

Bridges and barriers in intercultural relationships:
Exploring the encounters of ethnic Norwegians from two Charismatic
churches in Oslo with immigrants

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Abstract

Norway as a host society in Scandinavia has experienced an unprecedented growth of immigrants in the last few years. This dramatic change accompanies various challenges that involve both the host nationals and immigrants as they encounter each other in daily life. This study focuses on the perspectives of ethnic Norwegians on how they relate and interact with new members of society, as they meet them in their daily lives. The study discusses three major perspectives that shed some light on the attitudes, perceptions and concrete steps that certain host nationals have undertaken in relation to immigrants which show the impact that their values and perspectives have on their relationships. The different perspectives signify both the barriers and bridges in the intercultural relationships.

Key words: intercultural relationships, integration, host nationals, immigrants, intercultural encounters, host society, intercultural interactions

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Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Acknowledgments	3
1 Introduction	8
1.1 Relevance of the study	8
1.2 Objective of the study	10
1.3 Motivation for the selection of the topic	10
1.4 Background and context	13
1.5 Limitations of my research	15
2 Theoretical Framework	17
2.1 Intercultural competence	19
2.1.1 Components of intercultural competence	20
2.1.2 The expatriate perspective: ‘we there’	21
2.1.3 The immigration perspective: ‘they here’	22
2.1.4 The inclusive local perspective: ‘we all here’	22
2.1.5 The inclusive global perspective: ‘we all here and there’	23
2.2 Intercultural communication	23
2.2.1 Hermeneutic approach	24
2.3 Christian hospitality and the image of God	25
2.3.1 The spirit of hospitality: toward a pneumatological theology of hospitality	25
2.3.2 Hospitality in an ecology of faith	26
2.3.3 The image of God	28
2.4 Stereotypes	29
2.4.1 Stereotypes as ideology and fascination	30
2.4.2 An ecology of fear	31

3 Methodology	34
3.1 Qualitative research	34
3.2 Research question	35
3.3 Interviews	35
3.3.1 Semi-structured interview.....	36
3.3.2 Pilot interview	37
3.4 Observations in the field	38
3.5 Informants	39
3.6 My role as a researcher	40
3.7 Ethical considerations	43
4 Analysis	46
4.1 Relational attitudes	46
4.1.1 Culturally enriching	47
4.1.2 Relationally inclusive	50
4.1.3 Hospitality and love	51
4.1.4 Understanding of equality	55
4.2 Perception of the other	57
4.2.1 Threats to safety	58
4.2.2 Not willing or able to integrate	60
4.2.3 Exploiting the welfare system	62
4.3 Bridges to intercultural relationship	65
4.3.1 Language assistance	66
4.3.2 Inviting immigrants home	68
4.3.3 Being open and friendly	70
4.3.4 Curiosity	72

4.4 Summary	75
5 Conclusion	78
5.1 Summary of purpose and findings	78
5.2 Relationship to previous research	78
5.3 Research implications	79
5.4 Recommendations	80
5.5 Contribution to research	81
References	82
Appendices	87
Appendix A: Letter to participants.....	87
Appendix B: Consent letter.....	89

1 Introduction

1.1 *Relevance of the study*

Norway has changed; from being a country that used to send Norwegian immigrants to America in the 1800s, it is now a nation that receives ‘nine hundred sixteen thousand six hundred twenty-five thousand’ (Statistics Norway, 2018) immigrants to date. Another research report by Statistics Norway states that ‘immigration on a scale experienced in the Scandinavian countries over the last forty years has never been seen before’ (Pettersen & Østby, 2014, p. 76). Norway has, indeed, experienced this unprecedented growth as a host-society to immigrants from several countries and continents. More notably,

There has been a significant increase in immigration to Norway in the past twenty years, particularly since the EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007. Net immigrations of foreign citizens reaches its peak of approximately 48,000 per year in 2011-2012. At the end of 2015, almost 850, 000 people in Norway had an immigrant background – triple the number since 2000 (...) Norway has seen one of the highest rates of immigration in relation to population in the past decade and the demographics have – during a relatively short period of time – changed significantly as a result of this (NOU 2017:2, p. 2).

Norway is just one of several countries in Western Europe that is experiencing this dramatic change where ‘societies that previously thought of themselves as homogenous have seen the rise of ethnic, religious, and racial diversity’ (Alba & Foner, 2015, p. 1). With all these recent developments, the challenge to integrate an unprecedented number of immigrants represents various challenges. One of the challenges resulting from these current changes is making immigrants feel welcome and included in their new home society (p. 1). As the number of immigrants entering the country grows, the demand for immigrants to successfully integrate increases as well. Therefore, the necessity to help them integrate also increases. Integration is a concern because ‘in order to succeed in maintaining a high level of trust in Norwegian society, it is critical that newcomers are included in the most important social arenas’ (NOU 2017:2, p. 11). Thus, facing the challenge of inclusion is important. Norway recognizes the importance of doing so as it continues to find ways to address the integration of immigrants (NOU 2017:2). This current official Norwegian report released last year states that from their

reviewed studies, there is a clear indication that ‘discrimination does occur in Norway, in both labour and housing markets’ (NOU 2017:2, p. 7). The report further express that ‘these findings are a reminder that integration is a two-way process. Integration requires a great deal from the immigrants themselves, but also requires that they do not have to face negative discrimination from society at large’ (NOU 2017:2, p. 7). This discrimination, as stated in the report, could become a barrier to integration (NOU 2017:2, p. 7). This could be so, because ‘discrimination is a manifestation of a lack of recognition and can intensify the development of distrust’ (NOU 2017:2, p. 10) among immigrant population, which may lead to their seclusion.

With this in mind, the role of host nationals in facilitating the integration of immigrants has much importance. As it is pointed out by theorists of integration, Richard Alba and Nancy Foner, ‘all have to deal with incorporating millions of immigrants whose cultures, languages and religions and racial backgrounds often differ starkly from those of most long-established residents’ (2015, p. 1). While the host government does its role in making policies and opportunities for integration, and immigrants continue following and submitting themselves to those policies, individuals in the host society can also take part in the process. As various research, which emphasise the host community's role in integration show, ‘the responsibility for integration rests not with one group, but rather with many actors — immigrants themselves, the host government, institutions, and communities, to name a few’ (Penninx, 2003, para. 2). This means that facilitating the integration of immigrants is a shared effort between immigrants and their host society, which includes the host nationals¹.

Furthermore, NOU 2017:2 recognizes its need to improve in facilitating integration, stating:

If Norwegian society does not improve its ability to integrate immigrants and refugees from countries outside of Europe, there is a risk that increasing economic inequality could combine with cultural differences to weaken the foundation of unity and trust and the legitimacy of the social model (NOU 2017:2, p. 1).

¹ Local natives in the land who are ethnic Norwegians (have a common or shared cultural and historical heritage within their ethnic group)

This statement recognizes that the lack of ability to facilitate integration will have serious repercussions on society, could weaken the fundamental democratic values that Norway as a society is built upon. Moreover, the same report underlines that, ‘an improvement in the ability of Norwegian society to integrate migrants is important for combating the increased inequality and segregation’ (NOU 2017:2, p. 20). A need to improve is encouraged to combat marginalization. This statement recognizes a need to improve in integrating migrants to avoid segregation. Such improvement is crucial because ‘for immigrants to feel secure in their new homeland, they need to not only fulfil their own role to integrate but to perceive that the majority group is willing to engage in positive interaction with them’ (Mahonen & Lahti, 2015, p. 126). If the host-majority gives the impression that their attitude is more exclusive than inclusive, the goal of integration will be impaired. Recognizing the importance of partnership in integration, I am looking into the efforts undertaken by host nationals in the receiving society to assist the integration of immigrants; in doing so, I hope to contribute to the advancement of similar perspectives regarding integration.

1.2 Objective of the study

The aim of this study is to examine how ethnic Norwegians relate to immigrants during their daily encounters. More specifically, my intention is to analyse how Norwegian Christians interact with immigrants, identify specific behaviours that have an impact on their relationships, and bring to light various perspectives and values held by the research participants which influence their behaviour. Moreover, the study aims to know the concrete steps that locals have taken as they relate to immigrants during their daily encounters. Therefore, my research problem can be stated as: *How do Christian Norwegians from two Charismatic churches in Oslo relate to immigrants that they encounter in daily life?*

1.3 Motivation for the selection of the topic

Several factors compelled me to examine this research topic. One of these factors is my direct experience as an immigrant, particularly my own integration process. Though I had been married to an ethnic Norwegian prior to relocation, I came from the Philippines to Norway on a humanitarian visa. With this type of visa, I was not able to avail of the provision for free language learning given to refugees, asylum seekers and those with the family reunification visa. I was only able to benefit from free language training three years later, after acquiring a

family reunification visa. Before learning the national language, I experienced a lot of frustrations and disappointments while adjusting to my new environment. Truly, it was a huge leap, coming from a South-East Asian culture, to integrate in a Western culture. Anyone who has experienced moving from one country to another understands that the process of adjustment is not an easy road to walk. I had to face trying to understand the host culture, people's behaviour, and the language which, for the most part, made me feel lost and isolated. Aside from my daily need to survive as an immigrant, I had many questions and struggles that I knew could only be addressed by an ethnic Norwegian.

While learning and speaking the language is usually of primary importance in order to integrate, the experience I had was different. Thankfully, in the process of my adjustment as a newcomer within the new cultural environment, my ethnic Norwegian friends (the locals) offered me significant support in order to help me feel that I belonged, was accepted and included as a foreigner while waiting to formally learn the national language. Through my interactions and friendship with them, I learned many cultural codes that even my ethnic Norwegian husband was not able to teach me.

For instance, just dealing with the winter season alone involved learning a lot of things in order to adapt successfully. For example, I learned when to wear wool. Friends taught me when the best time to go skiing, how to ski, and which clothes were appropriate for such an occasion. Some of them gave me wool sweater, wool socks and wool tights in order to survive the winter that — during my first five months (during 2010) in Norway — was the coldest winter in a hundred years. Local friends taught me how to walk on slippery roads and which type of winter shoes were best to wear and could keep me warm. It was through friends that I learned the different cultural expressions to show politeness for different occasions and contexts. I learned a polite greeting for when I meet people for the first time. Being invited to locals' homes and birthday parties acquainted me with the many beautiful Norwegian cultural values and practices. Since I did not know how to speak and understand the language, they allowed me to be myself and use a language that I could speak. They accompanied me and aided me in identifying the things I could appreciate and love about their culture without abandoning and forgetting my own.

While I enjoyed the company of ethnic Norwegian friends, I learned that not all immigrants such as myself are fortunate enough to enjoy such friendships with members of the host

majority. Some of those immigrants I met from language school and from other meeting places have shared that they hardly have Norwegian friends, despite several years of residence. Being aware of the sentiments of other immigrants I talked to, it became apparent to me that this relational gap is not just a unique exception but a social phenomenon. There is, generally speaking, a relational gap between the locals and the immigrants. As stated, ‘the social distance between members of the native majority group and ethnic minorities is large in many Western European countries’ (Leszczensky, Stark, Flache, & Munniksma, 2015, p. 179). Norway as one of these societies is not exempted from such phenomenon.

This phenomenon I observed concerning the relationship between locals and immigrants also came up during the short fieldwork I did for a class assignment in a course called “Theory of Science and Qualitative Research” in the spring semester last year. To fulfil the assignment, I interviewed three female immigrants from different countries. They were not refugees but women who were also married to Norwegians. They shared their various experiences as immigrants regarding the process of their integration in this country. During the interview, they expressed that they hardly had any local friends. Despite being married to ethnic Norwegians and being part of an entire extended Norwegian family, speaking the local language, and holding jobs, still, they expressed the feeling that their sense of belonging was not fully internalized yet. In that interview, they explicitly expressed their desire to have spontaneous and closer friendships with people from the host majority group.

Lastly, the reason for choosing this topic is the heated issue and debate in Western societies about the influx of Syrian refugees during the autumn of 2015 (Østby, 2016, para. 6).

Refugees were fleeing from their country due to the long-term crisis resulting from the war. Many of the stories that were featured in the mainstream media then were mostly about the attitudes and reactions of people from countries who were likely to receive those refugees as immigrants. Some of those stories featured the resistance and negative attitudes of locals towards immigrants, signified by the closing of borders in countries wherein locals saw immigrants as enemies (Osborne, 2016, para.1). On the other hand, on that same occasion, there were also civil societies mobilised in several countries which demonstrated a great willingness to accept refugees (NOU 2017:2, p. 1).

All these factors motivated me to pursue research into this topic. As Hammersley and Atkinson say, social events provide an opportunity to explore some unusual occurrences; even chance encounters or personal experiences may provide motive and opportunity for research (2007, p. 23). In view of this, the primary inspiration for choosing this topic was my positive personal experiences of being assisted by ethnic Norwegian friends in the process of my integration.

1.4 Background and context

Those Norwegians I befriended during my first two years in Norway were my colleagues and people I met in a charismatic church I attended. These relational connections extended until I met several other new friends. Thus, in considering which group of people to serve as my informants for research, it was logical to choose from the same group of people I was acquainted with. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 50) state, research never starts from scratch; it always relies on common sense knowledge to one degree or another. The choice of Norwegian Charismatic churches for this research was the result of my relational connection with certain individuals in Oslo.

I visited the first of these two Charismatic churches two years ago, after receiving a personal invitation from a Norwegian pastor. In the summer of 2017, the pastor invited me to his church again, to participate as a prayer leader during their annual prayer festival. Even though I already knew the pastor, I did not know how the church interacted with immigrants and what their views on immigration were. As I participated in the festival, I observed that this church seemed to be more open to having immigrants as part of their leadership. This was markedly different from other congregations I had visited as I travelled and preached around the country. This particular church in Oslo is a Norwegian speaking congregation, composed mostly of Norwegians, but it was significantly different in certain aspects. For example, the participation of African and Asian immigrants in church management and leadership was common. People of different ethnicities could be seen on stage as leaders or participating behind the scenes, operating the sound system and screen projector. In my seven years of living in Norway, after having travelled among different churches and denominations, this was the first time I had seen something like this.

The setting of the study in this first church was selected based on the positive feedback received from immigrants friends who had enjoyed attending services at the church, and by my own observations upon visiting it myself. These observations and reflections I had sparked my interest to examine this church further. I informed the Norwegian pastor of the church about my research and focus. I sent him my project description and the interview guide. As someone who knew me personally, he became the gatekeeper for access to the informants or respondents from the church community. The gatekeeper had to be informed because the setting has boundaries that are clearly marked and is considered as a formal organization (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 49).

The other Charismatic congregation in Oslo where the other informants attended has a pastor who personally works with immigrants. I learned that he used to go to a refugee centre in Oslo and visited the homes of immigrants. He leads church outreaches in the streets of Oslo, where the church (Norwegian speaking) members pray for people. This congregation is part of a large, international Charismatic denomination.

Charismatic and Pentecostal Christian churches emphasize the practical application of faith, described as living out what one believes. Kim and Kim (2008, p. 170) state that ‘Pentecostalism has a greater orientation toward power which encourages mass movements and public demonstrations of solidarity’. Pentecostal theologians, like Steven Land (1993), argue that ‘Pentecostalism necessarily incorporates a practical concern and a missionary intent; a spirituality as essentially “a passion for the kingdom”, which combines ‘orthodoxy (right praise/belief), orthopraxy (right practice) and orthopathy (right affections) because the Holy Spirit is the spirit of love’ (Land quoted in Kim & Kim, 2008, p. 170). Another characteristic that is mentioned describes Charismatics as having ‘a great openness among them. They are notably evangelical, but not narrow; they emphasize love and mercy and the gifts of the Spirit are exercised by the whole body for the whole body not excluding, of course, the needs of visitors’ (Pytches, 1985, p. 15-16). All these descriptions are the basic characteristics that uniquely define them as a movement.

Furthermore, my interest with this group of Christians began after learning about their personal views and opinions regarding the influx of Syrian refugees in Europe which dramatically increased in 2015. The discussions I had with them conveyed a positive view in welcoming immigrants and I was curious about whether this was a general view among

members of Christian Charismatic groups. As such, the choice of selecting informants or respondents who are part of Charismatic churches strikes an interest. With an inflow of immigrants in Norway changing the social landscape from homogeneous to heterogeneous, it was interesting to examine how the openness of the group to the “work of the Spirit” was applied by individual members who experience the resulting changes in Norwegian society brought by the said inflow and how they interact with immigrants in their daily lives.

The international connections and network of Charismatic churches is another interesting point to study as these possibly give the churches certain competencies in relating to people from cross-cultural backgrounds. To note, these churches *per se* as Christian organizations are not the focus of investigation. It is not what they do as a collective group that I am interested in but how individuals who attend these churches may have influenced in shaping the behaviour of the selected informants.

Another key point is that these churches are in Oslo, which has ‘thirty two percent of those with an immigrant background from Asia and Africa live in Oslo’ (Østby, 2015, p.11). This figure shows that the largest population of immigrants in the entire country live in Oslo, a fact that is beneficial to the development of the research problem (Hammersley, 2007, p. 28) which intends to investigate the relationship of ethnic Norwegians with immigrants. The large number of immigrants in the area ensures that the host nationals have an increased chance of meeting migrants in the church and in other social arenas.

