into a fight and I won that fight. And after that they respected me more and were more nice to me. But bullying is in every culture, not only in Norway. It actually has less in Norway, but still happens sometimes. It was fun though. I've learned a lot of things. Actually I miss junior high school, you just study and making friends.¹⁴⁷

In Dobson's book he says that the junior high years are the most critical to the development of a child's mental health¹⁴⁸. Is it usually during this period of self-doubt that the personality is often assaulted and damaged beyond repair. Junior high school students are typically brutal to one another, attacking and slashing a weak victim.¹⁴⁹ From this we can conclude that bullying at school wasn't necessary an act of racism, although the respondent may feel it was because of the language, but rather a usual phenomena that happens to junior high school students, which is caused by self-doubt of the attacked student, and the language was just a reason for the attacks.

Rutna was also talking about her unpleasant experiences with her classmates. She has experienced bullying from her classmates, which she explained as an act of jealousy:

There was no racism but there was jealousy. Once I got a new sweater and we went to have a gym class so after the class they threw my sweater to the shower, to make it wet, that's it. It was because of jealousy, because they have seen that the teacher treats me and my brother different. And also I think they knew that my mother didn't have husband, I think they knew.¹⁵⁰

So here Rutna is talking about her unpleasant experiences with her classmates. She also points out that she thinks it wasn't a result of racism, instead, it was feeling of jealousy. Her classmates didn't like that some new girl go the attention from the teacher and so they were bullying her. Also she mentions that they were bullying her because they knew that there is no one to stand for her, as she had no father.

The childhood of Quan and Rutna were similar in the way that both of them were separated from their parents very early. Both of them were bullied at school and felt quite insecure. Similar things happened to Kevin, he felt himself lonely and isolated, found it difficult to find friends in the settings. This might indicate that the

¹⁴⁷ Pers.com. Quan, 30.10.2015

¹⁴⁸ Dobson, 1978, 190.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 190.

¹⁵⁰ Pers.com. Rutna, 23.10.2015

early childhood experienced that evolved into insecurity of children might have affected their self confidence and, as a result, difficulties with building relationships with peers.

4.5.2 Language as a Tool for Integration

According to Anne Holmen, language is a part of the complex and dynamic processes of social membership, culture and identity. Language learning is important for interactions at the micro-social level.¹⁵¹ Therefore, language plays a big part in identity construction and integration process. In Norway, there are generally four models of education system for immigrant children: ordinary classes, special reception classes, combined classes and special reception schools. In ordinary classes, children attend local schools with other local children¹⁵². In addition they may receive language classes. In special reception classes children are taught in separate classes at the local school or at another school in the municipality. The intention is to teach the children Norwegian and when they master the language they are transferred to ordinary local schools. Combined classes provide education to the children in ordinary classes at the same time as they receive some special training, especially in Norwegian, but also in bilingual education and their mother tongue. Special reception schools are separate schools for newly arrived children that provide special education within a limited time before the children enter into ordinary classes.¹⁵³ Every approach has its positive and negative sides. Like, for example, Pollock argues that putting an immigrant child in a local school might be good for his or her socialization, on one hand, and on the other hand it is important to teach the child some basic language skills, otherwise the child may feel isolated.¹⁵⁴

Here Kelly talks about her difficulties with the new language. Here language plays one of the most important roles of integration process, the tool to be used in

¹⁵¹ Holmen, "Finding a Voice in a Second Language—a Matter of Language Learning or Intercultural Communication?" 197.

¹⁵² Tonheim, Milfrid et al., *Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration of Asylum-seeking Children Affected by War and Armed Conflict*; available at https://www.udi.no/globalassets/global/forskning-fou_i/asyl/fou-rehab-reintegration-2015.pdf; site accessed 22 April 2016.

¹⁵³ Johannes læringscenter in Stavanger, "Organisering av TFO of MMO;" available at: <http://www.minskole.no/DynamicContent/Documents/357-3ad5c2ca-6f0f-4ce0-b9b0-81de927eb44c.pdf>; site accessed 13 April 2016.

¹⁵⁴ Pollock, 2001, 226.

order to become a part of society. The other challenge was that Kelly didn't have any preparation course before she went to Norwegian school:

I didn't even attend Norwegian class, like people used to do, when I... it was later when I moved to Oslo, people were like "Yeah, when I came to Norway, I had 2 years of Norwegian class before I started at school", but I didn't have that, just going to school, just like that with all the Norwegian teenagers. So it wasn't a side class, where they were teaching me language, it was more like I was listening to the teacher and I didn't even know what she was saying the first day of school. But I think it was very very good way and I am still thankful to that. I was like, Ok, now I don't even understand what they are saying, so I have to learn the language, because no one cares, like, it seems like no one cared, but I think it was just... they were not prepared, because they were no immigrant in that city, in that place... [...] But, again, I wasn't a refugee or something like that, because they get more... they get more help and stuff like that, because they are in a different situation. Like, I came to Norway, it was more like family reunification. So it was more like, yeah, you have a family, they can help you, why would the state care about you, when you had your own ticket and you came to Norway by your own, so it was more something like that. But, that's also something that has helped me to...to be what I am today, like, to see things the way I am seeing it today.¹⁵⁵

Kelly points out that she wasn't given any help or attention from the state to learn the language. She is saying there were no opportunities for her at that time to get well prepared for Norwegian school. Indeed, without knowing the language it makes it harder for the child to socialize and find it's place in the community. On the other hand, these conditions have taught her how to find the way through hard working and self-determination.

