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Multicultural Competence and Identity

in Young Immigrants and Refugees

in Oslo and New York City –

Challenges and Assets

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faculty of education
and international studies

May 2011

Master thesis

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree
Master of Multicultural and International Education (MIE)**

Summary

This research project is aimed at providing insight into the life worlds of 16 young immigrants and refugees currently residing in Oslo and New York City, specifically into how they see themselves in terms of multicultural competence and identity related to their cross-cultural experiences. Their stories reveal that individual acculturation cannot easily be put in a simple box, model, or theory, since human development is much more complex than that. Yet there are some indications that the interviewees of this study have some challenges and assets as well as some identity issues in common, suggesting that there could be some support for expanding Third Culture Kids (TCK) theory to include Cross-Cultural Kids (CCKs) in general. However, more research is needed before one can start to apply the term "CCK theory".

Second, this project researches the validity of some assumptions that the educational program FLEXid is founded on. FLEXid aims at helping young migrants currently living in Norway reflect on who they are, learn about which skills they may have, and help them deal with their challenges and make choices about their lives. These assumptions are first, that the concept of TCK can be applied to young immigrants and refugees in general, renaming them CCKs. The study gives some support for this expansion. Second, children who move cross-culturally often struggle with cross-pressure, which is far from true for all of the participants of this study. Third, a program that allows for reflection of one's multicultural experiences is useful in that it can give greater awareness of one's identity and competence. This seems to be a particularly relevant assumption in both Oslo and NYC, since few of the interviewees had thought and/or talked in depth about their multicultural experiences, and especially their assets. Many also lacked an awareness of this before the interview. Also, since the methodology of FLEXid is based on supporting individual reflection and not on giving answers, it should be relevant for a diverse student group. Thus, the basic assumptions of FLEXid come across as valid in both settings, although voluntary participation would be necessary to avoid ascribing a forced identity. Further research is needed before transferring the program to NYC, since there are many more factors that influence the success of a program than the ones that have been studied in this thesis.

The findings of this study should be valuable to both the majority and the minority population, to teachers and students, to the field of research as well as to parents. Allowing a more resource oriented focus on the life worlds of the new national citizens into public discourse as well as into classrooms would benefit society in that it would help expand everyone's worldview and thus the growing into effective world citizens for all.

Contents

1 Introduction

Multicultural identity is a growing field of research in an increasingly globalized world. More and more children grow up living in more than one country and culture due to their parents' choices, thus being socialized into more than one cultural system. This can be understood as having a multicultural identity. Mobility and cross-culturality are key aspects of a multicultural life-style.

The increase in moves across borders may be because of bicultural marriages, war, adventure, and work, and is spurred by globalization. Globalization can be understood as "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away and vice versa" (Giddens 1990:64). The fact that we no longer can relate to each other without considering how transnational issues affect us, be it economical, technological, cultural, or political, has an impact on individuals.

The fact that a growing part of the student body consists of people with multicultural experiences calls for a greater focus on the issue of multicultural competence and identity in the field of education. This has to do with matters such as status, empowerment, and inclusion in mainstream society. Recently an increasing focus on diversity as an asset can be seen in the Norwegian public debate (NOU 2010:7, Eriksen 2010). However, what this means for the individuals, especially for adolescents, remains unclear. Little comparative research has been done on ethnically diverse identity and competence development in immigrant youth. Teachers need a better understanding of what it entails to grow up multi-culturally in order to better meet the specific needs of such kids. The youngsters themselves need to understand what happens to them due to their parents' choices to move so as better to cope with the challenges they face and to apply their assets in society. This research explores and compares how young people living in the two multiethnic cities of Oslo and New York City see their advantages and disadvantages due to their diverse backgrounds, with a special focus on competence and identity.

Exploring how cross-cultural experiences in young people shape their identities and especially competence is a relatively new field in Norway (NOU 2010:7:30). Both the positive focus on assets and the comparison across diverse backgrounds would provide important knowledge to the field of multicultural education. Resilience studies, with their focus on what makes people succeed despite challenging circumstances, are growing in number. My research would fit into this category to the extent that I focus on benefits of having a multicultural background.

According to David Pollock and Ruth Van Reken, authors of "Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds" (3rd ed. 2009), growing up with high mobility and in cross-cultural environments does something to a person's identity. How often people move or experience people in the network to move, and how different the societies are from each other may vary. Theory on Third Culture Kids claims that children who grow up like this generally have more in common with each other than with either of the cultures that they live in (ibid). They rarely feel a sense of belonging solely to any of the countries in which they have been raised, but the common experience of frequent cross-cultural moving can in a sense be a culture in itself. This third culture of not belonging to a specific place but rather to a shared experience is why people sharing this experience may be called Third Culture Kids (TCKs).

Recently, the concept of TCKs has been expanded to include the large variety of children who grow up multiculturally, naming them Cross-Cultural Kids (CCKs). CCKs can be children of mixed marriages, adopted children, as well as children of refugees and immigrants. As of yet, research is lacking to support this new concept. However, an educational program called "FLEXid" is based on this assumption. It aims at helping young immigrants and refugees currently living in Norway reflect on who they are, learn about which skills they may have, and help them deal with their challenges and make choices about their lives. My project is meant as a contribution in exploring the validity and consequences of this expansion, as well as examining the relevance of FLEXid to young migrants in Oslo as well as in NYC. NYC has been chosen mainly because of it multicultural nature.

1.1 Research questions

I will specifically explore how young people having immigrated or fled to, and currently living in New York City and Oslo, see their multicultural experiences as challenges or assets in their lives in their new societies. Do they have certain competences and aspects of identity in common despite variables such as place of birth, types of family structure and relations, power relations, reasons for moving, number of moves, and current place of residence? The working hypothesis is that growing up with high mobility and cross-cultural experiences affects a person's character and sense of belonging in ways that are similar regardless of background and host society. If CCK theory can be supported, then at least some of the intentions of FLEXid should be transferable to NYC, since the basic issues would be similar.

2 Theory

This chapter will introduce and discuss the underlying theories of this dissertation. First, the topic will be placed within academic fields and foci. Second, four of the most essential concepts to the understanding of the research questions will be defined. Then, theory on multicultural identity and competence development will be presented and related to each other, before the educational program FLEXid that is based on these issues will be introduced. With these definitions and theories as a foundation, the research questions will be explained and defined.

2.1 Locating the study within the academic field

People have to adjust to new environments when moving. The adjustment concerns both behavioral and attitudinal aspects of a person's identity, and is often referred to as *acculturation*. Acculturation is "a process that individuals undergo in response to a changing cultural context" (Berry et al. 2002:349), and is generally based on research on adults (Salole & van der Weele 2010:353). Doctor of psychology Brit Oppedal (2003) outlines the different aspects of the study of acculturation. It may be studied on a group level, which would have a focus on changes in social structure, economic base, and political organization, such as in the fields of sociology and anthropology. It may also be studied at the individual level, which would have a focus on changes in identity, values, and attitudes. This traditionally belongs to the field of psychology, and can have an affective, behavioral, and cognitive focus, known as the ABC's. An affective focus would study stress, coping, and psychological adaptation. A behavioral focus would have skills and interpersonal communication as its object of study, and a cognitive one would study ethnic identity, intergroup perceptions, and relations.

Oppedal goes on to explain another focus on acculturation within psychology, which allows for studies of the dynamic cultural adaptation that children undergo, and redefines acculturation as the "continued growth and development in the person's original culture as well as in the lifestyles and values of other socio-cultural systems in which he or she participates" (Ramirez 1983 in Oppedal 2003:13). This allows for describing the process of acculturation in children of immigrants, which may be even more dynamic than in adults.

This thesis will largely have a psychological focus, specifically *intercultural* and *developmental* psychology, with its emphasis on the individual's perception of his/her identity and competence related to moving. However, it will also draw upon sociological and anthropological elements, such as psychological anthropology, insofar as the individuals are related to the society in which they live. As far as the field of education goes, the thesis is not directly related to schools, but to

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the specific educational program FLEXid. Also, students with migration experiences make up an increasing proportion of the student bodies at many schools, and how young people with such experiences see themselves, is relevant knowledge within the field of education.

2.2   Central concepts

Four concepts are essential to the understanding of the research questions. The first is competence, which forms the basis for defining multicultural competence. The three others are related concepts that are necessary to define and grasp in order to make sense of multicultural identity formation; these are identity, socialization, and culture.

2.2.1   Competence

A general definition of *competence* is skills or abilities (The Cassell Concise Dictionary 1997:294). According to professor of lifelong learning Knud Illeris, initial definitions of competence concentrated on "a person's adequacy to function effectively in the world" (Illeris 2009:9). Within the field of education, the concept has come to mean the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are the aims of learning (Bø & Helle 2008:154), and thus involves action as well as cognition and emotion. Competence is in my opinion not contingent of awareness of it, although it is would strengthen it.

The focus of this thesis is cultural and multicultural competence. I will return to a definition of *culture* and *multicultural*, but for now it suffices to say that it has to do with more than one system of beliefs, values, and experiences. Walker et al. (2003 in Illeris 2009:14) define cultural competence as **attitudes**, **awareness** of oneself and others, cultural **knowledge**, and cross-cultural **skills**. Expanding on these key components, my understanding of multicultural competence overlap with professor of intercultural education Michael Byram's concept of *intercultural communicative competence* (2003:62):

- *Attitudes*: curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own.
- *Knowledge*: of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction.
- *Skills of interpreting and relating*: ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one's own.
- *Skills of discovery and interaction*: ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.

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- *Critical cultural awareness/political education*: an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries.

These are the components of competence as I understand it for the purpose of this thesis.

Being multiculturally competent is, like any other competence, varying in degree; a person can be more or less open, knowledgeable, aware, skilled, and critical. Some aspects can be so challenging that they might not be experienced as a competence at all, but more as a problem. This research is meant to investigate both the challenges and assets resulting from the participants' multicultural experiences.

2.2.2 Identity

Depending on the academic tradition one operates within and the purpose of a research project, the concept of identity can be understood in different ways. A dictionary definition of identity is: "the distinguishing character or personality of an individual" (Online Encyclopedia Britannica). This definition includes others in that the individual is distinguished from, or set apart from others. Another way to put it is simply "a definition, an interpretation, of the self" (Baumeister 1986:4 in Salole Skjerven 2006:6). This definition has the focus on the individual and does not necessarily imply the existence of others. If one combines a psychological individualistic and a sociological group oriented definition, it places the individual within a collective identity. Knowing who you are in relation to yourself as well as to others is my understanding of identity, which will be pivotal in this dissertation.

George Herbert Mead's classical work from 1934 is famous for conceptualizing how we understand ourselves in relation to others in terms of "social mirroring", in distinguishing between "I" as a subject and "Me" as an object. We cannot understand ourselves isolated from the people around us, since we are influenced by others' reactions to our actions, consciously or subconsciously. In Mead's own words: "It is just as true in society as it is in the psychological situation that there could not be the individual if there was not the process of which he is a part" (Mead 1934:225). The relationship between the individual and the society a person lives in is thus inseparable, and one must take the interplay into consideration when trying to understand individual identity development.

Another relevant classical work on identity within the field of psychology is Henri Tajfel's theory of *social identity*. According to him, social identity is "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups),

together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel 1978:63). Thus, people have conceptions of the self as individual beings, but also as part of groups. The importance one puts in the group identification may vary, as well as how strong the sense of belonging is and how much one knows about the group, depending on individual and cultural differences (Brown & Capozza 2006).

Studying identity anthropologically often means to take the stance that "social identities in general are relative and to some extent situational" (Eriksen 2002:30). Exploring which social identity that is salient for the individual is central to my research. *National identity* is one type of group identity that is pivotal in my interview questions[1], and is according to Benedict Anderson (1983) "based on people's belief that a national community exists and that the people within that national community share certain characteristics" (in Theiss-Morse 2009:5). Anderson's famous definition of a nation as an "imagined community" also holds the understanding that national identity is a shared sense of belonging to people that you have never met, yet believe to have important things in common with, and that the nation has the right to govern itself. Furthermore, the fact that someone is part of the group entails that others are not. I will get back to what such national identity might specifically entail in Norway and the US in chapter 4.2.

Cultural identity is a level of identification in between national and personal identity, where national identity is broader and personal identity is unique. Based on the ideas of Geertz (1973) and Schneider (1976), cultural identity is defined as "identification with and perceived acceptance into a group that has shared systems of symbols and meanings as well as norms/rules for conduct" (in Collier & Thomas 1988:113).

Ethnic identity is another type of identity that often comes up when multiculturalism is being discussed. Ethnicity can be understood broadly in that it characterizes a group with certain elements in common, and I find that it is often undefined in academic literature, but used to mean something like "background" or a more politically correct word for "race". *Ethnic identity* is according to Collier and Thomas (1988:115) "identification with and perceived acceptance into a group with shared heritage and culture". I would add a group with <u>perceived</u> shared heritage and culture, originated in social anthropologist Fredrik Barth's famous study of ethnicity among the Swat Pathans in Pakistan, in which he found that ethnic boundaries were constructed on perceived - not objective - differences (Barth 1994). He further claims that there are generally

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[1] See interview questions three and four, appendix A.

two analytical categories to cultural contents of ethnic dichotomies, although it is not possible to predict which will be made relevant in which situations:

1. Overt signals and signs – dress, language, house-form, or general style of life
2. Basic values that a person is judged by

(Barth 1994:14)

Which identity that becomes salient varies from situation to situation, Collier & Thomas (1988) hold, which is in line with professor of anthropology Thomas Hylland Eriksen, who claims that "individuals have many statuses and many possible identities, and it is an empirical question when and how ethnic identities become the most relevant ones" (Eriksen 2002:31). This he calls "*negotiation of identity*", and involves the study of how and when individuals make which aspects of who they are relevant and to whom. This is a focus of my research project, although the concept of ethnic identity is not directly applied. However, it forms an underlying understanding of the qualities of group identities, in that what constitutes the contents and borders of a group is based on the mechanisms of ethnicity as explained by Barth (1994).

Consequentially, which aspect of identity that is salient is not always up to the individual to decide. Sometimes society has a stronger say than the individual in determining what defines a person, which is why understanding identity as social mirroring is so important. Individuals vary in how much emphasis we put on other people's opinions, but nobody is immune to what others think. Also, which alternatives that are available may also vary, depending on social status (May 2009). Thus, in the words of Eriksen (2010:42): "People appear in the interplay between their innate potentials and the relations that they are a part of.[2]"

Collier and Thomas (1988 in Gudykunst ed. 2005:197) have systematized the concept of identity into three dimensions:
1. Scope – size of group sharing the same identity.
2. Salience – relative psychological importance an individual feels related to various aspects of identity.
3. Intensity – how openly and explicitly an individual expresses an aspect of identity in a given interaction.

Finding out how multicultural youth see themselves in terms of with whom and where they belong and how important this is to them, as well as exploring the dynamics of social mirroring, is part of what I attempt to do in chapter five. I will come back to a more specific theory of

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[2] "Personer trer frem i vekselvirkningen mellom sine iboende potensialer og relasjonene de inngår i."

multicultural identity that suits this thesis, but first the concepts of socialization and culture will be explored.

2.2.3 Socialization

Moving from one place to another causes change. Change implies a starting point, which is why *socialization* is relevant in this context. Broadly speaking, socialization is the process in which an individual forms his/her identity to become part of society. The sociologists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann define socialization as "the comprehensive and consistent induction of an individual into the objective world of a society or a sector of it" (1967:130). It is thus the deliberate and extensive raising of a child into the society in which it is expected to live, forming its *life world* (Husserl 1950 in Sand 1992:84) or *universe of discourse* (Mead 1934 in ibid:83). Berger and Luckmann distinguish between *primary* and *secondary* socialization. The primary occurs in early childhood and the rules of life are taught by the *significant others*, usually the parents, but in many societies other relatives. The child will normally identify with the world in the way that their significant others see it (Berger & Luckmann 1967:151), thus playing a pivotal role in an individual's identity formation. Secondary socialization occurs later and involves more general aspects of the society, such as what one learns from friends and teachers, or *generalized others*. Secondary socialization expands the life world of an individual, but how a person sees him or herself has in Berger and Luckmann's theory a strong foundation in what has been learnt in primary socialization (ibid:162). A person's socialization is thus a dialectic process between the individual and the society, corresponding to Mead's theory on identity formation.

Therese Sand (1992) points out that the variation from society to society in how one adapts to the specific objective world is related to historic, political, economic, ecologic, as well as religious and social factors. I would add personal or psychological factors to that list. Sand suggests that children in Southern Africa and Northern Europe learn different things regarding how to protect themselves from the sun, temperature, animals and plants. They also learn different norms as to how boys and girls are expected to behave, as well as how to treat the elderly. Various institutions have differing functions in different societies, such as the police in a dictatorship or in a democracy. Thus, socialization is culture specific and has to do with both the concept of identity and acculturation in psychological and anthropological terms, in that it has to do with how people learn and adapt to cultural settings.

2.2.4 Culture

This brings us to the concept of *culture*. It is common to distinguish between two main views of culture in the social sciences: the *essentialist* and the *processual* (Baumann 1999, Gullestad 2002). By essentialist, Gerd Baumann means "culture as the collective heritage of a group, that is, as a catalogue of ideas and practices that shape both the collective and individual lives and thoughts of all members" (Baumann 1999:25). He compares this understanding to a photocopy machine that reproduces identical copies. This perception makes sense related to socialization, in that certain norms and values that are generally agreed upon are passed onto the next generation in order to prepare its citizens for life in the specific society. Being socialized usually contributes to a sense of belonging and identity in the individual. It also makes sense in that this is the way many people understand culture, hence being important when doing research on people's life worlds. The essentialist view of culture thus also helps understanding how people are kept in their place, and how they are stereotyped.

However, since the construction of reality is dialectic, and the individual also influences society, the results of socialization are never identical and hence ever changing, or processual. Rather than comparing culture to a photocopy machine, it makes more sense to perceive it as a concert or a jam session, Baumann continues. "It only exists in the act of being performed, and it can never stand still or repeat itself without changing its meaning" (Baumann 1999:25). Both conceptions are important to understand how culture is talked about, Baumann concludes: "Culture is two things at once, that is, a dual discursive construction" (Baumann 1999:95). Eriksen (2002) claims that although people may think that culture is essensialistic, in reality it is not, which is why we have to study both the individual and the academic conceptions of cultures. In line with this conception of culture it becomes important to describe how my informants understand and talk about culture in their lives, as well as maintaining a researcher's perspective.

Pollock and Van Reken (2009) use the concept of culture in the sense of what is being passed on from one generation to the next, both in terms of external patterns of behavior and as "a system of shared concepts, beliefs, and values. It is a framework from which we interpret and make sense of life and the world around us" (ibid:41). They do not talk about culture in a specifically processual way, although they take for granted the constant changes in life due to our experiences; their focus is more on an existing system of knowledge that people learn as part of being socialized into a society, thus causing shared experiences.

Pollock and Van Reken also separate between *surface* and *deep culture*, having taken the idea from anthropologist Gary Weaver's metaphor of the cultural iceberg (in Pollock & Van Reken 2009:42). The part of culture that can easily be observed, i.e. the part of the iceberg that sticks above water, is customs, food, language, and traditions. The invisible part, which also is the more significant part, consists of worldview, values, assumptions, and basic beliefs. We use the visible parts to identify the deeper levels of culture, just as our values become visible through behavior.

Figure 2.1 **The Weaver Cultural Iceberg**

Customs
Language Food
Traditions

Worldview
Values
Basic Beliefs
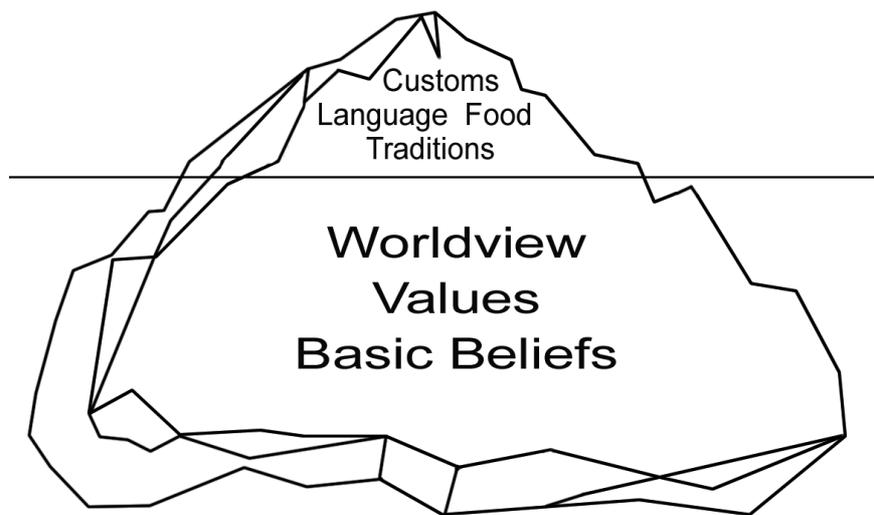
(Pollock & Van Reken 2009
Used by permission)

Within one cultural system this usually works, as people generally are socialized into the same symbolic expressions of their values, thereby identifying with them in similar ways. Stereotypes can help create order and structure to our lives. This corresponds to Berger and Luckmann's concept of *institutionalization*, in which habits have been repeated and become objectified as visual symbols that make sense across generations. It also corresponds to Barth's two categories to identify cultural boundaries in encounters between ethnic groups. However, when such interpretations are done cross-culturally, we may misinterpret what a certain behavior means, thus "crashing into the iceberg below water". For instance, for a child to lower its eyes when being scolded by a teacher means a show of respect in one culture, whereas it means cowardice or rudeness in another. Also, such a crash can occur within one person, causing struggles to contain and accommodate conflicting values. It is this construction of reality that Berger and

Luckmann encourages us to study so that we can understand the specific meanings in different societies.

Thus, the concept of culture as I understand it and apply it in this thesis is both essentialist and processual, as well as culture as experience. It is the dynamic and shared experience of people within a group who live with and pass onto the next generation certain traditions and values that are believed to hold significant defining characteristics.

Now, having defined the three central concepts of identity, socialization, and culture, I will further move on to combining these in ways that are relevant to understanding *multicultural identity and competence development*.

2.3 Multicultural identity and competence development

First of all, the concept of *multicultural* entails that there is more than one system of traditions, beliefs, and attitudes in play in developing one person's sense of self in relation to others. The following chapter will discuss how moving from one system of socialization to another may influence a person's development in terms of identity and competence. First, the concept of schemas as a framework for understanding mono-cultural and multicultural socialization will be presented, before it will be applied to children who move cross-culturally. Next, a pivotal theory of acculturation in children, the TCK profile, will be outlined and related to the psychological ABCs as well as the concept of competence employed in this thesis, before presenting additional theories on child acculturation. Finally, the proposed theory of Cross-Cultural Kids will be introduced.

2.3.1 Schemas

Uni-cultural or *mono-cultural* societies, in which "one culture, one language, one religion, and one single identity characterizes the whole population" (Berry et al. 2002:347) is what Berger and Luckmann's work has a focus on. They assume that what is normal is to acquire one specific *interpretative scheme* or system to understand one's world by. "These schemes provide the child with institutionalized programs for everyday life" (Berger & Luckmann 1967:135); the systemic patterns *legitimize*, or justify and explain why things are the way they are in his or her world. They specifically state that it is so different to be socialized into a society other than the one in which one first became a member that they will "leave aside here the special question" (ibid:130).

My work has a focus on individuals who currently live in what may be called *plural* or *multicultural* societies, in which "a number of different cultural groups reside together within a shared social and political framework" (Skelton & Allen 1999 in Berry et al.2002:346). In such a diverse context the concept of *schemas* as another way of talking about culture might be useful to explore. Kant and Piaget are along with Berger and Luckmann classical scholars who investigated or theorized about the idea that experiences are gathered together in memory, forming knowledge to interpret the world by. Piaget (1985) asserts that a child acquires knowledge by constructing schemes. The new knowledge sometimes makes sense and sometimes not. If it does not, the child will adapt by *assimilation* or *accommodation*. Absorbing new information into existing schemes is assimilation, whereas forming new schemes or adjusting them is accommodation. The more knowledge one gets, the more accurate and numerous the schemes.

Within the field of intercultural psychology, Hiroko Nishida has developed a theory on sojourner[3] adaptation to new environments. She is in line with these scholars when defining what she calls *schemas* as "generalized collections of knowledge of past experiences that are organized into related knowledge groups and are used to guide our behaviors in familiar situations" (Nishida 2005:402).

She explains schemas physiologically, in that neurons in our brains form connections, or synapses, based on behavioral patterns. Experiences, or repetitions, stabilize patterns of synaptic contacts. Those that are used survive, whereas those that are not, are eliminated. Thus, humans modify their nervous systems in response to their experiences. The more experiences, the more connection patterns are possible, and the more the experiences are repeated, the more automatic and stable the patterns become, ending up as long-term memory. Such "memory representation" is what may be called *schemas*. Within one cultural group, where people share many of the same experiences through institutionalization in Berger and Luckmann's term, it makes sense to talk about a cultural schema. Thus, it is our experiences and how we understand them that form the patterns that make up our culture.

When a person moves to another culture, it takes time and energy to unlearn the old and learn the new schema, or de- and re-socialize, as sociology professor Anton Hoëm (1978) would term it.

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[3] Sojourners = People who go abroad with a specific purpose for a limited time period. In this paper, *immigrant* is generally used for both short-term sojourners and permanent migrants. There are two main reasons for this. One is that many people move with the intention of returning, but end up staying. Another is that children are more or less subject to their parents' decisions, having a different sense of time, thus having a different sense of permanence.

When they do not have the same schema and their automated interpretative system fails, or if something is very important to them, they will use what Nishida calls "person-driven" or bottom-up functions as opposed to the "schema-driven" or top-down ones. This can be compared to changing from automatic to manual gear, or what I see as accommodation in Piaget's terms. These are individuating and piecemeal processes that require more effort and attention, but that are necessary to acquire new cultural schema. Forming cultural schemas are dynamic and dialectic processes, thus fitting with the processual view of culture.

2.3.2   Acculturation in children

Grown-ups and children thus have different ways of adapting to new cultures, or acculturating. Pollock and Van Reken (2009) point out that whereas adults commonly make such moves rationally, contemplating, reflecting, and making choices about the changes in their lives, children and youth more often than not just do. They tend to absorb their new life situations, learning as they go along how to act to fit in and how to survive, without making conscious decisions about why and how. If the move happens during primary socialization it would be expected to have a stronger impact on the individual than if it happened during secondary socialization (Byram 2003:55).

Moving cross-culturally may or may not be something people reflect upon as they grow older, but nevertheless it is something they often naturally learn to cope with. In line with Nishida's Cultural Schema Theory as well as supported by Oppedal's doctoral research (2003), I will contend that children and adults move in different ways, both because of the plasticity of the brain of a child as opposed to the more rigid adult brain, and because of the stability in the patterns of adults' due to more repeated experiences.

When a child moves to another culture, their socialization process is influenced in a different way than that of an adult, and so a child would more easily expand the cultural schema to adjust to the new setting. Similarly, Suárez-Orozco et.al. (2009) claim that children and adults acculturate differently, but give different, more sociological reasons. While parents often focus on making ends meet and sustaining networks with their ethnic group for support, thereby limiting themselves from opportunities to learn about their new society, the children enter into the institutions of society such as schools and TV, interacting with native teachers and peers, learning the language and customs more quickly.

These ideas are supported by the findings of Sissel Østberg (2003) in her work among Pakistanis in Oslo. She claims that the children in her study did not have to go through de- and re-

socialization as Hoëm (1978) contends is necessary when a child's community of interests and values[4] are in conflict. Rather, they often went straight to what she terms *expanded socialization*, thereby incorporating apparently conflicting needs and values (p.83-84). Supporting this is an article by Tamis-LeMonda et.al. (2008:1), which contends that "cultural values and developmental goals that have largely been classified as polar opposites may be viewed as conflicting, additive, or functionally dependent." This resembles Piaget's concept of assimilation, and also the expanding of a cultural schema. It may also be another way of understanding the debate on defining culture. An essentialist perception of culture demands a homogenous product of socialization, since culture is understood as "a people's collective set of knowledge, behavioral and value norms", which constitute the content of socialization passed on from one generation to the next (Hoëm in Sand 1992:89).

Children who grow up in a stable environment, who more or less share their frame of reference with people in their community, where how you see yourself is also how others see you, can be seen as having a mono-cultural identity development. Children who move during primary and/or secondary socialization, however, can be seen as having a multicultural upbringing. In the following I will describe and discuss a way of thinking about such multicultural children, called Third Culture Kids.

2.3.3   Third Culture Kids

The first person to coin the term *Third Culture Kids* (TCKs) was Dr. Ruth Hill Useem, with a PhD in sociology on the subject (http://www.tckworld.com/useem/home.html). A TCK refers to a person who has grown up in a country (first, host culture) other than the country that their parents are from (second, passport culture[5]). Hence, they are socialized into **more than one culture** in their formative years, which usually is regarded as up until the age of 18, i.e. during primary and/or secondary socialization (Pollock & Van Reken 2009:21). Another feature of TCKs is that they have been exposed to **high mobility**, i.e. that they have experienced a lot of moving, either by moving themselves, or by being moved away from. Useem found that such children had a lot of similar characteristics that separated them from both their passport and host cultures. They were neither typically one nor the other, often feeling different from their peers in either country. Rather, they showed a special mix of both or all cultures, feeling connected to

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[4] "interessefellesskap" and "verdifellesskap", my translation.

[5] This may not be the most accurate term any longer, since regulations on holding more than one citizenship have changed (source?). However, "passport culture" is the term used by Pollock and Van Reken, and so it will be used in this thesis to mean country of origin.

other people with similar experiences. In addition to this sense of belonging, they have often developed *cross-cultural competence*, which is understood as personal, practical, relational and developmental characteristics. Therefore, it made sense to call them Third Cultural, since they had so much in common with others who had a similar upbringing.

The TCK profile is compatible with the concept of competence as knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness as defined in section 2.2.1. It also touches on the interests of all three of the psychological ABCs, thus including identity issues, as well as being supported by Oppedal's research, which is based on the claim that: "Multicultural children learn different rules not only in the cognitive, but also in the affective, behavioral, and social domain" (Oppedal 2003:14).

The best-known book on TCKs is "Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds" by David Pollock and Ruth Van Reken (3rd ed. 2009). Although it is a repetition of the above, their definition of a TCK deserves to be quoted in full:

> A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is 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 of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture may be assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background. (Pollock & Van Reken 2009:13)

Pollock and Van Reken have collected numerous accounts from people having grown up abroad, and give a profile of the TCK. This they present in the form of benefits and challenges, skills and abilities, such as cross-cultural, observational, social, and linguistic skills. They claim that TCKs' lives of high mobility and cross-cultural experiences shape them in similar ways. For some it may be mostly problematic and for others mostly beneficial, depending on various factors, such as personal, psychological, social, political, and economic ones, which also parallel resilience studies, as will be clarified below. Roughly sketched, Pollock and Van Reken's (2009) TCK Profile is as follows:

The identity issues of **rootlessness** and **restlessness** are particularly defining characteristics of a TCK. Although there are few demographic similarities between TCKs, common to them all is the feeling of not really belonging anywhere, that of being both – and, and at the same time neither – nor. The question "Where are you from?" often has several possible answers so that it becomes difficult to know where the "roots" or "home" is. Is it the place of birth or from where you have the most memories? In fact, rather than defining it geographically, TCKs often have a sense of belonging to people so that "home" is where your closest people are.

Also, many TCKs develop a migratory instinct because of a sense of temporality and lack of a sense of a true home, and thus has to do with affective and behavioral responses. Since TCKs experience constant change in their lives, they tend to feel that the present moment is ever more important and must be made the most of. The idea that there is always something better around the next corner may make it hard to settle down and also to make choices. Ironically, seizing every opportunity can have the effect of not making plans at all. Since you or people you love may move before you know it, there is no use in making plans, seems to be a frequent idea. In fact, feeling like one has no choice in the matter is a widespread feeling, thus becoming disempowered. Also, there is no use in dealing with conflict, since moving will resolve it for you. Hence, one may subconsciously develop moving as a solution to every problem, thereby succumbing to the feeling of restlessness as a way of dealing with dissatisfaction. Yet another effect is often to wait until the last minute to plan to avoid the risk of disappointment and to keep the options open. If this leads to a victim mentality of bitterness and the disability to take charge of one's own life, it can be a great challenge to overcome.

One aspect of the TCK profile that most directly relates to Byram's definition of intercultural communicative competence (2003:62) from section 2.2.1, as well as cognitive psychology, is the following: Having lived in more than one culture **expands one's worldview** in the sense of **understanding**, **knowledge**, as well as **belonging**, which affect attitudes, knowledge, skills, and awareness, and can be great assets both to the individual and to society. By this line of thinking, moving cross-culturally expands a child's socialization in ways that affect identity and competence. This experience can be both beneficial and challenging, since it also can cause **confused loyalties**, **painful sense of reality**, and **ignorance** of the passport culture.

Other benefits are the survival skills of **cultural adaptability** and **the ability to blend in**, as opposed to the identity related challenges of a **lack of cultural balance** and of **knowing who you really are**. A TCK may have the attitude of being more or less **prejudiced** than others, either from knowing first hand that people are just people or from being outsiders or elitist. He or she may also be **arrogant** or perceived as such, due to having greater first hand knowledge that makes one impatient of ignorance in others or misunderstood as showing off when really just sharing. Thus, these personal characteristics can be understood as flip sides of a coin, but perhaps even better as interwoven tapestry, where for instance the benefit of knowing people around the world also causes pain in not having them around every day, which again can cause greater empathy for others who suffer.

Furthermore, the experiences of growing up cross-culturally and with high mobility help the development of useful practical behavioral and cognitive skills, such as:

✓ Cross-cultural skills; due to their diverse experiences of surface and deep cultures, TCK are often good **mediators** or bridge builders between people.

✓ Observational skills; in order to survive, TCKs have learnt to **observe** how things work before barging in with their own way of thinking.

✓ Social skills; having had to start anew many times can give the TCK a sense of **inner confidence** and **self-reliance**. The ability to **move smoothly between several cultural worlds** is common to many TCKs, and can make them take greater risks than others. But having experienced multiple fundamental changes can also have the opposite **paralyzing effect** of not participating at all rather than revealing their cultural incompetence, which might label them as social misfits, especially in the fragile stages of adolescence. This might also make them identify with others who do not fit in, thus making friends with those who often are in trouble with school administrations and such.

✓ Linguistic skills; becoming **bilingual** is potentially one of the most useful skills that a TCK might acquire, and certainly the most acknowledged. Not only does balanced bilingualism give cognitive advantages in learning other languages and subjects (Cummins in Baker 2006:170ff), but it can be an asset in various professions as well as giving access to nuances in how people think and relate to each other in that linguistic society. However, **not becoming sufficient in any language** is a potential risk that can cause numerous problems, such as difficulties in learning school subjects, communicating properly in all aspects of life, and loss of self esteem, to mention some (Baker 2006).

Again, the consequences of a multicultural lifestyle can be both challenging and rewarding.

> **Relational patterns** are another area affected by the paradoxical nature of the TCK experience. The wealth of friends from so many places and backgrounds is often beyond measure, yet the chronic cycles of leaving add so much loss as well. (Pollock & Van Reken 2009:131)

Many TCKs develop the behavioral response of forming large numbers of relationships due to high mobility. They also often jump quickly into deeper levels of relationships because of practice in having had to start so many, since they have lots of experiences to talk about, as well as due to a sense of emergency in that there usually is so little time to develop a relationship. Others enter new relationships cautiously because they fear loosing them, having experienced so

much loss in their highly mobile life. They may try to protect themselves by refusing to care, by letting go of a relationship quickly, or by refusing to feel the pain.

