If I speak the language, am I Norwegian?
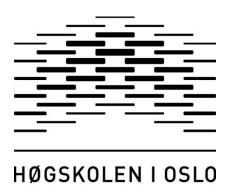
The role of activities and cultural experiences on perceived identities of minority youth in Norway.

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HØGSKOLEN I OSLO OG AKERSHUS

FOREWORD

All glory and praise to the Almighty God for making this dream a reality.

The process of doing this research has been very enriching process personally at varying levels.

I am immensely thankful for the guidance and motivation from my supervisor Professor Mona Sandbæk who went beyond her role when necessary to assist and encourage me throughout this process. Her constructive criticism, understanding and patience all made a significant difference.

I am also thankful to the youths who were willing to be interviewed and the Red Cross for granting me permission to interview youths at their Red Cross Resource Centre in Oslo. Thanks also to my lecturers and classmates who contributed in one way or the other in my research process.

Special thanks and gratitude to my family, my wife and friends for their invaluable support.

CONTENTS

SAMMENDRAG

Hovedfokuset for min forskning var å finne ut om og hvordan aktiviteter og kulturopplevelser av minoritetsungdom i Norge har en tendens til å påvirke dannelsen av deres oppfattede identiteter. Minoritetsungdom var i denne sammenheng definert som unge mennesker i alderen mellom 18-25, født utenfor Norge i et ikke –vestlig land. Forskningen gikk ut på å få innsikt i hvordan disse ungdommene deltok i aktiviteter fra ulike eller en blanding av kulturer. Det er også undersøkt om og hvordan disse aktiviteten viste eventuelle forskjeller mellom kulturer og hvordan de bidrar til dannelsen av ungdommenes oppfattelse av identitet og tilhørighet. Min problemstilling er; Hvordan aktiviteter og kulturelle erfaringer bidrar til opplevelse av identitet hos minoritetsungdom i Norge?

Det teoretiske perspektivet jeg brukte i denne forskningen er Meads symbolske interaksjonisme. Symbolsk interaksjonisme er i utgangspunktet en teori om hvordan folk, gjennom samhandling er i stand til å danne betydningene av andre personer og betydningene av seg selv. Andre viktige begreper jeg tar bruk av i min forsking er identitet, minoritet og kultur.

For å få data for arbeidet mitt, brukte jeg kvalitative intervjuer som ble utviklet fra et fenomenologisk perspektiv, slik at informantene kan være så tydelige som mulig om sine erfaringer. Jeg gjennomførte kvalitative intervjuer med åtte ungdommer som var medlemmer av Røde Kors Ressurssentre, der ungdommer deltar i en rekke aktiviteter.

Fra mine funn, fungerer aktiviteter som en kontaktpunkt for sosialinteraksjon for mange av disse ungdommene både i og utenfor Røde Kors Ressurssentrene. Disse aktiviteten påvirker deres atferd, spesielt i måten de reagerer eller tolker ulike sosiale situasjoner. Mønstre av akkulturasjon kunne identifiseres, som disse ungdommene mente, var å endre måten de presenterte og så seg selv på avhengig av hvilken sosial sammenheng de befant seg i, justeringer der det var nødvending og å gjøre det beste ut av begge kulturer. Det var også et interessant funn at disse aktivitetene og kulturelle opplevelser ikke bare påvirket deres oppfattede identiteter, men fungerte også som et grunnlag for ungdommenes resiliens i samfunnet. De var i stand til å bruke sine bindestrek-identiteter for å finne kreative måter å tilpasse seg det norske samfunnet og overvinne de utfordringene de står overfor.

ABSTRACT

The main focus of my research was to find out if and how activities and cultural experiences of minority youth in Norway tend to influence the formation of their perceived identities. Minority youth were in this context defined as young people aged between 18-25, born outside Norway in a non-western country. The research sought to get insight in how these youths participate in activities from different or a mix of cultures. It also examined if and how these activities bridge eventual gaps between cultures and how they contribute to the formation of the youths perceived identity and sense of belonging. My research question is; *How do activities and experiences of culture contribute to the perceived identity of minority youth in Norway?*

The theoretical perspective I used in this research is Meads Symbolic Interactionism. The symbolic interactionism theory is basically about how through interaction, people are able to form meanings of other individuals and meanings of themselves. Other important concepts I make use of in my research are identity, minority and culture.

In order to get the data for my work, I used qualitative interviews which were developed from a phenomenological perspective aimed ensuring that the informants could be as explicit as possible about their experiences. I conducted qualitative interviews with eight youths who were members of the Red Cross Resource Centres, where youths engage in a variety of activities.

From my findings, activities do serve as a contact point for social interaction for many of these youths both within and out of the Red Cross Resource Centres. These activities influence their behaviour especially in the way they react or interpret different social situations. Patterns of acculturation could be identified as these youths were modifying the way they presented and viewed themselves depending on which of the social settings they found themselves in, making adjustments where necessary and making the most of both cultures. It was also an interesting finding that these activities and cultural experiences not only influenced their perceived identities but also served as a basis for the resilience of these youths within the society. They were able to use their hyphenated identities to find creative ways to adapt to the Norwegian society and overcome the challenges they faced.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Discourse on immigration in Norway has been fluctuating from period to period depending on different factors related to what is affecting the society at any given point in time for example, it could be high criminality, economic crisis or even terrorism. But since 2011, the public discourses in the media and in articles have moved from issues of security to questions of preserving culture and identity even though recent terrorist attacks are beginning to bring back questions of security. These discourses about immigration have helped reduce identity to an ethnic and racial understanding of history and being a nation (Ericksen 2012). Discourse about the culture of immigrants and the Norwegian culture especially about what is acceptable or unacceptable has made identity more of a construction of being an insider or an outsider, 'us' and 'others'. Under such claims and from this perspective amongst others, immigrants are perceived by many as a threat to the Norwegian nation and the welfare state. (Mahmoud 2013).

When it comes to egalitarianism and minimal social inequalities, the Nordic countries are widely perceived as having positive alternatives. They are often seen as decent hosts, who promote inclusion especially for young people with immigrant backgrounds. Whereby the youths may be included to some extent in sections of work, leisure, social and political life. Their systems are perceived as being able to provide fair opportunities especially in their egalitarian educational system to minority youth. In spite of all the positive things mentioned about the egalitarian system especially in relation to education and minority youth, there are still shortcomings in relation to educational practices, labour market, housing as well as other areas within these Nordic societies (Gudmundson, 2013). Some educational fields provide less obstacles to immigrants like medicine, business, natural science, while others, given that they are built on the inherited culture of the host country like humanities, social science have more obstacles. It is often reported that girls from immigrant families appear more included than boys in the educational system in general. But immigrants are also known to always find a way to get into closed occupational structures even though some may succeed and others may not (ibid).

The idea of the presence of such inclusion related opportunities has fostered the debate about the successful integration of immigrant youth, with most research and newspaper articles or public debates focusing on their effect on the social system. These debates or articles have often presented them in a negative light especially in the media with them often being related to crime and other social problems (Bøhn 2008). These have enhanced stereotypes about this group with some of these reports basing the cause of these to an identity crisis and difficulties of immigrant youth to adapt to the Norwegian society which could presumably be a possible reason for their over representation in the child welfare institution. In these discourses about immigrant youths, they are mostly portrayed as threats (criminals, violent) or as problems (economic, social and cultural burdens to society) and often as being of lesser value. But other studies in this same area also show that youths in these contexts often use their condition as a resource for cultural creativity and agency (Mainsah 2013).

The discourses which I have mentioned above with varying perspectives when it comes to immigrants especially the experiences of immigrant youths caught my attention. As an immigrant who has also experienced some of the issues raised, these coupled with my interest in how immigrant youth in Norway are able to navigate through the society in the course of which they learn new things about themselves and the culture of their new environment. These made me interested in shedding more light on how immigrant youth live and adapt within the Norwegian society. Have they been able to find a balance between their cultures and the Norwegian culture? What it means for them to identify with and to belong to a community, where their own prior cultures have become exposed to a new one which holds varying perspectives about who they are, possibly leading to a development of their perceived identity.

1.2 Aim

The main focus of my research was to find out if and how activities and cultural experiences of minority youth in Norway tend to influence the formation of their perceived identities. Minority youth were in this context were defined as young people aged between 18-25, born outside Norway in a non-western country. The research sought to get insight in how these youths participate in activities from different or a mix of cultures. It also examined if and how these activities bridge eventual gaps between cultures and how they contribute to the formation of the youths perceived identity and belonging.

My research question is; ***How do activities and experiences of culture contribute to the perceived identity of minority youth in Norway?***

1.3 Existing Research

There are a lot of research on minority youth but with different focuses and outcomes.

Øia (2003) in his work "Innvandrer ungdom – kultur, idenitet og marginalisering" put fort that second generation youth with minority background were more prone to be involved in criminality and were unsocial when compared to ethnic Norwegian youth. It was a quantitative study with data collected in 1996 from 11 000 youth, 2000 of whom were youth with minority background.

A report from NOVA (Norsk Institutt For Forskning om oppvekst, velferd og aldring which was based on Øia (2003), stated that second generation minority youth are more prone to be involved in serious crime than Norwegian youth. The report stated that it is because these youths are less integrated and have a lesser feeling of belonging to the Norwegian society. It also stated that there were other factors which could lead to criminal behaviour among minority youth, other than the fact that they had a different cultural background and had a lesser bond with the Norwegian society. The other factors which could possibly lead to such behaviours were discrimination based on race and poverty which had not yet been analysed.

Vestel (2004) made an attempt to understand the multicultural situation of minority youths living in Rudenga, the East side of Oslo. They examined the process whereby an individual, subjectively identified themselves as a combining of two or more signs associated with different cultural traditions. The research stated that there are forces with pressure over tradition and these pushed hybridity in the face of threat or challenges to personal dignity. They found out that exclusion doesn't promote hybridisation, but rather limitations and possibilities in relation to current reality influenced hybridisation (influenced identity from a non-conscious to a conscious level). "Self-authoring" interplay between the collective and the personal where are seen to be forces which influence individuals. The psychology of individuals and collectivism in response to experiences influenced how individual with multicultural backgrounds would end up in creativity and reproduction to fit their psychological state or identity (Vestel 2004).

Furthermore, there is also research done by Gudmundson (2013) which examined the experiences of youth from immigrant families in relation to education, housing and cultural production within the Nordic welfare states. This work looks into how Nordic countries experience processes of exclusion and stigmatisation in school as well as in relation to their area of residence. Inclusion and multiculturalism are perceived as key words in Nordic educational policy, but the experiences of immigrant youth show that these are still a long way from being effective and realistic (Gudmundson, 2013). In the context of his work, exclusion is made in specific reference to minority groups as a whole where they are being denied economic, social or cultural privileges enjoyed by the rest of society. Due to this exclusion, only some few favoured members of the minority groups may make it in accessing these privileges enjoyed by the rest of society and become assimilated. But this does not solve the problem exclusion because exclusion can only be overcome by giving the whole minority group access to positions and full participation in society without having to give up their own culture, as prescribed by the concept of inclusion, whereby privileged groups would give room to new comers and the underprivileged. Inclusion and exclusion are represented differently by immigrants as some may be included in some sections while being completely excluded in others. For instance, some immigrants maybe included in some economic and educational spheres, but highly excluded in others. Just like some residential areas maybe characterised by inclusion while others are by exclusion all of which can either occur in relation to culture, leisure, social and political life (ibid).

Fangen & Frønes (2013), also look into how the track one chooses during their youth phase has important consequences for them especially in relation to their being included or excluded. This work shows that even though having access to education and employment are important in the life of youth especially in the Norwegian system which encourages equal opportunities, statistics have still shown that young immigrants in Norway still face greater barriers than the young people from the majority population. Children of immigrants perform at the same level and even top in school achievement in Norway, but ethnic inequality is often evident. This work goes further to show how structural and relational factors serve as a context which hinders or helps the young people in making their choices regarding work and education. Schooling or education plays a critical role when it comes to the future life course of these young people. While success in school reflected broader processes of socialisation and the importance of individual drive,

failure at school on the other hand could increase the possibility of engagement in risky behaviour and criminality. This work further shows that the encouragement and expectation from parents also played an important role in the life of young immigrants, but how they planned for their future seemed to have been inherited as forms of cultural and social capital. Another way they could achieve this could be through their experiences in planning, choices and success (ibid).

In his work, Mainsah (2013), looks at the role identity plays in the shaping of literacy practices in digitally mediated contexts (social networking sites). In his work, he examines how youth participate in online social network communities and how they learn to negotiate identities. There are a number of discourses that attempt to homogenise these minority youths into disempowering and marginal subjectivities in relation to the Norwegian society. There are a range of terminologies used to rationalise their status as the 'other' within the Norwegian society, with the 'other' referring to immigrants, refugees, Muslims. But studies have shown that youth in these contexts often use their condition as a resource for cultural creativity and agency (Vestel 2009). This opened up avenues for more flexible and process oriented approaches to identity (Mainsah 2013). Practices were seen to be contextually informed, with youths bringing to these texts and contexts, meanings drawn from their own experiences, cultures and social position. In addition, the culture these minority youths are seen to be mediates and are mediated by the texts they read, write and talk about. Thus, how people participate, interact and form relationships is contextual, which forms influences how people make sense of themselves and others and how they identify and are identified. Through their online practices, as this research puts forth, these immigrant youths are designing online identities and generating information and discussion around issues they care about. Through their self-representations and online interactions, they are showing a certain consciousness of how they are seen and positioned as subjects within the Norwegian context (Mainsah 2013).