Nazma was also mentioning her language learning experiencing. And it was quite different from the one that Kelly had. Nazma went to a special preparation language school before she has joined Norwegian school:

We started the school, we started to learn the language, it took us just about 5 month to learn Norwegian, we were learning very fast, as we could already speak English. They have these special classes for students who come from other countries. To learn the language first and then go to school. So we went to learn the language. It was the

¹⁵⁵ Pers.com. Kelly, 07.10.2015

time that was fun, as the kids who went with us they were in the same situation as us. So I still remember there was one girl from Iran and we were playing, having much fun together. We were in the same situation, it was exciting. But then that stage was over, we had to go to school, to the ordinary school. Then only the things started to happen. Then was when I saw the difference. There were not so many foreigners here at that time.¹⁵⁶

We can see the importance of such preparatory courses, as the child also has an opportunity to meet other children who are in the same situation. Learning some basic language skills can be very crucial when it comes to child's socializing further at school.

Some approaches for child's language preparation may vary, for example, Rutna had a special teacher that was following her in all the classes at Norwegian school. That teacher was originally from Rutna's country and she was teaching her Norwegian, as well as translating for her:

At that time we were the only in the class who were Asian and who didn't speak Norwegian.

-Did you go to any Norwegian course when you moved to Norway?

-Nothing. [...] There were only 2 dark students. This is real, because when I talk to my friends, most of them have been to this kind of Norwegian introduction class. But me and my brother, I think was between when Norway tried to develop something that can fit to this children who are not so young and are not adults. But at that time it doesn't have so many. So when we started there they got us a Norwegian teacher, I remember. And she spoke a little bit dialect and could speak a little bit English, just like "yes, no, I understand". And also they rent this woman who own the apartment that we stayed at. Because she was a teacher in [the country] so she applied to be our helping translator, but she was so bad in Norwegian, even I didn't speak Norwegian but I understood she was so bad. So, she was with us at all the classes, even other students got a little jealous, because she was helping us. Teachers were really nice to us. Once I broken one glass and the teacher said it was ok and another girl asked why the teacher didn't shout at me as she does with them. So at that time I felt some tension, because they were jealous.¹⁵⁷

Rutna said that although it was a good thing that they had a special translator and teacher who followed them, she didn't have a good knowledge of Norwegian.

¹⁵⁶ Pers.com. Nazma, 11.10.2015

¹⁵⁷ Pers.com. Rutna, 23.10.2015

And then she was talking about the other teachers they had, saying they were very kind and nice to them but that has created tension between her and other children, which made it hard to find friends at the beginning.

Another example of feeling isolation because of the lack of communicative skills in Norwegian shows Kevin's story. Although he went to Norwegian preparation classes before entering regular Norwegian school, it was still hard to find new friends:

In Norway it was the first time I understood the word loneliness. [...] The thing is I wasn't good in Norwegian at that time, so I didn't say so much, I tried but it was kind of boring for another to stay and try understand what I say. So yeah, "He is boring". So it was kind of bad experience because I felt kind of isolated. And I never thought about anything like that before, I always used to have friends. Even at school, in class for children who learn Norwegian and there was multicultural, different countries. Everything was good, I met my first friends there and 2 of them are still my best friends. [...] So it was sad because I couldn't have the same relation with Norwegian youth...¹⁵⁸

As Wit had some friends from his skating group, it was easier for him to learn the new language because he got some help from them. Apart from that Wit was sent to an ordinary school and was attending language courses in the evenings:

-So when you arrived there did you start going to school?

Yes, actually I started the school and it was hard because I didn't speak a word in Norwegian. And at the same time I have started Norwegian course in the evenings. In the morning go to school and in the evening Norwegian, yes hard. And I could speak just a little bit of English, which I learned in my home country.

-So what about the language? How did you manage to learn it?

-Ah, as I told you I had a good friend who was taking care of me, one of his friends he was Norwegian and he was correcting my Norwegian, taught us how to talk.

-Did the other kids ever made fun of your accent or the way you talk?