1.5 Limitations of my research

As the study is concerned primarily with the personal perspectives of host nationals regarding their perceived role in the integration of immigrants, specific limitations abound. Firstly, the qualitative research data is limited to the descriptions provided by a small sample of respondents who relate to immigrants whom they encountered in their daily lives. The small sample of participants was based on the narrow aim of the study, limited the information power that was provided in the findings (Malterud, Siersma & Guassora, 2015, pp. 2-3). While these respondents extended aid, assistance and friendship to specific immigrants, the study did not include interview of immigrants to ask whether or not their integration process was being positively affected by their interaction with the respondents. Secondly, my participant observation was only done twice in a church setting, to examine the dynamism of

interaction between host majority and immigrants. Other social arenas where the respondents interact with immigrants and encounter them on a daily basis was not observed. Thirdly, the timeframe dedicated to the study is short, which limited the collection of data that could have enhanced and broadened the study findings. Lastly, the respondents spoke Norwegian as their first language and the interviews were conducted in English; the mode of communication used could have affected how they expressed certain feelings and views given that English was their second language.

Despite the above limitations, the study managed to produce meaningful findings that allowed the research to meet its aims. Future research may attempt to expand the findings of the study by exploring the perspectives of immigrants who have existing friendships with the host nationals and how it affected them in their integration process.

All the factors I have mentioned above are precedents that led me to focus on this topic dealing with the relationship between host nationals with immigrants. After this chapter, various discussions regarding the focus of inquiry will be given in detail in the following chapters, in order to elaborate on the perspectives behind the chosen topic. Foremost to these perspectives is the discussion of the different theories that served as the framework for the study, and these are presented in the next chapter.

2 Theoretical Framework

In the book *Strangers No More*, Richard Alba and Nancy Foner say that ‘there is every sign that there will be continued demand for immigration, creating inflows of new arrivals in the years ahead’ (2015, p. 2). In the continuing demand for immigration, they argue that integration is a central question as to how immigrants and their children become full members of the societies where they now live (p. 2). This means that as immigration continues, the demand for integration will continue as well. Thus, different perspectives on integration are continually being explored. Currently, integration is a well-explored topic within the field of immigration. Various studies related to integration focus mostly on immigrants, such as the perspectives of immigrants in the process of integration, immigrants’ efforts in navigating within their new host society, and the like (Algan, Bissin & Verdier, 2012; Berry, Phinney & Vedder, 2006; Bochner, Lin & Mcleod, 1979; Fokkema & de Haas, 2011; Kim, 2001; Ray, 2002). Other studies talk about the factor of host-communities in integration (Penninx, 2003; Reitz, 2002). Despite all these studies, research that focuses on the role of the majority group in facilitating the integration of immigrants is rather limited.

The literature that helped direct my research was that of Salo-Lee (2006, p. 134) who states that ‘the successful integration of immigrants is a mutual process’. This statement suggests that integration relies not only on the effort of immigrants, but also on the effort of host nationals. This recognizes the need for host nationals to assist the immigrants in the process of integration. Mahonen and Jasinskaja-Lahti underscore the important role that the host majority has in the integration of immigrants by suggesting that ‘instead of focusing just on improving immigrants’ personal abilities to function in the new surroundings, equal efforts should be made to enable positive intergroup contact between newcomers and host nationals’ (2015, p. 134). This implies that efforts to integrate should not fall squarely on the shoulders of immigrants. With this perspective in mind, I am deviating from the mainstream research focus on immigrants and their role in facilitating their own integration. Instead, I am looking into the efforts undertaken by host nationals in the receiving society to assist the integration of immigrants; in doing so, I hope to contribute to the advancement of similar perspectives regarding integration.

Rinus Penninx, a Dutch theorist on integration, affirms the perspective that the integration process involves two parties: the immigrants, and the receiving society and its institutions,

which interact with these newcomers (Penninx, 2003, para. 3). He further states that this partnership is very crucial because ‘it is the interaction between the two that determines the direction and the ultimate outcome of the integration process’ (para. 3). This two-way process happens during the socio-cultural integration of immigrants, whereby they acquire a sense of belonging and acceptance from the receiving country (Ersanili & Koopmans, 2010, p. 778). In other words, the way that immigrants advance towards integration is also the result of the cause and effect experienced in response to the majority group in the host-society.

Another perspective that mentions the importance of a partnership offered by the host society in facilitating integration proposes that the process of intercultural adaptation and the development of a sense of belonging in immigrants is built, advanced and activated as they (immigrants) receive relational support from the host society (Gulzhan, 2014, p. 778). This perspective sees the host-majority as a crucial partner in achieving the goal of immigrant integration, and highlights the importance of mutuality between the two role players in integration. The crucial role of the host majority in helping immigrants feel that they belong to their host society is an important part of integration. Mahonen and Jasinskaja-Lahti (2015, p. 126) state that the whole process of integration involves meeting halfway. On the other hand, ‘negative treatment received from the majority group is seen to lead to worse socio-cultural adaptation outcomes’ (p. 127). This suggests that positive attitude from the host majority advances the integration of immigrants while negative treatment hinders it.

Hence, maximum impact for immigrant integration will be accomplished if partnership between two parties is achieved (p. 134). In other words, the dynamics of integration are more complex and involve more than just immigrants learning the host country’s primary language, getting a job in the host-society, and establishing themselves economically or participating in political activities (such as voting). There is a dire need for positive attitudes and behaviours on the part of the host nationals, to motivate immigrants in pursuing integration.

All these perspectives mentioned support the idea that host-majority plays a major part in ascertaining whether or not immigrants integrate successfully in the host society. This is something that the host majority may recognize as the integration of immigrants continues to be studied. At the very least, the integration process should include more than just governmental efforts currently in place and the efforts of immigrant themselves; host individuals within the receiving country play a key part in the integration of immigrants as well.

While the role of immigrants themselves is integral in the whole process of integration, assuming that successful integration is solely the responsibility of or completely within the power of immigrants is an inaccurate assumption, at best. Studies about integration must consider the roles of both the immigrants and their host societies because ‘adaptation is a two-way process’ (Strang & Ager, quoted in Snyder, 2012, p. 71). Efforts to make integration successful should be undertaken not only by immigrants, but also the receiving society, specifically individuals who are part of the majority group. Susanna Snyder (2012, p. 71) recognizes the idea of immigrants and the majority host group having a mutual role in integration; regardless of ‘how strong adaptation wishes and skills, a refugee's ability to adapt to the new society and the form that this takes place is largely dependent on the attitudes and policies of the established communities’. Furthermore, ‘the usually chequered responses by local authorities, service providers and local residents are key’ (Vervotec, quoted in Snyder, 2012, p. 71). All these suggest the importance of local individuals in host societies providing assistance to immigrants during their integration process.

Using a perspective that emphasizes the need for mutual partnership in integration, this study explores the role of the majority group in a host society in facilitating the integration of immigrants. Integration, for the purposes of this study, is defined as ‘a sense of dignity and belonging that comes with acceptance and inclusion in a broad range of societal institutions’ (Alba & Foner, 2015, pp. 1-2). In view of this definition, a sense of belonging develops when immigrants are accepted by the majority group in the host society. When host nationals extend their acceptance of immigrants via practices of inclusion, immigrants can feel welcome and experience belonging in the host society.

2.1 Intercultural competence

Darla Deardorff, one of the contributors in developing intercultural competence theory, defines intercultural competence as ‘effective and appropriate behaviour and communication in intercultural situations in specific contexts’ (2011, p. 66). These behaviours in specific contexts reflect how the informants relate to immigrants in various situations in daily life. According to intercultural competence theory, some of the appropriate behaviours that an interculturally competent person exhibits are empathy, open-mindedness, respect, understanding and lack of prejudice towards the *other*. Another definition of this theory that is applicable to the collected data is from George Yancey who says that it is ‘the ability to work and develop primary relationships with individuals from distinct cultures’ (2009, p. 377).

Based on these definitions, respondents in the study who exhibited intercultural competence are those who had established relationships with immigrants.

2.1.1 Components of intercultural competence

According to Michael Byram, one of the major proponents of Intercultural Communication Competence Theory, intercultural competence has three major indicators for how competence is demonstrated by individuals in intercultural communication and interaction. One of these indicators is *attitude* or *motivation* (1994, p. 34). Specifically, these are:

Attitudes towards people who are perceived as different in respect of the cultural meanings, beliefs and behaviours they exhibit, which are implicit in their interaction with interlocutors from their own social group or others. They need to be attitudes of curiosity and openness of readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment with respect to other meanings, beliefs and behaviours. (Byram, 1994, p. 34)

Another indicator for intercultural competence is *knowledge* (p. 35). The knowledge that individuals bring into the interaction is twofold: First, is the knowledge the interlocutor acquired about social groups and their cultures in his own country and similar knowledge that the interlocutor has from his own country; for example, knowledge of the history of another country. Secondly, knowledge represents processes of interaction at individual and societal levels. This knowledge is not acquired automatically but is acquired in the process of interaction (Byram, 1994, p. 35). An example of knowledge in intercultural communication would be social markers. In other words, the interlocutor acquaints himself with possible things that he can discover and learn from the *other*, such as acceptable behaviours within a specific culture and context (p. 35). According to this component or indicator, the greater the interaction between an individual and the interlocutor, the more that the knowledge about the *other* evolves.

The last component of this model of intercultural competence is *skills*. Possessing this indicator means that the interlocutor has the ability to translate his or her knowledge into actions. He or she can use his or her knowledge to develop certain skills that can further improve intercultural interactions and relationships (Byram, 1994, p. 37).

In summary, these three components — *attitude*, *knowledge*, and *skills* — can be used to gauge the competence of an individual in intercultural communication. The ability to which an individual demonstrates these three components is an indication of which intercultural competence is achieved and developed.

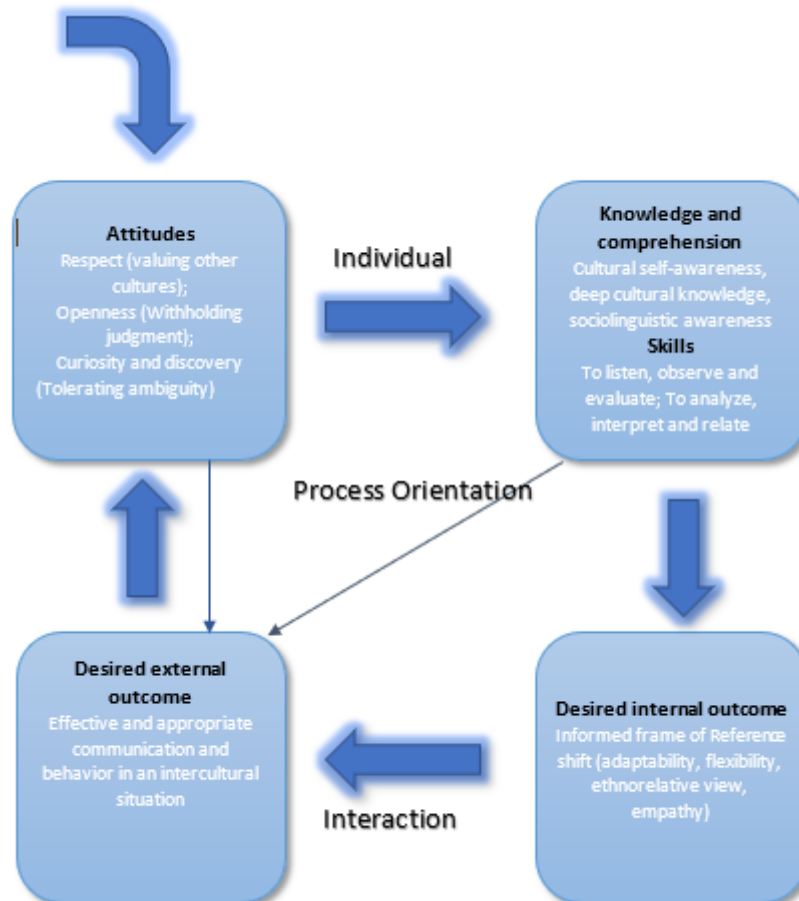


Figure 1. Deardorff Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 33)

2.1.2 The expatriate perspective: ‘we there’

Sara Salo-Lee (2006, p.131) discusses four different perspectives that show what an interculturally competent person is like. These specific perspectives are relevant because they are reflected in how the respondents gained their ability to relate with immigrants despite their cultural differences. She calls one of these perspectives ‘the expatriate’. This perspective is also known as *overseas effectiveness* and is embodied in someone who is an Interculturally Effective Person (IEP) (Kealey, quoted in Salo-Lee 2006, p.131). According to this concept, an IEP exhibits behavioural and adaptive skills in intercultural contexts. These skills include: An attitude of modesty and respect; relationship-building; understanding the concept of

cultural empathy; lack of prejudice; and behavioural flexibility (Salo-Lee, 2006, p. 132). Possessing cultural empathy means that the interlocutor realises how culture is reflected in practice and can justify how his own culture influences his perception and behaviour, how he manages his own ethnocentrism, and how the values of one's own culture may cause problems in intercultural relationship (2006, p. 132). This perspective fosters a recognition of cultural differences and the need to show respect and understanding for these differences.

2.1.3 The immigration perspective: 'they here'

In our globalized world, intercultural competence is not just necessary for expatriates who live abroad temporarily; immigrants who settle down and seek work in another country need it as well (Salo-Lee, 2006, p.133). Immigrants need this competence in order to integrate in and adapt to their new cultural environment. Moreover, Young Yun Kim (quoted in Salo-Lee, 2006, p.133) mentions that this competence develops during an intercultural transformation process. The model of host communication competence includes factors which influence this process, namely, 'environmental factors such as host receptivity and host conformity pressure' (Salo-Lee, 2006, p.133). This means that receptivity of host nationals assists the intercultural competence of the immigrant. Another factor is communication, such as 'ethnic interpersonal or host interpersonal communication, and media communication' (p.133). According to this concept, the immigrant develops intercultural competence as a result of a transformation process which brings "social currency" that empowers immigrants and makes active participation in civic society possible (p. 134). In other words, the intercultural competence of the host country will help develop the intercultural competence of the immigrant.

2.1.4 The inclusive local perspective: 'we all here'

After living overseas, expatriates return home. By then, they have gained new multicultural identities and new competencies which can be utilized in the home country as they encounter people from different cultural backgrounds (Salo Lee, 2006, p. 134). In most cases, the intercultural competence gained by repatriates is not recognized and often goes unused in their own home country (p. 134); however, such competencies can still be translated and used in a multicultural environment. This being the case, the new multicultural competencies are utilized by the individual on a personal level as he or she interacts with others from another culture.

2.1.5 The inclusive global perspective: ‘we all here and there’

Based on this concept, intercultural competence is useful for every individual. This kind of competence is needed because of the rise in multiculturalism, with the world fast becoming a “global village” where people from different cultures and languages work and often interact in groups or teams. Given this context, *participative competence* ‘which means the ability to participate productively in the common projects, give contribution to the task at hand, share knowledge, communicate experience and stimulate common learning of the group’ requires consideration (Salo-Lee, 2006, p. 135). Participative competence seeks willingness to negotiate the differences between cultures so that an atmosphere that is conducive to learning from each other can be fostered, despite cultural ambiguities.

2.2 Intercultural communication

Intercultural communication is a concept that attempts to reconcile the differences between the cultures of people that live and encounter one another within a multicultural setting. The theory is relevant to this study, which explores how respondents relate to strangers who have different cultural perspectives and backgrounds. As Øyvind Dahl describes it, ‘intercultural communication is building bridges of understanding between different people in different circumstances’ (2006, p. 7). Thus, it is important to consider this particular perspective as respondents try to understand the migrants they meet in their daily lives.

Another theorist on intercultural communication such as Milton J. Bennett (1998, p. 42) states that intercultural communication is a field of interest. The study of intercultural communication tries to answer questions such as, ‘how do people understand one another when they do not share a common cultural experience? (...) What kind of communication is needed by a pluralistic society to be both culturally diverse and unified in common goals’ (p.42)? This theory suggests that one aim of intercultural communication is to navigate possible ways for people in multicultural societies to live together with respect and unity amidst diversity.

Intercultural communication as an academic discipline uses different approaches that promote understanding and respect between individuals that are involved with encounters across cultures. Some of the most common approaches employed in the study of intercultural communication include ‘the process approach; the functionalist approach; the semiotic

approach; the phenomenological approach; and the hermeneutic approach' (Dahl, 2006, p. 8). However, not all the approaches employed in intercultural communication will be discussed here. Only the approach that was reflected in the analysis chapter will be focused on.

2.2.1 Hermeneutic Approach

This recent development within the field of intercultural communication was influenced by a concept formulated by German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (quoted in Dahl, 2006, p. 17) called the *horizon of understanding*. This horizon is 'the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point' (Gadamer, quoted in Dahl, 2006, p. 17). The horizon is not static; it is dynamic because it constantly evolves along with the change of a person's vantage point. In other words, it is something that can always be negotiated. In the field of intercultural communication, the horizon of understanding is a useful concept because it offers an alternative way of understanding the cultural *other*.

The whole process of understanding the *other* takes place when the interlocutor in a communication suspends his judgment until proper interpretation is achieved. A Finnish researcher, Marita Svane (quoted in Dahl, 2008, p. 89), introduces this process of understanding, calling it the *circle of understanding*. This perspective underlines a model for the interpretation of communication between individuals in developing understanding using a *dialectic approach* (Dahl, 2008, p. 90). All these imply that there is a way to understand the cultural *other* by interpreting the *other's* behaviour and actions based on his cultural context. This suggests a method used whereby the interlocutor in intercultural communication searches for truth in order to understand and bridge cultural differences.

