Finding friends after resettlement

A study of the social integration of immigrants and refugees, their personal networks and self-work in everyday life

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The social integration of first generation immigrants in Norway is the main topic of this study. Although most immigrants in Norway receive generous resettlement and welfare assistance from the state, experiences of non-belonging, cultural distance and lack of recognition from the mainstream are still a common fact of daily social life for many of them.
In this study, I relate these experiences to relationships that immigrants have established with other people. My interest is primarily on immigrant identities and the meanings they attach to interactions and relations within their social networks.

I am particularly interested in *the relation between patterns of social integration and identity negotiations in the everyday life of immigrants*. In the tradition of symbolic interactionism, it is argued that our self-conception is produced and reproduced in relationships with others. This notion is also used as a theoretical point of departure in my study. According to this postulate, the most important motivation that triggers our daily actions is our wish to reproduce a positive self-image in our own eyes and in the eyes of others (Mead 1934; Goffman 1959; Hewitt 2003). As newcomers to an unfamiliar social environment, immigrants are forced to rebuild their social networks. Among other things, they will try to establish new friendships, and create a feeling of belonging and self-worth in their new social environment. At the same time, they may also experience obstacles and embarrassing situations on their path, especially if they re-establish themselves in a strange place within the frame of a prejudiced social reception. Focusing on these tensions I will explore how different categories of non-western immigrants navigate within various social ties and networks with the hope of reproducing positive identities.[1]

In this study, I combine symbolic interactionist theory with a network perspective. Such a combination allows me to go beyond the perspective of individual action for which interactionist theory is often criticized. My position is that the individual actions of immigrants cannot be seen separately from the chains of social relations and surrounding network structures that constrain and enable them. The immigrants' sense of who they are, who they belong with and who they want to be, is embedded, constructed and reconstructed in interactions and relations with others. In these social encounters, their identities are processes involving constant self-reflection and negotiation, and depending on the relations, network structures and other social circumstances that frame them.

In public debates, the integration of immigrants – in terms of their acculturation and increased participation in mainstream society – is often pictured as a successful path of incorporation, while ethnic segregation is seen as a problem. Many immigrants end up in marginalised, segregated environments where they reproduce values, lifestyles and identities that are in opposition to those of mainstream society. Nevertheless, this study has no intention of becoming one of those which describes the misery of immigrant segregation and marginalization. Encapsulation in ethnic enclaves may work as a protective strategy. Increased participation within different arenas of the host society does not always lead to an increased sense of belonging to the mainstream, and may instead expose immigrants further to

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[1] The immigrants in my study originate from Iraq and former Yugoslavia. I acknowledge that it appears inaccurate to define a person from former Yugoslavia as 'non-Western'. In respect of this category of immigrant, the more precise term would be South/East-European. However, in Norwegian debates, immigrants from former Yugoslavia are defined as 'non-Western' immigrans. Western immigrants are primarily associated with people who come from developed countries in Western Europe and North America.

acts of discrimination and racism.[2] Within this context, ethnic networks and neighbourhoods can indeed be safe havens that ensure the preservation of a valued lifestyle for socially excluded immigrants who deviate from the majority's prescribed normality.[3]

On the other hand, we have to acknowledge that immigrants can protect their identities, culture and self-respect in many ways, and not only through segregation in their ethnic communities. Drawing on ideas of partial and selective incorporation (Portes and Zhou 1993),[4] I believe that the process by which immigrants adapt is more dynamic and includes a wider spectrum of experiences and modes of incorporation into the host society. I am especially interested in processes that take place as immigrants try to build bridges to the mainstream, including strategies and identity negotiations deployed in interactions and relations with the hosts. Through systematic analysis and comparisons between the different types of ties, networks, meanings and interactions that constitute immigrant social life, we may gain a better insight into what is considered an ideal or realistic integration, seen from the point of view of different categories of immigrants.

My goal is to give a detailed and diversified picture of immigrant attempts to reconstruct their social life. In this way, I will develop the conventional integration-segregation dichotomy, as well as reveal the individual, subjective, and local everyday realities that lie beneath general and uniform descriptions of immigrant social life. Although they have different backgrounds, resources and positions, I assume that the immigrants in my study share several common experiences and integration strategies. The data material is based on information gathered from immigrants from three countries: Croatia (mainly Serbs from Northern and Eastern Croatia), Bosnia (Croats, Serbs and Muslims/Bosniacs) and Iraq (mainly Kurds from Northern Iraq). Comparing these categories of immigrants I hope to highlight differences and similarities between various categories of immigrants, with regards to their network affiliations, resources and their experience and mastering of everyday life. The immigrants (from the ex-Yugoslav republics and Iraq) were also chosen because they represent some of the largest first generation immigrant groups in Norway.[5]

Throughout this study, I have made a conscious effort to contextualize the social life of immigrants. The social realities of immigrants are related to different everyday contexts (public life, family, workplace, ethnic associations, neighbourhood, city, small town, etc). I also incorporate a temporal perspective in exploring this social life. I will argue that oscillations between experiences of belonging, exclusion, recognition and misrecognition by the mainstream are inherent parts of immigrants' social trajectories. The reconstruction of social life after resettlement may be understood as a dialectic process where identities and social relations are continuously recreated, resulting in different ethno-social preferences and practices. In order to explore the integration careers of immigrants – that is, how their identities, ethno-social preferences, and social networks develop over time – I followed several of them over a sustained period of years.[6]

Although my informants are first generation immigrants who came to Norway as asylum seekers, refugees or as reunified family members, for most of them being a refugee was and is

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[2] Rogstad (2004).
[3] For more on self-segregation as a protection strategy see Wirth (1988); Crow and Allan (1994); Zhou (1997); Reinsch (2001); Barnes (2001).
[4] See also Rumbaut (1994); Zhou (1997); Portes and Rumbaut (2006).
[5] See Statistics Norway/SSB (2006).
[6] I followed several informants for more than six years (see chapter 4).

not the most prominent aspect of their identity. The reasons for their being forced to move, whether war or political prosecution, have often disappeared. Today, they may visit their home countries frequently and may even repatriate without the risk of imprisonment, prosecution or death. In their eyes, they have stopped being asylum seekers and refugees. They define themselves as immigrants or in terms of their ethnic identities, rather than as refugees or asylum seekers. Due to these reasons, and in order to avoid conceptual confusions in my discussions that follow, I will refer to them primarily as immigrants rather than switching between different labels.[7] In the cases where it is necessary to be precise in order to show certain aspects of their composite identities, I will use the alternative, more specific identifications.

This study has implications for debates on governmental integration policies. Understanding the day-to-day realities of immigrants, as well as the social-psychological motives that stand behind different integration patterns, may contribute to improving the quality of policy making in various host countries. Better comprehension of the local dynamic of immigrant social life may bring about the modification of various integration initiatives. This study may also contribute to the general literature by increasing our understanding of the underlying dynamic of social integration process, including the dynamic relation between individuals' personal networks and their daily experiences and self-work.

The thesis is organized into fifteen chapters. In the second chapter, previous studies about immigrants' social life are presented and discussed. In chapter three, the link between theory and the major assumptions of the study are clarified. Theories and concepts central to network perspective are also introduced in this chapter. Chapter four gives a presentation of my methodological approach and various dilemmas regarding data analysis are discussed. This discussion includes a presentation of the empirical data, my relationship with the respondents, the gathering of data and the interpretation of data. Chapter five analyzes the immigrants' experiences of everyday life. I argue that many immigrants experience various kinds of misrecognition in everyday life. It is also argued that encounters between immigrants and the indigenous locals may be seen as: intercultural meetings, relations of power and as mixed interactions in Goffman's sense. In chapter six, structural and interactional dimensions of respondents' personal networks are presented. General patterns regarding the informants' networks are explored. Furthermore, several cases and types of immigrant personal networks are presented. Chapter seven explores the connection between immigrants' daily life experiences and the relationships they have with the hosts, their compatriots and other immigrants. It is argued that immigrants' experience of everyday life is influenced by the ethnic composition of their networks and the type of attachment they have to others. In chapters eight and nine, I develop the argument that the social ties immigrants have with other people, as well as their personal social networks are influenced by the immigrants' self-work. Chapter ten discusses how immigrants negotiate their identity in interactions with indigenous locals. It is argued that the strategies applied depend on situational and relational contexts. In chapter eleven, it is shown how immigrants' social integration develops over a long period of time. It is suggested that immigrants' social integration in the host country should be seen as a dialectic process of a constant redefinition of relationships with other people, with references in the past, the present and the anticipated future. Chapter twelve identifies and analyzes various sources and arenas for immigrants' social integration. In chapter thirteen, it is discussed how immigrants experience everyday life in different spatial contexts. The main argument is that

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[7] Labels as such as - foreigners, naturalized immigrants, non-western immigrants, Bosnians, Croats, Serbs, Kurds, Iraqis, Ex-Yugoslavs, first generation immigrants, reunified family members, refugees, asylum seekers, minority persons, etc.

cities and small towns provide two different contexts for immigrants' social life, but that experience of social life in these contexts will differ among immigrants. Chapter fourteen contains a broader discussion about immigrants' social integration and their everyday life. The focus in this chapter is relation between immigrants' networking, ethno-social practices and broader social structures. In this chapter, I argue that immigrants' social life and social trajectories are influenced by their cultural background, social status and gender. In the final chapter, the main statements, conclusions and findings are discussed.

Chapter 2: Previous research and questions relevant for the present study

My study primarily focuses on how immigrants experience the socio-psychological problems they face in receiving countries, as well as how they cope with these problems within the frame of their personal social networks. In my view, immigrants and refugees' social integration, linked to the dynamic interplay between their identities, personal networks and their integration endeavours are still largely unexplored. The primary aim of this chapter is to situate my study within the field of inter-ethnic relations.

2.1. Social networks as sources of incorporation into the host society

The importance of social networks has long been recognized in the field of migration studies (see among others: Boyd 1990; Portes and Rumbaut 1990; Gurak and Caces 1992; Zhou 1997; Korac 2001; Krissman 2005). Immigrants and refugees' networks can be described as webs of interpersonal relations based on friendship, kinship or shared ethnic and national origin (Korac 2001; Krissman 2005). These networks can be seen as sources of social capital in exile, mediators of chain migration or as transnational networks that connect the old and new country (Massey *et al* 1987; Portes 1995; Levitt 2001; McLellan and White 2005). We may distinguish between three parallel (and often overlapping) network perspectives in the field of immigrant and refugee research: a) those that focuses on positive and negative role of social capital; b) those that focuses on role and capacities of strong and weak ties; c) those that focuses on relation between bonding and bridging capital.

a) Migrant networks - Positive or negative social capital?
Several students of inter-ethnic relations have studied the relation between the social networks of various immigrant groups and their well-being after resettlement (Quizumbing 1982; Noh and Avison 1996; Portes 1995; Phillips and Massey 2000). However, the empirical evidence is not consistent. On the one hand, migrant networks are seen as a form of 'positive' social capital that provides routes to upward mobility. Networks made of relations with family members and friends may be seen as an important source of capital that immigrants and refugees can draw on in order to improve their economical and social circumstances. In several studies, ethnic networks and strong ethnic communities are seen as providing newcomers with assistance, information, access to work and housing (Portes and Zhou 1993; Korac 2001; Aquilera and Massey 2003; Waldinger and Michael 2003). Ethnic enclaves are also seen as economically and psychologically protective; as shelters that may protect minority members against discrimination and downward mobility (Zhao 1997; Mikkelsen 2001; Barnes 2001; Portes and Rumbaut 2006).

Alternatively, it is argued that migrant networks represent a source of 'negative' social capital (Mahler 1995; Hondegneu-Sotelo 2001; Krissman 2005; Cranford 2005). This mode of interpretation suggests that reliance on intra-ethnic friendships tends to constrain the opportunities that members of minority groups can access (Aguilera 2002). Ethnic networks are here seen as an impediment to the social mobility and the psychological and socio-economic well-being of ethnic minorities, immigrants and refugees (Quizumbing 1982; Aguilera 2002). According to the critical interpretations, a number of socioeconomic abuses may be found in migrant networks where certain migrants profit at the expense of others. Established migrants may provide newcomers with support and assistance (employment, housing, migration channels, etc) but under highly exploitative conditions. In this way,

migrant ties to compatriots may constitute networks of exploitation and suppressive social control (Mahler 1995; Van Hear 1998; Cranford 2005). Furthermore, several studies show how internal divisions, factionalism, social control and mistrust may disturb ethnic networks (Levitt 2001; Brekke 2001; Vertovec 2000; Knudsen 2005; Al-Ali and Koser 2002).

The discussions about the influence of ethnic networks on immigrants are relevant for my study. Among other things, it is important to explore further what role and capacities immigrants' migrant networks have as a source of friendship, sociability and identity reproduction.

b) Strong and weak ties
Another ongoing question in the field of migrant studies is connected to the discussion about what kind of compatriot networks may best provide migrants with social well-being and economic opportunities. Some studies focus on 'strength of the strong ties' (Coleman 1990; Portes 1998: 13)[8] and social closure as important sources of social capital in migrant networks (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Zhou 1997; Sanders, Nee, Sernau 2002). According to these studies, close knit ethnic networks, made of strong dense ties between in-group members, in particular the family (through their properties of social closure and enforceable thrust)[9] provide social support to immigrants, develop human capital and catalyze the integration of immigrants into the host society. These studies downplay the role of loose networks and ties (Field 2003).

On the other hand, Granovetter's notion of weak ties (Granovetter 1973) implies that segregation will lead to political powerlessness, a lack of access to information, downward mobility and linking across the social strata (Voyer 2003). In line with Granovetter, Cranford (2005), for instance states that 'uniform networks characterized with low socio-economic status may not bring positive effects' (Cranford 2005: 381). In a similar vein, other researchers argue that weak ties and bridges to other groups may provide migrants and ethnic minorities with better access to other kinds of resources, or compensate for social and economic disadvantage (Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch 1995; Wilson 1998; Heer 2002). Several other studies suggest that less co-ethnic interactions in closed immigrants' networks may have a positive effect on their psychological well-being and social and economic prosperity (Quizumbing 1982; Caces 1987; Emerek 1998; Wilson 1998; Cranford 2005).

For the purpose of my investigation, it will be relevant to explore what kind of ethnic ties may provide immigrants with the best opportunities for successful identity reproduction and negotiations in everyday life. Immigrants, like anyone else, want to have intimate relations with their best friends, based on mutuality, trust and respect for the other. Ultimately, we may assume that in certain cases, loose networks and ties may be preferred. In such context, alters cannot monitor the person. Unlike close-knit ethnic networks, such contexts may enable immigrants to navigate more freely between different relations. It is important to explore further whether they may enable them to escape constraining social control that suppresses innovative cultural and ethno-social practice.

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[8] According to Portes (1998), such relations are for example relations with relatives or long term friends from one's village or town back home.
[9] The main argument here is that such networks may provide a high degree of social support because in dense networks the trust may be easily monitored and enforced.

c) Bonding and Bridging

There are also disagreements within the field about the relation between different kinds of networking. According to Putnam (2000), we should distinguish between two kinds of networks or social capital; bonding (exclusive) and bridging (inclusive). According to Putnam, some networks are outward looking and connect people across diverse social categories and groups, while others are, by choice or necessity, inward looking and tend to reinforce exclusive identities (Putnam 2000). There are different views on relation between *bonding* within the ethnic network and *bridging* across different ethnic groups. Some studies argue that strong bonding within the ethnic community may hinder bridging (Anwar 1985; Wilson 1998). Other studies suggest that bonding is a precondition to bridging. These discussions are highly relevant for my study because, inter alia, it is meaningful to explore the role of ethnic networks in enabling and restricting friendships with Norwegians. It is also relevant to explore how immigrants' identities are reproduced, negotiated and changed with bonding and bridging. Immigrants' experience of cross-ethnic bridging may be seen in the light of their bonding/internal integration and vice versa. The meaning immigrants give to their relations with the hosts and other immigrants may also depend on how they are socially attached to their compatriots. For instance, it is not difficult to imagine that people alienated from their compatriots may experience an absence of ties with indigenous locals more intensely than immigrants who are well integrated in their own ethnic group.

The recent sociological literature about immigrants' social networks focuses primarily on the role of social capital in generating economic and human capital (Field 2003). In this study, I focus on the relation between networks and self-work. In line with several studies about immigrants' incorporation into host societies (Hurtado and Carter 1997; Berg 2002; Korac 2003), I believe that their experience of their integration process goes beyond commonly used measures of integration. Among other things, their self-esteem and sense of a belonging may be more meaningful to use (Rumbaut 1994; Hurtado and Carter 1997). Together with these concepts, the complexity of interpersonal relations within different contexts of social reception must be taken in for consideration (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Immigrants' bonding and bridging, with regard to the quality of ties with compatriots, indigenous locals and between different immigrant groups have an important impact on immigrants' integration experience. I ask in which cases bonds with other immigrants, fellow compatriots and indigenous locals may have positive/negative effects on immigrants' identities and sense of a belonging.

Immigrants are ambivalent both to their ethnic networks and to indigenous local friends. Indigenous local friends may appear as symbols of acceptance and recognition by the mainstream, but they may also patronize and humiliate the immigrant. Non-indigenous friends may be safer to socialize with, but they may also appear as symbols of marginality and exclusion by the mainstream. In short, I will explore if ethnic networks may be perceived both as protective and suppressive networks. In some cases, members of ethnic networks may consider the bridging as an asset, promoting external networking and enabling identities of inclusion. In other cases, ethnic networks may sanction bridging and consider socio-cultural preservation a virtue. In order to diversify the picture, we have to distinguish between different categories of immigrants and social contexts, as well as different networks and ties. Discussions about social closure, as well as debates about strong and weak ties in networks will be equally relevant here, in analyzing of immigrants and refugees' identity work, as it is in studies outlined above. If we want to understand the dynamic between the immigrants' actions and the bonding and bridging networks that immigrants possess, we also have to find

out what kind of personal networks immigrants have and what resources they use to cope with these structures.

2.2. Everyday life: Immigrants and refugees as strangers

The concept of the 'stranger' is introduced by Simmel (1908) in his classic essay *Der Fremde*. Park (1928) reintroduced the notion of the stranger when he defined the marginal man as 'the man on the margin of two cultures and two societies which he never completely interpenetrated and fused' (Coser 1980: 224). Wood (1934) and Schütz (1944) have also used the concept of the 'stranger', but they take a broader view of the concept than Simmel. Wood (1934) sees strangers as newly arrived outsiders involved in the first face-to-face meetings with unknown people, while Schütz (1944) defines the stranger as an individual who tries to be permanently accepted, or at least partially tolerated by the group which s/he approaches. These scholars share a relatively similar view that the stranger will perceive the new surroundings through the lens of insecurity and a feeling of marginality and outsiderness. In general, these feelings can result in experiences of anxiety, alienation and social discrediting. I ask whether immigrants may experience these feelings also because their daily life is based on inter-cultural encounters and majority-minority relations. Furthermore, I will explore how certain immigrant groups reconstruct their social lives with the frames of prejudiced acceptance.

2.2.1. Inter-cultural encounters and majority-minority relations

Newcomers may experience everyday life in the host society as problematic because they are insufficiently familiar with cultural codes of the host country (Miller and Steinberg 1975; Gudykunst and Kim 2003). Everyday life practice presupposes knowledge about norms, values and traditions that are important parts of culture of this society. For many immigrants, it will take time to accumulate experience from different interactions that occur in various social settings of the receiving society before they manage to behave in accordance with expectations of the new cultural environment. Confronted with a new environment, the newcomers may feel disoriented because they note that everyday actions end in a wide variety of reactions and that each situation and interaction differs from the previous one (Reinsch 2001).[10] One important aspect of immigrants and refugees' day-to-day reality and their identity reproduction in the receiving country is connected to the mastering of cross-cultural aspects of interactions and relations with indigenous locals. To make proper self-presentations, a newcomer must have knowledge to interpret in what kind of situation that person is in, and to know how to behave in different situations and relations. It will be difficult to deploy one's self with self-confidence in a everyday life when that person is constantly uncertain whether it is the culture of the hosts that makes no sense, or that they themselves fail to fit (Reinsch 2001).

Typically, the ethnic majority has the power to define the code of interaction. The immigrant has to present herself in the minority role within situations defined on the cultural premises of the hosts (Gotaas 1996; Høgmo 1998; Knudsen 2005; Sandberg and Pederson 2007). My assumption is that many immigrants and refugees, due to their subordinate minority position, will experience constant insecurity in everyday life interactions, inclusive of social time they

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[10] According to Reinsch (2001), the stranger will often be insecure in interpretations of other actors' actions in various situations. S/he will wonder if they are manifestations of culture or characteristic of the person.

have with their Norwegian friends. In many social encounters, they will be forced to base their self-presentations on uncertain ideas about what is the accepted code in a particular situation and what is the socially acceptable performance. Even if immigrants know what the acceptable code is, it will often be difficult to perform it in practice. Immigrants have to think first and often hesitate instead of spontaneously giving socially acceptable performance. They may do it clumsily, without the required spontaneity, since it is hard to know whether the performance will result in embarrassing interaction-breakdowns. I ask whether such experiences impact the immigrants' identities and integration strategies, and if they may also influence relations with their Norwegian acquaintances and friends.

A feeling of insecurity in everyday life and a sense of cultural subordination in relation to the indigenous locals may be amplified if the mentioned experiences are combined with difficulties in communication. Immigrants may also have problems with self-presentations and experience uneasiness and inferiority in everyday life because they speak a foreign language (Bunar 1998; Barnes 2001; Knudsen 2005). We may expect that first generation immigrants feel communicational inferiority or feel that their usage of language is lacking spontaneity. They may not be able to express their feelings, develop complicated thoughts and explanations (Berg 1990). They may feel that the hosts perceive them as boring, simple minded or even stupid (Berg 1990; Grønhaug 1975; Barnes 2001; Grønseth 2006). It is not difficult to imagine that some people may experience such evaluations as quite humiliating. In fact, it is easy to imagine that everyday experiences of this kind will constantly remind the immigrants that they are operating in a context that is strange and unfamiliar to them.[11]

2.2.2. Ethnic discrimination, stigmatization and racism

Problems that characterize the interactions and relations between immigrants and Norwegians cannot only be characterized as inter-cultural encounters and majority-minority relations. If immigrants re-establish themselves within the context of strongly prejudiced social reception, then an intense uneasiness may go far beyond usual problems related to cultural and communicative differences. Many immigrants and refugees who resettled in western countries may also experience uneasiness and discomfort during interactions with natives due to ethnic discrimination, stigmatization and racism (Portes and Zhou 1993; Rumbaut 1994; Oyserman and Swim 2001; Tibe-Bonifacio 2005; Ross and Turner 2005; Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Gullestad 2006). From my previous studies (Valenta 2001; Valenta and Berg 2003) I learned that problems with inadequate familiarity with the dominant culture and language may also be seen in the light of immigrants and refugees' stigmatized ethnic identities. Appearance and distinctive speech do not only disturb the immigrants' self-presentations in interactions, they may also appear as ethnic markers that emphasize (or can lead to the confirmation of) difference between immigrant and indigenous locals. Reduced communication abilities and an inadequate knowledge of implicit and explicit cultural codes in the host country, combined with insecurity about how they are perceived recognized and classified, often leads to ethnicization of immigrants' everyday life (Høgmo 1998). Immigrants and refugees may be constantly reminded that they are not 'normal' members of the host society. These negative aspects of everyday encounters may contribute to immigrants' feeling that they are strangers who do not necessarily belong to the mainstream society (Gullestad 2006).

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[11] These assumptions are in line with a number of studies that focus on immigrants and refugees' experiences of everyday life and their encounters with local majority populations (See Kvo and Tsai 1986; Barnes 2001; Reinsch 2001; Grønseth 2006).

To summarize, we may say that previous studies about immigrants' everyday life support the idea that everyday life of many immigrants may be characterized by cultural and communicative anxiety and inferiority, together with a feeling of ethnic misrecognition and a sense of non-belonging to the mainstream. This study builds further on this knowledge. Drawing from previous studies, I ask whether immigrants cope with these problems; and if their identity negotiations and reconstructions of social life after resettlement should be seen in the light of this coping.

2.3. Social integration of immigrants: what do we know about immigrants and their friends?

Economic, cultural and residential integration of immigrants and refugees is quite a popular issue in the Nordic ethnic relation discourse, but interest is significantly smaller in respect to the process of social integration. Nevertheless, there are several studies within the field of immigrant research whose findings are relevant for my study. We know, for instance, that many immigrants experience cultural and social isolation and disqualification in relation to the mainstream (Rex and Josephides 1987; Dorais 1991; Akman 1995; Dalgard *et al* 1995; Barnes 2001; Korac 2003; Ross and Turner 2005).[12] This is especially the case for immigrants of different races, stigmatized ethnic groups and people that are seen by natives as culturally distant. These immigrants seldom have friends among indigenous locals and they seldom meet indigenous locals within the context of informal interactions and relations (Robinson 1984; Carli 1993; Berg, Svarva and Sollund 1995; Grønseth 2006). Previous studies also show that immigrants who have been in the host country for a long time achieve a higher degree of social integration than those who have been in the host country for only a short time. This is especially the case among immigrant groups that settle in a new environment within the frame of non-prejudiced social reception (Portes and Zhou 1993). Furthermore, several studies have shown that certain categories of immigrant and refugee women are exposed to social isolation, passivity and unemployment (Dalgard *et al* 1995; Djuve and Kavli 2000; Al-Ali and Koser 2002; Berg *et al* 2006; Engebrigsten and Fuglerud 2007).

The studies mentioned above highlight various dimensions of immigrants' social networks, such their size, their ethnic composition and the frequency of contacts within them. Several aspects of immigrants' affiliation to the hosts (such as the number of indigenous friends, and their participation in different segments of the host society) are presented in these studies. Nevertheless, few sociological studies say much about what quality of affiliation and network compositions this participation actually leads to and what kind of meanings, tensions and ambivalences are connected to these friendships. In my view, sensitivity to the types and quality of social relations, as well as to the meanings that immigrants attach to various ties, are important conditions for a deeper understanding of immigrants' relations to the indigenous locals. The type of ties newcomers have with other immigrants, fellow compatriots and indigenous locals, is presumably important for newcomers' perception of the host society and their place in it. It is important to emphasize that exploring the qualitative dimensions of immigrants' network relations may not only rely on apparent features as a type of sociability, their ethnic composition and frequency, etc. Friends and acquaintances are multidimensional constructs to which people attribute different meanings. I ask whether that they may be valued

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[12] Statistical data indicates that most immigrants and refugees in Norway live in more or less ethnically segregated networks (Djuve and Hagen 1995). For instance, among immigrants interviewed in 1995, only 10 per cent of immigrants and refugees in Oslo who arrived in 1988/89 held jobs where Norwegian was spoken, or met Norwegian contacts once a month or more (Djuve and Hagen 1995; Djuve and Kavli 2000/2001; SSB 2006).

by immigrants in terms of sociability. We may also ask if they also should be seen as symbols of acceptance or marginality. Therefore, together with qualitative sides of social relations, we have to explore immigrants' personal construction of their own experiences including the meanings they attach to these experiences and ties.

2.3.1. Social integration as dialectic process of internal and external integration

Ethnic segregation is often associated with strong ties to the migrant community and one's own ethnic group, while increasing an immigrant's contacts with the hosts is associated with social integration. This understanding of social integration is too simplistic and holds strong normative connotations. Social integration associated with processes of gradual incorporation into informal networks of hosts does not say much about the importance of integration into networks of compatriots and other immigrants, but considers integration into networks of the indigenous majority population as the ultimate goal. Several scholars, however, have a broader understanding of immigrants' incorporation. Schierup (1988) argues that two main sub-processes constitute the integration process of newcomers; the internal and external integration process. The external process refers to newcomers' relations outside their own ethnic group and the internal refers to relations within their ethnic group. According to Schierup (1988), these processes have parallel existence, they are in a dialectical relation and interplay to each other. In this study, I will look at this interplay between immigrants' internal and external integration. In their daily lives, many immigrants interact and are related to different people, their friends, workmates, neighbours, their compatriots, indigenous locals and other immigrant groups. The degree of attachment to the immigrant community may influence the perception of interactions and relations with the hosts and vice versa. This understanding may help us to explore the mutual relationship between immigrants' experiences, ethno-social practices and the meanings they attach to these experiences and behaviour.

Migration usually implies that people lose their personal network. As Putnam has noted: 'emigration devalues one's social capital, for most of one's social connections must be left behind' (Putnam 2000: 390). This means that migrants have to start to weave a web of contacts from scratch. They may lack contacts with both the immigrant community and the indigenous majority population, and are primarily concerned about how to break the isolation and reduce the feeling of loneliness. With a serious attempt to adopt immigrants' perspective in my exploration of their social life, I take into consideration the sum of their endeavours to rebuild their social life in the receiving country, a social life whose structure, content and ethnic composition is closely related to their capacities and desired self-image. The external constraints within which immigrants operate (along with their capacities and resources) may lead them into more or less ethnically segregated communities; however, they may also prefer and get the chance to operate in ethnically heterogeneous networks. I assume that each adaptation line embeds certain ambivalences and dilemmas.

2.3.2. Acknowledging variety and selectivity in social integration patterns

It is traditionally assumed that immigrants' participation in the host society will gradually increase, and will lead to a process of gradual acculturation and assimilation (Gordon 1964). The idea of a straight line process of increased assimilation, called 'classical assimilation'

(Zhou 1999) is criticized by segmented assimilation theorists (Zhou 1999; Portes and Rumbaut 2006).

Relying on concepts of 'segmented assimilation' and 'selective acculturation' (Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou 1997; Portes and Rumbaut 2006), recent studies on immigrant incorporation suggest that different immigrant groups may follow different paths of incorporation and participate in different segments of society, rather than adopting a uniform straight-line increase in participation (Zhou 1997). According to them, the context of reception includes three things: the host government's policies toward immigrants; society's attitudes and prejudices about immigrants; the qualities inherent in the immigrant community itself. It is possible to argue that all these factors also influence the social integration of immigrants and their ethno-social preferences and practices. While the government's policies toward immigrants and refugees (for example: reception/settlement polices, generous integration/welfare assistance, etc)[13] are obviously important factors, I focus primarily on how the attitudes of the hosts toward immigrants and the qualities of ethnic networks interact with their identities and ethno-social practices. We know that immigrants follow different paths of social integration, which, among other things, depend on: whether or not they can put their resources to use; whether they arrived in Norway on their own or with family and relatives; whether they feel accepted in desired segments of their new social environments; whether they experience subordination and stigmatization in interaction with Norwegians, etc (Valenta 2001; Brekke 2001; Gullestad 2006; Engebrigsten and Fuglerud 2007).

Some immigrants and refugees gradually come to acknowledge that it is unrealistic to expect that they will make friends among indigenous locals, no matter how acculturated they become. As a result, they turn toward their own ethnic group or other immigrant groups (Robinson 1984; Barnes 2001; Knudsen 2005, Portes and Rumbaut 2006). For them, social integration is primarily connected to establishing their own ethnic networks. These networks than appear as social ties which will help them to find a place in the new country without forfeiting their cultural identity (Dorais 1991).[14] Others gradually increase their bridging to the mainstream to the detriment of bonding within their own ethnic network. Introducing the concept of segmented assimilation, Portes and Rumbaut (1990) stress the fact that in some cases it may be advantageous to acculturate and assimilate, while in others, it may be disadvantageous to break ties with their ethnic communities and family networks. For example, for some immigrants it may be better to reconstruct their lives within their strong ethnic communities than to acculturate and assimilate into marginalized segments of the local population (Portes and Rumbaut 1990; Rumbaut 1994; Zhou 1997, 1999). Based on these studies, we may assume that the ethno-social practices and preferences of immigrants not only include distinctions between themselves and their hosts, but also distinctions and selectivity within these categories of potential friends. It is reasonable to expect that, both in the case of bridging and bonding oriented immigrants, friends will be recruited within the proper segments of the mainstream society and of the immigrant community. At the same time, they will try to distance themselves from other people, and from negative reference groups, in the same communities.

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[13] My informants came to Norway as asylum seekers, refugees or as family members who were reunited with refugees. Being granted asylum/refugee status in Norway includes not only the right to stay and work but generous resettlement and welfare assistance (for example: extensive language courses, health benefits, welfare provisions, education, housing, etc).
[14] According to Dorais (1991), who studied the integration of South Asians in Canada, even South Asians who have been in Canada for more than 20 years socialize primarily with their compatriots. Contacts with indigenous locals are considered to be rather superficial.

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2.4. Relevance of other integration processes for reconstruction of immigrants' social life

Although different aspects of integration process intertwine, several studies on inter-ethnic relation have deconstructed the concept of integration into several sub-elements.[15] In their analysis of immigrants' integration, they also made clear distinctions between various arenas of the host society. Researchers often divide integration into cultural integration, residential integration, economic integration and social integration of immigrants and refugees.[16] In the following, I discuss these processes and look at the relevance they have for my study.

2.4.1. Relevance of cultural integration

Several researchers have related social integration of newcomers to processes of cultural integration and assimilation (Gordon 1964; Dorais 1991; Diaz 1993; Hosseini-Kaladjahi 1997; Korac 2001; Portes and Rumbaut 2006). It is usually assumed that the level of immigrants' cultural integration will influence their chances to establish and evolve social relations with indigenous locals because they would more easily accept newcomers who meet their normative expectations. It is also assumed that some immigrants will maintain their own ethnic identities and culture, while others will avoid differing from indigenous locals in their look and behaviour. Among latter there are also those who will gradually accept some of the host's cultural norms and values. It is reasonable to believe that these strategies result in different social integration patterns. Here, it will be relevant to explore the underlying logic of different stances toward acculturation.

The question of persistence of ethnic identities and the 'cultural stuff' (Barth 1969) contained within them is a central one in inter-ethnic research. We can here distinguish between primordial and non-primordial positions (Banks 1999; Ålund 2002; Fenton 2003). The primordial position views ethnic identities as something static (Bromley 1974). According to this position (see for instance Bromley 1974) ethnicity has a stable core and ethnic identities are strongly resilient, persisting through generations (Bromley 1974). The instrumentalist and constructivist position are quite opposite from the primordial approach (see among others Eidheim 1969; Cohen 1969; Banks 1999; Sackmann *et al* 2003; Fenton 2003). The constructivist position suggests that ethnic identities are socially constructed (Tishkov 1997; Fenton 2003). According to the instrumentalist position, who will be ethno-cultural preserver and who will behave in innovative way depends of economic, social and political circumstances.

The present study explores the central topic of how ethnic identities and acculturation are related to immigrants' reconstruction of social life. It is hard to deny that birth into and experience of living in a particular family, community and language group brings with it complex attitudes, identities and cultural dispositions (Fenton 2003). However, it is also reasonable to believe that individuals may modify their ethnic identity and cultural practices in order to achieve certain social or material rewards (Eidheim 1969). I acknowledge that ethnic identities may have the instrumentalist, constructivist and primordial dimensions. In this study, I focus primarily on ethnic identities as changeable entities. In my view, their relevance and deployment is circumstantial, situational and instrumental (Fenton 2003).[17]

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[15] See among others: Gordon (1964); Diaz (1993); Hosseini-Kaladjahi (1997); Reinsch (2001).

[16] Gordon (1964), for instance, distinguishs between communicative integration, structural integration, spatial (residential) integration, family integration and cognitive integration (Gordon 1964).

[17] For more on ethnic identities as changeable entities see chapters 10, 12 and 14.

Many aspects of immigrant behaviour that are described in previous studies (Eidheim 1969; Banks 1999) indicate that ethnic minorities and immigrants have a flexible and pragmatic relation to their cultural practice and their ethnic identity. In line with my symbolic interactionist approach, I will expore how immigrants reconstruct their cultural practices and play out their ethnic identities in order to achieve desired reflections from others.

The social segregation of immigrants is often viewed as a result of their resistance to change the cultural practices in which their ethnic identity finds its expression. We cannot neglect the ethnic identities and their cultural dimensions in explanations of social integration. Some aspects of identity and cultural dispositions may indeed be different to change, no matter how eager an immigrant is to become the part of the mainstream. Ethnic groups may also perceive each other's ethnicity and culture in a primordial sense. Drawing on findings in previous studies on immigrants and refugees in Norway (Brox 1997; Høgmo 1998),[18] I have accepted the view that social integration for certain categories of the informants will occur within the context of prejudiced social reception. It is reasonable to expect that within such a context, no matter how acculturated immigrants become, Norwegians may still perceive them as inherently different, which may in turn reduce the possibility for interethnic friendships.

2.4.2. Relevance of residential integration

Residential integration is usually associated with the scattering of immigrants and refugees in areas dominated by indigenous locals. Mechanisms behind the processes of residential integration and segregation are widely discussed (Karn *et al* 1985; Wilson 1987; Wirth 1988; Wacquant and Wilson 1989; Kuusela 1993; Crow and Allan 1994; Brox 1997; Karn and Philips 1998; Mikkelsen 2001; Søholt 2004). Studies typically focus upon residential segregation where segregation is seen, among other things, as a result of economic marginalization (Karn *et al* 1985; Wacquant and Wilson 1989), of pragmatic short-term policy (Kuusela 1993; Brox 1997); discrimination (Karn and Philips 1998; Ross and Turner 2005) and of voluntary self-segregation (Wirth 1988; Karn and Philips 1998). The social integration of newcomers is also often related to their settlement patterns and their residential integration and spatial segregation (Hewstone and Brown 1986; Gaasholt 1991; Høgmo 1998; Satnam Virdee *et al* 2006).[19]

In order to contextualize immigrants and refugees' social life, it will be fruitful to discuss their everyday reality in terms of 'dispersed' and 'concentrated settlement'. There is certain degree of uncertainty about what kind of settlement is better for immigrants and refugees: scattered or concentrated. On the one hand, we have those who refer to the contact hypothesis and argue that increased proximity will lead to the growth of respect between ethnic groups. Furthermore, they suggest that with dispersion, the contact will increase and lead to faster integration of immigrants and refugees. They also suggest that dispersion will at the same time discourage the emergence of socially segregated ethnic communities and encourage inter-individual and inter-group contact across ethnic borders. These ideas are also implemented in practice. In several European countries, both central and local authorities, grounded on their anxiety towards ethnic ghettos, pursue efforts to counteract these tendencies (Kushner and Knox 2001; Djuve and Kavli 2001; Bloch and Schuster 2005). Norwegian

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[18] See also Lien (1997); Knudsen (2005); Grønseth (2006); Gullestad (2006).
[19] Norwegian majority population reside in larger apartments and houses than non-western immigrants. Norwegians also live in parts of the city with better reputation, while non-western immigrants are concentrated in marginalized parts of the cities (Brox 1997; Djuve and Kavli 2001).

authorities, for instance, have proclaimed several times that the geographical dispersal of refugee settlement was the most desirable settlement pattern for this category.[20] On the other hand, such practices are criticized for neglecting the realities of daily life. It is argued in several studies that dispersed settlement will not necessarily lead to integration (Brox 1997; Høgmo 1998). These studies argue that under certain circumstances, the result of increased dispersion, proximity and interethnic interaction may generate even more conflicts (Hewstone and Brown 1986; Gaasholt 1991; Høgmo 1998), that it may increase the experience of isolation among immigrants and refugees (Duke *et al* 1999; Grønseth 2006) and that it may result in increased secondary migration to the urban areas of the host country (Robinson and Hale 1989; Djuve and Kavli 2001).

Building on these discussions, I will explore how migrants experience Norwegian cities and small towns as different contexts for identity negotiation and for the reestablishment of social life. Another aspect of the residential integration debate is connected to how immigrants perceive ethnic and Norwegian neighbours/neighbourhoods and whether the dispersion of immigrants in Norwegian neighbourhoods leads to more interethnic contact. The dispersion of immigrants across the country may in some cases indeed accelerate their bridging to the mainstream. However, this does not mean that dispersion automatically leads to increased social integration. I ask if dispersion may also slow down or even hinder immigrants' social integration process. We should explore if certain categories of migrants may consider small local communities as closed, xenophobic social environments. Similarly, we should investigate if immigrants who are settled in Norwegian neighbourhoods really develop inter-individual and inter-group contacts across ethnic borders. Physical proximity is just as likely to strengthen as to diminish immigrants' experience of social exclusion and misrecognition (Høgmo 1998).

2.4.3. Relevance of economical integration

Definitions of the economic integration vary, but the majority of studies on the economic integration of immigrants associate the concept with the wages, occupational distribution and degree of immigrants' participation in the labour market of the receiving country. Several studies have shown that non-western immigrants have lower wages, have less desirable occupations and do not participate in the economic sphere of the host society to the same extent as native-born individuals (Diaz 1993; Husseini-Kaladjahi 1997; Gullestad 2002; SSB 2006). These inequalities are sometimes explained by referring to differences in human capital between newcomers and native born individuals. These kinds of explanations are usually based on human capital theories.[21] We can also find theories that explain economic inequalities between newcomers and the hosts by referring to certain structural properties (for example, different features of the labour markets of receiving countries). One of these theories is the so-called segmented market theory or theory of dual-labour markets (Niesing 1993). Several studies show that non-western immigrants and refugees usually end up in the lower segments of the labour market of receiving countries (see for example: Diaz 1993; Magerøy

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[20] See the Budget proposal from the Department of Work and Municipal Affairs 1995/96.
[21] The core notion of human capital theory is that the higher amount human capital a person possesses, the more productive that person will be, and the more rewards that person will receive. The relative lack of 'know- how in the receiving society' can result in economic inequalities between the immigrant and host population.

1995; Gullestad 2002).[22] The third set of explanations of economic inequalities between immigrants and native-born individuals refer to different kinds of discrimination. Among several 'discrimination- oriented' investigations, we can mention studies that refer to formal or institutionalized discrimination (that is a result of juridical barriers made by the authorities), discriminatory employment practices, and studies that focus on perceived discrimination and immigrants' reactions to discrimination (Brox 1998; Rogstad 2000; Grønseth 2006).