Despite the many benefits of the TCK experience, Pollock and Van Reken single out two main challenges that they consider the hardest, which are **finding a secure sense of identity** and the **issue of unresolved grief**. To take the latter affective aspect first, the very reason for grieving is having loved and lost, and a multicultural upbringing often brings at least double up of every experience; people, places, foods, and experiences. So if the things to love are plentiful, so are the losses. The reasons why it is often unresolved can be several. Fear of denying the good, that the losses are often hidden, lack of permission to grieve, lack of time to process, and lack of comfort are reasons that they give. Grief that is not dealt with is problematic in that they emerge, often in destructive and lasting ways, such as misdirected anger, depression, rebellion, vicarious or delayed grief.

The difficulty of finding a unique, personal identity is the last but not the least factor of the TCK Profile. One reason for this has to do with the issue of **uneven maturity**; to many adults they seem mature, and to many peers they seem immature. As a result of living cross-culturally and with high mobility in their lives, TCKs' development is often interrupted and sped up, which causes both early maturity and delayed adolescence, at least according to what is considered "normal" in Western psychology (Bradford Brown et.al. 2002).

Early maturity may have to do with responsibilities and a broad knowledge base of the world. Often living in smaller expatriate communities, TCKs generally socialize more with grown-ups. They may also be limited in their opportunities due to restrictions in their immediate ex-pat community, which adds pressure to conform. These reasons make them more mature, seemingly or in reality. Delayed adolescence can be caused by having to deal with getting to know another culture when normally one would be testing one's own culture and personal gifts and talents. Besides, it is difficult to make responsible choices when the situation is unpredictable and constantly changing. Family separations due to work or schooling conditions may cause early independence or prolonged dependence. Moving between educational systems may cause a change in grades and classes so that one does not follow one's age group.

Again, personal identity formation is closely related to how society perceives you (Mead 1934). Pollock and Van Reken claim that a common factor among TCKs is feeling different from people around you, and have developed a model that illustrates how this can affect you differently depending on your physical looks. I would like to add another category of how one

sounds as well as a second dimension to physical looks, namely clothing. How well a person masters the local language, especially in terms of accent can be a signifier of inclusion in Norway as well as in the US (Eriksen 2010, Berry 2006), and therefore relevant to my sample. Also, how one dresses is a common marker of group identity especially among youth (ibid). In addition, physical features are not as homogenous markers of inclusion in New York City as in Oslo, so the model as presented by Pollock and Van Reken would not be as useful there without these additional factors.

Figure 2.2 **TCKs/CCKs in Relationship to Surrounding Dominant Culture**

FOREIGNER Look/sound *different* Think *different*	**HIDDEN IMMIGRANT** Look/sound **alike** Think *different*
ADOPTED Look/sound *different* Think **alike**	**MIRROR** Look/sound **alike** Think **alike**

Personal adaptation of Pol/Van Cultural Identity Box
Copyright 1996-David C. Pollock/Ruth E. Van Reken

The *Foreigner* is the one who **looks/sounds and thinks differently** from those in the dominant culture. The visible layers of culture correspond to the deeper levels (figure 2.1), and the social mirror reflects what the individual feels; that you are different from those of the dominant culture both in physical features and in values. So does the *Mirror*, only in the opposite way, since the last category puts you in the same group as those around you; you both **look/sound and think alike**. The *Hidden Immigrant* is when you **look/sound like** the people surrounding you, but it is not visible that you **feel different**. This is typical of when you return to your parents' country after having lived abroad for a while. It can also be that your skin is the color of your host culture, yet that you feel different even though others do not see it. The last category is the *Adopted*, which is also a type where the social mirror does not reflect how you feel inside, only in the opposite way from the Hidden Immigrant; you **feel the same**, but others treat you like you are **different** because of the way you **look/sound**. This can be common among children who grow up in the host culture and have a strong sense of belonging to it, yet mainstream society has

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exclusive definitions of what constitutes national identity which do not include you for whatever reasons (see chapter 4.2).

Pollock and Van Reken hold that all people experience changing categories every once in a while, but that the difference for the TCK is that they constantly change boxes depending on their circumstances, may it be a permanent move between countries or a day-to-day commute between sub-cultures in the same country, such as between the home, friends, and the school. This can make it difficult to develop a strong and stable sense of identity, which in turn can have different effects on each individual. They outline three common reactions, particularly when a person's sense of self is not reflected by the society.

1. Chameleons – "those who try to find a 'same as' identity", the blenders.
2. Screamers – "those who try to find a 'different from' identity", the rebellious.
3. Wallflowers – "those who try to find a 'nonidentity'", the passive observers.

(Pollock & Van Reken 2009:57)

One person may adopt different strategies depending on the situation, age, or mood. Lill Salole and Judith van der Weele (2009), two psychologists and TCKs, point out that in the field of trauma, people's reactions to danger are compared to those of animals'. "Fight", "flight", or "play dead" are parallel instinctive responses that animals use when they feel threatened and insecure. I see parallels between the Chameleons and fleeing, because in blending in they run away from who they are; the Screamers and fighting, since they take on the challenges and their right to confront who they are; and between the Wallflowers and playing dead, in their passive response to claiming their identity. In this dissertation I will be looking at how my participants see themselves in relation to their new societies, and how they negotiate boundaries for inclusion.

2.3.4 Other studies on acculturation in children

Although not very many, there are others who have studied multicultural competence and especially identity formation, or acculturation in children. First, Pollock and Van Reken's models and categories of individual adaptation to society correspond somewhat to Carola and Marcelo Suárez-Orozco's styles of adaptation to a person's context and social mirroring.

1. Ethnic flight – those who identify most strongly with the mainstream culture while denying the passport culture.
2. Adversarial identities – constructed around rejection of and by the institutions of the dominant culture.

3. Transcultural identities – an adaptational style that "creatively fuse aspects of both cultures".

<div align="right">(paraphrased from Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001:103-118)</div>

They place their categories on a continuum, where Transcultural identities is in the middle. The first two categories from each model parallel each other, whereas I would say that the third category in each model are two opposite reactions to not choosing each of the two first points. Instead of operating along a continuum, Berry et.al. (2006) think in terms of yet another four-box model, the cultural adaptation model.

Figure 2.3 **The Cultural Adaptation Model**

<div align="center">Positive relationship to dominant society</div>

	YES	NO
YES Retention of cultural identity **NO**	**Integration**	**Separation**
	Assimilation	**Marginalization**

<div align="right">(based on Berry et.al. 2006:213f)</div>

Berry et.al. have found that the adaptation type that gives best psychological health is the one in which the individual is allowed to maintain his/her ethnic background at the same time as one is allowed access to mainstream society. This is what they call *integration*, which is also the way the concept is defined by Eriksen: "participation in society's common institutions, combined with maintaining one's group identity and cultural distinctness" (1993:335, my translation[6]).

Interestingly, Pollock and Van Reken describe three common reactions to mainstream society among TCKs, neither of which parallels Barry's "integration" category or the Suárez-Orozcos' "transcultural identities". This is perhaps because when they discuss the various reactions they have observed in TCKs, they are addressing the specific situations when the sense of self is not reflected by the society, in other words, challenging situations. They do, however, discuss conditions for maximizing the benefits of the TCK experience, of which becoming conscious of

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[6] "deltagelse i samfunnets felles institusjoner, kombinert med opprettholdelse av gruppeidentitet og kulturelt særpreg"

the often confusing and complex upbringing is the most crucial. If we merge these three models,
it will look like this:

Figure 2.4 **Cultural Adaptation Models Combined**

Positive relationship to dominant society

	YES	NO
YES Retention of cultural identity	**Integration** **Transcultural identities**	**Separation** **Adversarial identities** **The Screamer**
NO	**Assimilation** **The Chameleon** **Ethnic flight**	**Marginalization** **The Wallflower**

To help immigrant youth reflect on who they are and develop healthy strategies to become

integrated citizens is also a main agenda of the program FLEXid (se chapter 2.4). In the words

of Salole and van der Weele (2010:357): "The goal must be to become a *participatory* observer",

a cross-culturally competent person with one active foot in each society. Garrett (1996) defines

integration as:

> a secure, integrated identity with the ability to function effectively in both cultures. In
> addition, they understand the meanings behind various cultural values, beliefs,
> expectations, and practices of which they are a part. (In Byram 2003:54)

This definition covers both a complex identity and multicultural competence, and is thus

pertinent to the understanding of the healthy multicultural individual in this thesis.

Furthermore, Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco claim that:

> Transcultural identities are most adaptive in this era of globalism and multiculturalism.
> By acquiring competencies that enable them to operate within more than one cultural
> code, immigrant youth are at an advantage. The unilinear assimilationist model that
> results in ethnic flight is no longer feasible because today's immigrants are not
> unambivalently invited to join the mainstream society. The rapid abandonment of the
> home culture implied in the ethnic flight almost always results in the collapse of the
> parental voice of authority. Furthermore, lack of group connectedness results in anomie
> and alienation. The key to a successful adaptation involves acquiring competencies that
> are relevant to the global economy while maintaining the social networks and

connectedness essential to the human condition. Those who are at ease in multiple social and cultural contexts will be most successful and will be able to achieve higher levels of maturity and happiness.

<div align="right">(Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001:117)</div>

Hence, neither fighting, fleeing, nor playing dead – though understandable and necessary strategies when facing risks – are desirable strategies for multicultural people in the long run, since being comfortable with diverse contexts is what brings wellbeing in most cases.

However, individuals are not necessarily free to choose how to acculturate. As we have seen, identity formation is a dialectic process between the individual and the mirror of the society, represented by such factors as national integration policies and public attitudes. Phinney claim that "for integration to occur, a mutual accommodation is required, involving the acceptance by both dominant and non-dominant groups of the right of all groups to live as culturally different people who interact with the same society" (in Berry et.al. 2006:74), also called *multiculturalism*. Figure 2.5 illustrates how this is interrelated.

Figure 2.5. **Acculturation attitudes of immigrant groups and of the larger society**

Issue 1: Maintenance of heritage culture and identity

Issue 2:   + <------------------------> -   + <------------------------> -

Relationships   +

sought | **Integration   Assimilation   Multiculturalism   Melting Pot**

among | **Separation   Marginalization   Segregation   Exclusion**

groups   -

Attitudes of Immigrant Groups   Attitudes of Larger Society
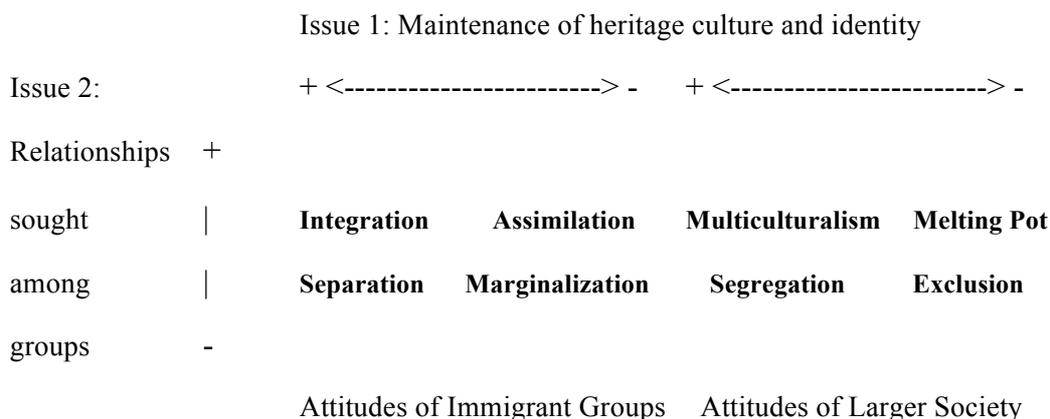
<div align="right">(based on Berry et.al. 2006:74)</div>

Assimilation is the loss of heritage culture and identity while adopting that of the new society, also called the Melting Pot. *Segregation* is when the immigrants are expected to maintain heritage culture and identity while staying separate from other groups, such as during the South African Apartheid regime. *Exclusion* is by Phinney understood as marginalization imposed by the dominant group. When society expects assimilation, segregation, or exclusion, it would be more difficult for the immigrant individual or group to develop Transcultural identities.

Assimilation policies, where the goal is to loose one's ethnic distinctions and blend in with mainstream society (Berry 2002), are therefore in my opinion passé, and representative of the conditions that bring the sense of danger in the first place. Lill Salole Skjerven found in her

research for her Master's thesis in psychology (2006) that the less support, recognition, and accept the TCKs got when returning to their parents' country, the more fragmented sense of identity they experienced. On the contrary, the more they were met with positive response and experiences that their views and skills were needed, the more they were able to integrate their background in the understanding of themselves. Thus, these studies supports the notion that the process of forming a secure sense of identity is influenced by the larger society, and paramount to what makes it possible to live an integrated life where there is room for all the different colors of the self. Consequentially, the way they are met by the society in which they live, in this case New York City and Oslo, should influence how integrated their sense of identity is. Therefore, although my working hypothesis is that they will have similar characteristics and sense of belonging regardless of culture of origin and current place of residence, I will investigate the variation in how they are experienced as assets and challenges, depending on individual as well as societal circumstances.

2.3.5   Cross-Cultural Kids

To summarize the idea of a TCK, it is not a hyphenated identity, like Norwegian-Pakistani or Mexican-American, in which the idea is that a person moves along a continuum between the two ethnic backgrounds to which he or she belongs (Fuglerud & Eriksen eds. 2007:43f). A TCK is neither the first culture nor the second, but something new. Steve Song found that new immigrant children to the United States described themselves in three main types of ethnic identity categories; country of origin (Haitian), hyphenated identity (Haitian-American), or a pan-ethnic term (Latino) (Song 2010). Song's study is a study of identity that focuses on which labels people choose themselves. An example of an outsider's description in addition to Pollock and Van Reken's study is Eriksen's doctoral dissertation from 1991 in Mauritius, where he uses *Creole identity* to describe this new mixed identity of one person living with more than one culture. He does not go so far as to give characteristics that are similar, however. This may be because these characteristics are psychological and not anthropological per se.

The important issue for our purpose, however, is not to determine which category that is the "correct" one. I want to introduce and discuss a term that in my opinion has a lot to offer in terms of shedding light on what a life of high mobility and cross-culturality often does to a developing personality. This is the concept of Cross-Cultural Kids.

The definition of TCKs has traditionally covered kids having grown up in Non-Western countries, moving back and forth between their passport country and host country(-ies).

Recently there has been a shift in focus also to include into this definition other *multicultural* groups, such as bi-racial, refugee, immigrant, and even adopted kids, who may never leave their country or go back and forth, and renaming them Cross-Cultural Kids (CCKs). This is because they all have in common the experience of high mobility and cross-cultural upbringing (Pollock & Van Reken 2009). According to Van Reken, "a *cross-cultural kid (CCK)* is a person who is living or has lived in – or meaningfully interacted with – two or more cultural environments for a significant period of time during childhood (up to age 18)" (ibid:31). By their understanding, a CCK is not merely living side by side with other cultural groups, but interact in ways that have impact on their sense of self, often with the consequence of not belonging to one group or the other, but with others who share such an experience. Figure 2.6 outlines different kinds of CCKs with key characteristics.

Figure 2.6 **Cross-Cultural Kids: Potential Commonalities and Differences**

"Traditional"
Third Culture Kids:
high mobility patterns

Bi/multicultural
Children:
*two cultures
within family*

Bi/Multiracial
Children: *plural
racial identity*

Children of
Borderlanders:
*regular international
interactions*

Educational CCKs:
change of cultures daily

**Cross
Cultural
Kids**

*Cross
Cultural
Lifestyle*

*High
Mobility?*

"Domestic" TCKs:
*invisible cross
cultural experience*

International
Adoptees:
*adoption
issues*

Children of
Minorities:
*prejudice from
majority culture*

Children of
Immigrants:
permanent change

Children of Refugees:
effects of trauma

(Pollock & Van Reken 2009
Used by permission)

The model shows challenges that are especially pertinent to each type of CCK. Relevant to this thesis is the fact that children of refugees commonly live with the effects of trauma, and that children of immigrants live with the expectation of a permanent change away from their parents' culture. As for the children of sojourners, they would belong to the traditional TCKs who live with high mobility patterns, although since I talk to them while they are still abroad, there is some overlapping with the permanent immigrants in that it may not be clear to them whether or not they are staying. Also, most TCKs experience moving back to their passport culture at one point, whereas this would usually be less part of the plans for refugees and immigrants.

Another aspect that enters the equation when changing the main characters from classic TCKs to other CCKs is that TCKs traditionally have moved from wealthier to poorer countries, and other CCKs include the opposite mobility, plus children of color, thus bringing power relations to the table. Socio economics, race, discrimination, and politics would be expected to have a different impact on the CCK than on the TCK profile. However, there are few if any academic studies to support this assumption, and this thesis is an attempt to investigate whether traditional TCK theory also holds true for the expanded concept of CCKs. By doing a comparative qualitative study on immigrant- and refugee youth in New York City and Oslo I intend to explore not only how they see themselves in terms of multicultural identity, but also the idea of CCKs sharing feelings of belonging to each other rather than to a country, as well as multicultural competence in the form of assets and challenges. This would make a hermeneutical approach useful, which is what I will be using to interpret their stories. I will get back to this in chapter 3.4.

2.4 FLEXid

Finally, an introduction to the educational program called FLEXid is necessary, since it is the validity of some of its basic assumptions that are being studied. The name FLEXid is a play with the words "flexible" and "identity". It has been developed to help 15-19-year-old children of immigrants and refugees currently living in Norway reflect on who they are, learn about multicultural competence, and help them deal with their challenges and make choices about their lives. It is from Larvik in Norway and is built on the assumption of CCKs sharing TCK characteristics due to high mobility and a cross-cultural lifestyle. The people who have developed this program are either TCKs or live in bi-racial marriages, being teachers and psychologists, and they have applied TCK theory on these children of refugees and immigrants, because they see many similarities between these groups. This is one premise that will be investigated in this research project.

Another assumption is that these young people often live in a cross-pressure between their parents' and society's expectations. Camilleri and Malewska-Peyre (1997) claim that this is because young people who move cross-culturally often share the values of their peers in the dominant society, and so the discrepancy between values and behaviors become larger for them than for grown-ups (in Berry et al 2002:358). This is an issue that will be explored in the individual stories of the interviews.

The program has five to six sessions over a year, with the option of a second-year build-on that repeats and expands on the first year. The topics are identity, the Cross-Cultural Kid; your assets and your bridge-builder skills; the psychological process of moving; stereotypes, prejudices, and racism; and girls and boys – roles and expectations, with the additional topics of language and emotions; and dilemmas and choices in the second year. FLEXid educates the individual not only regarding him- or herself, but also better to understand parents and mainstream society.

The methodology is based on the assumption that having words for your experiences is empowering, and that reflection and knowledge is part of bringing about recognition, insight, validation, belonging, and the ability to apply both the positive and negative usefully. Thus, FLEXid is basing itself in the field of resilience psychology (Waaktaar & Johnsen Christie 2000). In the field of medicine and psychology, there has been a growing shift in focus from pathogenesis to salutogenesis; that is from what causes diseases to what causes health (ibid 2000). The latter is within psychology generally called *resilience studies*. The word itself comes from the field of physics, and describe the ability of an object to return to its original state after having been stretched or bent (ibid:17). Researchers within this field have been interested in mapping resilient people's natural ways of moving on with their lives, to grow and develop. In the words of Michael Rutter: "Resilience involves a range of processes that bring together quite diverse mechanisms operating before, during and after encounter with stress experience or diversity" (in ibid 2000:17f). It is not easy to pinpoint which factors that are protective factors, especially since each individual is unique and cannot be placed in a definitive category. This is certainly true for the participants in my thesis.

Nevertheless, there are some factors that are more prevalent in research on children who do well despite challenging circumstances. Trine Waaktaar and Helen Johnsen Christie (2000), specialists at Nic Waal's Institute in Oslo who work with refugees and immigrant children and their families, have divided these into three categories; characteristics with the children themselves, with the children's family situations, and with the surrounding network.

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Table 2.1 **Resilience factors**

Individual:	**Familial:**	**Network:**
Innate robustness	Better parent-child interaction in infancy	At least ONE meaningful person who has seen the child over time
Social skills, light temper	Firmer structures, rules, rituals, boundaries	Group identity/ group belonging with peers
Autonomy, internal 'Locus of Control'	At least one resilient parent	Common shared values
Mastery, feeling of self worth	Parents who allow help from others	Societal structures that support the person's strategies of mastery
Cognitive capacity	Common understanding of values in the home	
Experience of meaning and coherence	Strong bonds to relatives	
Creativity	Higher socio-economic status	
Hobbies, interests	Little expressed criticism and negative emotions	

(Based on Waaktaar & Johnsen Christie 2000:20-24 + pdf)

When the interview questions for this study were made, questions were included that would give some information on a variety of these factors, such as "How do you perform in school?" for cognitive capacity, "How do your parents deal with your multicultural identity?" for common shared values in the home as well as in the network, and "Do you have a grown-up in your life that understands and supports you?" for at least one person who has seen the child over time. Although the interviews do not give me as much information as necessary to really make good judgments on each person, particularly since this crosses over into the field of therapy, the intention is to give some indications as to how they see their multicultural experiences as assets as well as challenges.

One clear experience that has been made throughout the years since FLEXid started in 2001 is the vast difference in the level of reflections that the youth have before and after the program. This is something I expect to see in the data collection for this thesis, in that my interviewees may not have a clear sense of who they are and what the advantages and disadvantages of their multicultural backgrounds are. The main goal of FLEXid is to help the participants gain solid ground in both (or all) cultures so as to successfully adapt to their contexts and thus better their conditions for psychological well-being and empower them to become assets for society.

Though it is essential to the methodology of FLEXid to avoid giving answers to dilemmas of value choices, it does have a clear agenda to help forming a sense of community to kids that are often marginalized, as well as to help identity formation in the sense of Integration and Transcultural identities from figure 2.4. Thus, FLEXid builds on, but goes beyond TCK theory, in that it addresses issues that are meant to be specifically relevant for adolescent immigrants and refugees.

This thesis is meant to supply research to the fundamental assumptions that FLEXid is built on, in order to evaluate whether or not they are valid and appropriate for the program. It is not an evaluation of the program per se. However, my research may uncover limitations to the program, thereby being able to give suggestions for improvement.

2.5 Research objectives and limitations

This chapter will clarify the purpose of this research project by discussing the main objectives, how the research questions came to be what they currently are, which topics they have been divided into and why, as well as the limitations and contributions of the study.

2.5.1 Behind the research questions

Right from the start, a main objective has been to provide research on the assumption that multicultural competence and identity in the Third Culture Kid tradition could be expanded to include other groups of children with high mobility and cross-cultural experiences, such as children of immigrants and refugees. This would support the notion that Cross-Cultural Kids share the same challenges and benefits as described in the TCK profile (section 2.3.3), and thus support one underlying assumption of FLEXid. Another main objective is to provide research for other basic premises for FLEXid, such as the belief that immigrant youth often struggle with cross-pressure and that awareness is beneficial for the individual. In order to do this, the research questions have been quite open. This is mainly because a broad perspective is necessary to shed light on possible exceptions to these presumptions.

My research questions have been slightly altered during the course of the study. The interview questions were planned so as to explore what thoughts my participants might have on how their multicultural backgrounds had influenced personal characteristics negatively or positively. The test interviews showed that this kind of information was difficult to get out of them, however, since they had not thought much about and/or talked to anyone about their challenges and especially benefits related to their special upbringing. It proved difficult to ask open questions that really gave rich and deep answers. My solution to this problem was first of all to include

various questions that would cast light on their experiences from different angles. Still, it remained difficult to get answers to shed light on my original research questions[7] for a number of reasons that were mainly methodological.

First, it varied how well they reflected on my questions during the actual interview. Some of them gave deep answers to questions they had never been given before, while others supplied more superficial ones. I also had to be careful of leading questions, since asking directly if they had positive qualities that are part of the TCK profile, such as increased understanding and adaptability, would reduce the trustworthiness of my findings and have little meaning. Also, I was not successful at gaining all the participants' trust quickly enough to have them share intimate thoughts and feelings with a stranger. Furthermore, I found myself becoming trapped in an attempt to use a qualitative approach on something that might have required a quantitative one. This is predominantly since it is easy to think of TCK theory as a causal explanation, which is usually the agenda of a quantitative design (Bryman 2008). However, having objections to the notion that human behavior and development can be explained in neat patterns, I wanted to maintain a qualitative approach, which in my opinion does the individual more justice (see chapter 3.1). Hence, I slightly changed the research questions better to fit my underlying epistemological assumptions, thereby moving away from controlling quantifiable variables and over to exploring how they saw themselves and look for patterns from there.

Further adjustments that were made had to do with the variables that might influence multicultural identity and competence formation. When analyzing the interviews, it became clearer which factors that surfaced in the interviews and thus gave me data to comment on. Therefore, I changed "types of background" to "place of birth, types of family structure and relations".

Finally, also due to clarity while analyzing as well as structuring the thesis, I added "competence" and "aspects of identity" to the research questions and deleted the more vague "qualities" and "see themselves". Thus, I ended up with the following **two research questions**: How do young people having immigrated or fled to, and currently living in New York City and Oslo, see their multicultural experiences as challenges or assets in their lives in their new societies? Do they have certain competences and aspects of identity in common despite

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[7] How do young people living in New York City and Oslo, with immigrant or refugee parents, see themselves in terms of multicultural identity linked to challenges and assets?

Do they have certain qualities in common despite variables such as types of backgrounds, power relations, reasons for moving, number of moves, and current place of residence?

variables such as place of birth, types of family structure and relations, power relations, reasons for moving, number of moves, and current place of residence?

2.5.2 Main topics

The main topics of the research questions can be divided into three. First, it is concerned with exploring which challenges and assets that the participants experience as a result of their multicultural experiences. This entails that each interviewee has moved from one country to another at a time that they can remember, thus being socialized into more than one cultural setting at once. How this has formed them in terms of attitudes, skills, knowledge, and awareness, as well as hardships that they have faced, is part of what is being investigated.

Second, how such a cross-cultural move has influenced aspects of their identity in relation to people around them is another angle of the inquiry. As discussed in section 2.2.2, identity can be understood in various ways; the development of an autonomous self, negotiating group identities, such as national, cultural, religious, and family identities, and the salience and intensity of the experienced identities, are the different aspects that are looked into.

Third, this is to some extent a comparative study, in that two groups of young immigrants and refugees now living in New York City or Oslo have been interviewed. There are two main reasons for this. One is that interviewing people in more than one place expands the potential generalizability for the results, since the assumption behind CCK theory is that regardless of where you move from and to, the experience of moving cross-culturally in itself gives you similar competences and sense of identity. Two, I wanted to explore the potential for transferring FLEXid to NYC. Since this program rests on such assumptions as CCK theory as well as the experience of cross-pressure and the usefulness of an arena to discuss and reflect on multicultural issues, investigating whether these demands are pertinent in NYC as well as in Oslo is an objective. In doing so, factors such as power relations, socio economic status, race, discrimination, and political conditions are relevant.

2.5.3 Limitations

In order to truly explore the consequences of cross-cultural moves for young immigrants and refugees it would be useful to do longitudinal as well as comparative studies. Basing a study on a glimpse in time of the lives of the participants is an obvious limitation, and talking to them again in five or ten years would broaden the picture of their particular experience. The dynamic aspects of identity negotiation as well as meeting with society in for instance a work situation would more clearly portray the various aspects of acculturation.

Also, comparing this group to a group of peers who have never moved and have not been exposed to multicultural socialization would also provide important information on how the experience of my sample might be different. A valid objection to my study is the underlying assumption that there are in fact young people in NYC and Oslo who live homogenous lives without significant multicultural exposure similar to the cross-cultural experiences of my participants. In fact, studying the consequences of globalization in local communities and how this influences identity and competence formation in today's young generation would be interesting in light of my research questions. The United States is a country of high internal mobility, and although Norway is less so, it can easily be argued that any move poses cross-cultural exposure, since there are multiple sub-cultures within both countries (Eriksen 2010, Shelton 2010).

Instead of comparing moving to NYC and Oslo, a comparative study of one cosmopolitan city to a more homogenous one within one country would possibly have exposed more clearly how such national sub-cultures vary, and how they make acculturation more or less difficult. Having chosen two of the most diverse cities in each country to a certain extent takes away the element of feeling different, since by definition, there are several others who share similar experiences residing in NYC and Oslo.

Furthermore, comparing my sample to adults who move would expose more clearly how it may be different to move during primary or secondary socialization as opposed to after such socialization is considered completed. This could reveal significant competences that might be part of why people move in the first place, since there are studies that show that it takes initiative and resourcefulness to break away from ordinary life in order to pursue dreams of a better future (Kivisto & Faist 2010). These personality traits would be expected to influence children in families that move, both due to biological heredity and cultural parental influence within a family (Yoshikawa & Way 2008).

Moreover, comparing them to their peers in the societies they left would be useful in that specific cultural traits might become clearer. Such traits could be which personal characteristics and competences are valued locally, as well as views on identity issues and adolescent development in the particular society that they come from. Also, interviewing parents, teachers, as well as peers would have broadened and clarified the picture of their lives more, since this study only rests on the participants' own understanding of their stories.

Additionally, comparing CCKs to TCKs would make the similarities and differences more clear than comparing CCKs moving to two different societies. This would also allow for a clearer answer to the assumption of FLEXid that TCK theory is applicable to young immigrants and refugees as well. Finally, comparing my participants to people who have completed the FLEXid program would make the relevance of such a program clearer.

2.5.4   Main Contributions

Despite such limitations, this dissertation aims at sharing and interpreting the given stories of the diverse and changing life worlds of cross-cultural kids in relation to the societies in which they live with the main purpose of shedding light on the basic assumptions of FLEXid and thereby its relevance in Oslo, possibly also in NYC.

In addition, this research would provide helpful knowledge for teachers and others who work with these young people, as well as for parents, because it would make it easier for them to meet the needs of the youth and validate them. Furthermore, the study would be helpful for the young people themselves, since knowing what happens to you usually makes it easier to cope, and a sense of community strengthens the identity and thus psychological health (Antonovsky 1993).

Finally, my findings will shed light to the public debate on diversity and integration in Norway. What do we really mean when we talk about diversity as a resource? Is it just a polite way of spinning what many people see as challenges and threats to our national unity, an attempt to convince the public that diversity is bearable since we cannot avoid the realities of globalization anyway? By giving a voice to people who are not often heard in our societies, we may get a better platform to continue the public discourse on diversity.

3   Methodological issues

This chapter will introduce and discuss various methodological issues pertinent to this study. First, the choice of design will be presented in its epistemological framework. Next, the specific methods for data collection and sampling will be discussed. Third, the epistemological foundation for the analysis as well as the methods for it will be presented. Then, the role of the researcher will be clarified. Finally, some ethical concerns will be treated.

3.1   Design

I have been interested in the experienced life worlds of the participants, which suggests a qualitative research paradigm. The study is in a sense a *deductive* study, starting with TCK theory and exploring whether or not immigrant youth in general also share the TCK profile, which usually is compatible with a quantitative research paradigm. However, I believe that it is not possible to confirm CCK theory in a manner fitting with a positivistic quantitative design, mainly since people are too different to fit neatly into categories of any kind. I could have employed a combined approach, but refrained because of the limitations of research at Master's level. This is also an *inductive* study in that the open questions have influenced the direction and understanding of the data. Keeping a clear focus on my curiosity of my informants' experiences and reflections was important to help avoid a strict deductive study and ensure a phenomenological approach.

Phenomenology is an epistemological philosophy of how individuals make sense of the world around them, and how the researcher should describe such preconceptions. It is the search for the central meaning behind human experiences of a phenomenon (Cresswell 1998), which the social scientist attempts to make sense of and describe from the research subjects' viewpoint (Bryman 2008).

In the groundbreaking phenomenological work "Social Construction of Reality", Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann argue that: "the sociology of knowledge is concerned with the analysis of the social construction of reality" (1967:3). They see knowledge as something that is constructed in a dialectic process between the individual and the society, and not as an objective truth out there. Individuals act in habitual ways, their actions becoming objectified, or observable. When the objectified reality is passed on to the next generation, it becomes institutionalized - or common sense - within a group of people. This society's institution in turn affects the individual's actions through forms of socialization; thereby creating knowledge that

passes as the truth for that specific group of people. Understanding and describing what constitutes knowledge in a given society, then, becomes the objective of the researcher. This may also be called constructionist ontology (Bryman 2008:160).

Furthermore, this research is also in a sense a *comparative case study* that is *cross-cultural*. A comparative design is by Bryman defined as: "A research design that entails the comparison of two or more cases in order to illuminate existing theory or generate theoretical insights as a result of contrasting findings uncovered through comparison" (2008:692). "*Cross-cultural research* entails the collection and/or analysis of data from two or more nations" (ibid 2008:59). Hantrais (1996) has suggested that cross-cultural research occurs:

> when individuals or teams set out to examine particular issues or phenomena in two or more countries with the express intention of comparing their manifestations in different socio-cultural settings (institutions, customs, traditions, value systems, life styles, language, thought patterns), using the same research instruments either to carry out secondary analysis of national data or to conduct new empirical work. The aim may be to seek explanations for similarities and differences or to gain a greater awareness and a deeper understanding of social reality in different national contexts. (in Bryman 2008:58)

My research fits this definition to the extent that it examines multicultural identity in young immigrants living in the cities of New York and Oslo in order to compare how they see themselves in terms of identity and advantages and disadvantages related to their multicultural backgrounds. I will put their stories into context of some cultural values of how national identity is understood in Norway and the US, and of some statistics, all of which paint a general picture of the greater society in which they are a part. The aim is to provide academia, schools, parents, and the immigrant youth themselves, on both sides of the Atlantic, with valuable insights into who these young immigrants and refugees are so that they may develop their strengths and get help in dealing with their weaknesses, as well as equip politicians and public debaters with information in the debate on diversity.

When making comparisons, especially across nations, it is difficult to come across easily comparable information. The statistics that are available may not be focusing on the same issues or from the same point in time. They may be produced for different purposes, for instance political vs. academic, and numbers generally do not provide insight into participants' personal thinking (Holmarsdottir 2009). Similarly, the literature on national identity or political systems, which have been written by different scholars, may represent opposing theoretical stances and are rarely automatically comparable. For instance, the fact that there is an enormous amount of research on immigration in the US, being "at the very core of American sociology" (Waters

2000:44), as opposed to the much less extensive counterpart in Norway is in itself a challenge when comparing the two contexts. Which information and ideas from the US parallel Knut Kjelstadli, who leads a large number of researchers and research projects in Norway? Together with Grete Brochmann he has written one book on the complete immigration history of Norway through times – although admittedly, the one English book is based on multiple volumes in Norwegian – whereas my attempts at finding comparative works in the US has mostly led me to understand how specific most research is there. Even for NYC most studies seem to be focused, like on *Linguistic and Cultural Recognition, for the "New" Black Student in NYC, the Barbadian Example* (Zakharia & Arnstein eds. 2005), *Becoming American, Being Indian, An Immigrant Community in New York City* (Khandelwal 2002), or the like. With the limitations of my graduate studies, I have not been able to read as extensively as I would like to make sure that I could thoroughly defend my claims. My aim for this thesis has been to be transparent enough for the reader to know when my arguments are sound and when I am merely being suggestive.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

I have wanted to find out how young immigrants and refugees, with memories of having lived in another country, experience living in New York City or Oslo. I have been interested in their reflections and thoughts on what is difficult as well as advantageous of such experiences in order to find out more about how salient their multicultural identity is, as well as what kinds of competences they may have developed as a result of their experiences. Therefore, I needed to talk to them, and have conducted semi-structured interviews with eight 16-21 year-olds in Oslo and eight in NYC. Although I have to some extent treated the clusters of interviews as two cases and compared them, I have mostly considered them as individuals and made comparisons across the two cases and between all of the individual participants. In order to make sense of their experienced life worlds, I have also done some research into their contexts at the time of the interviews, in the form of some relevant statistics and information about Oslo and New York City. I have not gone in detail into each separate background, both because it would make the research too extensive and because my focus is on the meeting between the youth and the new society. This is an obvious limitation to my research, since knowing more about the societies they came from would have been helpful in understanding their stories and experiences better.