According to Svane (2006, pp. 47-48), this circle of understanding has three stages. The first stage is *pre-understanding or presuppositions* (Dahl, 2008, p. 90). This stage is our own personal understanding of self, others and the world. At this point in the communication, we only understand our own vantage point based on how we see things within our cultural frame of reference. The second stage is *understanding or meaning production* during the communication which means that the interlocutor in the communication process enters into a dialogue and negotiates meaning that, in turn, eliminates cultural prejudice. The individual begins to understand things not only from his own vantage point but also from the vantage point of the *other* (p. 90). The last stage is *post-understanding or reflective phase*. This is when pre-understanding is changed because a new frame of reference is gained and new

meaning is achieved, leading to new interactions and communications (p. 90). Furthermore, when individuals in intercultural communication engage in a hermeneutical circulating process, the complexity in intercultural encounter is minimized.

2.3 Christian hospitality and the image of God

The two basic Christian beliefs of hospitality and being created in the image of God were apparent and repeated concepts mentioned by the respondents. In the analysis chapter of this study, these religious beliefs of the respondents are discussed. They are noteworthy because these are the reasons used by the respondents as their motivation behind why they nurtured a welcoming attitude towards immigrants.

2.3.1 The spirit of hospitality: toward a pneumatological theology of hospitality

In relation to the belief focusing on hospitality by charismatic church members, Amos Yong, a Pentecostal theologian, coined a concept called a pneumatological theology of hospitality. He proposes three reasons why the charismatic or Pentecostal belief held by individuals in such denominations make them more welcoming to and accepting of strangers (in this case, immigrants). First, Yong states that ‘Christian hospitality is grounded in the hospitable God who through the Incarnation has received creation to himself and through Pentecost has given himself to creation’ (2007, p. 62). He further explains that the hospitality of God is seen in the Incarnation, when Jesus embraced the world through his life, death and Resurrection. If this is the case with the Incarnation, Yong argues that God’s hospitable act was revealed during Pentecost, when the presence and activity of the Spirit manifested Himself on the disciples. Yong goes on to state that by giving Himself to men through the Holy Spirit, God:

Welcomes and embraces all of humanity; at another level, human being receive the gift of God, effectively hosting the Spirit of God in their bodies, as it were. Incarnation and Pentecost, then, are the ultimate expressions and manifestations of divine hospitality through which God both gives of himself to the world and invites the world to receive the salvation that comes through divine visitation (Yong, 2007, p. 62).

In other words, hospitality is a practice not just because it is commanded in the Bible, but because first and foremost, hospitality is exemplified by God Himself. This foundational understanding regarding divine hospitality serves as the basis for another perspective, which holds that ‘Christian hospitality is enacted by the charismatic practices of the church as its members are empowered by the Holy Spirit’ (Yong, 2007, p. 62). Charismatic perspectives recognize that it is through the work of the Holy Spirit that members are empowered to integrate their faith through works of justice and mercy. ‘The hospitality of God is thus embodied in a hospitable church whose members are empowered by the Holy Spirit to stand in solidarity and serve with the sick, the poor, and the oppressed’ (Rhoads, quoted in Yong, 2007, p. 63). Within the Pentecostal paradigm, charismatic believers perform their Christian duties based on the ‘leading’ and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. In addition, gestures of hospitality are part of the basic life and ministry of the church. As God exemplified hospitality to the church, the church should then become the channel of God in extending hospitality to the world.

The third proposition of Yong is this: Christian hospitality is realizable in a world of many faiths only when it is reciprocated by those of other faiths, and such reciprocity is made possible by the Spirit who is poured out on all flesh (2007, p. 64). This perspective adheres to the idea that the hospitality received by the church from God can be reciprocated by extending hospitality to those of other faiths. The outpouring of the Spirit on a person enables him to show hospitality to others. As a person opens his heart to God’s hospitality, he or she can open his or her home to receive strangers.

2.3.2 Hospitality in an ecology of faith

According to Susanna Snyder author of *Asylum-Seeking, Migration and Church* (2012), hospitality is an ancient practice of Christianity that can be traced back to the Old Testament, as illustrated in the life of Ruth, and to the New Testament, as seen in the example of the Syro-Phoenician woman (Ruth chaps. 1-4. & Mark 7:24-30). Both these women were typified as immigrants and were received by the locals as such. Snyder argues that hospitality is practiced by the receiving society when an ecology of faith is exercised. From a biblical point of view, Snyder offers three perspectives that are reflected in the respondents’ own

perspectives which facilitate a welcoming attitude towards the strangers or immigrants they meet in their daily lives.

The first perspective states that hospitality is ‘a duty of care: you shall not oppress the *ger*’ (Snyder, 2012, p. 164). *Ger* (plural form *gerim*) is a Hebrew term that refers to ‘a ‘resident alien’ or ‘sojourner’ and understood loosely as someone who lived among the people but who remained different and was, as a result, likely to be vulnerable’ (p. 166). Extending hospitality to such persons is a repeated command and exhortation given to the Israelites, or God's people, and refers to the act of taking care of strangers who are oppressed and needy. ‘*Ger* is translated in the Common English Bible as “immigrant”’ (Carroll, 2013, p. 87) and the command to be hospitable towards immigrants or strangers was given by God to His people, should they encounter such persons given that they were once strangers in another land as well. ‘Care for the sojourner was a moral demand that set God’s people apart from the other nations; even more significantly, it was grounded in God’s person. Not to be hospitable, individually or collectively, merited the wrath of the prophets’ (Carroll, 2013, p. 96). This means that, to believers, hospitality is a reflection of God’s character and is a trait which requires to be exemplified by His people; to do otherwise could be seen as misrepresenting God’s nature. Snyder further states that ‘the call to protect and support *gerim* in the Israelite community can therefore also be understood as a general guiding principle for Christians wishing to relate to migrants today’ (2012, p. 166). This implies that gestures focused on receiving people on the move are part of a greater general command that needs to be heeded.

Secondly, hospitality is a recognition of the *other* ‘not simply as one who requires help, but also as one who brings new and God-given life’ (Snyder, 2012, p. 167). This meant that meeting strangers and extending hospitality to them was seen as part of bringing life. ‘It is through encountering difference that we can develop, gain new insights and be transformed: Identity is a result of the distinction from the *other* and the internalization of the relationship to the *other*’ (Volf, quoted in Snyder, 2012, p. 175). The author presents a perspective how practicing hospitality benefits not only the one receiving it, but also the people who are extending it. Welcoming and receiving strangers becomes possible when strangers or immigrants are perceived as contributors in — rather than burdens to — the receiving society.

Lastly, in an ecology of faith, hospitality persists when there is one to one, personal, and embodied encounters between those in a position of weakness and those with power (Snyder, 2012, p. 177). Snyder quantifies what true hospitality is: True hospitality takes place when there is an interaction, physical meeting and conversation between two parties. She further points out:

This feature suggests how important basic, concrete human contact is in bringing about new attitudes and new life. Encounters between individual strangers, and between individuals and groups, are a vital element in an ecology of faith—especially where there are differentials in power. A face-to-face encounter can lead to the building of personal relationship and it is through such relationships that assumptions and stereotypes can be broken down and support can be offered. Christians have affirmed the importance of engaging with people pushed towards the edges of society in real, physical ways and through offering friendship (Snyder, 2012, p. 179).

This suggests that hospitality arises during occasions of informal meeting, wherein such meetings are voluntary acts of individuals, and encounters between one stranger and another are not professionally organized. Hospitality is a deliberate choice of individual Christians, to make room for others in their hearts and lives. As Daniel Carroll (2013, p. 78) puts it, the key is having an attitude of hospitality, a gracious spirit, towards strangers. On the other hand, passivity or the ‘exclusion of the stranger—any stranger—might be rebellion against God and an ignoring of something dear to him’ (p. 78). Without an attitude of hospitality among host societies, immigrants are more likely to be marginalized and excluded. Gestures of hospitality towards strangers allow them to feel welcome and received by the host society. This is why ‘the theme of hospitality is relevant to the immigration debate’ (Carroll, 2013, p. 78) — this biblical perspective can encourage the majority group to develop an attitude of hospitality and to practise actions of hospitality towards strangers (p. 78). This concept recognizes that biblical understanding of hospitality contributes to shape an attitude that welcomes immigrants.

2.3.3 The image of God

This biblical perspective was mentioned by the respondents as the inspiration for their favourable attitude towards immigrants. The Christian theological concept regarding the creation of human beings is relevant to the issue of immigration and why immigrants need to be received positively within a host society. Carroll argues that the ‘creation of all persons in the image of God must be the most basic conviction for Christians as they approach the challenges of immigration today’ (Carroll, 2013, p. 47). This also suggests that, in so-called fundamental Christian countries, this can be the beginning point of all arguments concerning issues of immigration on matters of policy making or border control that might imply exclusion. It is mentioned in the biblical account of creation, Genesis Chapter 1, ‘verses 26 and 27 that every person, male and female, is made in the image of God’ (Carroll, 2013, p. 46). The implication of this is that regardless of race, ethnicity, religion and cultural background, humans received an equal amount of God-given dignity, value, rights, and destinies on earth. As such, even people who move across borders and become immigrants possess inherent worth, regardless of where they originated from.

The Christian respondents in this study expressed an understanding that the biblical principle of inherent human dignity must lead them ‘to care for the vulnerable on the one hand, and to the human entitlement to dignity and the responsibility of providing for family on the other’ (Carroll, 2013, p. 45). This concept promotes the basic idea that host countries of immigrants who embrace fundamental Christian values can make this theological concept a primary basis for their attitude towards immigrants.

2.4 Stereotypes

‘Intercultural encounter is often a complex experience of: adventure and frustration, similarity and differences, hostility and hospitality, community and estrangement. Such interpersonal encounters often involve strong feelings of varying kind which affect the communication in different ways’ (Illman, 2006, p. 101). The author suggests that intercultural encounters involve contrasting emotions that are complex. This complexity in intercultural encounter was reflected in what the respondents expressed in their interaction. Such complexity is inevitable due to very varied and opposing worldviews of people who are involved in the encounter. Often though, what makes intercultural encounters complicated are the stereotypes that people project towards others (Snyder, 2012, p. 72). In this study, respondents revealed how

stereotypes that they held regarding immigrants contributed to an unfavourable attitude towards the immigrants that they encountered in their daily lives. To understand the concept of stereotyping, it is important to mention that stereotypes exist and are reinforced by mass media. Allport states that stereotypes are ‘socially supported, continually revived and hammered in by our media of mass communication — novels, short stories, newspaper items, movies, stage, radio and television’ (1954, p. 195). In other words, stereotypes are created and are influenced by various external sources presented to us.

While stereotypes are not always negative, ‘whether it is favourable or unfavourable, a stereotype is an exaggerated belief associated with a category. Its function is to justify (rationalize) our conduct in relation to that category’ (Allport, 1954, p. 187). This means that stereotypes are used as an excuse by people to justify a behaviour in relation to the *other*. A stereotype is usually an image that is created concerning a specific group and which is then reinforced when it is affirmed by an experience or by its sources. A stereotype is established when it is presented with a specific image of and judgment about the *other*. Whether the stereotype is positive or negative, it remains problematic because it is often a hasty generalization that is ‘unsupported by facts and develops from a sharpening and overgeneralization of facts’ (Allport, 1954, p. 186). It is intricate because of the way it affects people's mind and behaviour. Bennett (1998) adds that stereotypes of both kinds are problematic in intercultural communication because these give us a false sense of understanding of our communication partners and are often only partially correct. Furthermore, stereotypes may become self-fulfilling prophecies, where we observe others in selective ways that confirm our prejudice (p. 6). These views suggest that stereotypes are often a misrepresentation of the *other*.

2.4.1 Stereotypes as ideology and fascination

Pablo Cristoffanini a contributor in the book, *Intercultural Alternatives* further explains why stereotypes are problematic by saying that these add to the complication in intercultural communication as stereotypes ‘constitute an inadequate way of representing others because they isolate certain aspects, behaviours and inclinations which are removed from their historical and cultural context and attributed to all the individuals in a social group’ (Cristoffanini, 2004, p. 86). Stereotypes are destructive in intercultural encounters because

these put one social group into one general category without contextual perspective and understanding. As pointed out by Cristoffanini, ‘the way in which we categorize the world and the significance we give to things influence our behaviour’ (p. 81). Furthermore, in a broader context, stereotypes are tied to certain ideological creations and arguments that legitimise dominance, exploitation and inequality (Cristoffanini, 2004, p. 81). In addition, representations of *others* as seen in stereotypes are not only tied to ideologies but also to ‘beliefs and attitudes, and are often distorted and generalised images of groups that persist and resist change’ (p. 82).

Prejudice is another concept that is closely connected to stereotyping and both these concepts hinder or impair the development of intercultural interaction and communication within relationships. That is because prejudice is:

Thinking ill of others without sufficient warrant, with ‘thinking ill’ understood as both feelings of rejection and hostile behaviour. It is also described as a hostile attitude and shunning of a person because he belongs to a group with criticisable characteristics (Cristoffanini, 2004, p. 83).

In comparison to sources of stereotypes, Allport (quoted in Cristoffanini, 2004, p. 83) states that prejudice come from certain mental characteristics and aspects of human nature that have the tendency to generalise, and to hostility which, to a lesser extent, causes us to group ourselves with people from our own ethnic group. Drawing from these perspectives of the author, we can conclude that prejudice, just like stereotyping, is harmful to intercultural communication because of its major negative impact of separating people from each other in a multicultural society.

2.4.2 An ecology of fear

Fear and stereotypes are similar in that they can influence one another. Stereotypes create fear and fear breeds stereotypes. Snyder (2012, p. 118) calls the connection of this concept an ‘ecology of fear’. In an ecology of fear, both the migrants and the established societies are affected in the way they relate to each other. She explains it as such:

The ecology of fear surrounding migrants can be depicted as a vicious circle in which fears of the established population feed negative media discourse, public

acts of hostility and restrictive policies and practices. Such discourse, hostility, policies and practices, coupled with international geopolitical insecurity, only serve to intensify the anxieties and hostility of the established population and induce fear in migrants (p.118).

This perspective suggests that both parties are victims because they are both affected by their perceptions of each other. Both perceptions are induced by fear which breeds stronger stereotypes. As Furedi states, ‘fear breeds an atmosphere of suspicion that distracts people from facing up to the challenges confronting society’ (quoted in Snyder, 2012, p. 119). In other words, neither the migrants nor the host population benefit from the destructive cycle of an ecology of fear.

The correlation between fear and stereotypes can be seen when considering their sources. Just like stereotypes, fear can trace its source to the media. This is ‘neither accidental nor spontaneous (...) Fear is also actively produced by specific groups who may benefit from it. Politicians and governments are the predominant generators of fear’ (Snyder, 2012, p. 119). This premise proposes that politicians as authors of policies, and governments as implementers, feed the fear of the public and create more anxiety, leading to stronger stereotypes. As Sales (2007) put it, the construction of ‘immigration controls have created and sustained divisions and legitimized the racist attitudes that demand ever further controls’ (quoted in Snyder, 2012, p. 120). Within this dynamic, the policies made by the government are reported by the media to the public. Bralo and Morrison (quoted in Snyder, 2012, p. 121) specify that the media ‘commands the line of communication between those who are “in the know” and structures the ignorance of the general public’. Consequently, a public opinion is created by media presentation among the public which, in turn, is used by policy makers and is reported back to the public. In this dynamic, the public, the media and the politicians are all culpable in generating fear that divides both the migrants and the majority population.

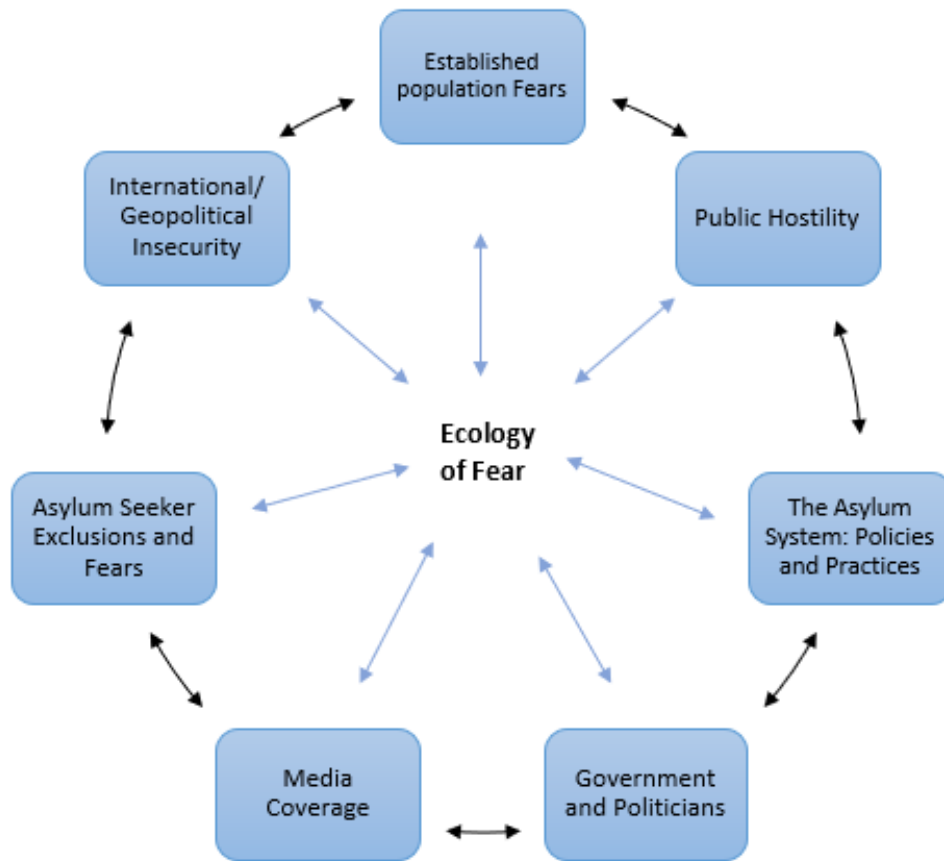


Figure 2. Ecology of Fear Model (Snyder, 2012. p. 119)

The various theories presented in this chapter served as my framework, which resulted from the analysis of the different themes that emerged from the data collected. The specific theories described in this chapter are consistent with the material I gathered in light of my research question. These are the theoretical underpinnings that are significant to the topic investigated.