The social integration of newcomers is sometimes related to economic aspects of their integration process.[23] In the present study, it will be relevant to explore whether and how immigrants' participation in the labour market of the host society influence their social life and identities. It is a widespread idea that when immigrants come out from the passivity of unemployment and start to actively participate in the work life of the host society, then social integration will also follow. Here, it may be meaningful to explore whether the workplace is an important source of social integration and identity affirmation for immigrants. Moreover, it may be relevant to find out what types of social relation immigrants normally establish via their participation in economic life of the host society; and more generally - what kinds of employment have significant positive effect on immigrants' social life and identities. Drawing from previous studies (Aakervik 1992; Borchgrevink 1996; Nilsen 1999; Sackmann 2003) I assume that participation in the economic life of the host society may have important direct and indirect positive effects on both immigrants' identity negotiations and their bridging to the mainstream, but only in certain contexts and under certain conditions. We know that workplace interactions may be an aspect of immigrants' integration and generate among them feelings of being accepted and respected. However, they may also contribute to feelings of exclusion and misrecognition (Næss 1997; Brox 1998; Miskovic 2002; Tibe-Bonifacio 2005). I ask whether and how employment through temporary contracts in least the desirable low status occupations, where many non-western immigrants in Norway end up, can provide good context for the reconstruction of social life and identities after resettlement.

2.5. Summary

I approach the social integration of immigrants in terms of the relations and networks they have with other people, and in terms of the meanings they attach to these relations. The first component of my argument builds on studies which claim that immigrant relations with other people influence their everyday reality, their self-perception and their well-being in general.[24] The second proposition is that immigrants and ethnic minorities are far from passive individuals: they have to cope with interactions and relations which are, or are experienced as being, problematic. This coping influences the friendships they establish after resettlement with other people and it shapes their ethno-social practice in general.[25]

Previous studies show that several aspects of the everyday life of immigrants in host countries are considered as humiliating.[26] At the same time, they are eager to find new friends in a new environment and to reproduce their desired identities. Finding friends after resettlement has a

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[22] According to this approach, the higher the equality of dispersion between immigrants and natives across occupational and salary ranks of the receiving country's labour market, the higher the economic integration of immigrant (Diaz 1993; Husseini-Kaladjahi 1997).

[23] See Aakervik (1992); Borchgrevink (1996); Husseini-Kaladjahi (1997); Mikkelsen (2001).

[24] See Quizumbing (1982); Sönderlindh (1984); Field (2003); Grønseth (2006).

[25] See Robinson (1984); Wirth (1988); Crow and Allan (1994); Reinsch (2001); Korac (2001; 2003).

[26] See Høgmo (1998); Schwartz (1998); Knudsen (2005); Portes and Rumbaut (2006); Gullestad (2006).

lot to do with the general human need to belong somewhere and the particular need of the immigrant to reconstruct her or his self-image as someone who is accepted, liked and respected by others. Based on this notion, I developed several assumptions about the interconnection between immigrant identity negotiations in everyday life and patterns in their process of social integration. I extend the insights of previous studies which have suggested that the experience of non-belonging to the mainstream society and feelings of stigma and subordinance are important aspects of everyday life for non-western immigrants in Norway.[27] I also propose that how immigrants perceive of themselves and others, as well as their identity work, is closely connected to dimensions of their personal network. I go on to propose that these explorations should not be seen in isolation from other integration processes such as those of cultural, residential and economic integration. Numerous studies discuss whether increased degrees of acculturation, employment and inter-ethnic proximity may reduce some of the negative experiences that generate a sense of misrecognition and non-belonging.[28] My study will contribute to this discussion. I shall argue that these processes may indeed influence the process of social integration for immigrants, but only in certain cases.

Patterns of social integration can be traced in the intersection between face-to-face interactions that immigrants have with others, features of their personal network, and immigrant attempts to deal with these dimensions. Here, I attempt to see beyond the debate that divides immigrant social trajectories into simple processes of gradual segregation and integration. This dichotomy hides a wide latitude of social trajectories and identity negotiations. There are still many ethno-social practices and identity related strategies that can be explored further. They differ in respect to relations with the host community, as well as to their own ethnic community and other immigrant groups.

In this chapter I have argued that exploring the social integration of immigrants requires a systematic analysis of different aspects of their daily life, identity presentations and network relations, both with members of the host society and with members of the immigrant ethnic community. Drawing on the concepts of 'segmented assimilation' and 'selective acculturation' (Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou 1999), I will explore whether immigrants have a selective approach to bridging and bonding. If an immigrant has to choose between social integration into marginalised segments of the host community or segregation within a strong immigrant community, it is likely that s/he will prefer the latter option. Similarly, if immigrants are not capable of successful self-presentation when interacting with their Norwegian friends, it is not difficult to imagine that they may prefer selective bridging to the mainstream, combined with sociability with approved segments of their compatriot community. Within such a context, concepts of integration and segregation are given new dimensions, raising the question of under what circumstances integration into the mainstream takes place.

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[27] See Ålund (1998); Knudsen (2005); Grønseth (2006); Gullestad (2006).
[28] See also Gordon (1964); Kuo and Tsai (1986); Rumbaut (1994).

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework of the study

In this chapter, I discuss the theoretical model adopted in this study. I argue that using the network perspective contributes to my study in two ways: a) at the theoretical level, it is designed to reduce the highly individualistic orientation associated with symbolic interactionism, by showing that immigrant identities and daily practices are embedded in social ties and networks, and; b) at the methodological level, it helps to supplement the symbolic interactionist approach by providing tools for the systematic analysis of immigrant actions. Drawing on both these perspectives, I propose and outline an interpretational framework that becomes the departure point for my analysis of interconnections between different levels in the social lives of immigrants.

3.1. The symbolic interactionist theoretical tradition

Symbolic interactionism is not a single, well defined and commonly accepted conceptual system, but rather an aggregate of theories or conceptual systems (Ritzer and Goodman 2003). The common characteristics of the symbolic interactionist theoretical tradition include, among others, a preoccupation with interpersonal and intrapersonal processes, the interaction between the self and others, self-work, and a focus on the relative autonomy of the actor.

3.1.1. The self, others and self-work

George Herbert Mead (1934), who is regarded as the founder of symbolic interactionist theoretical approach, starts his theory with the notion that self-image is produced and continuously evolves through interaction with others. He also introduces the concept of an active, coping oriented individual. The usefulness of the symbolic interactionist theoretical framework for the present study is not restricted to highlighting how immigrants' self and everyday experiences are produced via interactions and relations with others, but it can also be applied to an analysis of immigrants' action, especially immigrants' strategic attempts to achieve a desired identity, and to reproduce their positive self-perception through self-presentation and networking in everyday life.

In his theory, Mead (1934) distinguishes between two elements of the self; 'I', or self as subject, and 'Me', or self as object. 'I' is seen as the acting and unconscious part of the self, while 'Me' contains the observing and conscious part. A individual's awareness of her own initial response to stimulus signals is the beginning of the 'Me' phase of the self, where the 'I' is seen as a more or less creative and more or less unpredictable reaction to the attitudes of others (Mead 1934; Hewitt 2003). These two dimensions of the self are regarded to be in constant alternation in ongoing conduct (Mead 1934). The 'Me', or observing self, is influenced by other people (Mead 1934; McCall and Simmons 1966; Plummer 1991; Hewitt 2003).

Immigrants observe how others react to their presentations. They try to take the role of the other, which implies that they have to imagine how the other sees them. In that way, they and their actions become objects of self-reflection. Based on that reflection, immigrants engage in role making. They will initiate action and influence others, then consider the attitudes of others towards that action, and finally revise or alter that action in light of their interpretations of these attitudes (Mead 1934). In this study, it will be relevant to explore how these actions

are deployed in cross-cultural, majority-minority interactions and relations. It is reasonable to assume that immigrants who are not familiar with new codes will have difficulties taking the role of the other or implement role making on the premises of the ethnic majority. Other relevant questions are how the majority respond to their fragile self-presentations and how these responses influence immigrants' identities.

In line with Mead, we may assume that immigrants will take the role of their generalized other. Taking the role of generalized other means that people take into consideration the imagined attitudes of the community regarding the particular act.[29] In the case of immigrants, the generalized others may sometimes be ethnic communities, people connected to transnational networks and the host society. As for the encounters with specific others, it may often be difficult to reconcile the attitudes of different communities. Immigrants deal with ambiguities in everyday life in many ways and, as we shall see, they emphasize conformity with different generalized others depending on the situation. Through strategic behaviour, seemingly coherent hybrid identities may be carried over by immigrants from situation to situation. They may combine the new and the old cultural identities which results in 'transcultural bricolage' (Ålund 1999), 'syncretic identity-work' (Gilroy 1987) and 'hyphenated ethnic identities' (Modood 2003).[30] I assume that such identities require adequate structural features of interaction.

Mirroring or imagined reflected appraisals of immigrant friends and indigenous local friends may have both positive and negative influences on immigrants' self. With reference to symbolic interactionist theory, we may speak about affirmative 'mirroring' when others signal to immigrants that they are respected, liked and accepted. However, mirroring may produce stigmatized identities (Goffman 1963; Bauman 1997) and a sense of exclusion and non-belonging (Gullestad 2006). The notion of 'mirroring' comes from Cooley (1964).[31] According to Cooley's concept of 'The Looking-Glass Self', our self rests in the imagined reflected appraisals of others (Cooley 1964).[32] In line with symbolic interactionism, we also may assume that immigrants are continuously protecting their self-esteem from others' negative judgments.

If possible, immigrants will try to get recognition both from their immigrant contacts and from indigenous locals. If not, they may define one of the mirrors as insignificant or ascribe them different meanings and purposes. In that respect, I propose that the practical 'I' seeks to be reproduced both at an interactional and at a symbolic level. Immigrants may get recognition and mirroring from indigenous local friends, other immigrants and their fellow compatriots, but in different ways. For example, we may assume that compatriot friends are important for immigrants in terms of sociability, while relations with indigenous locals have other value at symbolic level.

Rosenberg (1979) pursued and developed Meads and Cooley's ideas and argued that the main goal of the social actor's action is closely related to the person's attempts to make and

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[29] See Plummer (1991).

[30] Both concepts are usually associated with immigrants' attempts to combine and unify their original culture with the culture of the host country.

[31] Although there we may find differences between Meads 'I' and 'Me' and Cooley's 'The Looking-Glass Self', both perspectives emphasize that the imagined stances of others towards us have an important impact on our actions. Clarification of differences between these two perspectives may be found in Plummer ed. (1991).

[32] According to Cooley, 'The Looking-Glass Self' has three components: the imagination of our appearance to the other person, the imagination of the other person's judgment of that appearance, and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification (Plummer 1991; Hewitt 2003).

reproduce their desired self (Rosenberg 1979). Rosenberg (1979) distinguished between three types of the self; the existing self, the desirable self, and the presenting self. The existing self is our conception of who we are, the desirable self is our conception of who we wish to be, and the presenting self is the way we present ourselves in a particular situation. It is not difficult to imagine that an immigrant's existing self, desirable self, and presenting self can be problematic and fragile.[33] Immigrants are typically disconnected from old social environments, and therefore forced to reconstruct their social worlds. Like anyone else, they desire to get proper respect. Nevertheless, they often get quite the opposite feedback on their daily self-presentations, due to their social skills, ethnic background or other reasons. Out of these tensions, immigrants develop coping strategies. They constantly have to renegotiate their identities, among other things, how they present themselves in everyday life and how they navigate between, select and rearrange, various situational and relational frames.

These strategies may be understood and explored with reference to Goffman's conceptual tools. While Mead and Cooley give us general understanding of the self, Goffman provides us with a detailed understanding of how the self is presented and reproduced in everyday life (Goffman 1956). He focuses also on people's strategic behaviour and shows how during this strategic work people make choices among the set of possible lines of response in order to get the best possible reaction from their self-presentations (Goffman 1970). The perspectives of actor's strategic coping with negatively ascribed identity are also discussed in his studies (Goffman 1956; 1963; 1974). Goffman's conceptualizations of face-to-face interactions will guide much of my analysis of encounters and relationships in which immigrants participate on a daily basis. In line with Goffman, I will analyze how immigrants deal with stigmatization and various expectations of others through the use of: 'impression management' (Goffman 1956); 'role distance' (Goffman 1961), 'passing and covering' (Goffman 1963), 'disindentifiers' (Goffman 1963); 'withdrawal from interaction' (Goffman (1967); 'secondary adjustments' (1961, 1974), etc. In the empirical/analytical part of my study, these inspiring notions and conceptual tools will be elaborated and adjusted for the purpose of my exploration.

3.1.2. Immigrants' social life involves different types of reflexivity

In Strategic interaction, Goffman (1970) suggests that actor's behaviour can be strategic, and uses an analogy borrowed from exchange theory in his explanations. At the same time, Goffman express a Meadian understanding of interaction. According to Goffman, courses of action will be made on the basis of one's thoughts about how others view them. Exchange of moves made on the basis of this kind of orientation to self and others is according to Goffman the basis of strategic interaction (Goffman 1970). In my view, self-work is not necessarily conscious through thought activity. Therefore, when I speak about the strategic action and mastering of self, I do not refer in the first place to the deliberate action of the actor, but to the process that involves different levels of reflexivity.

In symbolic interactionism, strategic interactions are assumed to be less rational than they are, for instance, in exchange theory. Several sociologists have argued that the highly utilitarian schemas of strategic action overestimate actors' awareness of their own actions.[34] Much of

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[33] Several studies show that this discrepancy between desired self and identity which is reflected by the out-group may in various situations limit identity reproduction of minority group members (see: Higgins 1987; Brown 1998; Clement *et al* 2001; Gullestad 2006).
[34] See among others Giddens (1984) and Hewitt (2003).

what immigrants do is not based on their conscious rational choices. Immigrants, like anyone else, often react spontaneously to the actions of others. The reactions of a creative 'I' are usually unpredictable, creative and done without deep reflections (Mead 1934). I believe that immigrants' actions will be directed outside themselves as long as the situational reality and the actors' self is not endangered. Human action may be conscious and unconscious, predicted and unpredicted. Peoples' behaviour may be in line with the rules of the game, but they may also play out their identities in creative, spontaneous and not deliberate ways. These ideas are perhaps best expressed by Giddens (1984). According to Giddens, reflexivity involves monitoring one's actions, but this is seldom undertaken in a fully conscious way. In his attempt to highlight the variety of human action, Giddens (1984) introduced several levels of consciousness; distinguishing between discursive and practical consciousness.[35] According to Giddens, a great deal of actors' daily actions is based on actors' practical consciousness. This kind of knowledge is based on a small amount of reflexivity.[36]

Practical consciousness is also 'the cognitive and emotive anchor of the feelings of ontological security' (Giddens 1991: 36). Ontological insecurity in everyday life may emerge when immigrants have to engage in the reflexive monitoring of action. In their case, insecurity may emerge in activities which, to others, appear as trivial aspects of day-to-day action. There are several aspects of everyday life that lead to immigrants experiencing insecurity, with a sense of alienation evoked through interactions with the hosts. However, immigrants may deploy a variety of strategies alternating between the level of practice and discursive consciousness in order to avoid negative mirroring that will require a re-evaluation of their existing self (for example, identities of ethnic stigma, exclusion and non-belonging). Although the self-monitoring of actions is perhaps emphasized more in immigrants' personal networks, due to the tensions embedded in them, it is not likely that prior to engaging in interactions and relationships immigrants are always calculating every action in a rational or discursive manner. Due to the dynamic nature of everyday life, immigrants, like anyone else, often have to act spontaneously. They do not have time to plan their self-presentations and possible responses to the actions of others. As a result, they may often react automatically to acts of racism, discrimination and exclusion, for example. The reflections usually follow and result in sadness, anger or regret.

These aspects of the social life of immigrants will have certain methodological connotations. If immigrants' ethno-social preferences, self-work and other strategies are pursued without discursive awareness, I will need specially adjusted methodological tools in order to gather information about their social life. In order to gain insight into their practical awareness, qualitative interviews will be combined with participant observations and other tools that may help informants to transform their practical consciousness into discursive awareness.

3.1.3. Symbolic interactionism and social structures

According to symbolic interactionism, people successively imagine their appearance in the eyes of the other and are able to control their behaviour by responding to that imagined appearance. However, there is tension as well as cooperation between 'I' and 'Me' (Hewitt

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[35] There is also a third level of consciousness that Giddens calls unconscious motivation, associated with unconscious needs and wishes (Giddens 1984; Scott 1995).
[36] Exchange theorists have gradually accepted similar notions. Contemporary exchange theorists have started to acknowledge that the process of selection between different types of behaviour may range from largely unconscious to very conscious (Hewitt 2003).

2003: 59). 'I' triggers 'Me' and react on 'Me'. If we did not have both aspects of the self, neither the conscious responsibility would exist nor would the new ingredients in our experience emerge (Mead 1934). Moreover, according to symbolic interactionism, the capacity to control one's conduct involves an ability to choose a behaviour other than that which is socially expected and approved (Hewitt 2003: 60). Our identity may also confront others' expectations and actions and may even resist them (Ritzer and Goodman 2003; Hewitt 2003). Hewitt describes this autonomy of the actor in the following way:

Because human beings can inhibit their responses, form images of themselves, and then choose an act, they can refuse to act as they are expected, choosing inappropriate acts instead. To put this another way, because they have the capacity for the self-conscious control of conduct, human beings also have the capacity to act in self-interested ways and to choose alternative and even socially disapproved ways of doing so (Hewitt 2003: 61).

In line with these notions, we may assume that immigrants interpret situations and try to fulfil behavioural expectations that emerge from different social contexts. Whether we speak about ethnic context (influenced by expectations derived from their original culture) or about situations where they interact with the hosts (where the cultural expectations of the ethnic majority dominate), immigrants cannot neglect these circumstances. On the other hand, based on symbolic interactionist theory, we may assume that the day-to-day life of immigrants consists of creative use of roles and actions that in various situations are inconsistent with existing definitions of situations and imagined perspectives of relevant generalized others. It is not difficult to imagine that on their path of reconstructing their social life after resettlement, expectations of others may sometimes be in line with immigrants' own interests, but there are also situations characterized by tension between the generalized others and immigrants' own interests. Immigrants may try to rebel against the others in one way or another, escape sanctions or even contribute to change commonly accepted ethno-social practice. The challenge here is to determine how to involve forces of constraining structures in the analysis of immigrants' behaviour within the frame of symbolic interactionist theory. Among other things, one must construct an interpretational framework that may convincingly describe the local grammar of immigrants' daily life, but which also includes tensions between immigrants' strategic behaviour and social contexts that frame their identities and actions.

In his highly influential 'Duality of structure theory', Giddens (1984) advocates for the adoption of a dual view of society. According to Giddens, social structures simultaneously control human action and are produced and reproduced by human action.[37] According to Giddens (1984), actors may also change social structure through their strategic reflexive action, but their 'knowledgeability' of how to achieve their strategic ends depends on existing knowledge and strategies. Because of the dynamic of this relation, he calls this process 'structuration' (Giddens 1984). Several other sociologists interested in the fabric of everyday life have also accepted the dual nature of structure and agency. Callero (1994), for instance, articulates the issue clearly, when he writes:

The emerging consensus among sociologists is that society consists of both powerful, determining structures and actors that posses a degree of efficacy, freedom, and creative independence. Once the dual nature of structure and agency is accepted, however, the theoretical challenge becomes a matter of creating a conceptual system that can account for the apparent contradiction implied by the two concepts (Callero 1994: 228).

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[37] According to Giddens (1984), structure both constrains and enables human action. The structure is both the medium and outcome of the actors' actions, which are recursively organized by structures (Giddens 1984; Ritzer and Goodman 2003).

Symbolic interactionism has been criticized for its exclusive focus on interaction and a lack of attention to structural constrains upon actors' expectations and roles. According to the critics, this perspective is not capable of adequately incorporating the significance of social structure (Biddle 1986; Stryker 1987; Ritzer 1997; Ritzer and Goodman 2003). Several scholars have therefore made serious efforts to develop a conceptualization that includes a structural dimension in the interactionist perspective. This recognition of structural influences includes both small-scale structures, such as social roles, relations and networks as well as large-scale structures like national policies and power distributions within society (Blumer 1958; Fine and Kleinman 1983; Giddens 1984; White 1992; Callero 1994).

Callero (1994), for instance, combined ideas and concepts of symbolic interactionism and role theory in his attempts to include an agency-structure duality in his theoretical frameworks (Stryker 1987; Callero 1994). Callero considers roles as resources in the production of both agency and structure. In his attempt at creating a conceptual system that can account for the apparent contradiction between action and structure, Callero distinguished between role type and role use (Callero 1994). He views a role as a resource which is both created through variations in actors' role use and structured (limited and enabled) by variation in cultural meanings of role type (Callero 1994). In a similar vein, Stryker proposes a structural version of symbolic interactionism (Stryker 1980, 1987; Ritzer 1997). Accordingly, he regards the self as 'a structure of identities reflecting roles played in dedifferentiated networks of interaction' (Stryker 1987: 91). He suggests that selves are produced in concrete networks of social interaction and that 'larger social structures are affecting objective possibilities for entering and remaining in particular kinds of networks and social relationships' (Stryker 1987: 91).

Another contribution is White's 'Structural theory of action' (White 1992) which claims that a person's social space contains all the interactions and relations that an individual is involved in on a daily basis. Various sorts of ties, which evolve from and into networks, lead to different framings. These framings constitute social spaces among identities (White 1992). According to White, who 'we' are is bound up with what 'control' is in social surroundings, and according to him, social networks are an important part of these surroundings. They are spaces among identities that seek control to enable the development of some degree of balance and continuity (White 1992).

Inspired by the aforementioned criticisms and proposed remedies, I acknowledge that symbolic interactionism can only help us to understand immigrants' social life and negotiations of identity in adequate way if it is used without denying the influence of broader social structures. Immigrants' creative action and coping with everyday life happens within certain situational, relational and institutional contexts. My analysis of immigrants' day-to-day reality and their attempts to reconstruct their social life after resettlement would be oversimplified if I neglected to clarify the relation between immigrants' behaviour and the wider social order, and inter alia, the social ties, settings and networks within which their self is embedded.

3.2. Immigrants' social life in the light of interactionist theory and network perspective

Symbolic interactionists and network analysts have different foci when they analyze society. As Gibson (2005) points out:

...Interactionists characterize it in terms of sequences of fleeting actions where each is seen as a response to what came before and as a stimulus for what comes afterward. Network analysts in contrast, characterize the world in terms of durable relational structures in which a connection between two individuals rendered more or less probable by the encompassing configuration of ties (Gibson 2005: 1562).

Although it is not easy to reconcile symbolic interactionism with network perspective, I see several reasons for integrating these two perspectives. Among other things, by combing these two perspectives we may find better a understanding of the relation between immigrants' identities and their social surroundings.

An understanding of immigrants' identity may build upon the position that sees identities as highly static, unchangeable and with fixed essence, that is, resistant to colonization by the mainstream society (Bromley 1975; Banks 1999). Alternatively, it may build upon various descriptions of the contemporary world where identity has no fixed essence at all (Williams and Chrisman 1994). Identity is then understood as something extremely changeable, fragmented, situation-dependent and volatile (Bauman 2000; Sackmann *et al* 2003; Krange and Øia 2005). In this study, I take an alternative or intermediate stance. The intermediate position here seeks to understand identity as something negotiable, malleable and variable, but also as something that may last. Immigrants' self-presentations and identities are often adjusted to various expectations and are situation-dependent, but their identities are also anchored in social relations and networks that have a longer existence than a single social encounter.[38]

Symbolic interactionists favour face-to-face interactions when they explore identity work in everyday life. I believe that immigrants interpret their social life in part through face-to-face interactions. However, their identities and their social life are also embedded in more stable social structures. Therefore, I will also explore how social relations with indigenous locals and family back home may contribute to immigrants' self-image. Two people can be considered 'friends' even when they are not being directly acted upon (Gibson 2005). In some cases there may be a discrepancy between the mirroring with others (for example, their immigrant friends and Norwegian friends), which unfolds sequentially in interactions with them, and the meanings that immigrants attach to these friendships.

Moreover, I recognize that networks, as principal forms of social structure, do matter for interaction (Stryker 1987; Gibson 2005). If we take this premise in account, we may explore how different social contexts, social relations and social networks guide immigrants' self-presentations, strategic interactions and impression management in everyday life. They may presumably also have influence on how immigrants perceive themselves, others and their social integration process in general.[39]

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[38] For example, stigmatized identities, feelings of belonging, identity, exclusion, etc, do not only depend on a single interaction. Such self-understandings are extended over time and space because they also are functions of structures –social ties and networks– that go beyond isolated encounters and sequential interactional constraints.

[39] Networks may mediate different expectations and mirroring as well as enable or constrain different ethno-social practices. For example, we may assume that some immigrant networks promote bonding and cultural preservation, while others promote and enable cultural adaptation and bridging to the mainstream.

3.2.1. Symbiotic relationships

Based on the discussion so far, we may see the combination of symbolic interactionism and network perspective as an attempt to expand the theory of identity in time and space. However, symbolic interactionists have shown little interest in developing their theory in that direction. As Scott (1995) pointed out:

…Blumer and other symbolic interactionists have shown little inclination to pursue the possibilities that social network analysis offers for the mapping of the 'structural' features of interaction (Scott 1995:108).

Although social psychologists were the first to study social networks (see for example: Moreno 1934; 1943; Lewin 1938, 1951), the current network research has not often been done within the frame of a symbolic interactionist perspective. The current state may be related to network analysts' usage of methods and their programmatic proclamations. As Fine and Kleinman (1983) pointed out, many network analysts regard themselves as structuralists and base their investigations on mathematical models and statistical methodologies. This tendency may explain why many interactionists do not associate themselves with network perspective (Gibson 2005). However, this does not mean that network perspective is not compatible with symbolic interactionism (Lazega 1997). Fine and Kleinman (1983) articulate the issue clearly, when they explain that:

…Network construct is compatible with the symbolic interactionist conceptualization of social structure…Symbolic interactionism, like the network formulation, suggest a relational approach to understanding social order. From the symbolic interactionist perspective, social order is constructed through meaningful, self-other interaction. "Society as symbolic interaction" (Blumer 1969) is equivalent to the view (in network theory) that social structure is grounded in relationships - the self-other relationship is the basic building block of society, and society consists of webs of meaningful self-other relationships (Fine and Kleinman 1983: 97).

Several other scholars have also argued that an interactionist conceptual system is compatible with an analysis of structural features of interaction (Stryker 1987; White 1992; Lazega 1997; Gibson 2005). According to most of them, the social networks that surround people are important for the production and reproduction of people's identity and desired self, which actualizes the combination of interactionist theory and network perspective. Moreover, they argue that network perspective and symbolic interactionism may supplement and mutually develop each other. According to Lazega (1997), for instance, network approach may provide symbolic interaction theory with systematic and flexible tools for analyzing behaviour at the individual, relational and structural level. At the same time, network analysis does not have a sufficiently developed theory of identity. The link between the meanings of an actor's relationships and the dynamics of relational structures is not systematically addressed in network analysis (Lazega 1997).

In short, we may say that there are several reasons why I have chosen to combine symbolic interactionist theory and network perspective in the present study. To summarize - symbolic interactionism helps me to understand immigrants' identity constructions and negotiations, while network perspective helps me to go beyond the level of sequential face-to-face interactions and relate these dimensions to more durable structural features of social life. Furthermore, it provides us with precise and coherent conceptual tools for exploring several layers of immigrants' social life, including the social relations and networks that immigrants establish after resettlement.

3.2.2. Social relations, networks and the trajectory of self

Up to this point, two basic threads run through my argumentation. Firstly, that immigrants' self and actions are influenced by social relations and networks. Secondly, that immigrants, through their attempts to reproduce their desired self, continuously influence the form and content of their personal networks. In the quest to reproduce the desired self, immigrants constantly make new acquaintances, they avoid certain types of acquaintances and they decide which friend they will prefer to socialize with, or introduce to others, at the next social occasion. Therefore, immigrants' personal experiences, mastering of the self and their personal networks are in mutual interdependence. In my view, it is relevant to explore how various dimensions of immigrants' networks [40] are interrelated with various elements of their everyday experiences,[41] especially how immigrants' coping strategies influence their ethno-social practices and networks in different social settings (neighbourhood, workplace, small town, ethnic associations etc). I assume that insight into that relation can help us to understand the dynamic of immigrants' social life and their social integration process.

According to Mead (1934) the acting and unconscious part of the self is in constant alternation in ongoing conduct with the observing and conscious part. In my view, the interactions between the current identities, self-work and networking, however, cannot be seen as isolated from their ongoing self-redefinitions with references to the past and anticipated future. Immigrants' reconstruction of social life and identity work interact and evolve over time. I believe that the mutuality and tensions that characterize the relation between the creative 'I' and the reflective 'me' also exist in the relation between immigrants' self-images of the past (biographic self), their current identity deployment and their desires and anticipations of who they will be in future (anticipated self).[42]

In order to place intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of immigrants' social life into more wide-ranging timeframe the conventional symbolic interactionist theory has to be extended. Here, we may again be inspired by Giddens' theory. According to Giddens, we are constantly involved in a 'reflexive project of the self' and a 'trajectory of the self' (Giddens 1991). Giddens argues that the process of 'monitoring' is at the core of our reflexivity. According to Giddens, people are engaged in continually monitoring their own actions and the actions of others. These activities comprise reflecting upon what has happened and anticipating of what might happen in the future. As Giddens (1991) points out:

The self forms a trajectory of development from the past to the anticipated future. The individual appropriates his past by shifting through it in the light of what is anticipated for an (organized) future…the reflexive construction of self-identity depends as much on preparing for the future as on interpreting the past, although the 'reworking' of the past events is certainly always important in this process (Giddens 1991: 75,85).

According to Giddens, we cannot take our identities for granted. In a dynamically changing and diverse modern society, identity is achieved rather than ascribed. In the practical conduct of everyday life, people avoid the dangers that may undermine their self-identity. Our actions,

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[40] For example, ethnic composition of networks, density, strong and weak ties, etc.

[41] For example, stigmatized identities, feelings of belonging, exclusion, etc.

[42] In making this distinction I am inspired, inter alia, by Mead (1934), Goffman (1963) and Giddens (1991). Mead focuses mostly on the interactional self and on self-work that occurs in the course of face-to-face interactions. Goffman (1963) does the same, but also discusses peoples' past and their biography and recognizes them as an important identity reference. In addition to these two dimensions, Giddens (1991) relates the self to the actor's anticipated future.

identities are constructed and reconstructed through reflexive interactions with ourselves and other people. They are fragile and therefore they have to be constantly worked, examined and refashioned in everyday life. The outcome is a trajectory of the self, a dynamic interplay between the past, present and an anticipated future (Giddens 1991).

Self-identity is not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits, possessed by the individual. It is the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography. Identity here still presumes continuity across time and space: but self-identity is such continuity as interpreted reflexively by the agent (Giddens 1991:53).

In line with these ideas, I ask whether immigrants' (self)understandings of the past, present and anticipated future are in a multiple dialectic relationship. If we apply Giddens' notions to the relation between self-work and networking, we may assume that immigrants' social integration trajectories are in close relation to their trajectories of the self. Accordingly, we may assume that immigrants are actively engaged in identity constructions where their self-understanding and their definitions of relation with the host society and with the immigrant community are constantly worked and reworked through daily ethno-social practice. Reconstructions of experiences of belonging and recognition, as well as stigmatization and exclusion may be here understood as part of an immigrant's trajectory of the self. For example, we may assume that the favourable self-image (of belonging, recognition and inclusion) that immigrants have achieved in the past would be maintained through strategic action in the present. Moreover, through successful bridging in the present, they may contribute to change old biographies and identities of exclusion, while their old experiences of discrimination and stigmatization may make immigrants reluctant to make new contacts with indigenous locals.

A equivalent assumption may be proposed in respect to the interaction between the present and the anticipated future. If immigrants anticipate that integration requirements are unreasonably high, and that there are possibilities for rejection by the hosts, this anticipated future outcome may influence their present inclination for ethnic bridging. On the other hand, it is not difficult to imagine that immigrants who think that acculturation requirements are reasonable, and anticipate that these adjustments will pay off, will be more inclined in their present everyday lives to incorporate into the mainstream. In a similar fashion, we may assume that repatriation plans reduce immigrants and refugees' inclination for social incorporation into the mainstream, while satisfaction with their current social life in Norway may make them change these plans.

3.3. Network perspective and the embedded selves

In the following, I will go a step further and define the conceptual tools from network perspective that may help us analyze immigrants' self-work at a relational and network level. Through these conceptual tools, I transform the network concept from a metaphor to a research method (Mitchell 1969, 1973).

3.3.1. Structural properties of social networks

The main dimensions of a social network may be defined in two ways: by its relational and interactional properties, or by characteristics of network structure.[43] The structural dimensions of a network refer to the network as a unit of analysis. The relevant literature gives us many suggestions on how to approach structural dimensions (Wasserman and Galaskiewicz 1994; Degenne and Forsé 1999). The most frequently mentioned dimensions are: *'size'*, *'reachability'*, *'density'* and *'centrality'*.

The *size* or range of a network refers to the number of actors that are connected in it. In this study, in addition to current contacts, an immigrant's previous significant others and relatives back home will be taken into consideration. *Reachability,* or accessibility, tells us something about the distance between people in the network.[44] I ask whether the immigrant may influence reachability. For example, if an immigrant moves out from the neighbourhood where her compatriot friends live, and consequently avoids them, the degree of reachability between her and the person will decrease. I believe that immigrants may in some cases be eager to introduce different people to each other, while in other cases they will try to prevent some contacts from reaching others.

Density tells us something about the extent to which actors in the network know each other.[45] Peoples' personal networks are characterized by different density. If density is used as an indicator of social integration, weak network density may indicate that immigrants have problems with the reestablishment of their social life after resettlement. Nevertheless, scattered or weak networks may also be self-imposed.

Centrality shows the extent to which the network has specially positioned people or distinguishable cliques. Centrality normally refers to the importance of individuals in the personal network.[46] In this study it will be relevant to explore who are these central persons in different categories of immigrants' personal networks: Indigenous locals? Neighbours? Workmates? etc.

The structural dimensions of social networks can be important in investigations of immigrants' social life. For example, the relative size of immigrant's links with Norwegians and immigrant contacts can help us understand immigrants' ethno-social practice and preferences. Nevertheless, in order to understand this, it is not enough to look at how many relations immigrant have to Norwegians and immigrant ties, but also to look at relations between alters in their personal networks. Relations among friends in an immigrant's network are closely related to issues of density and centrality of the network. These dimensions may shed light on several aspects of immigrants' social integration, among others, the centrality and density dimension may help us to indicate the degree of ethnic and inter-ethnic cohesion

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[43] See Mitchel (1973; Fischer (1977); Schiefloe (1985); Bø (1993); Wasserman and Galaskiewicz (1994); Degenne and Forsé (1999).

[44] Reachability is usually associated with the number of links needed to connect any two persons in the network by the shortest route, or how many indirect links the immigrant must go through in order to reach one specific person. See Mitchell (1969, 1973); Fischer (1977: 36); Degenne and Forsé (1999). We can also find differences in reachability due to social, physical and psychological obstacles (Bø 1993).

[45] Density is usually expressed as the ratio of the existing links in the network to the number of possible links in the network (Fischer 1977; Schiefloe 1985; Degenne and Forsé 1999).

[46] Centrality is usually indicated through higher density in the part of the respondent's network. Centrality can be measured by counting the number of ties that a network member has to other members in a respondent's network (Fischer 1977; Wasserman and Galaskiewicz 1994).

in an immigrant's network. For example, we can explore whether the Norwegian and immigrant parts of an immigrant's network are separated or fused, and if they have different density. In this way, we may get a better understanding of the structural aspects of cross-ethnic integration of the immigrants' personal networks. The next step may than be to explore the relation between different network configurations and their self-work.

Nevertheless, we can only paint a one-dimensional picture of immigrants' personal networks (and their social integration in general) if we base our conclusions solely on the structural dimensions of their networks. It is important to remember that immigrants' decisions regarding the development, maintenance and termination of certain relations, does not only depend on the network's structure. The existence of the relation is also based on the relation's content and the meanings the actors give to the content. When an immigrant adjusts her ethno-social preferences and practice, she does not make her decisions primarily on the basis of abstract dimensions of the network as density and centrality, but on the basis of concrete features of particular relations. For example, an immigrant's overall network may exercise social control that influences that person's ethno-social practice. Concern about what the others may mean about a particular relationship (and their monitoring capacities) will influence that person's networking. However, an immigrant's motivation for developing relations with other people, for instance with indigenous locals, is also connected to concrete questions such as: What do I get from this relationship? Is this Norwegian person nice to me? Does s/he return my initiatives? Has s/he accepted me as normal person and as an individual or does s/he understand me through a stereotypical ethnic lens? Do I like to be with this person? Do I have more fun with her/him than with my immigrant friends, etc?

3.3.2. Interactional and relational characteristics of social networks

While structural dimensions of social network refer to the form and distribution of relations within the network, interactional and relational dimensions refer to the qualitative properties of the ties between the ego and other persons in the network. *Frequency, symmetry, content, durability, 'plexity', and intensity* are the main interactional and relational characteristics of social networks.[47]

Frequency refers to how often a relation is used, in terms of the interaction between various parts in the relationship. If immigrants socialize more frequently with immigrant friends than with their Norwegian friends, we will then explore possible reasons that may explain these differences. Among other things, it may be relevant to relate patterns of their behaviour to their day-to-day experiences, as well as to the meanings immigrants attach to these social relations.

Content refers to the meaning or purpose that the persons in the network attribute to their relationships (Michel 1969). Some researchers associate content to roles such as friends, neighbours and relatives (Barnes 1954; Bo 1993; Degenne and Forsé 1999). It may be meaningful to find out in which roles immigrants usually socialize with their immigrant contacts and Norwegians and what exactly they do when they are together with these people. Different activities and roles are, after all, a part of the structural frames which give different possibilities for the reproduction of their desired self.

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[47] See for example Fischer *et al.* (1977); Wellman and Tindall (1993); Borell and Johansson (1998).

Symmetry refers to the balance between power and reciprocity in the exchange of goods and services between parts in the relation.[48] Symmetry may also be associated with mutuality and respect for the other, for instance when friends show a mutual interest in maintaining their friendship. A lack of reciprocity and mutuality in relationships may be one of the reasons why some people never develop strong friendships, and sometimes even give up on their friends. In this light, we should also consider the hardships of immigrants' integration process. It is not only their willingness to bridging outside their own ethnic group that matters, but also how the ethnic majority reacts to these efforts.

Durability refers to the history of a relationship between implicated actors. The relevant questions here are how stable the relation is, when the relation was initiated and how long the relation has existed. People build up new relationships, make new acquaintances and lose touch with others. Some relations can be developed solely to fulfil a specific goal and then disappear once it is accomplished. Others may last a lifetime (Bø 1993; Degenne and Forsé 1999). At this point it will be relevant to explore the underlying dynamic and logic of these actions, and also to relate them to trajectories of the self and to transitions in immigrant lives. I will explore whether the durability of a relation is influenced by certain symbolic aspects of social life. I assume that some relations and friendships may last even if the interactions with these people are not always experienced as pleasant.

We can also distinguish here between uniplex and multiplex relations (Bø 1993; Degenne and Forsé 1999; Scott 2001). Multiplex relations indicate the extent to which two persons are linked in more than a one way.[49] Uniplex relations do not give immigrants much space for identity negotiations in interethnic face-to-face interactions. Conversely, multiplex ties enable immigrants to go beyond ethnic based categorizations. It is not difficult to imagine that it may be easier to deploy different strategies of 'alter casting', 'role-play' and 'role distancing'[50] if one may choose between a wider spectra of identities, skills and statuses in encounters with ethnic majority members.

The most discussed qualitative aspect of a network's relations is their intensity and strength. The intensity of a relation is usually associated with the degree of commitment between the parts in relation.[51] Additionally, it often refers to the intimacy between the social actors and the strength of their ties.[52] It is relevant for me to explore whether immigrants are connected to the mainstream through strong or weak ties. I will argue throughout this study that there are a variety of possible connections to the mainstream society, but that an immigrant's connection via weak ties is the dominant integration pattern. The primary task here is to make sense of these connections, to find out what meanings immigrants attach to these ties and

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[48] Some network analysts call this aspect of social relation directedness (Mitchell 1969).

[49] Among other things, multiplexity can refer to different role relations. If an immigrant and her Norwegian contacts interact with each other in only one role (for example: as co-workers), then we can speak about uniplex relations. If actors interact with each other in different roles (for example as workmates, neighbours and relatives), we would speak about a multiplex relation. Multiplexity can also refer to the number of contents in a relation, for example the number of activities or modes of interaction between parts in the relation (Fischer 1977; Degenne and Forsé 1999).

[50] See Goffman (1997); Hewitt (2003); Ritzer and Goodman (2003).

[51] Mitchell (1969:27) defines intensity as 'the degree to which individuals are prepared to honour obligations, or feel free to exercise the rights implied in their link to some other person'.

[52] Accordingly, one distinguishes between qualitatively different relations. Previous studies distinguish between 'secondary' and 'primary relations' (Gordon 1964; Boissevain 1974) or between 'weak' and 'strong ties' Granovetter 1985, 1995). Strong ties are those defined by durability, emotional intensity and intimacy, while weak ties are single-stranded and defined by emotional neutrality.

what consequences the strength of the ties has for their identities and their sense of belonging to the mainstream.

Despite all this, the question remains as to how the aforementioned dimensions of relations are related to each other. Although the regularity of contacts, frequency, plexity and density is sometimes associated with the intensity of relationship between actors, it is worth mentioning that a high frequency of contact does not necessarily imply a high intensity in social relationships (Mitchell 1969: 29). The frequency and regularity of interactions between an immigrant and her workmates or neighbours can be high, but this does not mean that those persons necessarily have some feelings of commitment to each other or influence over each other's behaviour. The same may be said about the connection between other interactional aspects of relations. For instance, multiplex relationships can be an indicator of intensity of relationship, but not all multiplex relationships are intense. Someone can be a workmate and a neighbour, but not a friend with whom an immigrant has a certain commitment. Consequently, not all intense relations are multiplex. For example, kinship can be defined as intense in its own right (Mitchell 1969).[53]

Different kinds of social encounters and relations may require different strategies and identity negotiations. The strategy used depends on the specific characteristics of a given aspect of social reality they are confronted with; it also depends on what opportunities they have to deploy different strategies. I will explore whether and how immigrants distinguish between fellow compatriots and Norwegians, between strangers and friends, between weak and strong ties, and between neighbours and workmates, etc. We may assume that in some of these relationships immigrants prefer to cope with ethnic stigma by using passive strategies, while in other settings redefining the situation and focusing on identities other than the ethnic ones may be a preferred strategy. I believe that in certain relations, ethnic discrediting may appear as a major problem while in others, it will be not relevant at all. In some relationships the feeling of ethnic stigma is experienced as the main problem, while in others, it may be language problems, the lack of mutuality in relations or other things that endanger an immigrant's self. Different categories of people are also likely to have different experiences and expectations of various ties, as well as different capacities and human resources to deal with different relational requirements. The individual or collective characteristics of a social actor may be important determinants of the kinds of strategy pursued. For example, some immigrants may have more visible ethnic markers than others; some immigrants are fluent in Norwegian while others are not; others may have more favourable identity-compositions, which give them better positions from which to negotiate, etc. These differences and concerns may lead, inter alia, to selectivity in ethno-social practices, various rearrangements of networks and attempts to redefine certain social relations. All these assumptions provide me with initial clues about how the ethno-social practice and networking of immigrants may be explored with tools of network perspective, and related to their identity work in everyday life.