3.2.1 Interviewing

Dealing with how people understand themselves can be a phenomenological approach, for which interviewing is a useful tool. Qualitative interviewing is a good method for exploring matters

that are not directly observable, because the researcher is allowed in-depth access to the informants' thoughts and experiences by way of responses to open-ended questions. Such a method is also very flexible, in that it allows for the researcher to probe and do follow-up questions into areas that turn out to be interesting during the course of the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). However, interviewing does not ensure that the information that is given is the truth, since the researcher only has to take the interviewee's word for how things are. This may be especially difficult to know if the questions are sensitive and relies on gaining trust, which my questions to a great extent are. Also, doing only one interview with each immigrant youth is limiting in that the information that is given has to come at one specific point in time, and if the interviewee has not thought about the question before, the answers may be restricted. I did try to avoid this by letting them know that they were more than welcome to contact me later to give any additional thoughts they may have had, and also asking them in an e-mail a few months later if the interview had given them any thoughts that they would like to share with me, but neither attempts bore fruits.

Furthermore, to allow for the interviewees' stories to be told, semi-structured interviews are useful in that they remain fairly conversational. Semi-structured interviews or what Michael Quinn Patton calls "the interview guide approach" are interviews in which "topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in outline form; interviewer decides sequence and wording of questions in the course of the interview" (Patton 1987:116f). The interviews needed to be semi-structured and not unstructured since I was comparing youth in two cities. In order to compare, one must have comparable measures, and so I could not ask completely open questions. Semi-structured interviews also help maintain a focus of the study. Furthermore, they needed to be semi-structured and not structured. This is because although I would have loved to be able to make extensive comparisons in order to give generalizable results, which structured interviews are better suited for since they give more precise answers, I neither had the framework for such studies at this level, nor do I believe in the suitability of such an approach to exploring identity in multicultural youth (see chapter 3.1). Also, *triangulation* of methods would have been preferred, since using more than one method in studying social phenomena would give more confidence in the results, but again, the limitations of the scope of such a thesis stopped me.

Developing the interview guide was a relatively long process. I made my first questions for an in-class assignment, and got feedback from my fellow students and professor. After adjusting them and adding more questions as I thought and talked to people about my research plans, I

conducted a test interview in NYC in January 2010. He was a brother of a friend of a relative, a 19 year-old boy from Eastern Europe who had lived in NYC for four years, after first having come to Los Angeles for a while before returning to his passport country because disliking it so much. I learned a few valuable lessons from that interview, the most important one having to do with gaining trust.

First, I found that sharing information about my own upbringing was an icebreaker. So I have opened with telling each interviewee a little bit about myself before starting to ask them questions since then[8]. There was one time during the actual interviews that I left out a few things, and I could not understand why she seemed so guarded. Then I realized what I had done, and I told her, and things moved more smoothly after that. I have been careful not to reveal too much information about myself, however, since I did not want them to be influenced by the investigator, which is a well-known weakness of the interview method (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). I will get back to this in chapter 3.4.

Second, having experienced during the test interview how difficult yet important it was to gain trust quickly enough, I chose not to use confrontational questions. For reliability reasons it would have been useful to challenge them in this way to avoid lip service, i.e. that they answered according to what they thought the researcher was hoping for. However, trust issues were considered more important, so confrontational questions were avoided. I did get a general sense of gaining their trust, in that they opened up more towards the end of the interviews, and that I was given sensitive information that they rarely shared with anyone.

Another valuable lesson was to be careful of asking for an analysis of their experiences. I discussed my frustration of not getting any substantial information from my test interview with Professor Niobe Way at New York University (NYU), who has done research with youth as interviewees. She gave me the advice of asking for specific examples like stories and names when interviewing teenagers, since young people are generally more concrete in their thinking and also prone to telling you what you want to hear. This has been very helpful, in that I have gotten a lot of useful information from their stories, which often even contradict other answers, suggesting that they have a tendency to answer what they think I want to hear rather than how they actually experience it. Thus, I believe that I may have managed to counter some of the reactive effects that are known to occur during interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009).

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[8] See Appendix B for how I introduced myself, in English and in Norwegian.

A third beneficial lesson from transcribing the test interview was to hear the way I was asking questions. I often used incomplete sentences, correcting myself mid sentence, making it really hard even for myself to understand where I was going with the questions. In my mind at the time this was all very clear, of course, but hearing myself talking that way on the recording made me realize how confusing that must have sounded to him, probably making it difficult to answer my questions in a way that was useful to me. So I have made an effort to change that way of questioning, resulting in several improved interviews, although some are definitely better than others.

When the situation was sensitive, such as being anxious not to sound prejudiced, or when the young man or woman was obviously sharing something painful, I found myself relapsing. Where there were language problems, I had a tendency to ask many closed questions, subconsciously attempting to help the interviewee, but generally resulting in thin answers and thereby limited information. A couple of times I lacked the necessary concentration to be an active listener, so I repeated some questions or did not follow up properly. Naturally, the interviews improved in quality and grew longer as I got more confident in the interview situation and better at asking open questions and following up on them. Having been conducted last, this might have resulted in the interviews in NYC being of better quality than in Oslo, although I do have rich data from Oslo as well.

Generally I found myself being given rich and remarkable stories, which I felt so lucky to be told, especially since many of them said they had never shared their stories with anyone before, mostly because nobody had sat down with them to listen. While transcribing, I often had the same follow-up questions in my head that I actually had asked during the interview, and I left most interviews elated and excited about what I had heard. I conducted two test interviews in Oslo in June, them being of such quality that I settled on the questions[9] and included them in my findings. At the end of each interview I asked for an evaluation of the interview, and the general consensus was that the questions had been interesting, relevant, and with no serious shortcomings. Of course, being asked on the spot about something many of them had not thought about before has its limitations and does not necessarily qualify as good interview questions, but it would be hard to argue that the opposite were true.

The actual interviews were conducted in Oslo between June and August 2010, and the ones in New York City in November and December the same year. They were carried out in various

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[9] See Appendix A for the interview guide, in English and in Norwegian.

relatively secluded places: in their homes, at their schools, at their local public library, on my college campus, and in cafés, all according to their wishes and convenience so as to make them as comfortable as possible. I usually bought them some fruit and a drink, and everything was recorded. One interview was lost due to technical problems with my iPhone, which I discovered the same day, so I wrote down what I could remember based on my interview guide, and wrote the girl to let her know what had happened. She offered to do the interview again once school had started, which we did. Also, I lost half of the interview after hers due to not knowing how to use the borrowed recording equipment properly. I did not notice this until a while later, so I was not able to recount what she had said as well as I had wished, which resulted in half of the interview being summarized and half transcribed.

After most interviews I jotted down my initial impressions, so as to capture my thoughts while they were still fresh. Each interview has been transcribed word for word, with some indications of pauses and laughs better to interpret the feelings and confidence behind the answers, but without too much detail in the repetitions and stutters. This is both to be able to hold onto the data if I should ever need them later, regulations demanding that the recordings be deleted after the completion of the research, and to allow me to work with written as well as recorded text.

Also, after each transcription I wrote a one-page portrait of the interviewee. Although these are of course my interpretations, they are as descriptive as possible, based on what the interviewees actually said. I e-mailed each portrait to the respective participant for feedback and approval to ensure reliability. The portraits will be used as contextual data to give the reader a better sense of who my interviewees were and how I interpreted my findings.

3.2.2 Sampling

There are various reasons for having chosen immigrants and refugees between the age of 16 and 21 from NYC and Oslo for my study. First of all, FLEXid has been developed for 15-20-year-olds. Since according to psychologist Sunil Loona the development of this particular age group is at different stages[10], I aimed at interviewing the older half, generally being the more mature one. Originally I tried to interview 17-19-year-olds, but it was harder than I thought to find participants, especially in NYC, where access was limited to me, so I went up and down one to two years. FLEXid is for both girls and boys, so my informants are an approximate mix of both, although randomly so. Third, I have wanted to learn about multicultural identity and competence beyond the borders of Norway. With NYC being a city where I had heard that

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[10] Personal conversation during summer of 2010.

people with a multitude of backgrounds feel at home, I was curious as to whether such a social and cultural context would make much of a difference to living in Norway's most culturally diverse city, Oslo.

Typically, NYC has immigrants and Oslo has refugees (www.census.gov, www.ssb.no), which is why including both groups in both cities has made sense for this study. Also, a basic assumption of FLEXid is that CCKs have certain TCK characteristics in common, so including subjects from two groups was meant to give an indication if this thought is worth pursuing in further research. For the same reason, I have not been looking into specific language groups or nationalities. I needed to be able to communicate with them in either Norwegian or English, however, which meant that they could not have very recently arrived in either city. Also, they needed to have made some experiences in their new country of residence, so they all have lived there for a few years, at least three. I therefore looked for people who came before middle or high school, depending on how old they are now. Half of the sample in NYC is one to two years older than in Oslo, where most of them are 18, and half is one year younger. In NYC, the older half arrived during high school and had stayed no longer than five years, and the younger half during elementary between seven to ten years ago, whereas the years of stay and age of arrival were more mixed in Oslo.

The plan was to sample my interviewees in a similar way in the two cities for reasons of comparability. I made a point of attempting the sampling to be relatively random, wanting to ensure reliability (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). Since I did not include questions about why the participants took part in my study, I therefore in most cases do not know. It was more important to me that they had no direct connection to me, and that they had varied backgrounds, gender, degrees of success, and reasons for coming. Also important was meeting the criteria of age, having moved at an age that they can still remember their home country yet have lived in Oslo or New York City long enough to have made experiences on which to share their thoughts. I wanted to avoid going through interests groups that may be working with these specific topics, such as the Red Cross in Oslo or Big Brothers Big Sisters in NYC. Although it would have been easier to interview only those who had thought a lot about the questions beforehand, I wanted to attempt to reach a general sample of immigrant youth, since there is a greater chance of bias if my sample is limited to those with a special interest in or support of multicultural issues.

Therefore I went through public community colleges and high schools, the idea being that this would be a better way of reaching out to a variety of immigrant youth and minimizing potential

biases. Of course there is a greater chance that those who volunteer would represent the group of immigrant youth that are the most interested in multicultural issues, thereby causing bias anyway. However, I do not see how I could have avoided this problem, and believe that by going through the public school system, where all kinds of students are represented, there is a better possibility of finding the kind of variety that I was looking for in my research questions.

In Oslo I sent out e-mails including an attachment of information about my research project, in which there was a list of what kind of interviewees I was looking for.[11] This was at the end of May 2010, to the school counselors at every high school, 23 in total. Ten responded, seven of them indicating positive attitudes. Two of them contacted me with five interested students each, so I ended the search with that.

In New York City I attempted the same approach, but with the large number of public high schools I randomly chose 5 schools from four boroughs (Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens) and sent e-mails[12] to them as well. I got two replies, one of which was positive. A teacher there was kind enough to inform me of the need to get research approval from NYC Department of Education and how to go about applying for that. This set me back several weeks, since I had to put the interviews on hold until I had gone through the proper channels. In NYC I also wrote to a few schools that were suggested to me by Professor Pedro Noguera at NYU during my visit in January 2010, all of which responded positively. Having a "gate keeper" like that thus proved very useful. However, one of them, a community college, turned out to have students who had been in the US for maximum two years, and therefore could not be used.

I aimed at sampling people from various socio economic backgrounds, and with different degrees of academic and social success, so I tried to avoid only schools with a good reputation for their immigrant program. This is first because TCKs have traditionally had relatively similar socio economic backgrounds, often being white middle class people living abroad, and so it would be interesting to explore possible similarities in CCKs across socio economic strata. Second, the degree to which one might see ones' characteristics as challenges or assets might be connected to more or less successful experiences (see resilience theory, chapter 2.4). For these reasons I wanted to make sure that I sampled from different kinds of public schools.

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[11] See Appendix C for a copy of the e-mail with attachment, in Norwegian.

[12] See Appendix D for a copy of the e-mail with attachment, in English.

However, I found this part of the research process challenging, since the American school system is more diverse and stratified than the Norwegian one, with schools specializing in certain programs to a larger extent than in Oslo. Thus, the schools that were the most likely to have the kind of students that I needed for my research project, were either unknown to me or famous for their success in accommodating them. Another challenge was the different age at which one graduates high school in the two countries, one generally being a year younger in the US than in Norway. In Oslo all my interviewees were 18 or 19, yet still in high school or having just graduated. Most of them were also a year or two behind their peers due to the Norwegian school system which allows – and often encourages – you to take an extra year or two to catch up with learning Norwegian along with the standard curriculum. Finding the same age group in both cities, then, was tricky. Sampling from colleges meant that I would hear from the "successful" ones, since going on to higher education in the US gives a greater chance of social mobility (Rumbaut & Portes 2001, Sears et. al. 2003). However, in going through a community college that did not require very good grades to get in, I sought to avoid this bias as well.

The main difficulty turned out to be access. Only schools where I could refer to either a teacher working there, a professor at a famous college, or an alumnus would respond to my e-mails, and even then, most of them turned me down due to time issues. So I ended up actually walking onto school campuses in person, asking for access. This way I found interviewees at two high schools and one community college. At one of the high schools the students volunteered as a response to a general request, like in Oslo, and at the college I approached the students directly during lunch and asked if they knew someone or if they were interested themselves in participating in research that would benefit immigrant students[13], thus finding another high school student and five college students. I tried not to be selective as to appearances, but chose as randomly yet diversely as possible, to ensure a valid sample. Thus, the sampling process in Oslo and NYC could not be as alike as I would have liked them to be. However, I still think that the findings are relatively comparable, in that I have samples from only public schools, and students with mixed academic performance and economic status in both Oslo and in NYC.

3.3 Analysis

Whereas the data collection method is based on phenomenological ontology, the analysis will mainly focus on *meaning*. The main analytical tool will be a *hermeneutical interpretation* of meaning. Bryman defines it as "a term drawn from theology, which, when imported into the

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[13] See Appendix E for "the pitch."

social sciences, is concerned with the theory and method of the interpretation of human action. It emphasizes the need to understand from the perspective of the social actor" (Bryman 2008:694). Specifically, this study applies a hermeneutical interpretation in the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer's tradition. He strongly asserts that hermeneutics is not a method, but a basic phenomenological and ontological approach to understanding.

Hermeneutics is the art of interpretation. According to Gadamer, we all meet a text with presuppositions, with certain beliefs, with prejudices as to how that text should be read. We wear "clothes". We are children of our times. It is the reader's task to find the "glasses", point of view, or worldview of the text (Leer-Salvesen 1994). So in order to obtain an understanding, I have had to consider my own epistemological standpoint (what kind of knowledge do I believe is possible to acquire? Ch.3.1 and 3.3), I have had to try to become as aware of my own preconceptions as possible (what are my "glasses" by which I see the world? Ch.3.4), and I have had to gather contextual information about my interviewees (how is the world in which they live and understand themselves? Ch.4). These considerations have all been included in this thesis.

According to Robert J. Dostal, "Understanding, for Gadamer, is itself always a matter of interpretation. Understanding is also always a matter of language." (Dostal 2002:1) Therefore, in line with Kvale and Brinkmann's claim: "Meaning and language are intertwined" (2009:196), it is not doable to ignore language analysis completely. Since an interview is speech, and the written product is text, a certain focus on language analysis is also necessary. Hence, I have considered issues such as what is not being said (*deconstruction*), and what pauses or the use of personal pronouns might imply (*linguistic analysis*).

A hermeneutical approach to analysis entails that one attempts to reach an understanding of the interviews dialogically, in a hermeneutical circle. I, the researcher, meet the Thou, the text, which in my case is both human actions, in that it is a specific interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee, and written texts, as a result of being transcribed. According to Hans-Herbert Kögler, Gadamer claims that a text is "articulated beliefs about a subject matter" (Kögler 2010:346). A subject matter is never void of a context, and Gadamer places importance in tradition. Having knowledge of the context in which my interviewees live their lives is therefore crucial to get to the truth about what they find difficult and what benefits they have gained. Gadamer believes it is possible to obtain this truth. His hermeneutics is an alternative to the positivistic tradition of objective truths, as well as to the relativistic notion that there is no truth. I will go back and forth between my text and me, trying to obtain a "fusion of horizons"

(ibid:348). "Interpretation is thus the constant working-out between our own historical context and the background of the other's meaning" (ibid:347). This I have tried to do in an open manner, by being clear about the process that I have gone through, so that "the essential beliefs, assumptions, and value orientations are able to emerge and become part of a shared discourse", thereby reaching truth (ibid:350).

This is the more fundamental, philosophical foundation for my analysis. When it comes to the actual research method, the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis approach (IPA) has been employed (Smith & Osborn 2003). This is an approach that combines the epistemological foundations of phenomenology and hermeneutics in a two-stage interpretation process. "The participants are trying to make sense of their worlds; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their worlds" Smith & Osborn 2003:51). Thus, the concept of *understanding* has two meanings: *identifying or empathizing* and *making sense of*.

The actual analysis of the data in IPA is equivalent to the common mode of interview analysis called *bricolage*: "mixed technical and analytical discourses where the interpreter moves freely between different analytic techniques and theories" (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009:323). While only using one data collection method, utilizing various techniques to code the interviews is meant to ensure a rich interpretation of the data. Approaching from a variety of angles, such as noting patterns and themes, making metaphors and contrasts/comparisons, and making conceptual/theoretical coherence (Bryman 2008:234), going from my presuppositions to the text and back to an adjusted understanding and back again in a hermeneutic circle, until reaching a relative coherence of interpretation, provide trustworthiness, or reliability of the research.

Hence, after transcribing each interview and writing the portraits, I read through each interview several times, circling text that stood out in one way or another, noting key words and recurring themes in the margins, as well as question marks, exclamation points, and question numbers. Then I cut and pasted sections from each interview into various topics of interest, doing what I considered most important first due to time limitations. After this I noted key words and sentences about each participant on the three topics of multicultural competence, identity, and meeting with society. I also made tables and color-coded charts in order to help comparing and contrasting in various ways.

Kvale and Brinkmann assert that *generalizability* in qualitative research can be found to "the extent that findings in one situation can be transferred to other situations" (2009:324). Though it is not a goal in qualitative research to be able to generalize one's findings, a certain degree of

transferability can be possible through rich description. This is why I at an early stage talked to three professors (Marcelo Suarez-Orozco, Niobe Way, and Pedro Noguera) at NYU to discuss my research ideas, get some help on specifically American issues, and to find relevant literature to be better prepared for the analysis of the interviews. This is also why I have included the portraits as well as made an effort to give a rich account of what the participants said to support my findings.

In line with Kvale & Brinkman (2009), the analysis has been a conscious part of the process from start to finish. The design was chosen to fit what I was aiming to find as well as how I intended to interpret it. I was very much an active part in the actual interviews by attempting to understand, ask relevant follow-up questions, and by condensing and checking my interpretation with the interviewees. I noted thoughts and impressions after the interviews, during transcriptions, and during the actual analysis, as well as during the process of writing. All the while I constantly went back to the theory in order to stay focused and find possible ways to identify and make sense of the data.

3.4   The role of the researcher

The process of this research project has been especially challenging for me because I am so close to the subject. Having been born and raised in Japan, with Norwegian parents who went there to work but moved back and forth between Japan and Norway every few years, I consider myself a TCK; I feel neither fully Norwegian nor Japanese. In fact, I often feel like I have more in common with others who share this experience of having moved between different countries, whichever they may be, than with people who only know Norway or only Japan. I know first hand what it is like to attend a school in a foreign language, what it feels like to be an outsider, always having knowledge gaps in every cultural setting, always longing for people and places, never feeling quite at home anywhere. I also know how exciting it is to experience new things, to get to know new people, how rewarding it feels to have a broader sense of understanding of the world and to have gained a stronger sense of awareness of who I have become as a result of my multicultural background.

This experience, though being a powerful motivation and providing important insight to the topic at hand, also has the risk of making the research biased. I found that I easily connected with the interviewees, identifying with them, and sharing many of their thoughts and feelings. However, I made an effort to withhold this during the interviews, except for what I shared about myself before starting (see section 3.2.1 and Appendix B). It has been challenging to distance myself

from the findings and try to see things in a new way, also because this has required me to take into account a broader view of the data, which has been intellectually demanding and time-consuming. The reader will have to be the judge of how well I have achieved my goals of professionalism and trustworthiness.

Furthermore, it struck me while transcribing that the power relations between my interviewees and I were different in Oslo and NYC. In Oslo I was a teacher who also felt like I knew Norway better than them, in addition to representing the ethnic majority in the country. In NYC I was a student like some of them, and I was a guest who only knew NYC as a tourist. Was I therefore less of a "threat"? Did these factors make it easier to get rich and sensitive information in NYC? I do not think it played a major role in the interviews, mainly because of the way I connected with them and because of the kind of information I was given. When I asked if the interview had been as expected, if it had been about relevant issues that reflected this person's experiences, one participant in Oslo told me this:

> Because teachers, they are always like: "Are things fine at home? Is there something you'd like to share with me?" "I don't want to share anything with you, things are good at home." I thought you'd be a little like that. Cause we always laugh at that since we're fine at home. "How are things? You almost fell asleep in class yesterday. Are you ok? Do you work too hard at home?" "No, I don't." I thought you'd be like that.[14]

This passage shows that although the student – teacher role was initially activated, this participant's experience changed during the interview situation. It may or may not have been the case for the others, and something to be aware of while analyzing the findings.

3.5   Ethical concerns

Anonymity is difficult to assure and of particular importance to this study, both technically and when recounting the interviewees' stories. Both Norwegian Social Science Data Services and New York City Department of Education have approved the research project[15]. I have stored any personal information in separate files, both digitally and on paper. These have been treated like any valuables, and will be destroyed after finishing the thesis part of the program (June 2011). All participants have actively assented to participating, with additional parental consent for the minors[16], as well as to being recorded. They have been informed of their option of

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[14] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

[15] See Appendix G for approval letters from NYC DoE and NSD.

[16] In NYC all high school students had parental consent regardless of age, in accordance with DoE's guidelines.

withdrawing at any time, that it is voluntary, and of possible negative consequences of participating, as well as what they might do if they should feel the need to follow-up.[17]

In any research when one probes into the lives of people, there is the risk of opening wounds. My research is not especially vulnerable in this sense, but there is always the possibility of this happening. This is another reason why I have preferred going through or at least informing school counselors, so that the students may be taken care of by someone they already know, especially the minors. If anything, taking part in my study could have the benefit of making the young immigrants more conscious of their own lives, and thus help them strengthen their sense of competence and identity.

As for the recounting of the stories, I have had to take special care in making them as hard to trace as possible. This posed extra challenges in that some of the students as well as the teachers know each other and may recognize each other's stories upon reading them. The fact that the interviewees come from various backgrounds only exacerbates this challenge. Since I have been given sensitive information that is necessary to shield in most of the interviews, as well as the nature of the information being delicate in itself, I have not been able to be as clear as I would have liked in presenting the data. Specifically I have on occasion altered or left out pronouns and some characteristic details in the portraits, in addition to giving them pseudonyms. I chose to keep the real countries of origin in the portraits, since this was the most direct way for the reader to be able to contextualize their stories. However, in the thematic presentation of the data I have often substituted country of origin with X and nationality with Xn in some places, as well as paraphrased some sections of the quotes that might make them easily identifiable. Also, since the possible gap between what they actually said and the context in which it is presented could be unnecessarily big if quoted directly, being paraphrased might make the participants feel less exposed and misinterpreted. Although this might make the text less accessible and not satisfy the reader's need-to-know, the considerations of the individual participants have outweighed those of the reader.

Thus, having treated the methodological issues of this thesis, the next chapter will present some relevant contextual issues of Oslo, Norway and New York City, USA.

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[17] See Appendix H for assent and consent forms in English and Norwegian.

4   Context

In order to understand and compare the stories of the young immigrants and refugees who have been interviewed, a sketch of the macro societies that they have moved to will be drawn. This chapter will briefly present immigration history, various theories of national identity, some effects of the debate on diversity, and some general statistics and societal structures of Oslo and Norway and New York City and the United States of America. It would be even more helpful to have an understanding of the societies that they all moved away from. However, since the main focus is on their current situation, the most important is to get a sense of the mirror they might be seeing themselves reflected in now. Also, going thoroughly into each participant's background would require the scope of a doctoral thesis. Insofar as their background is important to their stories, it will be displayed and explored when necessary.

When doing a cross-cultural comparison of societal conditions for immigrants, the political philosopher Richard Freeman proposes to take several overlapping factors into account. According to Kurthen and Schmitter Heisler (2009),

> Freeman identifies four integration sectors; states, markets, welfare, and culture. While these sectors are not fully independent of one another, integration may proceed at a different pace and to a different degree in each sector, i.e. immigrants may be more integrated in one sector while they are less integrated in another. As such, a country's overall "integration framework" is expected to be a mixed bag, "not fully assimilationalist, pluralist or multicultural" (Freeman 2004, p.960).
>
> <div align="right">(Kurthen & Schmitter Heisler 2009:141)</div>

This chapter is not meant to be an extensive account of all there is to be said about the similarities and differences between the conditions for immigration in these two countries and cities, since that would require at least a Master thesis of its own. I will, however, attempt to outline a few of the most blatant characteristics of the "mixed bag" that set the scene for the stories of my interviewees.

4.1   Immigration history

The United States of America is a Settler Nation, founded on democratic principles a few hundred years ago by people who immigrated to this land of opportunities to make a new life for themselves (Kivisto & Faist 2010). Norway was founded a thousand years ago by uniting different kingdoms residing in the area, not becoming a constitutional democracy until 1814 (Brochmann & Kjelstadli 2008). This could lead one to think that USA is for everyone, and Norway is for Norwegians. Both New York City and Oslo are cities with large proportion of

immigrants, NYC being the third largest in the US[18], and Oslo the largest in Norway (www.nypl.org, www.ssb.no). When I have been telling people that I want to compare what it is like to move as a child to either of these two cities, most people seem to think that it must be much easier to be an immigrant in NYC than in Oslo. Since the US is founded by immigrants, and NYC in particular is a cosmopolitan city, where you can find people and customs, languages and foods from every corner of the world, they seem to assume that it must be easy for anyone to fit in there. Norway, however, where the idea of Norwegian ethnic homogeneity remains strong (Eriksen 2007, Seeberg 2003, Gullestad 2002), and symbols of farming culture such as goat cheese and the national costume *bunad*, the love of nature and skiing, and the Viking heritage are strong national symbols (Smehaugen 2004), seem to people to be less welcoming. Is this notion true?

In fact, upon reading literature on immigration history and national identity of both Norway and the US, I have come to think that these two nations have a lot more in common than I first thought. True, Norway has mostly stayed clear of colonial involvement and a history of slavery (Brochmann & Kjelstadli 2008), which I would assume has a different impact on how Americans treat their various ethnic and racial groups as opposed to Norwegians. Also, in the US, having immigrant ancestors as an integral part of your personal heritage and national history, make most Americans able to give hyphenated origins, such as German-Americans or Chinese-Americans. This would also influence the way one welcomes newcomers, as opposed to when the norm is to trace ancestors back to a village that has given rise to your very Norwegian family name. Yet both countries have experienced a change in the type of immigration since the 1960s, when a significant number of the newcomers have been non-white peoples (Kivisto & Faist 2010, Brochmann & Kjelstadli 2008). This has caused growing resistance towards immigration and thereby stricter policies in both countries (ibid, Banks, 2009, Shelton 2010, Eriksen 2007). Both countries have a majority white Christian population, whose identity as well as dominance is perceived as being threatened by the increased diversity in terms of customs and values. This could very well have similar impact on immigrant minorities of different colors and religions.

4.2 National identity

Both Norway and the US share the national stereotypes that Norwegians/Americans are white Christians who speak Norwegian/English (Pihl 2009, Smehaugen 2004, Theiss-Morse 2009, Shelton 2010). Being American is generally also considered to be about believing in liberalism

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[18] After Los Angeles and San Jose.

and economic individualism (Theiss-Morse 2009), whereas central Norwegian values are about humanism and equal distribution of assets through taxation and governmental involvement (Karlsen 2006).

Equality is an interesting notion to compare and contrast between the two countries. Equal opportunities for all are practically national slogans in both countries (Shelton 2010, Olsen 1997, Smehaugen 2004, Loona 2001), though actualized in different ways. In Norway equality is sought realized through the social democratic system that regulates the market and attempts to redistribute wealth to lessen class differences (Karlsen 2006), such as free education and health care and an extensive social welfare system. In the US it is exhibited in the equality under the law and the free market designed to allow any citizens the opportunity to succeed independently (Jacoby 2004).

In Norway equality has in many ways come to equate "sameness", however. Social anthropologist Marianne Gullestad (2002) has done an analysis of the Norwegian "immigrant debate", where she found that being equal has come to mean being the same, and being different is considered a threat to Norwegian unity. In fact, Seeberg (2003) found in a comparative study of two "average" schools in Oslo and Amsterdam that the idea of sameness is so important to Norwegian identity that the Norwegian students were not taught to communicate differences that everyone knew were there. Endorsing this claim is Eriksen's (2007) argument that the use of the words "difference" and "diversity" reflect how Norwegians really feel about sameness. Whereas diversity is used positively, but only about surface cultural elements[19], such as exotic foods and customs, difference is used negatively, about deep level culture such as values and worldviews. In other words, it is acceptable to like Thai food and World Music but not to believe that women belong in the home and that Mohammed is the last Prophet.

This is relevant in the context of my research, because it says something about what kind of thinking that supposedly meets new immigrants to Norway, thereby playing a part in forming their thoughts and identities. Seeberg (2003) argues that under-communicating differences makes those who are different invisible in a way that disempowers them. For instance, when the National Curriculum of 1997 mandated how to deal with gender differences in public education, both genders were explicitly mentioned, thus given a say. Comparatively, when the issue of learning Norwegian was discussed, language minorities were treated separately compared to an invisible majority, as if the language minorities were the only ones in need of help in learning

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[19] See Weaver's Cultural Iceberg Model, figure 2.1, p.14.

The Language (Norwegian, of course). The majority often remains invisible to themselves, thereby upholding an asymmetric power relation to the minority. Seeberg claims that this leaves the immigrants with the options of being assimilated or excluded, and I agree that this is a common effect of this kind of thinking.

In contrast, American identity has traditionally been centered on diversity (Jacoby 2004). According to Dr. Jason Shelton, sociologist and anthropologist, the American motto *E Pluribus Unum*[20] entails that:

> Despite a range of dissimilarities within the American population – such as national origins, racial and ethnic group memberships, religious affiliations, linguistic differences, and cultural orientations – Americans share a national sense of peoplehood and a devotion to the United States that predominates over less consequential distinctions. (Shelton 2010:67)

By this understanding, loyalty to the nation supersedes all other group identities, thus ensuring equality in the form of equal opportunities under the common law. However, since there have been some concerns lately that too much diversity undermines national unity, Shelton has examined whether diversity impedes the notion of Americanness by cross-referencing the relative effects of racial, ethnic, and religious group memberships across a variety of national sentiments using results from the 1996 and 2004 General Social Surveys (Shelton 2010). He found an overall pride in American politics and culture, though there were significant differences in ethnic and religious affiliations. African Americans and Latinos, for instance, tended to place a stronger importance in ethnic than civic identity, and non-Judeo-Christians were less committed to ethnoculturalism and/or patriotism. Being American according to this study still allows for diversity, because most people are loyal to the people of the United States and a devotion to the founding principles.

An interesting approach to understanding national identity has been developed by political scientist Elizabeth Theiss-Morse (2009). She builds her argument on a social theory of national identity on Henri Tajfel (1978), David Miller (1995), and Benedict Anderson (1991), as introduced in section 2.2.2. Shifting one's identity from the personal to the collective also necessitates commitment to the group. Theiss-Morse's social theory of national identity is hence grounded in "how strongly people feel committed to their group and how exclusively they set their group's boundaries" (2009:8), which influence the cognitive, affective, and evaluative aspects of national group identity (Tajfel 1978). Her theory is thus different from the more

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[20] "Out of many, one" (Shelton 2010:67).

traditional idea of national identity constituting typical norms and characteristics, such as being American is being patriotic and individualistic. According to her, norms show how "good" of a national you are, and it is those who identify the most strongly with national identity that more eagerly embrace the norms and set exclusive group boundaries. She holds that this theory can be used to identify any national identity, and from this she attempts to peg the American one.

By applying social theory on her quantitative studies of Americans, she found that those who identify strongly with the national group were more eager to live by national norms, such as independence and patriotism, and also to uphold stricter limits for inclusion to the group. This could for example be seen in the strong identifiers' willingness to help those who were more like themselves. If applying this theory to Norway, although a social theory study of national identity has not been done, one would expect to see stronger support of white, Christian speakers of Norwegian than of colored Muslims with poor Norwegian skills. Joron Pihl's (2000) critical analysis of the discourse on racism in Norway shows that although the intentions may be good, Norwegians have a tendency to apply other rules to those who do not belong to the group than those who do. So she argues that we make systems that for instance send immigrant children into special education because the ethnocentric test that we use to measure their academic skills label them mentally challenged, instead of recognizing the academic gap as due to being behind in the Norwegian language.

What these different scholars all show is that although the norms may be different, there are rules for inclusion into the national group in both Norway and the US. Figuring out cultural codes is a challenge to any newcomer (Berry et.al. 2002), and through my interviews I have attempted to find out how some people who moved to Oslo and NYC as children have met these challenges.

Interestingly, the definition of an immigrant is different in Norway than in the United States in most of the literature that I have come across for this thesis. In the American literature it was usually specified if the person is not born on US soil and still is termed as an immigrant (Suárez-Orozco et.al. 2008, Berry et.al. 2002), whereas in Norway it was the opposite. For instance, although the definition of an immigrant in Statistics Norway is: "Persons who are born abroad to two foreign-born parents, and who have moved to Norway", the figures that appear in the immigrant statistics include "Norwegian-born with foreign-born parents" (www.ssb.no). By this definition, 11.4% of the population of Norway, and 27% of the population of Oslo, are "immigrants"[21]. Having heard that 1/3 of the population of New York City were immigrants,

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[21] January 1st 2010. www.ssb.no

this initially puzzled me, until I realized that the numbers in NYC were strictly based on foreign-borns. The actual comparative figures for immigrants in Norway and Oslo are difficult to find, but only 11,1% of the graduating 10th graders in Oslo from 2008 and 2009 were foreign-born immigrants, whereas 19,3% were born in Norway to foreign-born parents (NOU 2010:7:408).