3 Methodology

3.1 *Qualitative Research*

Social science research employs two key methodological approaches: Quantitative and qualitative research methodology. Quantitative research methods focus on the verification of data validity (Bryman, 1999, p. 53), specifically numeric data, and thus was not applicable to this study, which collects qualitative data. The choice of which method to use is a matter of what is best suits the research; as Darin Weinberg (quoted in Silverman, 2010, p. 120) states, ‘selecting qualitative methodology could be mostly a practical matter of deciding what works best’. Qualitative research methods were used for this study as these are more suited to the research focus and bring to light various perspectives and values held by the research participants, which influence their relationship with immigrants.

After collecting the data, I intended to summarise the research findings using qualitative data interpretation and analysis methods. Using qualitative research methods, the following data can be collected via small-scale sampling: The possible underlying reasons and opinions behind what makes the supposed gap between host majority and immigrants in Norway wider or narrower; prevalent thoughts and feelings of the host majority sample group regarding the continuous inflow of immigrants in the host society; and the host nationals’ views about their roles in facilitating the integration of immigrants.

Moreover, because of its ‘exploratory and unstructured approach’ (Bryman, 1999, p. 49), the qualitative research method makes the entire research process more flexible and allows the researcher space to discover and explore all other possibilities in order to achieve the purpose of the study. Following the tradition of ethnography, Bryman states that ‘ethnographic research derives its strength from its flexibility which allows new leads to be followed up, or additional data to be gathered, in response to changes in ideas’ (1999, p. 53). As such, I — the researcher — can adapt to the changes that might emerge in the process of research (Charmaz, 2014, p. 25). The nature of flexibility in qualitative research was also part of my interest in choosing this approach. As a researcher, I like the dynamism this approach brings, as that will be advantageous as I explore the focus of inquiry.

3.2 Research Question

My focus of inquiry was to examine how participants in this study, who were ethnic Norwegians, related to immigrants during their daily encounters. My intention was to know the thoughts, feelings and efforts of the host majority towards immigrants and identified how these specific behaviours had an impact on their relationship. I wanted to know how having a specific involvement with immigrants affected their subsequent relationship and involvement with immigrants. I was interested in exploring their motivations and other inspirations in establishing relationship with immigrants when they encounter them in their daily lives, in different social arenas. I wanted to know the specific efforts they make as part of the host majority that help facilitate the integration of immigrants in the course of their relationships.

3.3 Interviews

Interviews produce direct oral accounts that ‘can be read for what they tell us about the phenomena to which they refer. We can analyse them in terms of perspectives they imply, the discursive strategies they employ, and even the psychosocial dynamics they suggest’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 97). Interviews also provide proximity between the researcher and the informants. As my intention was to learn about the thoughts and feelings of the respondents concerning the inflow of immigrants in Norway, face to face interviews were the best choice for data collection. As it is stated, interviews ‘elicit ‘the inside story’, to lay bare people's feelings, and so on’ (Atkinson & Silverman, quoted in Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 103). Furthermore, the interview as a method of collecting data is vital because ‘it may allow one to generate information that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to obtain otherwise—both about events described and about perspectives and discursive strategies’ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 102). I needed solicited oral accounts that were directly given via responses to researcher’s questions, combined with unsolicited oral accounts gained via observations.

As someone who has been immersed in Norwegian culture for several years, I am aware that it is not easy for respondents to open up to a stranger and share their thoughts and feelings. Therefore, I tried to create a positive and welcoming atmosphere for the respondents that I had not met prior to the interview, to help them feel at ease. I did this by introducing myself and sharing my personal thoughts and feelings about Norway, and the reason I came here. I told them about the circumstances that led me to migrate, the motivation for choosing my

focus of studies, and the reason why I pursued this line of study in Norway. I observed that when I shared my personal experiences, the respondents became less guarded and more open to sharing their own thoughts and feelings. One of the female respondents was very touched and became teary-eyed while listening, expressing her appreciation after. That short introduction paved the way for the respondents so that ‘they allow(ed) themselves to talk freely and expose their experiences and feelings’ (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014, p. 154) to me, a stranger.

All interviews were conducted in person, using the English language. There was no need for a translator as all the informants were fluent in English. The informants were informed ahead of time that the interview would be done in English. In instances when I recognized the respondents’ need to express themselves in Norwegian as a matter of emphasis, I encouraged them to do so, as it seemed to me that using Norwegian for particular words or phrases captured what the respondents wanted to express more clearly. In addition, the interviews varied in location, from a coffee shop, church office, to the homes of the informants. The choice of venue was an option given to the informants for their own convenience and preference. However, I learned to realize that using a coffee shop as a venue was not preferable due to the background noise.

The interviews were then transcribed and later analysed. For the analysis of the interview data, I used the coding style which later grouped specific data into categories. This process of analysis was made possible through repeated reading of and familiarity with the data, until connections to relevant theories emerged and were identified (Bryman, 2012, p. 568). Though the transcription process was difficult and took long, it helped me see the connections to emerging theories as I transcribed and examined how respondents said certain words. As Bryman (2012, p. 482) says, ‘qualitative researchers are frequently interested not only on what people say but also in the way they say it’. The accounts from the informants were transcribed verbatim. For the sake of grammatical clarity however, modifications were made without changing the actual words that the respondents directly expressed.

3.3.1 Semi- structured interview

The semi-structured interview was employed for this particular study because of the advantages this type of interview offers. Having a list of questions to serve as a guide — not needing to be strictly followed — ensured that the ‘interview process is flexible’ (Bryman

2012, p. 471). This type of interview is more dynamic and allows more diversity in the kind of information that could be extracted from the informants; this would not be possible using the structured interview format. Furthermore, the semi-structured interview encourages an atmosphere that allows conversation to flow naturally — lessening the respondents' self-consciousness that results from being interviewed and recorded — as I focused on listening to what was being said and maintaining eye-contact instead of trying to force a particular structure throughout the interaction. As Kvale and Brinkmann (2014, p. 113) state 'good contact is established by attentive listening, with the interviewer showing interest, understanding, and respect for what the subject says, and with an interviewer at ease and clear about what he or she wants to know'.

The interview structure used also allowed me to take note of certain gestures and body language that were not captured by a recorder. The exploratory nature of the semi-structured interview enabled me to ask certain questions not listed in the interview guide, but which emerged organically during the interview sessions. As Bryman (2012, p. 471) put it, 'questions that are not included in the guide may be asked as the interviewer picks up on things said by the interviewees'. In addition, since the semi-structured interview facilitates freedom in the process, 'the interviewee has a great deal of leeway of how to reply' (p. 471). There were also questions from the interview guide that were not asked because the answers were not needed anymore, due to the spontaneity of replies given. The majority of the interviews lasted for an average of forty-five minutes to one hour.

3.3.2 Pilot interview

Conducting pilot interviews helped me to prepare for the actual interviews with informants. The pilot interviews were conducted with three ethnic Norwegians in the city of Hamar, where I live, outside Oslo. The pilot interviewees were also individuals who actively attended Charismatic churches in the area. As a tool, (the) 'pilot interview is common to use in the construction of questionnaires, to chart the main aspects of a topic and test how questions are understood' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014, p. 143). Feedback from the participants during the pilot interviews provided me with additional input, helped me to think about the research questions more carefully, and led me to revise my questions, making them clearer and more precise.

3.4 Observations in the field

I conducted participant observation after the interviews. The purpose of this observation was to investigate the relationship dynamics between ethnic Norwegian Charismatic church members and immigrants, where actual interactions take place. As Bryman (2012, p. 432) writes, one of the objectives of participant observation is to observe the behaviour of members of that setting. Two of my observation sessions were scheduled during worship services in one of the churches, which ran for about two hours. Another participant observation session occurred during a visit after one Sunday service. I happened to drop by the setting upon hearing that a friend from America was there for a visit. Fortunately, my unplanned visit turned out to be a good sampling time. Bryman (2012, p. 427) explains that sampling is not just about people but also about time, where the researcher get to observe events at different times of the day or different days of the week. My visit during that particular time allowed me to see a different interaction dynamic between ethnic Norwegian church members and the immigrants, one that was more spontaneous and naturally occurring.

I also observed how the congregation in one church tried to facilitate meeting some of the needs of immigrants so that they would feel welcomed by the host-society. This was something I witnessed before the Sunday service started. In an effort to throw light on the issues emerging from the focus of the inquiry (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3), I searched for available documents on the site. I found material on their bulletin board which was relevant to my research, specifically three different posters of activities that were being conducted in order to meet some of the needs of immigrants in the area.

None of the posters were available on the church's website. Had I not decided to observe, I would not have discovered such useful data, as the activities they featured were not mentioned by any of my informants during the interviews. Indeed, it is true that participant observation provides a distinct advantage because it illuminates the data from the other (p. 102). Furthermore, the observation I did enabled me to witness first-hand how it is to be treated as an immigrant visitor in that setting. It was an interesting personal experience because aside from the gatekeeper, none of those who were friendly towards me knew that I was there as a researcher.

3.5 Informants

All twelve informants attend the two churches in Oslo mentioned in the introduction chapter. The majority of the informants were selected based on the recommendation of the gatekeeper, according to the preferred age group, gender and ethnicity I had specified. I asked the gatekeeper to provide me with a list of ethnic Norwegians — Norwegians who belong to majority group outside immigrant population. Both of my gatekeepers were pastors in the churches and had an overview of their church members. One of the gatekeepers informed me that she selected informants who she knows have active interactions with immigrants. The other gatekeeper, who granted me permission to access informants, later endorsed my request to the church' administrator, who in turn, gave me the information of the informants.

Three informants were friends who volunteered to be interviewed. One of them expressed willingness to be interviewed because of her personal interest in my research topic and she was the first interviewee. The other two were friends available for interview on short notice, as the gatekeepers took some time to respond to my request for more recommendations and I needed to stay within the current timeframe for my research and could not afford any delays. Selecting a specific type of Norwegian to interview was important because ethnic Norwegians have a common or shared cultural and historical heritage within their ethnic group (Vassenden, 2010, p. 737). The shared cultural and historical background of the informants determine how their cultural roots and heritage influence their behaviour and attitudes towards immigrants. Selecting a participant for the research who is considered Norwegian by virtue of citizenship or naturalisation may relate differently with immigrants, and may be influenced by the cultural values or family upbringing from an immigrant background.

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 38), the sampling of informants with particular categories is important as this relates to emerging analyses or rival theories. For this research, the categories of my informants fall under member-generated categories where they are categorized on the same label by themselves (p. 38). This specific category is important, especially when the respondents are asked questions that demonstrate how they relate and feel towards immigrants. Moreover, sampling based on member-identified categories is crucial because it is 'inextricably linked with the development of analytical ideas' (p. 38). The significance of the sampling of informants will contribute to the consistency of emerging theories.

The informants' ages range from twenty to sixty. Eight were women and the rest were men. The wide age range allows for a broader and varied perspective in relation to the research focus, given the diverse educational backgrounds and positions of those who encounter and interact with immigrants. The names of the informants were altered for confidentiality. It was my awareness of the cultural context of the participants' concern to privacy that made me decide to take the responsibility to protect their identity. As it is stated, 'researchers who oriented themselves as having primary responsibility for protecting participants viewed themselves as having appropriate knowledge about what would best protect participants' (Wiles, Crow, Heath & Charles, 2008, p. 424). In addition, informing the participants that I would anonymise their names also helped to gain their trust and quick consent. Informants were also offered the choice to read the results of the research, should they wish to do so.

3.6 My role as a researcher

According to a research done by Jørgen Carling, Marta Bivand Erdal and Rojan Ezzati, 'In migration research, the insider–outsider divide typically assumes a specific form: an insider researcher is a member of the migrant group under study, whereas an outsider researcher is a member of the majority population in the country of settlement' (2014, p. 36). For this research, the typical research role is reversed. I am an outsider researcher who is a member of the migrant group; at the same time an insider researcher making a study of the majority population of the country I migrated to. I am an outsider because I moved to Norway as an immigrant worker and at the same time an insider because I am married to an ethnic Norwegian.

Holding two roles as I conducted this research — as an insider and as an outsider — has both advantages and disadvantages. As Kusow (quoted in Carling et al., 2014, p. 37) states, these positions include potentially advantages as well as challenges. One of the disadvantages I experienced as an outsider was having to consciously not take things personally when informants gave generalized statements about immigrants regarding certain categories. In some instances, I found it difficult to focus during the interview because I was distracted by my feelings and memories of some difficult experiences during my early years in Norway.

Another disadvantage of my being an immigrant was that I observed that some informants seemed a bit restrained while answering interview questions and sharing their thoughts and feelings about the inflow of immigrants in Norway. Moreover, as an outsider in relation to the church community that the informants were a part of, it was not easy to schedule interviews with the informants within the timeframe I planned, causing delay to the research process. I had to conduct five interviews in one day in order to meet my deadlines. The factor of delay caused me to be too tired to do an interview which affected my concentration and attentiveness when listening to the last interviewee. However, one advantage I had as an outsider was that the use of the English language for the interviews was justified. English was for me the best language I could use to fully understand everything they will say. I also speak the native language of the informants though, so we conversed in Norwegian during our communication outside the actual interviews. This affected the power dynamics in the interview setting (Carling et al., 2014, p. 46) with the interactions between me and the respondents becoming a “give and take” experience. Another advantage it gave me as an outsider was experienced during the observation. I experienced on site how they received immigrant like me who came to visit which served useful to shed light on my data.

On the other hand, a number of factors make me an insider. First, I am married to an ethnic Norwegian, which gives me a general understanding of the cultural orientation and values of Norway. Second, my position as an itinerant preacher enables me to meet Norwegians as I travel around the country, and this gives me a broader access to locals, allowing me to observe how they feel and think regarding the implications that immigration brings to their country, thus affording me with better understanding of the context. As the wife of an ethnic Norwegian and the nature of my work, most of my daily encounters and several associations are with ethnic Norwegians. As a researcher, the benefits of my position include having a network of friends and associates who assisted me in accessing my selected setting. I also have ‘immediate access to different sorts of information’ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 87) regarding current events and political discussions in Norway, and I have the chance to discover ethnic Norwegians’ views about immigrants through casual conversations with them.

On one occasion, when I contacted an informant for an interview and communicated in Norwegian, she thought I was an ethnic Norwegian because of my name. It is mentioned that the ‘researcher’s name may be the informant’s first indication of his or her background, and therefore have particular importance’ (Carling et al., 2014, p. 44). Such impression from the

informant about my situatedness as an insider created an easy rapport in our communication prior to the interview. Being an insider has given me an understanding of the relevant issues and problems concerning immigrants and immigration, and this understanding helped me to design the research problem that I focused on for this project. My daily encounters and frequent interactions with ethnic Norwegians provided me with a motive and opportunity for this research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 23). My personal experiences made me want to seek answers concerning the role of host nationals in the integration of immigrants. My religious affiliation and shared associations with the informants were also advantageous to the research as the informants were more comfortable and were not threatened by my role as a researcher.

One disadvantage of being an insider was that I was often in an awkward position while interviewing certain informants. I had to consciously remind myself to remain objective and impartial when I was interviewing participants that I knew personally. There were instances where I refrained from asking potentially sensitive follow-up questions related to the topic because I was afraid of offending them. In those cases, I had to remind myself that I was a researcher first, before being their personal acquaintance. I reminded myself that I had a specific role as a researcher and that could not be compromised. As Bryman (1999, p. 38) states, 'the insider standpoint may have its costs, the most frequently mentioned of which is the problem of 'going native' whereby the researcher loses his or her own awareness of being a researcher and is seduced by the participants' perspective'. As a Christian interviewing a fellow Christian, I identified with ethnic Norwegian informants, especially when they expressed stereotypes against one specific type of immigrant related to religion. As such, I am aware of the dangers connected to personally identifying with informants, and am aware that I might fail to treat those perspectives as problematic (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 88). It was hard to balance my roles as a researcher and identifying with the informants, seeing myself in the same position as them.