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[53] For example, the fact that immigrants do not interact frequently with relatives and friends back home does not mean that these relations are insignificant. In my view, the intensity or strength of relations between immigrants and their friends and acquaintances should be explored by using several of the aforementioned qualitative dimensions of the relation. A detailed description of procedures that were followed during the gathering of such data may be found in the methodological part of this study.

3.4. Summing up the theoretical part of the study

This study is a micro oriented exploration of the social life of immigrants. The theoretical point of departure for my exploration stems from the intersection between an interactionist oriented theory and a theory of social networks. The combination of symbolic interactionism and network perspective will be used to explore immigrants' efforts to find new friends after resettlement in light of their identity reproduction on a daily basis. Immigrants' ethno-social practice and their social integration are seen as processes that primarily happen at intrapersonal and interpersonal levels. I assume, inter alia, that the reconstruction of social networks is generated by their desire to achieve and reproduce their desired self in a new social environment.

Drawing from the aforementioned perspectives, I suggest that the composition of relations with others, both in a qualitative and quantitative sense, influence immigrants' perceptions of everyday life, their strategic actions, and their social integration in general. The discussions in this chapter give several guiding principals for the analytical part of this study. I propose a theoretic model where I understand the reconstruction of social life after resettlement as being framed by two axes or vectors, simultaneously operative. In line with symbolic interactionist perspective, I assume that the immigrant's self is produced and reproduced in face-to-face interactions with other people. However, interactions cannot be seen independently from social relations and networks. The specific ways that symbols and information are exchanged between newcomers and the indigenous local population, are influenced by the definitions of situations, relations and surrounding network configurations. At the same time, these structures are continually reproduced and redefined through strategic interactions. In other words, we may assume that interactions, social ties and personal networks should be understood both as structural frames, and as the outcome of immigrants' actions. Finally, I also suggest that the relation between immigrants' social integration and self-work should be placed in a broader time frame. In order to understand how immigrants' social life evolves over time, we have to explore the relation between their trajectories of the self and their ethno-social trajectories.

The network approach contributes to this study in both theoretical and methodological ways. Its theoretical focus implies that people's identities are embedded in local structures. The main theoretical advantage with coupling the symbolic interactionist approach with network perspective is that such a combination allows us to connect the intrapersonal world of personal experiences, face-to-face interactions, meanings and self-work with the world of social ties and social networks. Drawing on the network perspective in this way enables us to transcend the interactionist notion of highly autonomous, individualistic human action. During the course of exploring the social lives of immigrants, I came to see the methodological usefulness of the network perspective – because its concepts and methodology were coherent, precisely defined and solidly grounded in empirical reality (Rogers and Vertovec 1995; Scott 2001; Wimmer 2004).[54] The network perspective helped me to map and investigate personal networks while moving the rather vague idea of immigrant social life and social integration beyond the level of simple abstraction and metaphor. Using this approach enabled me to explore how daily experiences of stigmatization, non-belonging, and problems related to culture and communication influence, and are in their turn influenced by, different types of ties and networks. In this way, I will be able to reveal

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[54] See also Mitchell (1969); Fischer (1982); Phillipson *et al.* (2004).

nuances in immigrant coping strategies that remain undetected by the conventional dichotomy of integration – segregation.

The disadvantage of the interactionist approach may be that we overlook other factors and motivations (not related to identity) that influence the process of immigrant networking and social integration. Additionally, by combining symbolic interactionism with network perspective we may easily overlook other structures and constraining influences of relevance within which the process of immigration and integration takes place.

Chapter 4: Methodological choices, challenges and coping with them

A study concerned with the relation between face-to-face interactions, social networks and identity reproduction requires methodological tools that can explore in depth subjective realities and the social life worlds of immigrants. In this chapter, I argue that such an ambitious task presupposes the simultaneous application of several methodological tools, including qualitative interviews, participant observation and network analysis. In what follows, I present different characteristics of the empirical data and discuss the process of gathering it all. Dilemmas regarding data analysis and interpretation are also outlined, including my relationship to the object of study.

4.1. Empirical data

This study explores the everyday life experiences and mastering strategies of immigrants in combination with an investigation of their social networks. Given the focus on immigrant experiences and meanings, the data is mainly gathered through qualitative interviews and participant observation.

Forty immigrants were interviewed for the purpose of this dissertation. Most (28) of my informants have lived between 8 and 12 years in Norway. They originate from three countries: Croatia, Iraq and Bosnia. Twelve informants are from Croatia, 15 from Iraq and 13 from Bosnia. Thirty lived in Trondheim at the time of the interviews: the remainder lived in three small towns in Northern, Central and South-Eastern Norway.[55] The oldest informant at the time the study began was 65, while the youngest was 17. Twenty-one are men, and nineteen are women. I managed to achieve variation within the data with respect to age, sex, family situation, marital status, place of residence and ethnicity.

The informants within each ethnic category have certain distinguishing characteristics. Most of the Bosnians I interviewed (or met during my fieldwork) came from urban areas. Among them, there are several highly-educated people who managed to achieve relatively high social positions in Norway. The Iraqis I met typically came from the urban districts of Northern Iraq. However, most of them do not have a higher education. Most of my Croat informants do not have a higher education, and they originate from small towns and the rural areas of Croatia. While most Bosnians came to Norway in 1993, most Croats and Iraqis arrived in 1998. As we shall see, these differences among my informants had a certain impact on their day-to-day reality in Norway.

The data above was supplemented by a reanalysis of the data that I collected in previous projects on immigrants and refugees and smaller contract research studies that I conducted simultaneously with my work on this dissertation (see Valenta 2001; Valenta and Berg 2003; Valenta *et al* 2003; Lauritsen, Molden and Valenta 2006). Although these studies were undertaken for different purposes, they addressed research questions that are highly relevant for the present dissertation.[56] Moreover, during these explorations I had many relevant fieldwork interviews with friends and children of immigrants, Norwegian officials, refugee

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[55] Eight of those who lived in Trondheim at the time of the interviews had lived in various small towns in Norway before they settled in Trondheim.
[56] Most of the interviews contain information about the respondents' life in reception camps, life in the various municipalities of settlement (both small towns and cities), their social life after resettlement and their repatriation planes.

guides and other Norwegian informal contacts that socialize with immigrants and refugees on an informal basis. These supplemental interviews, together with my observations of interactions between immigrants and locals, also gave me important knowledge about how the hosts experience interactions and relations with immigrants and refugees.

The selection of informants was based on observations and discussions with key informants and gatekeepers. Informants were mainly mobilized by using a 'snowball method' where one informant directed me to a second, the second to a third, etc. In this way, I established an extensive chain of contacts. The snowball method began from several entering points, which resulted in several chains. In this way, I ensured variation within the data. During my fieldwork, I also tried to achieve variation with respect to various types of relations and situational contexts that framed different interactions. Therefore, I tried to observe interactions between immigrants, between Norwegians and immigrants, between friends and strangers, interactions that occur within the private context of peoples' homes and interactions in public, workplaces, reception centres, etc.

4.2. Motives for my methodological choices and phases of the study

A deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms of interplay between immigrants' subjective reality, their social networks and identity requires a combination of different methods for gathering and analysing data.

Firstly, I needed methods and tools that could give me a better understanding of how immigrants experience and master their day-to-day reality. Experiences, meanings and presentations of self in everyday life are abstract concepts and quite complicated phenomena. In order to get a deeper understanding of these concepts, I recognized early on that I should use methods that focus on the qualitative aspects of the phenomena. To explore and get a glimpse of how immigrants cope with everyday life, I had to illuminate how immigrants' understand their own context of action. In other words, I had to gain insight into actors' subjective positions and see the world from their point of view (Blumer 1969).[57] In order to do so, I combined qualitative interviews and participant observations.

Secondly, I also needed methods and tools that could give me detailed insight of the structure of immigrants' social world and reveal different distinctive structural and interactional characteristics of immigrants' personal networks. My ambition here was to use the network concept as an analytical tool rather than as some general metaphor. Therefore, I combined interviews and participant observations with 'sociograms' and 'network protocols'. In this way, I could explore how immigrants' meanings and mastering strategies interact with different characteristics of social relations and interactional and structural dimensions of their personal networks.

This study may be divided into four phases. *In phase one*, I (re)interviewed a few immigrants who were my informants in previous studies (Valenta 2001; Valenta and Berg 2003). During this phase, which may be considered a pilot study, I pre-tested the research design in a small-scale. I experimented and developed some of my tools for gathering of data (sociograms, network protocols, interview guides, etc.). In this phase, I also tried to find my future

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[57] One of the main theses of the hermeneutic tradition is that understanding presupposes empathy. Researchers must take the position of the actor that is the object of the exploration in order to understand the meanings that underlie his or her actions (Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994).

informants and gatekeepers for my fieldwork. *In phase two*, I did a broad part of my fieldwork (participant observations) and carried out most of the formal interviews with immigrants and those who worked with immigrants and refugees. During this phase, I modified several techniques of data collection and included new ones. *In phase three*, I conducted follow-up observations and interviews with immigrants in order to gain insight into how immigrants' experiences of social integration develops over time. Furthermore, during this phase, I also compared the entire body of data that I had collected especially for this dissertation with all the relevant data I collected in my previous studies. *In phase four*, I gave relatively short texts with my descriptions and analysis of immigrants' social life to several of my informants. Although only two of them took the time to read them, the feedback I received was very useful to me. In this last phase, I also conducted several supplemental observations and interviews with my informants.[58]

4.3. Qualitative interviews

In this section, I present the types of interviews I used in this study. Furthermore, I justify their use and explain what interview tactics were deployed in order to get information from the interviewees. I also discuss some of the challenges I faced during the interviews and how I overcame them.

4.3.1. Conversational interviews and semi-structured formal interviews

In qualitative oriented studies, one usually classifies interviews by the degree of their formality and structure. When Patton (1990) speaks about interviews, he is ranking them from informal conversational interviews to standardized open-ended interviews. According to Patton, in informal conversational interviews, questions emerge from the context while standardized open-ended interviews are based on a predetermined sequence of questions (Patton 1990).[59] I have used different kinds of interviews depending on the situational context, the phase of research and the type of information I tried to acquire.

Situations that were not defined as formal interviews, such as conversations during observations in the field, were an important source of information and make up an integral part of participant observation (Whyte 1984; Hammersley and Atkinson 1996).[60] My role as a researcher was not overtly stressed in these situations, but the informants knew that I was asking them certain questions because of my scientific work. These interviews were spontaneous and informal. The length of these conversations varied and questions were unstructured and opportunistic. In other words, these interviews could be termed 'natural field interviews' (Fontana and Frey 1994) and often contained meanings and explanations of the things observed. Through such conversations, I had the possibility to improve my understanding of immigrants' behaviour, and to modify some of my working hypotheses. Furthermore, while I was interacting with immigrants, their friends and acquaintances in various informal contexts, I sometimes got the opportunity to discuss with them some issues

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[58] In addition, this phase was characterized by a final polishing of the dissertation-text, including language proof, etc.

[59] We may also speak about semi-structured interviews where the interview topics are predetermined, but the sequence of questions and themes are negotiated in the course of interview (Kvale 1996).

[60] Such conversational interviews were conducted during participant observations and encounters with immigrants and their friends in Trondheim and various small towns in Norway.

that were relevant for my study. These discussions were initiated either by me or by my informants and covered everything from general discussions to accounts that came as immediate reactions to specific events. For example, being together with immigrants in a public place where they were exposed to some discrediting episode, I could ask them to tell me how they experienced the episode and to give me a sense of their behaviour. I often did not even have to ask for clarifications since they gave me explanations without my encouragement. I usually did not have the opportunity to take notes during these conversations, so I wrote the main points afterwards. The empirical data gathered in this way was included and followed up with subsequent formal interviews.

I also undertook formal interviews with 40 immigrants.[61] In the initial phases of the study, the formal interviews were unstructured; the interview guide was also quite unstructured, containing few entries and clues. When I conducted several interviews that focused on the same set of issues, I modified the interview guide. The guide became gradually more and more structured. However, the questions in these interviews were also explored in an open-ended way. When I felt I reached the saturation point of the data, and that it was time to search for new issues and new informants, I once again made an unstructured guide that contained only a few entries and clues. The parts of the formal interviews which were aimed at gathering concrete data about immigrants' social networks were more structured. I gathered this kind of data mainly with the help of network protocols. Each interviewee was asked to list people who were central in her or his social life and they filled in the network protocol with my help. The network protocols contained a set of structured questions regarding different characteristics of immigrants' personal network.[62]

In order to explore how immigrants' networks, identities and their day-to-day reality developed and changed over time, I followed several immigrants over a long period of time. I re-interviewed the same immigrants (9 informants) two or three times over a period of six years (at approximately two-year intervals).[63] I also formally interviewed immigrants' who had been in Norway for a short time and compared their experiences and networks with the experiences and networks of immigrants who have lived in Norway for a longer period of time. Formal interviews were either tape recorded and transcribed, or recorded by means of extended notes.

4.3.2. Narrative interviews

Narratives can be collected 'naturally' as they occur during the researcher's participant observation in natural social settings. Alternatively, they can be recorded during formal interviews (Coffey and Atkinson 1996). In the later stages of the study, I decided to use narrative interviews as a part of formal interview situations. By means of narratives, I collected immigrants' biographies about the reconstruction of their social life in Norway from their arrival to the present. This strategy was not originally planned. However, the focus of the interviews changed many times depending on the saturation of data. There were also times when I received new information and I needed to follow up on the data until new patterns were revealed. In the beginning, most of the interviews showed that immigrants' existing experience of day-to-day reality (for instance, feelings of stigma and misrecognition or a

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[61] Some immigrants were interviewed several times.

[62] A more extensive presentation of this method will be given later on in the chapter.

[63] During the period of 6 years, one informant was interviewed 4 times; 6 informants were interviewed 3 times and two were interviewed twice.

sense of belonging/non-belonging to the mainstream society) was closely related to different aspects of their personal social network. However, the experiences and meanings presented by some interviewees deviated from the main pattern. For example, although interviewee's network protocol showed that the person lived in an ethnically segregated environment, the interviewee could feel accepted by Norwegians.

Several informants explained this discrepancy referring to their earlier relations with Norwegians, saying that these relations helped them feel accepted. Although they may not have Norwegian friends now, they had them before. Until this finding, most of my interviews were two-dimensional. One part of the interview focused on immigrants' everyday experiences while another part focused on the social networks. I acknowledged that I had to relate immigrants' day-to-day-reality to their past and their anticipated future. In order to get a glimpse into the immigrants' various 'social integration careers', I modified my interviews. I began the formal interviews by asking interviewees to give me a chronological story of their networking and experiences after resettlement in Norway. When these narratives had reached the present time, the focus of interview shifted toward exploring the informants' everyday experiences, and the meanings they attached to them. As the interviews evolved, my focus gradually moved toward my informants' anticipated future, integration hopes, repatriation plans, etc.

Since we make sense of the past through our existing situations and our understanding of the present (Coffey and Atkinson 1996), I did not consider narratives as a trustworthy tool that might reveal for me what actually happened in the past. In analyzing narratives, I was more interested in how immigrants articulated the relation between past and present. I also used them in order to explore how their understanding of the past and the anticipated future may influence present experiences of day-to-day reality and vice versa. The information I gathered from immigrants' narratives was later used in more structured interviews. I also compared narratives and interviews made by immigrants who I previously interviewed several time in the past. In this way, I could compare over a longer period of time how my informants redefined their social trajectories and made sense of their social life in the past, present and anticipated future.

4.3.3. Biases during interviews and coping with these

Many scholars argue that interviews are social encounters and that interview data must be understand as a joint accomplishment of the interviewer and interviewee.[64] Therefore, interviews should be understood and analyzed in the same way as any other social encounter where the interviewer and interviewee work together to construct themselves as certain types of people in relation to each other, to the interview situation, and to the interview topic (Rapley 2001). If we take a symbolic interactionist position (Goffman 1992; Hewitt 2003), we could say that interview data are considered as accounts or versions of socially situated activities produced through role-playing and impression management of both the interviewer and the interviewee.[65]

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[64] See among others Whyte (1984); Hammersley and Atkinson (1996); Miller and Dingwall (1997); Rapley (2001); Sinding and Aronson (2003).
[65] In other words, different social locations and types of situations in which conduct occur produce different vocabularies of motive (Miller and Dingwall 1997; Rapley 2001; Denzin and Lincoln 2001; Hewitt 2003).

Subjective feelings, perceptions and motives reported by the interviewee may be biased by the self-presentation of the interviewee and the interactional clues given by the interviewer (Whyte 1984; Miller and Dingwall 1997; Rapley 2001). Whyte (1984) cautions us that interviewees may report socially desirable answers or simply have the desire to please the interviewer. Furthermore, interviewees may be concerned to demonstrate their competence as members of a community they represent. Additionally, interviewee's ulterior motives such as the concern of hiding various secrets, misunderstandings, defence mechanisms, suspiciousness and the interviewee's current emotional state may affect his reporting.[66] In my view, the researcher must be aware of these biases and actively try to reduce them. I also acknowledge that the interviewer produces biases as well. The interviewer is a central actor in the interaction. Although I may try to be neutral and make an effort to avoid being value-laden or leading, this does not mean that I am neutral in absolute sense.[67] The strategies I have used to try and reduce some of mentioned biases include: a) establishment of favourable frames for the interview; b) awareness connected to my own impression management during the interview situation; c) strategies of identification and verification of implausibility and distortion.

a) *Establishment of favourable frames for the interview*: Here, I refer primarily to gaining the informant's trust (Whyte 1984; Hammersley and Atkinson 1996; Huberman and Miles 2002). In my view, informants will reduce the degree of their impression management, share their experiences of everyday life and their mastering strategies with the interviewer if an informal relation is established between them. Therefore, I invested a considerable amount of time and energy into building relations with several of my informants. Being introduced and recommended by them to other informants, I was somewhat cleared as trustworthy person. I also interacted with potential informants in different informal situations before I invited them to participate in a formal interview. In these informal settings, I discussed with several of my informants issues connected to their day-to-day reality and their social life before they were called to a formal interview. Since they became used to discussing these issues with me in informal situations, and had made up an impression of me, it was much easier for them to speak freely about these issues during the formal interview. Through these strategies, I reduced potential suspiciousness regarding myself and the topic of the interview, and worked to create a good context for the interview.

b) *Impression management during the interview situation*: In addition to preparing the frame for the interview, I had to play my role actively during the course of the interview. The job of a field researcher and interviewer involves, as any other job, active impression management (Murray 2003). In order to gain the confidence of potential interviewees, I had to give a convincing impression that I was a professional field worker who could keep secrets. At the same time, I tried to make the interview look and feel like an informal conversation between friends. I joked and tried to make the interviewee relaxed. In sum, I believe these strategies contributed to making informants relax and feel safe. During the interview, I occasionally paraphrased and summarized the remarks as checks of understanding, but also in order to show my interest and confirm the interviewee's self-presentation.[68] Literature on the issue says that the interviewer should confirm and encourage the interviewee, but not lead him or

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[66] See Whyte (1984); McCall and Simmons (1969); Hammersley and Atkinson (1996).

[67] According to Rapley (2001), the interviewer guides the talk, promotes it through the questions and decides which particular part of the statements they will follow up. In other words, there is difference between '*doing* facilitative and neutral' and '*being* facilitative and neutral' (Rapley 2001: 316).

[68] This is a normal strategy that researchers use in the course of an interview (See, for example, an overview in Whyte 1984).

her in certain directions. The usual tactic chosen by researchers is to use 'neutral' rather than leading questions. In order to get information about what the interviewee thinks about a topic, the interviewer may start with general questions and hope that this will be sufficient to initiate the interviewee to talk about the topic. If further encouragement is needed, the interviewer can later use more specific questions (Smith 1995). I had a positive experience with these guidelines. However, it is important to emphasize that they do not solve all the problems connected to the interviewer's influence on the interviewee. There were many other biases with which I had to cope. Different social characteristics of the interviewer and the interviewer's identity work during the interview may influence the interviewee.[69] For instance, some of my informants could interpret my identity as being 'one of them', someone who came to Norway as young person, who adjusted to a new environment and who apparently participated actively in various arenas of the mainstream society. This interpretation of me could lead some of my informants to think that I valued ethnic bridging and disregarded cultural preservation and ethnic segregation among immigrants.[70] I had to deal with such images through active impression management. In order to reduce the possibility that my own behaviour and expressions may lead the interviewee to present locally acceptable reports, I also refrained from expressing my own personal opinions and moral judgments.

As an interviewer, I also tried to encourage talk. Many researchers suggest being passive and letting the interviewee speak. But my experience is that biases connected with the interviewer's identity and actions are sometimes not reduced through the interviewer's passivity, but through strategic interaction with the interviewee.[71] My experience is that the interviewer's passivity reduces the spontaneity and creativity of the actor's responses. Therefore, I tried to be actively engaged in conversation with my informants. Interviews, like any other face-to-face interaction, have their own dynamic which requires both the interviewer and the interviewee to give active performances and mutual feedbacks. I gave my feedback in order to help interviewees with their self-presentation, but in a way that would help them to share their back-stage with me. I usually tried to present myself in 'neutral' manner. Nevertheless, passive neutrality is sometimes difficult to achieve. In situations where I felt that an immigrant shared some sensitive information or that an immigrant's expressions and claims needed confirmation, I supported the person referring to my own experiences or those of others. As an actor in a face-to-face interaction the interviewee designs his or her actions in light of the expected responses. It was easier for informants to share some aspect of potentially social undesirable behaviour (for example, different passing strategies and 'double-life' practices) when they expected that they would not be submitted to moral judgments. Therefore, in these cases I showed that I was empathetic towards them or at least expressed actively that their reported behaviour is not as deviant and unmoral as they might think. It is easer for interviewees to speak about 'our common day-to-day reality' and social practices than for them to make statements to someone who might misunderstand them and consider them as indicators of social unacceptable behaviour.

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[69] Literature on the issue also cautions us about this bias (Whyte 1984; Hammersley and Atkinson 1996). The informant may place the researcher in a certain category of people based on the researcher's personal characteristics, appearance and behaviour. These interpretations of the researcher's identity may influence the gathering of data (Whyte 1984; Hammersley and Atkinson 1996).
[70] Identified in this way, I might well find informants expressing opinions more favourable to Norwegians, Norwegian culture and to external social integration because they want to produce a morally adequate identity related to their vision of me and of the interview topic. Informants also could present themselves as more integrated into the mainstream society than they actually are.
[71] As Lemert (2005) pointed out: 'People know a lot about social things, but they cannot talk about them very well without some help' (Lemert 2005:8).

*c) Strategies of identification verification of implausibility and distortio*n: Here, I refer primarily to tactics that may be used in order to determine the validity of the interviewee's statements. Different tools may be used in order to indicate such distortions. A researcher dealing with more structured questionnaires may, for example, put several questions about the same topic in order to identify possible inconsistencies in an informant's statements. I used this strategy primarily for the mappings of immigrants' social networks.[72] Since I worked mainly with semi-structured interviews, interview guides were not efficient instruments for the identification of implausibility and distortion within interviewees' stories. I sometimes asked the same question several times, but formulated it differently throughout the interview. However, I recognized that if I did it too often the interview could easily look more like an interrogation than a friendly research interview. Therefore, when using this strategy, I tried to avoid direct confrontation and disclosures where the person could be embarrassed. I did not want to insult or humiliate my informants, for both ethical and pragmatic reasons. This does not mean that I was not aware of inconsistencies within the story. If parts of the informant's statements were inconsistent or if there were huge discrepancies between statements of different interviewees, I tried to clear them up by carefully asking for further clarification. I frequently compared the accounts of an interviewee with accounts given by other interviewees and in other social contexts.[73] Data from one interview should not be analyzed in isolation from other interviews and other sources of data. The informants' accounts or various ways of how they view interview topics are influenced by their identity work, but not all informants have the same identity work. Therefore, one informant may reveal an aspect of his of her life that another informant has distorted.

4.4. Challenges I faced during my fieldwork and my ways of coping with them

According to the symbolic interactionist perspective, the social world is composed of actors who continuously create and recreate meaning through interaction. In order to explore the social life and everyday reality of these people, the sociologist must become a part of that complex web of social interactions and relations (Murray 2003). During my fieldwork, I used participant observations in order to be more familiar with the immigrants' day-to-day reality and social life. Interaction with my 40 interviewees went beyond the interview context in that I also interacted informally with many other immigrants at different social gatherings. So we may say that the number of immigrants encountered during my fieldwork both overlap with, and extend, the original base'sample' size of 40 interviewees.[74]

Observations were primarily used in order to identify various relevant categories and hypotheses, and among other things, to explore the main contextual elements of interethnic interactions and relations. During my fieldwork, I observed immigrants' self-presentations and coping strategies (regarding different types of relations and interactions) in various natural situations. During participant observation in the field, I established informal and close relations with several immigrants.[75] In interactions with informants in different informal settings, the frame for formal interviews was also prepared. In the following section, I clarify

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[72] The network protocols are designed in such way that they may efficiently reveal inconsistencies in informants' reporting.
[73] I also compared data gathered from interviews with data gathered from observations. Observations and interviews are two different types of interaction that may provide different accounts (Whyte 1984; Miller and Dingwall 1997).
[74] Since my data are not only gathered from formal interviews with 40 interviewees, I prefer to use the term 'informants' rather the term 'interviewees' when referring to immigrants in my study.
[75] Advantages and disadvantages of my close relation to the informants are analyzed at the end of the chapter.

what type of observations I have used in this study. Furthermore, I outline some of the challenges I faced during my fieldwork and the ways I coped with them.

4.4.1. Participant observation

In the literature, one usually distinguishes between four different social roles for observation. The researcher who conducts the fieldwork may have a role of: complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant and complete observer (McCall and Simmons 1969; Hammersley and Atkinson 1996). These ideal types show differences in the degree of the researcher's involvement in observed interactions. They are also different in respect to the researcher's openness about her role as researcher. A field worker who takes the role of a *complete participant* becomes a complete member of the in-group that s/he wants to study.[76] In the case of a *participant as observer*, the researcher's observer activities are not completely concealed, but they are subordinated to activities as a participant. In the case of an *observer as participant*, the researcher's observer activities are made publicly known, but activities as a participant are subordinated activities as an observer. Finally, in the case of a *complete observer*, the researcher does not participate in interactions, for instance s/he hides behind one-way mirror.[77] The term 'participant observation' covers the first three types, while the last type may be considered as non-participant observation.

The role and activities of the field worker will shift through time from one of the aforementioned theoretical categories to another. The researcher may even have several of the mentioned roles in the one and same situation depending on the viewpoints of the people with whom he or she interacts. I carried out my research openly, in an 'overt role' (Whyte 1984).[78] For example, I usually explained the study in appropriate detail to the informants, making them aware of its aims and its outputs, and reassuring them of their anonymity within the transcribed and fieldwork data. However, sometimes it was inappropriate to announce to everyone who was present that I was a researcher conducting fieldwork.[79] At parties and other similar informal get-togethers where many people were in present, I sometimes did not have the opportunity to introduce myself fully to everyone present. People usually knew that I was a researcher, but some people might well have thought that I was there for other reasons. I was always prepared to explain what I was doing to anyone who asked, but if I did not get the opportunity to introduce myself, other participants in the interaction might have thought that I was just a friend of the host. Moreover, during my participation in interacting with a group of people who knew the purpose of my presence, I sometimes was also able to observe the interactions of others. The people observed on the other side of the room did not always know that I was a researcher or that they were being observed. Sometimes when many people were present, they were not even aware of my presence. In other words, due to the situation, I

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[76] Here, members of the group do not even know that he or she is a researcher. In this case, the observer's activities as such are completely concealed (Whyte 1984; Hammersley and Atkinson 1996; Hong and Duff 2002).

[77] The researcher is here completely removed from any interaction with the informants. In some cases, they do not take the researcher into account because they do not know that someone is observing them at all (McCall and Simmons 1969).

[78] Whyte (1984) describes the overt role in following way: In the overt role, you let people know you are doing a study. They may have only a vague idea of the nature of the study and judge it primarily in terms of evaluation of you personally, but still you are prepared to explain what you are doing to anyone who asks (Whyte 1984: 30).

[79] To avoid possibly creating difficulties for informants who participated in this study, great care was taken to maintain their anonymity. Similarly, in respect of face-to-face interactions, an ethical approach based on mutual respect and sensitivity set the framework for interviewer/interviewee interaction.

sometimes had the role of a non-participating observer, a complete participant and a participant observer at the same time. Therefore, for some people, I was more of a participant than an observer, for others I was more of an observer than a participant.[80]

4.4.2. The field site: managing the role of the participant and the role of the researcher

I preferred to display as many real quotations from my informants as possible, in the hope that something of the "true" spirit of their social life would emerge from their own words. However, I cannot emphasize enough that participant observations are an equally important source of my data.[81] I spent a lot of time with my informants. I spent anywhere from one or two hours to as much as one or two days. I interacted with most of the immigrants several times, visiting them at their work or in their homes, staying overnight, going out with them to cafés, restaurants, and parties, talking with them informally, and also doing formal interviews with them.[82] In most situations, I was a participant observer due to the definition of situations that I observed and due to my concern of not disturbing the existing definitions of situations and relational expectations. Interactions that I observed usually happened in the informal settings in people's spare time where friends met each other. If I wanted to be seen by others as a normal participant (and not a snooping intruder) I had to be defined as a friend, an acquaintance, or at least a friend of a friend (Whyte 1984). Therefore, my activities and role as an observing researcher was in most situations subordinate to activities as a participant. People with whom I interacted knew that I was a researcher, but my presence was not always connected with my research. In some cases, I invited immigrants to various informal gatherings or was invited by them to participate in different interactions as a friend or an acquaintance.[83]

During social encounters, actors participating in an interaction are actively engaged in the maintenance of an existing definition of the situation (Goffman 1959). Being a participant observer, due to my role and activities as a participant, I had to cope with several practical problems. The first problem was related to recording my observations of interactions. Much like other researchers who used participant observation, I was seldom able to take notes on the spot.[84] I had to cope with this difficulty by relying on my memory until I could write in private. In some cases, I left the interaction for a moment in order to write down at least a few phrases. I tried to follow the advice from other studies[85] and as soon the conversation was over, I excused myself and found some quite place (toilet, my car, balcony, etc) where I wrote down, in telegraphic style, the major points of the conversation and observed interactions. These phrases helped me later in achieving the recollection of mental notes during the process of more comprehensive transcriptions.

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[80] In the field, it is not unusual that a researcher may be associated with a multiplicity of roles and identities (Hammersley and Atkinson 1996).
[81] Quotations presented in the empirical part of my study derive from both formal interviews and fieldwork conversations.
[82] The usual settings were parties, home visits, work places, birthdays, weddings, interactions with immigrants and their friends in a library, café, gym, swimming pool, etc.
[83] My key informants sometimes invited me to participate in different settings telling me that it could be relevant for my work. They introduced me to others as a friend, because I suppose they did not want to insult me by defining me as an intruder who is present only because of his work. If somebody asked me about my profession, then I said that I was a PhD student and that I studied the social integration of immigrants.
[84] See for example: Whyte (1984); McCall and Simmons (1969).
[85] See Whyte (1984).

The second problem was that I was often unable to ask for more extensive clarifications of the things being observed. Being a participant, I was simply engaged, like anyone else, in the given encounter, in the maintenance of the existing definition of the situation. I decided sometimes to subordinate my activities as participant to my observer activities. In these cases, I openly made short notes or asked people to make sense of things, explaining my actions by referring to my research. However, in most cases that kind of behaviour would have caused a multitude of potential disruptions and made the whole situation superficial. I wanted to observe what immigrants did under ordinary circumstances. In order to avoid my questions from disturbing the rhythm of conversations and the existing definition of the situation, I had to refrain from asking too many questions. I restricted myself to short questions or asked informants to make sense of the things that I observed after the moment had passed.

In my case, the dynamic of the observed interaction, the expectations of others, my own abilities as an interactant and the situational contexts decided how active I was during my participant observations. My counterparts in interaction often expected my active participation. I sometimes engaged even deliberately because my participation could give me the opportunity to experience more strongly the dynamic of role-play, identity negotiations and definitions of reality that others tried to maintain in a given situation. However, being actively involved in the face-to-face interaction, I had less time and opportunity to reflect on the situation. I did not have the possibility to make even mental notes on the spot. I had to make these reflections retrospectively after leaving the scene, which the increased possibility for their distortion. I acknowledge that in order to avoid 'to begin as a non-participant observer and end up as a non-observing participant' (Whyte 1984: 29), I had to control and reflect on the degree of my involvement. In many situations, I decided to withdraw, take the role of the listener and observe situations from a 'distance', reflecting on them, making hypotheses and mental notes.

4.5. Gathering of network data

Network data can be gathered in several ways. Researchers may, for example, follow people over long periods of time and observe who is interacting together and who has relations to whom (Mitchell 1969; Whyte 1984; Gibson 2005). I have not used observations in order to identify immigrants' networks. This method would be very time consuming and result in a very small number of selected cases.[86] Instead, I used observations in order to learn more about how immigrants' day-to-day reality is embedded in contexts of various relations and natural situations. In order to cover a high variation in the patterns of social integration of different categories of immigrants, I needed to explore a relatively high number of immigrants' personal social networks. Therefore, in line with many other network analysts,[87] I asked my informants for various data on their own relationships to alters and linkages between alters.

During the preliminary inquiry of immigrants' personal social networks, I used sociograms as my analytical tool. Informants were asked to write the initials of different contacts in the proper place in a sociogram and to draw lines between different contacts. The advantage using the sociograms was that informants were able to see the graphic presentation of their own

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[86] In addition, by using observations as a method for gathering network data, I would risk misinterpreting various relations and network structures (Whyte 1984). In my view, the ego has the best knowledge about her own personal space.

[87] See Schensul *et al* (1999); Scott (2001); Pahl and Spencer (2004); Wimmer (2004).

network. This method made informants more conscious about the structure of their social life. Additionally, the graphic presentation of the personal network gave them a good possibility to compare different relations and to reflect over the importance of different contacts in the course of the interview.

Using sociograms, I gained important initial knowledge about the immigrants' personal networks; however, this method was extremely time-consuming. The informant and I had first to complete the sociogram, and then I had to ask a long list of questions in order to gather additional information about the structural and interactional characteristics of my informant's network. In addition, I had to interview each informant about their everyday experiences, coping strategies, meanings associated to different relations and other social dimensions that hopefully would give me a clue about the immigrants' social life. As a result, interviews often lasted four hours. Both the informant and I were exhausted.[88] Therefore, I decided to find more effective methods of gathering network data. Encouraged by my supervisor's earlier work and suggestions, I developed a 'network protocol' that enabled me to gather network data in a more effective and precise manner.[89]

Figure 1: Network protocol used in the current study.[90]

	Name of contact	Nature of relation[91]	Type of relation 1relative 2friend 3neighb. 4workm. 5other	Importance of contact: 1very imp. 2pretty imp. 3less imp. 4periphery contacts	Frequency of meetings: 1daily 2weakly 3monthly 4quarterly	Quality of interaction: 1very comfortable 2comfort. 3not so comfortable	Context of interaction: 1home visits 2outside arranged 3occasional interactions	Ethnici ty. 1Norw. 2comp. 3other ethn.	Who is in touch with whom?
1	Ivan	P,HB,K,B	2	1	1,2	1	1,2	2	2,3,4,5
2	Miki	P,HB,GK,	2	1	1,2	1	1,2	2	1,3,4,5
3	Tina	K,HB,T,	2	4	1,2	1	1,2	2	1,2
4	Ivo	HB,T,P,	1	1	2	1	1	2	5,1,2
5	Lela	HB,P	1	3	3	1	1	2	4,1,2
6	Azra	HB, BP	2	3	2	3	1	2	7
7	Nina	HB	2	3	2	2	1	2	6
8	Ole	HB	3	3	2	2	1,3	1	0
9	Siri	T,K,	4	3	4	2	1,2	1	10
n	Åse	T,K,HB	4	4	3	3	1,2	1	9

As we can see from the figure above, the network protocol that I have used is a sort of questionnaire containing a list of questions about the structural and interactional characteristics of informants' personal networks.[92] The network protocol displayed above may be also used in quantitative network analysis. However, the similar protocols are used in network ethnography.[93] It is important to emphasize that I did not use this tool in order to quantify data or to achieve statistical generality. The goal was to discover behavioural details and patterns of networking. This tool was used because of its precision in gathering structural and interactional characteristics of immigrants' networks.

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[88] After several hours of conversation, informants lost their interest for the issue. Our concentration also weakened, which reduced the efficiency of the interview and the quality of the gathered data.
[89] The length of interviews was considerably shortened. Including the exchange of initial questions and civilities, interviews usually lasted approximately between two and three hours.
[90] Pseudonyms are used throughout.
[91] Initials refer to different kind of activity. For example: home visits (HB), frequent phone contact (T), arranged meetings in café (K); Borrowing money (P); babysitting (BP), etc.
[92] Respondents were asked to pseudonyms in the protocol, thus assuring anonymity and allowing them to speak freely about various characteristics of their different contacts.
[93] See for instance Schensul *et al* (1999).

In my view, it was necessary to use network protocols in this study. If I had used other approaches, I would have risked not getting a adequate picture of the personal networks of my informants. Without identifying different network characteristics, the concept of network would only be used in a metaphorical sense.[94] Having the possibility to refer to different relations in the network protocol, respondents could compare the experiences they had with different concrete relations. In this way, they could give me information, in a straightforward way, about the interplay between their day-to-day reality and interactional and structural features of their personal worlds. They also got the opportunity to express their feelings about their social life based on real persons and concrete relations instead of using general ad hoc expressions and speculative explanations articulated in a vague manner.

4.5.1. Coping with challenges during the gathering of network data

Warned by the literature in the field, I expected that the choice of name generator to be one of the critical phases in the gathering of personal network data. The name generator is a free-recall question that delineates network boundaries (Marsden 2005:11).[95] I was warned that an imprecise initial question might result in qualitative and quantitative restrictions that could narrow network definitions and that could exclude important relations from the list (Antonucci 1985; Smith 2003, 2005).

No consensus has been reached among scholars regarding which strategies one should use when investigating peoples' personal social networks. As a result there are different strategies and different name generators; some ask the respondent to list people whom s/he feels closest to or ask respondents about the people they see most often. Others ask respondents to list people that they consider 'important to them now' (Pahl and Spencer 2004). In other approaches, researchers consider the network as being primarily a source of capital. In order to estimate network capacity, researchers may ask respondents to list the names of people who have a specific education/occupation or list people with whom they participate in certain activities (Smith 2003, 2005).[96] Researchers may also ask about people with whom the respondent exchanges practical help, asks for advice, money and help in finding a job, etc. (Fischer 1982; Marsden 2005). In order to limit any omission, some researchers suggest using multiple name generators because alters forgotten in one generator are often named in response to others (Brewer 2000; Marsden 2005).

I was not primarily interested in social capital and instrumental aspects of the immigrant's network, but rather in the social, symbolic and emotional aspects. I used the following question as my name generator: 'Could you list the people who are important in your social life in Norway in one way or another'? I order to avoid misunderstandings I made several clarifications. By referring to the categories in the protocol, I made it clear that such people could, for example, include relatives outside the immediate nuclear family, friends, neighbours, workmates and others. I explained that 'others' may be schoolmates, contacts in volunteer associations and spare-time organizations, etc.

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[94] As they filled in network protocol, respondents acquired a systematic overview of their personal social environment. Network protocols helped me to create new acknowledgments among respondents and helped them to express practical consciousness in a discursive manner.
[95] See Carrington, Scott and Wasserman (2005).
[96] For example, in some studies, researchers also used 'position generators' (Smith 2003, 2005).

This approach, including long conversations with each respondent, made it possible to make several other clarifications. I was primarily interested in immigrants' social life in terms of sociability and the friendships they have with other people. Which is why I added an additional question to the name generator: 'Who are the people of any significance and people that you see a lot or spent most of your time with?' The size of the respondent's personal network was flexible and I made it clear that the respondent had to decide how many names to include. When respondents had listed the coded names of their contacts, I asked them whether there were any other people who were important to their social life that should be added.[97] In the few cases were immigrants did not list any 'less important contacts' among initial names they have listed, they were once again asked whether there were any other people that should be added to the list.

In order to avoid any significant contacts from being excluded, I stressed that informants should list any contacts outside their town with whom they interacted and who were part of their social life. I also made it clear that when I used terms like 'close' or 'important' that I did not mean people who were geographically close to them or people whom they considered to be powerful and influential. I clarified that 'close' and 'important' people meant rather people who were important emotionally, with whom they socialized, shared intimacies, and people who were potential sources of emotional support. Ergo, we may say that the initial question which used the affective criteria ('closeness') was supported with several other criteria (sociability, proximity and role). As a result, I had multiple name generators that delineated network borders in quite a precise and multidimensional manner.

It is important to stress that this does not mean that the data were always trustworthy. We cannot neglect the possibility that the network data reported were not very accurate. Even if the immigrants did their best to list all the important contacts in their social lives in Norway, there is still the possibility that some persons were left out, since human memory is fallible (Brewer and Webster 1999; Brewer 2000). Network protocols are also the result of respondents' subjective interpretations of their social environment. For instance, some respondents could have recently been in a conflict or dispute with some of the significant people in their social life. Such disputes may be temporary, but they may make a respondent to degrade these contacts to 'less important contacts' or even exclude them from the list. Alternatively, respondents may have exaggerated the size of their network and overstated the quality of relations in order to appear more socially integrated or more socially 'rich' than they really were. In any case, I felt that most of these biases were discovered and reduced during the interview.[98]

4.6. Data analysis

We may distinguish between induction, deduction and abduction when we discuss the analysis of data material (Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994). The analysis of my empirical data was mostly characterized by abduction where I continuously oscillated between theory and the empirical data I gathered. The process of analysis usually began in an inductive manner, but gradually became more deductive when theoretical concepts were used in order to

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[97] I felt that this approach allowed for a certain flexibility. Evidence to this is the variation in the number of names listed. At one extreme 6 names were listed, at the other there were 18. This variation indicates that the network protocol was designed properly.