1.2 Definition of main concepts

1.2.1 Identity

Identity can have different meanings within different social contexts. In one context, it could mean the feeling of belonging while in another it could be referring to gender or age not leaving out the physical and psychosocial categories through which individuals are categorised by others. Identity is the process by which we take on the values of our cultures and that of others in the community within which we live. Through interaction with others in our community, we are able to find ways to fit into that community. Through our judging ourselves, through what others think about us and our experiences, we are able to form our identities (Sand, 1997). As Eriksen (2012) puts it, in such situations, the individual may see themselves as culturally similar to those who share the same identity as them but without it necessarily meaning that those who share same identity share same culture as the individual. In other words, it is possible to share the same identity as others but not necessarily a similar culture because it is more of the subject experiencing it that way. Identity in this context is about the differences and similarities which exist as a consequence of individuals being contrasts of themselves.

1.2.2 Minority

The term minority is often used to describe people who live as an ethnic category within a society where they are fewer than the majority. In certain situations, moving from one country to another will make an individual who was a majority in the prior country, become a minority in the new one (Eriksen 2012). Minority also refers to people who have a different cultural (culture here tends to involve language, and religion) and geographical origin than those in the country within which they reside. Often, the values of the majority tend to be constitute the norms and values of that society and with the presumption that the minority have to find a way to integrate into new society by adopting these values and norms.

In the context of my research, minority refers to people who have two parents with foreign backgrounds and who are not born in Norway (IMDI 2008). In this same light, minority youths are children born out of Norway to parents with foreign backgrounds as stated by Statistics Norway (2008). The group of youths who form a part this minority, are the focus of my research

because they are presumed to have a better understanding of the different cultures they have grown up in or have experienced, given that they were born out of Norway. Based on the fact that they have previous experiences of culture and are experiencing another culture in Norway, they may be able to better reflect over and express their perspectives.

1.2.3 Culture

Culture is complex and can mean a lot of different things in different contexts. But as Eriksen (2012) states, culture has to do with values, ways of thinking and experience which are shared by a group of people. Culture is obtained through tradition which is handed down. In this context can refer to ideas, rules, norms, codes and symbols which have been inherited from one generation to the other and which are still being respected and upheld in these given societies. In most cases, these norms or symbols change as they are being handed down from one generation to the next. Furthermore, culture is learned through experiences and therefore the individual gets culture through interacting both with the community as well as from parents. Salole (2013) also looks at culture from the angle that it has to do with values and norms of expression which are developed and shared by people of the same community and these can be written or unwritten.

1.3 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have been able to state what sparked my interest in carrying out this research one of which was my experiences as an immigrant. I have also presented my research topic and my target group, as well as the aim for which I am carrying out the research. I also looked into research which has been carried out related immigrant youth and found some interesting perspectives relevant for my work and some of which I will further explore in my work.

I have presented discourses in relation minorities and how these discourses have shifted over time mostly from positive to negative. These discourses in the media mainly present immigrants in a negative light and this has led to the formation of categories within which they are place as Mahmoud (2013) states.

Furthermore, I presented how all the discourses on immigration sparked my interest to understand how youth with minority background carry on in the society with mixed cultures, parked the desire to carry out this research. I also put forward the aim of my research which is to find out activities and experiences of culture influence the identity of minority youths in Norway.

There is existing research on minority youth which I have presented which have been approached the socio-cultural aspect of minority from different perspectives. I have also presented a brief definition of some key concepts which I use in my research such as identity, minority and culture.

1.3.1 Brief Overview of chapters

Chapter 2

In this chapter, symbolic interaction is presented as the theoretical basis for my analysis. Symbolic interaction is an important theory for my research analysis. Furthermore, I will present other theoretical perspectives which could help throw more light on issues related to my target group and which were part of the focus of my thesis. These include identity, minority and culture. I as well present the subject from a phenomenological perspective which gives more insight on the how subjectivity relates to minority youths. This perspective is an introduction to the choice of my method.

Chapter 3

In this chapter, I present a reflection over the process of my research, how I came about deciding the method to apply, how important it was for me to use semi-structured interviews as part of my qualitative research. I also present a reflection over the choices I made in terms of informant selection, the interview situation and all the ethical positions related to what an interview situation should involve, like explaining my research aims and providing the informants details about their rights. In this light I also looked at the ethical considerations of my whole research process as well as its validity and reliability to show that my position as a researcher with a minority background like the informants did not create any forms of bias in my data collection and analysis.

Chapter 4

In this chapter, an analysis of my data is presented with the use of relevant themes are presented. These shed light on the activities and cultural experiences of minority youths within the Norwegian society. The data reveals interesting aspects of how activities and experiences contribute in different ways to how these youths perceive and present themselves within different social settings in the society. It also explores their identity which is as a consequence of their social interactions within the Norwegian society. This identity is portrayed in different ways in different circumstances and are used as an effective tool for adapting to their society. The analysis is done in relation to the symbolic interaction theory.

Chapter 5

In this final chapter, I discuss my findings in relation to the theoretical perspectives and research. How minority youths in Norway are aware of their relation towards others and situations and how they both influence who they are presented through exploring their experiences within the Norwegian society. It looks into the social environment of minority youths and their experiences and how these presumably give them meaning especially about who they are. These are also discussed in the light of the principles of symbolic interaction.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

As Blaikie (2010) states, social theory provides insight into different perspectives people hold about their situation and how they understand their social environment especially in relation to how they interpret their interaction within these spheres. In this section, I will be using social theory to explore how minority to youths in Norway understand and interpret their social interactions within the Norwegian society and how these in turn influence their perceived identities. With the use of symbolic interaction, I will explore how they behaved in certain contexts and how this behaviour is an outcome of their social interaction facilitated by the activities they engage in and their cultural experiences.

In this section I will explore more in depth theoretical perspectives related to the key concepts I presented in Chapter one, such as identity, minority and culture. I will further seek to look into the subjectivity of minority youth which will be done by examining them from a phenomenological perspective. Through the illustrative use of data, I will attempt to look at how minority youth through their activities and culture activities manoeuvre through their position in society which plays a role in how they form their perceived identities. Symbolic interaction theory will be used to throw more light on how the subject based on their understanding and judgement of their social environment which is the Norwegian society, engage in activities from which they have several cultural experiences which in one way or the other influence the way they form their perceived identities. In other words, theory will provide a platform on which I can look at the way the subject understands, relates and interprets their situations of interaction in the society based on their conscious experiences and how these influence the way they define themselves within these different contexts. Theory is therefore used here as a representational step in providing conceptual building blocks throughout which the empirical world can be viewed and understood. Theory is used as a reference frame within which the context of the identity of minority youth can be understood in relation to the role activities and cultural experiences play in the forming of these perceived identities (Baert and Filipe 2012).

2.1 Identity

Identity as Eriksen (2012) approaches it, is about similarities and differences stemming from being the same as yourself and from being different from yourself. It is about contrasting. He

goes further to put identity under different categories. He defines social identity as similar to belonging to a group. While cultural identity is about one seeing oneself as culturally similar to those who share the same identity as them. It may not necessarily mean that those who share the same identity with the individual have the same culture, but rather that the subject experiences it this way. He goes on to state that when it comes to identity today, Simmels rule is still dominant (ibid). According to the Simmels rule, a groups sense or feeling of belonging increases in relation to the amount of pressure it gets from outside. The more a group is threatened, the more they become engaged in strengthening their togetherness.

As Eriksen (2001) believes that minority youth living between cultures, faces three kinds of possibilities of identities: clean identity, hyphenated identity or Creole identity. *The pure identity* is based on a contrast to "the other" and differences among people. Here we are talking about group identity as Turks or Norwegians. The advantage of this identity is that it has clear limits in terms of values and morals. It balances the chaos that characterizes the surroundings and exempts the individual from ambivalence, because it defines the rules of conduct (ibid) On the other hand, the identification as either a Turk or Norwegian may lead to segregation or assimilation. Many ethnic minorities describe their identity as *hyphenated identity*, and it is not uncommon to call themselves Norwegian - Pakistani or Kurdish-Norwegian. This form of identity presupposes that there are clear differences between the two respective cultures, hyphenated identity is an attempt to bridge the gap between these two cultures (ibid). Minorities, for example live Turkish within the home, but when they go out in public, they are in most respects Norwegian. The third form of identity adaptation has Eriksen called Creole. *The Creole identity* does not distinguish cultures and do not try to build bridges between them. It cannot operate with a hyphen or boundaries. People who identify themselves in this way, may be a Muslim and at the same time drinking alcohol and eating pork (ibid). As set forth in Eriksen's (2001) theory of identity adaptation, there are various ways minority youth to define their identity. They can identify themselves as totally Pakistani or Norwegian, or both, and they call themselves domestically Pakistani because they feel as much affinity in both cultures. Quite simply, they can also create their own way of living between different cultures, without operating with limits or hyphens, that is a Creole identity.

2.2 Minority

Minority can be defined as a group of people who represent the lesser number of people within a large society and exist as an ethnic category (Eriksen 2012). In Norway, there are two minorities, the Sami's who are known as ethnic minorities and urban minorities referring to refugees, immigrants, emigrants as well as their children and grandchildren. There also exist national minorities referring to groups like the gypsies. In spite of the fact that these minorities have been divided into separate groups or different categories, Eriksen (2012) claims they are perceived to be facing similar problems in their relation both to the Norwegian society and the Norwegian state, who hardly recognise the fact that there exist cultural differences between the minority and the rest of the majority society (ibid). He goes on to explain that both minority and majority are relative terms and based more on relations than on things. A majority exists only in relation to a minority and vice versa and situations create these differences. Different circumstances can cause a majority to be a minority for instance or an individual who was part of the majority in one country, moving to another where there are few others like him, he becomes a minority in that context or situation (ibid).

UN definition of minorities is: "Groups that identify themselves as different in important issues than the larger society that they are part of, having no power over power resources so that they, if they want, can enforce their interests and views in society as whole "(Hagen and Qureshi 1996: 19). This definition refers to a group that is in the minority in a large community. The concept of minority is relative and exist only in relation to a majority, the relational.

Immigrants are the focus of my research, with emphasis on immigrant youths. Immigrant youths form a part of the minority group as discussed in the previous paragraphs. According to Statistics Norway (SSB), an immigrant is a person with two foreign born parents (Bjertnæs 2000:10).

Youth is a social and cultural concept, opposed to as often perceived, concept of adolescence. The concept of adolescence refers to a stage in psychological development. It is presumed that sometimes more importance is placed on the transition from childhood to adulthood or at other times referred to as the stage of scheduled growth and experimentation, mostly between the age of sixteen and twenty-five. In the Nordic countries, this is the age where this group of young people get rights and obligations as independent individuals and citizens. Even then, exceptions

still abound where some of these youths continue to be dependent because of unemployment (Gudmundsson 2013).

2.3 Culture

Differences between people doesn't come at birth. They rather come from peoples contact with different societies, where they develop different potentials or skills and knowledge based on the demands of the society in question and their natural environment. Culture means a lot of different things to different people and in different situations. Work, school, music and many aspects of society all have cultures of their own. What we are born with is natural, while culture is learned (Eriksen 2012).

According to Salole (2013), culture is how humans react to the natural. How they interpret, understand and organise the world around them. From the worldly perspective, culture has to do with values, ideas, norms and modes of expression which are developed, shared and upheld by people of the same society. These ideas and rules are both written and unwritten, and handed through the generations. Just like human nature, culture keeps evolving. Culture should therefore be seen as something which keeps changing and could only be seen as a hypothesis whose practicality can be researched. In addition, culture has visible and invisible sides to it. Culture can be observed from two angles, the peak of the iceberg which is visible and the bigger invisible part of the iceberg hidden under water, hidden from us. The visible involves belonging which is expressed through what we say, listen to and taste which could include language, tradition, food and norms. In other words, the visible, people express culture through language/dialect, rituals, traditions, food or norms and values. While culture comes across as more invisible through our world views, religion, history, geographical connections/relations. The invisible or hidden is the fundamental basis of society which involves the hidden reasons behind our actions, that is the reason why we do the things we do which are noticeable. There is often reflection over the 'why', why for instance things happened in a particular way within one society and not the other (ibid).

Under culture it is also interesting to look at *acculturation* from the angle of a phenomena which may result with groups of individuals with different cultures coming into contact with subsequent changes that take place at the group level. *Acculturation* refers to those changes that

occur in the culture of the minority as well as in the culture of the new society into which they are being integrated. In other words, *acculturation* is about changes which occur within and between cultures (majority or minority) as a consequence of them intersecting at some level or point within the society. In certain situations, if there is a big difference between the dominant and the minority culture, more changes tend to occur in the minority culture than in the dominant (Linton and Herskovits 1936 quoted in Bøhn 2008). But in my research, the focus will be to examine how this happens at an individual level to be able to understand how immigrant youth adapt under such situations through looking at the feelings and opinions towards their new society.