Being an insider means that everyday encounters with ethnic Norwegians is part of my normal or regular routine, which can make it difficult to know when to "leave the field". I often meet ethnic Norwegian friends during the course of this research period whose comments about and perceptions of immigrants and their integration are similar to that of my respondents. Hearing such unsolicited oral accounts (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, p. 99) makes it difficult to negotiate which side to take, and was a constant dilemma. Indeed, even

the distinction between outsider and insider is problematic (Kusow; Labaree; Merton; quoted in Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, p. 87). The complexity of these roles required a constant and careful negotiation during the entire process of the project. In view of this complexity, my role as a researcher needed to take precedence over the other roles I had, as both an outsider and an insider, and I had to keep in mind that the ‘exclusive and immediate goal of all research is, and must remain, the production of knowledge’ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p.15). In light of this goal, the role of a researcher is ‘to produce findings that were true independently of any particular value stance’ (p. 13). These perspectives were important considerations, especially when the findings did not appear to be favourable to either an outsider or an insider.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Conducting qualitative research is not an easy task as it concerns formulating the right questions and finding the answers to those questions. Field research requires understanding specific issues as a researcher before proceeding with a research project. These issues involve the role of the researcher in relation to the objects of research. Specifically, they are ethical issues that need to be kept in mind in order to maintain responsible research standards. One basic thing that every researcher must remember is that ‘the immediate goal of ethnography should be the production of knowledge’ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 209). The goal of responsible research is not just to produce knowledge, but to ensure that the manner in which that knowledge is produced adheres to ethical standards. Hence, it is important that researchers be guided by a sense of responsibility to value his relationships with the people who are a part of the study and involved in the process of producing knowledge and narrative accounts of social phenomena.

In producing these accounts, there are ethical and relational issues that confront a researcher. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 210-218) mention five issues that need to be considered: informed consent, privacy, harm, exploitation, and consequences for future research. Bryman (2012, p. 135) describes ethical standards more specifically as ‘harm to participants; lack of informed consent; and invasion of privacy and deception’. David Silverman (2010, p. 153-154) states the general principles on research ethics as ‘voluntary participation and the right to withdraw; protection of research participants; assessment of potential benefits and risks to participants; obtaining informed consent; not doing harm’. I considered all these ethical

standards seriously when I selected three of my friends as informants. As I carefully considered and read thoroughly the different authors' stance on ethical standards, I concluded that none of the considerations hindered me from interviewing people I considered as friends. When I invited them to participate, I followed the general principle of having a clear conscience in order to reconcile the dilemma inherent in the participant-friend and researcher-friend roles. In the case of the doctoral research undertaken by Yanyue Yuan (2014, p. 96) she used the general principle of honesty in interviewing friends as participants.

However, regardless of how strictly researchers attempt to follow the rules on ethical standards, there are always challenges that occur for certain situations. In such cases, the discretion of the researcher can be considered. In cases where clear ethical rules are violated, scholars in ethnography have a general guideline wherein the 'effective pursuit of research should be the ethnographer's main concern' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 228). As it is stated:

It is the responsibility of the ethnographer to act in ways that are ethically appropriate, taking due account of his or her goals and values, the situation in which the research is being carried out, and the values and interests of the people involved. In other words, as researchers, and as consumers of research, we must make judgments about what is and is not legitimate in particular cases (p. 228).

This is a matter that is covered by the principles of *ethical situationism* (p. 219). In other words, researchers are given the discretion to act responsibly in light of research ethical standards. In view of that and to keep my distance as a researcher and maintain a clear conscience, I treated informant-friends in the same way that I treated the rest of the informants. I sent all the informants a letter with the project description, interview guide, and a waiver should they choose to withdraw from the interview at any time. I met each informant only for the purpose of the interview which lasted an average of forty-five minutes to one hour. Since the informants knew that I was working on a project and had other interviews to conduct, not staying to chat or spend more time with informant-friends did not become an issue.

I was very conscious of the concept of exploitation in ethical rules so, upon meeting each one of the respondents, I tried to be accommodating and polite. I offered to pay for the meals of the respondents during the interview process. At the end of the interview, when I felt that a good rapport had been established with the informant, I also offered to pray for them and verbally expressed my gratitude for their willingness to participate. The offer was received well and I also sent text messages to most of the respondents the day after the interview, to express my appreciation, not just for their participation, but also for the way their answers showed their deep concern regarding the well-being of immigrants. Through simple and sincere actions, I deliberately wanted to let them know that they are valued as individuals and were not just utilised for my own agenda. This affirms what Kvale and Brinkmann (2014, p. 187) say, that an interview subject should be treated as a unique human being, not as someone who is expected to answer and as such is reduced to simply being a means for the researcher rather an end in herself. Lastly, in the process of transcribing the data, names were codified, and my computer was locked with a long and strong password that only I knew.

4 Analysis

The data presented in this chapter attempts to critically reflect on how the specific respondents — ethnic Norwegians from two charismatic churches in Oslo engaged for the study — relate to immigrants they encounter within their daily lives. In exploring key research questions pertaining to the role of the respondents in helping immigrants feel belongingness, an analysis of the data uncovered three major, relevant themes reflecting the intercultural relationship between the respondents interviewed and the immigrants — new members of society — they currently interact with on a more or less regular basis. Those themes are described in this chapter as: relational attitudes, perception of the other, and bridges to intercultural relationship. The findings have been summarized and divided into three categories delineating the thoughts, feelings and actions of said respondents in relation to immigrants. The various descriptions outlined within this chapter seeks to define the relationship of the respondents to immigrants they interact with in different contexts, specifically: Casual engagement on the streets, commercial shops and public places; as a neighbour; as a colleague; as a fellow churchgoer; as a friend; and as an extended family member.

4.1 Relational attitudes

The participants were ethnic Norwegians and they were asked to discuss their feelings about immigrants coming to Norway. The majority of the respondents conveyed a varied set of attitudes towards immigrants. This part of the data is presented here because relational attitudes was a recurring theme in the interview and provided a basis for coding this section as such. This relational dimension impacts their intercultural interaction. In line with Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC), attitude is crucial because it is something that the interlocutor brings with him or her that could impair or advance intercultural interaction. Michael Byram points out that attitudes, whether positive or negative, are pre-conditions to successful or unsuccessful intercultural interactions (Byram, 1997, p. 34). Furthermore, Deardorff (quoted in Peng, Wu & Fan, 2015, p. 146) ‘emphasizes that attitudes are the most critical component and as such, attitudes are indicated as the starting point’ in the process of developing intercultural competence. In other words, the attitude of the respondents determines the characteristics of their interactions with immigrants. The

relational attitudes are categorized in this section based on personal experiences and religious beliefs of the respondents.

4.1.1 *Culturally enriching*

One of the respondents possessing a positive attitude towards interacting with immigrants was Kari Marie, who lived for two years in another European country. She is currently a mother who teaches children. She mentioned that a factor which contributes to her positive attitude is the experience of having lived abroad as a foreigner. She expressed:

I really like people from other countries. I think it is less scary to meet people from other countries because [there] is a feeling that you don't have to be that perfect. (...) In Norwegian society everything is so perfect especially (...) in your home, your clothes, everything has to be perfect. I was together with a Hindu mom in kindergarten and I thought it was easier and [I] feel myself [being more] free. Oh, I can feel more free. They [foreigners] don't have much expectations.²

Kari Marie expressed happiness that immigrants are coming to Norway because she feels that she can express herself more freely when she is with them. Her interaction with immigrants contributes to her personal enrichment by giving her a sense of freedom from societal expectations imposed by her fellow ethnic Norwegians. Contrary to the pressure she got from the expectations from her fellow Norwegian; she did not feel that pressure being with immigrants.

Kjetil was another respondent similar to Kari Marie in that he also lived in another country with his family while doing postgraduate studies. He also expressed his approval of having immigrants come to Norway, citing a sense of spontaneity during interactions with immigrants as a positive experience for him. He appreciates the spontaneous manner in which immigrants relate with one another. Describing his interactions with immigrants, he explained:

² Kari Marie, Oslo, 19.10.2017

Personally, I enjoy being with people from different cultures. It is enriching being together with people having different points of view. I have a lot of immigrant friends and contacts and can spend time with them every now and then. [While I may] Not [have] that many close [immigrant] friends (...) we have a daughter-in-law that is from [the] Philippines. They [immigrants] can enjoy small things different than we do. They have a different way of appreciating conversations [and believe] that the essence of being together is something that does not need to have a reason.³

Another reason that Kjetil enjoyed his interaction with immigrants is the dynamism that cultural diversity brings within the interaction. Furthermore, not only personal enrichment is achieved; social and interpersonal enrichment is gained as well when immigrants and respondents meet. One of the respondents that attested to experiencing such enriching outcomes was Inger. She is a single woman in her early thirties who works as an office secretary. As an active member of her church, Inger meets immigrants regularly within her local church setting and she has observed how the presence of immigrants has made her church community richer. Moreover, she expressed that the diverse cultural background of people within her church enhances her understanding of other cultures as she sees first-hand how other people express themselves in different ways. She said:

Norway would be poorer as a country if immigrants do not manage to integrate because we have so much to learn from them (...) A church is a small part of the society and I see how rich we have become. In our church, we have people from different places (...) we could see that we have so much to learn from people from Asia [and] from Africa, like in the way they are expressing themselves, the joy they have, the way they pray. So, I think we have so much to learn from each other.⁴

In comparison to the two previous respondents, Kara Marie and Kjetil, Inger shared not only her personal experience with immigrants, but also benefits reaped by her church from having immigrants in their congregation. Based on her statements, Inger recognized that immigrants

³ Kjetil, Oslo, 19.10.2017

⁴ Inger, Oslo, 12.10.2017

contribute to the enrichment of her church life. Her attitude towards immigrants acknowledged that they are not only in a position of receiving, but also in a position of giving. Susanna Snyder, writing about migration and the church, affirms the same perspective about the contributions brought by immigrants. ‘Christian communities in the Global North are also being revitalized by immigrants in a range of ways, from increases in existing congregation numbers to the introduction of new worship styles and social projects, and reinvigorated theological and ecclesiological understandings’ (Snyder, 2012, p. 176). This reinvigoration, brought by immigrants to the church is also acknowledged by one of the respondents, Jan Ove, a lecturer in a theological school. He stated:

My feeling about the immigrants coming is mainly positive. I think it is enriching that people are coming from different cultures, different continents. I think they bring many good things into the Norwegian society. I feel the church is very much enriched and built up by the Christian immigrants. They come with [a] more bold form of Christianity, [a faith that is] more sincere and [with a] more profound faith in Christ and in the Bible.⁵

He specified that immigrants can contribute not only to the church but also to society. He also mentioned the dynamics of such benefits that immigrants provide to church life. This reflects an important perspective — seeing immigrants as not merely passive receivers in a host-society, but also as active contributors within it. As Daniel Carroll notes, ‘immigrants possess an immense potential to contribute to society and to the common good through their presence, work, and ideas’ (2013, p. 48). This fact is further affirmed by a report through a collaborated effort of four Christian organizations (DAWN Norway, KIA Norway, Christian Council of Norway, Norwegian Baptist Union) that conducted a survey on migrant churches (Migrant Menigheter) in Norway. The report notes that:

There has been great changes in the context of the Norwegian churches in the past ten years, and the most striking change is the creation of migrant churches. About 250 churches/communities with worship celebrations in 40 different languages have been established, mainly in the last two decades. This has

⁵ Jan Ove, Oslo, 19 October 2017

provided a wide variety of worships and community, particularly in the larger cities (Migrant Menigheter, 2013).

The view that immigrants contribute to cultural enrichment within their interactions and within society in general was also reflected in the most recent survey conducted by Statistic Norway. The survey shows that sixty-eight percent of Norwegians agrees that most immigrants enrich cultural life in Norway (Blom, 2017, para. 5). The findings from this survey, conducted by two agencies (Statistics Norway and Christian organizations) in Norway, strongly suggest that the presence of immigrants in Norway enhances the cultural experience of people through intercultural encounters.

4.1.2 *Relationally inclusive*

This section itemizes the reasons behind the inclusive attitude of the respondents of the study. This part of the data is relevant because the reasons behind respondents' inclusivity are directly connected to the steps they are taking to welcome immigrants and make immigrants feel that they belong to the community. The respondents' experience of living abroad played a key role in fostering a positive attitude and interaction towards the immigrants.

Respondents were asked: what is it that influences you to have a positive attitude towards immigrants? The respondents gave varied answers, one of the most common being their experience of living abroad. This finding is reflected by the concept described by Salo-Lee (2006, p.134) as 'the inclusive local perspective: `we all here`'. This concept can be seen in practice when locals who return home after an experience of living abroad carry a multicultural competence that can be translated into competence at home. The repatriates can make use of his multicultural insights during interactions and encounters in his own country with people from other cultures. This theory is supported by the respondents who expressed that their openness to people from different cultures is influenced by their experience as a foreigner in another country. Going back to Kjetil, his openness to other cultures was a result of his years of experience living abroad and learning from other cultures:

I don't know if there is [a] one sentence answer to that. It probably developed through the years. We have been travelling as a family, to different cultures and learned to enjoy the company of being with people from totally different

cultures (...) We also need to understand that in our global situation today (...) it is easy to travel all around the globe (...) So to create not a [border control] system but an intercultural understanding of how we must have a society (...) we need to be open that immigrants will be here and that is part of how it will be.⁶

Another factor that Kjetil expressed which contributes to his welcoming attitude is his understanding of globalization. This perspective is called by Salo-Lee (2006, p.135) as ‘the inclusive global perspective: ‘we all here and there’’. With this specific perspective, an interlocutor gains competence to tolerate and understand cultural ambiguities. It provides willingness to negotiate the differences between cultures so that an atmosphere that is conducive to learning from each other can be fostered despite cultural differences.

Jan Ove, who is in his mid-thirties, fostered a welcoming attitude to immigrants due to his positive experience with the locals of the country he stayed in. He explained that he had experienced being received well by locals in countries that he has visited. In response, he wanted to return that favour to people from other countries who are coming to Norway.

I think it is because I have met people from different nations and I feel so enriched by that and I have been traveling much myself. So, I have seen cultures and felt the hospitality, the kindness of other cultures as well. (...) I feel that I have so much to learn and want to welcome them as well.⁷

This attitude of openness that respondents demonstrated in this section is reflected in the different perspectives described by Salo-Lee (2006, pp. 131-135). The various perspectives explain the varying influences on why certain individuals exhibit intercultural competence in a multicultural setting. Consequently, it creates an atmosphere of host-receptivity that encourages immigrants to exhibit, in return, intercultural competence as well.

4.1.3 Hospitality and love

⁶ Kjetil, Oslo, 19.10.2017

⁷ Jan Ove, Oslo, 19.10.2017

The oldest respondent for this study was Ole Kristian. He is in his early sixties and currently working as a nurse. The inflow of immigrants in Norway was still challenging for him as he expressed that he felt like a minority in his own country. He further explained that it was a strange feeling for him to be inside public transportation in Oslo and not understand the language of the people speaking around him. He expressed that he struggled seeing people being covered with hijabs. But he attempts to resolve that personal dilemma by processing his thoughts through the lens of biblical hospitality. He said:

There is nothing in me that want to reach out (...) with a Muslim lady with hijab. I can smile, but there is something with the way they are dressing that kind of keeps me from a distance (...) I think we are not ready to receive the extent of numbers of immigrants (...) But I think the way I understand the Bible also is that we are to share. And the Bible is very clear about welcoming immigrants. The Jews were being reminded about them being foreigners to Egypt. And so, I think God is being very clear about us being generous and receiving.⁸

Based on the statement of Ole Kristian, his understanding of hospitality is to share, be generous, and be receiving. Given his view, he chooses to love the strangers (in this case, immigrants) and receives them well. Despite his dilemma, he seeks to receive and befriend the immigrants in his neighbourhood. He reconciles his conflict with being overwhelmed by the number of immigrants to the core belief of love and hospitality, which results to his openness, and is a specific emphasis in Charismatic. This Christian concept was explained by Letty Russell wherein loving strangers is tantamount to hospitality. She explains this connection by borrowing the concept used by John Koenig, who points out that the term hospitality is from the Greek word *philoxenia* which literally means not only love towards strangers per se but also implies a delight in the whole guest-host relationship (2006, p. 466).

The respondents who understood and applied the value of loving their neighbours were those who also showed a gesture of hospitality. They recognised that their love needed to be translated into action. As Snyder states, 'hospitality can never simply be thought or talked about in the abstract. It should always be an embodied, real practice' (2012, p. 179). The

⁸ Ole Kristian, Oslo, 12.10. 2017

concept of hospitality could be put into practice via small gestures that demonstrate kindness towards and care for the needs of immigrants. Such gestures range from casual greetings to concrete actions that provide specific assistance (Caroll, 2013, p. 78) and intentional relationship building. Hence, the respondents who exhibited an attitude of love actively take steps to build relationships with the immigrants in ways that make them feel received.