Perhaps this has something to do with the fact that citizenship laws are different in the US and Norway. A person is automatically given citizenship status when born in the US, whereas this is not the case in Norway. Gullestad (2002) also points out that the current understanding of the "immigrant" is the one who is perceived visibly different, in Oslo typically being Muslim and Pakistani, ignoring the fact that the two largest immigrant groups by far are from Poland and Sweden. It could also have to do with the fact that many second-generation immigrant students have insufficient mastery of Norwegian, causing poorer basic skills. In addition, unemployment rates are three times higher among the immigrant population, the divide being between countries in Asia including Turkey, Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe (NOU 2010:7). Norwegians, like most Europeans, do not easily admit to being racist, preferring the term xenophobia – fear of the unknown (Hondius 2009, Gullestad 2002).

However, the academic achievement gap is significant between native and non-native English speakers in the US as well (Amrein & Berliener 2005, Banks 2009, Rumbaut & Portes 2001). In addition, opportunities of climbing the ladder are blocked to some by the so-called "glass ceiling", i.e. various forms of discrimination such as racism and sexism (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission 1995a). Skin color still matters in the US (Olsen 1997, Jacoby 2004, Theiss-Morse 2009, Shelton 2010), just as visible differences matter in Norway (Gullestad 2002). Thus, since these facts hold true for the US too, it does not account for the varying uses of the word immigrant in Norway and the US. It may just come down to the fact that the US is an immigrant nation and Norway is not, with the consequence that national inclusion in the US is more strongly linked to loyalty to the ideals that the nation is built on, whereas inclusion in Norway is more pending on the ability to trace ancestry (Gullestad 2002). No matter the reasons, the mirrors that my young immigrants see themselves in would be expected to cause different reflections in Oslo and NYC.

4.3 Assimilation and Multiculturalism

Furthermore, the debate on *diversity*, i.e. how to deal with the unity of the nation state while respecting people's choice to maintain their religious, ethnic, and cultural interests, roughly speaking has two proposed solutions that are similar in the two countries. In the US one view is

to hold loyalty to the nation-state above all other values, often with assimilation as a tool/goal. The other is to defend the equality of socioeconomic opportunity for all groups and recognition of cultural uniqueness as basic national values, which is the philosophy of multiculturalism in the United States (Shelton 2010). In Norway the tug-of-war can be said to be between maintaining Norwegian "cultural heritage", such as Christian and humanistic values and the Norwegian language, also often with assimilation as a tool/goal. The other is to hold that "Norwegian values" really are about equality and equity for all, especially including newcomers and the oppressed, which may be called multiculturalism or cosmopolitanism (Gullestad 2002).

Both countries used to have an assimilation policy, in which the goal was to incorporate newcomers into Euro-American norms (Joseph 2007, Banks 2009, Brochmann & Kjelstadli 2008, Government White Paper 15, 2000-2001). This policy is currently being challenged in the US by what Joseph calls *egalitarian pluralism*, which "seeks to accommodate an un-assimilated diversity" (Joseph 2007:82). This shift in policies has been apparent in Norway as well since the 1970s (Hauge 2007), when the term *integration* has taken over. Both countries thus share a history of assimilation policies that have recently been challenged. However, while the term assimilation, according to Peter Kivisto (2005), can have positive connotations in the US, in Europe and Norway it is politically incorrect to talk about assimilation as a goal, even though the meaning of the term integration is more like assimilation. One contrast to repeat that may help to explain this difference is how divergently the two countries deal with differences. Whereas assimilation in the US always has "left room for a hyphen, … finding unity amidst diversity" (Jacoby 2004:16), differences is something to be avoided in Norway (Eriksen 2007, Gullestad 2002, Seeberg 2003). Immigrants remain Norwegian-Pakistani or Norwegian-Somali (note which nationality is named last, suggesting its importance) for generations.

4.4   General statistics and structures

There are obvious contrasts between the two countries, of course. The population of the US is 300 millions and Norway's is not even 5 mill. NYC had close to 8.4 million inhabitants in 2009[22], and Oslo, the capital of Norway, had close to 590,000 by Jan.1st 2010[23]. In the US Census from 2000, 35,9% of the population of NYC was foreign-born (Foner 2005), whereas the Norwegian Census combines foreign-borns and those with immigrant background, so the percentage for Oslo in 2011 is 28,4% (www.ssb.no).

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[22] US Census Bureau

[23] Statistics Norway

Furthermore, the political systems are similar in that they are both constitutional democracies, but Norway is a social welfare state whereas the US has a liberal market system. There is a lot to be said about this, but for our purpose we will mainly focus on one aspect of this; the way in which a citizen is being cared for by the welfare state vs. the opportunities that a market economy provides to individuals in taking care of themselves. The stereotypical description of this is that the welfare state of Norway provides security and integration for people in that education, health care, unemployment, and social welfare in general create a safety net for the individual and minimizes class differences. These are believed to be factors that are beneficial in both physical and psychological health (Yoshikawa & Way 2008, Oppedal 2003).

Comparatively, the US provides integration and opportunity in its flexible market economy, easy access to the labor market with lower demands for credentials and fewer unionized regulations, thereby allowing the individual to take care of themselves but increasing class differences. Unemployment rates in Norway are significantly higher for immigrants than for the rest of the population (NOU 2010:7), and in the US many immigrants hold two or three jobs that are increasingly poorly paid (Kivisto & Faist 2010). Kurthen and Schmitter Heisler found that these factors did not form opposing integration regimes, but rather that they "provide support for Gary Freeman's 'patchwork' hypothesis, that integration in Western democracies is happening not monolithically, or in a linear fashion, but rather in the form of irregular patchworks" (Kurthen & Schmitter Heisler 2009:163). So we should not expect these different political systems to cause an easily detectible pattern of integration in my interviewees' stories, but they should be possible to recognize as influential factors nonetheless.

This chapter has outlined some economic, ideological, cultural, and demographic elements of Norway and USA, with a special focus on the cities of Oslo and New York, with the intention of drawing a backdrop for the stories in the next chapter. However, it is important to remember that although knowledge of the context of a text is important for understanding, such as Gadamer holds, Kurthen and Schmitter Heisler (2009) found that there is no direct cause and effect between how a country attempts to include its new citizens and the way these are actually embraced.

> Indeed, individual country studies and recent comparative research on labour markets, welfare states, education, and housing suggest that a country's citizenship regime, while important, does not determine the degree of integration or exclusion of newcomers in these important societal sectors. (Kurthen & Schmitter Heisler 2009:140)

Thus, although context provides important information, I do not expect to see a direct link between the macro societal characteristics and individual experience.

5 Data presentation and analysis

How do young people having immigrated or fled to, and currently living in New York City and Oslo, see their multicultural experiences as challenges or assets in their lives in their new societies? Do they have certain competences and aspects of identity in common despite variables such as place of birth, types of family structure and relations, power relations, reasons for moving, number of moves, and current place of residence?

In order to answer these research questions I have conducted qualitative interviews with 16 young people. They all have in common the fact that they remember having moved from one country to another in their formative years, as well as currently living in Oslo, Norway or New York City, USA. The interview has been designed to bring forth their stories and perceptions of what their meeting with their new society has been like, how this experience has shaped their sense of identity and competence, mainly through a focus on what has been and is challenging and beneficial about this multicultural experience.

Based on these interviews, I have gathered a large amount of data, and it is far beyond the scope of this dissertation to thoroughly discuss everything. However, since my main objective is to look into the foundation for expanding the TCK profile to include young immigrants and refugees, it has been necessary to maintain a wide outlook so as to become aware of possible discrepancies as well as correspondences. The findings have been organized into three main categories, based on the research questions. Although there will be no extensive discussion on all the aspects of the findings, the analysis is meant to paint a broad picture of how the participants see themselves as expressed in the following three categories, which have been introduced in section 2.5.2:

1. Multicultural competence; challenges and assets
2. Identity issues
3. Meeting with new society

Since the topics are so intertwined in the actual interviews, they might sometimes run into each other. Also, for the same reason, a more thorough analysis of the findings in relation to the applicability of the TCK profile to CCKs and FLEXid will be given in a final discussion.

5.1 Portraits of the participants

Before discussing each finding, a portrait of each individual who has been interviewed will be presented. This is meant to provide context for my thematic analysis while maintaining the

individual stories. Above all commonalities and possible patterns, each participant is unique and represents exceptions in different ways. These portraits, together with the context of the macro societies in chapter 4, will provide pivotal components of the hermeneutical circle of my analysis. The portraits have been written around the same main topics as how the thematic analysis is organized, in addition to their background context and most importantly what makes them unique.

The following eight portraits are from New York City.

Adanna

I'm a bit of a rolling stone.

Adanna is a high school girl who came to New York City from Barbados with her single mom and brother 10 years ago. Her parents used to run their own restaurant and were doing well, before they split up and her mother decided to move to her own mother in Staten Island. She has been working hard to keep her children fed, safe, respectful, and educated, and Adanna is a living proof of her success.

Adanna's first encounter with NYC was unfriendly, being bullied by her classmates in elementary school. This gave her some unpleasant memories and nearly set her back one school year, but moving to Brooklyn and making new friends changed that. She chose her high school for the freedom it gave her to experience new people and places. Being a bit socially awkward does not seem to bother her, as she is an independent girl who knows what she wants and is not afraid to be herself, even if it separates her from her peers.

She is a proud immigrant, who likes to be different, and who is adventurous and restless. Becoming American is not something she wants, because she does not want to limit herself to one nationality. She loves Manhattan, because there are so many places to explore without being bothered by nosy people. Finding a job that allows her to move around and see the world is her dream for the future. Going back for a visit to Barbados gave her some unexpected surprises in that places seemed smaller and people did not accept her as a local any more due to her "Yankee accent". Although she does not want to move back, she misses the sounds and the smells, and wants to be able to stay connected through occasional visits.

Fariba

I feel like I'm the only one, so you feel excluded. But it's nice to know that you're not the only one with this background.

Fariba is a young woman with qualities of a storyteller. Her parents are from Iran, but she was born and raised in Germany. She came to New York City with her mother and sister three years ago, because her mother wanted to see if she could do better in the US than in Europe. Before moving to NYC Fariba saw herself mostly as Iranian, although she has never been there, but since moving away, she has realized how much of her is also German. Now she is confused about whom she is, but is actively seeking to figure it out, reflecting on similarities and differences between being an immigrant in Germany and the US. Although she does not know anyone else who shares her experiences and truly understands her, she is an independent young woman who does not budge from hardships and struggle, which she sees as an opportunity to grow as a person.

Currently she feels like she belongs in NYC, because everyone else is unique like her. She sees herself becoming a permanent resident, yet having a job that allows her to live in different countries for a couple of years at a time. The friendliness and warm-heartedness of NYC is something she treasures, because it reminds her of such Iranian traits and is a contrast to Germany. However, she prefers German honesty, organization, and punctuality to the more superficial politeness and relaxed tardiness she finds in Iranian culture. Fariba appreciates that she can choose from the positive aspects and prefers to leave the negative ones alone.

Speaking, reading, and writing three languages fluently, she is now learning a fourth. Her schooling back in Germany has eased her transition into American society, since the academic level she has countered in the US is lower and has given her opportunity to deal with learning the language and adjusting to her new life there. She loves her college, not so much for the academic qualities as for the location and group of Iranian friends she has made. She misses her friends from Germany, who shared interests and characteristics despite different backgrounds, including native German.

Amadu

> As humans we're programmed to look at stuff from our viewpoint, but me, I try to step back and see what it is on the other side.

Amadu was born in Sierra Leone but fled with his father to Liberia as a baby, where he grew up living with his father's brother and wife. He went to school and was top of his grade, learning to read and write West African English. He also knows Creole and some Fulani, which are the family languages. His family came to the United States in 2002, after a rather long journey through several countries and states, and settled in Brooklyn, New York when he was starting the

4th grade. The encounter with the American school system was de-motivating to Amadu, who thought it was all too easy to pass the tests without much effort, and has been an under-achiever since. He has no intention of dropping out or finishing after high school, however, since both he and his family value higher education too much for that. He wants to become an engineer, although his interests are widely ranging, including sports, history, and world politics.

Amadu is quite the philosopher and debater, and he takes pride in his ability to regard the different viewpoints before making up his and other people's mind. He thinks of himself as a world citizen, thinking that people put too much emphasis on race and national identity. He pictures living in different countries as he grows older, not following his family, who plan to move back once the children's education is completed. Spending time with friends is something Amadu highly treasures. He juggles his family's expectations and his own artfully, pursuing what he believes in with impressive patience and maturity.

David

> Maybe I was suppressed by the environment, so it took a long time for me to be open-minded.

David is a Korean high school student who has changed names, parents, and citizenship for the opportunities that his real parents hope that the United States has to offer. He came with his brother when he was 10, and it took him over a year of copying the black board and sitting mutely in school before he understood enough English to comprehend what was going on. He also learnt how to behave to avoid being picked on and called Chino, and got good friends with diverse backgrounds whom he can joke around and hang out with.

David attends a specialized high school and struggles with living up to both sets of parents' expectations for him. They would like him to become a doctor or lawyer or another such prestigious profession, while his dream is to make music. The fact that his brother has moved back to Korea has increased the pressure on him, and he escapes in music and sleep. Studying hard is not something he enjoys, and his college plans involve moving far away and taking classes he has never heard of before.

At one point he started calling himself Korean-American, but feeling less and less that he belongs in America, he has gone back to saying he is Korean. A visit to his home country has strengthened his wish to return and get back his citizenship, even if it means serving in the military. He misses feeling safe in the streets and blending in with the crowds. However, he

appreciates having made friends with people from different cultures, and he wishes he could live in a utopia where people did not care about nationalities and race.

Isabel

> I always say that NYC would be perfect if all my friends would be here.

Isabel is a 19-year-old who came to Queens from Ecuador with her mother and sister to live with her new stepfather when she was 17. She did not want to come, and spent the first year crying and talking to her friends back in Ecuador online while staying home. It was not until she went back to visit that she realized that life had to go on and that things would have changed for her back in Ecuador anyway, so she started the process of applying for colleges and learning English. Now she studies business administration, has a part time job, a native-born boyfriend, and speaks English most of the time.

She says she is Ecuadorian and does not want to be American, yet she does not see herself moving back. The opportunities are better in the US, and so is the system. The lack of an organized system is something she strongly dislikes about Ecuador. She loves the beaches there, where she most strongly feels that she belongs. She would like to travel all over the world, but live in one country, since moving is hard, and she does not want to go through that again.

Her experiences have made her more independent and mature, and she appreciates having learned another language, although she still feels that her skills are inadequate. Being genuine and natural is important to Isabel, and she is puzzled by the carelessness she sees among her peers in the US. The peer pressure to take drugs and have sex seems strong, and she worries about her younger sister, who she fears does not have the same confidence as her in who she is, since she was younger when she moved away. Isabel hopes that hard work and good performance will give her success and avoid discrimination so that hopefully she can become president of a company one day.

Taeja

> Being Indian in NYC is more difficult than in New Jersey, because we're not following what you're supposed to do.

Taeja is a young woman from India. She came to what they see as the land of opportunities with her family after getting the Green Card 5 years ago. They were middle class people with their own business back in India, but her parents made the sacrifice of becoming lower class in the US so that their children might have a better chance at getting a good education and well paid jobs.

They currently live in Staten Island, but hope to be able to buy a house and move to New Jersey, where the Indian community is large and they might have a better chance at living their Indian culture and religion, both in the house and outside.

The transition to New York City was hard for Taeja, who left behind many friends and did not make new ones until she entered college. In high school she was picked on for reasons that are unclear and painful to her, and she changed her appearances and worked hard on her accent to blend in better and be accepted and understood outside the home. Her college friends have improved her life in the US a lot, though she misses family, friends, and her school back home.

She feels that India is where she belongs, even though she has no intention of moving back, since that would be a waste of the opportunities she has been given and so many Indians dream of. She hopes to study medicine, having useful support in relatives in the US who are doctors, and believes that this can be achieved with dedication and hard work. She plans to find an Indian man to marry at the appropriate time, since she believes that this will allow her to remain true to what is important to her, which is maintaining Indian and Hindu values and traditions.

Ahmed

I change so much I don't know who I really am.

Ahmed is a young Nigerian with a scattered upbringing. He has lived in Nigeria, Germany, London, and New York, going back and forth, most of the time being ready to leave at the spur of the moment at his parents' request, alone or with one or more family members. It could be to come along with his mother on one of her business trips, to live with his father in Germany, or to go to college in NYC while serving as his father's right hand in his business branch in the US. He is currently living on his own in Brooklyn, but has relatives all over NYC for support, as well as wealthy parents who take care of him from a distance.

His education has suffered as a consequence of having changed schools so many times, being moved up or down a grade depending on his new school. Nevertheless, he graduated early and is now in college, taking classes to fill the gaps and hopefully go on to study medicine. This is more his parents' dream for him than his own, however, and he really does not know what he wants to do, besides being successful and have financial stability. He thinks that having seen so much of the world has given him the advantage of increased understanding of cultures and people, as well as being goal oriented, which are not things he sees in his peers. He has many

acquaintances and no close friends, is very good at knowing what is expected of him and moving on when leaving a place.

Ahmed has confused loyalties and feelings of belonging. He has four different passports, speaks American English, Nigerian English, and one native Nigerian language. His father is Muslim and his mother Christian. He proudly says he is from Nigeria when asked, but he does not want to live there, and only goes there to visit his family and relatives. London is the place where he most strongly feels like he can be himself, because he feels appreciated as an American and they value different kinds of people, which is not his experience in Nigeria. He strongly dislikes Germany, where he never learned the language or went to school and therefore never managed to enter the society and make friends. But since his father lives there, he feels loyalty towards him and respects his wishes, and would go if asked. New York is where he was born, and where his parents advice him to stay, so he pictures himself living and working there in the future, while continuing his traveling lifestyle.

Samhita

In my country we have relatives, so you never feel lonely.

Samhita moved with her younger brother from her grandparents in Dhaka to live with her parents and youngest brother in New York when she was in the 11th grade. Her mother tongue is Bengali and she only knew "school English" when she came, so she struggled to understand and learn, especially at first. But she had great help in her brother, who was in her class so they could support each other. Having mainly learned to memorize and reproduce, she also struggled with learning to be creative and produce texts the American way, which she thinks is better.

When asked, she says she is from Bangladesh, which is also where she feels like she belongs, having grown up there and not lived in the US for more than four years. She thinks life is harder in America, because people have to work hard to support themselves, and since their family network is smaller there. Hard work is the reason why she thinks the US is so developed, however, and she also appreciates the advanced school facilities and technology, as well as the job opportunities and financial aid system for education in NYC. This is why she thinks she will stay on in the US even if her heart is in Bangladesh, though she hopes to visit frequently.

Growing up being taken care of by many loving relatives has made her know who she is, loyal to her roots, yet flexible in adjusting to her new country. Samhita accepts that there are things she must and cannot do because of where she lives and where she comes from. Dressing

appropriately at work, though not partying or having boyfriends are examples of her choices. She has great respect for her parents, a value from Bangladeshi culture that she would like to pass on to her own children some day. She thinks life would be easier if she found someone from her home country to marry, since she wants her husband to share her thinking on relationships and family and the support system she values so much from there.

The remaining eight portraits are from Oslo.

Mohammed

I can make my own culture that suits me.

Mohammed is a 20-year-old Muslim who fled from Iraq with his mother and brother five years ago to join his father in Norway. The family left behind two married siblings and many relatives, who he misses deeply. His whole life in Iraq he has known nothing but war and unrest, which makes him appreciate the freedom, peace, and opportunities of the Norwegian welfare society. He wants to give back to his new country for what he has been given, and he has lost pride in Iraqi people, who he thinks have turned on each other and are corrupt and dishonest.

His multicultural experiences have given him both challenges and assets, although he is reluctant to admit to problems, having such a positive attitude to life. He likes that he can pick and choose from the best in two cultures, with the Iraqi sense of community and support and the Norwegian honesty and respect for the individual. Mohammed thinks that one should be considerate of the culture in the new society and not just transfer ones' own cultural traditions, and he can help explain such differences in his professional life. He has some battle of wills with his father, who by Iraqi culture he has to show deep respect and obedience, but who will not let him do all that he sees other Norwegian youth does. Having a big network of friends through school and sports, he is exposed to different kinds of values and milieus, and he would like to move out of Oslo to get away from some of the bad influence, such as fighting and other kinds of destructive behavior.

When asked, he says that he is from Iraq, although he would like to say that he is from Norway, something he plans on starting with once he gets his citizenship. He has no faith in the potential for peace and dignity in Iraq, so he intends to create the best future possible for himself and people around him in Norway. He is very happy in his new country, but if there had been no reason to leave his country of birth, he would have preferred a life there to his current one, since

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there would have been no reason to miss his loved ones, and he would always have had the strong community supporting him.

Katya

> But when he got to know me, he realized that I was just – not very special – well, that we were pretty alike, really.

Katya is a young, bright woman who moved from Russia to Oslo to live with her mother and new stepfather when she was 10 years old. She reluctantly left behind her father, grandmother, and friends to embark on an uncertain future, where she had to learn a new language, get to know her new family, and make new friends. She went the unusual route of going straight into ordinary classes without the regular introductory intensive Norwegian language school year. However, within a few months she was able to communicate, and within a couple of years, she spoke fluently and without an accent.

Reading and writing Russian, Norwegian, and English fluently, she is currently working on her French while reading books in her languages to maintain them. Katya has also managed to graduate from 10th grade with a very high GPA and a big circle of friends. She lives in a diverse neighborhood where she feels comfortable and can be herself. When asked where she comes from, she says Russia, although she does not get the question too often, since she both looks and sounds Norwegian. She feels more and more Norwegian each time she goes back to Russia to visit, but her loyalty still tips to her country of origin if she has to choose.

Katya misses her Russian family and friends, but tries not to dwell on it, since there is nothing she can do about her situation. However, having moved cross-culturally has given her a broader understanding of the world, knowledge she uses both to mediate between people who are at odds with each other, and to voice nuanced opinions on current events.

Nkweto

> Maybe my experience as a girl can help other Norwegian girls?

Nkweto is a young woman from Zambia who joined her father in Norway with her mother and siblings close to four years ago. She comes from a family of high status in Zambia, but nobody except for Zambians are aware of that here in Norway. This is hard for her father, but not for her. She tells stories of gradual yet radical changes in herself after coming here, since the cultures are so different. As a Zambian girl she is expected to stay in the house and take care of the home, but she wants to be social and independent. At first she had many arguments with her

parents for not letting her live like the Norwegian teenagers she met, which has led her to live one life at home and another outside. However, this has calmed down since they are beginning to understand more of what Norway is about after having had more involvement in the society through work and school.

She says she is Zambian, but she does not want to move back. She hopes to stay in Norway to finish her studies in economics, even after her family returns. It will be hard to stay here on her own, but she also appreciates the independence that is encouraged in Norway as opposed to Zambia, and she feels that her harsher experiences from having grown up in Zambia have given her a good platform on which to make sound life choices. This ability is something she believes she can contribute to Norwegian teenagers, who live under great peer pressure to party and have sex.

Nkweto speaks two native Zambian languages, as well as English and Norwegian. She is a bright student, who has gone straight into regular schooling after only half a year in intensive Norwegian class, and is now attending a popular high school in Oslo. She wishes she could make friends with native Norwegians, but the ones she has met have not been including of her, and she says she has to try harder by being the one to take initiative. She appreciates her current multicultural class, where she has many friends and a teacher who is like a mother who has them discuss various relevant immigrants topics.

Amira

> Had I been Norwegian I wouldn't know so much about Ethiopia, and then I might have been Norwegian in my head, like my Norwegian friends. But now that's not possible, since I grew up down there and a part of me is from there. So now it's not so easy to be myself.

Amira is a young woman from Ethiopia who came to Norway with parts of her family seven years ago. Her father had been imprisoned in Ethiopia for being a freedom fighter, and left the country before his family. When Amira saw her father again at the airport in a small town in Northern Norway, she had not seen him since she was a baby. It took a while to get used to having a father around again, and sharing her mother with him. They left behind siblings in Ethiopia, since they were grown and married. She has not been able to visit, and dearly misses them and the weather, nature, food, and people. Being a refugee is a strong part of the family history and identity, and an important reason for keeping their traditions and language alive.

Yet Amira struggles with balancing her family's values and becoming Norwegian. She tells a story of exploration, rebellion, stress, and friction, in which she has not shun away from fighting for what she believes is right. Although she can point to positive aspects of her multicultural upbringing, such as learning the value of education and freedom through her childhood experiences, she keeps returning to how difficult it has been and still is for her to figure out how to be herself in the cross-pressure she lives in. She feels that this makes her more mature than her Norwegian peers, who do not share her responsibilities and hardships. Her struggle to adapt has given her opportunities to talk about and reflect on her life, which makes her an eloquent and conscious young lady.

She has a strong sense of belonging to both Ethiopia and Norway, but wants to live in Norway and visit Ethiopia in the future. She loves living in Norway, and she has many friends from all kinds of backgrounds and interests. She speaks several languages, being nearly equally strong in both Norwegian and Ethiopian. She did not get proper schooling until she came to Norway, and trying to catch up with various subjects while learning a new language has been and still is a challenge. Her goal is to become a nurse, which would allow her to work internationally and help her own people.

Ajanta

If I had never moved I would have been an ordinary girl.

Ajanta is a young woman from Bangladesh who four years ago moved for the first time in her life, with her mother and siblings, to join her father in Norway. The move has delayed her education, since she is taking a slower track in high school to work on her Norwegian, which she struggles with. She is learning things that she would not have learnt in her home country, with one consequence that her knowledge has become quite different from her parents'. She values the broadened perspectives she has gained from seeing different cultures first hand.

The transition to Norway has been difficult for Ajanta, especially the beginning, and she misses Bangladesh and relatives and friends a lot. Her best friend and support is someone from her home country and a daughter of family friends. Family is very important to Ajanta, and most of her social life happens through them. Loyalty and respect are important values to her, so she takes care to behave in a way that reflects well on her family.

She feels Bengali, not Norwegian, and she is determined to move back. She just has to wait for her siblings' and her own education to be completed. She would like to study dentistry and work

when she returns, even after she gets married, because she wants to lead an active, yet ordinary Bengali life, and values citizens who contribute to society.

Abdul

> The biggest difference between here and there is that there you cannot do what you want.

Abdul is a young Afghani man, who came to Norway via Pakistan five years ago with his mother and siblings. Their father had left several years before the rest of the family could join him. Abdul is the oldest, so he has many responsibilities in the family, including grocery shopping for his mother, who could not go outside much in Afghanistan, going to the Norwegian embassy in Pakistan to do immigration paperwork, as well as paying the occasional bills while in Norway.

He is an ambitious young high school student, with decent grades and dreams of getting a good education so he can work with organizations to help poor people in Afghanistan. He speaks several languages, including languages from his neighboring countries, most of which he has picked up through movies and the school of life. His formal schooling has been interrupted several times due to moves both within countries and across borders and school systems, but he comes from a highly educated family and wants no less for himself.

Norway is as much his country as Afghanistan is, and he appreciates the freedom and opportunities that lie there. He is a devoted Muslim, and believes in doing right and respecting others, rarely admitting to any negative sentiments towards anything. He is sad about what Afghanistan has become, and that people often associate being Afghani and Muslim with being a terrorist, although he values the hospitality and respect for elders from his culture of origin. He is very close to his siblings and parents, has many school friends and few foes.

Maryam

> When you lose things in life you can get them back. Money is nothing in life. When you lose it, you'll find it again. But health, when you lose that, you cannot find it again or get it back.

Maryam is a responsible and mature young woman from Iran, who fled across the mountains with her family when she was 7. They waited at a detention center for over two years before they were given asylum in Norway. Being mostly confined to the center, they were afraid of what might happen if they went outside. During this time, she learnt to communicate in languages of the neighboring countries from the other refugees, even though she was not allowed formal schooling, so now she speaks 5 languages. Besides first grade in Iran, which she skipped

a lot, since she refused to wear the required headscarf and got in trouble for it, she did not go to school until the 6th grade. Learning Norwegian intensively for 6 months, then going into regular classes, was thus a shock for her, but being a fast learner and getting individual help, she soon adjusted and thrived in school.

However, another shock to the family was the cold Norwegian winter climate, from which her father developed rheumatism, and so they decided to move, chasing warmer weather. But both her parents' health got worse, and Maryam has been taking over more and more responsibilities in the home to help them. Children's Services were notified, and she received substantial help in her increasingly isolated and difficult situation, having to take care of her sick parents while her brother provided income for the family. She has told her parents that she does not want to move again, being tired of loosing friends and starting over.

Maryam has ambitions of becoming a medical doctor in Norway, despite having no time to do homework, much less making friends, being too busy at home. She wants to help people and give back to her new country. Although she says she comes from Iran when people ask, she considers herself mostly Norwegian, having lived there for most of her life, and feeling welcome there. Her strongest language is Norwegian, although not at a native level, and her home language is Farsi. She is close to her parents, who have always given her freedom to choose for herself. She is upset with Iran for denying people this, as well as for treating women unjustly. She says her difficult experiences have made her vulnerable, yet stronger and wiser.

Sadia

Even if they treat me badly, I won't be that way with them. It's in me.

Sadia is a university student, born in Norway, who moved back to rural Pakistan with her family to live when she was five, since her parents thought they could raise the children better there. She went to a school where the languages of instruction were English and Urdu, and the discipline was strict. Her first language is Punjabi, which she values highly because it allows her to communicate with relatives. Sadly a family member passed away, and so they decided to go back to Norway when she was 12, because the support system was better there.

In Norway she had to start all over to learn Norwegian, and she still struggles with the disadvantage of having to study in a second language. She blames her father for not having thought things through when exposing her to this challenge. When asked where she comes from, she says Norway, even though she usually has to add Pakistan, since people are generally not

satisfied with that answer. Norway is the country where she feels she belongs, and she has no intention of going back to Pakistan other than to visit.

Sadia is a kind young woman with integrity and many friends, and an active social life, especially through her Pakistani Mosque. She adapts easily to people and situations, and a growing sense of who she is spurs her increasingly more independent choices. She misses the way traditions are celebrated and the sense of community support in Pakistan. She values Norway for the freedom to choose, and for the strong sense of justice she finds in its people.

With the individual portraits in mind, I will move on to a topic-based analysis of the data material.

5.2   Multicultural competence; challenges and assets

The two main questions of the interview guide were number five and six:

    5. What things are problematic to you about your background?

    6. What qualities do you see as assets due to your background?

These two questions were designed to extract information on how the young immigrants and refugees to Oslo and NYC see their multicultural experiences as challenges and assets in their lives.

5.2.1   Lack of explicitness

Surprisingly, most participants had rather brief answers to these questions, often with only one or two challenges and benefits, yet displaying many others during the rest of the interviews. Some of them would say: "I don't know" or "I haven't thought about that." Others would hesitate or ask for clarification, such as:

> Researcher: What are some things that you think you have as strengths or benefits or that's good about being a Xn[24] in NY?
>
> Benefits? You mean benefits for being a Xn here?
>
> Researcher: Yeah, or benefits for <u>you</u>, for having lived both in X and NY.
>
> Benefits?
>
> Researcher: Something that's good for you.
>
> I would say technology. We couldn't buy computers when I was in my country. But now we have one laptop, one desktop, so yeah.

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[24] For ethical reasons, nationality has been substituted with Xn and country of origin with X in some of the quotes in this chapter. See chapter 3.4 for a discussion.

One explanation for such answers is that they simply did not understand the questions, either a word – "benefits" – or what kind of assets or problems that were asked for. This could be because of language problems – although several synonyms were used to explain – or also lack of clarity on my behalf, of course. I did find myself trying to talk simpler Norwegian with the participants in Norway, being a Norwegian as a second language teacher and recognizing insufficient skills in most of them. This did not happen so much in New York, since the language skills were generally of better quality among the participants there.

Another explanation could be that they were not used to talking about such issues. The answers were ranging from "nobody cares" and "no, never" to "not in this depth" and "no, because it is not a problem for me". In fact, only one in NYC and three in Oslo gave an affirmative answer to the question of whether they ever talked to someone about multicultural issues, and even then, they were not related to what skills their experiences might have given them. One said that the challenges related to moving were discussed with a therapist, but not in a particular multicultural context. The other three said that they talked to peers about where they were from and what cultural differences they had in common. Interestingly, most of them said that they did talk about it in school, although mostly on a less personal level. I will get back to the context of school in section 5.4.4.

One obvious reason for the brief answers is that it is difficult to think of everything one knows when the questions are open-ended and it is up to you what you share. Another reason is that one may not want to share everything. I suspected this to be the case a few times, especially when the topic was challenging, but also for being reluctant to come off as bragging about oneself. A further explanation could be that they simply did not see any problems or advantages related to their experience. If that were they case, however, I would have expected at least a few of them to say so, but I never got such answers. I did sense a reluctance to be negative in some of the interviews, however, which could explain some of the brief answers, especially to question five (things that are problematic).

Besides, although many of them did not answer the direct question to my satisfaction, their challenges and assets came up in other parts of the interview. This may be observed in how they see themselves as different from their peers or the national majority, or to the open question "Can you tell me about your life since you moved?" One example of this is found in the following passages. First, one participant is asked what is problematic and beneficial about her background, to which she says "there's nothing special", and then adds a difficult experience in

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her family, and says: "can't say anything else. No, I don't know, it's that one reason." This caused me to probe further into the topic.

> Researcher: Who have you become as a result of being both Norwegian and Xn, as opposed to your cousins in X or Norwegians who have never lived abroad? Have you ever thought about that?
>
> Haven't really thought about that, but…
>
> Researcher: Do you think there are any advantages in being –
>
> Being from X?
>
> Researcher: Being multicultural.
>
> Sure, there are advantages. … I do have the Xn part of me when I celebrate … traditions and gatherings, and yes, … they are with me all the time, my language and stuff[25].

This young woman seems very unsure of both what I mean by my question, and when clarified, what her advantages related to having a multicultural background are. Yet in other parts of the interview, she comes across as someone with several qualities as well as challenges, such as being adaptable, culturally perceptive, a bridge-builder, and struggling with languages. For instance, her adaptability becomes evident in how she talks about being different from her female cousins in her country of origin.

> I can adapt to them, I can be silly with them, I can help them. It's ok like that, but we don't really know each other anymore, so – maybe that's a factor.
>
> [My siblings and I] preferred talking to the boys, the boys were cool. Maybe because they tried to hit on me or something, I don't know. But the girls I couldn't understand. The boys were nice, I could have fun with them, go outside with them. But the girls were like – "food is ready, come and eat, eat!" It never went beyond that[26].

Here she mentions almost as an afterthought how she easily adjusts to chatting nonsense with them when going back to visit, even though she enjoys being with her male cousins more. Later in the interview when the topic is feeling different from her Norwegian peers, she confirms that she is good at adapting, although it is not a skill she applies consciously:

> Researcher: Are you good at adapting to the different people you are with? You talked a bit about it earlier, but…?
>
> Yes, I am, I manage to become part of the gang, I do, so… Maybe [we do] not talk so much after I've had a conversation with them. I mean, I can't keep it very, like – what can I say? I know how to fit in, I don't do more than that, you could say, maybe I don't think about it. Do you know what I mean?[27]

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[25] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

[26] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

[27] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

Through this rather detailed account I have shown some of the challenges and assets this girl has due to her multicultural background. Even though she initially did not mention all her multicultural challenges and assets explicitly, I tried to pick up on the subtleties and followed up to verify my own understanding of what was being said. Thus, few of the participants seem to have thought about and/or talked to anyone about their competences related to their special upbringing in particular, and about multicultural issues in general.