Cultural identity can be seen as focusing on the immigrant's sense of self conceptualisation including ethnic identity and national identity especially as these identities change as influenced by contextual factors (ibid). My research will constitute looking at how they construct their identity from narratives of the self about themselves. How this evolves after they become proficient in the language, make new friends or contacts and learn the cultural codes of the Norwegian society and start to identify with them even to the extent of adopting double labels like Norwegian - Somalian for instance (Bøhn 2008).

Theory as earlier mentioned, is the medium through which we understand and define a social phenomenon in terms of technical concepts and ideas of some theoretical perspective within a discipline. This is done through the use of the others construction of reality as the point of departure for research (Blaikie 2010). In the following paragraphs we shall be looking at symbolic interaction.

2.4 Symbolic Interaction
The theory of symbolic interaction is a means to understanding how through interaction people form meanings of individuals and meanings of themselves. People tend to act on symbolic meanings which they find in given situations and through interaction, they create shared meaning. Symbolic interaction is a way of understanding a perspective or an angle from which social reality could be analysed (Levin and Trost 1996). Symbolic interaction developed thanks to contributions from William James, James Mark Baldwin, John Dewey, Charles Horton Cooley, William Isaac Thomas, George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer. Blumer presented

three principles on symbolic interaction which lead to conclusions about the creation of a person's self and their social interaction within the community (Griffin 1997). These principles include *meaning, language* and *thought*. In this section, we shall look both at Meads symbolic interaction as well as explore Blumers principles.

Mead used symbolic interaction theory to show the social nature of human beings, how through symbolic social interaction processes which are linguistic, they develop the human self. The society in served as the basis for the formation of the individual (Mead 2005; Griffin 1997). In order to understand how this unfolds, it is therefore important to look at the role of the mind, the self, I and me, which were all presented by Mead as important components of understanding and individual and their social interactions. We see ourselves by taking the role of the other, that is the self is seen through the perceptions of others. The self is a combination of the 'I' which is predictable and the 'Me' which is unorganised (ibid).

The self, I and Me

The formation of the 'self' is important to Mead because it is the process through which the individual perceives himself through the reaction of those around them. To Mead therefore, the self is an outcome of feedback the individual gets from their interaction with others within their society. These interactions form the basis for the self which keeps evolving through interaction with people. The 'self', 'I' and 'Me' all represent phases of the self. The self comes about as a consequence of interaction with the generalised other. When interacting, we take the position of the generalised other and reflect over it by placing ourselves in the context of things that mean something to us, like doing what doing what represents our culture. The 'self' arises from social interaction which is experience, making the individual an outcome of these interactions taking place within the individuals' society. In other words, the self stems from society (Mead 2005; Griffin 1997).

The self can be both an object and a subject because it is reflective. Through the reflective process or experience of the self, the individual is able to make symbolic meaning out of its interactions. Reactions which usually come about in the reflective process, are considered as the 'I' and these reactions are always different, depending on the context and often these reactions

are spontaneous. Mead approaches the self as being reflectively dual in that in the social process of experiencing, the 'I' becomes subjective, while the 'Me' becomes objective. Mead divides the 'self' into 'I' and 'Me', whereby the 'I' represents the subjects' reaction to interaction with others in society. In which case the 'I' becomes creative and takes initiative. While the 'Me' is the objective self of the individual which describes the self through their own meaning and through how others view them. The 'Me' stands for organised reflections over our actions which can guide us morally through making sue of society's rules or norms. In this situation, the individual becomes more socially aware of themselves. Through the 'Me' individuals see themselves and their interaction with society through reflective processes, while the 'I' reacts to these situations (Mead 2005; Griffin 1997).

Roles of the 'Self' and the 'Generalised Other'

The role and ability to place ourselves in the position of others, where we can anticipate their responses leads to the development of the self and self-consciousness. Through interacting with others and taking up different roles which are all guided by anticipation of the reaction of the people interacted with, the self is formed. Hence, social groups as well as communities where the individual lives give the individual the opportunity to live their 'self' in which case they are considered to be living the 'generalised other' (Mead, 2005; Griffin 1997).

The individual reflects over themselves and argues with themselves through which process an accurate self-image is developed. In this context, we see ourselves by taking up the role of the other. We use the self as a mirror of the generalised other which helps the individual develop their self-concept. These self-concepts help form who the individuals are and lead to conclusions about the creation of the persons' self and socialisation with the larger community. The generalised other usually presents a mental image of the others within the individuals' community, their expectations and possible responses to ones' self. But in symbolic interaction, there is always the possibility of negative responses which in turn could affect the self-perception of the individual negatively (Griffin 1997).

On the other hand, Blumer presented three principles which lead to a conclusion about the creation of a person's self and socialisation into a larger community (Griffin 1997). These include meaning, language and thought.

To begin with, meaning is derived through interacting with others who assign meaning in the communication process. What we say may be assigned a meaning different within different contexts. Peoples meanings affect what is being said and meaning is usually being negotiated through the use of language. Humans base things on the meanings those things are given. We all have different meanings attached to different things and things mean different things in different contexts. To understand something, we have to understand its context. This usually made easy through the use of symbols. This will also depend on if these symbols hold the shared meaning for those who use them (Griffin 1997).

Language is about indicating the stimuli and changing responses in them. Humans understand each other through the communication of symbols or language. This communication gives room for assumptions which make interpretations possible. Words can have different meanings in different contexts. It is considered a gesture which is linguistic and used to get the response in the other. When language is used, it is followed by an expectation of a reaction or response to what is being said. Language hence gives humans the means to negotiate meaning through symbols. Through naming something, you give it a meaning. Through language, humans gain meaning and develop discourse and can communicate with each other which serves as a basis for all kinds of exchange (Mead 2005; Griffin 1997).

Thought is the individuals' interpretation of the symbols based on the individuals' way of thinking. In social interaction, people reflect over what they have heard and reflect on how they will respond depending on their interpretation of what is said. In every situation, we talk to ourselves in order to get meaning out every moment, we internalise conversations involving thinking, which lead to the foundation of the self because of its reflective process. The mind in this process, enables the individual reflect over what is happening around the individual. Thus the mind makes the activity of thinking and engaging in a discussion with one's self possible. The mind interacts with other minds and only exists in relation to other minds which hold similar meanings like it within the society. Once we hear someone say something, we automatically start

thinking about what to say next. What we think before creating an act, is thought and it is through this means that we put personal meanings into words (Mead 2005: Griffin 1997).

In this work, the contribution of Mead (2005) will be the perspective which will be given more focus. Symbolic interaction has five aspects which make it up, which include the definition of the situation, all interaction is social, humans integrate with the help of symbols, humans are active and humans act and find themselves in the present (Ibid). In the subsequent paragraphs, I will be looking at these five different aspects of symbolic interaction and how they can help as a theoretical perspective to enable us understand the socio-cultural reality of minority youth in Norway.

To begin with, humans are according to symbolic interaction are conscious not only of reality, but that this reality also affects their behaviour. What is experienced is not just a reality but a determinant of people's behaviour (Ibid). From the responses of the interviewees we could see a pattern of how this plays out in their reality both from an activities and cultural perspective. In my analysis, I will use their activities social activities both at school and at their free times which have given them the opportunity to show how symbolic interaction takes place within the different settings in question especially at the Red Cross Resource Centre. I will approach this a conscious act through which they learn and add to or subtract from their behaviour what each of these activities and they people they engage with in these activities demand which appeal to their consciousness. Culture wise, I will analyse how these activities also enable them become aware of the differences between which activities are cultural, local or universal, which create a basis from which they can start to make conscious choices about which ones they want to engage in and for what reasons. In the analysis, I will also explore how their engaging in some cultural activities could be considered as the sign of a conscious effort to be part of something that represents the society in which you find yourself. This would in other ways be used to show how symbolic interaction can influence behaviour.

Furthermore, social interaction is considered an important part of symbolic interaction because it puts forth that to integrate is to discuss either through mouth or body movements or thinking. This in other words refers to people's ability to adopt the attitude of others for instance, through expressing themselves based on what they think the perspectives of others are with regard to them (Levin and Trost 1996; Baert and Filipe 2012). When it comes to activities, we shall use

this to show how in engaging in these activities according these youths have an opportunity to meet new people and interact with them and how this could be a medium for social interaction through which they could be able to exchange ideas and learn and become good at something.

Also, symbols are an effective part of this theoretical perspective because of the words are the most common symbols used and which have meaning. The definition of any situation gives the words their meaning, making them symbolic. For instance, family can mean different things in different settings depending on their understanding of what family means to them at that point in time. It is because we share knowledge of a common language that we are able to anticipate what our writings or words will mean to the reader or person we are discussing with (Ibid). I shall use the data to show how the activities these youths, either football or table tennis and the manner in which they communicated with each other represented some symbol to them. I will in the analysis show how this was used as a basis from which they could understand each other and carry out activities successfully because of shared meaning. I will further show that they give meaning to the opportunity they have at being good at whatever activities they engage in. Looking also into the symbolism of words or linguistic because they are part of a language which has to do with the culture of the society in which they lived and the one the currently are in. Language here will be explored from the angle of it playing a significant role both as a means of communication and as a means of enabling understanding mutual.

The aspect of activity, within this perspective refers to the fact that humans are active all the time. To be active is to be part of the process. This aspect was used as a means to explain how humans act in different situations for instance, using this as a means to understand how a person acts in a given situation and not in another. Dewey further states that humans always act based on their emotions, evaluations and feelings. Therefore, to understand one, we need to understand how he defines a situation, symbols seen and this is never an easy process (Levin and Trost 1996). In the analysis this will be used to explore the ways in which these youths are always engaged in acting or taking up roles most of the time. I shall look at how they act when engaged in different activities either in school or at their free time. I will also examine whether the roles they take up during such periods depend largely on which emotions, evaluations or feelings they have regarding such activities. It will involve trying to find out whether they engaged in certain

activities because they wanted to grasp it or to use it as a sign of their attempt to fully integrate into their current society.

Finally, is the present, the now, which is all about what is going on in the present. In symbolic interaction this also is important because it is closely related to what is active now or ongoing actions which play a role in forming memories. The human memory here is seen not to just hold experiences, but also the forgotten experiences are somehow integrated into the new experiences and evaluations. Accordingly, the forgotten experiences tend to passively influence humans (ibid).

In this part of my work, I will be looking at the subject from a phenomenological perspective. This was the basis or point of departure for my research and this phenomenological perspective of the subject went a long way to help me make the choice of using semi-structured interviews in order to get data for my research.

2.5 Subject from a phenomenological perspective

Phenomenology puts forth that in order to gain full understanding of the nature of knowledge, the subjective view of experience is optimal. It attempts to get the truth of any phenomena through describing it broadly as it appears or manifests itself to the consciousness of the people experiencing it (Moran 2000).

> "That branch of science which deals with things in their manner of appearing to us, for example, relative motion, or colour, properties which are dependent on the human observer" (Moran 2000:7).

On the other hand, subjectivity in other words refers to intentionality that is, being aware of the relation towards things or about things. It illuminates the nature of the inner self whereby the inner self is aware of acts of cognition without appealing to causal or genetic explanations. Self-evidence shows the subjects grasp of inner mental life, with inner perceptions as opposed to the fallible nature of outer perceptions. In fact, there can be no act without an object and the object therefore makes the act conscious. All subjective acts are characterised by conscious experiences of something which gives a deeper meaning to subjectivity, with intentionality showing how

consciousness interrelates both with the real world and the subject. A new domain of subjective consciousness was introduced by Husserl when he described the transcendental subjectivity of humans and the world as constituted by subjectivity. In phenomenology, knowledge is gained through experience and experience is concretized collectively (Luft 2011, Moran, 2000; Fuglsang, Olsen og Rasborg 2013).

Phenomenology on the other hand, stated that consciousness was the source of all knowledge and value. It sought to protect experience as a necessary part for the understanding of nature and knowledge, from a subjects' perspective. Subjectivity and consciousness were the key to founding all knowledge and description in the world. Phenomenology therefore analyses our experiences by looking at what is consciously seen in real life or in the real world. This is done, not through the use of abstract concepts to theorise the social world, but through the analysis of conscious experiences in the real life world. This thus presents the existence of relations between the subjects partaking in the same social world through their experiences and these experiences are examined in order to determine the actors' intentional activities or actions which form meaning and social processes. It is all about experiences which are intuitively sizeable and analysable in the pure general nature of their being, not experiences empirically perceived and treated as real facts (Moran 2000).

Phenomenology attempts to get the truth of matters to describe phenomena which appear and the way they appear or manifest themselves to the consciousness of the experiences. All explanations about phenomena are to be understood only from within and not from external traditions or common sense. Thus by giving conscious attention to things themselves, we revive our human contact with reality. Looking at it from the life of living human subjects this conscious attention can be used to capture life as it is lived and in understanding the meaningfulness of the process. Consciousness must be experienced and our experience must be engaged directly from the real world, with a description of things as they appear to our consciousness. Therefore, problems, things and events are only approached by taking their manner of appearance to consciousness into consideration. This gives the subject a sovereign and privileged position and this subjectivity stems from the fact that we use our brains and internal mental states to determine our consciousness, through which we experience the real world around us (Moran 2000).