A portion of the interview conducted with specific respondents — wherein the concept of love was seen as a reference point for acting towards immigrants — showed the connection between the respondents' understanding of love within their faith-based context, and hospitality. Inger, who is single and in her early thirties, continues to be actively engaged with assisting immigrants. She has a full-time job and in her free time, she volunteers at a non-profit Christian organization that helps immigrants. She has been engaged in this volunteer work since 2011, apart from her involvement with church ministry. Despite her busy work schedule, she makes time to visit a migrant family once a week, at their house. By deliberately seeking out and building relationships with immigrant families, she puts into action the concept of loving one's neighbour or being hospitable to strangers. She expressed her desire to continue what she does with immigrants because God's love has been poured out on her. She said:

I think the love of God is poured out in our hearts and that we can feel that when [we] see other people. My faith has to do with how I look at people (...) All the teachings from when I was in Sunday School or singing in the children's choir, all the text of the songs is about being nice to people and to smile. I know there are lonely people, especially lonely immigrants (...) we could always talk to people and we could always give food through organizations, but things that help are not only there, but [it helps] to have a relationship over a period.⁹

Based on what Inger shared, we can construe that her love for strangers not only involves providing humanitarian aid for ethical reasons; her actions lay the foundation for pursuing an active relationship with immigrants. Another respondent, Karoline, demonstrated similar motivations. Karoline is in her forties and runs her own business in Oslo. During the

⁹ Inger, Oslo, 12.10.2017

interview, she repeatedly expressed the view that it was the Lord who put love for immigrants in her heart. She added that she is the only member of her family (all the others being non-believers) who makes an effort to reach out to immigrants. In answering the question put forward by the interviewer (What is it that influences you to have a positive attitude towards immigrants?), she used the following words that expressed her passion and emphasized the reason for her openness and loving behaviour towards immigrants:

I really burn to do something to help them [immigrants] integrate, to help them feel at home because the Lord has put it [love] so much in my heart. God put it [the love towards immigrants] in my heart first of all, because I know it is not me. The Lord has put it so much in my heart that I like them so much, and then you become friends with them (...) I am an artist so my dream is to provide work for them [for example] to get them into sewing. We have to do something (...) we need something to help them.¹⁰

During the interview, Karoline showed me samples of the handmade products that she intended to offer to her currently unemployed immigrant friends as a way to earn money. Her concrete response to the immigrants' unemployment and need to find a viable source of income demonstrated her sincere desire to provide meaningful assistance to her immigrant friends — not only to help them financially, but to increase their sense of belongingness and usefulness as active members of society. Other individuals that I have conversed with, apart from the respondents mentioned in this section, also echoed the belief that the love they have for immigrants is something that they cannot claim as their own; rather, it was something that God had put in them. For them to mention the source of their love as God is noteworthy because this shows that their gestures of hospitality have not been forced upon them by any person or the religious institution they belong to; their belief and gestures are the result of their own personal, faith-based convictions. A majority of the people interviewed voluntarily engage with immigrants on their own, not as a part of a collective effort or program of their congregation. Such action reflects a consistency to their charismatic belief that emphasises great openness and extending right affections as the work of the Holy Spirit (Kim & Kim, 2008, p. 170 & Pytches, 1985, pp. 15-16). They understood and have internalized the view that to love the strangers is a fundamental value within the Christian faith. Hence, they seek to

¹⁰ Karoline, Oslo, 12.10.2017

uphold this value through the way they relate with immigrant outgroups in the country. Aside from valuing the command to receive the strangers in love, those interviewed also mentioned the role of Jesus and the Bible in their pursuit of practicing love and embodying hospitality.

4.1.4 Understanding of equality

When the respondents were asked about the influences behind their positive attitude towards immigrants, one of the beliefs mentioned was the notion that all humans are created equal. Immigrants are fellow bearers of God's image who needed to be valued for who they are. Coming from this understanding of the inherent value of humanity, the respondents see the need for immigrants to be treated equally and with value by the receiving society. According to Kjetil, 'Speaking theologically, we are all created in the image of God no matter what type of culture you are coming from'.¹¹ As a Christian with a postgraduate degree in theology, Kjetil stated that part of his theological understanding of the equality of man is that this equality is non-negotiable and applies to everyone, regardless of a person's cultural background. He expressed that there is no exception to that reality; it is a plain and simple understanding of equality. The same attitude is held by another respondent, Ingebjørg, who grew up in Africa as a 'missionary kid'. The country where she grew up is still plagued by war, and happens to be where some immigrants in Norway are from. In Oslo, she is working with the government in dealing with asylum seekers. In response to the question regarding motivation, she was able to elaborate upon the Christian notion of equality when she connected the idea of the equal value of man to the equal experiences of man. She shifted from saying *I* to *we* indicating the intention that what she was explaining was not only a personal view, but something that, possibly, is shared by her fellow ethnic Norwegians, as an adequate reason for why immigrants must be received and welcomed.

Maybe because I am a believer. It is the ground thinking that people are created equal. It is a very important foundation for Christians that we are created equal with people from different countries... That suffering is the same everywhere in the world; the pain, the sorrow, the death, the trauma is the same (...) If we don't take in that people were created the same as us, we devalue the way the Lord created them (...) if they think that immigrants just have to manage (...) It

¹¹ Kjetil, Oslo, 19.10.2017

is a way of thinking that really is so awful. We think that we in Norway are more valued. I think that is the bottom line. We think that we deserve our way of living. We deserve our money; we deserve our security. That makes us arrogant instead of humble.¹²

Ingebjørg is of the opinion that there is no distinction between the humanity of immigrants and ethnic Norwegians. For her, human beings do not just carry an equal value of worth, but also experience an equal weight of human tragedies, thus implying that all human beings possess an inherent dignity. It was offensive for her to think that there was a difference in the way that people are treated. As she spoke, she conveyed her firm conviction and emphasized that such belief about human equality should be foundational.

This belief about equality of man is affirmed by Daniel Carroll, author of *Christians at the Border*, and he says that ‘what it means to be a human must be the foundation for any discussion’ (2013, p.45). The concept of man being created in the image of God is a fundamental value in the Christian faith. He further says that:

The creation of all persons in the image of God must be the most basic conviction for Christians as they approach the challenges of immigration today. Immigration should not be argued in the abstract, because it is fundamentally about immigrants. Immigrants are humans and as such they are made in God's image (Carroll, 2013, p. 47).

This statement is consistent with the convictions held by Christian respondents in the way they relate with immigrants. The respondents nurture an attitude that is favourable towards immigrants because they are guided by their core faith value. As stated, faith guides the way people live their everyday lives (Levitt, 2007, p. 109). Action undertaken by respondents who identify as practicing Christians are favourable to immigrants, as such action is directly linked to what the respondents hold to be true within their faith tradition.

Referring to Ingebjørg's view, immigrants are fellow bearers of God's image and need to be valued equally. Along with her belief, given her background, her attitude is understandable, as

¹² Ingebjørg, Oslo, 13.10.2017

what she expresses is not just the opinion of a person who is trying to be “nice” to strangers; her words are those from someone who has been and continues to be an eyewitness to suffering, has experiences living in a place where many immigrants are fleeing from. Being a Third Culture Kid¹³ contributes to her perspectives and empathy with immigrants or those who have been uprooted from both culture and society. In the interview, she acknowledged that her perception of immigrants is coloured by her upbringing in another country.

4.2 Perception of the other

In contrast to the respondents who exhibited a favourable attitude to the immigrants, there were also respondents who expressed a non-favourable perception regarding immigrants and they mentioned specific things which described how they saw the *other*. This thematic analysis suggests that negative stereotypes directly affect the relationships of respondents to immigrants who they categorize in a specific manner. Fear and avoidance were expressed by respondents connected to their perception. The concept of stereotyping sorts people into groups based on specific characteristics that make them different from others (Illman, 2006, p. 102). More specifically, ‘a stereotype is an exaggerated belief associated with a category. Its function is to justify (rationalise) our conduct in relation to that category’ (Allport, 1954, p. 187). Furthermore, according to Cristoffanini:

Stereotypes constitute an inadequate way of representing *others* because they isolate certain aspects, behaviours and inclinations which are removed from their historical and cultural context and attributed to all the individuals in a social group. It impedes alternative ways of seeing and understanding them. (2004, p.86)

Milton Bennett writes that ‘Stereotypes can be attached to any assumed indicator of group membership, such as race, religion, ethnicity, age, or gender, as well as national culture’ (1998, p. 6). Stereotypes are acknowledged as a common social phenomenon in social relations and that is considered problematic, especially in the context of intercultural

¹³ Third Culture Kid (TCK)- a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture. The TCK frequently builds relationships to all the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background (Useem and Downie quoted in Davis et al., 2010, p. 186).

interactions and relationships (1998, p. 6). Using these different concepts of stereotypes as an anchor, the findings from the interviews with respondents showed some of the respondents with a non-favourable attitudes towards immigrants have placed immigrants under one specific category, based on their religion. Interestingly, one of the pilot interviewees said that he did not consider me an immigrant because I am a Christian. Specific statements made by respondents (which mirror their prejudice about specific group of immigrants) that reflect stereotypes, as per the findings of this study, are shown here. Identified below are common perception that respondents hold regarding immigrants that they had delegated to one particular category.

4.2.1 Threats to safety

Immigrants as being threats to safety is a strongly held and often repeated perception that came up during interviews. Respondents, particularly women, expressed their fears based on this perception. Ranveig, female and in her mid-twenties, expressed that fear. She was not completely detached from immigrants as she has a number of immigrant friends from her student days. Despite her friendship with immigrants from a specific religious background, she still has some fear towards immigrants in general. Here is what she said:

There [are] a lot of criminal[s]. A lot of them came from cultures where criminality and stuff is higher than in Norway (...) I think the media has painted a sour picture of a lot of immigrants. There are lots of stereotypes. So, there is really fear (...) I also battle about [it] every time I meet somebody who is an immigrant. I was thinking, how do I get out of those prejudices out of my head (...) I am not saying that there are lots of bad people (...) but it just creates a lot of fear. And there are a lot of people that don't want to live in those places because they are afraid to get mugged and get raped (...) I really have a lot of fear of being raped (...) when I see a lot of them, I can be fearful because I have been catcall[ed] and have been in areas where it has not been very pleasant to be a white Norwegian girl.¹⁴

¹⁴ Ranveig, Oslo, 18.10.2017

In the beginning of the interview, Ranveig explicitly expressed that the first image that comes to her mind when hearing the word ‘immigrant’ are the Mediterranean refugees. She thinks that many immigrants in Norway come from cultures where criminality is high. Because of this perception, she avoids going to certain places in Oslo where most immigrants live. Her fear causes her to avoid going to specific places and affects the manner in which she interacts with certain types of immigrants in public places. She recognized that there are lots of stereotypes, prejudices and fear in her head. She also expressed that such stereotypes were influenced by the media. She recognized that because of the stereotypes she gets from the media, fear is created in her. Moreover, the way she sees the *other* also affected her in that she feels her ethnic identity is a disadvantage. When she expressed the fear of being raped, she did so in a way that conveyed her belief that it was very possible for sexual assault or abuse to happen to her. According to Bennett (1998, p. 6), this is one reason why stereotype is problematic because stereotypes may become self-fulfilling prophecies, where we observe others in selective ways that confirm our prejudice.

Marta, in her early fifties, single and the oldest among the female respondents, did not express a personal fear like Ranveig but expressed the view that immigrants were behind the increasing violence in Oslo. She shared a commonly-held opinion echoed by the respondents that the negative things happening in the city are always associated with immigrants living there. Furthermore, she noted that Oslo was not the same anymore, compared to when she was younger and growing up in the city, and that Oslo has experienced a significant change for the worse since the arrival of immigrants. She seemed to imply that the presence of immigrants directly resulted in violence.

I grew up in Oslo. There [are] different kind[s] of elements when the foreigners started to come. The violence in Oslo started to go up. There have been quite negative things that have been happening in the city that is related to foreign groups that have been against each other (...) So, I think the violence is connected to some foreign group coming into the town. Our city has been influenced in a negative way in some areas by the foreign people.¹⁵

¹⁵ Marta, Oslo, 15.09.2017

From this perception Marta employed about the immigrants, she created an image that immigrants are her enemies without her explicitly saying it. As Brown put it, negative stereotypes cause to create an image of the *other* as enemies (quoted in Illman, 2006, p. 103). For Marta, she sees that the threat to security in Oslo is associated mostly to immigrants. Violence in her perception is generally linked to immigrants. She perceives that the negative incidents taking place in the city were caused by immigrants.

4.2.2 Not willing or able to integrate

In interviews with respondents, and in casual conversations with other individuals from the majority group, a commonly held view was that immigrants were either unable or unwilling to integrate in Norwegian society. This specific view by the respondents about immigrants is similarly echoed in a report released in December 2017 by the Center for Studies of Holocaust and Other Minorities (HL-Senteret). The report showed that forty-two percent of survey respondents perceive that Muslims are not willing to integrate in Norwegian society (Hoffmann & Moe, 2017, p. 58). According to Marta, who works in a human resource agency, ‘It is hard to integrate people if they are not coming to be integrated. It is hard to integrate people coming with a different motive. Many people come and they are not willing to learn the language.’¹⁶

Marta expressed the view that immigrants who come to Norway do not really intend to integrate and have different motives for coming to the country. During the entire interview with Marta, she expressed her prejudice mostly against a specific group of immigrants. She mentioned a specific place in Oslo where a group of many such immigrants live. She expressed in the interview that she does not have a lot of interactions with Muslim immigrants. But she also expressed that when she had an opportunity to go to a Muslim environment in Oslo, through her church community project, her exposure with them changed her negative perception. Jan Ove, a male respondent who is in his early thirties, specifically mentioned which group of immigrants are perceived to have more difficulty in integrating and which group has an easier time with integration into the host society: ‘It would be easier for Christian

¹⁶ Marta, Oslo, 15.09.2017

immigrant[s] to integrate to Norwegian society through the church because through the church they will also get friends (...) Muslim immigrants I think would [find it] more difficult [to integrate].¹⁷

Marit was another respondent who thinks that immigrants do not want to integrate. She is the mother of three small children and is currently studying theology as a part-time student. She also expressed that she feels like a minority in her area, where mostly immigrants live. She also mentioned that her parents were more sceptical about immigrants than she was. This is the way she put it:

Oh, they don't want to learn our language. They don't want to get integrated. I see those that are totally covered [women wearing hijabs], so I get a little bit scared. In my family, I see them [my family] as a little bit more sceptic[al] of them.¹⁸

In the interview, she also mentioned that she defined immigrants only as those women who wore the hijab and expressed her fears towards those who are "covered". With this perception that immigrants are those who wear the hijab, she said that she does not think of her husband as an immigrant, even though he came from another country in Western Europe. Because of their perception of immigrants as not willing or able to integrate, they decided to enrol their eldest daughter in a private school and they drive her to school every day. Here is what Marit said:

I chose another school for our daughter because she is very interested in learning (...) here, they need to put the level down because they are so many immigrants (...) if they [immigrants] are not integrating it is harder for them to learn of course. And that will affect her [daughter] too in a way. Then, she will be behind too if she follows them where they are and the teacher must follow the majority.¹⁹

¹⁷ Jan Ove, Oslo, 19.10.2017

¹⁸ Marit, Oslo, 19.10.2017

¹⁹ Marit, Oslo, 19.10.2017

Marit's view regarding immigrants inability to integrate affecting the educational approach in her daughter's previous school is strong enough for her to justify making what would seem to be a drastic decision, that of transferring her daughter to a private school in north of Oslo far from where they live. When I interviewed her, she had just come from driving her daughter to the new school, and that drive took her about twenty- five minutes.

Ole Kristian, who also felt like a minority in his home country, views immigrants as being content with not integrating into their host country and being inclined not to do so, even if the rest of the population try to help them with integration. Ole Kristian's perception illustrates the concept of stereotypes from Allport (1954, p.187) which rationalises people's behaviour in relation to their category. According to Ole Kristian, 'It seems like they [immigrants] might be even happy in their ghetto not wanting the Norwegians interfering with them. It seems like they are happy living their own life in their own bubble.'²⁰

The negative stereotypes espoused in this respondent's view were problematic as it leads him to conclude that the minority group itself constructs and designs their own exclusion when generally, minority "groups" are constructions that result from the majority or dominant group's practice of exclusion due to racism or xenophobia (Castles, De Haas & Miller, 2014, p. 57). If such is the case, then ghettos are not deliberate creations of minority groups; rather, these areas are a by-product of the failure of a host society's majority population in facilitating the integration of immigrants. As stated by Castles et al., 'the concept of ethnic minority always implies some degree of marginalization or exclusion' (2014, p. 58). These concepts from the authors mentioned suggest that the host nationals within a host society play a significant role in preventing the exclusion of immigrants, as exclusion leads to the creation of ghettos.

4.2.3 Exploiting the welfare system

This view that immigrants, as a group, exploit the welfare system, was a recurring opinion mentioned by the respondents. This is another specific perception associated to immigrants. This opinion is also reflected in a report by the Center for Studies of Holocaust and Religious Minorities (HL-Senteret) in response to a question about whether immigrants take advantage

²⁰ Ole Kristian, Oslo, 12.10.2017

of the Norwegian welfare system, or are valuable contributors to the Norwegian economy and working life. Approximately the same number of respondents support the former view thirty-six percent while the latter view was supported by thirty-eight percent of the respondents (Hoffmann, Kopperud & Moe, 2012, p. 33). While the percentage of those who agree are lower than those who disagree, there remains the view among the Norwegian population that immigrants exploit the welfare system in Norway.