-No never, but sometimes I saw them laughing and then I understood that I said something wrong. And they used to say "No, no you don't say like that, you should say...", so they were correcting us, everybody in the skateboarding group they were helping me, they also wanted me to talk Norwegian and understand.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Pers.com. Kevin, 22.10.2015

¹⁵⁹ Pers.com. Wit, 23.10.2015

As Wit's friends were also interested in Wit becoming better in Norwegian they helped him to learn it. At the same time Wit mentions that it was difficult for him to attend both the school and reception classes in the evenings.

In Young Yun Kim's theory about adaptation claims that the changes in the environment might manifest in different forms of psychological resistance; in this case some individuals may show hostility towards the host environment, while others may seek to regress to an earlier state of existence in the original culture, where is no feeling of isolation.¹⁶⁰ Indeed, my research shows that some of the respondents were talking about their home and their unwillingness to accept the host environment. But it is important to understand why this psychological resistance may appear and why it may vary from individual to individual. We can see strong connection between the childhood and further adaptation in the new environment.

Of course, the language plays one of the important roles in the process of adaptation. According to Pollock, it is better for a child to learn to speak enough of the local language before entering local school in order to function comfortably.¹⁶¹ He also mentions that it is quite important to consider the degree of animosity to the child's nationality in the host culture; otherwise the child might be designated as an outsider. In some degree Pollock is right, but my research also shows that it is quite important to be socially included for the best learning language results.¹⁶³ Some of my respondents have visited special preparation Norwegian course before entering the regular school but even that didn't help them much to succeed in both social connections and studies. For the best results a child needs a good language preparation and some social group guide, who can be of the same age and same background. Successful inclusion of the child in a group leads him to easier language and social adaptation.

4.6 Self-identification

In this part I will give examples from the interviews of my respondents' cultural self-identification. In many ways their cultural identity intervenes with nationality and language. But even after successful integration, language acquisition and Norwegian

¹⁶⁰ Kim, "Adapting to a New Culture," 383.

¹⁶¹ Pollock, 2001, 226.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 226.

passport obtaining, some of the respondents felt themselves differently defying their cultural identity. Lehtonen argues that individual's self identity is socially and culturally embedded.¹⁶⁴ That self-identity is connected with the social identity. But how does it work, when society may not include you a part of them? David Parker says, however, that the identity formation of a person from minority community may be influenced in a big extend by varying degrees of racism in each locality.¹⁶⁵ Day-to-day interactions with others in the new society can cause the identity formation. Some migrants find it painful to deal with the everyday prejudices that they experience and so retreat to their own cultural groups.¹⁶⁶

Indeed, the opinions of the local society in some extend have reflected of the respondents' self-identity.

During the interview, Kelly mentioned her identity every now and then and it was changing all the time in her narrative:

So, I changed school in one year, I changed from the school that I went to when I came to Norway to... to that new school. And that new school were more like... teenagers...students are coming from different school in there and studying there, so I started to also connect with this new kids... eh... teenagers and... and stuff, so, it was kind of... how to say, it was a period where my identity were also changing because I did an exchange travel class something to Belgium and I stayed at someone's place and went to Belgium, like, through my school, it was like an exchange program.¹⁶⁷

The new school gave an opportunity for Kelly to leave all her first years experiences in Norway behind and a try to start something new, meet new people, feel more confident with her language skills. She also talks about the exchange program that allowed her to travel to Belgium and that also in some way affected her identity.

Then in another passage, Kelly says that in some way local culture has affected her, in the way like she saw what other people of her age do and she wanted to be the same as them:

¹⁶⁴ Lehtonen, 2005, 12.

¹⁶⁵ David Parker, *Through Different Eyes: The cultural Identities of Young Chinese People in Britain* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995), 175.

¹⁶⁶ Martin, "Intercultural Communication in Contexts," 340.

¹⁶⁷ Pers.com. Kelly, 07.10.2015

So from there I started to find some things that my mom were doing that I didn't like... I was like... Heh! That's why I have to move out! So it was more about culture here, that I was affected by... and... But also I was... I...I have always been like, I want to do this, tadada, I don't want anyone to stop me... But my mom she is a mom, so she has always been like "No! Come back!", like, you know, and I didn't like it that she were...¹⁶⁸

Teenage years are the years when personality changes in big scales and you try to find the way out from your problems. In Norway Kelly saw like the other teenagers of her age were moving out from their parents' homes and she decided that it can be a resolution of her problem too.