[98] The protocol was designed and used in such way that it usually unveiled such exaggerations and other similar biases.

interpret the data. I structured the presentation of my empiric material in such a way that the analytical part of my thesis may indicate my analytical approach to the data. Firstly, I tried to capture broad varieties that were necessarily present when there were so many different cases, immigrant experiences and integration patterns. Secondly, I proposed analytical categories. Thirdly, I contextualized these analytical categories and related them to different local settings and broader structural constraints. This process was repeated several times, since new material often contributed to new interpretations of the theoretical perspectives I had chosen. These new perspectives were again applied when interpreting fresh material as it came in.

As I explored how social reality is subjectively perceived and experienced by my informants, their behaviour and statements were continuously analyzed, questioned, reconstructed and interpreted in a flexible and imaginative manner, because according to several scholars, qualitative data analysis should not be rigid. It should be a flexible, imaginative and reflexive process.[99] I agree with Coffey and Atkinson (1996) when they argue that data analysis should not be seen as a distinct last phase of research. In line with them, I considered the analysis of my material as a reflexive, cyclical activity that was in simultaneous interplay with data collection, writing, and further data collection. During this process, my meanings, interpretations and conclusions were drowned and working hypotheses emerged. Through further data collection they were verified, modified and contrasted with other methods of data collection. This continuous oscillation between the gathering and analysis of data contributed to the flexibility of the whole research process.

Qualitative analysis also must be a systematic, methodological and intellectually rigorous process. In order to make the analytical process more systematic, the notes taken during participant observations and interview transcriptions were coded and classified. Collected data was constantly broken down into themes and analytical categories.[100] By reducing the data material in this way, I developed a better overall picture of my data material. By identifying themes and categories, I could more easily confront and compare comparative and contrasting cases. Finally, by identifying themes and analytical categories, I could easily get an overview of certain experiences, opinions or patterns of mastering strategies among my informants. As a result, it was easier to get an overview of the exceptions and relate them to the rest of the data.

Due to the coding of data, it was more difficult for me to reproduce selective perceptions and to neglect the cases that were incongruent with my presumptions and working hypotheses. In other words, by through the systematic analysis of data, I coped with biases that came from my subjectivity. As we shall see, because of my close connection to the informants and the topic of the study, I had to be especially concerned about my subjectivity during the analysis and interpretation of the data material. Attempting to acquire objectivity, I constantly had to question the borders of my outsider and insider positions.

4.7. Relation to the informants and the topic of the study

It is important to distinguish between an outsider and insider position when one speaks about a researcher's relation to her informants and topic of the study (Hammersley and Atkinson 1996). Several researchers argue that insiderness has several advantages compared to being an

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[99] See for example Tesch (1990); Alvesson and Sköldberg (1994); Coffey and Atkinson (1996).
[100] Among other techniques, I applied various versions of 'indexing', 'charting' and 'mapping' (See Huberman and Miles 2002).

outsider (Zinn 1979; Oakley 1981; Hanif 1985).[101] Outsiderness may limit the understanding of hidden meanings and a deep level of trust with the informant. Their assumption is that the insider's privileged access offers the researcher insights that are difficult or impossible for an outsider to access.[102] On the other hand, many studies claim that the outsider will be more able to acquire objectivity. Since outsiders will be unrestricted by commitments to the community and any prejudiced practice, they may be able to raise questions that are unlikely to be raised by insiders who are members of that community.[103] In my view, both positions have their advantages and disadvantages. However, the disadvantages that both face are not absolutely insuperable obstacles, but challenges that we may cope with. Researchers need to ask themselves where they stand in relation to informants and the topic of study. They also have to take advantage of their position and cope with its disadvantages. I tried to do that during this study. In order to clarify the borders of my insiderness, I recognized what I and my informants had in common. Among other things, I was an immigrant/refugee myself, and I shared the same ethnic background as several of my informants.[104] I also personally knew many of my informants before I started this study (or at least they knew about me). In sum, I acknowledged that I might be considered an insider in many ways. The question remains as to how I benefited from my position and how I coped with its limitations and disadvantages.

I am convinced that my insiderness gave me greater access to informants than an outsider would experience, at least at the start of his or her research. By assuming that I had a similar social reality as theirs, my informants were more open to discuss intimacies of their social life with me than they perhaps would be if someone they defined as an outsider interviewed them. They were more willing to go beyond their impression management and self-protective behaviour because they believed I had a similar social practice to their's and was an insider with knowledge about the back stage of immigrants' social life.[105] Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that my insiderness was not an absolute advantage. Being considered one of them, my informants could see me as a menace in some cases. Compared with an outsider, for instance a Norwegian researcher, who 'comes and goes', I was sometimes considered as member of the community. Being categorized as a potential friend of other immigrants in the community, an informant might think that I could share gossip and confidential information in informal settings. Therefore, I felt that people sometimes might prefer to share certain kinds of confidentialities (secrets) with outsiders. It is sometimes easier to share information about one's own social world to an outsider far removed from that world because s/he is stranger. It might also be easier for them to confess to someone whose outsiderness makes her/him neutral in relation to conflicts, cliques and alliances within the community (Coffey and Atkinson 1996; Hammersley and Atkinson 1996).[106]

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[101] Insiderness is usually associated with several values such as: shared experiences, greater access and cultural interpretation (Labaree 2002: 103).

[102] Compared to an outsider, one assumes that the insider possesses exclusive intimate knowledge of the community and its members due to previous and ongoing intimate relations with that community and its members.

[103] Discussions about that issue may be found in: Whyte (1984); Kauffman (1994); Hammersley and Atkinson (1996); Labaree (2002).

[104] I lived as an immigrant in Norwegian towns of different size. In line with my informants, right after resettlement, I lived in reception centre and followed different integration oriented courses. I also worked for several years in different parts of the system that deals with the reception, settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees.

[105] Being considered as part of immigrant community, it was easier for informants to speak to me 'as if I were one of them'. Several times I heard people say: 'I would never say that to them because they would misunderstand me, but you understand what I mean'.

[106] As ethnic Croat, I was also given certain identity by my ex-Yugoslav informants (Serbs, Muslims, Croats), which surly made them sensitive to all issues connected to ethnic tensions between Ex-Yugoslav groups.

Furthermore, insiderness is not necessarily an advantage with respect to the interpretation and analysis of data. My personal experiences constitute a framework of understanding that shapes how I identify important questions and meanings and there is always a risk that my own experiences will overshadow those of others. Being an insider, the researcher may lose the humility and professional caution in her approach; the humility that may characterize a researcher who steps into the field for the first time (Hammersley and Atkinson 1996).[107] Additionally, being too close to the object of research may 'blind' the researcher. Being 'one of them', the researcher is part of community's discourse and may take many things for granted. Therefore, that person is not able to gain sense of awareness about the behaviour of people around him or her (Ohnuki-Tierney 1984). In other words, researchers who are involved too strongly in the culture they are studying risk 'going native', and fail to discover certain phenomena that a relatively uninvolved researcher would likely discover (Spradley 1980; Hammersley and Atkinson 1996).

I was 'native' in relation to my informants and topic of the study. At the same time, I felt that it would be unfair to interpret my position as a disadvantage. I felt that my insiderness and subjectivity were an important basis for my research. I considered my similarity with the informants and my personal network consisting of immigrants and refugees as important preconditions for getting access into the privacy of my informants' back stage. I also felt that my personal experiences often helped me in establishing emotional and intellectual connections with my informants, and in developing a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics of their social integration process.[108] Both communication with informants and interpretation of their expressions were facilitated because we shared cultural knowledge and an immigrant experience. I could formulate hypotheses and identify immigrants' reality constructions and their practical consciousness that went beyond an outsider's frame of understanding.[109] At the same time, I knew that I should resist the 'comfortable perquisites of insiderness' (Deutsch 1981:190).

I followed Magolda's (2000) advice and wrote extensively about my preconceived notions about immigrants' social life and their day-to-day reality. In that way, I forced myself to come to terms with my personal experiences and stereotypes. In this way, I engaged in the process of identifying, acknowledging, and seeking out my subjectivity. I continued this practice during the entire study. Additionally, I constantly questioned my selections of certain leads and whether or not to follow up on them. I asked myself whether I followed up on them because they were congruent with my own experiences and prejudices or if I followed up on them due to reasons that were more legitimate. Therefore, we may say that during the interpretations of my informants' social reality, I tried constantly to question and reconstruct my own reality, judgments and inferences (Huberman and Miles 2002).

Furthermore, not only did I recognize what I had in common with my informants, but I also reflected on what I did not have in common with each of them. I acknowledged that a researcher is a multiple insider and outsider (Deutsch 1981; Griffith 1998; Labaree 2002). Early in the process, I acknowledged that I was simultaneously an insider and an outsider

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[107] Knowing that she approaches an unknown phenomenon, an outsider will likely use different methods of triangulation, a longer period of time on pilot studies, or extensive document analysis in order to be more familiar with the object of the study.

[108] Finding the reference in my own experiences, I could achieve 'sympathetic introspection' and grasp certain aspects of immigrants' social life that would be difficult for an outsider.

[109] I also felt, in line with Magolda (2000) that the close relations to my informants provided me with a more potent voice because the voices of my informants resonated through me.

depending on the people, events and issues I confronted during my fieldwork. With respect to my background and my network connections, I was sometimes an insider. Given my socio-economic position, lifestyle and disconnection to certain migrant networks, I was also at times an outsider. Although I appeared to be insider, I sometimes felt more ignorant than a Norwegian outsider might be regarding certain aspects of informants' life. In many cases, day-to-day realities that were totally unknown to me showed me that my migration experience is one among many others. Even when I explored the social lives of people who I initially considered as very similar to me, I was astonished to discover that they sometimes had different immigrant experiences (or different interpretations of similar events). Recognizing the fact that my knowledge about certain aspects of 'my immigrant and ethnic community' is actually quite limited, I increased my professional caution and constantly questioned my insider knowledge about immigrants' day-to-day reality and social life.

4.8. Summary

I started my exploration of immigrants' social life with the assumption that different structural and interactional dimensions of immigrants' networks are in interplay with immigrants' identities and subjective experiences of day-to-day reality. In order to explore this assumption, I had to gather data about at least two dimensions of their social life: a) different aspects of immigrants' everyday experiences and behaviour; b) different dimensions of their personal networks. I quickly recognized the need to integrate different methods for gathering empirical data. Each method employed yields some gains in understanding the aforementioned aspects of the social lives of immigrants. Unstructured interviews and participant observations were tools that I used to explore immigrant behaviour and how they personally experienced their day-to day reality. Network protocols were used in order to increase discursive awareness among my informants and to provide me with extensive and precise information about their personal networks. Combing these tools, I was able effectively to make links between the different threads of subjective experiences, immigrant strategies and the interactional and structural dimensions of their personal networks.

During the gathering and analysis of my data, I faced different challenges. I had to deal with problems connected to my relations with informants and the topic of my study. Some of my strategies were related to frames of interactions and gaining access into various informal arenas of immigrants' social life. Other strategies were related to managing the interactions with my informants. I had to continually negotiate my identity, situational definitions as well as definitions of relations I had with my informants. My self-presentations as well as their interactional and relational frames were managed in order to gain trust, insight and resonance with my informants. In many cases, my insider identity did not come automatically, but was negotiated in interactions with my informants and achieved via extensive networking with different people in the immigrant community. Although I had a better start position than, for example, some Norwegian researchers, I still had to invest a considerable amount of a time in relationships with potential objects of the field research. I had to provide various kinds of help to my informants in order to show that I possessed a warm sympathy with them, what I really had, and in order to change my 'mandate' from the right to inquire as somewhat of a distant associate to the right to inquire as somewhat of a closer friend (Whyte 1984).[110]

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[110] During this process, I established close friendships with several of my informants, relations I hope will be maintained after I have finished this study.

During the process of gathering and analysing my empirical data, I oscillated between insiderness and outsiderness. In some cases, I explored the social lives of immigrants who apparently were similar to me. When I approached aspects of life that also were part of my own experience, I tried to distance myself introspectively from them in order to gain new perspectives. In other cases, I tried to gain insight and insiderness as any other outsider would do. In other words, during this study, I could not simply define myself as an insider and then constantly try to distance myself from the phenomenon and people I studied. Similarly, I could not define myself as an outsider and constantly seek to obtain insiderness. Instead, I had to continuously evaluate, negotiate and renegotiate with others and myself my own position to the phenomena, people and networks that I sought to study.

The strength of my data is that I have had a unique opportunity to interact in different informal social arenas with my informants over a long period of time. During that time, I have been able to draw on a variety of methodological tools that have provided me with a deeper understanding of immigrant social life. The weakness of my data is that it is biased in many ways – influenced by my informants and by myself. But the deployment of different approaches, triangulations and crosschecks makes me confident that the insights and conclusions that have emerged are worthwhile. This does not mean that the aforementioned strategies can ever reveal, in any absolute sense, the ultimate truth about the "real self" of any informant or informants, or capture the real spirit of their social realty. My efforts did not result in hard data. Acknowledging and dealing with the existence of various biases embedded in the process of constructing and reconstructing data do not automatically result in the illumination of an ultimate truth. Instead, my argumentations and conclusions may be seen as interpretations of constructed versions of social reality.

Finally, I want to emphasize that my empiric data cannot be generalised in a statistical sense. They cannot be used to draw overall statistical conclusions about Bosnians, Iraqis and Croats in Norway. Nevertheless, my interpretations may make valuable contributions to an important debate on the integration of immigrants, as well as to the general debate about the relationship between structure and agency and the links between social ties and the self. They may hopefully inspire and help others to understand (and compare) the social reality of other categories of people who share problems that are compatible or similar to those of my informants.

Chapter 5: Experiencing a burden of ethnicity in everyday life

Immigrants create friendships with locals as a part of their attempt to reconstruct their identities and social life after resettlement. This process happens in a specific social context. In what follows, I argue that interactions and relations between the immigrants in my study and Norwegians may be understood as: a) intercultural interactions and relations; b) interactions and relations between ethnic majority and ethnic minority; and, c) interactions and relations between normal people and stigmatized people. The main argument in this chapter is that each of these dimensions creates certain problems for immigrants' identity reproduction and integration process. Insecurity about Norwegian culture, language, and anxiety about potential misrecognition characterize their day-to-day reality. In everyday situations - from classroom to workplace, from house-hunting to public transportation, from restaurants to shopping, from home visits to encountering neighbours, the problems mentioned above may generate discomfort and uneasiness among immigrants.

5.1. In search of the Norwegian cultural code

Immigrants and indigenous locals engage in self-presentations with different typologies, values and cultural expectations. Inadequate familiarity with the new social context, new standards and cultural codes may generate a feeling of uneasiness in face-to-face interactions and relations with the indigenous majority population. In this context, it is not always easy to reproduce positive identities. Even more important for immigrants' self-identity is that in inter-ethnic relations, certain elements of culture are used to maintain ethnic distinction. Ethnic boundaries are produced and reproduced through actualization of cultural signs to which people attribute symbolical value (Barth 1996).[111]

My data suggests that immigrants' own standards of behaviour that have been learned and internalized in their home country are not always applicable in new cultural setting. At the same time, the new cultural code and definition of situation has to be followed. Cultural adjustment to the code of the majority and subordination to Norwegian definitions of given social situations is required if immigrants want to gain their recognition and acceptance in actual face-to-face interactions. Paraphrasing Habermas (1970a, 1970b, 2001), we may say that immigrants become part of systematically distorted communication, where domination of the other generate misunderstandings and failures of communication in role behaviour. Even when immigrants attempt to conform to majority, it is not guaranteed that they will necessarily manage to create successful self-presentations or achieve affirmative feedbacks. Although immigrants may be willing to conform to the majority's normative expectations, they may not be able to achieve this conformity due to lack of knowledge and proper cultural skills.[112] Thus, the process of cultural integration is not an easy one. Immigrants rarely manage to acquire highly developed interactive skills that would allow them to become equal to their Norwegian counterparts.

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[111] People actualize certain cultural elements from each others' cultures and use them as ethnic markers in everyday life (Barth 1996). As we shall see, the distinctive characteristics of immigrants' ethnic markers are actualized by the indigenous locals and used as criteria for negative categorizations.

[112] Sometimes, ethnic majorities and minorities share the similar culture and have similar communicative skills. Encounters between my informants and the hosts are minority-majority encounters and relations. In addition, encounters between my informants and the hosts are also inter-cultural interactions where the minority had to first learn the language and normative expectations of the majority.

Inadequate familiarity with the Norwegian social norms and behaviours may indeed disturb immigrants' self- presentations. During my fieldwork, I witnessed many episodes where unfamiliarity with the Norwegian norms and role behaviours spoiled immigrants' performances and discredited them. The immigrant may be eager to show proper respect to the hosts in the hope of soliciting positive responses and recognition, but the whole presentation can turn out to be embarrassing episode. It may be difficult for immigrants to grasp all of the cultural expectations and implicit information that circulate in their new social environment. Immigrants' self-presentation will be easily spoiled and discrediting by controversial episodes because they do not fully comprehend the typical codes and how they should play them out in each particular context. People know what to expect of each other in particular situations because they have a picture of what is typical behaviour in particular circumstances (Hewitt 2003).[113] Immigrants would be better able to grasp the hosts' attitudes toward them if they could typify their own actions from the hosts' point of view. The lack of knowledge of what is typical behaviour in certain types of situations for certain categories of people may make immigrants insecure in their own actions and actions of others. One man from Iraq expressed this feeling of being unable to typify in the following way:

> I do not know how often I should contact my Norwegian friends. I do not know what normal behaviour is. I sometimes call some of my Iraq friends several times during one single day. Other times, I do not contact them for several weeks. However, I am confident in my actions and our relation. With Norwegians, I never know. If they say that they will visit me, but never come, I do not know how I shall understand this. I do not know if I have done something, or maybe this is normal behaviour here.

Immigrants would be insecure about how to act, what to expect and how they appear in the eyes of others in certain situations, roles and relations. Furthermore, even if an immigrant has knowledge about what is the typical Norwegian social role behaviour in the given situation, they may still have problems with self-presentations in everyday life. Among other things, they may feel ambivalent about expectations regarding social situations because their values may be in conflict with Norwegian norms. Regardless of immigrants' adaptive behaviour, they may experience problems during their performances because of this conflict of values. On the one hand, if immigrants continue to follow the cultural practices they were born into, they may risk the negative feedback from their hosts. On the other hand, if immigrants try to act according to conflicting Norwegian codes, they may feel guilt because their own self-presentation is violating their perception of what is right and wrong.

> When I go out with my co-workers, women drink a lot of alcohol, dance and sometimes act like superficial bimbos…I know that I would be accepted if I act in the same way. I have tried to sometimes, but it is embarrassing. I used to act with more dignity. Therefore, when situation gets out of control, I go home (Croatian woman).

Which of the above-mentioned problems will disrupt immigrants' self-presentations depends on the particularities of the situation. In some contexts, the immigrants may experience interactions with indigenous locals as problematic because the dominant cultural expectations contradict immigrants' habitus, traditional values and social identities. In other cases, immigrants may know what Norwegian prescribed code are and want to follow the code in order to receive affirmative responses; nevertheless, in certain scenarios an immigrant may not be able to present herself properly because s/he does not have the skills to deploy

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[113] Controlling the typifications others form about us is a common feature of our role-making efforts in everyday life (Hewitt 2003).

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adequate situational identities. In this regard, language proficiency in the host country is often considered the most important skill.[114] As foreigners, first generation immigrants also lack much of the interactive competence which natives developed during their processes of socialization (i.e. the right response on teasing, the right length and tone of laugh at others jokes, the right intonation of the voice, the right face-work and body language, etc).

> I lack spontaneity… For example, I hesitate when I greet people, I have to think if I should only nod, give a hand or hug them. I feel that I am too slow in my responses… I feel clumsy when I am with Norwegians… I have to think about each step I make…I know more or less what the proper behaviour is, but this knowledge is not in my veins. This is like driving a car, you do not think what you do, you just drive (Bosnian woman).

As the informant suggests, natives express forms of interactional competence they acquired during socialization processes automatically and unconsciously in daily life. The interactions are often unpredictable and therefore presuppose creative response. This creative playing is usually related to an unconscious awareness of what fellow natives know, believe and mean. However, practical knowledge about common significant symbols, or 'models of reality' (Keesing 1974/81), must be made explicit by immigrants.

> When I say something or do something and I do not get the expected feedback, I think at once that I did something wrong. You never know. In my home country, I think that I was usually more self-confident…I have frequently encountered Norwegians who have misunderstood my intentions (Iraqi man).

When we analyze immigrants' inadequate familiarity with cultural norms of the ethnic majority, we may need to distinguish between discrediting self-presentation and immigrants' anxiety about enacting discrediting self-presentation. Embarrassing episodes and highly discrediting presentations do not necessarily occur so often, while varying degrees of insecurity about typifications and interpretation of the right cultural code are constant factors that generate uneasiness in immigrants' everyday lives. Insecurity about how they will interpret behaviours of the hosts and insecurity about how they should behave is always present. They have embarrassed themselves before and are therefore often uneasy, tense, worried and apprehensive about what may happen in the future interactions. Therefore, each interaction with Norwegians appears as potentially risky for immigrants' self-image. Due to these difficulties, several of my informants said that in interactions with Norwegians they feel clumsy, strange and even impolite. These experiences may also have broader consequences for immigrants' identities and their relations to majority culture. Several immigrants I met complained that they could not relax during face-to-face interactions with Norwegians. They often felt alienated in the situations when other Norwegian participants had an enjoyable interaction.

> I cannot relax when I am with Norwegians…When I speak I think about whether I am too reserved or too informal. I feel often that I have not done the right thing …It is frustrating that I have to think about such trivial things…I did not think about those things when I lived in home country. I did those things automatically (Bosnian man).

> I do not always know what the appropriate behaviour is. I think twice and constantly try to find out how they will react to my behaviour… This is not so easy. Norwegians do not give direct feedback about your behaviour. You can do many silly things, but they will

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[114] The language-related problems will be analyzed later in this chapter.

pretend that everything is okay. So you never know if you do the right thing or not (Croatian man).

The feeling that one is placed outside of situational reality due to the problems mentioned above was common among my informants. The behaviour of individuals is often based on habits or automatic actions that individuals enact without a deep or conscious self-instruction. Immigrants do not experience this social luxury. As the quotations above demonstrate, immigrants may be anxious about whether they are performing the correct behaviours or whether they are embarrassing themselves. Therefore, they perform their actions with a certain hesitancy and a considerable amount of self-observation (Gudykunst and Kim 1984). According to my informants, they thought about themselves as if they were on the stage, perceiving others as an audience who evaluated their unsteady and unconvincing presentation.

5.2. Ethnic discrimination, day-to-day racism and stigmatized identities

Although problems with 'finding the Norwegian cultural code' may disturb immigrants' self-presentations, several informants suggested that cultural differences were not their main problem. They clamed that there are not so many relevant differences between themselves and Norwegians, although they felt that Norwegians did not want to recognize this fact. According to my informants, Norwegians tended to focus on cultural differences rather than on similarities. Different markers (i.e. their physical appearance, clothes, religious symbols, etc.) are actualized and used as point of demarcation. These immigrants suggested that the aspects of their identity which were used by locals as signs of difference and as sources of ethnic prejudice were quite ridiculous and unjust. They experienced this treatment as humiliating.[115]

> When I interact with them, I sometimes feel uneasy because I am wearing the scarf. I know that they react to my appearance… It is unusual to wear a scarf in Norway. I also know that they associate it with negative things… It is difficult to appear as strong and independent, when they think that it is the symbol of oppression of woman and Islam. Being a Muslim is not easy now days. However, this is a part of me and my tradition and I shall continue to wear it (Iraqi woman).

This informant's story expressed her frustration about how her appearance and ethnicity were interpreted and actualized by others. She felt that her ethnic markers were interpreted in a negative way. The fact that people focused on them to such an extent was experienced by her as a sign of discrimination. She could see that similar markers were given different importance. She pointed out that if she had the Christian cross around her neck, nobody would react, but because she is wearing a head scarf, she is seen in certain way. Many other things were seen as cultural markers. For instance, some immigrants have in a similar manner compared the way they have spoken Norwegian inflected with different Norwegian dialects. They could see that their foreign accent was at once seen as ethnic marker, not as one among many other dialects.[116]

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[115] They felt that Norwegians had many unfounded prejudices against them. Many of them complained that their behaviour was scrutinized and that their social practices and presentations in various situations were often misinterpreted with reference to their ethnic background. Their experiences and irritation are in line with Bart (1969) who pointed out that certain aspects of culture become ethnic markers that contribute to maintenance of ethnic borders. The markers that are taken in account are not the sum of objective differences, but only those which the actors themselves regard as significant (Barth 1969).

[116] For more on this topic see 5.3.2.

My data suggests that immigrants experience an unnecessary emphasis on ethnicity in everyday life. On the one hand, we can say that day-to-day realities of racial and ethnic discrimination are connected to how the hosts perceive and behave toward immigrants in face-to-face interactions with them. On the other hand, it is important to acknowledge that these realities depend of how immigrants experience and perceive the behaviour and attitudes of the hosts. My emphasis here is on subjective feelings, perception and experiences connected to ethnic discrediting reported by my informants.

5.2.1. The range of ethnic discrediting

Discrediting may take many forms. In my data, I could distinguish at least between three dimensions of that experience: (a) Immigrants may experience the burden of their ethnicity due to direct verbal humiliations and unveiled acts of racism; (b) they also feel that they do not get the same respect that any other member of majority population usually receives in public life; (c) the burden of ethnicity is also experienced as a result of their own insecurity and anxiety about how indigenous locals categorize them.

A common wish among my informants is to be treated as normal members of Norwegian society. This means that they want to be treated with proper respect and without any negative focus on aspects of their non-Norwegian background. However, their experience is that these expectations are not fulfilled. They either mentioned this issue during interviews, or they were especially engaged with the topic during our conversations. They claimed that they have experienced everything from a lack of respect to direct verbal racist insults. The following stories show the range of offences and contemptuous behaviour that is a part of immigrants' day-to-day experience.

> Several times I have experienced episodes where Norwegians directly insulted me. Those things do not happen so often, but remarks such as 'this is not a way of doing things in Norway' or 'why have you came to Norway' I do have to swallow quite often… One woman asked me recently about where I was from and if I was a Muslim. She did not say anything else after I answered her question… I was cleaning her office and I could not see any reason why my religion and ethnicity were relevant. I had an unpleasant feeling the rest of that day…The whole week may be spoiled due to such humiliations (Iraqi woman).

> When I was in Oslo, police used to stop me up to 3-4 times in one single day… It is obvious that they stopped those who have a distinguishable foreign appearance. This was very humiliating…I wonder what other people think when they see police officers speaking with me and checking my documents. They may think that I have problems with authorities, that I am a criminal (Iraqi man).

> When I am inside a shopping centre, shop assistants sometimes follow me… They think that I will steal something because I am foreigner…I once saw that they gave the signal to one another. I noticed that other Norwegian customers also have seen that shop-assistants communicated to one another that I needed extra surveillance. This was very humiliating. My children were with me too. I was so angry and so humiliated that I felt that my face was red and hot. I could not control myself. I started to shout. The assistant started to apologize and was evidently very embarrassed…How I felt when I went out from the store? I felt terrible. It is not easy to forget that (Iraqi woman).

Although these immigrants attempted to appear as normal customers, students, workers, neighbours and adult citizens, their situated identities and 'identity announcements'[117] were often ignored. Immigrants felt that they were looked upon with scepticism and treated as criminals. Actors in interaction are constantly making announcements and hoping that others will see them in accordance with these announcements. However, the placements of others may be in disharmony with another person's expectations because others may resist or ignore the announcements.

> If I speak loudly, if I rebuke my child, if I experiment with strange food, if my apartment is in a mess, they think that this is how I am and explain it with my culture. If I am too similar to them, then it is of course an exception. They want us to be different from them. The Norwegians think that they are special. We want to show them that differences are small or irrelevant. This is constant negotiation…We mediate likeness and they mediate that they have monopoly on everything good. You know: 'Det er typisk norsk å være god'…They are insulted when we show that they are not so special, or maybe that we are even better (Bosnian woman).

As this informant suggest, any ascribed characteristic that is not germane to an activity may be used by locals as the basis for questioning person's situated identity. Even though immigrants' ethnic backgrounds or cultures were unrelated to the particular activity at hand, it may be actualized by others. Through such categorization, natives may disqualify them from the social group in which both the immigrants and natives have a place. One woman from Bosnia said:

> We spoke in one of the workshops about inequality between sexes in Norway. The three other Norwegian girls discussed enthusiastically different aspects of inequality between sexes. When I come with my remark about significant economical inequality in wage levels between the sexes in Norway, and referred to the existing statistical data, they were insulted… I was later directly insulted in front of the whole class by one of the girls who was especially nationalistic. As a foreigner, I did not have a right to criticize their society, especially because according to them I am from an inferior society, compared with their own. I was directly discriminated, no doubt. I am not a guest here. I live here and probably will die here. I cannot see why I cannot say what I think about Norway (Bosnian Woman).

This quotation shows one woman's disappointment with others' resistance to recognizing her situational identity and social identity, which in this case was the identity of a student. She did not have the identity confirmed which she was attempting to claim. Instead, her fellow students ignored her identity announcement and emphasized her ethnic identity. This story, like the additional stories presented above, describe how immigrants experience direct acts of discrimination in everyday life. However, most of informants said that they have seldom experienced direct ethnic-based discrimination and direct racist insults. Discrimination and racism in daily life seems to be more covert. According to my informants, racism was more often experienced as lack of proper response to their actions. In many situations, immigrants feel that the deference that was part of their demeanour was not reciprocated. For example, my informants frequently mentioned situations where people failed to greet them and described different social contexts where Norwegians addressed the other Norwegian people around them while ignoring the immigrants present.

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[117] According to Hewitt 'an identity announcement consists of anything that another can potentially interpret as an indication of the role that an individual intends or wants to enact in a situation' (Hewitt 2003: 101).

> They may show via small things and comments what they actually think about us…It is enough to act as you are not present…Sometimes they ask me up to several times to repeat my name. Again and again they say that they have not understood…They may ask many stupid questions (Iraq man).

Reciprocal exchange of deference is one of the common rules of daily social conduct and actors will react to violations of these rules (Goffman 1967/97:29). If these rules are not respected, the person in violation will usually become a non-entity in the situation. In fact, in terms of situated identity and its announcement, she does not exist (Hewitt 2003: 101). In situations where the expected deference failed to come, immigrants have to ask themselves why the usual rules of daily social conduct do not apply to them. There may be several reasons why the hosts do not respond to immigrants as expected. Nevertheless, within the context of insecurity, sporadic insults and other forms of apparently harmless behaviour of the hosts may generate bitterness among immigrants. Finding his own out-group references, one Bosnian man expressed this frustration in the following manner: 'That neighbours cannot greet… if I had gypsies as neighbours, I would greet them'. This informant was not insulted directly with ethnic or racist remarks by his Norwegian neighbours. Nevertheless, he connected the mentioned omission of deferent demeanour with his ethnic background. He is not the only one in my data who mentioned this type of omission as part of Norwegians ethnic-based discriminatory practice.

5.2.2. Ethnic identities as stigmatized identities

Based on observations and respondents' stories, I acknowledge that the concept of stigma can effectively be used to highlight important aspects of immigrants' experience of daily interactions and the meanings they attached to them. The concept of stigma is often used to describe everyday life of various social groups, as the homeless persons, the untouchable caste in India, prostitutes, immigrants, asylum seekers, handicapped people, ex-criminals, etc.[118] Goffman (1963) defined stigma as a deeply discrediting attribute that is intimately associated with negative stereotypes. People that possess such attributes will be differentiated from the 'normals'.[119]

In order to gain understanding of immigrants' everyday life, sometimes it is more relevant to analyze what kind of meanings immigrants attribute to the actions of the hosts than to examine the source of the hosts' actions. Whether there is real discrimination or not, ambivalence and insecurity may prevail among immigrants. The core problem is that the stigmatized person has an attribute that conveys a devaluated social identity. In some cases, the devaluation is pervasive, while in others it is restricted to specific social contexts (Miller and Kaiser 2001). Stigmatized people themselves may often be in doubt about whether responses or events are results of racism or the result of other factors (Ruggiero and Taylor 1997). Sometimes it is enough that immigrants do not get strong confirmations of their identity announcement from their hosts to provoke feelings of racist discrimination. Constant ambivalence and anxiety about how the hosts categorize them, combined with sporadic acts of discrimination and all the negative headlines about foreigners in the mass media result in

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[118] See among others Goffman (1963); DeVos and Wagatsuma (1966); Eidheim (1969); Høgmo (1998); Lewis (1998); Hughes (2000); Link and Phelan (2001); Lorentzen and Morris (2003); Kaiser and Major (2004); Pinel and Paulin (2005).

[119] Goffman labels the interaction between stigmatized individuals and 'normals' as mixed contacts/interactions (Goffman 1963/1990: 25).

constant uneasiness during daily face-to-face encounters with Norwegians, according to some of my informants. Their ethnic identity was gradually transformed into stigmatized identity.

We may clarify the relation between stigmatization and discriminatory practice by distinguishing between concepts of 'enacted stigma' and 'felt stigma' (Page 1984; Hughes 2000; Lorentzen and Morris 2003). Enacted stigma refers to discrediting practices applied to people based on their belonging to certain categories. However, immigrants may feel ethnic stigma without having been discriminated (exposed of enacted stigma) by their Norwegian counterparts in interaction. Immigrants may experience unpleasant feelings independently of how 'normal' people perceive them in the given situation because immigrants may be insecure about how they are viewed. My data reveals stories about uneasiness connected to Norwegians' interpretation of immigrants' behaviour and insecurity about how to understand Norwegians' non-affirmative actions. The quotations below serve to illustrate some of these feelings.

> I feel bad when I am in the city. I feel that I am different. Due to my appearance, I am distinguishable. I feel that this difference influences Norwegians' perceptions of me and that this difference determines how they will act towards me. Maybe this is not the case…They never show me directly that I am different, but I do not know what they think (Iraqi man).

> Each time someone is unkind to me, I wonder whether the action is connected to the fact that I am foreigner or if there are some other reasons that lie behind it… The possibility that others may discriminate against me due to my ethnicity always exists (Iraqi man).

Both enacted and felt stigma may have consequences for immigrants' experience of everyday life, but felt stigma is especially problematic. Direct ethnic discrimination or enacted stigma is rarely the dominant aspect of immigrants' day-to-day reality. Nevertheless, the fact that the direct discrediting occurs less frequently does not make immigrants' everyday life easier as they never know when these forms of spontaneous racism will occur (Høgmo 1998). We may say that such anxiety is especially problematic because it extends the sense of the discredited self in time and space. As the quotations above demonstrate, the possibility for enacted stigmatization maintains a certain state of alert.[120] Within this lingering state of alert and anxiety, immigrants become vulnerable to all signs of possible discrediting and rejection. The felt stigma may generate uneasiness during mixed interactions almost independently of how indigenous locals treat the immigrant. The signals that actors send to each other in the course of interaction are often fuzzy and it is easy to misinterpret them, especially for persons that interpret them from the filter of ethnic over-sensitivity. Within such context, immigrants may misinterpret the behaviour of others as racist discriminatory practice even where this was not a case.

5.3. Language related problems in interactions with ethnic majority

Frictionless and harmonic interactions presuppose the fulfilment of certain requirements. Perhaps the most important requirement is spontaneous involvement directed to maintain

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[120] For example- the following questions consistently circulate in the mind of migrant: Do they perceive me and categorize me on the basis of my ethnic background or not? What do they think about my ethnicity and culture? Do they reject me as a friend because of my ethnic origin or due to some other things? These questions imply that immigrants' experience of discrediting and exclusion is not necessarily a result of direct racist action or discriminatory action. This experience can go beyond the concrete actions of the hosts in a given situation.

common definition of situation (Goffman 1967).[121] Immigrants are involved in many encounters where they are anxious that they may threaten the situational reality prescribed by the ethnic majority. This concern, combined with the fear that their potential discrediting characteristics of their ethnicity and culture will be actualized in the given situation may reduce their spontaneity. In this context, immigrants tend to focus more than their local counterparts on their own behaviour, instead of the content of interaction. According to Goffman (1967), this kind of self-consciousness can lead to alienation from the interaction.[122] Using Mead's terminology, we could say that due to these concerns, the 'Me' is emphasized in immigrants' experience to the detriment of the 'I'.

Stigmatization and inadequate familiarity with Norwegian cultural expectations may hinder immigrants' self-presentation and alienate them from daily face-to-face interactions. However, thus far I have only discussed two sources of immigrants' alienation from social interactions. The third source of immigrants' anxiety in everyday life is connected to their communicative abilities. Inadequate familiarity with the language may threaten spontaneity and disturb the presentation of the self. Goffman (1967) states this clearly when he says:

The individual may focus his attention more than he ought upon himself…he may have speech defect such as a lisp or a stutter; he may have inadequate familiarity with the language, dialect or jargon…these minor defects in apparatus of communication tend to transform him into a faulty interactant, either in his own eyes or in the eyes of others (Goffman 1967: 124).

Unlike the hosts, who are free to think specifically about the content of messages that are exchanged in the course of interaction, immigrants are constantly confronted with constraining elements of language. This language prevents them from taking part and enjoying common situational realities that other actors jointly produce and maintain. Language problems that immigrants experience in everyday life contribute to feeling that they are not normal members of Norwegian society. Therefore, the informants first associations to 'life at home' (as opposed to being stranger in Norway) were often connected to the possibility of speaking mother tongue.

> When I am in Norway I am constrained by language. Each time I visit my home country, I surprise myself with my behaviour. I become more self-confident when I communicate with people. Even my children have noticed that I become more extraverted when I am in public (Croatian man).

> There are a lot of things that I do not like about Bosnia. However, when I am on vacation there I feel a huge relief…When I am in Bosnia, I feel that I am a part of that society. I know the language and I know how the people think. I blend in at once and everybody regards me as normal person…Everything is different in Norway. Norway is not my

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[121] According to Goffman (1967), the most fundamental requirement for successful interaction is spontaneous, reciprocally sustained involvement. If this requirement is not fulfilled, the interactant will deviate from the prescribed focus of encounter, and easily become a disrupting element during the interaction (Goffman 1967: 124).

[122] Goffman (1967) distinguishes between several types of causes that can lead to alienation from interaction, amongst others: *Self-consciousness* – the individual has attention upon him rather than being interested in topic of interaction. Individual is primarily concerned about desirable/undesirable response of other at the detriment of his involvement in the prescribed focus of attention. *Interaction-consciousness* comes from an individuals concern that the interaction is going well. That is, the individual is concerned that interaction is going well, instead of becoming spontaneously involved in the topic of conversation. *Other-consciousness*- the individual can be distracted by other participants because of their distinctive personal characteristics. Goffman mentions here, among other things, appearance, ways of speaking, and stigma (Goffman 1967).

country and I can never forget that I am a stranger here. However, we have good jobs here and the children seem to like their Norwegian school…I would like to live half a day in Norway and the other half down there (Bosnian man).

It is unpleasant and frustrating not to be understood in daily interactions. In most situations, good communicative control is a fundamental condition for a good self-presentation. Immigrants may be extroverted and familiar with normative expectations in a given situation, but because of inadequate familiarity with Norwegian language, they may be incapable of enacting their knowledge in a dynamic performance. It is important to note here that when I am discussing communication problems, I am not only referring to obvious cases when speak the Norwegian language poorly. Even immigrants who speak the Norwegian language regularly bring up this problem.

> I speak Norwegian fluently; however, communication requirements are sometimes so high that it is almost impossible to fulfil them. For example, in the group conversations, when there are several Norwegians who talk simultaneously, it is difficult to follow. I usually can not come up with any wittiness or other contributions. I am forced to be passive and to smile. They think that I am shy or in general, a withdrawn person, but I used to be the entertaining one…I am different person when I am together with my compatriots, or even with other foreigners (Bosnian man).

According to Habermas (1970a, 2001), in 'ideal speech community' differences of power do not influence the ability of a person to participate in actual speech situation (Habermas 1970a). As informant suggests, the communicative abilities and capacity of immigrants may also be considered in light of the interactional abilities of others. Immigrants have to speak a language of ethnic majority in the most situations. Forced to submit to the position of ethnic minority, immigrants may easily experience the communicative dominance of the majority with all the distortions this domination implies. In interactions that are dominated by majority, equality in interaction presupposes that immigrants can speak Norwegian as well as indigenous locals. However, this case of 'ideal speech' is difficult to achieve. No one of my informants can speak the language of the hosts as good as the natives. To them, Norwegian is a foreign language with all the problems this implies.

My data material suggests that immigrants' language proficiency is less important for achievement of 'ideal speech community' than sense of a communicative equality. For example, some informants have compared communication with ethnic majority with communication with other immigrants in Norway. They meant that cross-cultural interactions between immigrant friends from different countries who live in Norway are less disturbed with an feeling of a communicative inferiority they often have in face-to-face interactions with Norwegians. These relations are more egalitarian since both sides interact on neutral ground. No one has legitimate reason to take the role of majority. For example, both sides have to use a foreign language and reciprocally adjust to each other.

5.3.1. Anxiety of faulty interactants and depreciating actions of the hosts

According to my informants, exchange of ordinary civilities with neighbours, communication with shop assistants or small chats with co-workers may produce anxiety among immigrants. In these interactions, immigrants constantly wonder how their parlance appears to others. In all kinds of situations, these language-related problems can spoil immigrants' self-presentation and undermine their self-confidence.

> Each time I am about to become self-confident in interactions with Norwegians, something embarrassing happens… I choose the wrong word or use incorrect pronunciation when I want to buy something… People ask me to repeat myself or say that they do not understand me…These episodes really undermine my self-confidence (Croatian woman).

Even in cases where embarrassing breakdowns in self-presentations do not occur frequently, they may still have significant impact on immigrants' everyday life and their identification with their social environment. Their experience tells them that communicational breakdown will eventually occur. The problem is that immigrants never know when such incidents will occur. They know that there is always a chance that they will spoil their self-presentation by choosing the wrong word, wrong line or wrong intonation. Whether or not the incident occurs, their spontaneous involvement is threatened. This uneasiness will produce insecurity and increase self-consciousness in daily face-to-face interactions.

> I usually communicate with Norwegians without any problems. However, from time to time I experience embarrassing episodes. I would say that it is as if I have a weak stutter…Although it rarely happens, I know that it can happen. Because you never know when the embarrassing episode will occur, you have to concentrate all the time. Sometimes I manage to fix my mistake. At other times I feel terrible afterwards (Bosnian man).