5.2.2 Difficult in the beginning

Next, I found that nearly all said that it was difficult in the beginning. Moving across cultures is usually a challenging process (Nishida 2005), which was clearly reflected in all the participants' accounts, except for Ahmed's. He has been moving so often and to so many places that this is what he knows: "It's regular for me." Common issues that the rest considered hard in the beginning were getting to know people and the culture, learning how to dress and talk, getting accustomed to the climate, and leaving loved ones behind, as seen in the quotes by different people below.

> At first it was very difficult. To get used to people, the weather, and how the system works. But after a while, I think it got better[28].

> But in my country we have relatives, so you never feel lonely. But I think when I came here, I really missed my country, then you have to work, you have to study, by the time – with snow and everything, it's really cold here, but still we have to continue.

> In the beginning when I came, people drank and smoked at a very low age. That was a little strange. After a while I got used to it and then I thought: Yes, this is normal, why should I talk like that? And now I'm with friends and I don't drink[29].

> Yeah, at first when I came here, I was like – American life is so different than Xn life. When I was I X I used to have a lot of friends, and I used to hang out. But when I came here, first of all, my English was not so good, so people had a problem with my accent, so I didn't make so many friends. I just keep talking in English, and I'm used to it now, I got it.

One of the lessons in FLEXid is "The process of moving". It is considered empowering to understand what psychological processes people go through when moving, and that to replace the things that made you happy with similar things in the new society can help you become content in the new place. Based on the collected data, it seems safe to say that this topic would be relevant in both Oslo and NYC, since moving was experienced as difficult by nearly all of them.

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[28] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

[29] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

5.2.3 Challenges

Furthermore, many of the challenges they share are loss of family and friends, difficulties in finding new friends or feelings of loneliness, delayed or holes in the education, parents' loss of status, appearances (clothes, accent), reputation, and being prevented from returning. Some of them also talk about cross-pressure in how parents deal with their new society, as well as language problems and bullying. These last three challenges will be discussed in sections 5.4.3, 5.2.4, and 5.4.5, since they are especially pertinent to how they experienced their encounter with their new societies.

All the challenges and assets were presented in the individual portraits. To the direct question of what was challenging about having a multicultural background, what these two participants said cover a range of the challenges most had in common:

> The bad side is that I don't have as many good friends here in Norway as I did in X. That's boring, since I don't go out a lot. … Also, I would've been finished with high school if I had been in X. … And I miss my entire family.[30]

> Well, basic things that – I couldn't communicate with people when I first came here. The fact that I don't belong to a certain group. And thinking that people will have these automatic thoughts about me, because of how I look. … Everything was new, even if I didn't want to I had to live under those circumstances, and I had to learn how to live under that. So maybe I was suppressed by the environment, so it took a long time for me to be open-minded.

This last quote also illustrates how challenges and assets are often mixed together, because one can lead to another. Having a hard time with something can push you to find a way to deal. In this last case, it ended up with the multicultural competence of being open-minded. The same mix of advantages and disadvantages is even more clearly expressed by Ahmed:

> It could be a good thing, it could be a bad thing. … It's good, because I know people from different countries, and I think it's bad because, they can't relate to me … it's fun sometimes, because we're two different people, we should know each other's different background, how we're different, how you talk, what this means, good like that. And sometimes it's bad, because you don't get along, cause you don't have the same ideas and norms, so we don't really get that along. … I don't really have close friends. I have a lot of friends, a lot. But I don't think anyone could sit down and talk – I have friends that I can talk about different stuff with. … I'm really good at making friends. I'm really good at talking, I'm really good at saying the right things to the right people, not piss them off, and I'm really good at twisting stuff too, like I'm – I think it's what, the achievement, what I gained in moving around the world – how do you say that word – manipulate people?

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[30] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

Having moved around has caused that he does not know anybody who shares the total experience. The TCK profile says that knowing people from all over the world means loosing them when you move, but can give great stimuli, as well as the ability to adapt, which is what Ahmed has experienced in his life. I will get back to this in section 5.2.5, but first I will discuss the issue of language, both as a challenge and as an asset.

5.2.4 Language

Language is a challenge that all interviewees in Oslo talk about. This is not so surprising, since Norwegian is a language that is not used outside of Norway. English on the other hand, is a world language and the language of instruction in many countries beyond the US. Only two of the participants in NYC said that communicating in English had been a major problem for them. In fact, many shared that they had some grasp of English before they came, and that learning the accent was their main focus.

> When I first came here … my English was so bad. I used to have a <u>huge</u> accent. Nobody could understand me.

This experience that the form of English that they knew was not good enough could of course be due to the education system in their countries. It seems a bit strange, however, that having gone to English medium schools should not be sufficient in learning the language better, although they could be examples of poor English medium or bilingual schools. Although none of the participants explicitly said so – most of them held the opinion that their variety of English was so different that it was practically illegible to Americans – my impression was that they did not think that the kind of English that they knew measured up to the high status of American English.

On the other hand, knowing several languages were usually considered a benefit, and more so in Oslo than in NYC, although again, often not directly mentioned as one. Some of them proudly listed all the languages that they spoke, while some of them I ended up asking specifically about whether they thought of their language skills as challenges or assets.

> Researcher: Is it an advantage that you have learnt Norwegian?
> Yes.
> Researcher: Why?
> Um (ha ha) – because there are many Norwegians in X. So since I've lived here and understand Norwegian, if I go back, maybe I can work for a Norwegian company in my home country.[31]

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[31] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

I had to resort to a leading question to get this person to talk about language as a potential advantage. Again, when this occurred, it could of course simply mean that they did not think to mention it at the spur of the moment. It could also indicate that they spoke languages with lower status that were not considered an asset in Oslo or NYC (Baker 2006).

Some of the participants in Oslo also think of it as too much of a challenge to have to fully learn and maintain both or all languages.

> Katya: But finally I understood that I didn't maintain my language as well as I could have done. Of course it starts to get difficult when I have both French and English and Norwegian and Russian to maintain, so.[32]

Thus, language was both considered a challenge and an asset, in slightly different ways in Oslo and NYC, but need further research to give more in-depth analysis of the status of language in relation to multicultural competence and identity formation.

5.2.5 Assets

Moving on to the specific assets, at the time of the interviews, these young people express that they have an inner strength, confidence, and maturity, which many of them explain by having successfully survived many rough experiences. Fariba expressed it this way:

> Fariba: The advantage with the life I have lived is that I have learned a lot. Many difficulties. I have learnt what it means to have sick parents, what it means to be in danger, and what it means to not have freedom.[33]

She sees herself as a stronger, more mature person than what she would have been had she not moved, and than her peers who have not had to struggle as much as her. This makes her feel weak sometimes, but mostly strong and confident, so that she can challenge both teachers and parents if necessary.

Isabel responded this way to the direct question of qualities she has gotten due to her experiences:

> Isabel: I am more secure about myself. I became stronger, and know what I want to do and what I don't want to do. The strength to do things that I was so afraid to do before.

She explained that coming to NYC pushed her to do more than she thought she could do.

Being open-minded and having increased understanding and knowledge of the world also seem to be beneficial characteristics from the TCK profile that most of them have in common and

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[32] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

[33] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

appreciate. Katya shared the following thoughts on what her strengths are related to her multicultural background:

> Katya: I don't know – it might be the way I behave. I do find it easier to accept people from different backgrounds. I do. I kind of think that I'm kind of not very racist, since I come from another country myself.
>
> Researcher: Accept – what do you mean by that?
>
> Katya: Become friends with them and kind of – I don't know – be kind to them instead of judging them. Because of who they are. So for instance – Russia and Georgia have had many problems and stuff, so if someone comes from Georgia I won't judge that person, since I live in Norway and – even if I still have my Russian background, I do realize that it is easier for me to do it here than in Russia, no here in Norway, because in Russia people would've judged that person, right? People around me don't do that, and so I feel like when I go to Russia, if someone from Georgia comes, I won't judge that person in the same way since I've seen such a multicultural environment here in Norway.[34]

There is a debate in academic circles as to whether or not it is possible for people to understand those who do not share common cultural categories (Said 1991, Alred et.al. 2003). The fact that my participants hold that they have increased understanding for people as a result of their cross-cultural moves is not in itself an argument that cross-cultural understanding is possible. However, if one takes intercultural understanding to mean "that we can reconstruct the context of the foreign, take the others' perspective and see things through their eyes" (Bredella 2003:39), I would contend that Katya's reasoning is an illustration of how having met people from different cultures can lead to flexibility and acceptance of other ways of thinking, and thus that it is possible.

Adaptability, the ability to blend in, observation skills, the ability to move swiftly between cultures, as well as mediation or bridge-building skills are also common cross-cultural skills between them. Exemplifying these skills is difficult, since they did not necessarily answer question six directly, as I have shown. One example of adaptability was given in section 5.2.1, and examples of bridge-building will be discussed in section 5.2.8. For further examples, see the individual profiles.

5.2.6 Additions to the TCK Profile

Some challenges and assets that were not directly related to the TCK profile were shared. When they compare societies and cultural values and expressions – which most of them do easily, thus displaying cultural awareness, many of them seem to value freedom, both in terms of freedom from persecution and the freedom to choose, but miss the lack of sense of community in their

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[34] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

new countries. One tells of how difficult it was when her mother got sick and everybody was busy with work and school, and nobody was home to take care of her, like there would have been where they came from. Another appreciates the freedom to make independent choices, both because of the legal age of adulthood of Norway being 18 and because having a job and making money provides more of that freedom.

Many of them talk about the value of respect and having many responsibilities as something that set them apart from and make them feel more mature than their native peers. One girl shares this regarding responsibilities:

> I feel that of all the friends I've been with I'm more mature. Those who are born in Norway and raised here and are my age, I think I can be like a counselor for them, I'm more mature than them since I've experienced more since I was little. As a ten-year-old in X I could clean, cook, do lots of chores, but in Norway they could hardly tidy their own room, they're shocked in the kitchen and stuff, I cook like Mom. Am really good. They say: "How can you do that?" They're shocked, right. I feel like I'm more mature than them.[35]

In light of Hofstede's model of individualistic and collectivistic societies (in Berry 2002), these characteristics are often linked. Generally speaking, the goals of socialization in a collectivistic society are to teach the child to live in consideration of the community, with the benefits of a supportive community and the responsibilities of keeping the family's reputation and duties through respect and obedience. The goal of socialization in an individualistic society is considered to be the autonomy of the individual, with the benefits of individual freedom and the responsibilities to maximizing one's potentials. Although there are great variations within one country, one could argue that many of the participants came from collectivistic societies to the more individualistic ones of Oslo and NYC, and that this is becoming apparent in the findings that are different from the TCK profile.

FLEXid operates with Hofstede's models, using it to explain some differences that many refugees and immigrants to Norway experience. The fact that so many of the participants in both Oslo and NYC experienced these characteristics suggest that it might be a valuable model to continue to use to explain general cultural differences between the societies that they come from and the once they have moved to.

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[35] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

5.2.7 Exceptions from the TCK Profile

What are some elements from the TCK profile that did not appear? In fact, all of the elements were apparent in at least one of the interviews, but there were a few factors that did not come up very often. These were painful sense of reality and ignorance of the passport culture as negative elements, the paralyzing effect of not participating at all rather than revealing their cultural incompetence, and restlessness.

Rootlessness in the sense that one does not feel connected to places is a factor that might distinguish TCKs from CCKs. This is because TCKs usually go back to their passport country, while CCKs often have changed their passports to their new country, indicating that they will not go back. According to the TCK Profile, the sense of rootlessness often surfaces when moving back to where "home" is supposed to be, only to feel like an outsider there too. David, who considers moving back to Korea, has not had this experience yet, but is optimistic. Based on his visit to Korea he thinks that he might feel more at home there since he identifies more closely with them.

> David: Well, when I walk around [in NYC], I have to be aware of myself, I have to be aware of what's around, who's around, what kind of people are around, but in Korea I feel that everybody is like me. But still I found myself a little bit different, cause in Korea – uh, well, I was more of a quieter person there than almost everybody.

He did get a taste of feeling like a foreigner in his country of origin too, making him observe more than he participated; "Yeah, I just watched". He applied his skills of observation in getting a sense of how things worked, which is the strategy of "the Wallflower" (see section 2.3.3).

However, it is beyond the scope of this study to draw any conclusions regarding what moving back might do to a person's sense of identity and belonging, since the participants have been interviewed while living in their host societies, not having faced the challenges of returning to live in their country of origin. It could be a reason why my participants did not express any strong sense of rootlessness, however. I will get back to feelings of belonging in section 5.3.2.

Restlessness was also a characteristic from the TCK profile that I did not see in many of the participants. Only one participant expressed a strong will to move back to the country of origin. All the others wanted either to stay in their new country, get a job that allowed them to move back and forth between the country of origin and their new country, or one that allowed them to move around to different countries. It is debatable whether this last group exhibits signs of restlessness in the negative sense that can lead to avoiding conflict and making decisions, such as Pollock & Van Reken (2009) warn against, or just mere adventurousness. One participant in

particular exemplifies this. First we talk about what the future plans are, which are "all over the place".

> Researcher: Do you think you're all over the place because of your personality, or because of your age, or because of your multicultural background, or – what do you think?
>
> Um – I think it's my personality a bit, because I don't like things that sound really hard, and like "this is what you're set to do". Like career, I hate that word. You know when you say you're in a relationship with someone – I don't like that word either. You're just so – stuck. This is who you're supposed to be with, that's it. Career is the same thing, this is your job for the rest of your life. Settling down in a country, this is where you're supposed to stay. I don't like that. That's why I'm so all over the place. I want to find a job that's free flowing. I don't have to be stuck on one thing. I could do different things if I wanted to. But it's hard, so I'm all over the place with that. I don't know (ha ha).

While it is clear that this participant does not want to live a traditional life with a job, spouse, and a house with white picket fence in the suburbs, it is not possible to "diagnose" the person in the restless category of the TCK profile. What moving back to one's country of origin might do to the sense of restlessness and rootlessness would be interesting factors to study further for possible differences between the traditional TCKs and the expanded concept of CCKs.

Finally, some of the characteristics were so difficult to discern from this type of interview that they have been left out. These were whether or not they were more or less prejudiced than others – although many of them refused to stereotype; uneven maturity – though several displayed early maturity; and the issue of unresolved grief – which could be suspected in avoidance strategies by some. Since researching these characteristics would involve a more psychological type of study it is beyond the scope of my qualifications, since I am an educator and not a therapist.

5.2.8 Awareness

One of the interview questions was "How do you think that Norway/America can be a better society because you're here?" I wanted to find out whether or not they had a conscious awareness of how their special experiences may contribute positively to their new country, since this is considered part of what constitutes multicultural competence, as well as empowering. Their answers varied largely, from things along the line of "I'm nice" to "Nothing" to more specific answers such as:

> If I become a policeman, I know how Xn think, what they might do, right. So it'll be easier for me – if they doubt a Xn, then I know how to "catch" him. I understand the language, know what he thinks, so I can help Norwegians.

However, when I ask if he thinks his knowledge might be valued among Norwegians, he says:

I don't know, I've never really talked about it before[36].

Some of them actively use the multicultural competence in bridge-building, while others do not talk about it or do not seem aware that they do. Below is an example of someone who uses his expanded world knowledge and experience to help people understand each other. This information was not shared until asked about possible contribution to society by being multicultural:

> Open up the eyes of people. I do do that. When I see somebody, if one of my friends makes a comment that is very close-minded, setting them straight – this is how it is. And sometimes people get annoyed with that, while I think that they need to be told that people are generally close-minded and if you only see things your way, then you can never understand why people are like who they are. So I think that me being here, I can tell people that I have experiences from both ends of the rope, and I can tell you that this is how it is on this end, and this is how it is on this end, you have to put both ends of perspectives before you actually say or do something.

This is a clear example of someone who metaphorically builds bridges between people to ensure proper communication and understanding, and who knows it.

This skill was apparent in many of the interviews, although few of them seemed aware of it like this one was. What does this apparent lack of awareness of themselves and how their experiences had affected them indicate? One explanation may be that they were immature. In Western psychology, maturity is associated with mindfulness or being able to reflect on abstract matters (Berry 2002). My spontaneous interpretation of concrete answers, such as technology being a benefit, was therefore that this person was a typical teenager with a focus on the superficial levels of culture and not on the deeper levels (see figure 2.1). However, being in the field of multicultural education and cross-cultural communication, my next thought was that since this is puzzling to me, it may reflect cultural differences that I do not understand. Several of my participants with similar regional backgrounds expressed the same kind of material challenges and advantages; differences in clothing and food were experienced as main problems with having two backgrounds, not liking other food than from their home country, or that requiring a "double" wardrobe was expensive. Should I interpret this to mean that they were being teenagers with a different focus than adults on what matters, and with limited abilities to reflect on their lives, especially since they had not thought of many of the topics before? Or could it be that they shared possible cultural beliefs of a different kind than those originating in Western psychological tradition?

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[36] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

I would like to propose yet another explanation for why my research subjects seemed to be unaware of which benefits they had; that multicultural competence is not a clear part of the *discourse* of the larger society in Norway and the US. Discourse is here understood in Michel Foucault's metaphor of the monument. According to Pihl, the monuments cast light and shadow over the past, present, and the future and influence what we remember and what we forget (Foucault 1995, in Pihl 2002:150). In other words, it is the way society talks about things so that other ways of thinking become invisible and/or subordinate. Thus, the way that reality is being interpreted sets boundaries for how it is possible to act within one discourse, because how we talk about things form our thoughts, and the thoughts influence our discourse, and thereby action. If a person or group thinks or exists outside the discourse, it is very difficult to be heard by the hegemonic, or dominant agents. According to Gullestad, discourse analysts work under the premise that "representations of the world are interpretations and therefore constructions, and that some of these appear as matter-of-fact and natural, and thus hegemonic" (Gullestad 2002:46). Discovering which things are talked about by the dominant group and in what way is therefore an aim of discourse analysts.

This research is in no way representative of a discourse analysis. However, I have had difficulties coming across literature that discusses how children who move cross-culturally are affected in terms of developing skills, and how their experiences can be turned into assets not only for themselves, but for the communities they live in. In Gullestad's (2002) analysis of the discourse on the Norwegian "immigrant debate", this is not a topic, indicating that it is not a part of the public Norwegian discourse. In fact, she claims that the expanded world view that children of immigrants often have acquired from living with diverse value systems is "rarely acknowledged as valuable, neither by the parents or by 'Norwegians'" (Gullestad 2002:250).

In Hauge's (2007) textbook on multicultural education, she discusses how teachers need to develop their competence to be able to teach inclusive education for all, and how being aware of and appealing to the students' background knowledge is important for them to be able to identify with the education they receive. She does not, however, consider how such knowledge may be an asset in dealing with diversity, because growing up with high mobility and diversity is likely to make you more flexible, adaptable, and understanding.

Norwegian Official Report (NOU 2010:7), which represent the most recent and most extensive investigation and analysis of the minority perspective on education in Norway, does not have any emphasis on this perspective either. There is one sentence on how growing up in two cultures

"may be enriching and give stimulus and tolerance" (NOU 2010:7:30), yet that it may cause a divide if the children experience conflict between cultural values. Multicultural competence in this document is mainly referring to what teachers need in order to meet the needs of children of minorities, not how these children may be equipped to successfully deal with their needs themselves.

Although the literature on immigration is vast in the United States, I have had similar difficulties finding research that includes the positive qualities and agency of children who move cross-culturally to the discourse on immigration. There are lots of studies on adults who move (Foner 2005, Waldinger 2001, Glazer & Moynihan 1963), on immigrant children (Rumbaut & Portes 2001, Banks 2009, Yoshikawa & Way 2008), and on factors that influence acculturation (Berry et.al.2002, Gudykunst 2005), including for immigrant children (Lee & Zhou 2004, Song 2010). However, few directly address the understanding and experiences of the lives of children who move during primary socialization, and how this affects their multicultural competence.

Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) represent what I have found to be an exception. They point out that although the structural context of the lives of immigrant children is important in order to understand their situation, "their own agency is often neglected" (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001:118). In fact, they have taken this lack of research in the field seriously and conducted an award-winning interdisciplinary study on the adaptation of newly-arrived immigrant students on both coasts of the United States (Suárez-Orozco et.al. 2008).

Furthermore, they explicitly claim that children with such experiences are potentially best equipped to be successful global citizens (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001:118). Insofar as immigrant youth successfully manage their multiple cultural contexts, they can be useful assets in helping others handle their lives in today's globalized and multicultural societies, since: "For them, transcultural communication, understanding, empathy, and collaboration are no longer abstract ideals; they are part of day-to-day life" (Suárez-Orozco et.al. 2008:372). This corresponds with the findings of my study.

The point to be made is that if something is not part of the dominant discourse of a society, neither by academia, politicians, nor teachers, it is not so strange that the immigrant youth themselves lack words to talk about it, even if it is part of their experience. As it happens, a common reaction among TCKs upon reading Pollock and Van Reken (2009) or parallel material, is that they finally get words to express their experiences (www.tckid.com).

One of the objects of the FLEXid program is to raise awareness among the participants about common multicultural competences that many of them naturally have. The fact that few of my interviewees had much awareness of how their multicultural experiences had shaped their lives emphasizes the need for such a program. Having a clear sense of ones' qualities is empowering, so reflection is valuable in order to take charge of and make the most of ones' potential. This is beautifully portrayed in the following quote by one of the participants:

> The advantages? I think this journey made me an open-minded person. It made my views – it made me grow, and find more – well, I don't know if I can say that I found more myself, since I'm actually more confused than before (both laugh), but it made me think more about this issue where I'm from, which I think is very important in life. Because I think as soon as you find who you are and what your place in this world is, I don't think there would be anything else that can come into your way or make you doubt about yourself.

Thus, an experience of moving across cultures has the potential of giving cross-cultural skills and lead to an empowering feeling of becoming an integrated self. Struggling intuitively with nameless challenges may take away the appreciation of the benefits of their experiences. Therefore, awareness is an important competence, but which many of them did not seem to have.

To summarize, the participants of my study shared many of the challenges and assets from the TCK profile, such as loss of important relationships and struggling to fit in as opposed to adaptability, becoming open-minded, and gaining an inner sense of strength as a result of the challenges of moving. However, none of the interviews represented a complete parallel to the profile. Also, a striking finding was the lack of explicitness about especially the benefits of their multicultural experiences, which suggests a general lack of awareness of their multicultural competence.

5.3 Identity issues

In this chapter, how these young immigrants and refugees see themselves in terms of identity issues will be explored. When exploring if people who have moved cross-culturally as children have certain aspects of identity in common, despite variables such as place of birth, types of family structure and relations, reasons for moving, number of moves, and current place of residence, the definition of identity needs to be relatively open. It is the participants' understanding that is of interest, and in order to make sense of and describe it in their subjective viewpoint, a variety of perspectives on identity are needed (see discussion in section 2.2.2 on Baumeister 1986, Mead 1934, Tajfel 1978, Barth 1994, Eriksen 2002, Collier & Thomas 1988). In the following, I will discuss how my participants see themselves in the context of their

multicultural experiences; what kind of identity is salient to them, how is it expressed, and most importantly, do they share a sense of belonging to others with similar experiences?

Three of the interview questions were specifically designed to shed light on this:

1. If people ask you where you are from, what do you say?
2. Where would you say you belong?
3. What do you wish you could answer when asked where you are from?

The first section examines their immediate answers to question one and how they express themselves related to national origin as well as how important it is to them. The next section goes in depth with questions two and three to explore various facets of their identity.

5.3.1   Factors in defining national identity

Question one is in my experience often asked as an introductory question to strangers in both the US and Norway, meant to be a harmless icebreaker. However, having been born and raised in a different country than where I have my citizenship and looking very different from the locals, my understanding is that this is far from a simple question. In fact, it often triggers mixed feelings in me, making me wonder where I truly belong and where "home" is – or if it even exists as a geographical place. My ascribed national identity and my personal feelings of belonging are at a mismatch. Therefore, I wanted to find out if these young immigrants and refugees shared some of my classic TCK identity confusion by probing into this topic in different ways.

Initially, five of the interviewees from Oslo and four from New York City responded matter-of-factly that they are from the country where they were born. At a surface level this would imply that place of birth is a strong factor in national identification, and also that it is not as complicated a question as expected. Interestingly, two from Oslo gave a more complex answer than where they were born, indicating that defining their national identity was not so uncomplicated.

> I say I'm from X, and live in Norway.
>
> Researcher: Is it an easy question to answer?
>
> Kind of, yes. I can't say that I'm Norwegian, because I'm not. But I can say that I'm from X and live in Norway. So it's not too hard, because when we're living in Norway, we're sort of Norwegian. So it's not so hard[37].

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[37] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

This young woman has a way of including Norway in where she is from, even though people seem to be asking for her origins, thus signaling that where she currently lives has a significant impact on her national identity.

To the second question "where do you feel like you belong?" she first says country of birth, but when confronted with contradictions from something said earlier, the complexity shows even better:

> Mostly Norway. I don't really know. I live in Norway. I don't want to move back to X and live there; I would only visit. I feel like Norway is my home country, but I also feel like X is a part of me. It's a little hard, I don't know. I feel that I'm mostly from Norway, I think[38].

She defines her "home" mostly by where she currently lives, while still having a part of who she is in another geographical place. When connecting feelings of belonging to the matter of where she is born, she feels confused by this duality, even though she originally said that the question was not so hard.

The second participant form Norway with a more complex answer right from the start, gives an alternative reason for why place of birth is not the only factor in his national identity. He says he has to say his country of origin, but does not want to, since they were mistreated there and so he has lost pride in the country. He wishes he could say Norway instead, since he has not seen any injustice there. I did not ask him why he does not feel free just to say Norway, which would have been interesting. This young man seems to think that the question of where you come from requires an answer that has to do with origins, since he names the country of birth despite not wanting to. However, his wish to answer differently indicates that what people ask for and the answer he has to give are at conflict, thus suggesting that his national identity is not accurately expressed by the common question of where you are from. In his case, having lost pride in the values of the country of origin seems to play a major part in his identification with a group of people. Since he does not see a reflection of something that is important to him in the values of his parents' people, he distances himself from that group and identifies with Norwegians instead, who do mirror these values. At the same time, it is not only up to him to decide that he is Norwegian, possibly since national identity is often an ascribed identity (Eriksen 2010), something that will be dealt with further in section 5.4.2.

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[38] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

Four of the interviewees in NYC and one in Oslo had complicating factors related to their places of birth so that the question of where they say they are from could not be answered so straight forwardly.

> Isabel: I always say I was born in Argentina, but I grew up in Ecuador.
>
> Researcher: So you give them the long explanation?
>
> Isabel: Yeah. Well, sometimes if I feel lazy, I say I'm from Ecuador. Or that I'm from Argentina. It doesn't matter, the first thing that comes to my mind.

In this case, having been born in another country than where being raised is one such complicating factor, yet not causing much identity confusion. Another participant shared this:

> Amadu: Usually I would say without thinking Africa, and then –
>
> Researcher: Just Africa as a general – why?
>
> Amadu: (Ha ha) Yeah. I don't know, people don't think of Africa as a continent, so I just say Africa. And then certain people that would really know would say "what country in Africa?" and I say, "Sierra Leone, but I grew up in Liberia". Yeah, that's where I say I'm from.
>
> Researcher: Is it a complicated question for you? How do you feel about getting that question?
>
> Amadu: I've explained it so much, that it doesn't really matter to me. Where are you from? I was born in Sierra Leone, but grew up in Liberia.

Amadu shared the complicating factor of having moved from the country of birth while still a baby, then growing up in another country before arriving in the United States. In addition, the lack of geographic knowledge he experienced among Americans caused the answer initially to be more general and situational. However, neither of them appeared to put much importance to this question, indicating that they did not suffer from any uncertainty of national identity due to this.

Similarly, Ahmed, who was born in the US, but who has moved around most of his life, also has some additional complicating factors, yet seems to answer the question with ease.

> Ahmed: I just tell them I'm Nigerian. Because people, when they look at me, they don't think I'm Nigerian.
>
> Researcher: What do they think?
>
> Ahmed: They think I'm from here. I mean, I am from here, because I was born here, but still my background is Nigerian, even though I have a little German in me.

His looks signal that he is American, which he later explains has to do with how he dresses. He further explains that his relatives are mainly from Nigeria, and that he did not like living in Germany. He also thinks that it is important for all Americans to know where they emigrated

from, and that it is something that Americans have in common, so it is a sign of ignorance if they do not know.

> Ahmed: Everybody over here knows that they're not from America. Everybody knows that, so it would be so stupid if you say, "I'm from America." It's stupid, cause everybody knows you're not from America; your parents are not from America. Even if your parents are from America, your grandmother's not from America. Nobody is, no black person is. So "where are you from?" If you can't tell people, I think that person is stupid.

This aspect of identity as origin related to America as an immigrant nation is an issue that surfaced in many of the NYC interviews, and something I will get back to in section 5.4.1. First, staying on the topic of where you are from when the answer cannot be so clear cut, this is how it unfolded in the interview with Sadia, who was born in Norway, but who moved back to the parents' country of origin to live, and then came back to Norway again:

> Sadia: I say I'm from Norway, since I was born here, and my parents are from Pakistan. We have discussions about it at school and stuff.
>
> Researcher: You do?
>
> Sadia: Actually, yes. Two of my friends and I think we are from Norway, since we were born here. And in Pakistan we're not Pakistani and they say we're from abroad, "they come from Norway". That's the way it is. My opinion is that I come from Norway, I have some issues [like problems with the Norwegian language], but I don't see myself as a Pakistani. Because I live here in Norway and because, yes, for my future plans I will, they will be acted out here. I have no plans to return to Pakistan to live or anything, so.
>
> Researcher: This tells me that the question is not so easy to answer?
>
> Sadia: Yes, that's true, since it's not enough to say: "I'm from Norway." They expect more. So [even if] I would say: "I'm Norwegian," people expect more. It's the skin that describes, at least when I introduced myself in my class last year. "Yes, where are you from?" Right before I was going to let my best friend have her turn, [I was asked again]: "But where are you from?" "Well, Pakistan." So that's how it is, the Pakistani is kind of attached to you. I can say that my parents are from Pakistan, they know a lot more than me, but I live here. That's all I can say about it[39].

This example may illustrate that in Norway, where you are from is not only understood as place of birth, but about ancestry as well as looks. How she felt on the inside and how people perceived her did not correspond (= Adopted as in figure 2.2), and so she was given an ascribed national identity that she did not ask for. It also exemplifies that if it were up to this young person, where one currently lives and intends to go on living also play a role in defining where one is from.

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[39] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

One participant in particular struggled a lot with what she describes as confused identity related to where she was from. Fariba grew up in Germany to refugee parents from Iran, and then moved to NYC four years ago. She has different answers to the question of where she is from, depending on who asks and where she lives.

> Fariba: [In Germany] I would say I'm from Iran. And the thing is – that's also the interesting part, because in Germany it was easy for me to say I was from Iran, because – I couldn't say that I'm from Germany, because I didn't really feel that I'm part of – not part of – yeah, you could say that, I'm not really German. And I also think it's because they always say that immigrants, they are different from us – I mean they don't say it, but this thing about for example the work stuff, and what I just told you[40]. So therefore I think that's the reason why I cannot say I'm German. And also the reason why I say I'm Iranian is because my parents really raised me like an Iranian culture.

While living in Germany, which up till then she had done her entire life, she would not name her own country of birth, but her parents' as her place of origin. This was both because of how she had been raised by Iranian cultural values, and because of how she felt excluded from German society. When being asked the same question in the US, her answer was this:

> Fariba: This again depends on the situation – how can I give you an example? Sometimes I say I'm Iranian, and sometimes I say I'm German. If they only say, "where are you from?" then I say Iran, but if they say "oh, really, how is it there?" then I add, "well, actually, my parents are Iranian, myself I was born and grew up in Germany" – I go deeper. That's my sentence, "my parents are Iranian, but I was born and grew up in Germany", that's what I say. And then when they come back to the question "where do

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[40] It's a different kind of racism there than here. Like here it's more – I don't know – blacks and whites, but over there it's Germany and everybody from abroad – I don't know if I can say that. It's kind of different, but when I look at it, it's kind of the same, I don't know. But I would think that's racism, because I mean, if you're born there, you have the same (illegible), why should they not give you a chance [to work], although you're fully qualified? I mean, that's something that's totally –

Researcher: Why don't they, do you think?

Why don't they -?

Researcher: Give you a chance. What is it about you not being German that makes them –

Makes them think -? Because of my hair color, it's darker, maybe –

Researcher: What's wrong with your hair color?

It's dark – black.

Researcher: Yeah, so?

It's because most of them have more of a blond or brown hair color, and their skin is also lighter, and –

Researcher: So if you dyed your hair, would that -?

Would that make a difference? I would still look – they would still notice that I'm an immigrant, so – it's like they see you, and they make a first impression of you, and they can tell if you're form immigrant parents. You know they would still ask you even if you speak fluent German, "oh, so where are you from?" Even if you're from Germany. You would actually say Germany, because I was born and grew up there. But they would say "no, no! Where are your parents from?" They would still ask that.

you think you're from?" I'm basically kind of stuck. I don't have an answer to that; I'm looking for an answer.

This young woman is an example of how complicated this simple conversational question may be to a person with a multicultural background, and could easily serve as an example in any book on TCKs. She said that she only started really getting confused with the move to the US:

> Fariba: But I do sometimes feel that I should not have moved, because maybe I wouldn't have had this identity issue if I did not move. Maybe I could still say, "I'm Iranian". But since I came here all these issues and questions came up in my head. Who I really am and stuff.

> Researcher: So you didn't really think about that in Germany?

> Fariba: Who I am? No, that was top clear, I was Iranian, because my parents are Iranian.

> Researcher: So it became clearer to you that you're German too when you moved away?

> Fariba: Yes, yes it did, definitely. Actually I became a little more Germanized here, I realized that I'm actually more German than I think, especially in the World Cup 2010 when Germany got 3rd place, me and my American friends went to cheer at these open public TV stations, and I was always cheering for Germany. I was like "oh my god, back in Germany I did not cheer for Germany!"

Thus, having moved cross-culturally is an important factor in making her question her national identity. In addition, country of birth, culture of primary and place of secondary socialization, current place of residence, as well as how society accepts her all play a part in forming – or confusing – this person's changing sense of national identity.

Perhaps these examples could indicate that the question of where you are from holds a different meaning in the US than in Norway? In the US the question could simply be asking for the origins, since most people have an immigrant background at some point, like Ahmed pointed out, yet not implying that in having different origins, one is not an American. In Norway, however, the question could have a greater implication of making you less of a Norwegian, since Norwegian national identity is traditionally based in the idea of ancestry, similar to Germany (Smehaugen 2004). It is also interesting how this question of where you are from seems to indicate that they feel that they are expected to name only one country of origin. This might be a remnant of the political system of the nation state as contingent on loyalty to one nation in order to work, and not reflecting the global changes in migration and citizenship regulations. Further research into this would be necessary to better found such indications.

Finally, the English language is a significant factor in one young woman's identification with a national group. She said that she started calling herself by a hyphen-identity when her English

improved. However, emotionally, speaking English makes her recognize herself less than when speaking her mother tongue:

> When I speak in English I don't feel the same feeling that, like a true Xn inside, and when I speak X, I can be a little bit – I don't know – brighter. When I speak in English I think I become a little dull [as a] person.