It also can be quite frustrating to a teenager when the society around wants to spot her or him out from others. After acquiring the language, studying at school you start feeling a part of the local society and want to be just the same as all of them. But it might be quite disturbing when people still see you differently:

People were not really asking about my background after this Blakstad place... maybe when we were at school and the teacher will be like, OK, can you please tell about yourself. But it wasn't like people coming and asking you questions just for knowing you, it was they could ask me a question, "Well, where are you from?" and stuff like that, but I never felt that they were asking just for because it was exciting to know [...] they started to say that just for remembering like you are from another place, like, you know... [...] I started to dislike the question "Where I am from", because it was never like, I am from this, and I can talk about myself... No, it was more about like... "Aha, so we have someone from Africa here", and I felt like it was something... So it was more like, you know... [...] it was never about me as a person, but about my background, about where I am from...¹⁶⁹

Maybe, if Kelly would not be facing such situations, she would not question her cultural identity and could feel more Norwegian at that time. We can clearly see that at that period of her life she didn't want to be different, instead, she wanted to blend in. From her interview we can see that at the point she started to feel herself Norwegian, she wasn't able to feel it completely because the people around her were pushing her away by asking her background saying "We have here somebody from Africa" and therefore reminding her about the differences.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

At some stage of life Kelly started to meet other kind of people, who had the same interests with her and then she realized she finally found the people with the same mindset. When she talks about them, she calls them “normal”, which indicates that most of the people in Norway she met before were not in this category of being normal, maybe because they always used to treat her as an outsider and always questioned her background which doesn't let her feel comfortable:

I started kind of volunteer and I met a lot of people with the same interests like me. Like, they were human rights fighters and everything... and they had the same...the same...had exactly the same ideologies that I had... And I was like, yeah, I could have done this earlier, because I am meeting normal people, because before I was like, nobody is normal here, because they have different ideas then me and blah blah blah... But when I started to study, I was like Ok, now I am actually meeting people with the same interests, the same idea.¹⁷⁰

Another experience of identity change Kelly had when she travelled to Nicaragua with other Norwegian students from school. Something has changed for her, as in Nicaragua she couldn't say anymore that she was from Africa, as she has already lived in Norway for some time and could speak the language. It was the first time she felt herself Norwegian and that she could relate to this country:

So, when I travelled to Nicaragua with other students I was more like, you know, open and talking, I kind of, you know, washed out this frustration I had, like, emm blah blah blah... And I was more opened to tell who I was, because we were in another country, where people were also asking us where we were from and everybody had to say, “I come from Norway”, and I was like, I'm not going to say, because then I have to be like, you know... So, sometimes I was answering [the country] to the people I knew that they want to ask something more, and I was like... When I went somewhere with Norwegian students, i was like... “We come from Norway!”, because it was easier then telling where I am from, because, you know, it was so, you know, confusing. So, but, it was nice to be there and also see how the other person were being called immigrant in another country and stuff like that...¹⁷¹

When Kelly and me started to have a topic about her preferences in spouse choosing, she clearly said that she doesn't have any special preferences but she is

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

quite attractive to something opposite. It tells us a lot about her childhood experiences, when she grew up in a diversity society and always was curious to learn about others:

I have always been attracted to the opposite, somehow... eh... it's not only about color or race. I have always been like that since I was living in my country, I was more attracted to someone from another tribe, because I was like... I know everything about my tribe and I wanna know something more, I want to have a... I want to relate to things, or to more than what I know, I want to be able to travel to another village, than my own village...¹⁷²

Kelly grew up as a very open minded, psychologically secure individual and that developed in her an urge to learn about the differences and being opened to other different people. Although at some stages it was difficult for her to integrate and feel herself Norwegian in full, she managed to learn habits of living from her peers and now she feels her home is in Norway.

While some may question immigrant's background, it may reflect of the immigrant him or herself and can be followed by identity crisis. As in the case with Kelly, Nazma haven't been questioning her cultural identity for some time after she has successfully become a part of Norwegian society. Although she felt herself completely Norwegian, there were others who didn't see her being such because of her appearance:

Well, in the early ages when I got back from my country they did ask where I was from and I used to say I am from [the country]. But I mean when you get older and they ask the same question now, especially the Norwegians, I just say I am from Haslum. Haslum is where I live, here. So they find it kind of strange and then they ask me yeah, but where are you actually from? Because they are not satisfied with the answer I give them, because they can see or the way I dress that I am from somewhere else. But sometimes get furious or get angry... because I do feel that I am a Norwegian, because the way I think, the way I act, the way I live or behave... and talk is like a Norwegian and I fell I am a Norwegian, and I used to describe myself as a coconut: brown outside but white inside. So I am kind of Norwegian, but people don't see that.¹⁷³

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Pers.com. Nazma, 11.10.2015

The same like it was in the case with Kelly, Nazma said that every teen who comes to another country want to blend in and become as others as soon as possible. This hostility from society leads to crisis of identity, when individual cannot find a piece in what he or she feels like about him or herself. Lehtonen talks about crisis of identity as some phenomena that comes from within; he talks about 3 stages of identity construction: unexamined identity, cultural identity search and identity achievement.¹⁷⁴ In my respondents' lives usually it was outside factors that influenced the identity construction and pushed the individuals to question their identity:

You know, when you come here as a youngster, you don't want to be different because you do everything to be just like them and you don't feel by that time that you are Norwegian but you really hardly do everything to be one but they don't still except you as well. And then years go by and you become one and still they don't see you or except you as one, you know, that's the feeling you used to at the time you grow up.¹⁷⁵

Nazma was talking about the feelings for "two homes" and what defines a person to be "more Norwegian". She pointed out that the time plays a big role in cultural self-identification, that the longer person stays in the host country, the more he or she loses the contacts with the "home country":

How long am I supposed to live here or how much I have to adapt to become a Norwegian, am I Norwegian enough to you? Maybe these are the things sometimes I think about. But it is very sensitive question, because it depends where you are in your stage of life and how many years you have been living in the country and how integrated you are in the society, it has to do a lot with the feeling, with what you feel of where you are from. More years you have been away from your so-called "country", more you feel like your home is the new country. And also, but still I do have feelings and love for my second home, [the country]. It's not my first home, but it's my second home. Because when I am on holidays I am looking forward to come home because this is my home. The other place is just I go visit and nothing is there for a long time. But I do still have feelings for [the country], but maybe in a distance way. It is also a part of me, but there is more distance since I have grown.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Lehtonen, 2005, 55.

¹⁷⁵ Pers.com. Nazma, 11.10.2015

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

As Nazma had spent more than half of her life in Norway, she has reflected a lot on her self-identification. She still admits that her country of origin is where she is from, but she takes her Norwegian identity as the primary one. The reason she still keeps connection with her home country is because she wants to inherit the culture to her own children so they can know where their roots are coming from:

One of the reasons I have an apartment in [the country] is because my husband is Norwegian and my kids are Norwegian and they might or they won't have connection with [the country] and this scares me a bit, because I hope that they will have some impact or contact with [the country], there is all the family, uncles and aunts who are still there.¹⁷⁷

But then, when Nazma was talking about her cultural identity, she admitted that the traditions from her country have never been anything important to her, that is why she might not have a very strong cultural belonging to her home country. Nazma was talking about her religious identity, which was a priority for her and her family. As according to Scholte religion is one of the transworld identities¹⁷⁸, therefore it has no limitations and can be practiced within different cultural traditions, it has not predetermined clearly her cultural belonging:

Even though I am not so traditional or follow some traditions from my home country, I don't, because we were brought up in that way that cultural traditions were not strong in our family, cause the religion has been the base for our family, not the culture. So I am not so interested in culture in itself, religion is more important to me. So in that maybe it is more difficult to hold on to a country when you don't have a specific culture or cultural events or whatever. But of course, we do have the food; we do have the clothes, those stuff, of course. So those things I do take them with me and to my children.¹⁷⁹

Even though Nazma doesn't have that strong connection with her country in the sense of specific traditions, she would still like to pass some cultural manifestations like food and clothes to her children.

Rutna was also talking about not being accepted completely. Unlike Nazma's and Kelly's experience of not being accepted by the local society, Rutna's problem

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Scholte, 2015, 244.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

came out from her family. She was saying that because of her Norwegian stepfather she couldn't have a self-confidence to recognize herself as a Norwegian:

-What do you feel yourself?

-Me? Right now? I feel I belong to Norway... But Norway doesn't belong to me.... Because always majority is the one who decides who is belong to Norway. [...] I don't need this...this acceptance from these people around me, most important is my family, my stepfather, my mother...maybe my friends but...

-Why do you feel that you are not accepted?

-I have been told this by my psychologist and I talk to my stepfather now and he said that I misunderstand him. He said that "You are Norwegian" and also [my ethnicity]. Yes, because I feel that as a stepfather you didn't accept me as Norwegian, so who is going to accept me? Before I didn't think that he accepts me, as he said I am Norwegian because of the paper, only on the passport, that's what he told me. That's really hurtful. And he said "No, no, that's not what I mean, of course you are Norwegian also", because it's good to hear, because I always feel that he doesn't accept me, for me I don't care what people think about me, because they don't know me, they don't know my childhood or who is raising me, I feel he is my father in Norway who is raising me, so many values come from him. Like I like to go to work even if I am sick, because of you, because you said don't let cold or something like this stop you. So I think many things come from him, I listen to him. And this is what ethnic Norwegian people do to children. So I feel that I am part Norwegian, not because of the society, maybe just a little bit, a little bit friends and a little bit society but it's mostly come from my household.¹⁸⁰

The identity formation of Rutna, therefore, closely related to her family in Norway, first of all her stepfather, as she was relating to him like to her blood father and she wanted to be accepted by him. But as he couldn't accept her being Norwegian in the sense of culture and background she could feel herself violated. Her belonging to Norway wasn't approved completely by her stepfather and it let her felt that if he doesn't accept her being Norwegian then she will never be able to feel herself such, as her stepfather is also a part of Norwegian society as well as a close family member.