A new domain of subjective consciousness was introduced by Husserl when he described the transcendental subjectivity of humans and the world as constituted by subjectivity. As he put it, the world does not change as we actually see it, find it or experience it, but the world appears to be what it is through our transcendental relationship to it in our experiences (Luft 2011; Moran 2000). Intentionality assumes the existence of the world and it is not until the practitioner is brought back to the pure transcendental subjectivity that it becomes real. It all has to do with consciousness as another view of the world. Intentionality leading to transcendental subjectivity, bring about consciousness and knowledge about the real world and as Gadamer states, it is the manner in which matter manifests itself through living dialogue in speech (Moran 2000).

Our consciousness of reality as approached by phenomenology, is focused on the life of the living subject. How a phenomena present itself to human consciousness and is experienced by the subject plays an important role in clarifying that no phenomena can be derived without it having been understood from within or from a subjective point of view. To understand the world will therefore require returning to concrete lived human experiences which go beyond existing assumptions about the human experience and existence and to capture life in the world as it really is being lived. From this perspective therefore, the subjects' affections, emotions, and imaginative life are understood through how they are living life and how meaningful this process is to the individual. Furthermore, this entails looking at how other humans approach and adapt to the individuals' experience and project themselves back to the subject as an urge to move towards self-consciousness and self-satisfaction. Therefore, what is important is not necessarily finding out rational explanations for the existence of the world, but rather trying to understand how through conscious interpretations subjects have come to think or worry about the existence of the world they live in (Moran 2000).

This is so because all knowledge comes as a consequence of how we perceive whatever manifests itself to the consciousness of the subject and is not a mental representation of any sort of what exists outside the mind (Moran 2000).

Our subjective experiences can only be accepted as real if they experience is as a consequence of a direct interaction with the real world. Consciousness in this case is experienced through our direct interaction and goes beyond natural evidence because it is experience which is evidence based. The subject therefore understands through his experiences, whereby he experiences being

present and embodying the intentionality of the experience and in turn can be used to describe things as they appear to the subject's consciousness. This reiterates the importance of inner awareness of the subject looked at from the position of intentionality with the subject identifying universal laws by looking at their individual instances. Self-evidence of the subject's inner perception serves as evidence of the mental grasp of inner mental life stemming from the mind which surpassed the nature of our outer perceptions. From this stance, no act without an object could be considered an act because an empty act could not be conscious and in other words, this was an attempt to look at objectivity from a subjective angle. The subject's awareness of the fact that he is sensing gives meaning to the fact that he is sensing which is an interconnection of the common inner sense and the primary act taking place even though reflectivity may try to limit it to immediate memory after the act. Hence, every mental act by the subject, is either a presentation or based on some kind of presentation but which also indicates that a mental act must be an object of inner reflection leading to consciousness and intentionality (Moran 2000).

Everything that stems from self-evident experience and understanding of the real world requires a self-evident understanding of the real world. Intuition mostly comes about through subjective experiences which could be intuitive and conscious because experience is always related to someone especially based on the person's manner of experience. Experiences are the backbone to how the subject looks at the life world and to understand it. Experiences still act as the basis for that understanding. Thus, from the subject's perspective, all experience is conscious and it will require for a subject to be able to understand their experiences, to first understand their relation to their body as being different from their relation to other things in which way they can optimise consciousness and their experiences.

2.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have presented theoretical perspective through the use of relevant themes. I selected symbolic interaction theory to use in my analysis to provide an understanding of the viewpoints of minority youth and their identity within the Norwegian society.

In order to make the perspective of minority youth to be better understood, I had to use other concepts like identity, minority and culture. I therefore presented theoretical perspectives on my

key concepts such as identity, minority and culture. I presented how these concepts play out within the Norwegian society and in relation to minority youth, approaching them from a contextual perspective.

I further present symbolic interaction theory through which the way these youths form meaning about themselves within the Norwegian society and through interaction could be understood. The self and the role of the self are explored in addition to the principles presented by Blumer which include meaning, language and thought which lead to the conclusion of a person or self (Griffin 1997).

The chapter is concluded by presenting the subject from a phenomenological perspective. As Moran (2000) puts forth, this perspective helps us gain a full understanding of the phenomena through understanding how these people consciously perceive it. My research is conducted from this perspective.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD AND DESIGN

3.1 Choice of Method

There is a major difference between quantitative and qualitative research designs based on the fact that qualitative designs usually seek to examine relatively smaller units often involving in depth studies and depending on the scope of the research, smaller groups. On the other hand, quantitative research usually is large scale with larger groups being examined and the measuring of variables. Each of these methods usually provide different results for your research depending on which you use and what you are researching. Bearing this in mind and given my research question, I think this research method that would enable me get the kind of insight I needed on this important issue, is a qualitative research method (Ringdal 2001; 91).

My research questions also influenced my choice of research method in a lot of ways. My experience as an immigrant myself, made me reflect over which method could enable me to capture the experiences of the immigrant youths I will interview, in a way that will better tell their story and enable me understand the realities of their situation. As an immigrant myself, I have been interested in finding out how youth with minority backgrounds engage in the Norwegian society and how this has influenced their cultural identities.

Therefore, to get their stories and how these experiences have affected them, using interviews as a means of data collection was selected. Through interviews, it is presumed that it can help the interviewee or researcher learn more about the interviewees experiences, feelings and the world this has created for them. Given that this was really what I wanted to learn more about with regards to minority youth, I selected qualitative research and semi-structured interviews as my research method.

3.1.2 Semi-structured interview

In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer and interviewee have a face to face interaction which is a two-way conversation directed by the researcher's interview guide. This form of interview gives room for flexibility between the interviewer and the informant whereby the interviewer may create some questions under interview in order to get a point clarified or more details as need may require. Before conducting a semi-structured interview, good planning is necessary. This planning will involve identifying what themes the interview guidelines will carry, identifying respondents, deciding the number of interviews and preparing the interviews. As soon as possible after conducting the interviews, the researcher is expected to analyse the interviews (Kvale 2015).

Qualitative interviews are a means through which we can get quality knowledge about something we are interested in knowing more about especially social phenomena. This is done through the use of interviews, where the interviewee expressions or descriptions are used to understand their world through words and not through numbers. My interviews were conducted in order to be able to understand the meaning of central themes in the interviewees world or life which my research were minority youth and their identity (Kvale 2015).

3.1.3 Selection of Informants

Here it was first and foremost important to decide who or which group will be best to get the information or data for my research from. I therefore needed to be specific in relation to what kind of informants I had to contact to get the kind of information I required. The most important factor was that these informants were expected to have been born out of Norway in a non-Western country to parents from non-Western countries and only moved to Norway at a later stage in life. This was important because, being born out of Norway was guarantee that they would have experienced another culture before moving to Norway. Therefore, moving to Norway and experiencing a new culture would probably have created new experiences for them and this amongst others, was what I intended to learn more about and how they had been able to cope.

Thus, I selected informants based on their being born out of Norway in a non-western country, but who at some later point in life moved to Norway, either with or without their family or parents. The focus here was on the fact that these youths would already have experienced another culture before moving to Norway, giving them some experience about other cultures and experiencing another culture here in Norway would have given them a dual or multiple cultural experience. I was not specifically concerned about their age when they moved to Norway. I was rather interested in how they could reflect over the cultures they had been exposed to. I did not place any specific emphasis on gender because I was not going to lay any specific weight on differences in the experiences when it came to gender or trying to compare and look at what role gender played in how they experienced the new culture.

Thus, I selected informants who were born out of Norway, but the time they had lived in Norway was not also of particular focus in the research even though this might have thrown some light as whether age and length of stay had an influence on experiences and outcomes. So as earlier mentioned, the focus was that first they were born out of Norway to non-western parents and were therefore experiencing the Norwegian culture as a second or third culture. Another important thing I took into consideration was age at the period the interviews were conducted. This was important because I limited age to between 18 and 25, because I presumed that those that fall within this age group will be able to reflect over their experiences and express them better than those of younger ages. This does not cancel the fact that they could reflect over their experiences could also serve as hindrance as it could lead to them not being willing to share these experiences or talk about them because of the effects or impact it might have on them.

It was also important to ensure that the number informants selected were just right and not be a burden when it came to analysing the data that had been collected.

3.1.4 Recruiting of Informants

I had to look for youths which fulfilled the fore mentioned criteria. One place to meet youth who fit my target group, was at the Red Cross Resource Centres where I was a volunteer (See Appendix 3 Request for permission). With the permission and help of the leader of one of the

youth centres, I was able to get 8 minority youth interviewed and who fit the criteria. The informants came from 3 different countries.

3.1.5 Presentation of Informants

As required by research ethics, the privacy and anonymity of the informants have to be respected (Kvale 2015). In that light therefore, I have to give them different names in order to respect their anonymity. These informants are from 3 countries namely, Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Somalia. They were aged between 20 to 21 and none of them was born in Norway, but they had so far lived in Norway from between 3 to 18 years.

The informants were 8 and were born out of Norway. They came from Afghanistan, Somalia and Eritrea. There were 6 boys and 2 girls. I have given them false names in order to hide their identities.

Abedin - Afghanistan 20 years old, lived in Norway for 4 years

Ahmun – Somalia 21 years old, lived in Norway for 9 years

Abun – Somalia 20 years old, lived in Norway for almost 6 years

Adul- Somalia 19 years old, lived in Norway for 5 years

Adin -Somalia 22 years old, lived in Norway for 18 years

Desa – Ethiopia 19 years old, lived in Norway for 8 years

Amna- Somalia 20 years old, lived in Norway for 3 years

Jodi- Somalia 20 years old, lived in Norway for 4 years

3.2 Interview Guide

The interviews were semi-structured in order to give the interviewee the opportunity to fully express themselves (See appendix 1 Interview guide). The questions were developed in relation

to my research question. I started with general questions before settling down to more specific questions in order to make the interview easy and comprehensible for the interviewee. The interview guide was divided into three parts, background, activities and culture.

On background the informants were asked questions about the country of their parents and themselves, how long they have lived in Norway and the occupation or level of their education.

The interviewees were eight in number from three different countries and between the ages of 19 and 22. A part from one who was working the others were all students. They have all been members of the Red Cross Resource Centre from between one to two years and they usually visited the centre as often as their schedules permitted.

With regards to activities, the questions asked were about their engagement in the Red Cross resource centre with regard to the length of their membership, the activities at the centre, other activities they are engaged in outside of the centre, their social network and their experiences in general. The Red Cross resource centre offers different activities which help out the youths in different ways. These activities are what attracts the youths to this centre. The activities include helping out with homework or school assignments, indoor games like table tennis, video games and other outdoor activities. They also offer courses which enable the youth to empower their capacities, for example courses on job search and writing CV's.

On culture the interviewees were asked about how they project their culture, the languages they used often, the cultural challenges they face in Norway, how they tackle these challenges and what they appreciate most about Norway.

3.2.1 Interview Situation

The interview as expected, should be in a place where the informant feels it is convenient enough for them to express themselves. Therefore, I was able to get a room in the centre where the youths were in which we could sit and talk at their convenience. I started by explaining to them what my research was all about and their rights especially that they were free to stop and leave the interview whenever they felt uncomfortable (Kvale 2015). Then I gave them time to read the

cover letter and to sign an agreement that they were giving me the right to use the information they provided in my thesis (See Appendix 2).

During interviews, a micro-social relation takes place between the researcher and the interviewee which is a face to face social interaction in which they both act social actors give meaning to their own actions and actions of others involved (Blaikie 2010).

In the course of interviews, the interviewees words and expressions were taken through words or recorded as I did in my research. Then their meanings are interpreted in order to further understand how and what they said. My questions were therefore designed in such a way that they could get as much relevant information as possible which enable me better understand the interviewees perspective aimed at understanding their experiences and why they handle things the way they do (Kvale 2015).

The selected informants were studied as categories specifically under the youth category as a means to get access to their individual perceptions of their social environment. It was also a means to get them to report their individual perceptions of their social environment and to get them to report their experiences which were all about their interaction with other people within their social environment (Blaikie 2010).

As Blaikie (2010) states, it is important that we avoid influencing the informants to give the kind of answers we require of them. In order not to give unintentional, nonverbal communication which could influence the informants, I had to allow them express themselves as much as possible and only asked them to elaborate where they were not clear enough.

The interview was between myself and each informant from beginning to end in a secluded room within the Red Cross Resource Centre. But I felt like some of the interviewees did not feel comfortable enough to express themselves when I asked about their negative experiences. There was one who stated that he did not feel different or had not been treated differently. But when I asked about challenges they faced within the society, they mentioned experiences where they had been treated differently because of their names like when they were applying for jobs. This to me was an indication that there was more some of them could have said, but I could not also force the information out of them because I had to respect ethical norms especially regarding their rights to express themselves without any form of coercion.