According to Goffman (1956/1992: 21), an actor's presentation depends on deprecating action and defensive actions. While they speak, people continuously make adjustments (so-called defensive actions) in the course of their presentation to prevent embarrassing situations or to outweigh discrediting episodes that have already taken place. Successful self-presentation of the actor, however, does not only depend on the individuals own endeavours, but relies on all the actors that are engaged in interaction. Especially in interactions with 'faulty interactants' (Goffman 1967), it is important that other participants in interaction support the existing definitions of the situation and the actor's presentations (so-called deprecating action).[123] Those who have experience in interactions with people who stutter know how important it is to show tactfulness and under-communicate the stuttering person's disability in such interactions. In a similar manner, language disabilities of immigrants sometimes have to be overlooked by the hosts who interact with them in order for the immigrants to construct a self-affirmative performance.

> In order to feel pleasant in interactions with Norwegians, they have to treat us as if we were not foreigners. They should overlook differences…They should not make a big deal out of our language problems…We do not speak to every fat or bald person we meet about their appearance…Our background and out language abilities are our weakness zones. The problem is that we never know when they will be actualized (Bosnian woman).

If immigrants want to fulfil their communicational requirements and give satisfying self-presentations, they must have control over their speech and defensive actions. They must be tolerably familiar with the language of the hosts and give adequate defensive actions. Most immigrants I met have problems fulfilling these requirements. Due to their often insufficient communicative abilities, defining a situation will not only depend on immigrants' endeavours and motivations, but will also depend of Norwegians' willingness to overlook problematic aspects of their self-presentations. This dependence on others may reinforce immigrants' anxiety about their self-presentations in everyday life since they never know whether the

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[123] Goffman (1992: 21).

members of the indigenous majority are willing to help them or not. The following narrative highlights this dependence and anxiety.

> Before I had even reached the desk to ask about exchanging a sweater, I started to think about what I should say…Several people waited beside me in the line while I attempted to explain to the shop assistants what I wanted. I felt that they did not want to understand me. I did not manage to complete such a simple task… I know what they thought of me… It was very embarrassing (Iraqi man).

This episode took place during my fieldwork and therefore I could observe the whole course of events. Several people were standing in a queue. The shop assistants did what they could to serve customers in polite and effective manner. Everything went quite smoothly until my informant reached the desk. The problem was that he did not know that the sweater could not be exchanged or returned because it was purchased at a reduced price. This frustrated both him and the shop assistants, and resulted in short dispute and many indulgent wry smiles on the faces of people who were waiting behind him in line. The immigrant could speak relatively good Norwegian. After few minutes, he understood what the problem was, but he was not able to implement the repair work successfully. Communication requirements were simply too high. He did not have in his possession the whole arsenal of aligning actions (as proper verbal expressions, apologies, disclaimers and pleasantries together with appropriate body language of shrugs, grimaces, sincere facial expressions) that a native person would mobilize spontaneously to gloss over the unexpected misunderstanding. Instead, the immigrant appeared as unsympathetic, impolite and even aggressive. Other people did not remain uninfluenced by this. The shop assistants started to look over his shoulder and both they and customers signalized that they wanted to finish the interaction. The immigrant gave up. He turned and met the eyes of the people who were waiting in the line who had witnessed his presentation. In short, this course of events shows the interplay between defensive and depreciating actions. It illustrates that the ethnic majority do not only have the power to define what is relevant in given situation, but they also decide whether the immigrant passes the defined requirements or not. It also illustrates how important it is for immigrants' self-presentations that hosts are willing to help with depreciating actions. We may say that the situation was experienced as unpleasant because both defensive and depreciating actions failed. My material suggests that episodes similar to the one presented above are a 'normal' part of the everyday lives of many immigrants.

5.3.2. Communication and stigmatized identities

Inferior language abilities may be constant source of stigma. It is not difficult to imagine that Goffman's 'faulty person' will experience social discrediting because s/he chronically makes himself or others uneasy in conversation. If migrants who according to the host society's attitudes and prejudices originate from less advanced societies break the code, their behaviour may be explained with their backward culture. Immigrants know that the hosts may see them as a culturally or communicatively inferior people. Therefore, they are anxious that interactional breakdowns caused by their inadequate familiarity with language may also be interpreted as a confirmation of their discredited social identity.

Language is not only a means of communication. It is closely connected to important aspects of our social identity. In the case of immigrants, it can be a social or ethnic marker that implies ethnic stigma. From a person's dialect and manner of speaking, one can know which part of Norway one originates from. In the same way, the foreign accent provides information

about whether a person is Norwegian or not, or even which country a person originates from. These aspects of language were actualised by several immigrants in my study.

The specific way immigrants speak Norwegian during their everyday life in Norway will remind both immigrants and their Norwegian counterparts that they are different, and in the worst case scenarios, that they are members of a potentially stigmatized category of people.[124] Here, it is important to mention that experiences of connection between language and ethnic stigma differ a lot. For some immigrants, language and ethnic stigma appears to be tightly interrelated. It seems that this aspect of language is most emphasized in occasional encounters with strangers when immigrants cannot be physically distinguished from natives. When in public, they have an invisible ethnic stigma. Immigrants that are physically different from the hosts would have visible stigma. If we use Goffman's typology, we may say that in the first case, the person is 'the discreditable', but not 'the discredited'.[125] If an immigrant is 'discredited', the immigrant's appearance will immediately inform others that s/he is immigrant. In the case of 'discreditable' immigrants, the relative importance of language is increased since the foreign accent becomes the only marker of distinction.

> As long as I do not speak, people think that I am Norwegian. I feel like a normal member of Norwegian society. It is easier to live here if you look like them. Many foreigners experience racism – they are stopped by the police, and followed when they are shopping. I do not have this problem, at least as long as I am silent (Bosnian woman).

> When I speak, my foreign accent betrays me, but because of my blond hair and my western style, they usually think that I am from Iceland, Holland or some other west European country…I do not have anything against it…When they hear that I am from Croatia, they are usually surprised. They sometimes said: 'But you look like a Norwegian'! Sometimes they also ask: 'Did you have the same style in your home country'?…or they ask: 'Is such an appearance customary in Croatia'? Their image of my culture and my country is based on various prejudices (Croatian woman).

> I have experienced so many times that everything is normal until I have to say something. It can be on the bus, in a shop, taxi, café etc. Last time this happened in the lavatory in a disco bar. The person who was standing in the urinal beside of me was drunk. He asked me for the time. I answered, but I regretted this. I should have lied, I should have shown with body language that I did not have a watch, because shortly after, he asked me about where I came from… The conversation usually continues with questions about why I came to Norway, if I like living in Norway, if there is it still war in Bosnia, and if I have plans to repatriate, etc…These patronizing attitudes emerge from time to time. They may spoil the whole day (Bosnian man).

The informants above cannot be distinguished by their appearance from indigenous Norwegians. They can pass as a Norwegian as long they do not speak. As they imply, when they start a conversation with people whom they do not know, their foreign accent will threaten their passing. Their story shows that the symbolic aspect of language can often be

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[124] Some informants have emphasized how relieving it is to use Norwegian in interactions with other immigrants. Speaking with a foreign accent with people who also spoke with foreign accents reduced the accents distinction and its symbolical connotations.

[125] Goffman (1963/1990) distinguishes between 'the discredited' and 'discreditable'. The distinction relates the stigma to the question of visibility. As Goffman puts it: 'The term stigma and its synonyms conceal a double perspective: does the stigmatized individual assume his differentness is known about already or is evident on the spot, or does he assume it is neither known about by those present nor immediately perceivable by them? In the first case, one deals with plight of the *discredited*, in the second with that of the *discreditable* (Goffman 1963/1990: 14).

more important than the communicative aspects. These informants, like several others, claimed that in many cases they wanted to speak with Norwegians because they needed information (this could be everything from the size of the item they wanted to buy to information about a specific address in the city). However, they choose to remind silent although they heve spoken Norwegian fluently.

This type of behaviour was much more apparent in the accounts of my informants from the former Yugoslavia than among the Iraqis that I interviewed. One possible interpretation may be that, unlike my Yugoslav informants, the Iraqis I met did not have these experiences because their appearance constantly defined the situation. Using Goffman's terminology, we might say that the Iraqis I met in public were in the position of the 'discredited,' while the Yugoslav informants were in the position of the 'discreditable' (Goffman 1963). When ex-Yugoslavs speak, an encounter that might have began as one between Norwegians will be redefined as 'a mixed contact' (Goffman 1963), bringing with it all the uncertainties and discomfort this type of interaction implies. Unlike most of my ex-Yugoslav informants, the Iraqis interviewed reported that their involvement in occasional conversations with Norwegians did not result in a changed definition of situation. Their distinction was already evident from their appearance.[126]

5.4. Sense of non-belonging, everyday life and marginalized ethnic identities

In her autobiographical reflections Nazneen Khan (2002)[127] discusses her own dilemmas of belonging and the effects of discrimination:

If you are confronted, more often than you wish to remember, with prejudices or ignorance, questioning your identity, you will probably become alienated. The experiences are banal in their simplicity, but every episode reinforces the feeling of difference. When this is supplied with negative images of the culture you originally belong to, an explosive cocktail of bitterness and contempt is created (Khan 2002:155).[128]

In addition to ethnic discrediting, communication and culture-related problems, a general feeling of non-belonging to mainstream society may characterize the social life of immigrants. It seems that what happens in daily interactions influences this feeling, and vice versa, but respondents referred not only to their personal everyday experiences when they were asked to explain their feelings of non-belonging (or that Norwegians disliked them). Explaining these feelings and constructions, many immigrants referred to the mass media in combination with personal experience or to the mass media alone.

> When some crime case is mentioned in newspapers or TV, it is always emphasized that the person who committed the crime is an asylum seeker, refugee or foreigner. The mass media and politicians are continually focusing on those cases. One can get the impression that all immigrants and refugees are thieves, rapists and women-abusers. I feel each time that those cases are influencing my life indirectly. When I encounter Norwegians, I feel

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[126] Iraqis appeared as stigmatized persons in a mixed interaction before they start to speak. This does not mean that Iraqis were more relaxed in everyday life. On the contrary, this means that their appearance constantly informs others that they are different. Unlike many Ex-Yugoslavs who may pass and merge as 'normal' people in many situations, most of Iraqis had to bear the burden of their ethnicity all the time.
[127] Nazneen Khan is one of the few Muslims (her family is of Pashtun/Afghan origin) who actively participate in public debates in Norway (Gullestad 2006).
[128] The quotation is taken from Gullestad (2006: 286).

sometimes that they perceive me on the basis of information they get from the mass media (Croatian man).

I know how the FRP's (Progress Party)[129] representatives speak about immigrants. They consider us to be a major social problem in Norway. They would prefer to send us all out of the country. I know that the FRP is almost the strongest political party in Norway. Support for them is constantly increasing. This means that a huge part of the Norwegian population have directly stated their dislike for immigrants (Bosnian woman).

Others have referred to political developments in the country or even to political tensions at the international and global level. The constant focus on criminal activities that some foreigners committed, followed by increasing xenophobic sentiments and movements in Norwegian society, produced a general sense of marginalization and stigma among my immigrants. These feelings were especially emphasized among my Iraqi informants and among some of Bosnian Muslims. The focus in the mass media on Muslim fundamentalism and terrorism, the publishing of the prophet Mohamed's image in Norwegian newspapers in 2005/6, as well as the burning of Norwegian flags and embassies in Syria and Palestine, and xenophobic debates that come afterwards, have influenced impression of my Muslim informants of how they are perceived. Some of them turn inwards and begin to identify themselves in terms of their stigmatized ethnic minority status.

On the other hand, I met immigrants who arrived to Norway within the frame of strongly prejudiced social acceptance, but who later experienced that their position in Norwegian society improved. For example, my Serbian informants from Croatia arrived to Norway when the Serbian atrocities committed against Kosovo Albanians were in the media spotlight. At that time they felt strongly stigmatized, but later, due to political and economical development in their home country, their identity slightly improved in the eyes of indigenous locals. For example, the mass medias' positive focus on Croatia as a tourist destination made immigrants from Croatia become more optimistic with respect to their relation to the hosts and Norwegian society in general.

5.5. Summary

In this chapter, I have argued that interactions between non-western immigrants and Norwegians are far from being one-dimensional. These contacts are complex and are problematic in several ways. These interactions may be understood as cross-cultural encounters, interactions between the ethnic majority and the ethnic minority, and as mixed interactions. They are cross-cultural interactions because immigrants and Norwegians encounter each other from different cultural positions. They are interactions between the ethnic majority and the ethnic minority because immigrants and Norwegians encounter each other from different power positions. They are mixed interactions in Goffman's sense because immigrants may become stigmatized persons in their own eyes and in the eyes of indigenous locals.

Immigrants feel that they are primarily perceived by Norwegians through an ethnic lens rather than through other aspects of their identity. This focus on ethnicity disturbs their

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[129] Progress Party (in Norwegian-Fremskrittspartiet) is the largest right-wing political party in Norway and the second largest political party in Norway as of the 2005 parliamentary elections. The FrP advocates, among other things, strict limits on immigration.

announcements and identity negotiations in everyday life. My informants claimed that indigenous locals not only focus on their ethnicity, but also attach negative symbolic value to their ethnic identity and their ethnic markers. They experienced a lack of proper respect or even direct acts of racism. These experiences may generate constant anxiety about how others will categorize them. Due to these aspects of their daily interactions, immigrants may experience their ethnicity as burden in everyday life. They have strong impact on immigrants' personal integration experience, their ethno-social preferences and sense of a belonging and self-worth in their new social environment.

Most of the immigrants in my study are exposed to problems that I focused on in this chapter, but they experience these problems in different ways. Those variations can be explained with reference to many factors. Some immigrants are physically different from the hosts. Unlike those immigrants who may pass and merge as 'normal' people in many situations, they had to bear the burden of their ethnicity all the time. Some of respondents are more familiar with Norwegian culture and language than others, or belong to ethnic categories that have more favourable identities than others. Some achieved high social positions that compensated for their low ethnic status, while others experienced humiliating reductions in social status in Norway. Some immigrants have been successful in pursuing their economic, professional and educational goals in Norway, while others encountered obstacles limiting their achievement of personal goals. Some immigrants experienced that their identity slightly improved in the eyes of indigenous locals, while others begin to identify themselves in terms of their stigmatized ethnic minority status. As we will see subsequently, these factors influence immigrants' personal experiences and perception of their everyday life, how they perceive their new country and their place in it.

So far, the experience of immigrants' day-to-day reality has been described. Now I will proceed to analyze the second important dimension for immigrants' social integration and identity reproduction, namely, social relations and networks. In the following chapters, I will explore how perceived day-to-day realities of my respondents are related to qualities of their personal networks. As we will see, immigrants' everyday life experiences depend on the relations they have with other people. The intensity of misrecognition, non-belonging and other experiences analyzed above depend on the type of the subject's network affiliations. On the other hand, immigrants are not passive entities in these processes. They also work out their identities actively and organize webs of relations in order to achieve their desired identities in the new social environment.

6: Immigrants' social networks

In this chapter, the main characteristics of social networks of my informants are presented. The relationships with fellow compatriots are closer and richer in density than in the relationships formed with Norwegians. Furthermore, networks tend to be segmented according to ethnic lines. Yet, I also argue that there exist considerable differences between networks. In what follows, the aim is to show not only the dominant network patterns, but also to highlight the variety in adaptation lines as these differences may have consequences for immigrants' identities and day-to-day realities.

The findings in this chapter are confined to data arising from the study of 40 immigrants and their respective contacts. The aggregation of individual contacts gives a total of 418 contacts. The following dimensions of the networks are presented: compatriot density, network size, network composition, frequency of contact, centrality, interactional content, context and strength of the ties.

6.1. Characteristics of immigrants' social networks

In what follows, I present the major characteristics of personal social networks of 40 immigrants. In order to identify and outline dominant network patterns, several characteristics of networks and types of relationships are presented, focusing on dimensions such as size of network, contact frequency, ethnic category, density, etc.[130] However, it should be emphasized that numbers are not the most important thing here: patterns are.

Size
It is difficult to estimate the size of one person's network. By including all periphery contacts and second order contacts, then personal networks may easily involve several hundred people. Although informants do their best to recall and list all the people they know, it is inevitable that some will be forgotten and left out. Researchers also usually define some criteria of restriction in order to limit the list of ego's contacts. For example, they may limit the scope of the study by asking informants to list only their most important contacts, or confine the size of network membership by geographical boundaries (i.e. ask informants to list only those contacts in their own locality or town). A similar technique has been employed here. To recall, the name generator selected was primarily designed to obtain information about contacts who are considered to have made a significant impact on the social life of the participant immigrants. The mean average of listed network contacts for all the immigrants was 11. The immigrant with the smallest personal social network listed 6 contacts, while the largest personal social network was composed of 18 contacts.[131]

Composition of immigrants' personal networks
The empirical material provides us with information about the relative spreading of contacts through a number of important social categories. It also gives certain guidelines about in which roles informants interact with their contacts, and inclusive information about the arenas

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[130] Such presentations are not unusual in anthropological and sociological qualitative network studies (See Boissevain and Mitchell 1973; Scott 2001; Wimmer 2004; Bø 2005).

[131] Ten immigrants listed between 6 and 9 names; twenty four immigrants listed between 10 and 12 names; and six immigrants listed between 13 and 18 names.

from which the members of the networks have been recruited.[132] In addition to these contacts, the methodological tools were designed to gather information about ethnic composition of immigrants' personal networks.

Table 1: Composition of immigrants' personal networks

	Workmates	Relatives	Friends	Neighbours	Others	N
Norwegians	66	0	54	4	13	137
Compatriots	6	39	166	14	10	235
Other nation	6	0	36	4	0	46
N	78	39	256	22	23	418

Networks of my informants are composed, in the main, of contacts with compatriots. Of the 418 contacts listed, 56 per cent of the ties were with compatriots, 33 per cent with Norwegians and 11 per cent with other nationalities. Immigrants participating in this study most frequently listed either one or two Norwegian contacts,[133] and 7- 8 compatriot contacts. If we look at the roles in which informants know their contacts, 5 per cent of them are characterised as neighbours, 61 per cent as friends, 19 per cent as workmates, 9 per cent as family members, and 5 per cent as others.[134] Norwegian contacts are mainly represented in the category 'workmates', while compatriots in the category 'friends, relatives and neighbours'. Although the informants had opportunities to become acquainted with immigrants from other ethnic groups (for example, in the reception camps, when attending Norwegian language courses, or in their neighbourhood, etc.) relatively few cross-ethnic/immigrant ties are to be found in my material.

Density

By exploring the connections among the contacts of each respondent,[135] I was able to obtain information about the density of relationships in all of the personal networks. In my material, each contact is in touch with approximately three other individuals in the ego's network. In the densest networks I found, immigrant's contacts (alters) are, on average, in touch with eight of the other contacts listed by the immigrant, while, in the most scattered networks, immigrant's contacts, on average, have a connection with one of the other contacts listed by the informant.

It is important to be aware that information in network protocols indicates how informants perceive the density of their own network. Only immigrants, not their contacts, were asked to indicate which individuals are connected to each other. Nevertheless, although I do not have precise information about the relationships between alters, my empirical material reveals certain patterns of distribution of the ties between alters in immigrants' personal networks. Amongst other things, it informs us about the ethnic clustering in the network and about

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[132] Several researchers have looked at a range of personal ties, including those with friends, workmates, neighbours and relatives (Wellman 1990; Pahl and Spencer 2004; Wimmer 2004). A similar method of classification has been used in this study.

[133] Eight networks are without Norwegian contacts.

[134] The category 'others' is quite heterogeneous, and composed of ex-spouses, parents-in-law, refugee-guides, teachers, etc.

[135] Each immigrant was asked to indicate any ties they had with other immigrants whose names appeared on the contact list. This question was further clarified, by adding that these ties could be friends or acquaintances who socialise at least sometimes.

ethnic segmentation in networks. The relevant question here is whether this network fragmentation may be seen as a sign of a lack of integration or whether it is instead the result of (or even a precondition for) successful integration and identity reproduction.

Density and ethnic clustering
Co-ethnic networks of my informants are dense, while Norwegian ties are quite scattered. The Norwegian contacts (workmates, neighbours, etc.) are seldom in touch with each other. In contrast, immigrants' compatriot contacts are often in touch independent of the informant. Immigrants' compatriot-friends are friends or acquaintances of each other.[136] Furthermore, networks are fragmented along ethnic lines, in the sense that ethnic friends of the immigrant (ego) did not have contact with the person's Norwegian friends and acquaintances. One possible interpretation may be that the compatriot and Norwegian friends of immigrants do not have proper common arenas where they could be introduced to each other. Another possibility may be that ethnic clustering is self-imposed and is a part of the identity-work of immigrants.

Strength of the ties
The participant immigrants were asked to rank their listed contacts by order of perceived importance. The following response choices were offered: (i) very important tie, (ii) quite important tie, (iii) less important tie, (iv) unimportant/'periphery' tie[137] The data suggests that immigrants do perceive ties with compatriots as more important than ties with Norwegians. Contacts with compatriots were defined as very important or quite important ties for their social life in Norway.[138] Out of the 40 immigrant networks, only eight included two or more Norwegian friends who were defined as very important contacts. A pattern occurs where immigrants are primarily connected to Norwegians through weak ties, while the most of the listed compatriot ties were perceived as important strong ties.[139] Few immigrants listed immigrants from other groups, but those who did that considered these people as important for their social life. As we shall see, these patterns may again be interpreted in connection with the self-work of immigrants and may therefore relate to the opportunities they have of presenting themselves successfully in different social relationships.

Frequency and context of interaction
We may distinguish between several contexts in which relationships are maintained: interaction at the workplace, arranged meetings outside the home, home visits, occasional interactions, etc. Immigrants socialise in their spare time more often with their compatriots (and other immigrants, if such ties exist in the network), than they do with their Norwegian friends and acquaintances. In the cases where encounters with listed Norwegian contacts are

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[136] 32 respondents have networks with at least one tie with Norwegians. These 32 networks comprise a total of 175 ties with compatriots and 137 ties with Norwegians. Only 17 out of 175 compatriot-contacts within these 32 personal networks have ties with respondents' Norwegian contacts.
[137] Perceived importance of relationships with listed contacts (in total 418) were classified by the informants in the following way: 26 per cent were categorised as 'very important', 37% as 'quite important', 30% 'less important' and 7% as 'unimportant/periphery tie'.
[138] Thirty five per cent of all listed compatriot contacts were defined as very important, while 14% of all Norwegian contacts were defined as very important.
[139] Among all listed compatriot contacts 75% were defined as important contacts or quite important contacts. Among respondents that had contacts with other immigrants, 55% of them were considered as quite important or important contacts.

frequent, they normally happen within the context of the workplace. It seems that home visits and other spare time activities are confined to non-Norwegian friends, primarily compatriots.[140] Cases where immigrants exchange home visits with Norwegians occur only infrequently. I got the impression that two main factors influence this pattern. Firstly, there is the sense among immigrants that Norwegians do not respond properly to their invitations, and secondly it is common that such visits are felt to be rather strained and formal.

Type of sociability

In asking informants about what typically occurred when socialising, several components were listed, including: weekend trips, meetings in the café, telephone calls, eating and drinking tea or coffee in each other's homes; holding barbeques, etc. Immigrants spent a lot of time visiting their compatriot friends for dinner or other evening social occasions. They socialised with compatriots in other ways too. Indeed, a wide variety of social interaction was revealed in the set of relationships amongst the compatriot cohort. Conversely, immigrants' relationships with Norwegians were shown as restricted to just a few activities. While relationships with compatriots included a range of informal activities (such as home visits, weekend trips, meetings in the café, babysitting and telephone calls), in the case of relationships with Norwegians, interaction was usually of a more formalised nature including interactions such as workplace exchanges, occasional short interactions in the town, and sporadic (often formally arranged) gatherings outside the home.

6.2. Variation within the material: Presentation of ten cases

Immigrants' relationships with other people differ in respect of the type of ties and ethnic composition of relationships in their social networks. In order to illustrate variation in immigrants' personal social networks, 10 personal networks are presented. These cases illustrate different kinds of immigrant social attachment. While these cases show considerable diversity in experiences and adaptation lines, they also share similar properties.

In what follows, I classify the personal networks of immigrants under three main categories. In *the first category*, we may find immigrants whose networks were almost entirely composed of relationships with compatriots. I label this category as *ethnically segregated networks*. *The second category* is labelled as *ethnically heterogeneous networks*. Immigrants in this category have personal networks that are characterised by a certain qualitative and quantitative balance between compatriot contacts and contacts from the host community. *The third category* includes immigrants whose social life is almost entirely based on contacts and relationships with indigenous locals.[141] All three categories are also characterised by considerable internal variations in respect to quantity and quality of their contacts with compatriots and indigenous locals.

6.2.1. Segregated networks

I present three cases that illustrate segregated networks. They are all strongly dominated by compatriot contacts. Nevertheless, it should be noted that segregated networks do not always

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[140] Among 235 compatriot contacts that are listed, respondents engaged in reciprocal home visits with 91% of them.

[141] I labelled this category as - *Networks entirely based on relationships with indigenous locals.*

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conform to a uniform pattern. Segregated networks may be characterised by a *high degree of social integration with compatriots* (many close-knit social relationships with compatriot friends and relatives), but also a *low degree of social integration with compatriots*. As we shall see, the effects of these differences lead some immigrants to be satisfied with their segregated networks while others feel they are missing out through the absence of interaction with indigenous locals.

6.2.1.1. Strong internal integration based on social ties with compatriot friends

I met with immigrants who reconstructed their social life in Norway within their own ethnic community. Their social personal networks are either entirely, or almost entirely, based on dense social relationships with their compatriots. Although these immigrants do not have stable direct relationships with the hosts, some, such as Hassan, whose case is discussed below, do not necessarily feel socially isolated.

> Case 1: *Hassan* is of Iraqi (Kurdish) origin and came to Norway five years ago. He is 44 years old, married, and has one child. Although Hassan has a university education, it is not recognised in Norway and he has temporary work as a shop assistant. Hassan has no relatives in the town where he lives. His wife does have some relatives in Norway, but as they live 500 kilometres away, they do not add to the quality of life in terms of everyday sociability. Yet Hassan does not feel socially isolated. He has several close Iraqi friends whom he meets regularly (either daily or at least weekly). They visit each other at home or meet up together downtown. Hassan is engaged in variety of activities with several of his friends including, for example: physical training, family barbeques, meeting in local cafés, telephone conversions, etc. Most of his compatriot friends he met either in the neighbourhood, at the workplace, or while he attended Norwegian language classes. Most of Hassan's friends also know each other independently of Hassan. Therefore, Hassan will often meet up with several of them at the same time. Such gatherings contribute to maintain the density of social ties in the network. Hassan has only two contacts in his network that are not Iraqi. They are work colleagues who, although not from Iraq, are also Kurds. Hassan does not consider them as close friends. They are not a part of his main social circle. Hassan has several Norwegian friendly-minded acquaintances, but he stressed that neither he nor they consider each other as friends. According to him, they do not 'deserve' to be listed in his network protocol. He meets them occasionally and irregularly. To date, he has not established any stable direct relationships with Norwegians.

Sociogram 1: Hassan's personal network – a socio-cultural preserver
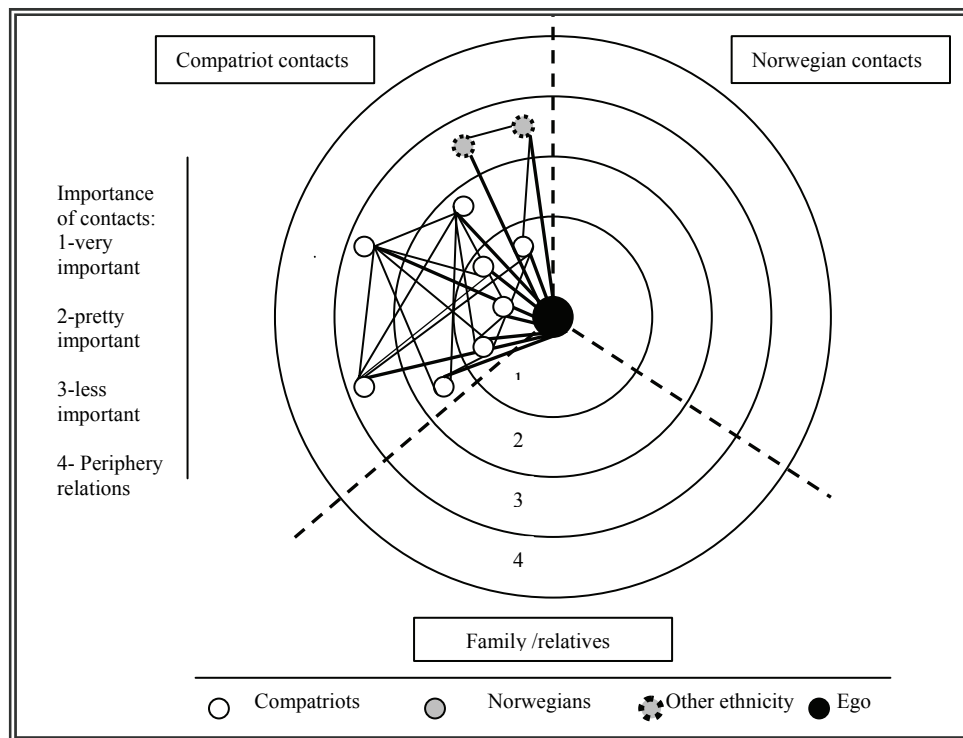
During discussions about his personal social network, Hassan stressed that he hoped to be better acquainted with Norwegians at some point in the future, but I found no evidence of any serious effort in that direction. For example, after five years in Norway, his spoken Norwegian was still barely understandable. He had re-settled within the well-established urban ethnic networks that had few ties with mainstream society. He was also indifferent about events and current affairs in Norwegian society. Hassan claimed that he had nothing against Norwegians, but he felt that many Norwegians had prejudices against foreigners and especially those who are Muslims. With that, he indirectly expressed that people like him did not have any reasonable chances to be accepted by primary groups in the local host society. When encouraged to exemplify what negative experiences he had had with Norwegians, he referred in the main to the stigmatisation he was exposed to while living in the reception centre. He had nothing positive to say about Norwegian immigration authorities. According to him, at best, he was patronised, at worst, he was treated as criminal. However, he did not care anymore about what Norwegians may think about him and his ethnic group. He claimed that he was content with his new social life, although it had been reconstructed within an ethnically segregated social environment.

Hassan thought that Norwegian society showed a low tolerance level towards other cultures, but he did not feel rejected or that he failed in his integration process. To the contrary, he was rather proud about managing to preserve his traditions and culture after resettlement. In short, Hassan is 'socio-cultural preserver', in contrast to the acculturation and integration oriented migrants who place great value on forming close ties with indigenous locals. But for Hassan, living in an ethnic neighbourhood gave him a sense of belonging. He regarded this behaviour, to seek fellow compatriots when far away from home, to be quite normal. Hassan's case exemplifies that immigrants with scarce integration resources may indeed avoid significant change in their socio-cultural practices if they are able to integrate into established and sufficiently large ethnic communities. His case made me even more determined to explore further, why some immigrants confine themselves to a segregated lifestyle, while others make huge efforts in order to make Norwegian friends.

6.2.1.2. Strong internal integration based on social ties with compatriot friends and relatives

As well as friends and acquaintances, relatives are often important parts of peoples' social networks. Many immigrants become disconnected from family networks after leaving their home country. Consequently, it is quite common that immigrants do not have any relatives in the host country and in such cases they rely on friends and acquaintances. However, I have also interviewed immigrants who have relatives living nearby. These relatives played central role in the immigrants' lives, either in terms of sociability or in terms of material and emotional support.

Case 2: Irena is from Bosnia and came to Norway 11 years ago. She is 46 years old, married, and has two children. Irena, who works as a teacher assistant, is university educated, but the education has only partial recognition in Norway. Irena's sister and her family live in the town, as does Irena's mother. Irena meets her family frequently (weekly) and considers them as very important in respect of her social life. She also has several more distant relatives in the town, but they are not considered as an important part of her personal network in terms of sociability and social support. In addition to her family, Irena is a close friend of two couples who are also from Bosnia. One of the couples are neighbours of Irena, while the other couple became known to Irena during their time together at the reception centre. Irena has frequent contact with the neighbouring couple who also look after her house when she is away on holiday, and she sees the other Bosnian couple on a monthly basis. These two couples also know each other independently of Irena. Irena engages in a variety of activities with her Bosnian friends. They visit each other in their homes, meet up in cafés, and go to the cinema together. Sometimes, they will rent a weekend cottage together. Irena also has a Norwegian work colleague who, from time to time, is invited along with her husband to Irena's house. Irena has a lot of contact with Norwegians and other foreigners at work, but as a general rule she rarely meets her colleagues outside of working hours.

Sociogram 2: Irena's personal social network – maintaining relationships with family and compatriot friends
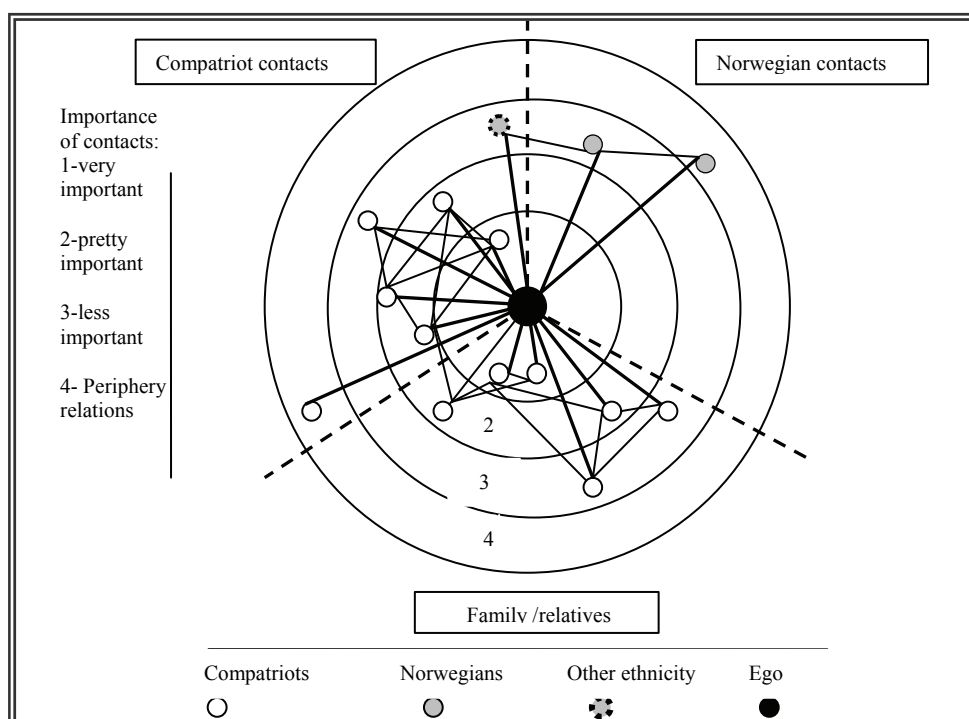
While she was reflecting over her own personal social network, Irena addressed several questions that will be explored throughout this study. For example, she discussed the structure of her network and the importance of her family in terms of her social life and sense of belonging. Irena also stressed the importance of her job as arena for forming weak ties with

Norwegians. Furthermore, she discussed the reasons why her personal social network is divided along ethnic lines, mentioning that certain people would be unlikely to get on together, as well as lack of opportunity to become acquainted.

Irena compared the strength, density and number of relationships she had with Norwegian contacts and compatriot contacts, noticing that everything goes strongly against the formation of Norwegian contacts. Irena operates in an ethnically segregated social network, but she does not feel socially isolated because of the spare time she spends with her family, relatives and her compatriot friends. She said also that she does not consider Norwegian contacts as real friends. In spite of this, she feels reasonably integrated into Norwegian society. In this respect, she primarily referred to her job. The impression was formed that for her, the weak ties with Norwegian workmates provided a sufficient degree of connection into mainstream society.

In certain cases strong in-group bonding may hinder the development of out-group bridging (Putnam 2000; Field 2003). I formed the impression that in Irena's case, her social segregation was not primarily a result of her eagerness to preserve her traditions and culture after resettlement, as appeared to be so in Hassan's case. Her lifestyle and values were actually, in many ways, similar to that of the Norwegians. Further, it seemed that she also had opportunities to develop relationships with her Norwegian workmates if she really prioritized these relationships. In Irena's case, the lack of friendships with Norwegians was, rather, a product of her eagerness to preserve and maintain her current social network. She felt more comfortable with her relatives and her compatriots than with Norwegians. Therefore, she was simply not motivated enough for bridging outside her family network.

6.2.1.3. Segregated networks characterised with weak co-ethnic integration

The third case illustrates the personal networks of immigrants in the most vulnerable and most difficult situations. The social life of immigrants in this category is characterised by a sense of alienation and loneliness. Immigrants in this category also operate in almost totally ethnically segregated social networks. However, unlike the cases cited above, immigrants in this category are not only ethnically segregated, but also weakly integrated in their own ethnic milieu.

> Case 3: *Salih* came from Iraq where he worked as a taxi driver until coming to Norway six years ago. He is thirty-three years old, single, has no children, and no relatives in Norway. He recently got a job as unskilled worker in a factory. Salih's personal network is composed of few week ties. There are almost no strong ties in the network. According to him, an Iraqi married couple form his most significant contacts and he visits them at home from time to time. Salih considers this couple as his only friends in Norway. They are nice people, but he does not meet them often. He has much more free time for various activities compared with this couple, who also have children. Salih knows another Iraqi man with whom he will sometimes go to pub or discothèque. They do not meet very often, but they do telephone each other quite often. Salih also knows one couple who are much older than him from his time spent at Norwegian language classes. They invite him to dinner about four or five times a year. Salih has also had few short relationships with Norwegian women, but he does not have contact with any of them now. Salih has changed jobs several times in the last five years. He has worked as cleaner and newspaper deliverer, but during this time, he did not establish any stable relationships with his Norwegian workmates: they were regarded simply as acquaintances. More recently, Salih made friends with two of his Norwegian workmates at his new place of work. However, these friendships are weak and uniplex.

Sociogram 3: Salih's personal social network – an example of segregation with few contacts and weak ties
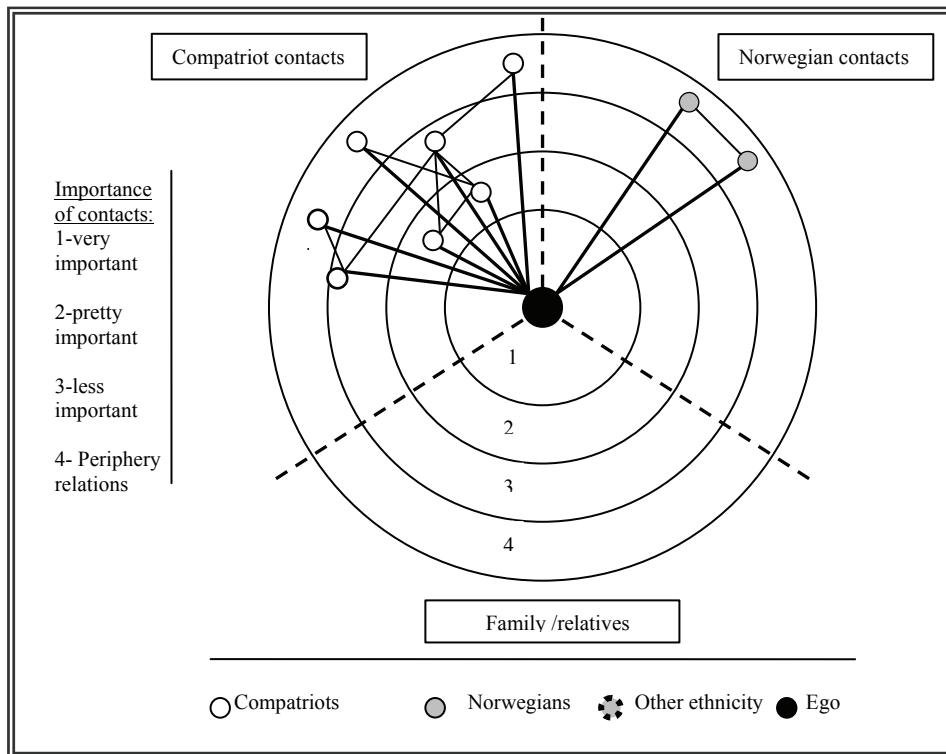
Salih mentioned several important aspects of an immigrants' bridging to the mainstream that I found of relevance for my study. Amongst other things, his story expressed the tensions between the immigrants' initial desires for bridging to the mainstream, and the external obstacles that hinder entrance into Norwegian networks. Like several other immigrants I met, he implied that he wanted to establish friendly relationships with indigenous locals. When I asked Salih why he then did not have any Norwegian friends, he said that he simply did not know where to find them. He also felt that Norwegians were not interested in having contact with him. In other words, he felt that he did not have a proper chance for becoming acquainted with Norwegians and, even if he did the chance, he was not sure that increased contact with Norwegians would lead to friendships. He anticipated that increased contact might actually lead to disappointments and new humiliations. As a result, he somehow gave up building bridges to the Norwegian social networks.

Discussing his social life, Salih complained that he feels socially isolated and lonely. While he outlined distinctive characteristic of different relationships in his social network, he made several general observations about his social life. He was especially concerned with two issues that I felt worthy of further exploration. First, Salih attributed his loneliness to the fact that he was single. As a single person, he was alone for most of the time. At the same time, he did not 'fit in' with his ethnic networks as most people of his age are married and have children. He thought that if he had family, he would have his family members and other families to socialise with in his spare time. Salih hoped to find a new Norwegian girlfriend. I got impression that for single immigrants like him, Norwegian girlfriends appear in certain phases of their life as source of affirmation and access point into Networks of indigenous locals. However, Salih considered these relationships as temporary. Therefore, he planned to travel out of Norway in order to find an Iraqi woman with the aim of marriage. Salih also discussed problems about establishing friendships with Norwegian workmates. Salih's experience was that the workplace is not the right arena for social integration and identity affirmation. Amongst other things, his

case exemplified that outsiderness at the workplace may be related to insecure employment and unfavourable contact structures at the workplace.