Rutna was also talking about her religious identity as some big part of her, which she cannot change:

And also I got strong from [the country], I also cannot delete it, it's stuck in the system, the Buddhism, it's stuck in there, I cannot say I am not Buddhist. I cannot say I am practicing Buddhist, because if you say that you have to go to temple. But my family taught me to

¹⁸⁰ Pers.com. Rutna, 23.10.2015

be a true Buddhist you don't have to go to temple, they said we are Buddhist, but if you want to help somebody-help your close family first, before you start helping somebody. Like they say those European, they have so much time and money, why don't they try to help someone in family first, someone who struggles, with drugs or alcohol. Why do they start collecting money and help someone else? For us it's not logical, you need to help someone close first and then... Have strength to help other people, powerful together. Help yourself first, then, help your family and then society.¹⁸¹

Rutna's life is being guided much by Buddhism and her understanding of life and relations closely connected with her religion. This identifies her strong religious identity and she recognizes it as her cultural identity from her country. This is the way her family thinks and act and the first years of her life she has spent in her home country and she has learnt many things from those times.

According to Martin, media's opinion about immigrants also reflects on the identity formation.¹⁸² It is also claimed that even in most of the movies the actors who would represent the people of color don't appear often on the screens.¹⁸³ All the comments from media doesn't leave without a trace. Being so hardly accepted by society and finding own identity become like a competition for immigrants, who compete between each other for the place of "the most integrated":

Also media have a lot to do with how I feel. I try to question a lot, because I am curious...Why? And also when I had Persian friend, also got reflection on me... She said..."Why we are not Norwegian? We are Norwegian, but...". Because the media says that most of the foreigners are useless, we just get money and go. But they don't think when the Pakistanian and Persian before revolution, there was nobody much who had high education among those who are from Africa or Asia. So the foreigner worker also build the society, so why cannot we be called Norwegian? We are a part of Norwegian society! How long have you have to call yourself immigrant? How long? And I told her I understand what you mean. But she also try to say that she is more Norwegian then me. But I am also proud to be [my ethnicity]. Because sometimes immigrants compare each other, like compete each other...I don't like it.. There is no winning, how you feel inside. At the work also... To work with foreigner I feel is harder then with Norwegians sometimes because 2 foreigner they are more like... I

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Martin, "Intercultural Communication in Contexts," 205.

¹⁸³ James Kendra, "#Blackosvarbait: On the Importance of Casting," Racialicious—the Intersection of Race and Pop Culture; available at <http://www.racialicious.com/2016/02/01/blackoscarbait-on-the-importance-of-casting/> site accessed 13 April 2016.

don't feel like foreigner, but for them they feel like foreigner, so they have to mark. "I am not foreigner, you know? I am better than you! And all the rest of you!"... Even they don't speak so good but they have to show the skill in another way, have to be faster, have to be more like ass licking...¹⁸⁴

In the recent years when there are more and more immigrants in Norway and all of them want to be counted as Norwegian, they strive hard to prove it first of all to each other. That makes it more difficult to keep the cultural traditions from own country, as people are too concentrated on becoming a part of something new.

In the case with Kevin, he proudly represents his background if somebody asks him. Like Rutna, Nazma and Kelly he doesn't feel that strong need to identify himself as a Norwegian:

-Did people ever ask you in Norway about where you are from?

-Yeah, that is the most usual question actually. I'm proud of where I am from, so I always said that. Yes, I said that. And "why did you come here?", especially the older ones, they used to ask that. Then I said the same thing: "My mother was married to a Norwegian and I came here after".¹⁸⁵

Although Kevin didn't feel that need to prove others that he is Norwegian, after some time he started to question himself if he starts to be a Norwegian. By saying that, he meant the language, the humor, understanding each other when talking about certain things:

I can see that I have changed. But I am not sure is that about my personality, life experience or about the fact that I'm getting more Norwegian. It's a little bit complicated, because I can't identify myself as a Norwegian. But sometimes, sometimes I can... especially when I am talking with Norwegian and we are together with another person from another country who doesn't get what that Norwegian person is saying and I get it, you know. Then I figure maybe I am integrated, maybe a part of me become Norwegian. But then I ask myself a question or maybe because I have been here so long that I understand, because my way to react I cannot see that it is typical Norwegian. But if you ask me how I feel to be [the country] I would say I am 100% [the country]. But when I go to [the country], I have been to [the country] this summer, then I can also see that there was a difference between the way I was thinking and the way the most [citizens] were

¹⁸⁴ Pers.com. Rutna, 23.10.2015

¹⁸⁵ Pers.com. Kevin, 22.10.2015

thinking. I think it was more about my personality and also my life experience...¹⁸⁶

Kevin became a part of the Norwegian society without putting any special efforts to become one. The longer a person stays outside his original country, the more he feels himself related to the host country. Kevin kept his African's identity because during his first years of life in Norway he was not accepted by the children at school. He found the things and people quite different and hostile. He is not trying to hide his origins from the people and his African's identity is his primary one, although he admits that he has changed since he has moved to Norway and that when he travels back to his country he feels that the mindset with the local people is different.