3.2.2 Reliability and Validity

According to Kvale (2015), reliability has to do with how trustworthy and consistent an interview is. If two people interview the informant, how they will change their answers based on how the questions are asked. The kind of words used can possibly influence the answers the informant will provide. Validity on the other hand is about truth, referring to whether the research method used can give appropriate insight to the situation that is being researched. In other words, will qualitative or qualitative research methods or the type of interview method used provide relevant and necessary data on what is being researched?

Reliability has to do with how trustworthy and consistent an interview is. The way the questions are asked and the kind of words used should not be words which can influence the answers of the interviewer. Validity on the other hand is about how truthful the research is and which has to do with which research method would have been able to help researcher get the most relevant information needed to give insight on what is being researched. This for instance will require looking into whether qualitative or quantitative interviews will produce more important information (kvale 2015).

Given that I my research was about minority youth and I also have a similar experience or background like these youths with regard to the fact that I am from another country, this could possibly affect the way I interpreted the data I collected. Therefore, I had to be critical in the way I interpreted the data I collected and looked at the data from different perspectives in order to make my research trustworthy.

The distance of the research from its original source of data has consequences for the ability of the data to represent the social phenomenon to which they relate. For instance, the use of primary data which has been collected, analysed and reported should be the result of direct contact between the researcher and the source (informants) (Blaikie 2010).

Primary data is generated through the use of specific methods which enable researchers have control over the production and analysis of their data therefore offering the researcher the opportunity to judge their quality. The data that which I collected usually started out just as words which are recorded, analysed and findings were reported in this work. In this process, the

original words may become transformed into language which is more technical but the medium is always words (Blaikie 2010).

There was no selection bias given that the individuals were selected randomly and based only on their age, background and that they were born out of Norway, which were the specific to the target group for my research (Blaikie 2010).

In the course of the interviews, there were no specific events which occurred that could have influenced the interview and possibly the results in any way (Blaikie 2010).

The interviews were not so long that could make them bored, tired or restless or itchy to go. They were also aware that they could drop out or not respond to the interview questions any time they felt uncomfortable (Blaikie 2010). Fortunately, all the interviewees answered my interview questions and presumably did so as openly as they could.

The reliability and validity of my research also required that I avoiding instances of relative subjectivity where everything could mean anything especially in ensuring to overcome researcher bias. Through the use of reflectivity whereby I was constantly thinking about my biases and working to minimise them for instance by not trying to press for the kind of information I wanted out of informants as well as reflecting over their responses. My minority background or perspective could be a potential bias but I had to ensure that the interviews and the interview situation had as little influence as possible from my position as a researcher. In my analysis I also use Meads symbolic interactionism as my theoretical perspective which is not influenced by researcher bias stemming from my position as the researcher with a minority background like the informants in my research. I therefore ensured that I was ethically objective throughout the interview process ensuring that I did not force my biases or perspectives on the interviewees (Kvale 2015).

3.2.3 Method of Analysis

In order to do my analysis, I had to follow one of the five analytical methods laid down by Kvale (2015). The method I chose was the categorising of meaning. After data collection, the next important step was data analysis. To be able to do this, I had to first transcribe the data

immediately after the interviews. The data had been collected through interviews which were recorded. To transcribe them, I did not do too many a day in order not to get too tired and blur my ability to fully comprehend what I was doing and which could affect the data I was transcribing in that I could either leave out things said. After transcribing, I then read through the whole data the first time to get a detailed overview. The second time, I did in depth studies of all the data, trying to code them into categories in order to ensure that they could be arranged under relevant themes. This to an extent had been made feasible by the fact that my research guide was divided into three parts, background, activities and culture. This made it easier for me to be able to arrange the data into relevant themes which could give insight into what I was researching. The categories and themes under which the data was divided were aimed at getting a good overview of what the informants responses under the same themes.

The data for my research was collected through semi-structured interviews. The data was then arranged into suitable categories to make analysis easy, a process which involved reorganising, changing and combining categories. Instances from the data were then used to make the categories relevant. These categories served as a guide for stimulating further theoretical reflection. I also had to ensure that there could be no sensitive connections between emerging categories and other milieus or whether they could be applied in other social settings. I therefore had to use the connection between these categories to reflect and develop pointers to my research question. I also used the theoretical framework to establish such connections (Blaikie 2010).

3.2.4 Ethical Reflections

According to Kvale (2015), there are seven ethical considerations to be aware of throughout the research process, which I followed in the course of my research. To begin with, I had to make sure that the aim of my research was not to harm or put those I was researching in a way which could affect them negatively. Therefore, my topic and purpose of my research was to throw light on the cultural identity of youths which will not only throw more light on how they see and define themselves, but also enable others understand them for who they are and see them from another perspective. This is with the hope that this will affect positively the way they are perceived in the society and ease their interaction within the society in any way possible. As a part of my research, I had to conduct interviews in order to get the data I needed. Before the

interview, I had to get signed permission from the informants that I could use the information they were going to provide in the course of the interview. This was important because in the course of introducing myself and the aim of the project I was carrying out and purpose of the research, it cleared out some doubts and suspicion which could have hindered me getting the information I needed. The informants were also guaranteed that their anonymity will be respected in order the data could not directly refer to a specific person from a specific part of the city. Thus this was reassuring to the informant as well. The place where the interview was done was also ensured that it was convenient to the informants so that they would not be stressed and unable to answer the interview questions as openly as possible. Through the process of transcription and in the development of the material into relevant themes, I had to further ensure that their anonymity was respected without leading to any changes in their responses. Therefore, I had to ensure that the data really represented what they said or put their point of view through without releasing any information which could reveal their identity in any way.

3.2.5 Summary

In this section I was able to look at the methodological aspects of my research process especially the data collection process. This section presents a reflection over the process of my research, how I came about deciding the method to apply, how important it was for me to use semi-structured interviews as part of my qualitative research. I also reflected over the choices I made in terms of informant selection, the interview situation and all the ethical positions related to what an interview should situation should involve, like explaining my research and giving details of the informants rights. In this light I also looked at the ethical considerations of my whole research process as well as its validity and reliability to show that my position as a researcher with a background like the informants did not create any forms of bias in my data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

In this section of my work, I will analyse the data which I collected through interviews under two main themes, that is, activities and cultural experience. The aim of my research is to find out how youth with minority background engage in activities and how these activities affect their perceived identity. I will analyse them all in relation to four sub themes such as social perspective, self-perception, feeling of belonging and adaptation strategies as well as explore the principles of meaning, language and thought.

4.1 Presentation of data collected

4.1.1 Background

On background, the informants were asked questions about the country of origin of their parents and themselves, how long they have lived in Norway and the occupation or level of their education.

The interviewees were eight in number from three different countries and between the ages of 19 and 22. Apart from one who was working, the others were all students. They have all been members of the Red Cross Resource Centre from between one to two years and they usually visited the centre as often as their schedules permitted.

4.1.2 Activities at the Red Cross Resource Centre

With regards to activities, the questions asked were about their engagement in the Red Cross Resource Centre with regard to the length of their membership, the activities at the centre, other activities they are engaged in outside the centre, their social network and their experiences in general.

The Red Cross Resource Centre offers different activities which help out the youths in different ways. These activities are what attracts the youths to this centre. The activities include helping out with homework or school assignments, indoor games like table tennis, video games and other

outdoor activities. They also offer courses which enable the youth to empower their capacities, for example courses on job search and writing CV's.

In response to the questions in this section the youths all said they like coming to the centre but they had different reasons for coming there. Some of these reasons were that the centre was a place where they could pick up ideas which could help them be good at different things, especially the courses they offered. They also liked the fact that they met people with different backgrounds, especially the volunteers and it made interaction easier between them. It also helped to keep them away from trouble or getting involved in negative activities. The volunteers were good at enabling the youths engage in different activities in the centre which made them particularly like to visit the centre. They also mentioned that the volunteers were easy to talk to and being there gave them an opportunity to get to know people based on their personality without being judged based on their background.

4.1.3 Activities outside the Red Cross Resource Centre

Outside of the resource centre they are engaged in other activities after school and at varying times some of these activities gave them a sense of achievement. For one of the informants he was given an opportunity during the open day in school to report on the activities which was what he loved doing and that made him feel like he accomplished something. Most of the activities they engage in at the centre or out of there do not necessarily represent the Norwegian culture from what they said like playing table tennis and other indoor games. To them some of these activities or games are universal and even in their home countries they were engaged in such games or activities as well, like football. The activities they engage in within in and out of the Red Cross Resource Centre gives them the opportunity to be youth because in some of their home countries youth spend a lot of time either in school or at work and have little or no time to be youth.

In relation to cultural activities they were engaged at varying levels, for instance one mentioned that he occasionally went to the mosque. Another stated that skiing is more representative of the Norwegian culture and he does not ski, but he like many Norwegians, likes football even though it is universal. He also likes chess because chess is becoming a part of the Norwegian culture

given that there is a Norwegian who is currently the world champion. To show his culture another informant stated that during parties where he is a DJ he plays Norwegian music but sometimes he also plays music which is representative of his culture. Others stated that they took part in the festivities of the 17TH of May, which is the Norwegian national day. One of the informants even mentioned that she could play football with boys here in Norway while in her home country it was forbidden.

Furthermore, as to whether their activities had evolved over time, the youths said nothing much had changed neither in school nor at the Red Cross Resource Centre. The major difference had been with them trying to adjust to the new system and trying to live like a Norwegian in Norway. Other youths mentioned that their activities had changed due to injuries they incurred during outdoor games like football and they had to now revert to training in gyms as an alternative. While one said he had changed his activities to suit the kind of career he wanted to pursue. In the course of these different activities these minority youths met other youths like in school, at the city centre or in pubs where they watched matches together or at the field where they played football together.

4.1.4 Social Networks

All of them were a part of some social network and a few belonged to other organisations like Redd Barna. They all were using one of the social media communication mediums such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype, Instagram, Snapchat. They used these networking sites to communicate with friends and families in other parts of the world. These enabled them remain and feel connected to their families and friends. Their being able to keep in touch in one way or the other helped them not to feel lonely, bored or depressed as well they could get advice and companionship. Through these social network mediums, they were also able to learn tolerance and how to see things from other perspectives through the discussions they had. They got to know others, shared advice or jokes, expressed themselves and their feelings as well as created bonds, which in some way gave them a sense of belonging. Two out of the eight informants did not have ethnic Norwegian friends, but the rest did.

4.1.5 Negative and Positive Experiences

With regard to their experiences, they had gone through different situations and interpreted their experiences in different ways. For one of the informants he received compliments from ethnic Norwegian friends that he was good with the language and that made him feel like he was becoming Norwegian. To him because he lives in Norway and can speak the language then he feels he is Norwegian and as he stated if you speak a language and you live in that country then that gives you identity. Through interaction at work and on the football field one other informant experienced that he picked up the language and aspects of the culture faster and he got to know more about the system and how to relate to others. For one other informant he felt excluded because his ethnic Norwegian friends told him that he was not Norwegian while friends from the same cultural background as himself told him he had become too Norwegian because he could not fully understand their mother tongue. One informant said he met very welcoming Norwegian friends when he arrived in Norway and they have been friends since then. While another is happy being who he is and has never really felt like a Norwegian or thought about being excluded because according to him he had lived in another country before moving to Norway. The experience for one informant was that he was invited to a lot of birthday parties when he was a kid which was nice and after having visited other countries he felt included in Norway when looking at it comparatively and to him you cannot force people to like you, you just have to be nice, honest and social.

When it came to the negative experiences one informant said he had never really felt like home and there was once he went skiing and he was so bad at it that he felt like he did not belong. There were times ethnic Norwegian friends of his friend were reluctant to have him over because they did not know him well, but once they got to know him as a nice person they started inviting him out. It was strange to him because foreigners opened their doors to everyone but it seemed to be the opposite in this situation. Due to the fact that he could not speak Norwegian which made interaction difficult both in school and in shops it made another informant feel excluded. He also said the media has promoted fear of the unknown through their generalization which has led to people from different groups to be treated differently and stereotypically. According to the informant this negative media portrayal has made many to be sceptical when it comes to skin colour, religion and even leading to him being treated differently in the work environment. Some

other informants stated that they had experienced people shouting racist slurs at them or asking them to go back to their countries while in some other circumstances people avoided sitting by them on the bus or metro or they were accused of doing things they did not do all because they looked different. But for one informant he said he did not feel excluded and he did not think about it because he always knew he was not a Norwegian and he was aware of his cultural background.

4.1.5 Coping Strategies

To deal with some of these challenges mentioned above, most of these youth have adapted different strategies. Some of them handle meeting people by just being themselves and behaving nicely. The positive compliments they have had about their personality have helped them as well. For others so long as there is no physical confrontation they just ignore and do not take any racial incidents personally, particularly as they know who they are and they feel special about themselves and their culture. Due to their self-awareness, such racist things do not matter to them and most often they consider those who engage in such racist acts as uneducated and easily influenced because they cannot analyse people at an individual level. For one of them the most important thing was that they learned the language.

4.2 Cultural Experience

Under culture the informants were asked about how they project their culture, the languages they used often, the cultural challenges they face in Norway, how they tackle these challenges and what they appreciate most about Norway.