6.2.2. Ethnically heterogeneous personal networks

Compared with ethnically segregated networks, ethnically heterogeneous networks are composed of ties with compatriots, and ties with the hosts. As we shall see, these networks are not uniform. I present below three cases in order to illustrate the degree of variety of immigrant experiences and integration patterns. There are different degrees of social anchorage among these three cases. For example, relationships with compatriots may dominate networks, but these relationships may be weak. At the same time, immigrants may have few strong relationships with Norwegians. Alternatively, immigrants' personal networks may be characterised by striving to achieve a balance between relationships with the compatriots, and relationships with the hosts. In some cases, relationships both with the compatriots and the hosts may be strong, while in other cases, both may be weak.

6.2.2.1. Ethnically balanced networks characterised by general scarcity of strong ties

Some immigrants in the study have relatively high numbers of relationships both with their fellow compatriots and with the hosts. If an increase in the number of indigenous local contacts was the ultimate aim for immigrants, we might conclude that these people have reconstructed their social life in Norway in a successful manner. We might also say that they achieved a better balance between bonding with their compatriots and bridging with the hosts, as opposed to those immigrants who live in ethnically segregated environments. However, further exploration may sometimes reveal that these immigrants do not have close friends to turn to in times of crisis.

> *Case 4: Nerma* is from Bosnia and came to Norway 10 years ago. She is thirty-nine years old, married, and has one child. She has a high school education from her home country and works now as reception clerk in one of the reception centres for asylum seekers. Nerma does not have any extended family members or close friends in her personal network, but her interactions with members of her nuclear family fill her spare time. Her social network is composed of compatriot ties and Norwegian ties. Nerma meets one of her compatriot contacts frequently (weekly), seeing the rest of her compatriots on a monthly basis, usually meeting in each others' homes. Most of her compatriot contacts are also in touch with one another independently of Nerma. Nerma became acquainted with her compatriot friends in different ways. She became acquainted with some of them through her job, while she met others through other acquaintances in the network. Nerma indicated that she considers herself as loosely connected the Bosnian community. Generally, Nerma does not have any strong ties in her network. While, she does not feel socially isolated and lonely, due to her relationship and interactions with the immediate family, she does feel that her current ties outside the family are not close enough. She misses not having any close friends in her network. Nerma considers some of her Norwegian contacts as friends, but not as close friends. Two of them are ex-neighbours, while another two are workmates. She rarely meets her Norwegian contacts in her spare time. Nerma's Norwegian acquaintances do not have any contact with her compatriot friends.

Sociogram 4: Nerma's personal social network – weak ties to Norwegians and to the ethnic community
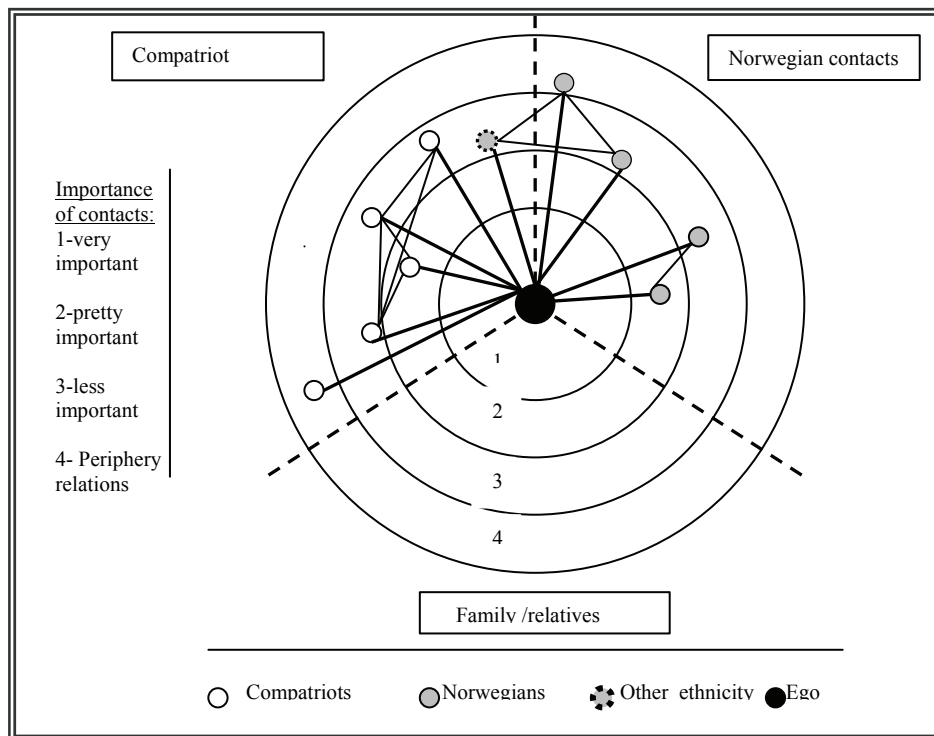
Nerma's case also reminds us once again that social integration is not only the process of building bridges to other networks and people, but also includes bonding within nuclear family. On the one hand, Nerma's family made her less dependent of her friends. On the other hand, since she did not have any stronger anchorages outside her family, she felt strongly family dependant. She did not have anybody to turn to and to get comfort from, in the event of experiencing problems within her family. Nerma also missed the roles that go beyond the family context and wanted to experience a wider sense of belonging either to her ethnic community or to Norwegian mainstream society. I asked her - what were the possible arenas for achieving a sense of belonging to her ethnic community. She mentioned that many Bosnians are connected to local Bosnian associations and networks connected to it, but she was deeply mistrustful of them. Nerma was also pessimistic and mistrustful with respect to her ties with indigenous locals. The only arena where she had contact with Norwegians was at her workplace. The relationships with her Norwegian workmates were uniplex relationships, almost exclusively altered into workplace. Although she had known her colleagues for a long time, she did not consider them as close friends with whom she could share private thoughts. Further, Nerma was convinced that these relationships would not continue if, for example, she changed her place of work. They would be then nothing more than past acquaintances.

6.2.2.2. Compatriot centred ethnically heterogeneous network

Some immigrants have personal networks constituted almost entirely of social relationships with compatriots. We could say that these immigrants have compatriot centred personal networks with respect to network size, strength, density, etc. However, compared with cases that served to exemplify differently segregated networks, these immigrants may enjoy qualitatively better attachments to the host community. They may, for instance, have just one or two ties with the hosts, but they may consider these friendships as very important. As we shall see, these contacts

may, under certain conditions, make a significant impact on immigrants' day-to-day realities and identities. They may have a positive influence on the experience of recognition, inclusion and sense of belonging to the mainstream society.

Case 5: Dina is forty-three years old and came to Norway from Iraq seven years ago. She is married and has two children. Dina was a teacher in her home country, but her education is not recognised in Norway. She now works as a cleaner at two different places and needs to work long hours to compensate for the low salary. When asked about her social life, Dina listed seven compatriot contacts and five Norwegian contacts. Dina either established relationships with her compatriot friends while they lived together in the reception camp, or she was introduced to them by other compatriots in the network. Three of her compatriot friends are also her neighbours. These individuals take important position in her compatriot network. Dina's compatriot network is very dense and almost all compatriot contacts are friends or acquaintances with each other. Dina meets her compatriot friends quite often. They usually visit each other at their homes or meet occasionally outside their homes. Dina also has three weak relationships with her Norwegian workmates, but she thought that she did not have much in common with people at her workplace. Her job was a source of money and nothing else. Dina has also two Norwegian close friends. One of them worked in the reception centre while Dina and other Iraqis lived there. During this time, the friendship relationship was established between them. Dina socialises with her Norwegian friend separately from the rest of her contacts in the Network. They meet outside of home, mostly in cafés. Another Norwegian person with whom Dina has contact is her neighbour. From time to time, they go together to a café.

Sociogram 5: Dina's personal social network – a compatriot centred, but ethnically heterogeneous network
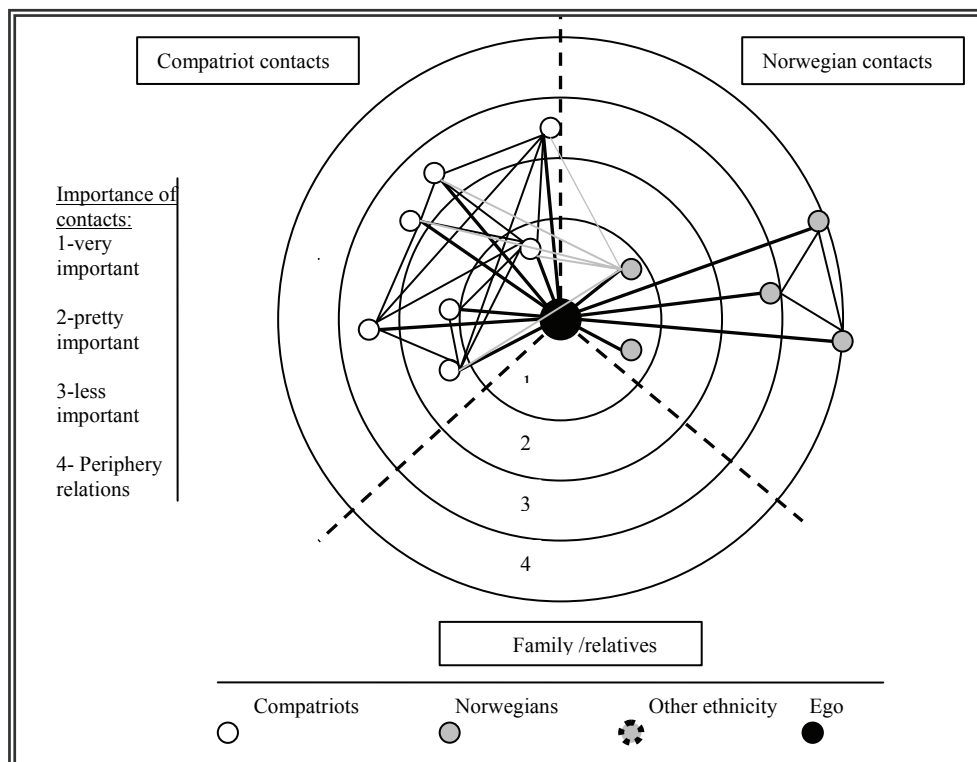
Dina's case showed the role played by reception centres in terms of an immigrants' social integration process, as well as informing on the potential of neighbourhoods to influence the social life of immigrants. Her case showed that active participation in work life did not necessarily lead to social integration into mainstream society. Even more important, Dina's case was one of those which, for me, highlighted the distinction between two important aspects of

immigrants' bridging to the mainstream. The first one is seen as the amount of social time immigrants spend with their new friends. The second one is seen as the meanings which immigrants attach to these relationships. Dina's reflections over different ties in her network implied that these two aspects of bridging are not in necessarily a straightforward relationship. The conventional assumption is that the more immigrants are with their friends the more important they will be for the immigrant. Therefore, I asked Dina why her Norwegian friends are so important part for her social life in Norway in view of her limited contact with them. It transpired that these contacts were important because they represented her connection with mainstream society and she went on to explain that it is important to know Norwegians when one is in Norway, otherwise one does not feel accepted. These views supported Irena's perceptions indirectly (see Case 2) in that that relationships with indigenous locals which, at first glance appear as weak ties, may have an important impact on immigrants' identities. Although Dina and her best Norwegian friends met only monthly or quarterly, these contacts were considered by her as important for her social life in Norway even though they were not part of her daily social life, as in the case of her Iraqi friends. In fact, she attached a high value to her Norwegian contacts to the point of considering them as her best friends. These people were what I later choose to call 'Norwegian significant others', representing Norwegian ties which are primarily of importance at the symbolic level.

6.2.2.3. Ethnically balanced network comprising both strong and weak ties

Only a few of my informants functioned in ethnically balanced networks that are composed of multiplicity of ties both with the hosts and fellow compatriots. These immigrants combined and balanced, social bonding with their compatriots and bridging with indigenous locals. Sometimes, the immigrants even acted as intermediaries between their Norwegian friends and their compatriots.

Case 6: Boris came to Norway from Bosnia 10 years ago. He is forty years old, married, and has two children. He is the manager and joint owner of a car workshop that repairs, imports and sells cars. Boris has several Bosnian friends. The relationships with Bosnian friends are maintained via frequent home visits (accompanied by spouses). Several of Boris' compatriot contacts are friends with each other independently of him as well as all having social gatherings together. Boris also has several Norwegian friends. Two of his Norwegian friends are workmates, while the rest of them are ex-workmates. Boris meets his Norwegian friends outside of the home, either at workplace or in his spare time. Boris claims that he has a lot of fun with them. He socialises mainly with them as an individual (not as a couple). His frequent spare time activities with them are an extension of workplace interactions and relationships. Some of them also visit him at home, but this does not happen so often. Boris feels that he is well integrated and that his friends are also source of support. They take care of his house when he is abroad and they even help him with home maintenance and repair tasks, etc. Boris cannot see any significant differences (in his relationships) between Bosnian and Norwegian friends. His best friend is Norwegian and Boris claims that, in the event of any crisis, it is this friend to whom he will turn first.

Sociogram 6: Boris' personal social network – an example of an ethnically balanced network
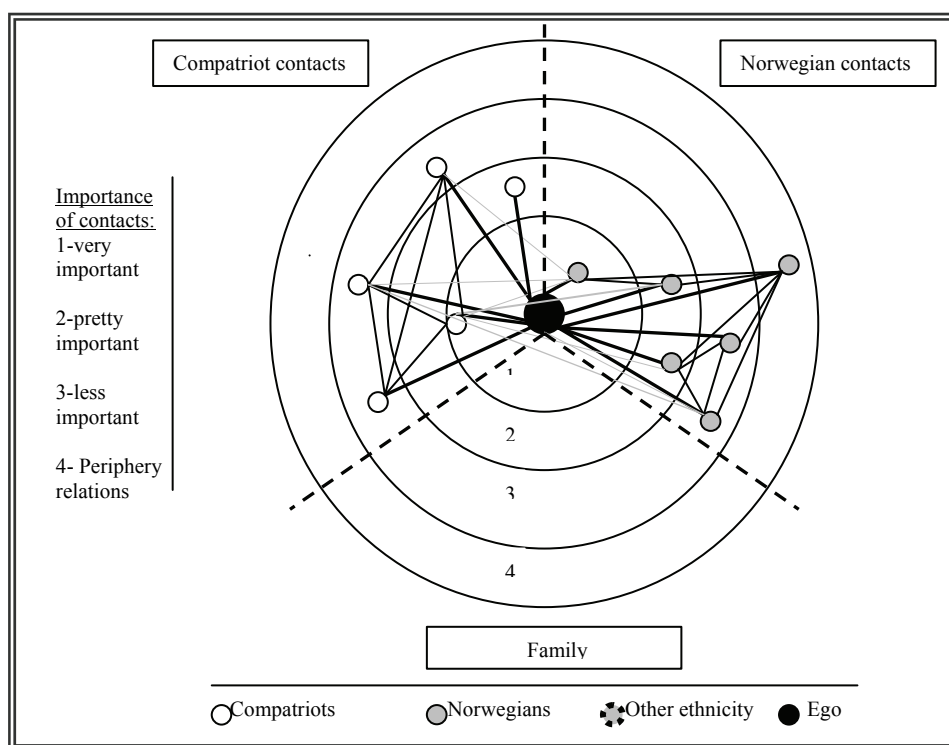
Boris is one of the few immigrants I met where the circle of friends also knew each other across ethnic divisions. He sometimes invited both Norwegian and Bosnian friends to the same gatherings. When his Norwegian friends invite Boris out, he will sometimes ask if his best Bosnian friend can also come along. However, in the majority of cases, he socialised either with compatriot friends or with Norwegian friends. Therefore, direct relationships between his Norwegian and compatriot friends tended to be rather more at the acquaintance level. While Boris discussed the structure of his personal social network, he also gave an account of the difficulties connected to ethnically mixed gatherings. He experienced that it is difficult for newcomers to enter in dense networks of people who have known each other for a long time. He felt that it was difficult to handle these types of situations because, amongst other things, he was not the same kind of person with his compatriot friends that he was with his Norwegian friends. Boris' reflections inspired me to explore further, the relationship between network fragmentation and reproduction of synchronic identities. Even more important, Boris' case revealed an important structural aspect of immigrants' social integration process. While we were discussing the relationships Boris has with his Norwegian workmates, he mentioned that his life changed when he became manager and co-owner of the workshop. In addition to economic benefits he enjoyed due to his new position, he also mentioned the importance of his position/role as manager in identity negotiations with members of the majority population. Amongst other things, he mentioned that after he became the manager and co-owner, he interacted with his workmates and customers 'from above' which give him more self-confidence in interactions with Norwegians.

6.2.2.4. Norwegian centred social networks

Immigrants who fit into the category of Norwegian centred social networks have reconstructed their social life in Norway, mainly through forming relationships with the hosts and not with compatriots. This does not mean that they have not formed relationships with

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compatriots. In essence, this means that their bridging and bonding behaviours are not in equilibrium to the detriment of establishing relationships with compatriots. The individual in the following case has such a social network. He also resettled in a small Norwegian town which, in itself, makes his situation special.

Case 7: Branko came to Norway from Croatia five years ago. He is thirty-three years old, married, and has two children. He works as refugee worker in the municipality. Although Branko has been living in Norway for relatively short period of time, he speaks fluent Norwegian and has several Norwegian friends in his personal network. Some of them are his ex-language teachers. Others are parents of his children's friends or neighbours. He meets his Norwegian friends very often at various arenas in the town, but qualifies this statement in terms of the size of the town. According to Branko, the town is so small that it is normal to occasionally bump into friends and acquaintances several times during one single week. He visits some of his Norwegian friends at home or they might come to visit him. He and his wife meet some of them on a monthly basis, while contact with others occurs weekly. During the summer period, they tend to socialise with their neighbours almost every day. When socialising, they play football, have barbecues, or drink coffee together. Most of his Norwegian friends and acquaintances know each other, which he again explains in the context of living in a small town. Branko has only a few friends and acquaintances from ex-Yugoslavia. Two of them live nearby, while others live in a neighbouring town. He meets them monthly and quarterly. Typically, they visit each other at home. They also meet each other at parties and meetings arranged by a Serbian association in the neighbouring town. Branko indicated that he considers himself as loosely connected the ex-Yugoslav group. Only one compatriot contact is considered as a close friend. He meets him and his family once a month. Branko socialises either with his compatriots, or with Norwegians. He feels that he has found a satisfying balance between relationships with indigenous locals and compatriots.

Sociogram 7: Branko's personal social network – an example of a Norwegian centred network
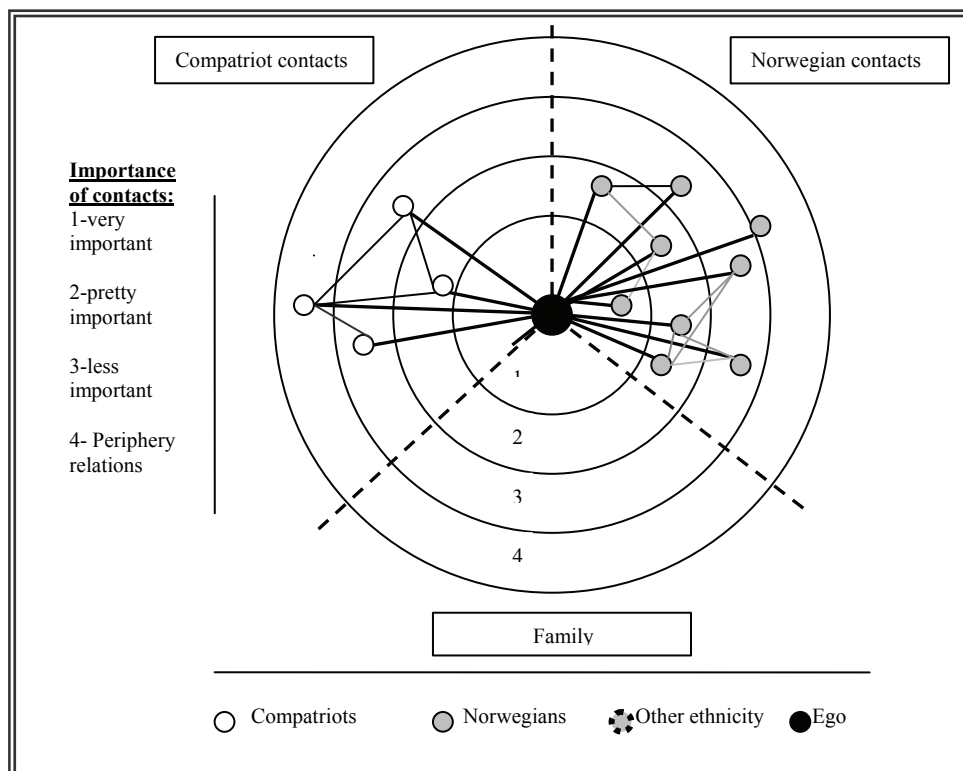
Branko mentioned several important aspects of immigrant social life and, amongst other things, his reflections revealed the social realities of immigrants who live in a small local community. His case highlighted problems with bonding and bridging in a small town. Discussing the structure of his network, he acknowledged that his network was divided across ethnic lines, which he explained with reference to the fact that most of his compatriot friends live in another town. He did not want too much involvement with his fellow compatriots within his own town. His story suggested that it was not easy to socialise with compatriots within the narrow context of a small town environment, if wishing to be fully accepted in networks of its indigenous locals.

Branko claimed that he is very satisfied with his social life in Norway. He was one of only a few immigrants I met who really enjoyed social life in a Norwegian small town. He thought that he had a richer social life in Norway than he had before migration. He felt accepted by indigenous locals and had strong sense of a belonging to the local community where he lived. He also claimed that he experienced a high degree of recognition in everyday life by the indigenous locals. The intensity of social life in a small town community really surprised him. Before he left Croatia, he studied in the city far away from home where he did not have many friends. While he felt 'invisible' and 'lost' in the Croatian urban environment, he felt visible in positive ways in the Norwegian small town.

Several studies (Høgmo 1998; Grønseth 2006) have showed that it is not easy to be immigrant in Norwegian small towns: however, Branko's case suggested that some categories of immigrants may indeed profit from settlement in small local communities. Branko had the motivation and resources that are required for admittance into networks of indigenous locals in small local communities. His case made me curious to further explore the reality of immigrants who enjoyed the dense sociability of the small town. I decided to compare their stories with experiences of immigrants who looked upon small local communities as being cold and xenophobic in nature.

6.2.3. Networks heavily based on relationships with indigenous locals

Compared with previous cases that illustrated heterogeneous Norwegian centred social networks, the next three cases illustrate personal networks of immigrants with much more pronounced disequilibrium between relationships with their compatriots and Norwegians. In this category of immigrants, external integration works to the total, or almost total, detriment of relationships with compatriots. However, these networks mask different social realities and may include multiplicities of permutations of ties with indigenous locals. In what follows, I distinguish between: a) immigrants whose social life is primarily based on weak ties with indigenous locals and b) immigrants whose social life is primarily based on strong ties with indigenous locals.

6.2.3.1. Networks based on weak ties with indigenous locals

I met immigrants whose networks consisted of contacts with indigenous locals, but with an absence of close friends, spouses or relatives with whom to socialise or to turn to for help. Their social life is characterised by a sense of loneliness and alienation. The case chosen to represent this category clearly shows that close relationships do have an important impact on immigrant integration after resettlement.

Case 8: Edin is from Bosnia and has lived in Norway for the past 10 years. He is 31, single, and lives alone. Edin's university education in Bosnia is not completely recognised in Norway. He works in a factory that produces electrical components. Although his job gives him a relatively high standard of living, he does not feel happy in Norway. He has no close friends in Norway, including fellow compatriots. He has some loose acquaintances, but meets them only seldomly. He explains the absence of relationships with compatriots by saying he does not know where to meet them. Additionally, Edin indicates that he is not so motivated to socialise with them or go to local Bosnian associations. According to him, his compatriots are too much concerned with politics, gossiping and internal competition. The only personal relationships Edin has with Norwegians are those with his workmates and he socialises with some of them in his spare time. However, he does not consider them as friends. According to Edin, most of them do not have much in common with him. Edin also knows a few Norwegians from the local basketball club. He plays basketball with them sometimes and meets them from time to time in the club's café, but that happens quite seldomly. He considers these people as mere acquaintances and feels quite lonely in his spare time. Generally, he is highly dissatisfied with his life in Norway and has plans to resettle elsewhere.

Sociogram 8: Edin's personal social network – weak ties with compatriots and Norwegians
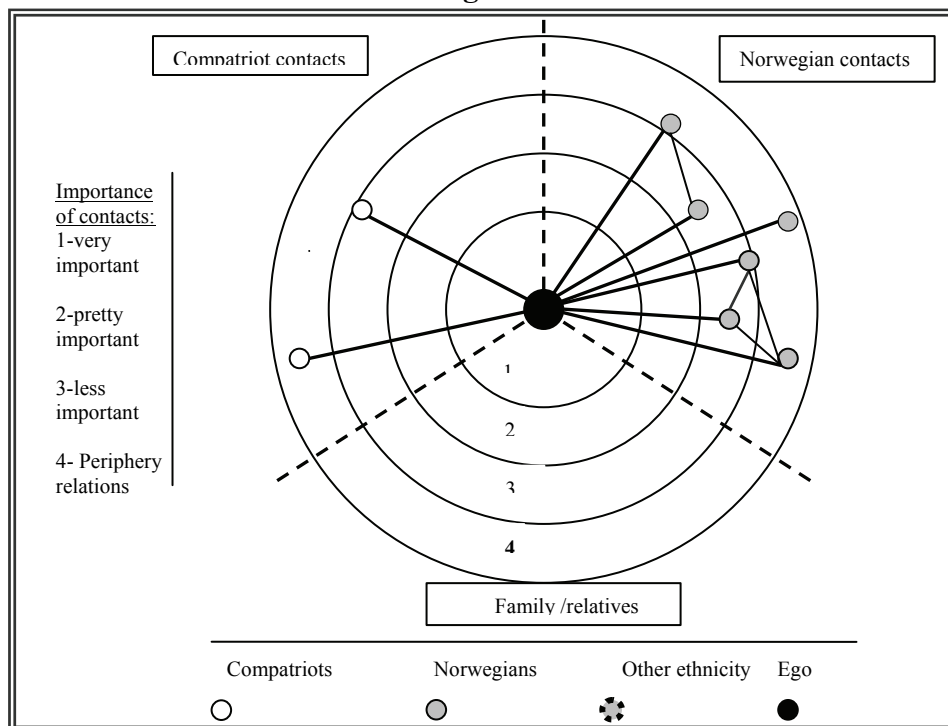
At first glance, Edin appeared as a successfully integrated immigrant. He has stable, relatively well paid job and owns an apartment in a nice part of the city. However, he feels like a stranger in Norway. His case pointed up the vulnerability of single immigrants who, after resettlement, were unable to cultivate proper ties, both within their own ethnic communities, and with indigenous locals. Edin was not the only immigrant I met who was friendless. Nerma (see case 4), for instance, also lacked stronger ties within her ethnic community as well as within Norwegian mainstream society. However, the presence of her family somewhat reduced her dependency on friends. Edin, however, had no family members to socialise with in his spare time. Edin's case also uncovered three other factors that seemed to be relevant to the immigrant social integration process. First, he expressed an aversion to ethnic organisations and associations. Since it was part of my hypothesis that these types of institutions and arenas can

help to facilitate the social integration of immigrants, it was felt this area deserved further exploration. Amongst other things, I found it necessarily to compare the experiences of immigrants who were strongly involved in such associations with those experiences and motivations of immigrants who avoided involvement in them. Second, during Edin's account of why he did not develop friendships with his workmates, he spoke of feeling a strong sense of 'outsiderness' in relation to his workplace. He could not associate himself or identify with the dominant culture at his workplace. His explanations made me sensitive to similar cases which I refer to later as 'occupational misplacement'. Third, Edin also stated that he has seriously considered returning to Bosnia. He saw his repatriation plans as a direct consequence of his dissatisfaction with his life in Norway. Even so, at the same time, he was concerned about the lack of opportunity in Bosnia for obtaining employment. Therefore, he had been considering moving to a third country. His reflections inspired me to explore deeper, in terms of how (dis)satisfaction with life in a host country is interrelated with repatriation dreams and dilemmas.

6.2.3.2. Networks based on strong ties with indigenous locals

Only a few immigrants I met were inclined to reconstruct their social life exclusively through ties with indigenous locals. These immigrants had the resources and competences required for bridging to the mainstream society. At the same time, there was an absence of genuine opportunity for integration into certain, desired segments of their own ethnic communities. Immigrants who belong to this category may sometimes miss the company of their compatriots. However, in some cases this form of reconstruction of social life may be the result of an immigrant's own ethno-social preferences. Immigrants who came to Norway when quite young (and who do not especially identify with their home country and their fellow compatriots) typify this particular category.

> *Case 9: Eva* came to Norway seven years ago from Croatia. She is 23, single, and is currently working as a nurse. Before Eva began full-time paid employment, she had been a pupil at a Norwegian school. Her network is almost exclusively composed of relationships with Norwegian friends and acquaintances. Most of Eva's Norwegian friends are her ex-schoolmates, partners of her ex-schoolmates and her workmates. Eva's personal network is very dense. Because her Norwegian friends went to school together or worked together, the majority of them are also friends and acquaintances with each other. Several of the contacts have formed boyfriend/ girlfriend relationships with each other. Eva counts a number of her Norwegian friends as best friends and she feels she can always turn to these best friends for help should the need arise. Eva often socialises with her friends, engaging in a variety of social activities. They meet each other in cafés most of the time. She also visits some of her best friends at home and they also go out together to the cinema, gym, barbeques, and on cabin trips, etc. Eva has almost no compatriots in her personal network. She has only one compatriot contact in the network with whom she meets only on an occasional basis. She sometimes meets other ex-Yugoslavians of her own age at various meetings and parties that are organised by the local Serbian club, but she does not consider them as friends and feels that they have little in common.

Sociogram 9: Eva' personal social network – strong ties with Norwegians
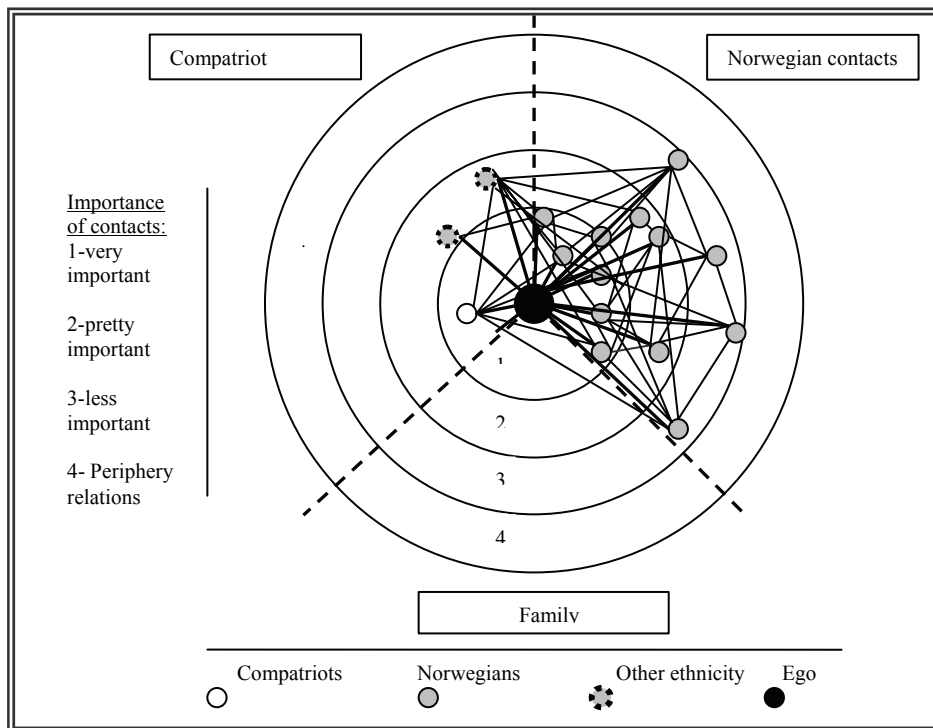
Eva is one of the informants that I interviewed several times. I met her for the first time when undertaking my MA thesis. Therefore, I was able to see how her social integration process developed over a longer period of time. Eva came to Norway as teenager. Compared to some of the older immigrants, she did not experience that migration and resettlement in Norway resulted in strong, multiple ruptures with old networks, identities, habits and lifestyles. She learned the language easily, adopted Norwegian norms, and embraced Norwegian values and lifestyle without any reservations. Unlike many other immigrants I met, Eva felt comfortable in her interactions with Norwegians and her acculturation and bridging to the mainstream was not selective or based on a combination of bonding and bridging. Eva headed towards total cultural and social assimilation in Norwegian society and claimed she felt more Norwegian than anything else. She had little contact with her fellow compatriots, and she did not miss their company. Eva's efforts paid off - she gradually entered into Norwegian networks. Eva felt that she had very rich social life and that Norwegians have accepted her. Eva's case exemplifies how immigrants who re-adjust to their new social environment within 'low-cost conditions' experience full integration into the mainstream. Her case led me to compare how different categories of immigrants experienced and looked forward to bridging to the mainstream. Eva's experiences and expectations were the exact opposite to the experiences of immigrants such as Hassan or Salih for example (see cases 1 and 3) who had to invest a lot of energy in acculturation in order to build bridges to the mainstream while, at the same time, anticipating that chances of rejection by indigenous locals was high.

6.2.3.3. Immigrants who miss the company of compatriots

I also met immigrants who were integrated in Norwegian social networks, but who also felt disconnected from their ethnic community. Compared with Eva, who represents the category of young, assimilated immigrants, they have not acquired (or looked forward to acquire) the values and ethnic identity of the Norwegians. They sometimes feel reduced to tolerating

rather than enjoying the company of indigenous locals. Generally, they are effective in their bridging to the mainstream, but they are not entirely content with their social lives. The participation in Norwegian networks in their case arises from the absence of genuine opportunities for integration into own compatriot networks.

Case 10: *Sanela* came to Norway from Bosnia 12 years ago. She is 49, married, and has two children. The children no longer live at home. Sanela is university educated and works as teacher in a small Norwegian town. She builds her social life almost exclusively on dense relationships with Norwegians whom she meets frequently and in different roles. Her friends are current and ex-neighbours, and workmates and friends of her husband. She feels accepted by Norwegians and has a relatively strong sense of belonging to the town where she lives. She thinks that these sentiments are closely connected with her job. As a teacher, she has a lot of contact with pupils and their parents. Most people in the town know her and in most situations, she does not feel like a foreigner. Even so, Sanela (and her husband) miss the company of their fellow compatriots or people with whom she can speak using her mother tongue. She had only one compatriot friend in the town. Since she could not find friends among few compatriots who live in the town, she and her husband recently started to socialise more and more with other foreigners. She has also started to increase contacts with fellow compatriots who live in other towns.

Sociogram 10: Sanela's personal social network – ambivalent strong ties to Norwegians
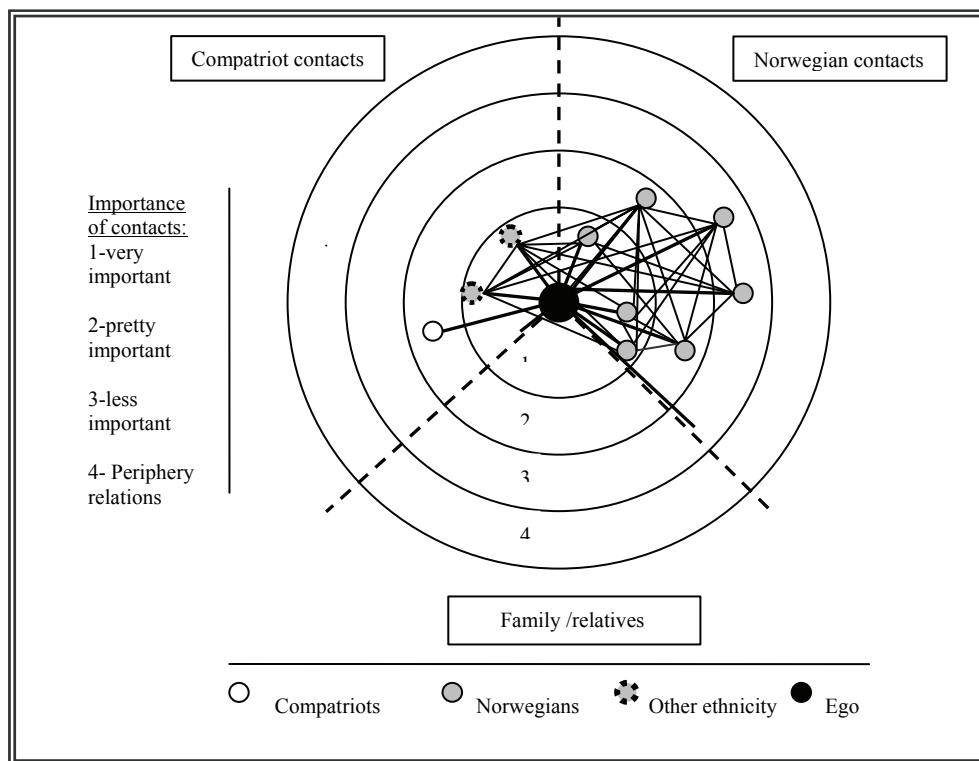
Like Eva, Sanela has reconstructed her social life within Norwegian social Networks, but unlike Eva, Sanela is married, middle-aged and lives in a small town. Therefore, several characteristics of Sanela's network indicate that her social network is the result of processes other than those already mentioned in Eva's case. Eva come to Norway as teenager and was primarily oriented towards the school arena. Sanela's contacts are not drawn mainly from school, as in the case of Eva, but from several different arenas that were accumulated in different phases of her networking in the town (old and new friends and workmates, new and ex-neighbours, etc). Sanela is also married and her husband played an important role in her

networking. Sanela became acquainted with several of her friends through her husband. She and her husband also jointly contributed to the density of the network. They invite both his and her friends to social gatherings (such as home visits, barbeque parties, holidays and various organised spare time activities) where they introduce various friends to each other. In other words, they can be seen as members of a 'family networking team'.

Sanela's descriptions of Norwegian small town life as operating in a narrow social context lends added weight to the findings in Branko's case (see case 7). Sanela's friends are drawn from various arenas, but they are all interconnected with each other and she meets these people frequently in different roles. This has something to do with the fact that she lives in the small town where people are more likely to be interconnected by different kinds of informal relationships. However, Sanela was ambivalent in her feelings toward her Norwegian and compatriot friends. When I asked Sanela why she spent so much time with Norwegians, she said that it was because of where she lived. In short, she pointed out that acceptance in networks of indigenous locals within a small town, rests on the unstated pre-condition of the host community that the immigrant is willing to submit to intensive participation and immersion into different arenas of mainstream society. Sanela's case revealed the dilemmas facing immigrants who settle in small local communities which are also featured in Branko's stories. On the one hand, they (in one way or another) enjoyed the dense sociability of the small town while, on the other hand, they felt that they could not freely socialise with their fellow compatriots within the narrow social networks of the small town.

6.3. Immigrants' social networks according to volume and type of social integration

Immigrants' social practices depend on their individual and collective resources, opportunities, family situation, and social contexts in which they operate, etc. The ten cases presented above show the wide spectra of immigrants' personal social spaces.

In the figure below, all the cases presented in this chapter are classified by two parameters or axes: a) The intensity of social integration immigrants have achieved, including total volume of weak and strong ties,[142] and; b) The mixture of ties with compatriots, and indigenous locals. In the figure, ties with compatriots are labelled as 'bonding ties' while ties with indigenous locals are labelled as 'bridging ties'.[143] In terms of the cases presented above, we may say that the (dis)satisfaction with social life after resettlement goes along both dimensions.

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[142] See figure 2, vertical axis.
[143] See figure 2, horizontal axis.

Figure 2: Volume and type of social integration

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                    Intensity and total volume of social integration +

                                                         Case  9
         Case 1                                          Case 10
              Case 2
                       Case 5
                          Case 6        Case 7

 Bonding ties +                                   Bonding ties  -
 ←――――――――――――――――――――――――――――――――――――――――――――――→
 Bridging ties  -                                 Bridging ties  +


                       Case 4
          Case 3
                          Case 8

                    Intensity and total volume of social integration  -
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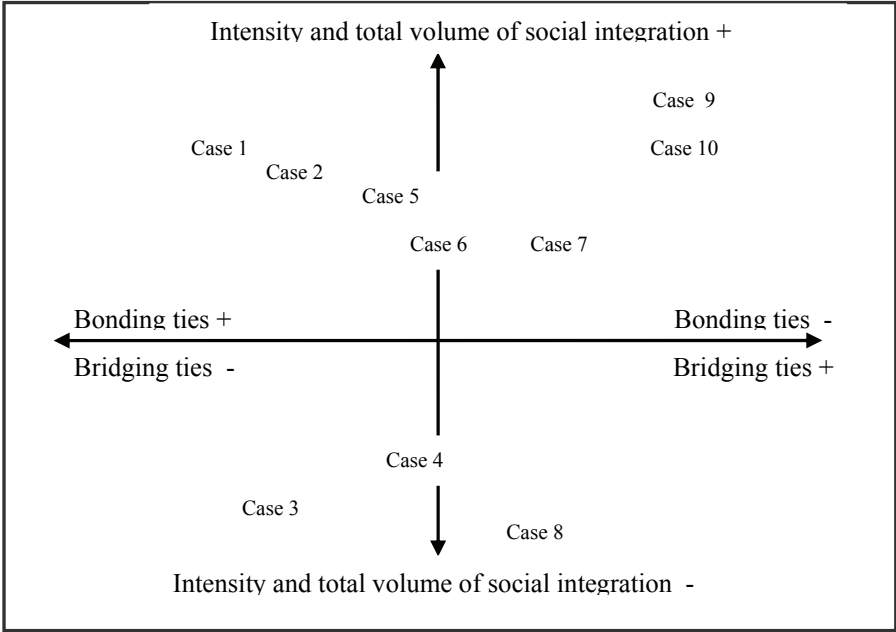
After resettlement, immigrants try to reconstruct their social lives and this may include a gradual increase in the total volume of their social networks. Some of them, like Hassan, base their social lives exclusively on relationships with their compatriots, and are content with that (see case 1). Some immigrants, such as Irena and Dina, thought that it was good enough to have weak ties with the mainstream society (see cases 2 and 5). Others went beyond weak types of bridging as in Eva's case and established ties with Norwegian friends even to the detriment of forming relationships with their compatriots (see case 9).