Wit feels himself both Norwegian and [the nationality]. Wit is a representative of multiple identities, according to Lehtonen.¹⁸⁷, as he gives equal importance for the both allegiances:

-But would you say you are from Norway or from [the country]?

-Ehmm.. I'm from Norway, but another town, not from Oslo... And then they ask "where actually you are coming from?" – "from [the country]"

-Did this question "where you are actually from" ever made you feel uncomfortable?

-No, because they just think that you are adopted from somewhere, there are a lot of people who are adopted from China, from Korea, but they are asking me this because my Norwegian is pretty good. Nowadays people would still ask me this question because they think I am adopted. They are not used to talk with Asian people who can speak good Norwegian.¹⁸⁸

The reason Wit proudly tells about his origin is the will to avoid being misunderstood and taken as an adopt child. He explains it by his good skills of Norwegian. And the question people ask him about his origin means for him that they think he is adopted child who was brought from some Asian country. The question about his origin doesn't offend him and he doesn't feel sensitive about it; he is gone through his identity formation and clearly identifies in himself both affiliations.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Lehtonen, 2005, 55.

¹⁸⁸ Pers.com. Wit, 23.10.2015

When I asked Wit how did he feel when he once travelled back to his country, I got a question which one more time approved my conclusion about his double cultural affiliation:

-So in [the country] you felt more being at home?

-Norway is a home too. I have 2 homes. Because I am moving so much.

-Did you ever think of going back to [the country] and staying there for longer, not just for 6 months?

-Yes, of course. But the money run... Actually it's funny. When I am in [the country] I feel like I'm [nation], but when I am back in Norway I feel like I am more Norwegian. You know, because the people in Norway, in Oslo, they are still [nation], I think they are assholes. Because when you are in Norway, you have to follow the rules and you are in Norway. That's the thing. So when I'm here in Norway I feel like I am Norwegian.

-Did you ever feel yourself of [the minority] origin?

-Sometimes, when I was with my father's side family.

When I am with my mothers side family I feel [nation], when I visit my fathers side, I feel like I am a little bit, [the minority] you know.

Because when I am in my fathers side family, they talk to me like to. [the minority]. They still have that influence from my grandfather and grandmother. They have [the minority] name for me, [the minority] nickname for me.¹⁸⁹

It is possible that Wit was very flexible and found peace in all of his affiliations because of his family which was of a mixed origin. From the early childhood he learned how to be both and moving to another country gave him one more place to be related to. At the same time he criticizes inflexibility of other immigrants from his country, who came to live in Norway, saying that they have to follow the Norwegian society rather than staying inside their community and ignoring the outer world.

For Quan, affiliation with a country is strongly connected with the language. So he says that he always felt himself as a representative of his original country before he could finally speak good Norwegian:

Most of people when they asked where are you from question, they meant to ask if I am from Sola or Bryne, I was answering I was born in [the country] they were really surprised because they think I was born in Norway, because my Norwegian had come to a level when people don't think I am from my country anymore.

¹⁸⁹ Pers.com. Wit, 23.10.2015

At the beginning when I didn't speak Norwegian so good, I said I am from [the country]. When I was in high school yeah, I also said I am from [the country].¹⁹⁰

When I asked him what does he feel and think about his identity, he recognized both of his affiliations, but being Norwegian is primary for him:

I represent Norway. But I don't forget my roots, that I am [ethnicity]. But I represent Norway, because all my good friends, best friends are here, my family is here and I lived here for half of my life, so... My sister was born in Norway, so I talk Norwegian to her and my mom was living here 18 years so she also very good with Norwegian. So when she talks in [language] she uses some Norwegian words. But I actually talk more Norwegian than [language], as now I live alone, so when I talk with my crew and my sister I use Norwegian.

I am not old-fashioned [ethnicity]. My mother is kind of old-fashioned [ethnicity]. But I hang out with Norwegians a lot so I understand the culture, I keep up with the future. I can understand how the young people think in Norway. Let's say, I am not forgetting the roots, but I don't go with 100% tradition from [the country]. I am more like, living more like Norwegian. I moved out in early age so I learned a lot about the life, so... yeah. Learned grow up with Norwegian people, so I actually become a part of Norwegian culture.¹⁹¹

Quan's mother seems to have a strong cultural belonging to her origins and in some ways she wants to influence on Quan. But Quan says that he feels that the big part of his is Norwegian and therefore he doesn't strictly follow his original culture but is also proud of it and remembers it.