So far I have shown how other factors than country of birth are important in the lives of my participants in defining their national identity, although how much emphasis they put on such an identity and how confusing their multinational identity is varies. Such factors are language, expectations and attitudes of the dominant society, physical appearances, the values from their primary and secondary socialization, pride or lack thereof in the relevant countries, having moved cross-culturally, and current place of residence.

5.3.2 Feelings of belonging

A main objective of this thesis is to consider whether Third Culture Kid identity theory is applicable to Cross-Cultural Kids in general. The notion is that constantly moving across and between cultural borders as children influence identity development in ways that are similar regardless of where you move to and from, how long the move is for, and reasons for moving. This experience is believed generally to give them a sense of belonging to other people with similar experiences, and not mainly with a geographic place. Does this hold true for the participants of my study?

First of all, the way that a person sees him- or herself may be different from how a researcher understands their stories. TCK theory gives an outsider's explanation of a phenomenon, and it would be surprising if this directly corresponded with the participants' insider view. Also, having talked to the participants individually and not together, it is difficult to determine whether or not they have a special connection to each other. However, this analysis intends to make sense of how the individual participants make sense of their stories and thereby forming an understanding from the researcher's point of view.

The first example is taken from Oslo, in which Katya expresses her thoughts on multicultural identity and feelings of belonging.

> Researcher: If people ask where you are from, what do you answer?
> Katya: I say I come from Russia.
> Researcher: You do?
> Katya: Uhu.

Researcher: Do you ever wish that you could answer differently?

Katya: No, I don't. I don't think it's a problem for me to be Russian. Of course sometimes I feel like it would've been easier to be born in Norway, and I just wouldn't have had to adapt to the culture and all that. But I still feel that I wouldn't want to be anything but Russian. Because for instance I have the issue of citizenship, that I might have to choose between the two –

Researcher: You have both?

Katya: No, I just have the Russian one. You can get it after three years, I think … But Mom didn't apply, because she wanted to wait, and now they have changed the laws, so that if we apply now, we might have to choose. And I don't know what to choose. Because I kind of don't want to give up the Russian one, since I feel like I have given up so much already; I don't live with my family, and I don't use Russian so much, and I don't have any Russian friends here in Norway, since there are hardly anyone here[41].

This girl initially starts out by answering where she is from in an uncomplicated manner, tied to where she is born. Right underneath the surface some identity issues appear, having to do with feelings of belonging and loyalty. Her loyalty tips in favor of her country of origin, because she feels that she has sacrificed so much already, so that "I kind of feel like I'm trying to cling to the background that I have.[42]" She also says that constantly moving between the two countries, both by visiting and by living with the mix on a regular basis, is complicating her feelings of belonging:

Katya: It does get increasingly difficult, because I'm getting very attached to Norwegian culture, since I'm kind of part of it. But when I'm in Russia I feel – the first year [I went back] I felt like I was Russian and the second – when I came to Russia the second time I felt like I was more Norwegian than Russian, and that people kind of looked at me as if I was a foreigner – in Russia. That was very weird, and when I was there last year, many people told me that I had started developing an accent and that I couldn't speak Russian properly and stuff[43].

However, she says she does not really think about these issues, since they are not problematic to her, having friends from all over, rarely being even asked the question where she is from. Also, her physical traits may be mistaken for Norwegian, and her accent does not reveal that she is from abroad. She says maybe her mother kind of understands what it is like to be multicultural, but no peers understand her fully. When asked if this is because she has moved, she says it might be part of it, but that she is a complicated person, "so then it sort of turns out like that[44]". Also, even though she does feel national loyalty too, in the way she says many Norwegians she

[41] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

[42] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

[43] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

[44] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

has met do, she says that her loyalty towards her religion is stronger than to the nation. This is because she strongly believes in it and lets it guide her moral choices more than the traditions of her birth country do. These factors advocate the interpretation that her multicultural identity is not very salient for her. Perhaps this is why the question of where she is from does not feel like a complicated question to her, although it is obviously more complex than what she claims it to be, revealing multifaceted loyalties and a sense of belonging to more places than just one.

In fact, six of the participants in Oslo and five in NYC clearly displayed mixed feelings of belonging. The ones in Oslo said that they belonged to both countries that they had lived in, such as the Katya above, whereas those in NYC were reluctant to define a country as a place of belonging. A quote from Oslo that illustrates this is:

> I belong to both countries. I was born in X, and I live here, so Norway is my second country. So I belong to both now[45].

This same person also says that although she thinks that she is different from most people she knows except for her siblings, she does not emphasize it much. Rather, she claims that people are just people, and that she can get along with anyone. Thus, although she does not explicitly say that she belongs to others who share his experience, I would argue that she shares feelings of mixed belonging, such as TCK theory holds is common for children who move cross-culturally.

One participant explained why he would have chosen to move back to his country of origin if he could magically remove the war from history:

> It's my country. You were born in Japan, right? But you know how it is; you're standing in between. You cannot say, but I was born in X, and raised in X, but I came to Norway – Norway gave me something good. So I can say I'm kind of in between. I can't say I choose X because I grew up there, since it's a bad environment there. I came to Norway because, like to continue my life in a good environment.[46]

Here he starts out by saying that he would move back, and then seems to think that reality makes it hard to do, since Norway is a part of him, and since war has ruined his country, thus revealing feelings of belonging to both countries.

Interestingly, half of the NYC sample did say that they did not belong to any specific country, thus holding an understanding of belonging that parallels TCK theory.

Researcher: Do you have a place that you would say you belong?

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[45] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

[46] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

Earth. I mean, we're humans over all. Whatever nationality, race, cultural background, you're human. And if you see how humans are behaving these days, it's pretty ridiculous, how divided we are, and how much ignorance we have in our lives. And we don't take a look at that, that we're humans overall.

This interviewee from NYC also says: "I belong nowhere and everywhere." This is a typical TCK-answer, where the complexity of the person's background makes it difficult to define belonging to a specific group. Rather, this person belongs to people in general. Another NYC immigrant shares this kind of answer to the same question:

I would say that – if there was a group that didn't care about culture or race – I think I would say that I belong there.

This young immigrant seems to relate better to other people who do not classify themselves according to racial or ethnic groups, which is reflected in the choice of friends – a diverse group of people, ethnically speaking. Another NYC participant has a similar, yet slightly different take on the same question:

I don't feel – I want to dedicate my life to traveling. I don't see myself staying in one place. It's going to be hard for me, cause I don't see myself staying here forever, I don't see myself in X forever, I don't see myself anywhere, I just see myself amongst people. You understand what I mean, right?

This last question directed at me can be an indication that I have been too clear about what my ideas are, so that the participant answers the way he thinks he is expected to. It may also suggest that he relates to me as a person with shared experiences, which is what TCK theory holds to be true for CCKs as well.

Even though not everyone parallel the TCK profile this closely, other participants share the feeling that it is difficult to fully belong to one country or the other.

Researcher: So where is your loyalty then?

That's a good question. I think it's not more to the country, but rather maybe to the culture? Of my parents. … Right now. I <u>think</u>. I think that's where my loyalty belongs. But which country I would be loyal to, I couldn't really say, because there are also a lot of flaws in the American government too. And also the same for X, of course, … so – I pick up the advantages of the countries and basically put them together and make them a new country for myself.

This idea of being able to pick and choose between the various cultures that they know, and compose their own new culture, is shared by several of the participants, and generally regarded as a benefit to their experience, as presented in section 5.2.5.

What this different expression of belonging to people rather than places between Oslo and NYC indicates is not clear to me, though an interesting finding. As presented in section 2.3.5, a TCK

and thereby CCK is considered to share feelings of belonging to people with similar experiences rather than to one country or the other. The fact that none of the participants in Norway explicitly expressed this notion could of course mean that CCK theory does not apply there. However, it may also be due to lack of words to express how they feel, experiences of cross-pressure, as well as how it is talked about within educational contexts. Cross-pressure and educational context will be dealt with in more depth in section 5.4.3 and 5.4.4.

Thus, there is no conclusive indication of a personal understanding of CCK or multicultural identity. However, more than half of the participants in both Oslo and NYC clearly displayed mixed feelings of belonging in line with TCK theory, although there are variations in how they specifically define themselves in terms of origin, feelings of belonging, and identity and loyalty confusion.

5.3.3 Other group identities

Those participants who did not seem to have mixed feelings of belonging also varied individually in reasons for this. One of them is the young refugee on p.91 who distances himself from the other countries he has lived in, because of the way he was treated there, thus only feeling that he belongs in Norway. Two of the others came relatively recently to the US, one of them explaining that:

> But I don't feel American; I came here only [a few] years ago, why should I say I'm American? I don't say that.

All four who feel like they belong in their home country display strong ties to their home countries through family, relatives, friends, and religious or cultural values. See for instance the portraits of Ajanta in Oslo and Taeja in NYC.

Although a majority of the interviewees had mixed feelings of belonging, only Ajanta was clear about wanting to move back to the country of origin. This is a person who moved for the first time when coming to Norway at 15, who has strong family and religious ties, and who has made just one close friend since coming, one who is also from her country of origin. All she wants is to go back and be a normal girl, although she thinks it might be hard now that she has lived abroad.

5.3.4 Salience of identity vs. other issues

Taeja showed a clear national identity related to her country of origin, yet did not want to move back.

Taeja: I don't think so, because why would we lose the chance once we get it? You know in my country, so many people are trying to come here, but they're not getting it. Why would you miss it once you get it? That's how I feel. It's a good opportunity, you know.

This surprised me, since I expected that when the feelings of belonging were so strongly connected to country, family, and culture as in her case, she would also want to fill that void. However, I found that most of the participants were willing and able to sacrifice and live with a lot in order to secure such needs as food, housing, health, safety, opportunities for education and jobs, as well as freedom. This could mean that identity issues are less important than other issues. However, my preoccupation with identity issues could also mean that as a Western scholar I have the luxury of dealing with such issues in a way that most of my participant cannot, thereby making my research project elitist.

The philosopher Charles Taylor (1994) argues that there is a different understanding of identity in traditional and modern societies. In hierarchical societies, the notion of identity generally has to do with social position, i.e. knowing one's collective identity. In individualized societies, identity has to do with authenticity, i.e. discovering one's unique identity. Identity issues in the former are related to honor by filling one's social position in a respectable manner, whereas in the latter it is related to the dignity and value of each human being. If a person comes from a country where identity has to do with social position, one could expect that how one behaves in relation to the social group is more salient than finding out who one really is and pursuing an authentic self.

While it is not essential to this thesis to find out why multicultural identity issues are not salient to the participants, since identity can be situational, thus constantly changing, Taylor's essay may add an interesting perspective to Western TCK theory. TCK theory holds that feeling different can cause identity confusion, and that discovering others who share the same cross-cultural lifestyle may give a sense of belonging that can give stability to an individual. When it is more important to find one's position in society in order to respectably fill a role than to discover one's authentic way of being, it is no wonder that some of my participants seek the same group identity that their significant others' hold. What may seem like a sacrifice to someone with individualistic values, may not feel like that to those who value the well being of the community more.

Alternatively, although adolescence takes different forms in different cultural settings, depending on the needs and demands of each society, a common trait of being an adolescent is being in

transition, and thus focusing on the future (Bradford Brown et.al. 2002, Vestel & Øya 2007). This could also explain why who one is in the present might feel less important than who one is becoming, thus making it easier to live with sacrifice in the hope of a better future.

To summarize, other factors than country of birth are important in the lives of my participants in defining their national identity, although how much emphasis they put on such an identity and how confusing their multinational identity is varies. Many participants also clearly displayed mixed feelings of belonging in line with TCK theory, although there are variations in how they specifically define themselves in terms of origin, feelings of belonging, identity and loyalty confusion, as well as other group identities. Finally, most of the participants were willing and able to sacrifice and live with a lot in order to secure such needs as food, housing, health, and safety, opportunities for education and jobs, as well as freedom, thus suggesting that Western preoccupation with the search for the authentic self may not be as important to the rest of the world.

5.4   Meeting with new society

In order to investigate how young immigrants see themselves as a result of their multicultural experiences, the participants were also asked questions on how they saw themselves related to peers, parents, school, and larger society. They were asked if they felt different from their peers as well as from the majority in the new country, what kinds of issues they might be negotiating with their parents, how their school includes their background knowledge and experiences, and if they felt accepted by their new countrymen. The underlying assumption is that identity is formed in relation to the surroundings (Mead 1934); therefore it is crucial to look into this dynamic in order to understand these young immigrants' adaptation. Also, since this is a comparative study between two cities in two countries, it is therefore necessary to look specifically at the societies that the participants have moved to.

5.4.1   US as an immigrant nation and feeling accepted

One finding that revealed a clear pattern in NYC was how their accounts reflected that they considered America as an immigrant nation. However, this notion did not necessarily correspond to feeling accepted by and as nationals. Factors such as common values, knowing the language, friendships, and dress code, seemed to be inclusion and exclusion mechanisms that they were concerned with. One interviewee was asked whether or not he considered himself an American, and responded like this:

Are you really asking me that? I'm actually going for my citizenship (ha ha). Yeah, I'm supposed to go for an interview in December but – uh – that would have to be a definition of American. Because American to me is being different. Like, this nation was formed on so many people coming together – well, not coming together, because Native Americans were practically almost wiped out – but with the Irish immigrants and the European immigrant in the early 20th century – that's what America is, that different – you have your own culture, and yes we all have something similar, and yes we have produced this culture, hamburgers and stuff. But that is America, being different. And when you're saying American, to me, you're saying I'm different, I come from somewhere else.

Researcher: So what unites Americans then?

A common goal. You all are different, you have different views and different stuff, but you have a common goal to produce a prosperous nation and be with people who are different, so I really think that's what brings Americans together, that sanctuary – I use that word loosely – that you live in, and I think that's what brings people together.

This young person practically repeats the well-known ideology of America as an immigrant nation (Shelton 2010). Furthermore, the argument was that since the number of different cultural groups is so large in the US, it is easy to find someone who fits with who you are and therefore feel at home. By this line of thinking, acceptance is not contingent on assimilation as conformity, rather to the fact that there are so many who are different, so it is easy to find someone who is similar to you.

Fariba, who was born and raised to Iranian parents in Germany, felt very much at home in the Melting Pot of NYC:

But here at college, I don't feel at all like a foreigner. Not at all. Especially since a lot of people say, "oh, yeah, so what part of America are you from?" Because they really think – although I do have an accent – they really think that I'm American, which is amazing! These little things make you feel more part of here, of New York. And also when you see – I haven't been to a lot of places in the world, but I think New York City is one of the most diverse places on earth. And places like this I really feel at home, because I can identify myself with others, because everybody here is an immigrant, it's like a Melting Pot, they say here. So I don't feel at all that I'm excluded, because – people in the classroom, like me, their parents come from another country, and everybody has a unique experience when they came here. So I can identify myself with here much more than back in Germany.

Again, finding others who share the experience seems to be what makes another of the participants at home, despite the obvious differences between the people form all these different countries. Fariba found friends with Iranian background at college, and this made her happier to live in the US.

Another young NYC immigrant answers in line with the two above when asked what it is like to have the experience of having lived in different countries: "It's just the way America is, you

know." Although there was no further explanation to this statement, I take it to mean that so many Americans share the experience, so it is not a big deal. However, this is not consistent with feeling accepted by all Americans, which became apparent when asked whether multicultural knowledge would be appreciated in a work situation:

> It really depends on the person, right? Let's say the interviewing person is from a foreign country, he would accept me, but let's say the person is from America, if he were born here, I would say he would probably not accept me. It really depends.

To this participant having a shared experience of personally immigrating seems more important than the national ideology of US as an immigrant nation.

This interpretation is further supported by how the participant explains being one person at home and another outside. In the country of origin, people would be interested in studying and talking to each other, whereas people in the US do not care about studying after school, according to this interviewee. Also, he might wear traditional clothes at home, but when going outside, he tries to be like an American by not standing out with appearances and speaking in an American accent, because "they look at me staring." This person seemed to have the strategy of blending in by appearances, while maintaining the values of the country of origin, i.e. the "Hidden Immigrant"[47].

Isabel, who also strongly identifies with the country that she grew up in and lived in most of her life, had the following opinion of what the conversational question of where she was from meant to people as well as to herself:

> Researcher: How do you feel about that question [of where you come from]?
>
> Isabel: I like it. I feel proud of who I am and where I come from. Besides, they always ask me "I hear you have an accent, where are you from?" So I always have to tell them. And they're like "really", and they always ask me like "why did you move here, how long have you been here, did you know English there?" These are questions that they always ask me.
>
> Researcher: Do you ever say that you're American?
>
> Isabel: No – because I'm not (ha ha)!
>
> Researcher: You don't want to be?
>
> Isabel: I don't think I'll ever feel American. Not for now. Maybe in more years, maybe. But I don't think so, not now. I'm so different. I think so differently from American people.

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[47] See figure 2.2 - TCKs/CCKs in Relationship to Surrounding Dominant Culture, p.23.

She is not only proud of her origins, but she is happy to share her background story, something she says she often does, especially with people from work, all of whom have different backgrounds, thus mirroring her. Feeling American is something she does not think will happen, since she thinks she is too different; she does not find a mirror in the social group identity of "the American" that reflects who she is. She says that she does not think that "Americans" like her, so being accepted by them is not important to her. When asked why she thinks they might not like her, she says:

> Isabel: Because, I don't know. It's not that I'm racist but. I don't like certain kind of people, not the race, just the way they act. I don't mind if I look at them or they look at me, if I say hi or they say hi, I just don't care. So I think a lot of people think I'm better than them or something like that. But it's not like that. I just don't like relating to people that – I don't know how to explain – they behave in a different way than I do.

When probing into how she felt different from them, she talked about having a problem with how her American peers did not value themselves by partying, doing drug, and having sex at a very young age. She feels that distancing herself might make them perceive her as arrogant, even if she is just doing it to remain who she is. In fact, when asked if there was anything in her life that had not changed, her answer was: "I'm me all the time." Her negative perception of the values of her American peers, thus not mirroring her own, seems to influence her maintenance of the national identity of where she grew up.

Another participant in NYC, David, had the following to say about his national identification:

> Researcher: So if people ask where you are from, what do you say?
>
> David: I say I'm from Korea.
>
> Researcher: Is that easy – do you always say that?
>
> David: It wasn't always easy. When I first came here, I would always say I'm from Korea, and then after three, four, or five years, I got good at English, and people would say "what are you?" and I would say "I'm Korean-American". But two years ago, maybe, I saw that other Korean-Americans, they would have bad attitudes or opinions about Korea. They would say, "oh, Korea is like that, New York is like this, and [NY]'s so much better." And I thought that it wasn't cool, because Korea is where we're all from, we're Korean, whether we were born here or there, we're all Koreans, so now I don't say I'm Korean-American, I just say I'm Korean.

David says that the attitudes of American superiority by American-born Koreans pushed him away from wanting to identify with that group. Here he seems to hold an idea that ancestry supersedes pride in accomplishments and ideals. At another point in the interview he shared these thoughts on where he belongs:

David: I walked around some streets of Manhattan, and there are bars, where the majority are white people, and they were drinking and watching football. And I looked at it and I thought: I don't belong there. And of course I thought back – I thought of my Korean friends and I belong there, and not in America.

This is a telling example of the effect a societal mirror can have on a person's sense of who he is and where he belongs; what he saw in the mirror did not correspond to how he saw himself, in this case serving as a wake-up-call to how he really felt. Also, when asked whether he felt accepted as a New Yorker or American, he hesitated, then said:

David: No. Because, every time in school or, they see me as Asian, and they will ask me always, where are you from? And I will say Korea. And I think that's the basic start of having a conversation with somebody that I don't know. Where I am from. So I think what that means is that they don't see me as American, of course.

To this young man, being asked where he is from due to his Asian physical features signals that he is excluded from the national group and makes him want to move back to where he came from, since he feels more connected to them:

David: I just think that Koreans and Koreans have similarities and connections that can make me part of them faster than my friends who are from different cultures now. I'm friends with them, but not as close – I don't really know, but – I don't think I could be as close to them as I could to Koreans.

Again, relating to people who mirror you seems to be very important in feelings of acceptance and belonging (Mead 1934). David looks different and thinks differently, making him a "Foreigner"[48] when relating to the surrounding dominant culture and causing him to seek his "roots" in his country of origin. Yet he says that learning the language made him feel a bigger part of the society, which is a notion that he shares with many others.

An interesting difference between Norway and the US is that the American accent seems to be an important signifier of inclusion in NYC, whereas in Oslo, learning Norwegian is considered a necessity to function at all. This is reflected in how language is something most of the participants in Oslo mention as a challenge about their multicultural background, especially in what was difficult in the beginning (see section 5.2.2 and 5.2.4). In NYC, one young immigrant had this to say when asked if it was easy to be accepted as an American:

Yeah, cause I don't have an accent. That's all you need, an American accent – bam, you're an American, just like that.

Back to David, who says that now he has learned the language, even if it still limits him. He also says that he has learned to adjust so he stands out less.

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[48] See figure 2.2 – TCKs/CCKs in Relationship to Surrounding Dominant Culture, p.23.

> David: When I first came here and I didn't know anything, they would call me certain words – you know chino? – it's like Chinese. And I would get offended by that, but now I know their culture, and I kind of blend in.

He further shares that he has many friends who support him and who he appreciates, who come from different backgrounds, and who he does not feel different from. They all share the ambition of doing well in school as well as the common experience of having another cultural background, thus putting him in the "Mirror" box[49] when relating to friends.

Another account of how fitting in can make a person feel accepted as an American is the following:

> I think I just adapt to changes so good, different countries, that even over here, I'm so good at adapting to different people, I change my personality to be really nice. I could be really mean sometimes, and I could be really nice sometimes. I don't know who I am sometimes, because I change so much. I think that's a bad side of it too. I change so much I don't know who I really am. Yeah, I blend in with everybody, good. Over here they don't discriminate me, they don't look at me, they don't call me anything at all.

This person's ability to blend in is thus helpful in being considered American, although he recognizes the flipside to this ability in that it makes him less sure of who he is.

Thus, even if many New Yorkers share the immigrant experience, how one feels accepted varies.

5.4.2 Norwegian national ideology and feeling accepted

In Oslo, I found no specific reflection of a well-known national ideology like I did in NYC. I also found that some felt accepted, some not so much, which is similar to NYC. As discussed in section 4.1.2, as well as in 5.3.1, common principles for inclusion in the Norwegian nation state are believing in Christian and humanistic values, looking like and being able to speak Norwegian, preferably without an accent and with a local dialect, as well as the ability to trace ancestry within Norway. Since none of my participants can do the latter, they would not be "allowed" to call themselves Norwegian, even if they would want to. Ancestry is not something that any of them directly talked about, however. Rather, they revealed a variety of other ways of circumventing these hurdles to being considered nationals, such as appealing to their loyalty to "Norwegian values", learning the language, and the ability to fit in.

To a follow-up question of whether or not it was easy to be from another country at the school, being so diverse, one person replied:

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[49] See figure 2.2 – TCKs/CCKs in Relationship to Surrounding Dominant Culture, p.23.

> Yes, I think so, because it is so very multicultural. So many countries are [represented], so that how you behave can be both related to your country, or your religion, or whatever you may be thinking, right? Everybody is – nobody is alike here[50].

Another participant was not so preoccupied with being accepted, since he "just laughs it off" if someone does not accept him. He says he likes living in Norway, since he feels free to do what he wants, including pursuing Islam:

> Here I can go for my interests. If somebody had forced me, I wouldn't have wanted to [study religion]. Here I choose it myself, here I learnt it by myself, so then I thought: "I'll take it, this is important."[51]

He had told me how he did not really become interested in Islam until he moved to Norway, where he felt free to choose it himself, as opposed to in his parents' home country. There everybody expected piety, yet did not really understand what it was about. Interestingly, this person also feels like he mostly belongs in Norway, where Islamophobia is supposedly growing (Eidsvåg et.al. 2011). I also find it interesting that he did not feel excluded, perhaps because he has so many good friends who supported and reflected his identity.

This is supported by findings in a master thesis by Brynhild Simonsen (2009), also discussed by Eriksen (2010). Simonsen examined the relationship between a formal nationalism and an informal identity formation by youth at a multi-ethnic school in Oslo. She found that although there are mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, such as dress code, accent, skin color, and certain forms of behavior, these are negotiable; the most important is living in Norway and mastery of the Norwegian language.

One interviewee, who says that she feels like she belongs to and wishes she could say that she is from both countries, refuses to let the limited possibility to be called a Norwegian bother and exclude her. She says she comes from the country where she was born, and that she does not mind saying so:

> I come from there, so why should I lie to them? Even if they like me, they need to like me for where I come from too. Not just that I live here or that I need to be Norwegian or with some other background. It's sort of a racist question if they ask me and they don't like that background. So it's not so hard for me.[52]

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[50] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

[51] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

[52] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

Even though being from where she is born may be considered a stigma to some people, she argues for why it should not be, upholding and appealing to what are often considered fundamental Norwegian values of equity and humanism (Gullestad 2002).

In fact, the general consensus in the Oslo interviews seemed to be that if one respected certain values one could expect to be accepted. The following young man always says country of origin when asked where he is from, which is something he "has nothing against". However, when asked what he wishes he could say, the answer is Norway. This he says is because he respects its people for all the help that he has been given since fleeing, and because he has lost respect for his country of origin, where he feared for his life.

> Researcher: You say that you reply that you come from X, but that you wish you could say you are Norwegian? You wish to become a Norwegian citizen because Norway takes good care of you?
>
> Yes, of course, right? I want to give back to Norway with everything I can, do everything I can for Norway, all the energy that I have, give it back. Because my parents have taught me that if a person is kind to you and helps you, return the favor. That's the way it is. If a person is mean to you, don't go near him; simply go away from that person. That's what I've learnt. So if a person does something nice to me, I want to do all I can for that person to have a good image of me. That's why I want to do everything I can for Norway[53].

This young man has similar reasons for identifying with Norway as the young man on p.91; they both distance themselves from their country of birth because they have lost pride in the values or lack thereof that they have experienced from the nationals there. Both of them also indicate that the values of equity and humanism are in harmony with their significant others' values, thus suggesting that a conflict of values is not pending on their encounter with Norwegian society. In fact, certain values are mirrored in Norway rather than in their country of origin. It would be reasonable to assume that their reasons for moving – fleeing from oppressive regimes and mortal danger also represented by civilians – in themselves caused this breech in national identification with their countries of origin.

Having discarded such an identity, one might assume that it was important to substitute it with another one, and both of these young refugees express a wish to claim Norway as their national identity. However, it may not be that simple, as the section below shows:

> Researcher: Can you say [Norway] if people ask [where you are from]?
> Yes, I can. That's my opinion.

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[53] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

Researcher: But if people ask "where are you from?" Can you say Norway?

No, because you know youth, right – because I haven't gotten Norwegian citizenship yet, right? If I say, "I'm from Norway," they'll say "but do you have Norwegian citizenship?" When I say no, I'll have messed up. But when I become a citizen, I'll say, "I'm from Norway." (Ha ha). That's the way it is.

Researcher: Do you think people will say "ok, you're a citizen, so you're from Norway"?

No, people don't think like that, right – "why do you say you're from Norway?" They don't get it. They say "why are you in Norway if you don't like Norway? Norway protects you, you could live in your home country, you couldn't state your opinion, why did you come to Norway?" When I talk to someone, I have to respect that person, no matter what. I respect Norway and the Norwegians very much. So it's like that for me, but I don't know what others think[54].

Although he himself thinks he is at liberty to say that he identifies with Norway, this passage indicates that people do not necessarily accept it, not even if he gets his citizenship. What exactly it is that "they don't get" is not clear, but he goes on to share that people expect him to be appreciative of the refuge that Norway has given him. So he must behave accordingly, which he takes pride in emphasizing that he does. This suggests that "Norwegian values" are strongly tied to identification with the "national culture", and that loyalty to certain ideals is a factor in allowing an outsider to belong.

Thus, there might be support for Theiss-Morse's theory of national identity (2009); particular norms (equity, kindness, justice, freedom, appreciation of the social welfare system) show how "good" of a national you are, and it is those who identify the most strongly with national identity who more eagerly embrace the norms and set exclusive group boundaries. According to this line of thinking, the people in the center possess the power to define what is considered important, and those in the periphery have to abide by them to be included. The young man above may have been confronted several times by people who identify more strongly than him with Norway, letting him know that he needs to adjust to be included, perhaps because he might have made some mistakes that are considered to be a betrayal of such norms, or simply because he looks and sounds different?

When asked "why is it good for Norway that you live here?" one person felt that:

I'm a kind person (ha ha). Maybe if there were someone else here instead of me and who was a terrorist, it wouldn't be so good for Norway. But I will never do anything stupid so that Norway doesn't want me. So I will fight to be myself and a kind person – to

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[54] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

everyone, also to those who pick on me. Because one day they will know that what they did to me was wrong, like those girls in my class[55].

Again this idea of identifying with the "values of Norway" is brought forth as a reason for inclusion. Between the lines here, it seems that this person has been informed that there are limits to Norwegian hospitality. Also, there is optimism as to the ability to conquer this hurdle. Further studies on the dynamics between the majority and the minority would be necessary to explore this particular aspect of acculturation.

The notion that the ability to blend in is helpful in being considered a national that was seen in NYC can be found in Oslo as well. One participant says that although he has not changed his personality, he has changed the way he dresses, since people will look at him funny if he dressed traditionally. Another said that she tried to participate in activities designed to get to know fellow students, but that it was difficult since she was fasting and the activities involved eating and drinking, thus marking a limit to how far she was willing to adapt. These thus display adaptation in behavior but not in values, which suggests that adaptation can be limited to the surface cultural elements for convenience in some cases, while others adapt so much that they change their personalities, i.e. the more deeper levels of the cultural self.

Thus, this kind of reasoning, where identification with and mirroring of values determine loyalty to a nation or a group, is something that many of the participants in Oslo share. Which values and norms that are considered most important lie beyond the scope of this study (see Simonsen 2009, Vestel & Øya 2007). Also, relating to others with similar experiences and learning to fit in were considered helpful in feeling included.

5.4.3 Cross-pressure

The difference between surface and deep culture also plays a role in the issue of cross-pressure, which is experienced differently among the participants. Two of the young immigrants from Oslo describe living with great cross-pressure between parents' expectations and society's, giving them a constant struggle to balance what they do and who they want to be. One of them expressed it like this:

> When I'm at home I have to behave like a Xn young girl, but when I'm out, I'm Norwegian.[56]

The other one shares this:

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[55] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

[56] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

That's what I'm saying, it's a bit stressful, right? When you have come to Norway while young you don't really know what to do. There can be conflicts in families due to these things, and they can get a bit pissed off at you. So it's pretty stressful. Many girls struggle with this, not just me.[57]

They both say that this results in them living two different lives at home and outside, thus moving cross-culturally on a deep cultural level on a daily basis. This has to do with what kind of behavior their parents expect, such as being a proper girl who stays at home and learns to be a good housewife, vs. what their friends represent, such as dating, hanging out, and going to parties. It also has to do with the way they are expected to dress, i.e. modestly according to parental opinion, and fashionable according to friends. Clothes are according to the Weaver Cultural Iceberg model (figure 2.1) is a surface cultural characteristic, and according to Barth (1994) an overt cultural signal (section 2.2.2).

In NYC there were also a few who felt a cross-pressure, leading them to live different lives at home and outside. Some of them seemed to relate this pressure to their parents' vs. society's expectations for them, like this young man, who had the following to say about what the hardest thing about being multicultural was:

What [my parents] let me do and what they don't let me do. … They're really strict.

Others explicitly described an internal battle:

Researcher: So you say that you "can't go out". Is that because you don't want to because of your morals or is it because your dad says you can't go out?

Ok, it's like – it's pretty much everything. I want to – when my friends are together, we say, "oh, let's go to a night club", you know. No, I really want to do that. I see some people, and they're having fun. "Let's drink", you know, we never drink, "let's drink". Then I think it's not good for you though. If you do it one time, you're going to be addicted to it. You're always going to want to go another day. You're going to tell your parents lies, you're going to make something up. And also I'm scared of my parents, also that thing happens to me. But I want to, but my mind is like, no, it's not good for you. If you drink – you shouldn't, cause you're a Muslim and you shouldn't drink, your culture is not – so everything. And some people they just go for it. As I said, some people came here earlier, they get this culture here. Maybe I came here late, so I understand what is good for me and what is bad for me. Maybe. But I want to! It's not like I don't want to, but I know myself.

This account illuminates how the battle is not just between strict parents and expectations of the new society, but within the autonomous individual's value system as well. Ultimately, the choice is the individual's. This particular interviewee thought it might have to do with her late arrival to the US that she knew what was "good for me and what is bad for me". This would

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[57] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

support Byram's (2003) claim that moving during primary socialization would be expected to have a stronger impact on the individual than if it happened during secondary socialization. However, this is not a claim that finds support among the other participants of my study, since some who moved early on seems to have tackled the transition smoothly and without conflict, while others who moved at a more mature age do struggle with cross-pressure and identity confusion.

Those who seemed to handle the transition and cross-pressure smoothly would say that they were used to it from before they left their home country, or that they patiently pushed the boundaries little by little until they were allowed to do what they wanted. Yet others did not feel such cross-pressure at all, despite saying that they lived two lives at home and outside. This supports Tamis-LeMonda et.al.'s claims (2008) as well as Østberg's findings (2003, see section 2.3.2), the latter in which the children of Pakistani immigrants in her study often went straight to expanded socialization, thereby incorporating apparently conflicting needs and values. This suggests that children who grow up with more than one set of socialization have the capacity to contain conflicting values within themselves without necessarily being conflicted, such as Nishida's schema theory (2005) asserts.

One person was asked what the parents would have said if they were told that she wanted to drink beer:

> Nothing would have happened, but I'm guessing they would've laughed or something. Because I would never have done that. But I do joke with my father, like that I'm going to a party or have a new boyfriend and stuff. But we just laugh. I have a very good relationship with my mother and father. If anything happens, I tell them right away. And I never get yelled at by them, because they think I have struggled so much in my life and I have helped them so much that I know what I'm doing, and I can never make any mistakes.[58]

I have not been able to find an explanation or pattern for why and when such cross-pressure occurs, although it clearly has something to do with individual personality as well as perceived ethnic mutually exclusive boundaries, i.e. personal as well as ascribed identity (Barth 1994). I only found cross-pressure in half the sample, evenly spread between NYC and Oslo, between boys and girls, between types of religious backgrounds, and between individualistic and group oriented societies. So I can only conclude from this that it does happen in different kinds of families and societies, and it is experienced differently among different people. Hence, this is

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[58] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

important to keep in mind when working with this topic in FLEXid, since one cannot assume that it is a problem for everyone with immigrant or refugee backgrounds (see chapter 2.5).

One participant summarizes what is important to consider when moving in a way that involves most of the adaptation strategies described in this chapter so far:

> The most important is to watch who you get to know. And the most important is that first you need to learn the language, and afterwards you can think about other things. For example if you move in order to get rich, it's wrong. First you need to learn the language, then laws and regulations, and then you can pursue what you came for.[59]

Thus, sharing and abiding by values and norms, having friendships, knowing the language, dressing properly, and having the ability to fit in to the culture seemed to be important factors of inclusion and exclusion to the dominant society in both Oslo and NYC.

5.4.4 Schools and teachers

In general, the schools that the participants attended seemed to be supportive of multicultural identity formation by affirming diversity in NYC and discussing multicultural issues in Oslo. Below is a typical answer from Oslo:

> Researcher: Do you ever talk about multicultural issues at school?
>
> Yes, we talk about it. We have compared Iran, Pakistan, Iraq, Poland to Europe and stuff, and the climate and cultures and stuff. And everybody agreed that we have changed when we moved to Norway[60].