The total volume of social integration achieved by immigrants seems to be especially important for immigrants' social lives and well-being. Immigrants like Salih and Edin (see cases 3 and 8), who did not manage to establish any strong ties with other people subsequently experienced a general lack of relationships with other people and were in a difficult situation. They were in a totally different situation compared with immigrants like Hassan, Eva and Sanela who achieved high degrees of social integration in Norway, either within the ethnic networks, or within the Norwegian community (see cases 1, 9 and 10).

As will be shown, the network patterns presented above may be closely related to immigrants' identity-work and their self-presentations in everyday life. In what follows, we shall see that many immigrants are ambivalent about their friends. A sense of involvement and sense of having many things in common feature far more strongly in interactions with their compatriots (and immigrants from some other ethnic group), when compared with interactions and ties with Norwegians. On the other hand, relationships with their compatriots (and other immigrants) and relationships with the hosts were often assigned quite different symbolic meanings. These differences produce tensions and ambivalences within immigrant networks, which may result in specific patterns of social integration.

6.4. Summary: similarities and differences amongst immigrants' networks

For the purpose of further analysis, I classified the personal social networks of immigrants according to qualitative and quantitative composition of the relationships they have with their fellow compatriots and indigenous locals. One aim was not to propose ideal types of immigrants' networks, but to present the variation in immigrants' social worlds. When it comes to differences between the networks, I suggested that they may be classified along two major interrelated dimensions: a) The total volume of social integration they achieved after resettlement, and b) the relative portion of weak and strong ties they have with indigenous locals and compatriots.

A further aim was also to identify possible similarities among networks. Immigrants' networks do have several things in common. Firstly, the majority of immigrants I met had more compatriot friends than either Norwegian friends, or friends with ethnic backgrounds other than their own. The second common characteristic of their networks is that the compatriot element of immigrants' social networks is separated from the ties immigrants have with Norwegians. Thirdly, density is higher in the compatriot element of immigrants' personal networks than it is in the case of Norwegians. Fourthly, in terms of sociability, compatriot friends are normally more important to immigrants than Norwegian contacts. Most immigrants I met often socialised with their compatriot contacts in their spare time. They interacted with their fellow compatriots in wide spectra of activities and in different roles. Unlike these ties, relationships immigrants have with Norwegians are mainly uniplex weak tie relationships.

The ten cases presented in this chapter reveal several aspects of importance to the social lives of immigrants – topics that will be more thoroughly explored over the course of my study. They reveal how difficult it may be to build bridges to the mainstream, but also indicate the wide range of strategies immigrants deploy in order to regain a sense of belonging within their new social environments. They further demonstrate that friendships may have several dimensions, including those that go beyond frequent face-to-face interactions. As Irena's and Dina's cases have shown, weak ties with indigenous locals may have important symbolic value for immigrants – because they prove that they are not rejected by the mainstream. Other cases also indicate that the family situation, structural position and relation to their compatriot community have an important impact on the social integration process of immigrants and their day-to-day reality after resettlement. Finally, the findings from this chapter may be related to governmental policies on the integration and settlement of immigrants and refugees. They suggest that the workplace, inter-ethnic proximity and immigrant associations do not always provide immigrants with new friends. Moreover, the cases studied here suggest that cities and small towns provide two different contexts for integration – information which is surely relevant and useful for debates about governmental settlement policies.

In what follows, I attempt to make a sense of these findings, and relate them to how immigrants cope with everyday life after resettlement. In order to understand the local dynamic of immigrants' social lives I shall, in the following chapters, closely examine the everyday life of immigrants and the meanings they give to different relationships within their social networks. I will argue that the composition of immigrants' networks, including the types of attachments they have with indigenous locals and their compatriots, influence their sense of a belonging, experiences of ethnic stigma, coping strategies at intra/interpersonal level, and their integration experience in general.

Chapter 7: Social networks and everyday life of immigrants

In this chapter, I further investigate how the everyday life experiences of immigrants are influenced by their network affiliations. This includes an exploration of how the ethnic composition of immigrant networks, and the strength of the attachment they have with other people, influence immigrant identities, their sense of belonging, and their sense of exclusion. I argue that weak ties with indigenous locals may function as an optimal source of affirmation and integration into the mainstream.

7.1. Identities, type of attachment and ethnic composition of the network

If we classify immigrants' personal social networks according to ethnic composition of network and type of relationships held with other people, the networks outlined in the previous chapter may be placed within four different categories of social attachment. Some immigrants are without close Norwegian friends or without any stable strong ties with other people, while others have managed to achieve and maintain these relationships. There are, however, several other sub-categories of attachment that may be placed between these categories. Some networks are dominated by only one type of tie, for instance, weak ties, while others include both weak and strong ties. They may be dominated by ties with compatriots while others are dominated by ties with indigenous locals.

Figure 3: Immigrants' networks after type of attachment and ethno-social practice
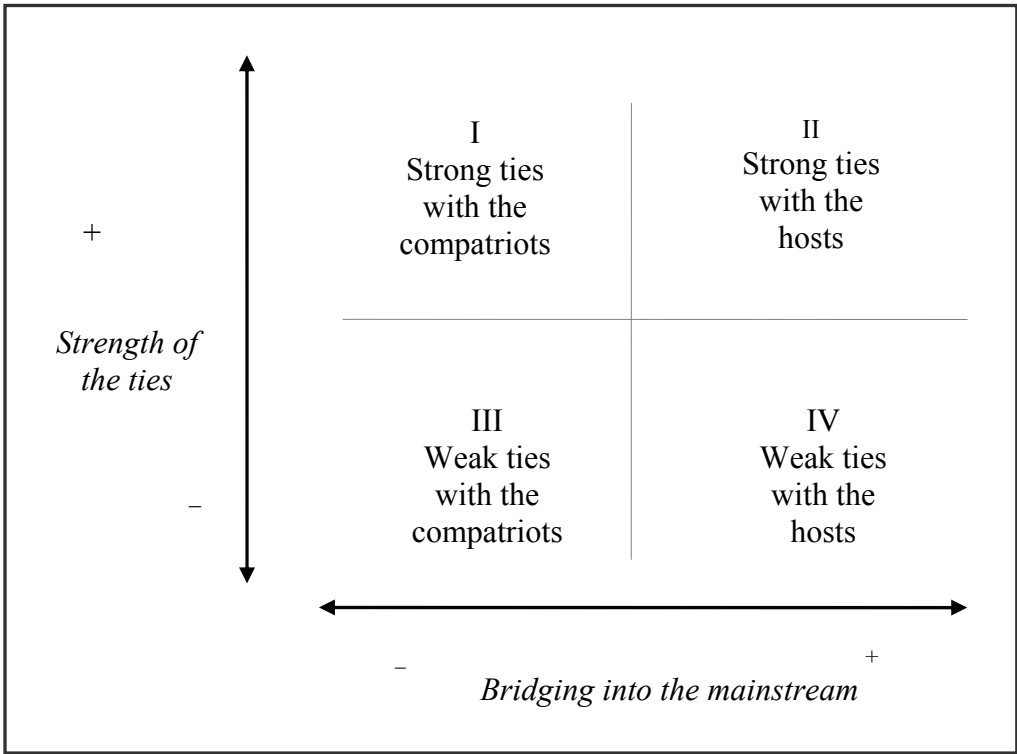
Many of my informants feel stigmatised, excluded or at least lonely in relation to the host society. However, there are also immigrants who feel accepted and respected by the host society. In this chapter, I explore how experiences of misrecognition in everyday life is influenced by the type of relationships immigrants have with indigenous locals and fellow

compatriots. In what follows, I firstly explore how ethnic composition of immigrants' personal social networks may influence their day-to-day realities and identities. Thereafter, I discuss whether these dimensions are related to the quality of attachment immigrants have with indigenous locals and their fellow compatriots.

7.2. 'To have only outsiders as friends'

The way everyday interactions and relationships with Norwegians are defined influence immigrants' daily experience of recognition and sense of belonging in the host society. Feelings of ethnic stigma and non-belonging to the mainstream were most pronounced among informants that were cut off from Norwegian networks. In such cases, encounters with Norwegians pertain almost exclusively to the public life. Encounters with the hosts can be described as impersonal, comprising occasional contacts between either acquaintances or strangers. According to Goffman (1963) such impersonal contacts between people typically result in stereotypical and negative responses.[144] Within the framework of such contacts there are fewer chances for immigrants to experience realistic assessments of their personal qualities. In encounters with strangers, they may be denied their individuality and be relegated to a type of general abstract category. One Iraqi man expressed his frustration about occasional interactions with Norwegians in following way:

> I am for them just a foreigner. They just see our hair or skin colour. If I want to rent a flat, they do not see the other things. They do not know who I am or what educational background I have. We do not get any chances to show who we really are...Conversations with Norwegians usually start with being questioned about where I come from. It seems that this is the only thing that matters (Iraqi man).

Generally, prejudiced categories of immigrants who are without personal relations with indigenous locals' will be continuously in the state of alert. Furthermore, the lack of proper relationships with Norwegians also contributes in hindering the acquisition of Norwegian norms and Norwegian language proficiency. This in turn may undermine the immigrants' abilities to cope with occasional interactions with Norwegians, encounters that already are strained by feelings of ambivalence and anxiety. Nevertheless, as shown in the account given below, less emphasis is placed on these feelings when immigrants get more opportunity to show that they are more than just a foreigner or just an immigrant.

> When I settled here, I practised Norwegian with a teacher and other foreigners in the Norwegian language classes. I did not have the opportunity to be assigned a Norwegian refugee-guide[145] with whom I could have socialised by going to a café or the cinema for example, nor did I have any opportunity to develop friendships with even one Norwegian person… It can be unpleasant to engage in conversations with Norwegians in cafés or on the bus. People do not know who you are. They know that you are foreigner, nothing else. But the situation is much better now…People at my workplace know me, my Norwegian friends know me and some of my neighbours know me. They do not look on me as foreigner, but as a person (Bosnian woman).

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[144] Goffman argues that discredited and discreditable people in particular are exposed to stereotypical categorizations, as feeling stigmatised is experienced, during occasional encounters with strangers (Goffman 1963).

[145] Refugee-guides are volunteers from local communities who are coupled with refugees on an informal basis. The Refugee-guide programme is an initiative organised by the Norwegian Red Cross.

Stories of my informants suggest that when immigrants do not manage to establish more stable and personal relationships with the hosts, feelings of marginalisation and exclusion from the mainstream may be manifested in at least in two ways: (a) through everyday interactions and (b) at the symbolic-level. As illustrated above, daily interactions contribute to these feelings because immigrants do not have opportunities to get realistic assessments of their personal qualities because of the impersonal nature of the interactions with strangers. In addition, as the following quotations illustrate, immigrants also attach symbolic meanings to this lack of personal ties with the hosts.

> I did not have any Norwegian friends. I had three friends, but they were refugees too. Gradually, it became boring to have only outsiders as friends… During all the years I attended secondary school, I was invited to only one party…I felt that the Norwegians did not like me…Several times, I was exposed to bullying because I was foreigner. One guy at school thought it was cool to be racist… When I returned to my home country and began studying in Sarajevo it was difficult to adjust to a new educational system, but I found many friends and felt that I was accepted. I started to live again (Bosnian woman).

Amongst some immigrants, the lack of Norwegian ties is interpreted as direct proof of Norwegians' scepticism about foreigners from certain parts of the world in terms of religion, ethnicity and culture:

> I have several friends so I do not feel lonely, but all my friends are either my compatriots or foreigners from other countries. I have lived here for a very long time, and I have an extrovert personality, so it is really strange that I did not have a single Norwegian friend…I have lived in countries other than Norway, and I blended in fast. Norwegians are special. They are introvert. There is a lot of scepticism and hostility against everything different…. They did not want even to join to European Union. They are sceptical about Europeans who are their neighbours so how can we hope that they will accept us Iraqis? (Iraqi man)

The self may be extended in time and space through the symbolic meanings immigrants attach to certain relationships, or to the absence of certain relationships. The absence of friendships with indigenous locals, even when an immigrant has been in Norway for a long time, may be assigned negative symbolic connotations. It may contribute to feelings of social exclusion, social misrecognition and a sense of non-belonging in the host society. As we shall see below, I also met several immigrants who managed to establish more or less stable personal relationships with Norwegians. As suggested in figure 3, we may distinguish between: a) immigrants who only have established weak personal relationships with the hosts (category II in the figure), and b) immigrants who have also established strong social relationships with the hosts (category IV). It seems that acquaintanceships and friendships with Norwegians may have a positive impact on immigrants' identities in terms of feeling accepted and respected individuals: however, there are also certain tensions imbedded in these ties.

7.3. Acquaintanceships with indigenous locals

Although most of their friends are not Norwegians, it seems that immigrants who established weak ties with the hosts experience quite different day-to-day realities in Norway compared with immigrants without any stable personal ties with the hosts. Even though these immigrants spend most of their leisure time with their compatriots, they also get a lot of feedback from their Norwegian contacts. Based on interviews and observation in the field, my

impression is that breakthroughs in forming relationships between immigrants and members of indigenous local populations is not confined to a framework of intimate close-knit relations. High levels of normalisation of interaction may also be achieved through friendly relationships with Norwegian acquaintances.[146] These ties are weak, but face-to-face interactions are experienced as more pleasant than occasional interactions with strangers. It is sometimes enough for immigrants to feel that they are included as normal individuals with their own personal identities (amongst workmates, classmates, club members, etc.) to experience these interactions in a more positive manner. As the following quotation illustrate, through increased frequency of exposure with others, the initial insecurity experienced by the immigrant starts to recede, and interactions are experienced as more comfortable.

> I do not consider them as friends, but I usually have a nice time with them… I do not feel that I am a stranger while I am with them. I feel like a normal person with a name. I think that the most important thing is that my Norwegian workmates know me, that they have seen me in various situations…They have learned that they may rely on me and that I do my job in a responsible and serious way (Iraqi man).

As the informant suggests, face-to-face interaction between actors is influenced by pre-existing relational structures. He knows that indigenous locals (with whom interactions have taken place many times in various social settings) have formed impressions about him. Therefore, as the following quotation shows, they could become more self-confident.

> I do not need to think so much about cultural differences or language problems when I am with my work colleagues. I sometimes laugh at my mistakes. They know me and they are used to me…Many people have a lot of prejudices against foreigners. Each mistake may be used as confirmation of their prejudices against foreigners…In interactions with Norwegians who do not know me; I have to think about how I behave and how I speak (Croatian man).

The immigrant above feels that occasional breakdowns in interactions with Norwegian colleagues (arising from his lack of shared cultural references or imperfect language skills) will not result in these colleagues changing the general image they have of him. In this context it is less likely that such 'deviances' will be seen as a consequence of an immigrant's 'backward culture' or attributed to any negative associations that may be attached to the ethnic background. Relationships defined as informal ties between individuals that recognise each other's personal identity, frame these interactions. The relationship has its own inertial force. Therefore, actors engaged in face-to-face interactions will interpret such self-presentation in the light of relationship histories between one another. Conversely, during face-to-face interactions between strangers, where all actions of the actors actively contribute to construct the first impression of each other, the immigrants may feel far more insecure and uneasy about how the other side perceives them (including their ethnic markers, fragile self-presentations, communication errors, etc) and will respond on immigrants' self-presentations.

In short, immigrants who have established personal relationships with the hosts, experience less uneasiness in daily interactions with members of indigenous local majority populations

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[146] According to my immigrants, anxieties about, for instance, ethnic stigma as well as concern about how they are perceived by counterparts in interactions, are significantly reduced in interactions with 'Norwegian weak ties'. Within the framework of these relationships, the ethnic aspect of interaction is reduced.

because their interactions with them are structured in more favourable ways.[147] I want to stress that it is not my position that immigrants who have established acquaintanceships (and friendships) with the hosts never experience anxiety related to social discrediting, lack of familiarity about Norwegian codes of conduct and everyday language. However, it would appear that this category of immigrants experiences these interactions in different ways when compared with immigrants who lack any stable personal ties with indigenous locals. The important difference is that these negative situations make less of an impact on their general experience of everyday life because of having Norwegian ties to turn to.

7.3.1. Norwegian significant others

Each situation in which we interact with others affects our self-esteem. However, some situations and people have greater impact on us than others do. For immigrants, the significant others who are central to achieving a sense of recognition and sense of being part of mainstream society, are their Norwegian friends and acquaintances. These Norwegian friends and acquaintances influence the social life and identities of immigrants in several ways. First, the social space of immigrants who have established personal ties with Norwegians is more favourable, because their networks 'protect' them. This does not mean that these immigrants never experience humiliating situations or being denied individuality during daily encounters with the host community.[148] It is simply that their general impression of everyday life is more optimistic because an important part of interactions with Norwegians around them is personalised with no unpleasant connotations attached. Second, these immigrants are also less affected by stigmatisation and acts of racism when they occur. The positive feedback immigrants get from their Norwegian workmates, friends and acquaintances may reduce and compensate for negative experiences in everyday life. Having personal, stable ties with Norwegians, gives an immigrant the opportunity to differentiate between and select from, the varying opinions of indigenous others.

> Somebody likes me and somebody dislikes me. I don't care what Norwegians think about me if I don't know them. They don't know me, so they aren't capable of judging me. I only care about the people who know me …I cannot say that Norwegians do not accept me. For example, sometimes I go on fishing trips with Lars and he's Norwegian. Workmates of mine are also nice to me (Bosnian man).

As indicated by the informant, he distinguishes between occasional unpleasant interactions with strangers, and interactions with people that he defines as his real Norwegian significant others. Here, Norwegian significant others take on a symbolism which immigrants interpret as concrete evidence of belonging. Such significant others contribute to nourish identities of inclusion and feelings of acceptance. They tend to increase the immigrant's sense of recognition and modify perceptions of external hostility.

> Many of us dream about repatriation. We have everything, but we feel that we are living in the wrong place, that a life is passing without purpose…I ask myself sometimes whether my children will also be strangers here… When my Norwegian neighbours or

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[147] I got impression that during these interactions with immigrants, hosts may indeed change their perceptions of foreigners (or certain ethnic categories). They may get an opportunity to distinguish between 'foreigners-in general' and immigrants as their acquaintances.

[148] Most informants from this category also have stories of discrimination and exclusion to tell. They have also experienced constant reminders of difference, but they did not consider them as very important. They have accepted them as a 'normal part' of their daily routines.

workmates take the initiative and invite me to their home on a visit, etc., I feel happy. I feel that it is possible for me and my children to live here after all (Bosnian man).

A crucial aspect of the relationships in a personal network concerns the meanings that people in the network attribute to them. We have seen that lack of contact with indigenous locals represents, in the mind of the immigrant, direct evidence of non-belonging to Norwegian society and lack of acceptance by Norwegians. Equally, immigrants interpret the existence of personal ties with indigenous locals as personal evidence of acceptance and belonging to mainstream society. This may explain why several informants have defined their Norwegian contacts as more important than indicated by a range of other relationship variables, such as frequency, plexity, durability etc. Although these relationships did not form a central part of immigrants' networks (in the sense of sociability and social support) they played an important symbolic role in the life of immigrants. This was especially true for those immigrants with few personal relationships with Norwegians. They were important because they were unique, and represented the immigrant's only connection to mainstream society.

7.4. Weak ties with the hosts and strong ties with compatriots

Immigrants that have established stable weak ties with the hosts may encounter social life and day-to-day realities in Norway with greater optimism than those without Norwegian ties (Fuglerud 1996). Nevertheless, the relationship between immigrants' weak ties bridging to the mainstream, and their identity reproduction, is not entirely straightforward. There may be found certain variations in perceptions of these ties amongst immigrants: for instance, I met immigrants who were not satisfied with such weak connections to mainstream society.

> I feel lonely here. When I'm on holiday in Bosnia, I'm very social. I have close friends and relatives down there. I used to go out to cafes and the cinema with them. I do that quite seldomly here in Norway… I do not have close friends here in Norway. Norwegian workmates are nice to me, but these relationships are superficial…I have only one close friend here and she is from Bosnia. We meet quite often, but it's not really enough. I have been here for ten years, but don't have any close Norwegian friends… I go out sometimes with some of my workmates to the cinema and cafés, but only occasionally…It is always me who has to invite them… If I wanted to go out to a restaurant with my husband, there is almost no-one who I could ask to look after our kids…And we have been here longer than ten years. Does this say something to you? (Bosnian woman)

The reasons for forming close friendships with Norwegians differ and are dependent on several factors. My informants indicated that immigrants perceive weak ties with indigenous locals in positive ways, if their social needs (in terms of sociability, emotional and other support) have been met elsewhere.

> I have a good relationship with my Norwegian workmates… They are important to me, but I cannot say that we are close friends. I think that they like me, and this is important to me…I almost never socialise with them out of work hours. I usually socialise with my compatriots in my spare time. I have several compatriot friends, some of whom are relatives. I prefer to socialise with them. I do not need to socialise with Norwegians more than I do now (Bosnian man).

Figures 2 and 3 indicate that immigrants' social lives can be understood in the light of ethnic composition of personal social networks, as well as, the degree of social integration achieved. The stories presented above exemplify the perceptions held by different categories of

immigrants concerning their weak ties with indigenous locals and show how these relationships may be experienced. The stories suggest that immigrants' satisfaction levels with ties they have with their fellow compatriots have a direct impact on perceptions about the value of ties with indigenous locals. For example, the last informant (Bosnian man), is satisfied with his Norwegian contacts and with his social life in Norway in general. And, unlike the first informant (Bosnian woman), he is strongly integrated in his ethnic community. The Bosnian woman has not managed to sufficiently reconstruct her personal social network after resettlement. Due to this fact, each of the informants attach very different symbolic meanings to their weak ties with indigenous locals. Thus, weak ties with indigenous locals may nourish identities of both inclusion and exclusion. These kinds of connections with indigenous locals may give a sense of a belonging to the mainstream, but they often fail to satisfy other expectations.

My material suggests that immigrants who have satisfying multiplex friendships with compatriots (i.e. with people that fulfil their social needs in terms of acceptance, desired group-identification, sociability and social support), will be more satisfied with Norwegian weak contacts. Without expectations of fulfilling their social needs in terms of acceptance, sociability and social support with Norwegian contacts, they extract from these relationships, positive symbolic meanings. These immigrants do not expect more from them, other than to just nourish their need to feel accepted and respected by indigenous locals. Alternatively, if an immigrant, for various reasons, could not establish ties with compatriot friends or other foreigners, s/he would not be satisfied with low levels of sociability with Norwegian acquaintances. In this case, immigrants may be more inclined to transform acquaintances with Norwegian neighbours, workmates, acquaintances, etc. into close-knit ties, or at least try to increase levels of sociability. If immigrants do not manage to develop these weak ties, such relationships may be assigned quite different meanings, and feelings of rejection may emerge. Here, instead of nourishing a sense of a belonging and acceptance by the hosts, weak ties with indigenous locals can generate a general sense of non-belonging in the host society.

7.5. Friendships with indigenous locals

While some immigrants have achieved a balance between relationships with the hosts and compatriots, others have entered Norwegian primary networks at the cost of social relationships with fellow compatriots.[149] As a result, their social life and personal networks are characterised by an absence of ties with compatriots and a profusion of ties with Norwegians.

I met immigrants who in addition to acquaintances with Norwegians, also had several Norwegian friends. These friends normally hold an important position in the immigrant's life, both in terms of sociability and in terms of the meanings attached to these relationships. According to my informants, these relationships are multifunctional. They visit and are visited by their Norwegians friends, and go on fishing trips and holidays together. They invite each other to barbeque parties, birthdays, weddings, etc. Therefore, it is not surprising that immigrants with such a profusion of indigenous contacts feel that they are accepted and recognised by the host society. Nevertheless, this rather rosy picture is by no means typical. We have seen that immigrants with weak Norwegian ties have different understanding of these relationships depending on the degree of their internal integration. Immigrants who have

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[149] See figure 3, category II.

achieved high degree of social integration at the expense of relationships with compatriots may also experience their social life in different ways. Some immigrants do enjoy being part of close-knit Norwegian networks, while others have expressed dissatisfaction with their social life.

7.5.1. 'We expect to relax and laugh when we are together with our friends'

The distinguishing character of personal networks of immigrants who have achieved high degrees of external social integration is that they not only have many weak ties with the hosts in their personal network, but they also have close friendship ties with Norwegians and frequently socialise with them in their leisure time. Social time with Norwegian friends may indeed have a positive impact on immigrants' identities, but only for those immigrants who possess the individual predisposition and capacity to cope with the interactions with Norwegian friends. For example, immigrants who master Norwegian norms and speak fluent Norwegian belong to this category.

I met immigrants who frequently socialise with their Norwegian friends, yet who are not able to present themselves as they would wish in these relationships. This places the immigrant in a quite different position. In such relationships immigrants and their friends are not defined as equals. In my material, I found several stories that reveal these underlying tensions. Some informants, for example, felt that they did not get the response they expected from their Norwegian friends. In other words, it was lack of reciprocity in relation to their Norwegian contacts that was at the core of their explanations. They claimed that they often invited Norwegians to their homes or put forward ideas about things they could do together, in order to maintain a good ongoing relationship, while the Norwegians, on their part, were passive and seldom took the initiative. Therefore, immigrants wondered whether their Norwegian friends defined their friendship in the same way. Others felt that their Norwegian friends were helpful and supportive, but that this was tinged with patronising behaviour because they sincerely believed that they were culturally superior to their immigrant friends.

> Our Norwegian friends are nearly always nice to us. We visit each other quite often and we help each other with babysitting, etc. However, because of the language I often feel that I cannot relax when I'm with them…They sometimes also preach to us about life in Norway. They imply that we cannot know about this and that because we are not born here…They sometimes correct and instruct us as if we were idiots…I sometimes feel that they sincerely think that we are inferior. For instance, one of my Norwegian friends was surprised when I showed her the photo of my relatives in Croatia. She said, 'Hey, they have such a Western style' as if she expected them to be savages…My husband sometime feels really irritated by all these put-downs. Another problem is that we have to take the initiative all the time. They are more reluctant. They invite us less often. We do not know how to react to that (Croatian woman).

As indicated by the informant insecurity about self-presentation and her reflexive questioning about mutuality of relationships contributes to tensions in these ties. Immigrants' Norwegian friends have seen the immigrants in many situations, which implies that these immigrants are not in the first phase of 'image making'. Therefore, they may feel it less likely that every mistake they make will be thoroughly scrutinised. Immigrants appreciate this aspect of friendships with their Norwegian friends. Yet, this does not mean that they and their Norwegian friends can be seen as an egalitarian 'ideal speech community' (Habermas 1970a)

or 'pure relationships' (Giddens 1991), based on commitment, mutuality and recognition of the other.

Several immigrants who had Norwegian friends were dissatisfied with these friendships due to problems they experienced in face-to-face interactions. In order to understand the tensions that are embedded in interactions and relationships between immigrants and their Norwegian friends, we have to acknowledge that relations between immigrants and Norwegians have different dimensions. To recall, they may be seen as: a) cross-cultural interactions and relations, b) interactions and relations between ethnic minorities and ethnic majorities, and c) as interactions and relations between non-stigmatised and stigmatised people. Although interactions with Norwegian friends are not primarily experienced as 'mixed interactions' (Goffman 1963), encounters between immigrants and their Norwegian friends may still be characterised as intercultural minority/majority interactions. Norwegian friends, as members of the indigenous local majority population, have the power to decide whose social, cultural and communicative competence is the relevant one. In interactions dominated by the norms of the majority, immigrants will never know when they will activate 'a reservoir of taken for granteds' that participants in interaction need in order to construct and reconstruct shared meanings and common definitions of situations.

> We socialise with each other. We have invited them to dinner from time to time. They are nice, but on the whole the situations are somehow tense and forced…I do not know why… No; I feel that we are not just foreigners for them. We have known each other for a long time. Maybe we cannot relax due to language problems…Maybe all of us are afraid to do something wrong, to insult each other. You never know what they think (Iraqi man).

Several informants said that they often were disappointed in one way or another after spending leisure time with their Norwegian friends. Amongst other things, they felt that they invested too much energy in their performances while they were with them. Spontaneous repartee and sustained involvement in conversations were hindered by language problems, misunderstandings, and sensitivity on the part of immigrants as to how they appear in the eyes of their Norwegian friends. As a result, leisure time with them was not experienced as comfortable and relaxing.

> We feel tired after our Norwegian friends have visited us. We have to speak Norwegian and to think whether we behave correctly or not…We do not get the same quality of time with Norwegian friends as we used to get with our friends in our home country…We feel that we have to show ourselves in the best light. If we shall invite them, we have to get our apartment into respectable shape, and put on a dinner party… We have to speak Norwegian, not our mother tongue as we could with our people. They are friends, but we are still strangers to each other… This is not how our leisure time is supposed to be. We expect to relax and laugh when we are together with our friends (Bosnian woman).

As suggested by informant, within the context of friendships with Norwegians, she is still focusing upon herself because she is concerned that their behaviour can be misinterpreted. She is too conscious and too sensitive about the prescribed norms of interaction. In social interactions with Norwegian friends, immigrants feel they have to present themselves in the best possible light in order to convey the proper impression. Since there are chances for backlashes and a risk of damaging situational identities that still exist, they cannot relax. They continually have to think about defensive actions in order to prevent embarrassing situations and to maintain their fragile identities. Compared with interactions with strangers, these encounters are much more pleasant, but they still do not qualify as 'ideal leisure time'. As the

informant pointed out: 'This is not how our leisure time is supposed to be'. In this light, it is therefore unsurprising that, also amongst those immigrants whose social life is almost entirely based on relationships with the host society, I find people who miss the company of their compatriots.[150]

7.6. Being content with strong ties with fellow compatriots

At the end of this chapter I want to emphasise that there may also be found variations in experiences and day-to-day realities amongst immigrants who live in segregated networks. I interviewed immigrants who had minimal contact with indigenous locals, but who did not experience that as a problem in everyday life. I also met immigrants whose current networks, as well as their anticipated social trajectories in the future, do not include Norwegian contacts, but who seemed did not care about the Norwegians and what Norwegians think about them. If we use Mead's concepts, then we might say that people in their compatriot networks (they and nobody else) are their significant and generalised others in Norway. As the case of Hassan exemplified in chapter 6, some immigrants do not regard their segregation as the result of social exclusion. They did not have a sense of a belonging to the mainstream, but were contented with that because they had more in common with their own people. They regarded it as normal that they preferred to be with their compatriots, and even other immigrants, rather than with Norwegians.

> I know people who do not feel that they are part of Norwegian society, but they are not bothered with that. They have a sense of belonging in terms of their relatives and their ethnic community: this is what really matters…My mother, for example, likes Norway, but she does have any relationships with Norwegians. She lives here, but more as a tourist, you know, as Norwegians in Spain. She travels a lot. When she is here in Norway, she socialises exclusively with us and other people from former Yugoslavia. She is satisfied with that (Bosnian women).

As the informant suggests, this particular category of immigrant does not express any disappointment and discontent about lack of friendship with Norwegians. Several of my informants, especially elderly people, have low expectations and ambitions in respect to integration into mainstream society. Some of them have rich social lives with strong social attachments to other people, but socialise exclusively with their compatriot friends. They watch only TV programmes from their home country, and rarely read Norwegian newspapers. Most of them are retired, unemployed, or work in organisations and ethnic associations where they do not meet indigenous locals. They prefer to go to dentists, shops, and hairdressers where their mother tongue is spoken. They use their children and relatives as interpreters or intermediaries in encounters with indigenous locals, etc. In short, people in this category appeared to be self-sufficient in their segregated worlds.

Feelings of non-belonging and exclusion are more keenly felt when immigrants do not have a strong social anchorage in the ethnic networks. As the cases of Edin and Salih exemplified in chapter 6, the feeling of exclusion, loneliness and general dissatisfaction with life in the host society are especially pronounced amongst single people who are in this situation. It seems that family members fulfil many of the social needs within the framework of the family. Conversely, immigrants who are single do not have this opportunity and depend more on

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[150] It is also not surprising that amongst the informants who enjoyed a profusion of indigenous contacts, the majority also had close relationships with non-indigenous people, primarily composed of fellow compatriots.

contacts outside their home. Being without Norwegian or compatriot friends to socialise with, and turn to in times of crisis, makes life in Norway more difficult. When there is no-one from the home country in the local community to either socialise with or turn to in times of crisis, or where an immigrant cannot gain proper admission into compatriot networks for whatever reason, it makes the situation very difficult to endure. People in this category were lonely. They felt isolated and alienated from their social surroundings. They were highly dissatisfied with their life in Norway. They had negative perceptions of Norwegians and Norway and tended to blame Norwegians for their loneliness and isolation. Some of them dreamed about repatriation or about migration to third countries, while others tried to solve the problem by looking for a spouse from their home country.

7.7. Different networks and different day-to-day realities: A summary

Immigrants' experiences of everyday life depend on their networks and the feedback they get within the framework of different ties. Friendships with Norwegians have different dimensions and outcomes. Lack of personal relationships with members of the indigenous local population may result in feelings of stigma, exclusion and a sense of non-belonging to mainstream society, while friendships with them may reduce these feelings. However, there may be found tensions and dilemmas connected to friendships with the hosts. These tensions may partly be illuminated if we distinguish between the interactional aspects of the ties and the symbolic values that immigrants attach to these ties.

Interactions that take place between immigrants and their Norwegian counterparts (as well as meanings they attach to these relationships) influence immigrants' day-to-day realities and their self-perception in different ways. Immigrants who do not have personal ties with indigenous locals, report feeling burdened by intense pressures in their everyday life as a direct consequence of their ethnicity, ethnic markers, religion and culture. Their interactions with indigenous locals almost always take place within the worst possible frameworks. In their case, interactions with Norwegians are restricted to occasional encounters with strangers. In these interactions, the prejudices held about an immigrant's ethnicity, culture and religion, etc, become actualised. The absence of personal ties with indigenous locals means, therefore, that this category of immigrants has little opportunity to benefit from a realistic assessment of their personal qualities. Moreover, this lack of personal ties with indigenous locals ensures that these immigrants are never in a position to learn about the different attitudes and beliefs held by indigenous locals. Accordingly, they tend to think that all Norwegians dislike immigrants like them. Furthermore, in this context, the lack of friendships with Norwegians is seen as direct evidence that they live in a hostile and xenophobic environment.

Immigrants who have Norwegian friends are less preoccupied with issues relating to social exclusion and misrecognition because they attach certain positive meanings to these ties. Immigrants find in their associations with their Norwegian friends, the advantages of help, sympathy and fellowship. Norwegian friends may be perceived as symbolic evidence that they are accepted by locals. Within these relationships, they may also have better opportunities for a more realistic assessment of their personal qualities. At the same time, if these ties are too weak they do not necessarily fulfil the requirement of social need in the sense of sociability. Thus, the symbolic meanings immigrants attach to these ties depend on, for example, their experiences and perceptions in relation to both their own compatriot group, and those of other immigrants.

In certain cases, immigrants will manage to get self-confirmation during face-to-face interactions with Norwegian friends. Here, relationships with Norwegian friends may contribute to producing positive identities amongst immigrants, both in the course of face-to-face interaction, and as proofs of acceptance. In other cases, interactions with Norwegian friends will not be without friction. These encounters may even undermine the positive symbolic meanings that immigrants have attached to these ties. Overly intensive contact with Norwegian friends can be at the expense of immigrants' situational selves. The dilemmas outlined here relating to strong and weak ties with indigenous locals are also reflected in the ways that immigrants choose to arrange their social lives after resettlement.

Chapter 8: Selectivity in social relations and the self

In this chapter, I explore how immigrants organize their social lives is influenced by their self-work. I argue that immigrants try to achieve a desired identity and to gain positive recognition in their everyday lives through the active and selective rearrangement of social relations with other people. The identity negotiations of immigrants and their selectivity in respect to who they want to be associated with are expressed through their ethno-social preferences, as well as through the kinds of ties and the sociable intensity they have with their friends and acquaintances.

8.1. Managing strangers: Between avoidance and breaking through

Other people may be a source of social support, health and personal well-being. However, social relations do not always provide support and positive feedback. Some relations may reduce a person's standard of living and threaten her or his self-perception. I have met immigrants who considered certain relationships with their hosts and fellow compatriots as a burden rather than a resource and a way of securing affirmation. The uneasiness and ambivalence immigrants feel in their interactions with indigenous locals and certain segments of the ethnic community may constitute an important part of their everyday life (Gullestad 2006).

We have seen that interactions with Norwegians are hazardous for the immigrants self because of the potential for discrediting episodes and rejections. If the right people can be found among the immigrant community as an alternative to Norwegians, then ethnic 'encapsulation' and avoidance may appear as ways of protecting the desired self. Avoiding contact with the hosts was widespread among the immigrants of this study. For certain categories of immigrants, it was an obvious strategy to choose. Immigrants who especially stand out in this respect were those who, because of different social circumstances, could not reproduce positive identities in their relations with Norwegians – for example, immigrants with low proficiency in the Norwegian language and immigrants who anticipated that the hosts would behave in ways that were patronising, xenophobic or hostile.

The stories reported by my informants suggest that we should distinguish between different types of ties and settings when we analyze the selective ethno-social behaviour of immigrants. For example, it seems that avoidance is especially deployed in situations where the indigenous locals are not personally known to the immigrants. This is hardly surprising, given that we know that stereotypical categorizations are more likely to be a factor in these types of encounters.[151] The two quotations presented below show how immigrants distinguish between different relationships and settings. They also indicate a motivational background for their selective social action.

> I try to avoid conversations with people who do not know me well…It is difficult to lower one's guard when you know that even total strangers may allow themselves to patronise and humiliate you…For example, they will inevitably ask where I come from, whether I like to live in Norway, etc. Their comments may be irritating – things like 'war is a

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[151] We have to recall that occasional encounters with strangers do not give immigrants a proper chance to negotiate and use the arsenal of different roles and statuses they have in their possession. In these contexts, immigrants experience that they are conceived through the least desirable attributes and identity, namely the ethnic one, with all the stereotypical interpretations and prejudices this perception implies.

terrible thing, poor you'…or 'you speak very good Norwegian' and other patronising comments (Croatian man).

I have two Norwegian friends that I have known for a quite a long time. These friends are important to me…I still have problems dealing with new relationships. Over the years, I became suspicious about Norwegians. I am not suspicious about my Norwegian friends, but I am about Norwegians who do not know me (Bosnian woman).

Avoiding strangers seems to be a widespread strategy, both among well integrated immigrants and those who have lived in segregated and marginalized environments. Even immigrants and refugees who reached high socioeconomic positions in Norway may experience occasional humiliations in everyday life. At work, for instance, they may feel that their ethnic status is less important than their position in the organizational structure of the workplace. Nevertheless, during encounters that occur outside these organizational hierarchies, with indigenous locals who do not know them, this is not automatically the case. In these interactions, they will be downgraded and judged on the basis of their ethnicity, religion and race. Therefore, immigrants will be highly selective about the kinds of contact they have with Norwegians.

One way of coping with discrediting in relationships with the hosts is to avoid them: another is to take the bull by the horns and to transform impersonal relations into personal ones. The personalization of relations with 'normal' members of the mainstream is one of the techniques that people with potentially discrediting attributes use in the hope of reducing the relevance of a stigmatized identity (Goffman 1963).[152] As is exemplified in the two stories presented above, immigrants who become better acquainted with indigenous locals may be able to move on to a more personal level where their ethnicity ceases to be a relevant factor during self-presentation. Nevertheless, this does not mean that immigrants are not ambivalent and hesitant about breaking through. On the one hand, immigrants want to transform impersonal relations into personal ones. On the other, engaging in interactions with strangers may turn out to be quite humiliating.

These dilemmas should be related to the larger contexts of how strategies of avoidance and breaking through are deployed. Avoidance will be a strategic choice for immigrants if the hosts they interact with on a daily basis do not belong in one way or another to desirable segments of the host community. Furthermore, immigrants are more likely to approach hosts in the hope of achieving breakthrough in social settings and roles where the chances of being humiliated and rejected are low and where the chances of affirmative identity deployment and acceptance are reasonably high. Even if immigrants and Norwegians are determined not to avoid, but to get to know each other better, developing relationships is difficult if there is no proper social arena where people with the same background, interests and habituses can interact meaningfully without endangering the self-respect of one or the other.

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[152] This gradual process is often labelled 'breaking through' (Goffman 1963; Hughes 2000). Goffman has actually challenged this commonly accepted view that greater familiarity and interaction bring increased acceptance. My findings also suggest that familiarity relations may bring a certain degree of normalization in relations, but that such normalization is not total. The ambivalence and discomfort immigrants often experience do not completely disappear when they are with Norwegian friends (see chapters 7 and 10).

8.2. Loose connections to members of the indigenous local population as a coping strategy

Generally speaking, once immigrants achieved a breakthrough in their relationships with Norwegians, they seldom give up their Norwegian friends. At the same time, the more risky occasional contacts and conversations with the rest of the local indigenous population were minimized. Immigrants are not only selective when it comes to their interactions and relations with strangers, but also with their Norwegian friends. This aspect of immigrant behaviour is closely related to arguments that I have presented in the previous chapter. Two of the aforementioned arguments are relevant here. The first states that face-to-face interactions which occur within the frame of relationships with compatriot friends may give immigrants a better opportunity for self-presentation and reproducing the desired self, while relations with the hosts function more as evidence of acceptance by the mainstream. The second states that unsuccessful attempts at being social with Norwegian friends undermine any initial positive symbolic value these ties may have. There is always the possibility that because of different breakdowns in communication, culture related problems, etc, an immigrant's self-image may be endangered in face-to-face encounters with indigenous local friends. These concerns are clearly expressed in the following story:

> My Norwegian workmates are ok, but every time I join them in the pub after work I regret it. They are nice to me, but when I am with them, most of the time I do not manage to participate in the conversation. Sometimes I have problems with the language; sometimes I am not familiar with the topic of conversation. I feel that they try to involve me. They ask me if I have understood, or if we have the same things in my home country. I keep smiling, but I feel that somehow I do not fit in…I am not this kind of person…When I come home, I feel bad (Bosnian man).

In order to maintain close friendships with their hosts, several immigrants felt that they had to meet them too often in their spare time. Every time they socialized with their Norwegian friends, however, they too have to make proper self-presentations. As my informant shows, it is not always easy to do this when his self-presentation has to be based on the premises of the ethnic majority. He often felt uncomfortable when he joined his Norwegian workmates in the pub or in other spare time activities. At the same time, these ties were important to him and he wanted to maintain contact. Coping with these concerns may lead to selectivity with respect to Norwegians ties. For example, most immigrants I met seemed to prefer bridging to the mainstream through weak ties with a few locals rather than through many strong ones. The two quotations below illustrate this kind of ethno-social behaviour.