The respondents mentioned under this section of this study were not asked where they got their specific information about immigrants from, but Allport (1954, p. 195) points out the source of stereotypes and reason for the existence of such. Stereotypes 'are socially supported, continually revived and hammered in, by our media of mass communication — by novels, short stories, newspaper items, movies, stage, radio and television'. Earlier, for respondent Ranveig, a free-lance saleswoman, she mentioned the source of her stereotypes and that immigrants who abused the welfare system annoyed her. She said:

A lot of people come to Norway to exploit the whole system (...) there are those who study the Norwegian system and how they can just live here for free and that pisses me off (...) there are some people who come here and lie (...) I am a Christian and I want to have like mercy with them. But at the same time, we need to have boundaries. So, I think it is hard. I am in a dilemma.²¹

Ranveig finds herself in a dilemma, having negative attitude towards immigrants, because of its conflict with her religious beliefs. Moreover, her assumption supports her suspicion that one of the reasons why people move from one country to another is to take advantage of a host country's welfare system. According to the theory of immigration, people move from their country of origin to another country due to a formidable situation at home, such as political or religious persecution, and war. People who move under such circumstances are called forced migrants (Snyder, 2012, p. 10). There is also a type of migration that is motivated by economic development, and this is done in search of better opportunities and lifestyles (Castles et al., 2014, p. 7) than those that can be achieved in one's home country. Within this definition of migration, there is no indication that people intentionally move to

²¹ Ranveig, Oslo, 18.10.2017

another country with the intention of exploiting a country's economic system. Nonetheless, there are cases wherein the hospitality of the host society has been exploited by migrants. As stated by Carroll, 'there are cases of immigrants who do take advantage of national and local services and of well-meaning individuals for personal gain' (Carroll, 2013, p. 79). However, such cases do not indicate, that all immigrants take advantage of their host society's welfare system.

Another respondent, Marit, perceived immigrants as not just those who exploit the welfare system, but also those who want to "take over" the country. In the interview, she expressed that the generation of her parents exhibits that fear more than her generation. Marit expressed this view which is shared by her parents, both of whom are in their sixties.

They feel like some of the immigrants get too much for free you know (...) My mom is a teacher in *voksenoppl ring* [adult language learning]. She finds it hard that they would, for instance, get the driver's license for free from the state (...) I think there is fear among my parent's generation that their [immigrants'] [Muslim] faith will take over.²²

Within the context of immigration and immigrants, 'fears of a "foreign take over" are perceived by some members of the majority group when ethnic groups cluster together, they establish their own neighbourhoods, marked by distinctive use of private and public spaces' (Castles *et al.*, 2014, p. 63). The authors further state that, 'the tendency has been to perceive the newcomers as the cause of the threatening changes, an interpretation eagerly encouraged by the extreme right, but also by many mainstream politicians and parties often leading to more restrictive policies' (p. 60). This kind of fear is called *xenophobia* —'hostility to foreigners' or most recently 'Islamophobia' (p. 60). In addition, this kind of stereotype is apparent not only among host majority groups but also among migrant populations from different religions and ethnic groups. In other words, Islamophobia cannot be attributed solely to the host population of the receiving society but to anyone who considers himself different or 'better' than the groups being categorized, whether migrants or not.

²² Marit, Oslo, 19.10.2017

Furthermore, this fear-based stereotype was conceptualized by Susanna Snyder as being part of an ecology of fear. Both the metaphorical and literal meaning of “ecology” is referred to here, and it can be defined as a material and ideological environment in which mutually reinforcing patterns of thinking, feeling and acting define relationships between individuals and groups (Snyder, 2012, p. 118). “Ecology” indicates a space wherein different kinds of encounters can happen. She points out that the ecology of fear is a cause and effect phenomenon. It is a vicious cycle in which the fears of the majority population produce negative media discourse, public acts of hostility and restrictive policies and practices. Negative media discourse then escalates fear and hostility within the majority population (p. 118). In short, within an ecology of fear, fear itself is the stimuli that feeds negative media discourse, which then intensifies fear, thus perpetuating the cycle.

In addition, the fear that was expressed by the respondents in this study is also mirrored in the report by *HL-Senteret* about the attitudes of the Norwegian population towards minorities. Their report states that the phenomenon of fear towards Jews and Muslims has shown a shift from anti-semitism to Islamophobia. The survey shows that ‘eighty-one percent think negative attitudes towards Muslim in Norway are most widespread compared to nineteen percent towards Jews’ (Hoffmann & Moe, 2017, p. 66). In another report, the given explanation for the negative perceptions ‘towards Muslims was linked to religion and religious fundamentalism while regarding attitudes towards Jews, the respondents to the survey did not seem to think that religion has any significance’ (Hoffmann et al., 2012, p. 37). Both the survey results and data from the respondents in my research show a correlation between ethnic Norwegians increased feelings of fear when exposed to immigrants with a Muslim religious background.

4.3 Bridges to intercultural relationship

As mentioned previously, findings show that respondents who demonstrate a favourable attitude towards immigrants actively seek to bridge cultural gaps and differences. Outlined here are the concrete steps undertaken by respondents to build their relationships with immigrants. Themes that mirror the concept of intercultural competence in cross-cultural encounters are presented in this section. In a study by Darla Deardorff, author of *Assessing*

Intercultural Competence, intercultural competence is defined as ‘*effective and appropriate* behaviour and communication in intercultural situations, in specific contexts’ (2011, p. 66).

As such, intercultural competence is reflected in the way respondents relate with immigrants. According to intercultural competence theory, effective and appropriate behaviour involves empathy, open-mindedness, respect, understanding and lack of prejudice towards the *other*. These same characteristics or skills were described by respondents, in keeping with the theory being described by Deardorff (2011). Identified below are the concrete steps, within various contexts, taken by respondents in order to help immigrants feel welcome and encourage within them a sense of belonging.

4.3.1 Language assistance

All the respondents recognized the crucial need for immigrants to learn the host country’s language in order to successfully integrate. Thus, some of the respondents assisted the newcomers by teaching them Norwegian. Inger, an office secretary, assists an immigrant family with language lessons.

I am visiting a family from Eritrea. The main goal for that family is to learn Norwegian. She [the mother] is going to a language course. But it is a bit hard for her because she does not use it so much in her everyday life. So, we are speaking a lot together when I visit her. Very often she [the mother] comes with a letter from the school or from kindergarten or from NAV or SMS or from someone that she does not understand.²³

Inger assists the family by practicing speaking the Norwegian language with them and translating written correspondence. She also mentioned that she visits that family every week and does not intend to stop helping and building relationships with immigrants. Moreover, the assistance she provides to the immigrant family she visits not only helps them to develop their grasp of the host country’s language, but also helps them manage their new life in Norway during the process of integration. Inger explicitly expressed that she considers it a personal commitment to ensure that the Eritrean family eventually masters the Norwegian language.

²³ Inger, Oslo, 12.10.2017

The above scenario is mirrored in the actions of two other respondents, Hanna and Kjetil. Hanna works for the local government and Kjetil is a musician. They both think that it is their responsibility to help immigrants with the national language. As native speakers, they feel that they are the best people to help newcomers learn how to speak in Norwegian. They practice speaking the language and correct new learners as needed to help them communicate properly. According to Hanna: They [immigrants] need Norwegians to practice Norwegian with. And that is very important. So, I see it as my task to help them to practice Norwegian²⁴, while Kjetil said, ‘There is no point learning the tools without someone to communicate [with] if you are not invited into that culture. So, they need the locals to practice their Norwegian.’²⁵

Along Hanna’s mention of the assistance she makes with immigrants in language, she also expressed that her motivation for doing it was the love she got from God for everyone. The willingness of these respondents to partner with immigrants in their process of learning the language is a very important factor in successful integration. Byram (1997, p. 11) specifies that language learners need native speakers to help not only with speaking, but also with learning how to use the language in proper contexts. This concept is an important perspective because it recognizes that native speakers should be there to assist immigrants on when to use the right tools at the right time.

The importance of having native speakers as partners in language learning was also illustrated in a research done in Neuland, Austria. The aim of the study was to initiate a process on both sides that encouraged participants to overcome prejudices, live integration and start intercultural understanding (Piatti & Schmidinger, 2013, p. 116). The result of the study showed that — through the regular meetings of the participants, wherein they spoke the German language — the immigrant participant’s language skills were vastly improved. Eventually, he (the immigrant) also became friends with the German resident who served as his partner in the study (2013, p. 124). This shows the important contribution that native speakers give to immigrants as they are in the process of integration by learning the language.

²⁴ Hanna, Lillestrøm, 19.10.2017

²⁵ Kjetil, Oslo, 19.10.2017

4.3.2 *Inviting immigrants home*

The gesture of inviting immigrants to the homes of the respondents came up several times during the interviews. The reasons behind such invitations were to show hospitality, make time for longer conversations with immigrants, and show them that ethnic Norwegians were interested in getting to know them better and share with them some aspects of Norwegian culture. Ranveig shared an experience wherein her mother invited an immigrant to join their family for their Christmas meal at home.

A friend of my brother is from Ghana. He did not have a place to spend Christmas. And then my mom found out. So, she said, he is staying with us. So, it was just amazing that even [if] he was just here as a student, we got him to experience a Norwegian Christmas. It felt like he was part of our family that Christmas. It was just so precious. It was amazing both for him and for us. So, I think Norwegians should do more of those things, like welcome immigrants into their homes for holidays. So, they (...) get a feeling of what it feels like [in] a typical Norwegian [home].²⁶

Ranveig's joyful experience illustrates the benefits of inviting an immigrant to the homes of ethnic Norwegians; her family was to be able to showcase Norwegian culture and share with a foreigner the deep connectedness of a family on a cultural occasion. She expressed that it was also a happy experience for the immigrant visitor to witness their Norwegian Christmas tradition. Another example illustrates what can develop between ethnic Norwegians and immigrants when the latter are invited to homes. Another respondent who invited immigrants to his and his parent's houses is Peter. Until now, Peter has kept his relationship that was established with immigrants. He recalled:

We had immigrants from [a] refugee camp for dinner. We invited them to my parent's home where we stored up a lot of stuff in the basement. They could just pick up what they wanted. I think by doing such thing, we let them feel welcome. They will easily be connected to ethnic Norwegians and to the

²⁶ Ranveig, Oslo, 12.10.2017

society (...) The guy from Turkey became my father's best friend. The lady from Iran considers my parents as her parents and myself as her brother. She has been with us until now, joining us in our holiday. There is also another Iranian couple who [the husband] became like a brother to me.²⁷

In the interview, Peter described how deeply involved they are as a family with a man from Turkey. They provided the man with connections to the government to help him defend his right for residency. Unfortunately, that man from Turkey eventually died. The respondent explicitly said that it is the love of Christ that made him reach out to immigrants. Hence, he used several hours when he visited them in refugee camps. Peter's story exemplifies how relationships developed from just inviting an immigrant home, and how such an act can lead to deep and meaningful connections. Another respondent who likes inviting immigrants to her house is Kari Marie, a school teacher. This is what she expressed:

Inviting them is not so much about showing my home, but maybe a kind of hospitality. Home is a place where you can be more open about your life. I think it is about just the feeling of getting a bit closer and you are kind of more open about your life when you take people home than when you just meet somewhere else. For me, it is quite easy to take people to my home. It is just showing a bit of our culture of course, I am interested in theirs too. We are getting to know each other (...) so that, if they would need help or anything, that we are such a family (...) I want to be such a family that they could trust if one would need me in that way.²⁸

Kari Marie is one of those participants who is very intentional in relating to immigrants in order to make them feel welcome. She explicitly expressed that part of the reason why she does this is because she does not like hearing about immigrants who have been staying for several years in Norway and have not been in Norwegian homes. Moreover, she said that she does not want things to be this way so she tries to do her part to change the experiences of immigrants by inviting them to her house. She recognized that home is a venue where relationship is built more personally.

²⁷ Peter, Oslo, 18.10.2017

²⁸ Kari Marie, Oslo, 19.10.2017

4.3.3 *Being open and friendly*

Building relationships with immigrants is not only limited to inviting them to the homes of ethnic Norwegians; respondents also attempted to maintain a posture of being open and friendly. While not all participants in the interview had experienced inviting immigrants to their homes, all those with a favourable attitude towards immigrants expressed their hospitality in other ways. Kjetil, who described himself as an introvert, does not invite people to his house. Nevertheless, he does not use his personality as an excuse not to reach out. He finds other ways to show his openness and friendliness. He expressed:

Put a smile on your face instead of being shut-off. Like I did yesterday, when I was buying food instead of waiting for them to finish up my order, I started talking to them. And then there is [a] totally different reaction because there was an interaction instead of just being shrugged [off] by somebody. I know we have a culture of not talking to strangers, but since we have been living abroad ourselves, I know that this is just our culture.²⁹

In various contexts, where respondents meet immigrants, they use different gestures to show to immigrants that they are welcome to Norway. As an immigrant myself, I can attest to how small gestures, like a smile or a casual greeting from ethnic Norwegians, means a lot to me. Simple acts of friendliness clearly convey a feeling of being welcomed and accepted into Norwegian culture.

Inger, who is very open to immigrants, uses friendly gestures when she meets immigrants on the street. She is intentional about looking them in the eye when they meet. She acknowledged that she cannot do this for everybody, but she takes every possible step that she can to make immigrants she meets in public places feel welcome. She said:

When I meet people in the street, I am very focused to see them and to smile and say hi. I see the same man who is from Romania begging for money, every morning. So, every day I want to greet him and I want to say hi and he always

²⁹ Kjetil, Oslo, 19.10.2017

smiles back and say ‘hi, good morning’. So, I think that is the least we can do is to see them [immigrants] as people and to recognize them and to look them in the eye and smile. Try to do what we can do. *No one can help everyone but everyone can help someone.* (Emphasis mine.)³⁰

The response of the Romanian beggar to Inger shows that simple greetings and a little attention from locals affects immigrants in a good way. This also validates that there was an interaction that took place between them, even though they did not formally talk with each other. To show a friendly gesture, Ingebjørg signals her openness towards immigrants at her workplace. Since she sees specific immigrants daily at work, she has pursued friendship with them. When she was asked how she could receive immigrants as new members of society, she answered:

It is friendship. They need a local friend. Often society takes care of the housing (...) but they don’t give the friendship part and that is where the individuals can come in. The first thing is to let them know that ‘I see you’ (...) they need me to take responsibility to give them [a] signal and to make them understand that ‘I see you and I like what I see’. Friendship means that I recognize that I need you in my life (...) I think that will make people happy if I can make them feel that they bring happiness to my life (...) friendship opens [the door] for all these conversations about the small details [of life] that nobody tells you, not even the contact person from NAV.³¹

Ingebjørg recognized that locals like her could do something in receiving immigrants that government could not do — offer friendship. The majority of the respondents mentioned friendship as a very crucial component in helping immigrants feel like they belonged to the host country and were welcome in their new environment. When respondents mentioned the importance of friendship to the integration of immigrants, they were asked to clarify which was more important between the two (friendship or learning the language of the host country), and Kjetil said, ‘I think friendship is

³⁰ Inger, Oslo, 18.10.2017

³¹ Ingebjørg, Oslo, 13.10.2017

probably more important than learning the language, no matter what.³² Marit on the other hand, said:

I think the most important [thing] between the two is friendship because then the language will come as well and they will be more motivated [to learn the language]. Because without friendship they could be quite isolated even if they learn the language. But if they get to have friends who are Norwegians, then they will automatically be integrated (...) *people need love more than anything else*. So, friendship I guess is number one. (Emphasis mine.)³³

These respondents' perspectives concerning the role of friendship in the integration process for immigrants is affirmed by the functional model of intergroup friendships. This model suggests that interactions of the majority group with migrants provide the migrants with socio-cultural knowledge and serves as an aid in adapting to the culture and practices of the new cultural environment (Bochner, McLeod & Lin, quoted in Mahonen & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2015, p. 127). Quite recently, the same model of intergroup friendships was applied in Israel and Germany. The study found that participants who reported an increase in native friends also reported a greater decrease in problems with socio-cultural adaptation (Titzmann, Michel & Silbereisen, quoted in Mahonen & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2015, p. 127). On the other hand, negative treatment received by immigrants from the majority group is seen to lead to worse socio-cultural adaptation outcomes (Mahonen & Jasinskaja, 2015, p. 127). Therefore, recent studies strongly suggest that for migrants to achieve a sense of belonging, the majority population in the host society must engage in active friendship with said immigrants. In addition to friendship, respondents further said that curiosity — the interest to know the other — is one thing that paves the way for friendship to be established.

4.3.4 Curiosity

In the interview with Kari Marie, she expressed her general curiosity about people from different cultures. She is fascinated by other cultures. This fascination is something that she

³² Kjetil, Oslo, 19.10.2017

³³ Marit, Oslo, 19.10.2017

carries with her as she interacts with immigrants in Norway. She explained that her curiosity with immigrants comes from her experience when she was in India.

I am interested in other cultures and how they live their lives and everything. I always have been fascinated by other cultures from my childhood. I went to India [I visited] real poor areas and the rural areas. We had to dress like them. We could not wear our Western clothes because it would be too much. And I enjoyed it, because I kind of get the feeling, oh, I can be one of you. It was really an exotic feeling. I am curious how they live? How is their life? What is important to them? ³⁴

As illustrated by Kari Marie's experience, curiosity is the interest to know any point of cultural difference. Her sense of wonder centered on the different customs of dressing and the way that strangers live their lives. Kari Marie's high interest regarding other cultures captures the definition of curiosity in the context of intercultural competence theory, where it is defined as a:

Sense of wonder: Wonder (...) always points to something beyond the accepted rules. Because of this, the feeling of being overwhelmed, or the experience of humbleness and even awe could accompany it. Wonder is the state of mind that signals we have reached the limits of our present understanding and that things may be different from how they look (Opdal, quoted in Bennett, 2009, p. 128).