Learning about cultural differences can stimulate various aspects of multicultural competence, such as knowledge and awareness about cultures, open attitudes, as well as the ability to critically assess and make choices (Byram 2003).

Among the interviewees in the US, they did not talk about learning about specific multicultural issues, except for in certain classes in college, such as sociology and history. The general consensus seemed to be that their schools affirmed that diversity was valuable. Fariba had this to say regarding multicultural identity in school:

> Fariba: Um – yes, yes we do. Especially here, much more than we did in Germany. In Germany it was kind of like a taboo. Not taboo but, you were not really talking about it. But here, yeah, you do talk about multicultural identity and –
>
> Researcher: In what ways?

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[59] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

[60] See Appendix F for original quotes in Norwegian.

> Fariba: Just when the teacher says "oh my god, look how diverse NY is. You're a class of 25 people, and you're all from some other part of the world." And how being multicultural makes you unique, because everyone has their own experience.

Fariba said that diversity was acknowledged as a good thing in NYC, whereas she did not feel that way in Germany. Also, the participants informed me that teachers in their NYC schools encouraged the participants to share their background knowledge in class.

> Researcher: So the teachers are lecturing a lot, then? They're not interested in your opinions – or?

> Um – no, my teachers are. They're interested, but it's the students. They just run on somewhere else and talk amongst their peers and stuff.

Many of the interviewees from NYC shared the same thing, that teachers encouraged them to share their knowledge from where they were from, but that they did not often do so, since there was a general disinterest among the other students to take school seriously. One participant gave this reason for why this might be the case:

> I think I take stuff more seriously than people over here, because I've seen poverty and a lot of bad stuff back there, and people here they haven't really seen or experienced it, so I take stuff more seriously what I have. School, I take more seriously than your average person.

Having increased knowledge about the world in the sense of a more painful reality has given this person another perspective on life than what she sees in her peers, thus making her take things more seriously.

Teachers and schools, then, seemed to be relatively supportive of multicultural identity formation, and some competence development, especially knowledge about cultures, although my data is far too limited to make any sound conclusions. I found that the participants from the two high schools in Oslo had been offered support groups and discussions where I vaguely detected a problem- and difference-focus. In Norwegian schools there has been a tendency to treat immigrant students as problems. Although education policies have advocated resource-oriented approaches to diversity in schools for a long time, practice is far from following suit (Hauge 2007). This may be enforcing the discourse on difference as a threat, because the idea of sameness is such a central part of the unity of Norway (see section 4.1.2). Rather, the findings of this study suggest that a more resource-oriented focus would be required, since few of them had a conscious awareness of their multicultural skills (see section 5.2.1 and 5.2.8).

5.4.5   Optimism about the future

Most participants shared optimism about the future because of the opportunities they saw in their new societies. In fact, regardless of where they felt like they belonged, or statistics on

discrimination, many of them wanted to keep living in Norway or the US if they had a choice, such as can be seen in the following example from NYC:

> Researcher: So you see yourself as having a future here. You won't be discriminated against, because you come from X or -?
>
> I hope not. I'm not sure about that, but I hope not. I think it all depends on how smart you are and how you perform in what you're doing. That's it.

The same hope is expressed by another immigrant in NYC:

> Researcher: So you expect too that you'll be able to get jobs? Noone will discriminate against you because you're not – an American or you're from X –
>
> No, I'm pretty sure that I'll be very successful here if I push myself. Regardless of where I'm from. That's the thing I really love about America, it doesn't matter what part of the world you're from, you can make it as long as you show the effort and have the will to do it.

These two young immigrants expresses belief in "The American Dream", which in the definition by writer James Truslow Adams is "that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement" (Adams 1931:214). Adanna did not share this idea, however:

> Adanna: Well, not for me, but for my Mom, really. The business was going really well. My mother and my father, they were doing really well, really well. We didn't struggle. As soon as my Mom came here as a single parent, that's when everything went downhill. So I went back two summers ago, and her friend, who she put into business with her, has the biggest house in Christchurch. It's huge, I think it's three stories, and it's pink! You can see the mayor's – like the prime minister's house on the hill. It's so beautiful. And I was just thinking if we never had moved, we could have had this – like, she was saying that herself. If your father and mother had stayed together, you guys would've been millionaires by now. And I wanted to believe that. My Mom is a hard worker, and my Dad is a hustler. Oh, well.
>
> Researcher: But they're not able to do the same thing here?
>
> Adanna: Yeah!
>
> Researcher: Why do you think that is? Because – from the books that I read, America is supposed to be the land of opportunities.
>
> When you come here with a situation, that's not the case. … Cause in Barbados it's like, oh – it's small, and I'll just have a stand and I'll sell something. Around here it's not like that. It's 15 million different people doing it. If you have mouths to feed and rent to pay, it's more of a – what you need right now. That's how my Mom has been thinking since she got here. She doesn't like to take risks when it comes to her money. She tries to play it safe now.

This is an example of someone experiencing the so-called "glass ceiling", i.e. "artificial barriers to the advancement of women and minorities" (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission 1995a:iii). This drop in status has made life harder, but Adanna remains youthfully optimistic. She did not

want to continue living in the US, but move to another country in the pursuit of a better future there.

In fact, many of the participants, especially in NYC, told stories of bullying or other forms of unpleasant encounters with their school peers. All of them told me that this had been in the beginning, and that it was over now, hence no longer affecting their wellbeing. One young woman in NYC told me that her peers had been very rude to her in high school. When asked for examples, this is what she shared:

> Like try to pick my hair, pull my jacket. [The girl behind me] would do that. I could complain to the Dean, but I was so nervous, and that was my first time, and English was my problem too, right, so I forgot everything. So I didn't really care about it, but it really upset me, I felt so bad, I don't know why they were doing that.

Very few of them had personal experiences of extensive racism and discrimination. In fact, although many of them had heard about it and knew that it was a part of reality, they seemed to have decided that it was not going to let it affect them, suggesting that they had useful survival strategies to overcome this well-known hurdle. One young woman in Oslo told me that they had discussed the difficulty of finding jobs with a foreign name in her class one day, and that some of her classmates had suggested changing their names to avoid this disadvantage.

> But I disagree with them a little. It depends where you apply for a job. They others thought that if you change your name you can get a job, but if not, it's really hard. But if you have good experience, if you have knowledge, then you'll get a job. So I don't think it should depend on names. Maybe someone has encountered such a thing, but I haven't.[61]

Similar positive attitudes to opportunities were expressed in by another participant in Oslo.

> Here I get lots of opportunities.
>
> Researcher: For example?
>
> For example education and schooling, and the teachers are really nice, and people are kind too. And young people can work here.[62]

Believing in the possibilities for education and work, as well as appreciating the social welfare system of Norway were societal factors and opportunities most of the participants in Oslo seemed to share. Thus, despite negative statistics on achievement gaps and employment opportunities (NOU 2010:7, Suarez-Orozco et.al. 2008) as well as facing many challenges and complex feelings of belonging, nearly all of the young immigrants held high hopes for the future.

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[61] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

[62] See Appendix F for original quote in Norwegian.

This might also reflect their family histories in the sense that they all left their countries for the hope of a better future somewhere else, be it due to war, persecution, financial struggles, love, or adventurousness.

So at this stage in their lives, the overall attitude of my participants was that they were not excluded from society, regardless of what inclusion and exclusion mechanisms might be at play in NYC and Oslo. Rather, this study shows that most of the participants had "one leg in each camp", suggesting that they were well on their way to being integrated in the sense that Eriksen (1993) and Berry et.al. (2006) use it, and developing "transcultural identities" (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco 2001) or becoming a "participatory observer" (Salole & van der Weele 2010). This is hopeful for the possible change in what it might take to be included in mainstream American and Norwegian society in the future. Further research on the interplay between individual agency and societal mirrors would be interesting to see what challenges and assets these people experience as grown-ups.

Summing up, the clearest pattern reflecting a difference between the two cities was found in a shared idea among the NYC participants. All the interviewees in NYC held the opinion that since the US is an immigrant nation or NYC is "The Melting Pot", everyone is from somewhere else, and so where you are from or what kind of feelings of belonging you have do not really matter to them. The interviewees in Oslo did not explicitly express any national ideology when relating how Norwegians regarded them, although several of them seemed to share the idea that respecting Norwegian values was the way to be considered Norwegian. These underlying assumptions did not necessarily correspond to how they felt about being accepted by and as Americans or Norwegians, however. Rather, almost all of them seemed to share the idea that relating to others with similar experiences, learning English or Norwegian, and the ability to fit in helped them to feel included. They also shared optimism regarding the opportunities available in their new countries that trumped potential exclusion mechanisms, such as discrimination, racism, and nationalist sentiments.

5.5 Concluding discussion

It is difficult to neatly summarize how the young immigrants and refugees of this study, who currently live in New York City and Oslo, see their multicultural experiences as challenges or assets in their lives in their new societies. Do they have certain competences and aspects of identity in common despite variables such as place of birth, types of family structure and relations, power relations, reasons for moving, number of moves, and current place of residence?

There is no simple yes or no to this question. The most significant finding of this study is how complex this issue is. For all findings, there is at least one exception, and no clear patterns or models could explain what appeared in a conclusive manner.

True, all the participants had in some way or another characteristics that revealed multicultural attitudes, awareness of oneself and others, cultural knowledge, and cross-cultural skills. However, if each participant were to be ticked off against the TCK profile, none of them would be a perfect match. One would be restless and adventurous while another would be eager to settle; one would be confused about where they belong while another would be most certain of it; one would be struggling with cross-pressure while another did not experience any contradictory expectations. Some would name the freedom to choose between cultural values as the best thing about their experience while others would give opportunities for school and work as the thing they most valued; some would state that struggling with a new language was what was challenging while others would say the loss of network of family and friends.

Perhaps more commonalities between them would have appeared, had they met and talked in a group interview. But after having met them individually, I am quite certain that some of them would have taken the role of the devil's advocate in their desires to be unique so that the results would have been equally colorful. The only certain conclusion that can be confidently drawn is that they are all individual human beings, with unique dynamic personalities and distinctive experiences, so that their stories become unrepeatable. This is a defeatist and postmodern conclusion, however, and not representative of my epistemological stance (see chapter 3.1 and 3.3). Theories help structure the world we live in, and although one will never find a theory without any exceptions, they can still guide us in a meaningful way.

A main objective of this study has been to investigate the validity of applying TCK theory to CCKs such as children of immigrants and refugees. In order to take on such a task, one has to believe in the possibility to discern truth and that certain structures guide human development. The concepts of identity, socialization, and culture have been thoroughly discussed in chapter 2 of this thesis. There I took the stance that since the construction of reality is dialectic, and the individual also influences society, the results of socialization are never identical and hence culture is ever changing, or processual. Yet since identity is ascribed in addition to being chosen, and since people often believe that certain patterns of values and customs guide their lives, completely disregarding culture as a defining characteristic is unrealistic and meaningless. Even though it is impossible to describe "a culture" with definitive characteristics and borders

that make clear distinctions between those who belong to that group and those who do not, cultural variation exists nonetheless. By this understanding it makes sense to talk about common characteristics of Cross-Cultural Kids, even though there are individual differences, and the borders of such a group are blurred.

The CCKs of this study to a varying degree talk about having become open-minded and understanding of other ways of life. They display having acquired increased cultural knowledge and the skill to interpret it, some of them through actively blending in, others by passively observing. They also evaluate and negotiate cultural practices and reveal varying degrees of a secure sense of self and salience of a multicultural identity. They are all in a process of overcoming the challenges of moving cross-culturally, though how much emphasis they put on their losses and how they cope with the stress varies.

The fact that one cultural group shares certain characteristics does not mean that other groups cannot have the same traits. Thus, it is not my point to claim that multicultural competence is a distinctive mark of CCKs; I believe that the potential for developing and expanding one's attitudes, knowledge, skills, and awareness to other cultural systems than the one to which one has been socialized lies within so-called "mono-culturals" and "multiculturals" alike. Although this study has focused on one group and not compared identity and competence development in those who have been socialized within one system to those who have experienced more than one, the fact that such issues surfaced in the interviews would be a strong indicator that the shared experience of moving cross-culturally during socialization stimulates similar identity and competence issues. Further research would be necessary to investigate this more thoroughly.

However, it is not my intention to label my participants CCKs if they do not find it meaningful themselves. Some of the young immigrants and refugees gave much more emphasis to being a good family member, Muslim, or individual to deserve any ascribed identity of CCK, immigrant, or any other for that matter. Although I sincerely believe that it is empowering to acquire multicultural competence, and especially in the form of awareness of who one is as a result of one's experiences, I do not want to, in the words of Anthony Appiah (1994:163), " [replace] one kind of tyranny with another". It is important that there is individual freedom in choosing which aspect of identity that is salient and when, as well as how intensely they feel like expressing them. It should not be something that others ascribe them, since this increases the risk of applying stigma.

The second main objective of this study is to investigate the relevance of the educational program FLEXid (chapter 2.4) in Oslo as well as in NYC. Just because FLEXid recognizes certain students as a group with common characteristics and experiences, and aims at helping them come to terms with who they are so they can better make sound choices about their lives, there is still the potential of stigmatizing. Hence, care should be taken in recruiting participants, so that it is voluntary as well as clear that being a CCK is only one aspect of a person's identity.

Fundamental to TCK and CCK theory as well as to FLEXid is the notion that having grown up in more than one society often causes one to not belong solely in either of the societies, but rather to others who share that experience. This notion was shared by a few of the participants, but not the majority; there were those who did not have a "either or", but a "both" sense of belonging. TCK theory claims that this sense of belonging is not only due to having felt like a foreigner in their host country, but also to having returned to the place that is supposed to be the home country, only to realize that it is not[63]. Many TCKs feel like a hidden immigrant in their country of origin, looking the same but feeling different on the inside. I wonder if the fact that my participants moved to the multicultural cities of Oslo and New York City lessened this feeling of being estranged; although they felt different from others in some way or another, they also talked of friendships with people who were like them, thus being surrounded by people who mirror themselves by the very fact of living in these cosmopolitan cities. Eriksen (1993) claims that in many ways, metropolitan cities across the globe have more in common with each other than with small places in the same country, and this study offers support for this idea. To further explore this indication, a comparative study of moving to a smaller, more homogenous society would be interesting.

Does this mean that FLEXid is less called for in multicultural places than in more homogenous ones? Not necessarily, though recognizing the potential for the benefits of a broader network that one can identify with is useful. Not only would there be more people who come from your home country, but other aspects of identity, such as personality, religion, interests, and shared experiences can be found and shared. Also, sharing the feeling of being different can cause a sense of community, such as was seen in the interviewees in NYC. These are positive aspects of integration that rarely is mentioned in Norwegian public discourse, where the proportion of immigrants in Oslo seems to be considered more of a problem than an asset.

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[63] Only two of the interviewees had this experience, since the sample was meant to have been born in one country and moved to another during primary or secondary socialization.

According to An-Magritt Hauge (2007), schools that have a problem-oriented focus on multiculturalism are schools that regard the very existence of language minority students as a problem. She claims that the aim of education is to help bring about identity confirmation and expand ones' perspectives of the world and how it works beyond the dominant culture in which one lives. In order for a school to confirm its students' identity, it has to build on each student's experience and knowledge. At a problem-oriented school, the majority students would get identity confirmation without much perspective expansion, whereas a minority student would get lots of perspective expansion without identity confirmation. At a resource-oriented school, however, both majority and minority students would get both. In order for a school to meet these goals, it would need to know about the world from other perspectives, and about whom the minority students are. My research is a contribution to give insight into especially the latter.

Unfortunately, the findings of my study do not support the development of teaching models that may make multicultural education simpler. As a teacher I know how welcome it is to come across educational programs that are easy to apply and which reach the targeted group of students. The problem is that groups are rarely as homogenous as such models assume, and this study has found that it is too simplistic to talk about "refugee students", "immigrants to NYC", or "CCKs", just to mention a few possible labels that might be tempting to make from my data material. This knowledge seemed to have seeped through regarding the majority student population in Norway, in the recent focus on adapted education, where individual adaptation is a given to provide quality education for all (Kunnskapsløftet 2006). Perhaps the minority student population is lagging behind in this area, in our attempts to find models that work for those who are different than "the rest of us", i.e. the invisible majority (Seeberg 2003).

Let me make the following argument: All students are unique, culture is processual, and the world in general is changing with great speed, endlessly renewing what constitutes knowledge in a given place. This makes it practically impossible for one person to learn, much less for a teacher to teach one group of students to know all there is to know. Hence, learning about the students' background culture in order to understand how to meet them would be less useful than helping the individual student acquire skills to access, evaluate, and reflect on knowledge, and to make sound decisions based on the choices that each person has. FLEXid applies this logic, basing its methodology on providing the participants with information on which to reflect and make individual choices, thus empowering the individuals to take charge of their own lives.

Another issue that FLEXid is concerned with is the process of moving and how this often affects the family psychologically. One thing that this study strongly indicates is that moving is challenging, and thus is a topic that is called for with this group. It is not unanimous, however, that being raised in two different cultural value systems has to be experienced as challenging. Cross-pressure was not a problem for a majority of the participants, indicating that they have a capacity for incorporating often conflicting values within one life world, which is supported by the findings of Østberg (2003), Vestel & Øya (2007) in Norway, as well as by Suarez-Orozco et.al. (2008) and Tamis-LeMonda et.al. (2008) in the US. However, it is clear that they all face many choices and dilemmas in acculturating, and having an arena to discuss these issues with others who identify with them would be beneficial.

Even though there are challenges in multicultural experience, this study shows that there are many benefits related to it as well. The participants are far from helpless individuals who deserve the problem focus that they so often get in Norwegian and American society alike (Hauge 2007, Banks 2009). They exhibit great inner strength, maturity, and confidence. They are multilingual, adaptable, knowledgeable, understanding, sensitive, and flexible, and some of them already actively apply their competence to mediate and positively influence their surroundings.

The study indicated that awareness of their multicultural competence was not very high in many of the participants. Knowing that internal sense of control, feeling of self worth, and experience of meaning and coherence are significant factors of resilience (Waaktaar & Johnsen Christie 2000), strengthening the multicultural competence aspect of awareness is important. This is because awareness is closely linked to obtaining the crucial resilience factors mentioned above. However, it is not something that appears to be the focus in many other institutions of society in that it is not part of the public discourse in either Oslo or NYC. Thus, FLEXid offers a valuable contribution among scarce options.

Developing critical awareness of cultural perspectives, practices, and products (Byram 2003) is further a competence that is crucial for societal change. Although my participants did not express noteworthy concern for issues such as discrimination, racism, and exclusion from mainstream society, it does not mean that these problems do not exist. On the contrary, there is an extensive amount of research that shows that it does (NOU 2010:7, Hondius 2009, May 2009, Apple et.al. 2009). In his classic work from 1968, Paulo Freire (2009) argued for why education should teach critical thinking. His argument was in essence that since reproduction of

knowledge would keep the oppressed in their place, teaching critical thinking is necessary to break the cycle of oppression. Critical multiculturalist Stephen May (2009) point out that since some people have more choices than others in defining who they are and want to be, learning about power relations and mechanisms of exclusion is crucial to overcome discrimination.

FLEXid, although aiming to help making choices and reflecting on how multicultural experiences have effected the participants, does not include critical perspectives on discriminatory mechanisms of society. Osler and Starkey (2005:86) distinguish between minimal and maximal citizenship education, though the dichotomy is placed on a continuum. On the structural/political level, minimal citizenship education gives an understanding and experience of human rights, democracy, diversity, inclusion, and civil society. On the cultural/personal level, it emphasizes feelings of belonging and a reflection on feelings and choices. They further argue that education should be based on its outcomes, i.e. the society that it produces. Therefore, they call for maximal citizenship education, which also teaches skills to effect change, political literacy, and active participation. Including a critical focus on discriminatory mechanisms of society would have an even more powerful influence on the participants' lives, with the potential of educating politically active citizens.

In Norway, studies show that immigrants are greatly misrepresented in political life (Bø 2011, Gullestad 2003), and the same can be found in the US, although less clearly so, due to the nature of the nation being formed by immigrants (Bird et.al. 2011), as well as the political structure of ethnicity politics in NYC (Foner 2005). If FLEXid included a more critical perspective in its approach, it could serve as an even more effective contribution to positive inclusion in society. Political participation should not only be reserved for the majority population. In James Bank's words,

> Multicultural education tries to provide students with educational experiences that enable them to maintain commitments to their community cultures as well as acquire the knowledge, skills, and cultural capital needed to function in the national civic culture and community. Increasingly, multicultural education has a global component that seeks to help students develop cosmopolitan attitudes and become effective world citizens. (Banks 2009:14)

Multicultural education is not education directed at the multicultural part of the population, but for all the students. Cosmopolitan attitudes, such as being understanding, open-minded, knowledgeable, and flexible, are beneficial for all future citizens in this increasingly globalized world. It is about time that we recognize the assets that children of immigrants and refugees

often represent and make sure we treat them as such, both in the classrooms, in the work force, and in the political arena.

The participants of this study show an eagerness to fit in and participate, while expressing a wish to be themselves. They also reveal that they are not so different from the rest of society in their quest for finding out who they are and who they are becoming, how they want to live their lives, and what competence they need to do so. If society learns to build on their competence and not focus so much on what they lack in being "like us", we might discover what great gifts they can offer society, as well as that they are just people like the rest of us. Inclusion is perhaps not as threatening as people might think.

6 Conclusion

I hope that my research has provided useful insight into the life worlds of the 16 young immigrants and refugees currently residing in Oslo and New York City, specifically how they see themselves in terms of multicultural competence and identity related to their cross-cultural experiences. They represent the notion that individual acculturation cannot easily be put in a simple box, model, or theory, since human development is much more complex than that. Yet there are some indications that the interviewees of this research project have some challenges and assets as well as some identity issues in common, suggesting that there could be some support for expanding Third Culture Kids theory to include Cross-Cultural Kids in general. However, more research is needed before one can start to apply the term "CCK theory".

Furthermore, this project has researched some of the assumptions that the educational program FLEXid is founded on. These assumptions are first, that the concept of TCK can be applied to young immigrants and refugees in general. Second, children who move cross-culturally often struggle with cross-pressure, which we have seen is far from true for all of the participants of this study. Third, a program that allows for reflection of ones multicultural experiences is useful in that it can give greater awareness of one's identity and competence. This seems to be a particularly relevant assumption in both Oslo and New York City, since few of the interviewees explicitly expressed their multicultural experiences, and especially their assets. Many also lacked an awareness of this before the interview. Also, since the methodology of FLEXid is based on supporting individual reflection and not on giving answers, it should be relevant for a diverse student group. Thus, the basic assumptions of FLEXid come across as valid in both settings, although a stronger focus on education for active citizenship participation could be useful. Further research is needed before transferring the program to NYC, since there are many more factors that influence the success of a program than the ones that have been studied here.

This study should be valuable to the majority and minority population, to teachers and students, to researchers as well as to parents. Hopefully, the discourse on immigration will come to have a stronger resource oriented focus. This could in turn influence education in general, in that it would provide meaningful identity confirmation for majority and minority students alike, thus help minimizing the existing achievement gap. Also, allowing the life worlds of the new national citizens into the classroom would benefit all students in that it would help expand everyone's world view and thus becoming effective world citizens. This is in my view necessary regardless of what one thinks of immigration, since I do not see globalization as reversible any time soon.

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Appendix A

Interview questions

1. **Background questions**
   a. When did you come here?
   b. What is your citizenship status?
   c. Why did you/your parents move here?
   d. What did/do they do for a living?
   e. How many times have you moved between countries/cities?
   f. Who do you live with here/ who is in your family?
   g. What language(s) do you speak at home with whom?
   h. Which languages do you speak?
   i. How do you perform in school? (now and then)
   j. What kind of schooling did you get in your parents' country?
   k. How did you learn Norwegian/English, and what was that like?
   l. What is/was your school here like? (diversity and quality)
2. **Can you tell me about your life since you moved?**
3. **If people ask you where you are from, what do you say?**
   a. Is that question difficult or easy to answer?
   b. Does that mean that you don't want to let people know where you/your parents come from – or is it not about that?
   c. Where would you say you belong?
   d. What do you wish you could answer when asked where you're from?
4. **What is it like, coming from different places instead of just one?**
   a. Do you see yourself as different from your peers?
      i. Who are your friends? (names, origin, interests)
   b. Do you see yourself as different from the majority in the country?
      i. If so, in what ways? (looks, language, traditions, religion, way of thinking, experiences, interests, adaptability)
      ii. How do you feel about being different?
      iii. If not, how do you manage to fit in?
   c. How do you think others see you?
      i. Do you feel accepted as an American?
      ii. How important is that to you?
      iii. Have you ever been bullied or experienced racism/discrimination?
   d. How do your parents deal with your multicultural identity?
5. **What things are problematic to you about your background?** (Longing/prejudice/being understood/making choices /loyalty/language/restlessness/status/relations)
   a. How do you deal with it?
6. **What qualities do you see as assets due to your background?** (Adjustability/flexibility/bridgebuilding/understanding/relations/extended world view/languages/multiple belongings/multiple experiences)
   a. How do you apply them/ how/when/where do they come in handy?
   b. What do you think you can contribute to American society due to your multicultural background?
   c. How do you think your school includes your background knowledge and experiences?
7. **Do you like living here?**
   a. What do/don't you like?
   b. What do you do for fun?
8. **Have you ever been back to where your parents come from?**
   a. If yes
      i. How often?
      ii. Do you like it there?

iii. What do/don't you like?
       iv. Do you feel accepted as a national when you go back?
       v. How do you feel about that?
    b. If no
       i. Why not?
       ii. How do you feel about that?
    c. What do you miss from your home country when you are here?
       i. How do you deal with that?
9. Do you think that you will ever move back?
    a. How important is your country of origin to you?
    b. Where do you see yourself living in 10 years from now?
    c. What do you see yourself doing 10 years from now? Why?
10. Is there anything in your life that hasn't changed?
    a. If so, what?
    b. How do you like change?
    c. What do you think you would have been doing/ how do you think your life would have been if you never moved away?
11. Do you ever talk to someone about multicultural identity issues?
    a. If so, with who/in what situations?
    b. Do you ever learn about this in school?
    c. Do you ever read about it privately?
    d. Do you have a grown-up in your life that understands and supports you?

Intervjuspørsmål

1. Bakgrunnsspørsmål
    a. Når kom du hit?
    b. Hva er din statsborgerstatus? (Dette spørsmålet tok jeg bort i NYC, etter krav fra NYCDoE)
    c. Hvorfor flyttet du/foreldrene dine hit?
    d. Hva jobbet/r de med da og nå?
    e. Hvor mange ganger har du flyttet mellom land/byer?
    f. Hvem bor du sammen med her/ hvem er familiemedlemmene dine?
    g. Hvilke(t) språk snakker du hjemme og med hvem?
    h. Hvilke språk snakker du?
    i. Hvordan gjør du det på skolen? (nå og før)
    j. Hva slags skolegang hadde du i dine foreldrenes hjemland?
    k. Hvordan lærte du norsk, og hvordan var det?
    l. Hvordan er skolen din her? (mangfold og kvalitet)
2. Kan du fortelle om hvordan livet ditt har vært siden du flyttet?
3. Hvis folk spør hvor du kommer fra, hva svarer du da?
    a. Er det spørsmålet lett eller vanskelig å svare på?
    b. Betyr det at du ikke ønsker at folk skal få vite hvor du/foreldrene dine kommer fra – eller handler det ikke om det?
    c. Hvor vil du si du hører til?
    d. Hva skulle du ønske at du kunne svare når folk spør hvor du kommer fra?
4. Hvordan er det å komme fra forskjellige steder i stedet for ett?
    a. Ser du på deg selv som forskjellig fra dine jevnaldrede?
       i. Hvem er dine venner? (navn, opprinnelse, interesser)
       ii. Kan du fortelle om den første vennen du fikk etter at du kom til Oslo?
    b. Ser du på deg selv som forskjellig fra majoriteten i landet?
       i. Hvis ja, på hvilke måter da? (utseende, språk, tradisjoner, religion, tankegang, erfaringer, interesser, tilpasningsdyktighet)
       ii. Hvordan føles det å være annerledes?
       iii. Hvis nei, hvordan klarer du å passe inn?

       c.   Hvordan tror du andre ser på deg?
           i.   Føler du deg akseptert som nordmann?
          ii.   Hvor viktig er det for deg?
        iii.   Har du noen gang blitt mobbet eller opplevd rasisme/diskriminering?
       d.   Hvordan forholder dine foreldrene seg til din flerkulturelle identitet?
           i.   Hva forhandler du med dem om?

5. Hvilke ting er problematiske for deg i forhold til din bakgrunn? (savn/fordommer/bli forstått/ta valg/lojalitet/språk/rastløshet/status/relasjoner)
       a.   Hvordan takler du det?

6. Hvilke kvaliteter ser du på som styrker pga din bakgrunn?
(tilpasningsdyktighet/fleksibilitet/brobygger/forståelse/relasjoner/utvidet verdensbilde/språk/mange tilhørigheter/mange erfaringer)
       a.   Hvordan anvender/bruker du dem/ hvordan/når/hvor opplever du at de er nyttige?
       b.   Hva tror du at du kan bidra med til det norske samfunn pga din flerkulturelle bakgrunn? Hvorfor trenger Norge deg?
       c.   Hvordan synes du skolen din inkluderer din bakgrunnskunnskap og erfaringer?

7. Liker du å bo her?
       a.   Hva liker du (ikke)?
       b.   Hva gjør du når du skal more deg?

8. Har du noen gang vært tilbake i dine foreldres hjemland?
       a.   Hvis ja
           i.   Hvor ofte?
          ii.   Liker du deg der?
        iii.   Hva liker du (ikke)?
        iv.   Føler du deg akseptert som nasjonal når du drar tilbake?
          v.   Hva synes du om det?
       b.   Hvis nei
           i.   Hvorfor ikke?
          ii.   Hva synes du om det?
       c.   Hva savner du fra hjemlandet når du er her?
           i.   Hva gjør du med det?

9. Tror du at du noen gang kommer til å flytte tilbake?
       a.   Hvor viktig er ditt opprinnelsesland for deg?
       b.   Hvor ser du for deg at du kommer til å bo 10 år fra i dag?

10. Er det noe i livet ditt som ikke har forandret seg?
       a.   Hvis ja, hva da?
       b.   Hvordan liker du forandring?
       c.   Hva tror du at du ville ha holdt på med/ hvordan tror du livet ditt ville vært hvis dere aldri hadde flyttet?

11. Snakker du noen gang med noen om flerkulturelle tema?
       a.   Hvis ja, med hvem/ ved hvilke anledninger?
       b.   Lærer du noen gang om dette på skolen?
       c.   Leser du noen gang om det på privaten?
       d.   Har du noen voksne i livet ditt som du opplever forstår og støtter deg?

Appendix B

Introduction prior to interview:

There's a big difference between having a conversation and an interview. In a conversation I would share things with you, and in an interview I'm not supposed to. Let me tell you this about myself before we start.

I was born in Japan, and I grew up there. My parents are Norwegian missionaries, and we moved back and forth a lot between Norway and Japan. I have two brothers and one sister, and we mostly speak Norwegian to each other, but sometimes we mix in some Japanese. I speak Norwegian, English and Japanese, all of which I learnt mostly by living where I had to speak it. I went to a Japanese kindergarten and one trimester in Japanese first grade, but mostly I went to Norwegian school, both in Japan and in Norway. I mostly got good grades, until I went to an international high school in Japan and had to do everything in English, which was really hard and made me feel stupid. I've lived in Japan for a total of 13 years, and now I live in Oslo, Norway where I used to work as a teacher before I started this Master's program in Multicultural and International education.

So I have a personal interest in this topic, because I have thought a lot about what this background has done to me. I want to find out how you see yourself in terms of having a diverse background; what advantages and disadvantages you experience. So I'll be asking questions about that, and I appreciate any thoughts and stories you would share with me. Please feel free to elaborate and go off on a tangent. You may also choose not to answer one or more questions, and also stop and quit the interview if you wish. You may also contact me within two weeks after this interview to withdraw your data. If you think of anything you might want to add, you may contact me at any time later on.

Anything you say will of course be anonymous, and I will be using this information in my master's thesis in a way that people won't be able to trace back to you.

I would like to record this interview, because that allows me to pay better attention to what you're saying, since I wouldn't have to take too many notes to remember this interview afterwards. Is that ok?

Introduksjon i forkant av intervjuet:

Det er en stor forskjell mellom å ha en samtale og et intervju. I en samtale kan jeg dele ting med deg, og i et intervju så skal jeg ikke det. La meg fortelle deg dette om meg selv før vi starter.

Jeg er født og oppvokst i Japan. Foreldrene mine er norske misjonærer, og vi flyttet mye frem og tilbake mellom Norge og Japan. Jeg har to brødre og ei søster, og vi snakker stort sett norsk med hverandre, men noen ganger blander vi inn litt japansk. Jeg snakker norsk, engelsk og japansk, noe jeg hovedsakelig har lært av å bo steder hvor jeg måtte snakke språkene. Jeg gikk i japansk barnehage og noen måneder i japansk førsteklasse, men for det meste har jeg gått på norske skoler, både i Japan og i Norge. Jeg gjorde det stort sett bra på skolen, helt til jeg begynte på en internasjonal videregående i Japan, der alt foregikk på engelsk, noe som var veldig vanskelig og fikk meg til å føle meg dum. Jeg har bodd totalt 13 år i Japan, og nå bor jeg i Oslo, hvor jeg jobbet som ungdomsskolelærer før jeg begynte på denne masteren i Flerkulturell og internasjonal utdanning.

Så jeg har en personlig interesse i dette temaet, fordi jeg har tenkt mye på hva denne oppveksten har gjort med meg. Jeg ønsker å finne ut hvordan du ser på deg selv med hensyn til å ha en mangfoldig bakgrunn; hvilke fordeler og ulemper du opplever. Så jeg kommer til å spørre deg spørsmål om det, og jeg setter pris på tanker og historier du måtte ha å dele med meg. Ikke vær redd for å utdype eller ta av i ulike retninger. Du kan også velge ikke å svare på ett eller flere av spørsmålene, og å avslutte når som helst hvis du måtte ønske det. Du kan også kontakte meg innen to uker etter dette intervjuet og trekke deg. Hvis du kommer på noe mer du vil fortelle eller spørre om etterpå, kan du når som helst kontakte meg.

Alt du sier vil selvfølgelig være anonymt, og jeg vil bruke denne informasjonen i oppgaven min på en måte som gjør at folk ikke kan spore opplysningene tilbake til deg.

Jeg vil gjerne ta opp dette intervjuet, fordi det gjør at jeg bedre kan konsentrere meg om hva du sier, siden jeg ikke trenger å notere for mye for å huske intervjuet etterpå. Er det greit?

Appendix C

E-post til rådgivere i Oslos videregående skoler

Hei Rådgivere,

Jeg heter Berit Jørgensen og er masterstudent i Flerkulturell og internasjonal utdanning ved Høgskolen i Oslo. Jeg skal gjøre en studie av førstegenerasjons innvandrere/flyktninger og trenger å komme i kontakt med noen i alderen 17-19 for å gjøre avtale om ca. et timeslangt intervju. Kan du hjelpe meg?

Vedlagt finner du mer detaljert informasjon om prosjektet mitt. Målet er å komme i kontakt med aktuelle informanter før skoleferien starter, og ha gjort ferdig intervjuene før utgangen av august.