To showcase their culture, they used either their mother tongue, traditional dress, ate their traditional food or engaged in other cultural activities with friends and family. They mostly used their mother tongue when they were with family or friends from the same cultural background while they used Norwegian in school, at work or when they were with other Norwegian friends. One of the informants used music as a way of expressing his culture.

Given that these minority youths were in a new society they stated that they found out that the social norms were different from what they had been used to. For instance, people could drink as much as they wanted, people did not talk to each other on the metro and there is lack of respect for the elderly. These cultural differences as one said made it challenging for him to keep up with both cultures, but he was taking the best from both cultures and making use of them. For example, there were times he had given up his seat for an elderly person to sit on the bus or the metro for he had respect for elders. They stated that they used the best of both cultures interchangeably as required by the different situations they found themselves in. As put forth by one of the informants he had learned to accept the fact that he is in a different country with a different culture and he had tried to adapt to the situation. To one informant he felt like he had to work hard to achieve goals and to show his capabilities which was quite challenging to him. Another experience that was mentioned was that one informant felt because of the way he looked, either at work or at school, he always had extra eyes on him and that made him feel excluded as well as he felt pressurized to dress or act in particular ways and to be extra careful. The issue of discrimination was also brought up by an informant who recounted in his job search experience whereby employers looked for Norwegian names and this act of discrimination made him feel excluded because it made it difficult for him to get a job.

On what they appreciated about the Norwegian society, they had similar thoughts about what they appreciated. They said Norway was safe and Norwegians were nice once you got to know them and that Norwegians were good at giving compliments and correcting when necessary. In addition, they mentioned that Norway is peaceful, you have freedom of speech, religious tolerance and a system that works, with good healthcare and even offers free education. That you have opportunities even though the really good opportunities are out of reach. One can follow their dreams and study because it is peaceful and you can live a normal life.

4.2.1 Social Interaction

From the social perspective I will be looking at how socially active minority youth are. All of eight of the youths I interviewed were members of the Red Cross Resource Centre and other youth groups. Some of these youth groups have youth centres which organize activities and the minority youth enjoy involving themselves in these activities. For instance, the Red Cross

Resource Centre has created a point of contact or interaction between minority youth and youth with other cultural backgrounds as well as with volunteers or other adults who are involved in the activities at the centre in one way or the other (most of the volunteers also have different cultural background, both from Norway and other countries). This interaction gives the youths new ideas, especially ideas and understanding related to different cultural backgrounds. This gives them ideas about other cultures and creates some level of understanding in and between them.

Minority youth are also involved in other activities in other settings out of the Red Cross Resource Centre, like in school or during other free time. They engage in other activities like football, partying with friends, open days in schools or even watching football matches in pubs with other people. These activities have helped them in certain ways like enabling them to find out what they are good at. The youths like going to these places, for instance places like the Red Cross Resource Centre because they feel they are treated nicely and without prejudice based on their background or culture. They especially like it there because they meet youth with similar backgrounds as them.

Even though most of the activities they are engaged in, particularly within the Red Cross Resource Centre do not necessarily represent the Norwegian culture (some activities that were mentioned to represent the Norwegian culture include skiing), some of these activities give them the opportunity to be and to live like youth. Some of these activities like table tennis, chess and DJ'ing have helped them discover their talents and helped them improve on them.

Abedin: "I like it here (Red Cross Resource centre) because I meet people with different backgrounds, especially volunteers with from different countries. It's a place that keeps me from being in other places or being involved in activities that could get me in trouble."

Adin: "There are lots of ideas here that can help you be good at something, for example, I would not have been a good DJ if I didn't come here. You can be good at a lot of different things here."

It is noticeable here that there is social interaction taking place at varying levels within the Red Cross Resource Centre and the activities they engage in give them an opportunity to have positive experiences. The social interaction here also gives them the opportunity to learn

something new and in getting to know others, they also get to learn new values and new things about other cultures which brings about mutual understanding and tolerance.

Due to the fact that the use of technology is common nowadays most minority youth are connected to family and friends in other parts of the country or the world through social media. So they use modern technology to keep in touch with friends and family and use that as a web of protection around them. Through the use of social networking sites, it has helped the youths in many ways to keep both in touch with their culture and values as they use these platforms as mediums for getting advice from family and friends.

Amna: "It has helped me keep connected and not feel depressed."

Desa: "I will not have been able to make it socially. They give me advice, sometimes positive and sometimes negative and at times this creates conflict but I learn and grow positively."

The media is presented within two contexts, the first as a means of expression and the second as a means through which a lot of stereotypes have been promoted. In the first instance, the social media acts as a medium through which they are able to maintain their social network with family and friends. In this process, they feel the sense of belonging as they keep in touch with family and friends which is used as a means to maintain the bond between them. They use social media sites to enhance their sense of self and a positive self-image. They get advice from friends and family when they need it, as well as they give advice to others via social media sites like WhatsApp, Facebook or Skype. This contact and connection which they maintain through the afore mentioned communication medium, helps them keep and uphold a positive sense of themselves. They are able to use the social media to express their identity and culture through the discussions they engage in and the articles they read. They as well learn about other things about their society and are quick to pick up changes which are occurring within their society.

Abun:'It helps me keep in touch and helps especially when friends have problems. As long as I talk to them it feels like I have someone to talk to'.

Public discourses in the media such as public debates, research and newspaper articles have in recent years been around the successful integration of immigrant youth. Most of the newspaper articles and public debates on the integration often focused on their effect on the social system

and presented immigrant youths in a negative way. In most cases, the media presented them in relation to crime and social problems which only enhanced the stereotypes about minority youths. Some of the reports about immigrant youths often pointed at identity crisis and difficulties of adapting to the Norwegian society as the causes of the reason for their unsuccessful integration (Bøhn 2008; Mainsah 2013). The negative media representation of immigrant youths also influences the way the youths think about who they are as well as what they think others think especially ethnic Norwegians within the society. The medias portrayal of minority youths in a negative light does presumably has an effect on the way people interact with these youths in the society, which has led to minority youths experiencing being poorly judged by others within the society. Furthermore, the media representation particularly discourses on criminality, extremism, culture have also enforced the placing of minority you within categories such as 'us' being the majority and 'others' being the minority (Mahmoud 2013).

Ahmun: "The fear of the unknown and the media is creating these issues because of their negative representations or articles which people read and judge certain groups differently and stereotypically. They generalize a lot, which is bad."

Amna: "After what happened in Paris, people look at us strangely. They say things like "go back to your country."

4.2.2 Self-perception

As seen the different activities these minority youths get involved in, gives them a sense of who they are to some extent. They also give them a sense of pride and a feeling of being responsible, as can be seen in what Abedin said: "*During an open day in school, I was able to do what I love. I was asked to do a live coverage of the activities in school.*"

Activities both in and out of the Red Cross Resource Centre have not only given them an opportunity to discover their talents and work on them, but have also given them an opportunity to express themselves and who they are in other ways. The activities have enabled them to be more sociable and outgoing because of the many people they have met when they engaged in these activities. This also gives them a sense of self-consciousness and self-improvement.

Desa: "These activities have made me more sociable. I have been able to meet a lot of people, like when I play in different places… Being a DJ has made me stronger and better… Through being a DJ, playing other musical instruments they have helped me to be able to express myself better. Like expressing myself through the music or musical instrument I play."

Through activities and interaction some of these minority youths have started forming new ideas about what kind of attributes or behavioural attributes are acceptable. For instance, in order to be liked by people they consider that there are basic requirements even if these do not work in all cases. Some of these attributes of a supposedly good person include being nice, being honest and being social. Some of them are now adopting what it means to be nice, honest and social within the different settings in which they find themselves in the society. This is driven by how they think how others perceive them and what kind of reactions they want from those people, especially in their interactions.

Adin:" If people don't like you, there's nothing you can do especially as some people still look at you strangely sometimes. You can't force them to like you, you just have to be nice, honest and social."

One thing that comes across is that some of the minority youth have a sense of being different especially based on their culture or race. Some of these minority youth have experienced more than two cultures depending on which countries they have been to, lived in or where their parents come from. But this sense of being different to some of them is more of a strength than a weakness.

Desa: "I just feel special because of my culture. We have many cultures but I feel I grew up in a good culture."

Most of them engage in activities related to their culture, but do not necessarily use these activities like going to the mosque to define who they are. Even though they may for example go to the mosque often, dress in a traditional wear or speak in their mother tongue. They mostly consider themselves liberals. Yet, the compliments they get when they engage in these activities give them a sense of pride and belonging.

Adin: "I feel happy and proud when I get compliments from the friends of my parents when they come visit and they hear me speak in my mother tongue and they tell me I speak well."

Some of these minority youths due to some cultural demands are facing another kind of dilemma, where they feel they belong neither to the Norwegian nor to their own culture. Due to the fact that some are not as good in their mother tongue or in Norwegian they feel excluded from both cultures. This makes them have a different perception of who they are and how both communities perceive them. While to some others they have never felt included or excluded because to them it boils down to knowing who you are and where you come from.

Abun: "When I'm with friends they tell me I have become too Norwegian, but when I'm with Norwegians they tell me I am not Norwegian. This is because I cannot speak my mother tongue well and they have to explain some words to me when we discuss."

Desa: "I don't think about skin color, I know I have a different culture but I have never felt excluded, I feel African and I am not Norwegian, but I don't think so much about it."

4.2.3 Feeling of belonging

There were several issues raised here especially when it came to feeling included or excluded, either within the Norwegian society or within their own cultural community. This really created a dilemma for some of the minority youth. To begin with language came across a key part of the Norwegian culture and society. They placed much emphasis on learning the language which to them was a key to understand the society which they lived in and to be able to interact with others as well as offer other opportunities like education to them. Some of them used the different activities they engaged in like football, to learn and improve on the language. This was so because they felt being able to speak the language gave them a feeling of belonging and as a key to other opportunities.

Abedin: "I feel like I'm more Norwegian now because I live in Norway... When I speak Norwegian and get good compliments from Norwegians it makes me feel happy. Language gives you an identity. We are the languages we speak, for example if you speak Spanish and you are in Spain, you are Spanish... Languages become who you are when you travel to these countries. Because I can speak, therefore I am...."

Language therefore plays an important role in the way they feel about belonging to the society. So when they get positive compliments about how good they can speak the language, it gives them a sense of belonging to the Norwegian society. It is further significant in that being able to speak the language gives them the feeling that they are able to integrate and adapt to their new community. It also symbolizes a key which gives access to a fulfilling life within the Norwegian society. This is because some of the youth believe that when you can speak the language It gives you access to better opportunities like education, and with a good education you will be able to live a comfortable life within the community.

Ahmun: "Once you learn the language the only thing after that is to find out what you would like to do in your life."

On the other hand, in spite of being proficient in the Norwegian language and trying to adapt in the society in other ways, there are certain experiences which have made these minority youths feel excluded. Such experiences like being hurled racial slurs at or being discriminated against have only gone to foster a sense of being the "other", where the "other" refers to the outsider. Most of these youths have experienced different forms of discrimination based either on their race, colour or religion.

First and foremost, they have had experiences where they were discriminated against. Even though they could speak or write the language and even had the education and experience needed, they were still not given the jobs they applied for because of their foreign names. This reinforced the feeling of being the "other" and feeling of being excluded. It also made them conclude that even though there are opportunities open to all within the Norwegian society, the really good opportunities were being kept out of the reach of the outsiders, the 'others'.

Abun: "When I search for work those in charge look at my name and skin color, and often end up employing Norwegian which makes me feel excluded."

Adin: "Whenever you go to school or work you always have extra eyes on you whether you are good or bad… They put extra pressure on you to be extra careful, to dress or act in ways which will not make you mistaken for something else. This makes you feel excluded."

The fact that the media reinforces stereotypes and generalizes about particular groups of people especially minorities reinforces the feeling of being excluded. The media to a great extend plays

a role in how people treat or interact with each other, especially when it comes to people with either majority and the minority backgrounds. For instance, in Norway there is a fear of the unknown which is very common, which makes it difficult for non-judgemental interaction to take place between an ethnic Norwegian and a foreigner or minority. Minority youths have experienced this in different ways, different places and at varying levels.

Desa: "There was once I met a lady in the metro and she said to me that foreigner should not come to Norway."

Ahmun: "The fear of the unknown and the media is creating these issues because of their negative representations or articles which people read and judge certain groups differently and stereotypically. They generalize a lot, which is bad."

Amna: "After what happened in Paris, people look at us strangely. They say things like "go back to your country."

When it comes to extra-curricular activities they offer both positive and negative experiences. Many minority youths have experienced being left out or not being invited to parties organized by other Norwegian friends. In some cases, ethnic Norwegian youths are not particularly open or welcoming to those they do not know or are familiar with.

Abedin: "There have been times that when I went out to party with Norwegians like a friend was invited to a party and wanted to take me along he had to call his Norwegian friend who invited him to ask if I could come along with him since he didn't know me. The Norwegian friend accepted reluctantly and only after my friend had told him I was a nice guy. When we were at the party and I got to meet and interact with him and others, they discovered that I was really a nice person and so after that when they organized other parties they were the ones who called and invited me."

4.2.4 Strategies for adapting

Due to the differences in culture and their experiences, most of these minority youth had to develop different strategies to deal with their experiences and cope with the daily challenges

which come with trying to adapt to a new society. Some of these challenges involved adapting to a new culture, learning a new language, dealing with discrimination, to name a few.