All of my respondents had to go through the time when they had to decide who they are indeed, what do they represent. There are many sources in the life of teenager that influence his or her identity formation. It comes from school, family, surrounding, media, and policies of the country. The push to question one owns identity sometimes come from somewhere you do not expect. Without such pushes the individual might have chosen another way for him or herself. Some of the respondents have experienced abruption from society when they have been trying to blend in and just become like others. Other respondents might have also experienced it but those situations were not that sensitive to them and didn't play a big role.

¹⁹⁰ Pers.com. Quan, 30.10.2015

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

Another observation, which is made is that the women whom I have interviewed tended to be more sensitive in the questions of culture and country belonging and any rejection would be taken as an offense. The men, on the other hand, were more proud of their origin affiliation and were less sensitive or not bothered at all by the locals who would question their origin.

Based on my data, I can agree with Lehtonen, who argued that identity findings and crisis of identity usually ends up giving privilege to one of the affiliations, while taking the rest as secondary, or in the other case, the cultural identity may represent symbiosis of the several cultural affiliations.¹⁹² But, sometimes it is hard to judge so precisely, as the person may feel affiliated only to one culture and see it as his or her primary one, but at the same time doesn't forget own roots and wants to inherit it to children. So there is no strict division between these two groups.

¹⁹² Lehtonen, 2005, 55.

Chapter Five

CONCLUSION

To conclude this research I would like to go back to my research questions. My first research question was: “How did the events from the early childhood influence on perception of life of the respondents?” First of all, I would like to say that a try to understand somebody’s personality and understand somebody’s life and challenges, couldn’t be done without looking at the picture in whole. When I am talking about the picture, I mean all the aspects of individual’s life at all times. Every event may change our opinions, life decisions, and attitudes. The important task is to find the keys to the identity search challenges. The results of this research show that there is indeed a connection between the personality and the events that happened in early childhood. The respondents who grew up without their parents and sometimes not knowing much about their parents had lead them to become insecure and therefore at the stage when they had to relocate to Norway it has reflected on their attitude to the surrounding, as in some situations they felt being bullied or treated bad by their peers. My cases illustrate the theory of Liisa Salo-Lee, who says that each individual should understand what the culture is and how his or her culture manages own ethnocentrism, also, how the values of their own culture may cause problems in multicultural work life.¹⁹³ In this sense intercultural competence plays an important role for immigrants’ integration process. To successfully integrate into the host society doesn’t mean to lose one’s background, instead, modern social organizations can cope quite well with pluralized cultural orientations.¹⁹⁴

The other question that I approached in my research is: “How did the events that happened during the relocation influence on the respondents’ identity formation?” I have concluded, that frequent change of residency has a reflection on how open to the change of environment respondents were. The respondents who have faced a big diversity in their home country found it easier to adapt in Norway and after a while

¹⁹³ Salo-Lee, “Intercultural Competence Research,” 132.

¹⁹⁴ Bommes, 2012, 19.

found their place in the new society. The relocations in early life had a potential influence on the respondents and their perception of the new environment and surrounding.

Another research question was: “Do the racism cases reflect on the identity formation? How do respondents identify their own belonging to community?” Answering this question, I would like to point out that there were more factors that had an influence on my respondents’ integration and finding own identity, than I have expected. The studies have shown that sometimes it’s not easy for immigrant children to become what they want to become and what they feel. It shows that the society sometimes doesn’t except them, by always putting them in the “immigrant” category of society. European countries in general may expect the newcomers to integrate and become like others, but it doesn’t happen on practice. On practice there are a lot of people who judge on the basis of looks and may always treat you as an “exotic outsider”. The interviews with the respondents show their struggles with becoming “Norwegian enough” and that no matter how they try, they still will be treated by some local people as foreigners, no matter how they feel and what passport they hold. Along with those who felt themselves Norwegian, half of my respondents prefer to identify themselves having double identity. They belong to the both cultures—the one they were born in and to the other one that has brought them up from their adolescence.

Another obstacle for immigrant children is education system in the host country. As this research shows, students had to deal with different educational systems that were helping them to learn the language, and those different educational approaches have shown different results and proved the theory of Bommes about the system.¹⁹⁵ School is one of the systems in the country that the immigrants have to become a part of. It is not only the task of an immigrant to become a part of the system, but it is also the goal of the system to make all the possible conditions to make it happen. For the respondents who didn’t get any help from the government to learn the language prior their classes at school it was more difficult to integrate and communicate at school; sometimes they even felt abandoned by the government, as they moved with family members and were not seen as immigrants who need help. However, they have also pointed out that because of that they became who they are

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

today and that the new environment helped them to learn overcome new tasks and obstacles in their lives.

As there were few cases in my research that illustrate such phenomena as identity formation and integration, the future research on more cases of first-generation could be relevant to make. It would be also interesting to do the future researches focused on the second-generation immigrants, their identity, life challenges connected to their background, the continuity of family cultural traditions.

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