På forhånd takk!

Mvh Berit Jørgensen

Informasjonsbrev om forskningsprosjektet

Oslo, 7.mai, 2010

Til den det måtte angå

Mitt navn er Berit Jørgensen. Jeg er masterstudent i Flerkulturell og internasjonal utdanning ved Høgskolen i Oslo. En del av studiet er å skrive en hovedoppgave på 100 sider. I denne ønsker jeg å utforske og sammenligne hvordan ungdom i New York City og Oslo ser på dem selv når det gjelder å ha flerkulturell bakgrunn, særlig med tanke på hvilke fordeler og ulemper de opplever relatert til dette.

Som datagrunnlag for forskningen min vil jeg benytte semistrukturerte intervju. Jeg trenger:

- 10 personer som bor i Oslo for å sammenligne med 10 i New York City
- av begge kjønn
- mellom 17 og 19 år,
- som selv har flyttet fra deres foreldres hjemland på et tidspunkt de kan huske.
- De er enten innvandrere eller flyktninger,
- fra hvor som helst i verden så lenge det er utenfor Norge.
- De har bodd lenge nok i Oslo til å ha gjort seg erfaringer og tanker som de vil dele med meg om sitt nåværende liv.
- Jeg planlegger å gjennomføre intervjuene i Oslo mellom 11.juni og utgangen av august 2010.
- Masteroppgaven skal være ferdigstilt 2.mai 2011.

Min motivasjon for å velge dette temaet har med min egen personlige historie å gjøre. Jeg er født og oppvokst i Japan av norske foreldre, og de første 19 årene av mitt liv flyttet jeg mye frem og tilbake mellom Japan og Norge. Jeg har brukt mye av mitt voksne liv på å forsøke å forstå hvordan denne erfaringen har formet meg, noe som blant annet har fått meg til å studere engelsk, religion, sosialantropologi og norsk som andrespråk (NoA) som del av min lærerutdanning. De siste 10 årene har jeg jobbet som lærer i Oslo, i det siste hovedsakelig som mottakslærer på ungdomstrinnet. Jeg opplever å kjenne meg igjen i mine elever på så mange flere måter enn mange nordmenn som aldri har bodd i utlandet.

Mitt forskningsprosjekt er et forsøk på å utforske denne erfaringen, og jeg er særlig interessert i hvilke utfordringer og styrker du opplever på grunn av din flerkulturelle bakgrunn. Jeg vil sammenligne svarene jeg får i Oslo med dem i NYC. Jeg vil sammenligne likheter og forskjeller i erfaringene deres ved å bo i disse to byene med innvandrer- eller flyktningbakgrunn, og om deres felles historie med hensyn til det å ha flyttet til et nytt land i ung alder har gitt dere like egenskaper og utfordringer.

Hvis du selv eller noen du kjenner kunne tenke deg å stille til intervju, ville jeg blitt veldig takknemlig.

Du kan være trygg på at du kan velge ikke å svare på ett eller flere spørsmål, og du kan velge å trekke deg når som helst underveis. Hvis du velger å ta del, gjør du det av fri vilje, og med samtykke av foresatte hvis du er under 18 år. Du kan også kontakte meg i inntil to uker etter intervjuet og trekke dine svar.

Alt du svarer vil bli anonymisert, og jeg vil lagre og bruke din informasjon i masteroppgaven på en slik måte at folk ikke vil være i stand til å spore det tilbake til deg, i henhold til Norsk samfunnsvitenskaplig datatjenestes retningslinjer.

Jeg ønsker å ta opp intervjuene på lydbånd.

Berit Jørgensen   Kristin Skinstad van der Kooij
Masterstudent   Veileder
s160543@stud.hio.no   Kristin.Van-Der-Kooij@lui.hio.no
98 86 85 92   22 45 28 91

Navn på informant:: _____ Alder: _____

Opprinnelsesland: _____ Antall år i Oslo: _____

Kontaktinformasjon (telefon og/eller e-post): _____

_____

Appendix D

E-mails to New York schools

Hi,

I am a student at the Master's program of Multicultural and International Education at Oslo University College in Norway. I am in Brooklyn/NYC for 3 months to conduct research for my master's thesis, in which I wish to compare immigrant youth (age 17-19) living in NYC and Oslo, in terms of what challenges and assets they experience related to having moved from their parents' home country to NYC/Oslo.

I am looking for interviewees for my research project, and am wondering if you might have students who came to the US around the age of middle school? I would greatly appreciate it if you could help me get in contact with some (10 max) of your students who would be willing to be interviewed. See attachment for a more detailed letter of information for you if this seems like something you could pursue.

Thank you for your time!

Regards,
Berit Jorgensen

Information letter about my research project

Oslo, June 30th, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Berit Jørgensen. I am a Master's student at the Oslo University College, Norway, where I study Multicultural and International Education. Part of the program is to write a 100-page thesis, for which I want to explore and compare how young people in New York City and Oslo see themselves in terms of having a multicultural background; what advantages and disadvantages they experience related to this.

As data for my research I will be using semi-structured interviews. I need:

- current residents of New York City to compare to 10 in Oslo.

- People of both genders

- between the age of 17 and 19,

- who themselves have moved from their parents' country at a time they can remember.

- They are either immigrants, sojourners, or refugees,

- from anywhere in the world as long as it is from outside the United States.

- They have lived long enough in New York City to have experiences and thoughts to share with me about their current life, min. 3 years.

- I plan to conduct the interviews in NYC during Oct and Nov 2010.

- The thesis project is due on May 2nd 2011.

My motivation for choosing this topic has to do with my own personal history. I was born and raised in Japan to Norwegian parents, and I spent my first 19 years moving back and forth between Japan and Norway. I have spent a great deal of my adult life trying to understand how this experience has shaped me, leading me to study English, Religion, Social Anthropology, and Norwegian as a Second Language

(NSL) as part of my teacher's degree. For the past 10 years I have been working as a teacher in Oslo, recently mainly teaching NSL to 13-16-year-olds who have just arrived in Norway. I find that I can relate to my students in so many ways that set me apart from Norwegians who have never lived abroad.

My research project is an attempt to explore this experience, and I am especially interested in what challenges and assets young immigrants/refugees experience due to their multicultural background. I will compare the answers from NYC to those of Oslo. I want to see what similarities and differences they experience living in these two cities with a multicultural background, and if their common history of having moved to a new country at a young age has given them similar skills and challenges.

If you yourself or someone you know may be willing to be interviewed, it would be much appreciated.

Please be assured that during the interview the interviewees may choose not to answer one or more questions, and also stop and quit the interview at any time if they so wish. They would be participating in this research project freely, and if under 18, with parental consent. They may also contact me any time after the interview to withdraw your data. I would like to record the actual interviews.

Anything they say would of course be anonymous, and I will be storing and using the data for my Master's thesis in a way that people will not be able to trace back to the informants, according to New York City Department of Education guidelines for a research project of this kind.

I would be happy to send you a copy of my final thesis, which would hopefully be helpful in better understanding this particular group of students.

Berit Jørgensen   Kristin Skinstad van der Kooij

Master student   Supervisor

s160543@stud.hio.no   Kristin.Van-Der-Kooij@lui.hio.no

+1 (347) 278-2403   +47 22 45 28 91

Name of interviewee: _____ Age: _____

Country of origin: _____ No. of yrs. in NYC: _____

Contact information (phone and/or e-mail): _____

_____

Appendix E

"The pitch" when approaching potential interviewees in person

Excuse me. Do you have a minute?

My name is Berit Jorgensen and I am a Master student at a college in Norway. I was wondering if you might be able to help me find interviewees for my research project, which is beneficial to immigrant students?

I am looking for people who have moved to NYC three to 10 years ago, who are now between the age of 17 and 19. Does that apply to you, or do you know someone like that?

I am interested in the stories of people who have moved as kids. May I take your contact information?

Appendix F

Original quotes from the interviews conducted in Norwegian:

[14] For det er sånn lærere, de er alltid sånn, går det bra hjemme, er det noe du vil dele med meg, jeg vil ikke dele noe med deg, jeg har det bra hjemme, trodde du også skulle være litt sånn, for vi ler alltid av det sånn for vi har det bra hjemme. "Åssen er det, du holdt på å sovne i går i timen, går det bra, gjør du alt for mye arbeid hjemme?" "Nei, jeg gjør ikke det." Trodde du skulle være noe liknende da.

[26] Forsker: Hvem er du blitt som et resultat av at du både er norsk og Xn, til forskjell fra kusinene i X eller nordmenn som aldri har bodd i utlandet? Har du tenkt på det noen ganger?

Har ikke tenkt noe særlig på det, men…

Forsker: Tror du er noen fordel å være –

Være fra X?

Forsker: Være flerkulturell.

Det er jo fordeler. … Jeg har jo den Xn delen i meg når jeg feirer … tradisjoner og samlinger og ja, … de går med meg hele tiden, språket mitt, og sånn.

[27] Jeg kan tilpasse meg dem, jeg kan være en tulling der, jeg kan hjelpe dem, sånn sett er det greit, men vi kjenner ikke hverandre lenger, så – kanskje det kan spille en rolle.

Vi snakket heller sammen med gutter, guttene var greie. Kanskje fordi de ville prøve seg eller no, jeg vet ikke, men jentene kunne jeg ikke forstå, guttene var greie, jeg kunne tulle med dem, gå ut med dem, men jentene var sånn – "nå er det mat, kom og spis mat, spis", det ble aldri noe mer enn det.

[28] Forsker: Er du flink til å tilpasse deg de forskjellige folkene du er sammen med? Du snakket litt om det tidligere, men.

Ja, det er jeg. Jeg klarer å komme inn i gjengen, det gjør jeg, så… Kanskje ikke snakke så mye etter at jeg har hatt en samtale med dem. Jeg mener, jeg greier ikke holde det veldig sånn – hva skal jeg si? Jeg greier å tilpasse meg, jeg gjør ikke noe mer enn det, kan du si, kanskje jeg ikke tenker over det. Skjønner du hva jeg mener?

[29] Først var det veldig vanskelig. Å bli vant til folk, og været og hvordan systemet er. Men etter hvert synes jeg det blir bedre.

[30] I begynnelsen da jeg kom, så drakk folk og røykte i en veldig lav alder. Det var litt rart. Etter hvert så ble jeg vandt til det og så tenkte jeg; ja, det er vanlig, hvorfor skal jeg snakke sånn? Og nå er jeg med venner og jeg drikker ikke.

[31] Det dårlige er at jeg ikke har så mange gode venner her i Norge som jeg hadde i X. Og det er kjedelig, jeg går ikke ofte ut. … Og jeg ville ha vært ferdig med videregående hvis jeg hadde vært i X. … Og jeg savner hele familien.

[32] Forsker: Er det en fordel at du har lært norsk? (mm) Hvorfor?

Eh (hehe) – fordi det finnes mange norske i X. Fordi for eksempel hvis jeg har bodd her i Norge og skjønner norsk, og hvis jeg drar tilbake, kanskje kan jeg jobbe i en norsk bedrift i mitt hjemland.

[33] Men til slutt så forsto jeg at jeg ikke opprettholdt språket mitt like godt som jeg kunne ha gjort. Selvfølgelig så begynner det å bli vanskelig når jeg både har fransk og engelsk og norsk og russisk å opprettholde, så.

[34] Det som er fordelen med det livet jeg har levd er at jeg har lært mye. Mye vanskeligheter. Jeg har lært hva som er syke foreldre, hva det betyr å være i fare, og hva det betyr å ikke ha frihet.

[35] Jeg vet ikke, jeg – det er kanskje måten jeg oppfører meg på eller. Jeg har jo lettere for å ta i mot mennesker med forskjellig bakgrunn, da. Det har jeg. Det er sånn at jeg tenker at jeg ikke er så veldig rasistisk på en måte, for jeg er jo fra et annet land selv.

Forsker: Ta i mot, hva mener du med det?

Bli venn med dem og på en måte – jeg vet ikke jeg – være snill mot dem i stedet for å dømme dem, på en måte. Pga hvem de er. Så hvis for eksempel at – Russland og Georgia har hatt mange problem og sånn, så hvis det er en som kommer fra Georgia så er det ikke sånn at jeg kommer til å dømme den personen, fordi jeg bor i Norge og – selv om jeg fremdeles har den r bakgrunnen, så skjønner jeg at jeg har lettere for å gjøre det her enn i Russland, nei her i Norge, fordi i Russland så hadde folk rundt meg dømt den personen, ikke sant. Det gjør ikke folk rundt meg, og da føler jeg at jeg når jeg kommer til Russland, hvis det kommer en fra Georgia, så vil jeg ikke dømme dem på samme måte pga at jeg har sett et så veldig flerkulturelt miljø her i Norge.

[36] Jeg føler at med alle de vennene jeg har vært med er jeg mer moden. De som er født i N og oppvokst her på min alder, jeg synes jeg kan være som en rådgiver for dem, jeg er mer moden enn dem siden jeg opplevd mer fra jeg var liten. I X kunne jeg som tiåring rydde, lage mat, gjøre masse ting, men i N kunne de nesten ikke rydde rommet sitt sjøl, de får sjokk på kjøkkenet og sånn, jeg driver og lager mat som mamma. Er skikkelig flink. De sier: åssen kan du det? De får sjokk, ikke sant? Jeg føler jeg er mer moden enn dem og sånn.

[37] Hvis det gjelder en politi så vet jeg hva Xn tenker, hva det er de kan gjøre, ikke sant. Så det blir lettere for meg hvis de tviler på en Xn så vet jeg hvordan jeg skal "fange" han. Jeg forstår språket, vet hva han tenker, så der kan jeg hjelpe norske.

[38] Jeg sier jeg er fra X, og bor i Norge.

Forsker: Er det et lett spørsmål å svare på?

På en måte, ja. Jeg kan ikke si at jeg er norsk, for jeg er ikke norsk. Men jeg kan si jeg er fra X og jeg bor i Norge. Så det er ikke helt vanskelig, for når vi bor i Norge er vi på en måte norsk. Så det er ikke så vanskelig.

[39] Mest Norge. Jeg vet ikke helt. Jeg bor jo i Norge. Jeg ville ikke flytte tilbake til X og bo der. Jeg ville bare være på besøk, jeg føler Norge er hjemlandet mitt, men jeg føler også at X er en del av meg. Det er litt vanskelig, jeg vet ikke. Jeg føler jeg er mest fra Norge, tror jeg.

[40] Jeg sier jeg er fra Norge fordi jeg er født her, og foreldrene mine er fra Pakistan, og vi har diskusjoner om det på skolen og sånn.

Forsker: Har dere det?

Ja, faktisk. Jeg og to av venninnene mine mener at vi er fra Norge, og vi er jo blitt født her. Og er vi i Pakistan er vi ikke pakistanere og de sier de er fra utlandet, de kommer fra Norge, det er sånn. Jeg mener jeg er fra Norge, jeg er norsk, jeg sliter med en del ting, men jeg ser ikke meg selv som en pakistaner. Fordi jeg bor her i Norge og fordi, ja, fremtidsplaner skal jeg, skal de bli utført her eller skal jeg til Pakistan. Jeg har ikke planer om å reise tilbake eller bo der eller no, så.

Forsker: Men det sier meg at det spørsmålet ikke er så lett å svare på?

Ja, det er sant fordi det holder ikke å si: "Jeg er fra…" De forventer mer, så jeg kan godt si: "Jeg er norsk," men folk forventer mer. Det er huden som beskriver – det er noe mer, i hvert fall når jeg presenterte meg i klassen, i fjor. "Ja, hvor er du fra?" Like før jeg skulle gi ordet til bestevenninnen, "ja, hvor er du fra?" "Jo, Pakistan." Så det er sånn, det pakistanske henger etter deg sånn – det vil ta med deg. Jeg kan si foreldrene mine er fra Pakistan, det er de som kan mer enn meg, men jeg bor jo her, jeg kan ikke si noe mer.

[41] Forsker: hvis folk spør hvor du kommer fra, hva svarer du da?

Jeg svarer at jeg kommer fra Russland.

Forsker: Det gjør du? (mm) Hender det at du skulle ønske at du kunne svare noe annet?

Nei, det gjør jeg ikke. Jeg synes ikke det er et problem for meg å være russisk. Selvfølgelig noen ganger så føler jeg at det hadde vært lettere om jeg hadde blitt født i Norge og bare hadde sluppet å adoptere meg til kulturen og alt det der. Men jeg føler fremdeles at jeg ikke vil være noe annet enn russisk. For jeg har for eksempel det med statsborgerskap at det kan hende at jeg må velge mellom de to –

Forsker: For du har begge deler?

Nei, jeg har bare russisk. (å ja) Man kan få det etter 3 år, tror jeg... Men hun søkte ikke, for hun ville vente, og nå har de begynt med en sånn ny lov, sånn at hvis hun søker nå, så kan det hende at vi må velge. Og jeg vet ikke hva jeg vil velge. For jeg har på en måte ikke lyst til å gi fra meg det russisk, for jeg føler at jeg har gitt fra meg veldig mye. For jeg bor ikke med min familie, og jeg bruker ikke russisk så veldig mye, for jeg har ingen russiske venner, sånn her i Norge, for det er nesten ingen her.

42 Jeg føler at jeg på en måte prøver å tviholde på den bakgrunnen jeg har.

43 Det blir jo vanskeligere på en måte etter hvert, fordi jeg blir jo veldig knyttet til kulturen i Norge, for jeg er på en måte en del av den. Men når jeg er i Russland så føler jeg – første året så følte jeg at jeg var russisk og andre så – når jeg kom til Russland, så andre gangen så følte jeg at jeg var mer norsk enn russisk, og at folk så på meg som en utlending, liksom – i Russland. Og det var veldig rart, og da jeg var der i fjor, så var det mange som sa at jeg hadde begynt å få sånn aksent og at jeg ikke klarte å snakke ordentlig russisk og sånn.

44 Så da blir det på en måte sånn.

45 Jeg hører til i begge land. Jeg er født i X, og så bor jeg her, så Norge er jo mitt andre land. Så jeg hører til i begge nå.

46 Det er landet mitt. Du ble født i Japan, ikke sant? Men du vet hvordan det er, du står imellom. Du kan ikke si, men jeg er født i X, og oppvokst i X, men jeg kom til Norge – Norge ga meg noe bra. Så jeg kan si jeg er nesten sånn imellom. Jeg kan ikke si jeg velger X fordi jeg er vokst opp der, det er dårlig miljø. Jeg kom til Norge fordi, liksom jeg fortsetter livet med bra miljø.

51 Jo, det tror jeg, fordi det er så veldig flerkulturelt, at det er så mange fra forskjellige land, sånn at hvordan du oppfører deg, kan både være i forhold til ditt land, eller din religion eller hva du nå tenker, ikke sant. Alle er – ingen er like på en måte her.

52 Her kan jeg gå for mine interesser. Hadde noen tvunget meg hadde jeg ikke hatt lyst. Her velger jeg det selv, her lærte jeg det selv, så da tenkte jeg: "Jeg tar det, det er viktig."

53 Jeg kommer jo opprinnelig derfra, så hvorfor skal jeg lyve til dem? Selv om de liker meg, så må de like meg der jeg kommer fra. Ikke bare at jeg bor her eller jeg må være norsk eller med en annen bakgrunn. det blir et litt rasistisk spørsmål hvis de spør meg og de ikke liker den bakgrunnen (hehe). Så det er ikke vanskelig for meg.

54 Forsker: Du sier at du svarer at du kommer fra X, men du skulle ønske du kunne si du var norsk? Du ønsker å bli norsk statsborger fordi Norge tar godt vare på deg?

Ja, så klart, ikke sant? Jeg vil gi tilbake til Norge med alt jeg kan, gjøre alt jeg kan for Norge, alt jeg har av energi, gi det tilbake. For mine foreldre har lært meg, en person er snill mot deg og hjelper deg, hjelp tilbake. Det er sånn. En person er slem mot deg, ikke gå i nærheten, gå fra den personen, rett og slett. Det er det jeg har lært meg, så hvis en person gjør bra ting mot meg, vil jeg gjøre alt jeg kan for at person skal ha et bra bilde av meg. Derfor vil jeg gjøre alt jeg kan for Norge.

55 Forsker: Kan du si det, da, hvis folk spør?

Ja, jeg kan si det, det er min mening.

Forsker: Men hvis folk spør: Hvor kommer du fra? Kan du si Norge?

Nei, for du vet ungdommer, ikke sant – for jeg har ikke fått norsk statsborgerskap enda, ikke sant? Hvis jeg sier: jeg er fra Norge sier de: "men har du norsk statsborgerskap?" Så sier jeg nei, og da har jeg drite meg ut, men når jeg blir statsborger sier jeg: fra Norge (hehe). Det er sånn.

Forsker: Tror du folk vil si: OK, du er statsborger, da er du fra N?

Nei, folk tenker sånn, ikke sant, hvorfor sier du at du er fra Norge? De forstår ikke sånt, de sier: "hvorfor er dere i Norge hvis dere ikke liker Norge? Norge forsvarer dere jo, dere kunne ikke bo i deres hjemland, dere kunne ikke si deres mening, hvorfor kom dere til Norge?" Når jeg snakker med en person, må jeg respektere den person, uansett hva, jeg respekterer Norge utrolig mye og norske så mye. Da er det sånn hos meg, men jeg vet ikke hvordan andre tenker.

[56] Jeg er en snill person (hehe). Kanskje hvis det var noen andre som var her i stedet for meg og som var terrorist, så ville det ikke være noe bra for Norge. Men jeg skal aldri gjøre noe dumt slik at Norge ikke vil ha meg. så jeg skal kjempe for å være meg selv og en snill person – mot alle, også mot de som plager meg, fordi de kommer til å vite en dag at det de gjorde mot meg var feil, på samme måte som de jentene i klassen min.

[57] Når jeg er hjemme så må jeg oppføre meg som en Xn ung jente, men når jeg er ute, er jeg norsk.

[58] Det er det jeg sier er litt stress, ikke sant? Når man er kommet til Norge når man er ung vet man ikke helt hva man skal gjøre. Det kan være konflikter i familien pga disse tingene, og kan være litt sure på deg. Så det er ganske mye stress. Det er mange jenter som sliter med sånt. Ikke bare meg.

[59] Det hadde ikke skjedd noe, men de hadde sikkert ledd eller noen sånt (hehe). Fordi det har jeg aldri gjort. Men jeg tuller med faren min og sånn, at jeg skal på fest og skal ha ny kjæreste og sånn (hehe). Men vi bare ler. Jeg har veldig god kontakt med moren og faren min. Hvis det skjer noe, så sier jeg fra med en gang, og jeg får aldri kjeft fra dem, fordi de synes at jeg har kjempet så mye med livet mitt og jeg har hjulpet dem så mye at jeg vet hva jeg gjør, og jeg kan aldri gjøre noe feil.

[60] Det viktigste er å passe på hvem du blir kjent med. Og det viktigste er at først, så må du lære språket og etterpå kan du tenke på alle andre ting. For eksempel hvis man flytter for å bli rik, det er feil. Først lærer man språket, så lover og regler, og så kan man gå etter det man kom for.

[61] Hender det at dere på skolen snakker om sånne flerkulturelle tema?

Ja, vi snakker om det. Vi har sammenlignet, Iran, Pakistan, Irak, Polen og Europa og sånn, og klima og kulturer og sånn. Og alle var enige i at vi har blitt forandret (hehe) da vi flyttet til Norge.

[62] Men jeg er litt uenig med dem, det kommer jo an på hvem du søker jobb hos, de andre mente at hvis du endrer navn så kan du få jobb, men hvis ikke så er det vanskelig, men har du bra erfaring, har du kunnskap, da får du jobb, så jeg synes det ikke skal være avhengig av navn. Kan hende noen har vært borti noe sånt, men jeg har ikke.

[63] Her får jeg masse muligheter. (For eksempel?) For eksempel utdanning og skole, og så er lærerne skikkelig snille, og folk er også snille. Og så er det en ting at ungdommene kan jobbe her.

Appendix G

October 27, 2010

Ms. Berit Joergensen
207 12th st.
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Dear Ms. Joergensen:

Re: How do young people between 17 and 19 living in New York City and Oslo, with immigrant or refugee parents, see themselves in terms of multicultural identity linked to challenges and assets?

I am happy to inform you that your research study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the New York City Department of Education. However, in order to begin the research you must meet the following conditions:

1. Approval by this office does not guarantee access to any particular school, individual or data. It is your responsibility to make appropriate contacts and get the required permissions and consent before initiating the study. Participation in your research must be strictly voluntary.

   When requesting permission to conduct research, submit the Approval to Conduct Research form, a copy of the Proposal Summary form, and this letter to the principal.

   Please be aware that this approval is in effect for one year. Any continuation of your study after a year requires re-approval from the Proposal Review Committee.

   The following written consents are required:

   A. Each principal agreeing to participate must sign the enclosed Approval to Conduct Research form. A completed and signed form for every school included in your research must be returned to this office prior to beginning your research.

   B. In addition to the above written consent, all participants (e.g., administrators, teachers, parents, and students) must be informed that they are not required to participate in the study, and that there are no consequences for non-participation or withdrawal.

   Your report of the study should not include the identification of the superintendency, district, any school, student, or staff member. A coding system should be used if necessary.

2. Please be aware that all researchers visiting schools will need to have their fingerprints on file at the Department of Education prior to the start of field work. This rule includes all research in schools conducted with students and/or staff. The cost is $115.00. See attached fingerprinting materials.

Please remember when requesting permission to conduct research to submit an Approval to Conduct Research form for each participating school, a copy of the Proposal Summary form, and this letter to the principal. The Approval to Conduct Research forms must be returned to the Research and Policy Support Group in order for you to begin your research.

Please send us a copy of your final report as we are most interested in the results of your research.

Moreover, we require a study abstract which includes all study findings for our records. Please send an electronic copy of the documentation of your research to RPSGresearch@schools.nyc.gov or send a printed copy to: Proposal Review Committee, NYC Department of Education, 52 Chambers Street, Room 309, New York, NY 10007.

If you have any questions about implementing your research, please contact us at (212) 374-7659, or by e-mail at RPSGresearch@schools.nyc.gov.

Sincerely,
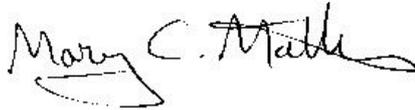
Mary C. Mattis, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

c: Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger
   Barbara Dworkowitz

Kristin Skinstad van der Kooij
Avdeling for lærerutdanning og internasjonale studier
Høgskolen i Oslo
Postboks 4 St. Olavs plass
0130 OSLO

Vår dato: 28.06.2010   Vår ref 24393 / 2 / LT   Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILRÅDING AV BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 11.05.2010. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

24393	*Flerkulturelle ressurser og utfordringer hos ungdom i New York City og Oslo*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Høgskolen i Oslo, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Kristin Skinstad van der Kooij*
Student	*Berit Jørgensen*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, vedlagte prosjektvurdering - kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven/-helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk_stud/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/prosjektoversikt.jsp.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 02.05.2011, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen
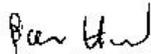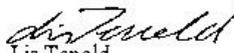
Bjørn Henrichsen   Lis Tenold

Kontaktperson:Lis Tenold tlf: 55 58 33 77
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering
Kopi: Berit Jørgensen, Edvard Griegs allé 13, 0479 OSLO

FILIAL LAKKEGATA
Rosenhoff Voksenopplæringssenter
Lakkegata 79   Rett kop.
P.b. 4691 Sofienberg, 0506 Oslo
Tlf. 23 03 77 00 Fax 23 03 77 01

Appendix H

Informed assent form

<u>Purpose of the research</u>

I want to find out how you see yourself in terms of having a multicultural background; what advantages and disadvantages you experience. I will be interviewing people of both genders between the age of 17 and 19, who have moved from your parents' country at a time you can remember. You are either immigrants or refugees, from anywhere in the world as long as it is from outside the United States. You have lived long enough in New York City to have experiences and thoughts to share with me about your current life.

I will compare your answers to about 10 others living in NYC and 10 in Oslo, Norway. I want to see what similarities and differences you experience living in these two cities with an immigrant/refugee background, and if your common history of having moved to a new country at a young age has given you similar skills and challenges.

<u>Background for the research</u>

I am a Master's student at the Oslo University College, Norway, where I study Multicultural and International Education. Part of the program is to write a 100-page thesis, due May 2nd 2011. These interviews will provide the data for this research, and will be conducted in NYC during October and November 2010.

My motivation for choosing this topic has to do with my own personal history. I was born and raised in Japan to Norwegian parents, and I spent my first 19 years moving back and forth between Japan and Norway. I have spent a great deal of my adult life trying to understand how this experience has shaped me, leading me to study English, Religion, Social Anthropology, and Norwegian as a Second Language (NSL) as part of my teacher's degree. For the past 10 years I have been working as a teacher in Oslo, recently mainly teaching NSL to 13-16-year-olds who have just arrived in Norway. I find that I can relate to my students in so many ways that set me apart from many Norwegians who have never lived abroad. My research project is an attempt to explore this experience, and I am especially interested in what challenges and assets you experience due to your multicultural background.

So during the interviews I will be asking questions about that, and I appreciate any thoughts and stories you would share with me. Please feel free to elaborate and go off on a tangent. You may also choose not to answer one or more questions, and also pause and quit the interview at any time if you so wish. You would be participating in this research project freely, and if under 18, with parental consent. You may also contact me any time after the interview to withdraw your data, or to add to your answers or ask questions.

Participating in a research of this kind would at best make you more conscious of who you are, which is thought to be psychologically beneficial. Starting such a process might also open up wounds. This is not a deep psychological study, however, and such risks should be minimal. However, should you need to talk to anybody, your school councilor is informed about the project and can see you upon request.

Anything you say will of course be anonymous, and I will be storing and using this information in my Master's thesis in a way that people will not be able to trace back to you, according to rules and regulations of the Department of Education of New York City, as well as the Norwegian Research Council.

I would like to record the actual interview, because that allows me to pay better attention to what you will be saying, and because I would not have to take too many notes to remember the interview afterwards. The interview usually takes a little over an hour.

If you understand and agree to the above, please sign and give me the requested information below.

Berit Jørgensen

+1(347)278-2403

Name of interviewee: _____ Age: _____

_____   _____
               (date and place)   (interviewee's signature)

I allow the interview to be recorded under the conditions outlined above.

_____   _____
               (date and place)   (interviewee's signature)

Informed consent form

<u>Purpose of the research</u>

I want to find out how you child sees him-/herself in terms of having a multicultural background; what advantages and disadvantages he/she experiences. I will be interviewing people of both genders between the age of 17 and 19, who have moved from their parents' country at a time they can remember. You are either immigrants or refugees, from anywhere in the world as long as it is from outside the United States. Your child has lived long enough in New York City to have experiences and thoughts to share with me about his/her current life.

I will compare your child's answers to about 10 others living in NYC and 10 in Oslo, Norway. I want to see what similarities and differences they experience living in these two cities with an immigrant/refugee background, and if their common history of having moved to a new country at a young age has given them similar skills and challenges.

<u>Background for the research</u>

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So during the interviews I will be asking questions about that, and I appreciate any thoughts and stories he/she would share with me. Please know that he/she is free to elaborate and go off on a tangent. Your child may also choose not to answer one or more questions, and also pause and quit the interview at any time if he/she so wishes. He/she would be participating in this research project freely, and with parental consent. Your child may also contact me any time after the interview to withdraw his/her data, or to add to his/her answers or ask questions.

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Anything your child says will of course be anonymous, and I will be storing and using this information in my Master's thesis in a way that people will not be able to trace back to him/her, according to rules and regulations of the Department of Education of New York City, as well as the Norwegian Research Council.

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If you understand and agree to the above, please sign and give me the requested information below.

Berit Jørgensen

+1(347)278-2403

Name of interviewee: _____ Age: _____

_____   _____

          (date and place)   (parental signature)

I allow the interview to be recorded under the conditions outlined above.

_____   _____

          (date and place)   (parental signature)

Informert samtykkeerklæring

Mål for forskningen

Jeg ønsker å finne ut hvordan du ser på deg selv med tanke på det å ha en flerkulturell bakgrunn; hvilke fordeler og ulemper du opplever. Jeg kommer til å intervjue ungdommer av begge kjønn mellom 17 og 19 år, som har flyttet fra sine foreldres hjemland på et tidspunkt de husker. Du er enten innvandrer eller flyktning, fra hvor som helt i verden utenfor Norge. Du har bodd lenge nok i Oslo til å ha erfaringer og tanker å dele om livet ditt her og nå.

Jeg vil sammenligne dine svar med svar fra ca 10 andre i Oslo og 10 i New York City, USA. Jeg vil sammenligne likheter og forskjeller i erfaringene deres ved å bo i disse to byene med innvandrer- eller flyktningbakgrunn, og om deres felles historie med hensyn til det å ha flyttet til et nytt land i ung alder har gitt dere like egenskaper og utfordringer.

Bakgrunnen for forskningen

Selv er jeg masterstudent ved Høgskolen i Oslo, hvor jeg studerer Flerkulturell og internasjonal utdanning. En del av programmet er å skrive en 100 siders masteroppgave. Disse intervjuene vil danne grunnlag for min forskning, og vil i Oslo bli foretatt mellom juni og august 2010.

Min motivasjon for å velge dette temaet har med min egen personlige historie å gjøre. Jeg er født og oppvokst i Japan av norske foreldre, og de første 19 årene av mitt liv flyttet jeg mye frem og tilbake mellom Japan og Norge. Jeg har brukt mye av mitt voksne liv på å forsøke å forstå hvordan denne erfaringen har formet meg, noe som blant annet har fått meg til å studere engelsk, religion, sosialantropologi og norsk som andrespråk (NoA) som del av min lærerutdanning. De siste 10 årene har

jeg jobbet som lærer i Oslo, i det siste hovedsakelig som mottakslærer på ungdomstrinnet. Jeg opplever å kjenne meg igjen i mine elever på så mange flere måter enn mange nordmenn som aldri har bodd i utlandet. Mitt forskningsprosjekt er et forsøk på å utforske denne erfaringen, og jeg er særlig interessert i hvilke utfordringer og styrker du opplever på grunn av din flerkulturelle bakgrunn.

Så jeg kommer til å stille spørsmål om det i intervjuene, og jeg setter pris på alle tanker og historier du måtte ha å dele med meg. Ikke vær redd for å utdype og ta sidespor. Du kan også velge ikke å svare på ett eller flere spørsmål, og du kan velge å trekke deg når som helst underveis. Hvis du velger å ta del, gjør du det av fri vilje, og med samtykke av foresatte hvis du er under 18 år. Du kan også kontakte meg i inntil to uker etter intervjuet og trekke dine svar, og legge til eller stille spørsmål når som helst.

Alt du svarer vil bli anonymisert, og jeg vil lagre og bruke din informasjon i masteroppgaven på en slik måte at folk ikke vil være i stand til å spore det tilbake til deg, i henhold til Norsk samfunnsvitenskaplig datatjenestes retningslinjer.

Jeg ønsker å ta opp intervjuene, fordi det vil gjøre det lettere å konsentrere meg om hva du sier under intervjuet uten å måtte ta så mange notater for å huske intervjuet etterpå.

Vær vennlig og skriv under og fyll ut feltene nedenfor dersom du forstår og samtykker til informasjonen ovenfor.

Berit Jørgensen

Navn på informant: _____ Alder: _____

Kontaktinformasjon (telefon og/eller e-post): _____

_____

_____   _____

(dato og sted)   (informantens signatur)

_____   _____

(dato og sted)   (foresattes signatur hvis 17)