For these minority youth one of the challenges in the beginning was being able to speak the language as well as engaging in other cultural activities like skiing. For those who were unable to learn other aspects of the culture, they had to find ways to excel in things related to the culture without necessarily giving up who they were and their identity. For example, those who were unable to ski focussed their attention to learning the Norwegian language as perfectly as possible. As one of the youths mentioned, chess was now becoming a part of the Norwegian culture due to the fact there is a Norwegian who is the world champion. As a consequence, some other minority youth have actively engaged in learning chess. These examples are some of the ways in which minority youth are adapting and trying to integrate to the Norwegian society.

Abedin: "I went skiing and fell so many times, while ethnic Norwegians were extremely good. That made me feel like I didn't belong to the Norwegian culture… When I am out with Norwegian friends and we talk together they complement me for speaking Norwegian saying that I've been here only four years and can speak so good Norwegian. I feel I'm on my way to become a Norwegian."

Ahmun: "I like chess and I'm becoming good at it. Chess is also becoming a part of the culture because there is a Norwegian who is the world's best at the moment."

In reaction to the different experiences minority youth have had in the face of discrimination and racism they ignored, spoke up or just gave their best behaviour. They did not let these experiences steal the pride of who they are or where they come from.

Ahmun: "When you know who you are those things don't matter. Most often they are those who are less educated who hold such thoughts because they don't have enough knowledge to analyse people at an individual level, so they are influenced."

Desa: "I know I have a different culture, I feel African and I'm not Norwegian but I don't think so much about it."

Adin: "No matter how well dressed you are or what you do, you still meet the wrong people sometimes."

The cultural diversity of these youths is often used to their own advantage. Most of the minority youth I interviewed had lived in another country before moving to Norway, so they had experiences of cultures other than the Norwegian culture. More often what they tend to do is to make use of the best of both cultures that is the Norwegian and the culture of whichever country they come from. By blending the best from these different cultures has given them the edge to stand out and to be the best version of themselves as well as in most cases make the best of the situations in which they find themselves.

Abedin: "I tried to get used to and in other circumstances I use my culture in place like for example, when people do not give their seats to the elderly, I give because it's part of my culture."

Adul: "Trying to keep both cultures has been difficult. When I'm out in the society it's different, but when I'm home it's more of my culture."

From the data presented in this chapter, we find that some of the experiences which the youth had before or upon their arrival or later in life both influenced the way they related with others or engaged in the society. Some had developed new ways of approaching people and believed that being honest and nice was one of the ways you could use to break through some of the barriers created by their backgrounds. In relation to culture, their experiences in the meeting with a new culture served as a basis for defining how and who they were going to be, in terms of their affiliation to their new society reason why many had developed different strategies to cope with the aspects of culture that seemed negative by using the positive aspects from their own cultures. They were able to do so because of their experiences of both which made them a judge of what was good and could be upheld and in other ways be more flexible.

4.3 The principle of Meaning

The way we act towards people and situations are according to the meanings we give them. Thus, meaning acts as a guide to human behaviour. In the communication process, we often have shared meanings within given contexts which determine the way we act or relate with others and

carry out activities. Meaning is central and important in human behaviour because humans base their understanding of things around the meanings they have acquired. We all have different meanings and give different phenomena varying meanings especially depending on the context in which we perceive them. Therefore, to understand something, we need to be able to understand the context within which it is placed or explained. Meaning is also derived through interaction with others especially those who have assigned special meanings in the communication process. In similar manner it states that human behaviour is guided by meanings which are more than just incidences (Griffin 1997).

In my research we find that these minority youths hold a lot of different meanings to things around them. These meanings guide their behaviour in one way or the other, positively or negatively. Meanings can be shared or acquired but when it comes to context, it is often the context of the receptor and interpreter which defines the outcome of their behaviour.

Abedin: "I feel like I'm more Norwegian now because I live in Norway… When I speak Norwegian and get good compliments from Norwegians it makes me feel happy. Language gives you an identity. We are the languages we speak, for example if you speak Spanish and you are in Spain, you are Spanish… Languages become who you are when you travel to these countries. Because I can speak, therefore I am…."

Adin: "I feel happy and proud when I get compliments from the friends of my parents when they come visit and they hear me speak in my mother tongue and they tell me I speak well."

We realise from the above quotes that even though language is a means of communication within the society, it also holds cultural heritages both to the minority and the majority. In a more positive way, one of the youths sees language as a means of feeling part of the society. This is based on the meaning he has attached to the use of language and which within his context, means more than just a means of communication, but also an aspect of becoming part of the society. This interpretation has driven his desire to become more competent in speaking the language because of the context within which the language gives more meaning to him. We notice how indirectly, the meaning he holds about that particular aspect of culture which he certainly has picked up from his social interaction within the society, is influencing his ideas and behaviour.

It can also be seen that the behaviours of the youths are guided in one way or the other by the meaning they attach or what specific things may mean to them as being part of the minority. Some of the youths usually exhibit neutral stances when it comes to giving meaning to how they feel about their current circumstances of being different within the society. While there may be circumstances which they may see as a sign of exclusion, they do not give more meaning to them. They rather decide to give these circumstances the meaning which they presumably feel more comfortable with and use this as a platform from which they can interact with others within the society.

Desa: "I know I have a different culture, I feel African and I'm not Norwegian but I don't think so much about it."

This raises an interesting point because when we look at it, the society kind of has ways through which it relates to the youths' position in terms of his background and other ways which they have given specific meaning to. But this youth rather decides to create a neutral stand. Neutral in the sense that he states that he knows where he comes from and he does not really look at it from the context and meaning others have given it, thereby recognising what already is there. He rather looks at it from the meaning he holds within his own context and probably this has been working for him. His meaning of who he is and his cultural heritage serve as a basis for his formation of meaning and interaction within the society. It can be presumed that he has assigned a meaning which is working for him and he uses this to act towards things and others.

4.3.1 The principle of Language

Language is used as a means to negotiate meaning through symbols. Through language, the meaning of words can be derived within set contexts. In other words, meanings are derived from social interaction between individuals in the society, that is between the individual and others. Social interaction serves as the basis for meaning creation through language. Griffin (1997) presents that language is used to get a response from other individuals which occurs through interaction with others within the community. Thus language is used by those involved in the communication exchange, to assign meanings to situations. These meanings in turn have an influence on the way people understand or interpret what is being said or done. Even though

language may exist and has shared common meanings, the interpretation of what is being said is influenced as well by the context in which it is being said or used. This is so because humans all have different meanings attached to different situations and these same phenomena may have different meanings in different contexts. In order to understand something, the context is always important as well. In this case, symbols which are considered linguistic in nature and which have shared meanings help to create some basis for common understanding. When used, language usually requires a certain reaction in return which in some ways indicates an understanding of what has been said.

In the context of my research, minority youths find themselves within a society or community where they share common symbols like the Norwegian language, and these symbols have common meanings with the majority in the society. This serves as a basis for exchange and understanding because they use a language which they understand and which has assigned meaning to gestures and all else that occurs under any interaction process. The use of a common language for communication and interaction between the two groups and within the groups creates a situation of shared symbols of language which serve as a basis for common understanding. The youths use Norwegian language which is the official language to communicate with their peers and others they interact with within the community. These youths also use their mother tongue to communicate with family and friends from some cultural backgrounds in different settings like at home. Hence, language here serves as a basis for shared understanding of communication in the settings for social interaction just mentioned which also gives room for contextual understanding or contextually shared meanings.

Social interaction has language as a basis for shared meaning and when language is used, it usually expects some form of reaction in return. The reaction in communication usually lies in the understanding of what has been said, which could have been interpreted based on the individuals understanding of what was meant. Language thus could be understood in terms of behavioural responses to what is being said. The individuals' response to what has been said is what gives the action its significance especially as meaning is always being negotiated through the use of language (Griffin, 1997). To understand something means that we have understood the context.

The youths always seem to be giving meaning to their interactions based on the responses they get from the others with whom they interact. Their involvement in activities with both groups of minority and majority has an influence on the way they interpret and react to situations. In many ways, they had formed new meanings in the way they interacted in different settings because they were aware of the importance of meaning in context. For instance, the fact that they spoke either Norwegian or their mother tongue depending on where and with whom they were is an indication that language and context were important for creating understanding and shared meaning within different settings. All of the youths interviewed stated that they used Norwegian either at work or school and more of their mother tongue while at home or with friends from same cultural backgrounds. It can be seen as their attempt to get expected responses within these different groups because out of experience they know that shared language and shared meaning create expected reactions unlike in cases where the meanings were not shared. Some of the youths I interviewed indicated that when they arrived in Norway and could not speak the language, they faced a lot of challenges because there was a lot they did not understand and could not communicate with others outside their cultural group because of language barriers.

Jodi: 'It is difficult to communicate in the beginning when you cannot speak good Norwegian ...'

Language is derived through interacting with others who assign meaning in the communication process, giving room for assumptions and possibly wrong interpretations. What we say may be assigned a meaning different within different contexts. Peoples meanings affect what is being said and meaning is usually being negotiated through the use of language. Humans base things on the meanings those things are given. We all have different meanings attached to different things and things mean different things in different contexts. To understand something like for instance what is said, we have to understand its context. This is usually made easy through the use of symbols. This will also depend on if these symbols hold shared meaning for those who use them (Griffin 1997).

4.3.2 The principle of Thought

Thought is the individuals' interpretation of symbols based on the individuals' way of thinking. Thoughts modify the individuals' interpretation of symbols and represents a mental conversation

from different perspectives which the individual engages in. In social interaction, people reflect over what they have heard as well as reflect on how they will respond depending on their interpretation of what is communicated. When we engage in discussions with others, our minds tend to reflect over the different points or meanings being expressed. We have an internal discussion which enables us get meaning of what is happening at that moment as we engage with others. Our reaction to what people say usually is thinking about how to respond to what they have said. In this process of this interaction, the interpretive process begins whereby the meanings we get are managed and modified and used to interpret all that is happening around the individual (Griffin 1997).

In the thought process as Griffin (1997) puts it, the individual has a focus on the things which he is acting towards through a process of internalisation, whereby the individual interacts with himself. This interaction is considered as a process of communication with the self which has to do with assessing meanings. In this process, the individual takes into consideration his environment or context and how the intended actions will correspond with the context.

From the data, we find that the youths have different meanings attached to things and to the people they meet and especially the contexts within which they meet these people. Through thinking therefore, these youths in way anticipate how others will react and react in ways that will either bring about anticipated reactions or in a way which is satisfactory to them, especially the meaning it holds for them.

Adin:" If people don't like you, there's nothing you can do especially as some people still look at you strangely sometimes. You can't force them to like you, you just have to be nice, honest and social."

Some of these minority youths have been in situations where they could not understand the reaction of people towards them. In some situations, after reflecting over what may be a suitable reaction, they tended to act in such ways especially positively, but that did not usually give them the response they expected. So in the end, they just resolved that they would stick to being who they are and act as it is morally expected of them in these situations. The fact that they are able to use their different cultures in these different situations to their advantage also indicates that they are reflecting all the time about their role within the different contexts they find themselves in within the society.

4.4 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented my data and also analysed the data with the use of relevant theoretical perspectives which shed light on the activities and cultural experiences of minority youths within the Norwegian society. The data reveals interesting aspects of how the activities and experiences contribute in different ways to how these youths perceive and present themselves within different social settings in the society. It especially shows that many of them have an idea about their hyphenated identity which is as a consequence of their social interactions within the Norwegian society. This identity is portrayed in different ways in different circumstances and are used as an effective tool for adapting to their society.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Discussion of Findings

In the previous chapters of this research, I have attempted to study how activities and experiences of culture contribute to the identity of minority youth in Norway. From the data collected and presented in chapter four, there were several interesting themes that shed light on the role these activities and experiences play. In this chapter I will therefore be discussing my data, in relation to theory and existing research as presented in the previous chapters, to explore whether or not there exists any link between activities and experiences of culture, and the identity of minority youth in Norway. I will be looking at how minority youths in Norway are aware of their relation towards certain aspects of the Norwegian society and how these aspects like culture and activities, influence who they are through analysing their experiences. Furthermore, I will look into the social environment of minority youths and their experiences and how these presumably give them meaning especially about who they are. These will be discussed in the light of the principles of symbolic interaction (Levin & Trost 1996).

To begin with, in my data, it was noticeable that the informant's definition of their situation as youth with different ethnic backgrounds than Norwegian, in many ways influenced their behaviour. According to this principle, people react towards other people and act based on the meaning they get or give to whatever situation they find themselves in. Through what they believe and have formed as an outcome of what actually happens in their interaction, determines the way they will act (Levin and Trost 1996). From the data, there are instances where these minority youths clearly state the ways in which they were discriminated against and how they reacted to these situations like for instance where they were openly told by people that they were not welcome in Norway, but they just ignored. Their interactions within the society occurred at different places and at different points and the activities they were involved in also created the stage for such social interactions. They described their interaction for example at the Red Cross Resource Centre as interesting because of the people they met there from several cultural backgrounds like themselves. These encounters made them feel like being at a place where they could be themselves without others judging them for who they are. This interaction at the Red Cross Resource Centre seems to offer a situation or a setting where they can lift up the masks and pressures of being someone else and just being themselves comfortably, to some extent. It

raises an interesting issue of how interactions in certain places can affect the way they react and it seems like they redefine themselves with every new social environment they find themselves in, based on their judgement of the feedback they get from the interaction. Thus their interactions in these settings whether in school, gym or football field, provide them with relevant experiences which influence their behaviour.