While Kari Marie's curiosity was focused on the customs, dressing and the way strangers live their lives, Inger's curiosity revolves around the manner in which immigrants eat. She was fascinated by the fact that her immigrant friends eat their food using their hands. While visiting an Eritrean family, she was invited to share a meal with them. This is how she put it:

It is a blessing to me to meet these people and get to know them. I like to see things from their culture, to sit together with them around the table. Like eating with them [using] my hands which I never tried before. Sometimes, you think

³⁴ Kari Marie, Oslo, 19.10.2017

you need to go for a vacation to experience something new. But the new things are just around us.³⁵

For Inger, to eat with her hands and to sit around a table with immigrants was a beautiful moment to learn and experience a different culture. She enjoys the fact that she can now experience other cultures even while staying in Norway. Jan Ove is curious about the lives of immigrants in general. His interest to learn about other cultures is stimulated when he interacts with immigrants. Jan Ove said:

I meet many immigrants in different setting[s], for example in a school where I work. There are many internationals. So many interesting people whom I have learned so much from. I love to hear their background and their stories as well. It is interesting to listen to people's stories. And I think [stories] from people who are not from Norway is especially interesting to listen to.³⁶

As per Jan Ove's statement, we can see that he shows his curiosity by opening himself to learning and listening to people from other countries. Ingebjørg who is a mother to a teenager, defined what curiosity is about in her understanding. She explained that curiosity is not just about the interest to learn and to listen to the *other*, but about desiring to understand them based on their cultural context. She expressed:

To be curious and look behind what you see at first (...) look behind the colour, behind the attitudes, behind the way immigrants' dress up. If you are willing to go behind the first appearance, you can get the story behind [the immigrant]. Then that is when we understand why do you act like you do. I want to know what is inside you, the willingness to ask one more question and to go behind the first thing that we see (...) be curious (...) it is curiosity to people and the respect that you bring something from your culture in your way of living that we need.³⁷

³⁵ Inger, Oslo, 12.10.2017

³⁶ Jan Ove, Oslo, 19.10.2017

³⁷ Ingebjørg, Oslo, 13.10.2017

The perspectives expressed by Ingebjørg in her intercultural encounters with immigrants echoes the hermeneutical approach that is espoused in intercultural communication. According to the hermeneutical approach, ‘the interlocutors in a communication can negotiate language, meanings and the accepted reference frames’ (Dahl, 2004, p. 89). The goal of negotiation in the communication is to understand the *other* that is coming from a different cultural context. To achieve an understanding of the *other*, Svane (quoted in Dahl, 2004, p.90) developed three stages of the circle of understanding using a dialectic approach. The first stage is called pre-understanding or presuppositions, which connotes the cultural frame of reference of the individual. The second stage is understanding or meaning production during the communication. In this phase, the interlocutor suspends his or her stereotype or prejudice of the *other* by searching for meaning and understanding behind the obvious until new meanings about the *other* are produced. The last stage is post-understanding or the reflective stage. At this point, a new reference frame and new possibilities for interpretations are created, allowing for new interactions and communications (Dahl, 2004, p. 90).

The correlation between the hermeneutical approach theory and the statement of Ingebjørg about curiosity suggests that in order to arrive at a successful intercultural interaction, there must be a great amount of willingness and effort on the part of the interlocutors in order to understand the *other*. The behaviour and actions of the *other* must be interpreted based on his or her cultural context or background. In doing so, intercultural communication becomes open and develops.

4.4 Summary

The focus of this inquiry is to find out how ethnic Norwegians who attend two charismatic churches in Oslo relate to immigrants that they encounter in their daily lives. In exploring the research question, this chapter presented three major themes: relational attitudes, perception of the other, and bridges to intercultural relationships. One of my hypotheses for this study is that individuals who come from Charismatic church will find it easier to welcome immigrants because of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit upon them. The findings of this study support the above hypothesis. In the case of respondents who expressed a favourable attitude to immigrants, they were explicit to attribute such attitude as work of the Holy Spirit on them. Much of the respondents expressed that the command to ‘love your neighbour’ is one of their motivations in opening their hearts to strangers entering their country. The respondents did

not specifically mention giving ‘love to strangers’ but they understood that the essence of loving their neighbours was the same as loving strangers. This certain attitude was mirrored through their charismatic emphasis on love.

On the contrary, the findings regarding stereotypes failed to support one of the hypotheses put forward, that members of charismatic churches do not have unfavourable attitudes towards immigrants. Nonetheless, among respondents who held a negative attitude towards immigrants, findings showed that their reflection on their church’s values helped minimize the effects of negative attitudes. The findings also showed that negative stereotypes of respondents changed after participation in an activity provided by the church for immigrants..

A majority of the female respondents expressed their fears of and insecurities with immigrants, especially regarding those with Muslim backgrounds. My assumption that younger people were more friendly towards immigrants did not match the results among the respondents of this study. The findings of this study showed that the youngest respondents were just as sceptical towards immigrants as older respondents. Many of the stereotypes shared by respondents were pointed towards only one group of immigrants, based on their religion. For the majority of the respondents, the word ‘immigrant’ was commonly associated with refugees and asylum seekers with an Islamic background.

Many of the respondents expressed that after the influx of Syrian refugees in 2015, the way they defined immigrants changed. From that year on, the ‘face’ of immigrants became limited to immigrants coming from the Mediterranean region. Oslo, which has the highest share of immigrants in Norway, showed that respondents encounter them in daily life in different social arenas like workplace, public transportations, church, stores and neighbourhoods. Churches where respondents attended provide opportunities for their members to participate in various activities, which fosters a welcoming attitude towards immigrants. Some of those activities are language learning, free dinners, street prayer events and immigrant community visitations.

In addition, respondents who fostered a favourable attitude towards immigrants demonstrated significant signs of intercultural competence, with many of them having experienced living outside Norway, either short-term or long-term. Overall, a majority of the respondents held an open attitude towards immigrants and are actively seeking and maintaining friendships with

immigrants of different nationalities. Respondents showed a significant interest to know and become friends with immigrants across ethnicities and religions, as many of these ethnic Norwegians recognized the importance of building friendships with immigrants to help them feel belongingness.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Summary of purpose and findings

This research sought to explore the behaviour of ethnic Norwegian attendees in two Charismatic churches towards immigrants, and to identify factors that have an impact on the relationship between the host nationals and immigrants, by focusing on a sample population of host nationals, specifically ethnic Norwegian Charismatic Christians. The findings of the study suggest that there are two prominent indications that contribute to the positive interaction towards, and relationship of the respondents with, immigrants.

One factor is the religious beliefs regarding biblical hospitality and human equality. The second factor is the experience of having lived abroad for a period of time, which contributed to an openness in developing relationships with immigrants that mirrored their own past experiences of positive interaction with locals in the foreign countries they had lived in. Both factors correlate to the intercultural competencies of the respondents and developed the respondents' active role in serving as bridges that build and develop ongoing relationships with immigrants. The actions being taken by the respondents are intentional and aim to assist and facilitate the integration of immigrants.

On the other hand, findings in the study also suggest that respondents who held a non-favourable attitude towards immigrants did so for a specific type of immigrant, and such respondents appeared to hold strong stereotypes towards these immigrants which directly affected their daily or regular encounters with immigrants. However, despite the stereotypes that respondents are familiar with, these locals exert effort to change their views regarding immigrants and attempt to demonstrate favourable attitudes towards immigrants. In addition, it was interesting to note that my female respondents seemed to express certain stereotypes toward immigrants more strongly than my male respondents. Thus, the findings of the study show the impact that stereotypes have on the respondents (particularly women's) attitude towards immigrants which serves as a barrier to intercultural interactions.

5.2 Relationship to previous research

One of the main theoretical concepts used that anchored the analysis of the data was the theory of intercultural competence. This theory posits three major components to intercultural competence: Attitude, knowledge and skills (Byram, 1997, p. 34-37). The findings suggest that the attitudes of the respondents towards immigrants supported the theory's argument that attitudes are the most critical point in intercultural competence (Deardorff quoted in Peng et al. 2015, p. 46). Attitudes serve as pre-conditions for successful or unsuccessful intercultural interactions (Byram, 1997, p. 34). As seen in the findings, attitude determines whether intercultural interaction will move forward or be impaired. The respondents who fostered favourable attitudes towards immigrants progressed in establishing and continuing their relationship with them. The crucial role of attitude in intercultural competence was illustrated among respondents and paved the way for positive intercultural communication. Furthermore, intercultural communication that was reflected in the findings served as a helpful tool for respondents to relate to immigrants with understanding and respect.

The data gathered suggests that the respondents held certain stereotypes that added to the complication in intercultural communication. Such is the case in this study because the stereotyping held by respondents generalized their view about immigrants; this constituted an inadequate way of representing them because the particular stereotypes used isolate certain aspects, behaviours and inclinations which are detached from the historical and cultural context of different individuals categorized as immigrants (Cristoffanini, 2004, p. 86). Moreover, all the stereotypes described by some respondents were of a negative view of the *other* and acted as a barrier in their relationship with and view towards immigrants they relate with in their daily lives.

The study's findings also seemed to indicate consistency with the theory of hospitality, which posits the idea of love towards strangers and encourages a sense of delight in the whole guest-host relationship (Russell, 2006, p. 466). Respondents who built friendships with immigrants exhibited love towards them. These respondents exhibited a welcoming attitude when encountering the *other* because of their belief in biblical hospitality.

5.3 Research implications

This study offers evidence that supports positive outcomes in intercultural communication, when the host majority group engages in developing active relationships with immigrants that

they encounter in their daily lives. The findings of the study also suggest that the role of the majority group in a host society is very important, as the majority group can provide assistance to immigrants as they go through the process of integration. The religious beliefs of respondents on biblical hospitality and their religious understanding of human equality, as anchored in the Christian creation story, appear to be helpful factors in developing and maintaining a favourable attitude towards immigrants.

Charismatic Christian respondents who strongly adhered to their Christian faith, specifically with regards to the two concepts mentioned above, assisted immigrants with the intention that they could successfully integrate. The respondents from Charismatic churches do not only engage with immigrants through collective voluntary work; they also try to integrate their faith into their everyday life in a practical and concrete manner in the way they communicate and relate to immigrants. As per the beliefs held by the respondents, relational engagement with immigrants by the host majority should not be limited to various organized activities initiated by institutions, but should be a daily act that is seen in fostering an attitude that welcomes immigrants. The Charismatic Christian respondents who took part in this study established and develop friendship with immigrants, not with an ulterior motive to ‘evangelize’ but simply to demonstrate their God-given love and human equality.

5.4 Recommendations

Further research on integration can look into specific roles of the host majority that could facilitate immigrants in developing a sense of belonging and inclusion in their new host society. The findings of this study suggest that one avenue of further research could further investigate the role of friendship between members of the host majority and immigrants, and the effect that this factor could potentially contribute to the sense of belonging of newcomers in the host society. An analysis of friendships established between immigrants and locals would be another interesting focus of research, as friendship could have a deep impact on the process of integration for minority groups.

Some practical implications of some of the findings in this study include the potential value of raising awareness of the host majority’s importance in integration in various social arenas, like churches, neighbourhoods, business companies and schools, where people can be educated and informed about the importance of connecting and establishing relationships with

immigrants. Included in the cause for raising awareness of the importance of the host majority's role in integration is the presentation of all possible consequences when host nationals do not improve in their efforts to assist immigrants in their process of integration. In our growing multicultural society, intercultural competence can be added as a topic of study for students so that they can learn how to manage relationships within a multicultural setting and on a personal level. Another recommendation would be to avoid or discourage the use of media that promotes negative images of immigrants, as the findings in the study indicate that these produce fears and stronger stereotypes among host nationals and migrants' groups that are considered different from the group being categorized. Instead, media can be utilized to promote how people from different ethnicities and cultures can develop respect and understanding amidst diversity and multiculturalism.

5.5 Contribution to Research

Theorists concerned with integration recognize that a mutual process is needed in order to make integration successful. The research undertaken for this study affirms that necessity and, in addition, presents concrete steps taken by host nationals to facilitate the integration of immigrants. The research undertaken here provides the following specific contributions which can support the broader field of integration studies: One, the research highlights the perspectives of respondents who are host nationals, giving insight into the way they act, think and feel about their roles in the integration of immigrants. This is not a common area of focus, as most studies concerning integration focus on the role of immigrants in their own integration. This study offers possible explanations behind the behaviour of respondents regarding their relationship with immigrants and how those specific behaviours have an impact on their relationship, and it is possible that these explanations can be applied to members of the host society at large. Two, this study portrays how intercultural interaction takes place and the process that occurs within the intercultural encounter. Concrete steps that the host nationals have undertaken as partners in the integration process are enumerated in the findings. As such, this study offers a perspective that highlights the idea that the process of integration is not just a result of specific skills that are learned by immigrants, but also a result of the relationships established with host nationals. Findings from the research show the dynamic brought into intercultural relationships by host nationals. Third, the study highlights the importance of extending a positive relational message, which can be communicated through simple gestures demonstrated by members of the host majority to immigrants.

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Appendix A

Letter to Participants

11 September 2017

Dear participants,

I am currently studying at Vitenskapelige Høgskole (formerly Misjonhøgskole) fulfilling the course of Master in Global Studies. As a second-year student, I am going to work on my master thesis to complete the course requirement for my graduation on June 2018.

In view of this, I am writing to ask if you could help me with my research by allowing me to do an interview with you. My aim on this research is to find out your thoughts and feelings as Christians towards the immigrants that are coming to Norway. By hearing your perspectives, the research might be able to help remove some biases that immigrants may have against the locals in the country that are often presented by media and may bridge the seeming cultural divide between the locals and the immigrants.

Here are the questions that I will be asking:

1. What do you think are your roles to help the immigrants integrate in Norway?
2. What do you think you could do to help them feel at home?
3. In what way, can you receive them as new members of Norwegian society?
4. How do you define immigrants in Norway? In your opinion who do you consider to be immigrants in Norway?
5. What do you think could be the consequences of them failing to integrate
 - a. on the society?
 - b. on the immigrants?
 - c. on you personally?
6. What do you think are your reasons that would stop you from relating to them?
7. How do you feel towards the immigrants when you see them in public places, and talk to them personally?
8. If you are doing anything towards them, what are your motivations for doing what you are doing towards the immigrants?
9. How do your non-Christian friends, colleagues and family react to your attitudes towards the immigrants?
10. As Norwegians, how do you feel that immigrants keep coming to Norway? What do you think you can do about it?

11. How important do you think is your role to their integration to this country?
12. If you have any immigrant friend in Norway, how is it to be friends with them? What nationality do they have?

This interview will be done in person as we agree with the time and venue. For the purpose of the project, the interview will be recorded. It may take forty-five minutes to one hour interview. Your answers to the questions will be handled confidentially and strictly in full compliance to the ethical research guidelines of NSD (Personvernombudet for Forskning). This interview is voluntary and there will be no coercion should you decide not to participate. For transparency and accountability purposes, I offer to share with you the result of the research should you choose to see the results.

Thank you in advance for your participation and assistance.

Blessings,

Carina Sand
Research Student

Appendix B

Interview Consent

Project Title: *The Role of the Locals in the Integration of the Immigrants*

Background and Purpose:

This research project is personally funded. This project aims to understand the roles of the locals in host country have in helping immigrants integrate. This project also intends to know and hear the thoughts and feelings of the Norwegian Christians regarding the inflow of immigrants to Norway. This project is being performed as a partial fulfilment of my master thesis at Vitenskapelige Høgskole (formerly Misjonhøgskole).

What Does participation in the project imply?

As a participant, you have been selected through a recommendation of your leader because of your age, gender and nationality that would be significant in the pursuit of the research that is being studied.

What will happen to the information about you?

The interview will be done in person and will be recorded audibly with some note taking that I will do during the interview. The questions concern about your thoughts regarding what you perceive to be your role in the integration of the immigrants. All the information gathered in this research will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be anonymised. Since this project is done with the supervision of my thesis coach, he will have an access to the information that is given without your numbers, names and emails. The duration of the interview will only last for forty-five minutes to one hour. Outside of the research question that is attached to this letter, there are no other personal questions that will be asked that is not related to the topic.

After you answer the interview questions in person, there is nothing more that is expected of you. If there will be follow up questions that are needed later, it will more likely be of the same length of time or even less than what I mentioned here. The entire project is scheduled for completion in June 2019. Afterwards, all the information will be deleted and no one else could have access to the information that is provided from the interview.

It is voluntary to participate in the project, and you can choose at any time to withdraw your consent without stating any reason. If you decide to withdraw, all the data you have provided will be made anonymous. If you would like to participate or if you have any questions concerning the project, please contact me Carina Sand at number 906-40-043 or through email at ciforerunners@yahoo.com.

This research study has been registered to the Data Protection Official for Research, NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data. If you are willing to participate in this project as one who will provide answers to the question, you may just send me a text message or respond to this letter via email.

I have received information about the project and am willing to participate

(Signed by participant, date)