Furthermore, social interaction serves as a point of exchanging mutual responses and adjustment of both the actor and others. Every interaction is social and offers them the ability to take on the attitudes of others as well as their perspectives. As a consequence, the self emerges as the individual sees it and develops it as a response to the views of others he interacts with (Levin and Trost 1996). From my data, there are instances where the youths mentioned that they felt proud because of either a role they were offered which they loved or because of compliments which were given them due to their level of their proficiency in the Norwegian language. These situations provided them an opportunity to rediscover themselves to the extent of one even stating that he felt more Norwegian because he was good at the language. For another, through activities at the Red Cross Resource Centre, he was able to discover what he was good at. These examples to some extent show how these youths were in other ways expressing the emergence of a new self or identity which is based on their acknowledgement of finding out new things about themselves especially with the backing of views and comments from others. Such experiences in other words creates a possibility whereby their identities are altered as they may tend to engage in these activities more as a way of expressing their self-image which is both as they view it and as others have viewed it. These may include the kind of music they play or listen to.

Humans are said to integrate through the use of symbols and these symbols refer to language or words which have meaning and define any situation triggering a response (Levin and Trost 1996). When meanings of words are shared and understood, then the words create meaning within the contexts they are used and these influence the interpretation of action and interaction which in turn bring about flexibility (ibid). These youths have been brought up in another culture before moving to Norway and being in Norway therefore recommended them learning about the Norwegian culture, especially the language which forms an integral part of the culture. In Øia (2003), it is presented that the reasons why minority youth were more prone to criminal activities was because they were not well integrated and the challenges they faced due to their multiple

cultural background. The report also stated that there were other factors which could be the cause like discrimination. From the data I collected, some of the informants stated how important learning the language was to them especially when they just arrived because it made communication and interaction difficult. Learning the language was a process where they not only understood the language but also learned more about other aspects of the Norwegian culture. What this indicates is that they understood that in order to integrate into the new society to whatever extent they deemed necessary, they had to adopt certain aspects of the culture. This created a certain level of flexibility in them. They had to learn the language and the culture in order to understand the Norwegian context so that they could react appropriately to whatever situations that came up in their course of interacting within the society. Understanding the language also enabled them understand other aspects of the society and as an informant interpreted it, the media was spreading stereo types which in turn was influencing the way they were being viewed and interacted with. He recounted an incident where he felt excluded because he was being judged as the 'other' or based on his ethnic origin and only became accepted after he had presented himself as a 'nice guy'. Thus the context of fear of the unknown which characterised this interaction context, made the youth to adjust and act flexibly to the situation and the other Norwegian youths when they got to know him also adjusted. The manner in which these youths are described within contexts as seen in this case influence the way they are treated, but at the same time, that narrative creates a presumably flexible opportunity for adjusted interpretations through action and interactions.

In addition, humans are considered to be active and are part of the process as they act based on their emotions, evaluations and feelings. In order to understand a person within a given context, we need to understand how the person defines that situation (Levin and Trost, 1996). To be able to get some insight about the situation of minority youths, it was therefore important to get some information about their emotions, evaluations and feelings which we get a view of from the data I collected. These youths have different perspectives on their situation and these in many ways determine their feeling of belonging, inclusion or exclusion whether from the angle of their own cultural milieu or from the Norwegian cultural milieu. From my data, they describe situations where they felt included like when they were complimented for being good with the language, being engaged in activities both at the Red Cross Centre and with Norwegian friends all gave that feeling of belonging in these contexts. On the other hand, we also saw situations where they

faced some form or discrimination or pressure to act in specific ways which will make them more acceptable. One of the informants gives an example of how when he was with his Norwegian friends they made him understand he was not Norwegian, but when he was with friends of the same cultural background as him, they told him he was Norwegian because he could not speak his mother tongue well. Another example is where one of the informants say that it has been difficult to find work because of his foreign name in spite of the fact that he could speak the language well. These are examples which show the contexts within which the experiences of these minority youths making them feel excluded or included in one way or the other. The interesting thing is that this brings to light the fact that they reacted to these situations in different ways, mostly by finding ways to achieve the things or goals they have had and especially working at being the best they can in spite of the stereotypes and judgemental attitude of people they come across. As Mainsah (2013) States, these attitudes have also led them to redefine their identities through online interactions and platforms where they express themselves and discuss about the things they consider important to them. This also showed that they kept their interaction and connection or bond to family and friends through the use of social media and in this way they could maintain some connection to their culture and also express it like when they communicate in their mother tongue.

5.2 Hyphenated Identities

The present moment is also presented as an important part of understanding symbolic interaction between humans. This refers to humans acting and finding themselves in the present moment and at times the actions of that present moment are influenced by old forgotten memories which are somehow integrated into the new (Levin and Trost 1996). This can be seen through the manifestation of their *hyphenated identities* (Eriksen 2001), where some of them consider themselves as part Norwegian and part of the country they come from. For instance, you have the expression Norwegian-Gambian which they use to describe or acknowledge the fact that they are a product of both or several cultures and with the possibility of identities which lean more or less to one of them depending on which they felt more connected to in that context. One of the informants mentioned that he felt more Norwegian because in spite of his cultural background, he did things like other Norwegian youths did like taking part in activities which representing

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more the Norwegian culture like skiing, but only occasionally engaging in activities related to his cultural background. Like him, other informants were able to state in other words that when at home, they act more related to their culture like speaking their mother tongue and eating their cultural food, but while in public, like in school or work, they acted more Norwegian like speaking the Norwegian language. Their experiences as seen through these examples in other ways show that they live in the present moment flexibly, between both cultures and making use of them as the different activities and contexts within which they find themselves will require. They also expressed the fact that they used the best of both cultures whenever they were faced with different challenges in their activities. They used their different cultural backgrounds to their advantage.

5.3 Conclusion

From this discussion we have been able to use symbolic interaction to understand the situation of minority youths in Norway and how activities and experiences of culture contribute to their perceived identities. From this research, I was able to deduce that activities and experiences of culture do contribute to the perceived identity of minority youth in Norway. Through their social interactions and their coping strategies, we realise that they are making use of both their previous and present social and cultural context to adapt to the new society. Under culture it was also interesting to see the role of acculturation taking effect in different ways when these minority youths with different cultural backgrounds came in contact with subsequent changes that take place at the group level within the Norwegian society. We could see changes occurring at different levels and to different extents in the culture of the minority as well as in the culture of the Norwegian society into which they are adapting. In certain situations, if there is a considerable difference between the dominant and the minority culture, more changes tend to occur in the minority culture than in the dominant (Bøhn 2008). But in this research I did not try to determine to which extent one of these cultures (majority or minority) influenced the other. My focus was rather on the role of activities and cultural experiences and the perceived identities of minority youth.

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE

A. Background Information
- In which country were you born?
- Are your parents born out of Norway?
- In what country were you born? In what year?
- How long have you lived in Norway?
- What kind of education do you have?
- What is your current occupation?

B. Activities
1. How long have you participated at Red Cross Resource centre?
2. What kind of activities do you engage in here? What do you appreciate with the centre?
3. What kind of other activities do you participate in in your studies/work/leisure time?
4. Do you consider any of these activities to represent the "Norwegian society"? Your own culture? Or a mix?
5. Have your activities changed over time?
6. Are there any other places (than the Red Cross Resource center?) where you meet young people from a variety of other cultures ex. school or youth centres?
7. What kind of networks are you part of? Locally, transnationally? Globally – in person, travelling, skype, online internet.
8. What are meaningful about these activities/engagements/networks for you? What do they bring out in you/do they bring out different qualities in you?
9. Do you have any friends of ethnic Norwegian background?
10. Can you mention two or three good experiences you have had in Norway when you felt you belonged? /at home?
11. Can you mention two or three bad experiences in Norway when you felt lack of belonging?
12. What did you do to cope with the challenging experiences?

C. Culture

13. What do you use or do, to show your identity/culture? Ex. Clothing, dressing, language/dialect?

14. What language to you speak at home or at school?

15. What have been your main cultural challenges in Norway?

16. What did you do to overcome these challenges?

17. What do you still find appreciative or challenging by living in Norway?

APPENDIX 2

REQUEST TO PARTAKE IN MY RESEARCH AS AN INTERVIEWEE/INFORMANT

My name is Jude Mbom Kuma. I am currently taking a master degree at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Science. My master thesis will focus on youth and cultural identity and belonging. The aim of the research is to explore how minority youth engage in activities representing different or a mix of cultures. The project also examines if or how these activities bridge eventual gaps between cultures and how they contribute to the formation of the young people's cultural identities and belonging.

To get insight on the topic, I would like to get information from youth with minority background between the age of 18 and 25. Based on this, I would like to ask you to be part of my research. If you agree to participate in this research, I will have a face-to-face semi-structured interview with you at a location of your choice. You can decide whether we will talk Norwegian or English. The interview will take place between the 27th of January and 05th of February, 2016. It is expected to last about an hour and will be tape-recorded. I will not share any of the information you give me in ways that can identify you. All the information from the interview will be anonymous and deleted once the research is over in May 2016.

I hope you have the possibility to participate in my research project. Your consent is being given voluntarily and you are free to withdraw at any time. If you have any questions, please contact me at 939 88 333 or email; s236903@stud.hioa.no or my supervisor, Professor Mona Sandbæk at 918 43 334 or email; Mona.Sandbæk@hioa.no.

The project has been accepted from NSD – Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste AS

Thanks in advance for your contribution. If you agree to take part in the interview, please sign the attached form and return to me.

Best regards,

Jude Mbom Kuma

INFORMED CONSENT to participate in research

I have received information about the research project: A Narrative Study of cultural activities and experiences of minority youth in Norway and I agree to be interviewed by Jude Mbom Kuma

SIGNATURE_____DATE_____

APPENDIX 3

Groruddalen Røde Kors Ressurssenter

Ved Solveig Haland

REQUEST TO GET PERMISSION FROM RØDE KORS RESSUSSENTRENE TO INTERVIEW YOUNG PEOPLE AS PART OF MY MASTER PROJECT.

My name is Jude Mbom Kuma. I am currently taking a master degree in child welfare at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Science. My master thesis will focus on youth and cultural identity and belonging. The aim of the research is to explore how minority youth engage in activities representing different or a mix of cultures. The project further investigates if/ how these activities bridge eventual gaps between cultures and contribute to the formation of their cultural identities and belonging.

To get insight on the topic, I need information from youth aged between 18 and 25 with minority backgrounds. The diversity in Red Cross' Resource centres will be of great benefit to my research. I will also mention that I work at one of the centres as a volunteer. I want to ask your permission to invite 5-10 minority youth to take part in a face to face semi-structured interviews. The interview will be tape-recorded and is expected to last about an hour. Interviewing will take place between the 27th of January and 05th of February, 2016. All the information from the interviews will be anonymous and deleted once the research is over in May 2016. For any further questions, please contact me at 939 88 333 or email; s236903@stud.hioa.no or my supervisor, Professor Mona Sandbæk at 918 43 334 or email; Mona.Sandbæk@hioa.no.

The project has been accepted from NSD – Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste AS

Thanks in advance for your kind consideration. Find attached hereto the information letter to then interviewees.

Kind regards

Jude Mbom Kuma

APPENDIX 4

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

Mona Sandbæk
Institutt for sosialfag Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus
Postboks 4 St. Olavs plass
0130 OSLO

Vår dato: 04.11.2015   Vår ref: 45323 / 3 / AMS   Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 23.10.2015. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

45323	*A Narrative Study Of Cultural Activities And Experiences Of Minority Youth In Norway*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Mona Sandbæk*
Student	*Jude Mbom Kuma*

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, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og 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/meldeplikt/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://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.05.2016, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Anne-Mette Somby

Kontaktperson: Anne-Mette Somby tlf: 55 58 24 10
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering
Kopi: Jude Mbom Kuma mbomjude@yahoo.com

BEKREFTELSE PÅ ENDRING

Vi viser til statusmelding mottatt 29.06.2016.

Personvernombudet har nå registrert ny dato for prosjektslutt 15.11.2016.

Det legges til grunn at prosjektopplegget for øvrig er uendret.

Ved ny prosjektslutt vil vi rette en ny statushenvendelse.

Hvis det blir aktuelt med ytterligere forlengelse, gjør vi oppmerksom på at utvalget vanligvis må informeres ved forlengelse på mer enn ett år utover det de tidligere har blitt informert om.

Ta gjerne kontakt dersom du har spørsmål.

Vennlig hilsen,
Marie Strand Schildmann - Tlf: 55 58 31 52
Epost: marie.schildmann@nsd.no

Personvernombudet for forskning,
NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS
Tlf. direkte: (+47) 55 58 81 80