> For most of the time my wife and I socialize with our compatriots, but we keep in touch with our Norwegian friends too. Sometimes, we say to each other that it is time to socialize with Norwegians…We became acquainted with one Norwegian couple many years ago. We do not meet them often, but their friendship is important to us. If that relation dissolved, we would feel that we had lost something. We would be isolated from this society (Croatian man).

> I have two Norwegian friends… I prefer to socialize with my compatriots, but I try to maintain friendships with my Norwegian friends…I seldom socialize with my Norwegian friends. We do not have a lot in common, but sometimes I have a need to meet them. They are somehow the only emotional connection I have with Norwegian society. If you are with foreigners all the time, you may feel that you are not really living in Norway (Iraqi man).

Described selectivity has two consequences for the integration process and identities of immigrants – at the interpersonal and intrapersonal levels. On the one hand, any reduction of contact maintains the weak degree of attachment to the host. In this way, the possibilities immigrants have for greater social integration within mainstream Norwegian society is reduced. On the other hand, what seems like dysfunctional levels of friendship with Norwegians may in certain cases be good for their self-image and for their sense of belonging to the mainstream. Moreover, I found that shying away from deeper levels of engagement may, paradoxically, reduce the possibility of these friendships collapsing. The cheap and rentable things are easier to maintain. If the immigrant feels that he has not invested a lot of energy in the relationship, he will not expect a particularly strong commitment from his Norwegian friends. I have met immigrants whose positive apprehensions of their relationships with Norwegians were precisely due to a lack of frequent contact and commitment. When these immigrants made considerable efforts to increase the level of contact, they found that it was not so easy to evolve and maintain these relationships after all. Feelings of disappointment emerged, together with a sense that there was a lack of mutuality and commitment, which in turn isolated these people from their Norwegian friends.

8.3. 'Who needs Norwegian friends?'

Immigrants strategically regulate their degree of attachment to the mainstream, in terms of the selective minimizing and maintaining of relations with indigenous local friends. What the stories above did not show is that an important part of this strategy is continuously convincing oneself that weak attachments to the mainstream are self-imposed. As long as immigrants manage to be social through compensatory bonding within their ethnic networks, they can allow themselves to turn down invitations to join Norwegians in spare time activities, which gives them the feeling that they are wanted, but still able to accept or to reject meetings on their own terms. Together with the informant below, several immigrants claimed that they could have Norwegian friends if they wanted to, but that they did not have time for them – that they were too busy, or that they prioritized their compatriot friends, etc.

> Norwegians invite me often to different gatherings…No, in most cases, I do not come. It tends to be quite boring… If I wanted, I could have several Norwegian friends, but I prefer to spend my spare time with my family and relatives (Bosnian woman).

> Who needs Norwegians? Norwegians prefer to be with their own people…I have more in common with my compatriots. If I was more interested and persistent, I would probably have established friendships with Norwegians. However, I like to be with my own people…This is normal (Iraqi man).

Some immigrants find it easier to get Norwegian friends than others. Furthermore, immigrants interpret a lack of friendships with indigenous locals in different ways. Although they might have similar problems finding new friends if they moved back to their own country, these problems were understood in a specific way after their migration. Some immigrants, for example, believed that they were rejected because of Norwegian xenophobia. They liked to focus on Norwegian scepticism and hostility towards their ethnic group or towards immigrants in general. However, there are other perspectives. Some immigrants I met believed that they as individuals or as members of a certain ethnic community were not stigmatized. They denied being rejected. Consequently, they explained difficulties in getting closer to Norwegians by referring to other, less harmful, factors.

I got impression that immigrants who did not feel that they had been stigmatized because of their ethnicity and culture were more inclined to resort to 'harmless explanations'. There are two types of interpretation that dominated the stories of these immigrants: one focuses on differences in social needs and interests, while the other refers to specific aspects of Norwegian culture. It is difficult to say whether these perspectives are connected to real circumstances or whether they can be seen as an attempt at making daily life more bearable through various kinds of denials. Nevertheless, in both cases, these interpretations and constructions are part of immigrants' social realities, and relate to their identities of belonging and non-belonging. One Bosnian man offered this story:

> I know that many immigrants are convinced that Norwegians dislike them, so they turn their backs to them… In my view, they have to like you and you have to like them, but if they do not have time for you, you will not have the possibility of develop relations with them… If some foreigners wanted to socialize with me when I was in my homeland, I would probably not be interested in them. I would use my spare time to maintain relations with my friends and relatives…When I arrived here, I was in a different situation. I needed new friends…It is not strange that most of my Norwegian friends are people who had recently moved to the town. They too are migrants. Such people are more accessible because they are eager to get new friends (Bosnian man).

The informant suggests that different degrees of social integration among newcomers and locals results in a lack of reciprocity and different inclination for contacts. I also heard similar arguments from Norwegians – for instance, Norwegian refugee guides when explaining why they did not try or did not manage to absorb migrants in their personal social networks (Valenta and Berg 2003). The rationale here is that newcomers are in a phase where they need to accumulate social ties, while the hosts are in the position of needing to maintain the social networks that they already possess. Compared with immigrants who have to reconstruct their social life from scratch, and who still had to meet their social needs, Norwegian contacts had to maintain relations with their family and old friends. Consequently, immigrants have to compete with the latter when it came to spending time in the company of their Norwegian friends. The second type of 'harmless interpretation' relates to cultural differences in people's expectations, and definitions, of friendship. For example, I have met immigrants who claimed that close-knit relations characterized by a high frequency of contact are the norm when it comes to friendships in their native country, but who then went on to argue that Norwegians do not have such expectations. In ways that echo the comments below, they felt that Norwegians are not used to these kinds of intense friendships.

> Unlike Norwegians, our people are used to visiting each other frequently. They just come without invitations and negotiations, drink a cup of coffee or tea, have a chat and leave shortly after. A good friend is one you see almost every day. Norwegians are more introverted. You have to arrange the visit several weeks in advance… They seldom visit their parents and closest relatives. Why should we expect them to visit us? (Iraqi man).

Most immigrants I met, no matter what country they came from, said that Norwegians were not as sociable and warm as their own people. When they met Norwegians who were really funny and outgoing, they defined them as somehow untypical. These stereotypical interpretations of the host culture, combined with an idealized and nostalgic image of their compatriots and of the 'good old times' in the homeland, may contribute to reducing the inclination immigrants have to socialize with their hosts. If we look at these interpretations as part of a pattern of denying rejection, we can argue that such constructions are used to legitimize why my immigrants seldom socialized with Norwegians. Nevertheless, in these

'harmless interpretations', indigenous locals are not seen as hostile, but rather as boring, cold or passive – and therefore not so attractive as potential social partners in one's spare time.

8.4. Compatriots, other immigrants and indigenous locals

It is not only immigrant relations with their hosts that embed dilemmas, ambivalences and problems. Relations between compatriots and within the immigrant community in general, can also be experienced as problematic, which in turn fuels selective co-ethnic and cross-ethnic bridging and bonding. It was indeed the case that most of the immigrants I met preferred being together with their compatriots in their spare time. When they are with them, they can deploy their individual identities without worrying about low ethnic status, communication problems and insecurity about cultural codes. Immigrants and their compatriots also have common memories about their home country. These interceptions may indeed strengthen relations between them.[153] Nevertheless, it would be too simple to consider these ties and networks as frictionless. For example, it is not uncommon for certain relationships within compatriot networks to be characterized by a high degree of social exclusion, and there are varieties of sanctioning and continuous competition between compatriots.[154] Irritating gossip, intrigues, intrusions into each other's personal lives and other types of social control make some immigrants ambivalent and selective with regards to their compatriots. Some immigrants referred to these kinds of experiences when arguing that that their internal integration was not a matter of free choice. They insisted that their ethno-social practice had to be seen in the light of a lack of other alternatives.

Ambivalences and selective ethno-social practice may be also found in cross-immigrant relationships – in friendships with immigrants from other countries, in other words. There are cases in my data material that serve as good examples of how common migration experiences may actually bring people from different countries together. During my fieldwork, I also observed and participated in many settings that showed me that people from different countries who live in Norway may experience relations with each other as more egalitarian than their relations with the Norwegian majority. This led me to expect that the personal networks of immigrants will include multiple relationships with other immigrants. Nevertheless, most immigrants I met had not established and maintained friendships with immigrants outside their own ethnic group.

The paucity of cross-immigrant relationships among my informants was not primarily a question of physical access, since most of them lived side by side with immigrants from other countries in the reception centres. They also had opportunities to get better acquainted with members of other immigrant groups while they all attended the language courses and integration programs together – and later in ethnic neighbourhoods. In my view, the relative lack of cross-immigrant friendships may be better understood in the light of images and identities immigrants from each ethnic group have assigned to one another (See also Valenta 2001; Brekke 2001; Sandberg and Pedersen 2007).

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[153] This is also shown in other studies about immigrants and refugees. See Korac (2001); Al-Ali and Koser (2002)
[154] Several studies show that relationships within immigrant networks may be characterized by internal conflicts, exploitation and suspicion (Levitt 2001; Krissman 2005; Knudsen 2005).

The lack of attraction connected to these relations may be understood in the light of the previously discussed duality that embeds social relations.[155] At the symbolic level, potential friendships with immigrants from other ethnic groups were seen as less valuable (as symbols of acceptance to the mainstream) than relations with indigenous locals. As one informant puts it: 'It is boring to have only other outsiders as friends'. At the sociability level these ties are also surpassed, but this time by compatriot friends. Immigrants communicate with their compatriot friends in their mother tongue, share common interaction codes, ethnic background and ties to their native land. Therefore, it is to be expected that my informants prioritized their compatriots as friends before immigrants from other countries. In short, we can say that relations with other immigrants somehow fell between two stools.

As we shall see below, another obstacle to cross-immigrant friendships is closely linked with selective identification and distinction-work among immigrants. When we analyse the question of bridging to the mainstream and ethnic segregation, we have to relate the debate to the opportunities and aspirations immigrants have to identify with desired segments of the different communities – that of their compatriots, other immigrants and of indigenous locals. The ethno-social practices and preferences not only involve choosing between immigrants, compatriots and hosts, but also choosing between different categories of these people.

8.4.1. Identifications, distinctions and selectivity in relation to other immigrants

The self is not only defined through a clarification of who one is, but also through a clarification of who one is not. Several researchers have described different strategies that people who are dissatisfied with their group identity use in order to produce a positive self-perception. People may maintain their positive self-perception by distancing themselves from the rest of the group. Members of a minority group may also try to associate themselves with groups that have better social characteristics (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Tajfel 1987; Snow and Anderson 1993; Sandberg and Pedersen 2007).

Most immigrants in my study have experienced situations where the hosts related to them on the basis of their potentially stigmatized immigrant and ethnic identity. The immigrants then responded through a series of selective identifications and distinction-making. In line with Brekke (2001), I found that immigrants and refugees distance themselves from ascribed social identity through a successive distinction that was composed of two stages (Brekke 2001). First, they distinguished their own ethnic group from the general immigrant population. The next step is to distance themselves from segments of their own ethnic group. In other words, an immigrant will define the borders of her or his identity by insisting on the one hand that the ethnic group he or she belongs to is superior to other categories of non-western migrants, and on the other that she/he is better than other members of her/his ethnic group.

> We are Europeans who are in many ways different from all other non-European groups of migrants… We had cities that the fishermen and peasants here in the village have never seen. I worked in a high tech company in Sarajevo that had more workers, engineers and intellectuals than all these villages have inhabitants…I think that Norwegians know that my family and I are not common refugees. It is enough to see our lifestyle. We foreigners have brought an urban way of life to this village (Bosnian man).

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[155] To recall, social relations may have a twofold importance for the immigrant self: they may be seen in terns of sociability and as symbols of acceptance.

Generally speaking, immigrants I met felt that it was unfair to be ranked *pari passu* with more prejudiced individuals who in their opinion had far less in common with Norwegian society and who had a backward culture compared with their own. Distinctions constructed through defining one's own group in opposition to others may be found among Bosnians, Croats and Iraqis. While immigrants from Bosnia and Croatia consider themselves more western than non-European immigrants, several Iraqis I met, for instance, believed that African culture was more primitive than their own.[156] These processes were especially easy to identify when the groups lived side by side in reception centres, where it was possible to experience this distinction-work in daily encounters (Valenta 2001).

> There is not so much contact between ethnic groups in the reception centre. Yugoslavs and Russians, for instance, did not want to speak with us. When I met some of them, they pretended not to see me. They think that they are better than us…It is also true that some Iraqis are racist. Once, the Somalis organised a party in the reception centre. They prepared a lot of food and danced… Iraqis who looked on directed really insulting comments at them…They called them savages. Fortunately, the Somalis could not understand (Iraqi man).

> Many Africans are involved in criminal activity. They do not want to adjust to Norwegian society. Some of them have been here for a very long time, but they cannot speak Norwegian and consort only with their own people. We are not like them. They should contribute to this society like we do. They undermine the reputation of hard working people who really try to be part of this society (Iraqi man).

It is not difficult to imagine that described selective identifications and distinctions are reflected in the ethno-social practice and preferences of immigrants: after all, who we are relates closely to who we socialize with. Therefore, immigrants avoid friendships with other immigrants who are seen as a negative reference group. These concerns were clearly expressed during interviews. When encouraged to explain why they do not socialize with certain categories of immigrants and fellow compatriots, most immigrants explain that they do not have much in common. Some informants, however, offered alternative explanations which showed a clear aversion to certain categories of people, stressing that they could not imagine why they should have any contact with these people.

> When I see how some of my compatriots behave, I become even more reluctant to have any contact with them. I did not know that such primitives and peasants lived in Yugoslavia. It was here in Norway that I first discovered that. We are not like them (Croatian woman).

On the other hand, some immigrants stressed similarities with immigrants from some other, less or non-prejudiced immigrant groups, or similarities with prominent individuals within their own ethnic group –, people they wanted to associate with or belong to. The short narrative presented below, exemplifies this type of distinction-work.

> I have few friends from the former Yugoslavia…When I started to study here I moved to the Student campus. Therefore, I socialized almost exclusively with students from other countries and with Norwegian students…With that, my social life totally changed… It is totally different being a refugee and asylum seeker and being a part of an international student community…The student community in the campus was polarised. There was one division between Norwegian and foreign students. But there were also divisions among foreign students. On the one hand, you have student networks and organisations made by

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[156] Moreover, immigrants from all three groups compared themselves in similar ways in opposition to certain people who came from their own homeland.

students from the third-world countries, mostly Africa and China, while on the other, you have places organised by students from Europe, mostly form Germany, Sweden, Holland and USA… I made friends among those students who came from different European countries (Bosnian women).

If it is not possible to find the right people within one's own ethnic group, an immigrant may seek them among other ethnic groups. As the last quotation suggests, cross-immigrant bridging will start to appear as an attractive alternative to ties with compatriots especially in cases when immigrant friends have a considerably better social identity than one's own compatriots. For example, for some immigrants in my study, including the above informant, identifying and bridging with students or highly skilled professionals from the UK, USA, etc, was a more appealing path to social integration than associating with compatriots and other low status immigrants. The selectivity and ambivalences in the ways that immigrants engaged with fellow compatriots, other immigrants and indigenous locals are summarised in the figure below.

Figure 4: Compatriots, other immigrants and indigenous locals

The ethno-social practices and preferences of immigrants
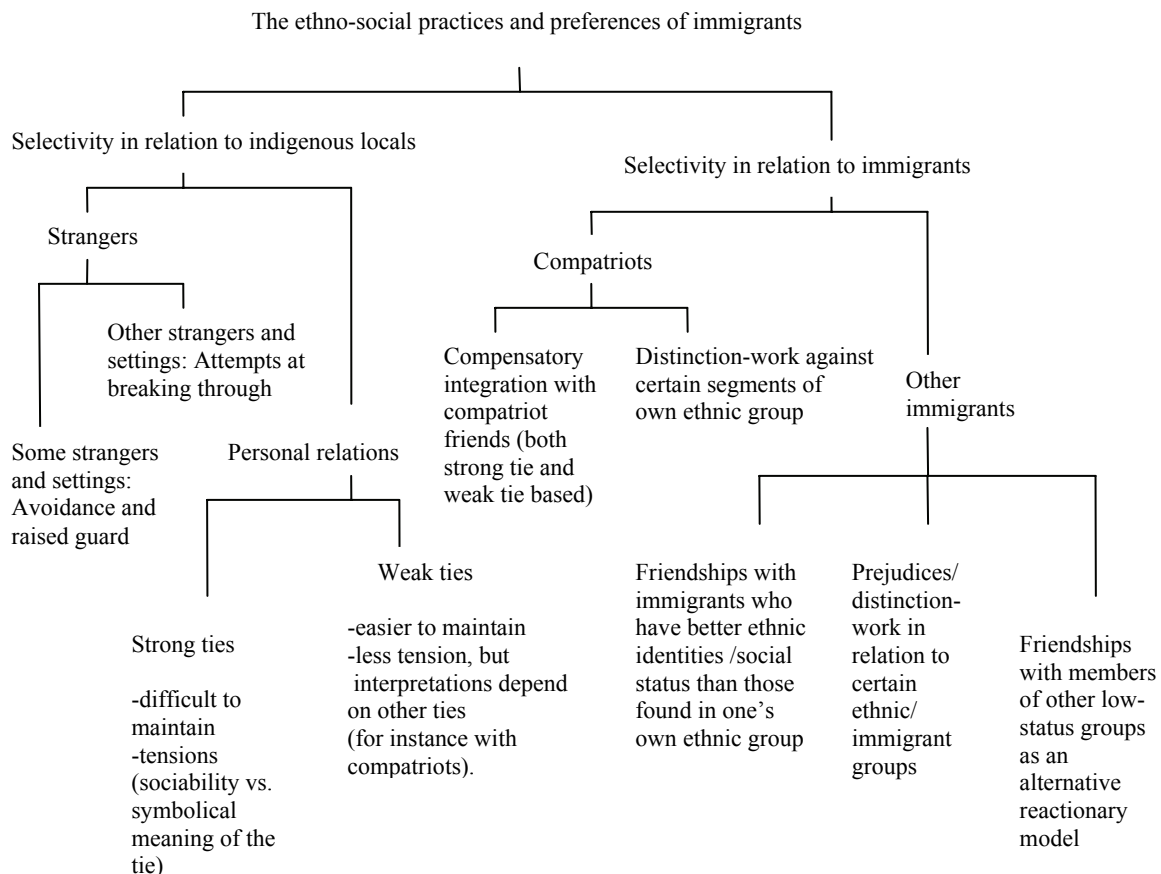
In the course of my fieldwork, I visited homes, associations and gatherings where I not only became acquainted with adult immigrants, but also got the chance to observe and speak with their teenage offspring. I also participated at international student parties and different after-school activities where young immigrants meet. These observations confirmed that immigrants who come to Norway as adults may have a different stance to ethnic networks than younger immigrants. The first category preferred to socialize with their fellow compatriots, since they shared pre-migration experiences. They were more comfortable and relaxed with their compatriots since they could speak their mother tongue with them. By contrast, the last category did not see the same advantages to compatriot ties as their parents

and elders did. After a few years in Norway most young immigrants I met had become fluent in the Norwegian language. Furthermore, the culture of the home country was remote and abstract to them, and more associated with the generation of their parents than something they shared with their compatriot peers.

Some of these young immigrants, as Eva's case illustrated,[157] followed the path of integration and assimilation into the mainstream, preferring Norwegian friends to the detriment of ties with their own compatriots or other immigrants. Others did not have Norwegian friends, but they did not necessarily socialize with their compatriot peers (although their parents often encouraged them to do so). For example, I met young immigrants who were integrated in heterogeneous ethnic networks, but who socialized primarily with the immigrant offspring of other ethnic groups. Some of them even avoided their compatriot peers, in this way escaping the social control that sometimes comes with compatriot networks. These young immigrants also felt that they had more in common with other immigrant children in Norway. These children had shared experiences of ethnic stigma; rejection by the hosts, and conflicts with adults and their parents: thus, integration within ethnically heterogeneous immigrant networks was an alternative both to the mainstream and to their own ethnic community.[158]

8.5. Conscious identity-work as generating force?

By looking more closely at how immigrants conceive of and interpret their own actions and those of others, we may get the impression that they think constantly about how to reproduce their desired identities. I want to stress that it is not my position that conscious identity-work is the only thing that drives the daily rounds if immigrants. The identity negotiations presented above, as well as those to be presented in the next chapters, can be seen as just one among many important dimensions of the daily lives of immigrants. Although immigrants are conscious of their social position and ethnic identity, this does not mean that their behaviour is entirely subjected to conscious self-work. Their social life has a certain internal logic, but this logic is not necessarily brought about by rational actors who always thoroughly consider their actions. Certain relationships may simply be the unintentional result of other actions. Many of the ties immigrants have with other people are selected, established and maintained as they go about their daily tasks. Immigrants meet some people within certain arenas and interact with them regularly (and in that way become acquainted, and then maintain acquaintances), but they visit these arenas for reasons other than meeting these people. As the quotations below reveal, their selective weak tie connections with locals may be the outcome of their participation in work, school, parenting and other activities.

> I meet Norwegian acquaintances quite often in my spare time. My children are active in different after-school activities and I meet other parents there. I have known some of these people since my children started at this school. However, I cannot say that I always enjoy their company. I sometimes feel like an outsider when I am with them, but I have to show up anyway. I try to do my best (Croatian man).

> Because of my job, I have many Norwegian acquaintances… I really dislike some of my workmates and customers, but I cannot choose my workmates and customers. I have to be kind to them, this is part of my job, and I want to keep my job. I need money as much as anyone else (Iraqi man).

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[157] See chapter 6.
[158] This strategy is outlined on the right side of figure 4.

My findings suggest that people initiate and maintain social relations with other people even if these run directly counter to their self-work. Although such dimensions of human action were not the main focus of this study, I cannot overlook the fact that in some cases immigrants started to build bridges to the mainstream and maintained them *despite* their self-work, and not *because* of it. Some of my informants made it very clear that they barely tolerated their Norwegian friends and acquaintances, but these relationships were kept up because they had a certain practical, economic or social value. For instance, they maintained ties to their neighbours, work associates and friends because they help them (or have the potential to help them) with baby-sitting, useful information, employment, etc. On the other hand, the stories of my informants suggest that the borders between such motives and self-work are not always very clearly defined. What initially might have been a pragmatic attempt to gain a certain kind of help from others, may gradually acquire other dimensions. For example, when indigenous locals provide immigrants with valuable information and help, these actions are more than just useful: immigrants may also interpret such actions in emotional and symbolic ways, thus strengthening their sense of belonging to the mainstream.

8.6. Summary: Managing the tensions in social relations

In exploring ethno-social practices among immigrants we may distinguish between activities that take place at two interrelated levels: a) at the intrapersonal level of meanings, interpretations and self-images, and; b) at the interpersonal level. At the interpersonal level we may for analytical purposes distinguish further between three areas of action – those that happen at the level of relationships, networks and face-to-face interactions.

In this chapter, we have seen that immigrants are selective about their relationships with other people. They identify and socialize with some people, while avoiding others. Furthermore, they may simultaneously avoid their friends and maintain friendship relations. In the course of face-to-face interactions, they can strengthen relations, maintain them, weaken them, or even do or say things that bring a relationship to an end. I have argued that this process may be seen in the light of immigrant identity reproduction. Naturally, immigrants who manage a satisfying self-presentation in interactions with Norwegians, and who preserve their self-respect within these relations, will be the most motivated for such engagement in future. This capability and motivation will often be reflected in the ethnic composition of a network, the number of ties with Norwegians, and the strength and amount of time that is spent with them.

The dominant pattern of integration found among immigrants in my study is weak external integration combined with compensatory internal integration in selected parts of social networks comprised of compatriots. This pattern may be understood as the way that immigrants attempt to deal with the interactional and symbolic aspects of network relations. Relationships with indigenous locals and compatriots have different symbolical and interactional relevance for immigrants' self-work. Although many immigrants do not necessarily enjoy social time spent with indigenous locals, they try to maintain at least a few weak relations with Norwegians whom they socialize with from time to time. Bridging strategies based on weak ties is connected to the fact that friendship relationships with the hosts may give the immigrant the feeling of being a part of the mainstream society.

Relationships with Norwegian friends help immigrants nourish their identity as that of someone who is accepted by locals. At the same time, these ties may have a negative impact on their self-conception if immigrants are not capable to self-present themselves successfully

in interactions with their Norwegian friends. It is not easy to manage this because such relationships are still characterized by distorted communication between counterparts within which, among other things, immigrants have to present themselves in minority roles. Therefore these strategies are often combined with dense sociability with approved segments of the compatriot community. In these relationships, immigrants do not interact on the premises of the ethnic majority. Consequently, these interactions and ties give them a better chance of achieving positive self-presentations in their eyes and in the eyes of others.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the social life of immigrants after resettlement depends not only on the actions and strategies of the immigrants themselves. It also depends on the access they have to different types of relationships, as well as the readiness of the host society to accept them. On the one hand, selective incorporation – for example the partial renunciation of contact with hosts – may be part of an immigrant's self-work. On the other hand, immigrants want to develop relations with indigenous locals, but do not succeed. It is the experience of these immigrants that indigenous locals do not respond properly to their attempts to develop friendly relations. The relations immigrants have with other immigrant groups may also be related to the previously mentioned experiences and anticipations of rejection. In some cases, immigrants identify and mix with other immigrant groups, while in others they try to distance themselves. If immigrants feel accepted by the right members of the mainstream society or the immigrant community, the other, more marginalized categories of immigrants will appear as negative reference groups. However, if entrance into such networks is denied, the alternative reactionary models of identification and compensatory integration may be constructed, either within available subgroups in their own ethnic community or within ethnically heterogeneous immigrant networks.

Chapter 9: Fragmented networks and immigrant self-work

I argue in this chapter that the structural characteristics of the personal social networks enjoyed by immigrants are affected by several factors, including what attempts immigrants make to achieve and maintain coherent positive identities in their everyday life. Immigrant (ethnic) identity negotiations may strengthen certain relations within their networks, but also lead to bifurcation and the disintegration of certain segments of their personal social networks.

9.1. Weak connections and fragmented arenas

Making sense of the structural dimensions of the personal networks of immigrants requires exploring how immigrants perceive and define the borders of their networks. Immigrants operate within several arenas, and establish relations with Norwegians in all of these. For example, an immigrant who works as a shop assistant in a store may know all of his Norwegian workmates. He may in addition belong to a local football club. The density of relations may be high in both social environments, but the immigrant may not consider all of the people who he interacts with in these two arenas to be his friends. The immigrant may have relations with a number of people within the aforementioned arenas, but because the ties are not thought to be strong enough, most of these individuals will not in his eyes merit being considered part of his personal network. This selectivity in turn affects his and our perceptions of the network's density. The density of the personal social network, and how it is perceived, are illustrated in the figure below (The trapezoids symbolize various social environments).

Figure 5: Density and perception of the network

-The grey zone symbolizes what an immigrant considers his personal social network.

-The black node symbolizes the immigrant.

-White nodes symbolize compatriots

-Grey nodes symbolize Norwegians.

-Grey lines symbolize relations that the immigrant does not think belong to his personal network

Workplace

Neighborhood

Football club, etc.
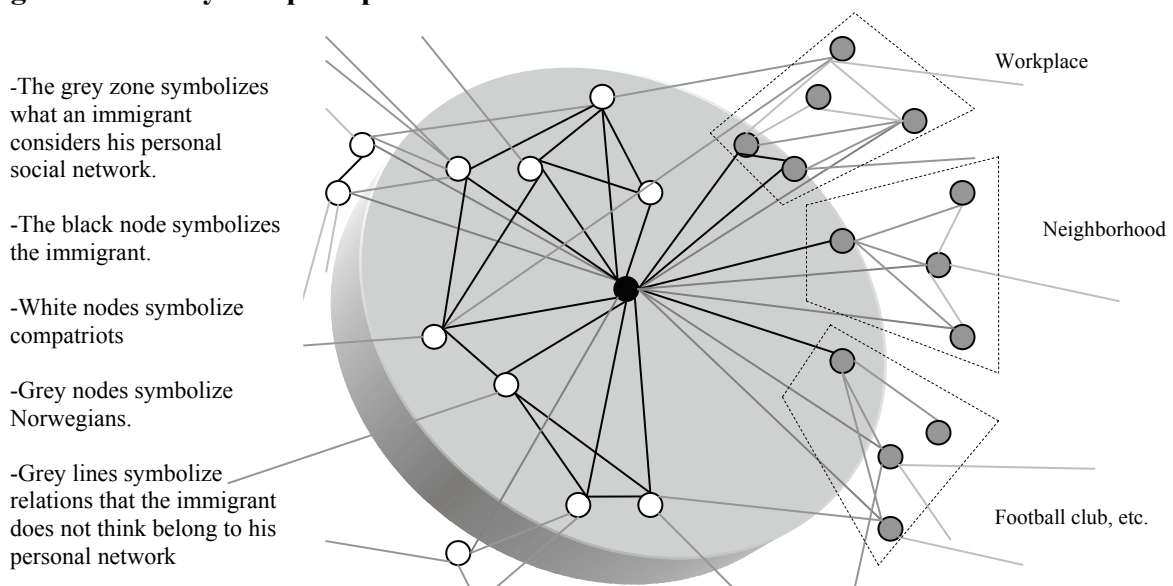
As the figure illustrates, when immigrants are only loosely attached via a few bridges to various arenas where they interact with Norwegians, relations formed there are not counted because they are too weak. They are placed outside 'the network border'. As a result, the Norwegian part of an immigrant's personal network appears to be scattered. If the network border (grey circle) was angled slightly more to the right, it would include relations that stand outside the circle. This would make the Norwegian part of the immigrant's network seem denser. The low level of interconnections found among the Norwegian friends of immigrants

is closely related to the fact that most of the immigrants I met had a relatively low degree of social integration within the different arenas of mainstream society. Most immigrants I met have few ties with Norwegians and these ties are weak. With this in mind, it is hardly surprising to discover that the density of these ties seems so low. Furthermore, as the figure also illustrates, relation between immigrants and hosts may be scattered because there is an absence of social relations between the Norwegian friends of immigrants, who operate within different arenas. The last factor is a common characteristic of modern urban life. The networks of people who live in modern urban contexts are often scattered. People may have contacts with their neighbours, workmates, and club members, etc, and yet still not be friends with each other. They may not even know about each other.[159] It seems that immigrant ties with their fellow compatriots transcend the fragmented urban social environments, which in turn contributes to the density of the ethnic part of the network.

As we shall see in what follows, the ties that immigrants have with their hosts are primarily based on their participation in different arenas and roles (for example: neighbours, workmates, schoolmates), while the friendships they have with their compatriots are primarily based on a common ethnic background.

9.2. Perspectives on the structural aspects of bonding within compatriot networks

The compatriot part of the network of my informants was in most cases quite high in density. This was also the case among informants in the city, where we might expect personal networks to consist of scattered ties (Fischer 1982; Bø 2005). No matter what the size of the place I visited during my fieldwork was, it appeared that people knew each other in the different ethnic communities. Instead of persistently asking why the Norwegian part of network is so scattered, then, we might ask instead why the density of the compatriot part of immigrant networks is so high. The first and most obvious explanation lies in the fact that immigrant communities are small in most Norwegian cities and towns. Therefore, participating in different Iraqi, Bosnian or Croatian cultural arrangements makes it easy to get an overview of who belongs to these communities in the town. The small size of each ethnic community, which contributes to 'everybody knows everybody patterns', contributes indirectly to how dense the compatriot part of the personal network of a single immigrant is.

Several studies have also suggested that dense ethnic networks might be a function of chain migration.[160] Chain migration produces the effective re-establishment of dense, close-knit networks of kinship and friendship after resettlement. Chain migration may partly explain why some of my informants live in dense close-knit ethnic networks. I met immigrants – for instance, Bosnians from the cities of Mostar and Sarajevo – that were related by kin or friendship to each other before they arrived in Norway. They followed each another. They resettled in relative proximity to each other, and the dense ties between them were also maintained in Norway.

The common background and migration experiences of immigrants may also be seen as the internal glue that connects different kinds of people together in a network. A person may

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[159] This argument cannot be applied to the personal networks of immigrants who lived in the small Norwegian communities. In those cases, the Norwegian friends of immigrants at least knew about each other due to the small size of the community. I shall discuss the social integration of immigrants who live in small towns more extensively in chapter 13.

[160] See among others: Anwar (1985); Shaw (1988); Crowe and Allan (1994).

belong to a dense co-ethnic network even when fellow compatriots within the network operate in different arenas and occupy different social positions. Several things may connect these people. My informants pointed out that people had been 'in the same boat for a long time'. For example, they had lived together in a reception centre before they settled permanently in Norway. During this time they established tight relations with each other, spending countless hours watching TV, preparing meals and playing cards in common kitchens and activity rooms in the reception centre (Valenta 2001). During this time, they not only shared sleeping rooms, kitchens and bathrooms, but also similar experiences, and common feelings of being isolated from the local community and battling with the Norwegian authorities.[161] After being resettled in local municipalities, they often continued to participate together in Norwegian courses and integration related programs. These programs are also important arenas for reproducing pre-existing dense close-knit friendships with compatriots and for initiating new relations.

Because of their common ethnicity, immigrants may also develop a strong sense of affiliation. Even if things such as a common nationality, ethnicity, religion or connection to a particular region were not terribly important when they lived at home, they often became more relevant after resettlement, when co-ethnic ties were strengthened. Even immigrants and compatriots who conceived of each other as different may find a lot in common after resettlement. In order to generate a sense of fellowship, certain aspects of their similarity in relation to the mainstream society are developed. For example, sharing the same mother tongue and culture produces a feeling that they have much more in common with their own compatriots than with the hosts. As a result, immigrants feel that it is quite normal to introduce different ethnic friends to one another and to invite them to dinner, common parties, etc. Similarly, alters who are introduced to each other will be able to develop relations independently of intermediaries through the actualization of an ethnic fellowship and migrant experiences. In this way, they contribute to the density of their own personal networks. In certain instances, these networking patterns may be reinforced if the immigrants have ethnic clubs or organizations or other arenas where their common religion, ethnicity and language are defined as the reason for gatherings.

9.2.1. Transcending and maintaining differences across the personal social network

Although compatriot friends are connected through dense, close-knit ties, this does not necessarily mean that the ethnic communities that my immigrant informants belong to are well integrated. It is important to note that when discussing dense migrant networks such as the ones described above, I do not categorize ethnic communities as single or whole entities. I refer primarily to the process that takes place within the personal networks migrants have, and between people who had individual or social similarities in addition to a common ethnic background and migrant experience. Within the ethnic part of immigrant networks we can usually distinguish areas or cliques that are characterized by a higher frequency of contact, higher density, multiplex ties, etc. For example, one Iraqi may know almost all of the other Iraqis who live in town, but still not have close relations to all of them. Similarly, an individual may socialize with many fellow compatriots during her stay at a reception centre, but afterwards have relations with only a few of them. Being together in a reception camp, having the same ethnic background or common migrant experiences may not in themselves be

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[161] Several studies have shown that a lack of contact with the hosts, as well as experiences of an inhospitable environment, is often compensated through different kinds of ethnic clustering (Anwar 1985; Crowe and Allan 1994; Barnes 2001).

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sufficient reason for close-knit clustering. It is first and foremost in combination with other similarities that they may compensate for certain distinctions and contribute to the development of dense weak ties across the ego's network. It is possible to argue that a sense of fellowship based on a shared ethnic background may be seen as the critical mass that helps to transcend certain dissimilarities (such as age, social status and educational background, for example). Because they relate to each other as compatriots in Norway, people who might never have become acquainted in their native countries sometimes allow themselves to approach each other and establish friendships.

> We are in contact with people here that we would not have come into contact with in our home country…In our home country, we would spent time with relatives, neighbours and workmates. Now, we feel that our compatriots at least have more in common with us than our Norwegian workmates and neighbours…A common culture and language become important in Norway (Croatian woman).

On the one hand, immigrant (ethnic) identity negotiations may strengthen certain relations within their compatriot networks. On the other hand, for the Norwegian contacts of immigrants, equivalent common characteristics will not necessarily serve as the critical mass that will outweigh other perceived dissimilarities. My data material suggests that Norwegians who make friends with immigrants will not necessarily make friends with the immigrant's other Norwegian friends. Compared to those they have with their compatriot friends, the ties immigrants have with Norwegians – for example workmates, fellow students or neighbours – are mainly established and reproduced within the workplace, neighbourhood or the frame of different parental responsibilities. Therefore, Norwegians who immigrants meet in different arenas will not have a proper chance to get acquainted with each other. Even if immigrants socialize with their Norwegian contacts during their leisure time, and introduce them to each other in neutral arenas, the chances of such relations developing any further are much lower than is the case with compatriot friends. Even if they are introduced to each other and become acquainted, the Norwegian contacts of immigrants do not necessarily have enough in common to transcend differences in such a way that they build their own ties with each other. Or to put it another way, they have a lot in common because they are Norwegians (for example: they share the same mother tongue, culture and a sense of imagined community, etc), but these things do not play the same role as they do for the compatriots of immigrants. They can refer to these things, as many do, only first when they are abroad (Gullestad 2006). In that case, their shared Norwegian identity may then become a legitimate reason for the establishment of closer relations.

Comparing the ties he has with his compatriots and those he has with Norwegians, one Croatian man commented:

> It would be strange introducing the Norwegians I know from the football club to my Norwegian workmates. Among other things, my workmates are mostly older family people, while the Norwegians I play football with are young… I invite people to a party two or three times every year, but I do not mix people. They do not have much in common. They have different interests and lifestyles (Croatian man).

The informant expresses his concern that some of his friends and acquaintances would not get on so well with some of the others. In order to prevent tense situations, he isolates his different contacts and maintains the fragmentation of the own personal network. Such concerns and behaviour are even more emphasized when it comes to building the 'bridges and walls' between Norwegian friends and compatriot friends.

When I am out in town with my Norwegian colleagues, we talk about work, other colleagues, etc. These topics would be boring for my neighbours or for my Bosnian friends….With my compatriots, I talk about the situation in our homeland, the good old days, our common friends and acquaintances and our situation in Norway…You know, we also gossip about Norwegians and their culture…My Norwegian friends cannot participate in these conversations because this is an unknown world for them. They do not have any experience of life in exile…That's why it's not odd that the two Norwegian friends I have do not know anyone else on the list[162] (Bosnian woman).

I have several Norwegian friends. Sometimes we go to the cinema or to a cafe…My wife and I sometimes invite our Norwegian neighbours and workmates to our home too...As you know, both my wife and I also have several Bosnian friends who we meet regularly in our spare time…Some of them are also our family friends….I feel sometimes that I neglect my friends, both Norwegian and Bosnian…When I decide to be together with my friends, it would be better if I could invite as many as possible, but this would be difficult…They are interested in different things (Bosnian man).

Even if immigrants have good reasons to invite the friends and acquaintances they have from different areas of their social life to a common social gathering, or if they wish in some way to connect the different parts of their personal network together, they tend to refrain from doing so. As pointed out above, immigrants may reject this option because of the perceived lack of a minimal common multiple between these ties. There are several forces that contribute to the self-imposed fragmentation of the network. Immigrants may have different type of conversations with their ethnic friends and their Norwegian friends. Moreover, different languages are used in interactions with compatriot friends and Norwegian friends. As we shall shortly discover, there are also other factors which contribute to the fragmentation of personal networks among immigrants – factors embedded in the local logic of interethnic encounters and immigrant identity negotiations. The advantage, among other things, of dividing compatriot and Norwegian audiences is that immigrants define and protect separate environments – and one of the most important is with their own people, where they can relax, use their own code and mother tongue, and not have to worry about being careful and reserved in the way that characterizes a great deal inter-ethnic interaction. By inviting a Norwegian audience into such 'back stage settings', immigrants risk disturbing their own social networks.

9.3. When compatriot and Norwegian friends meet

I have observed and participated in different situations and gatherings where both sets of friends, compatriot and Norwegian, were invited (diner parties, birthdays, weddings, etc). Such situations and gatherings may be quite chaotic. In contexts like these, the actors are ambivalent with regards to the language and codes of conduct. The gathering will take place either to the detriment of relations with compatriots or to relations with Norwegians. For example, if Norwegians are in the majority, then the immigrant's compatriot friends may be forced to speak Norwegian or to be more passive. If several guests are invited from both ethnic/language groups, the party may split in two across ethnic and language lines. Alternatively, if the immigrant's compatriot friends are in the majority, they may start to use their mother tongue – excluding Norwegian guests from the main interaction as a result. I

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[162] The informant refers here to her network map which shows that eight of ten friends in her network have direct relations to each other. Among these contacts, the only two who did not have any contact with the rest of the network were Norwegians.

observed such situations where the majority became minority. Although they did not understand the language, Norwegians in such settings were forced to pretend that they took part in the interaction.

Even if the 'majority' agree to accommodate the 'minority' by choosing the language and codes that were more or less accessible to all of the actors present, the situation would still not be entirely free of problems. When immigrants meet their fellow compatriots, they expect to relax and to exchange information and chat about their native country, common friends and shared migrant experiences: they certainly do not expect to have to present themselves in the kinds of minority roles associated with their workplace and other arenas of the host society (Longva 1987; Fladstad 1993; Akman 1995). In addition, immigrants may find it odd to have to speak Norwegian with each other in their spare time. Moreover, some are less proficient in Norwegian than others, and they will therefore be uncomfortable about showing their 'disability' to others. Immigrants may therefore experience the presence of Norwegians in such situations as a disturbance that reduces the quality of their leisure time.

Like most people, immigrants who are with their friends want to confirm and reinforce their relations. Mixed social gatherings and interactions are not suitable settings for achieving this aim. One Bosnian woman described the experience of just such a gathering, where she had invited both compatriot and Norwegian friends, in the following way:

> The Norwegian friend just sat there and smiled all evening, while the rest of us talked and laughed. Now and then, someone tried to include her by translating parts of our conversation, but these translations were no more than fragments of the discussion…I was embarrassed, so I came to her and spoke with her. I could see that she was grateful that I did that…On the other hand, I wanted to join the loose and interesting conversation on the other side of the room. I felt that I had sacrificed an interesting evening in order to entertain her (Bosnian woman).

The immigrant host wants to avoid such embarrassing episodes, as well as to maintain good relations with her different friends. As the above informant implies, she wants on the one hand to have a nice time with her friends, but on the other feels that it is her responsibility to make all of these friends feel comfortable when she invites them home. In order to achieve this, most immigrants preferred to organize and join in Norwegian evenings that are separate from evenings and activities with their compatriots. Therefore, unless they have some private agenda, people avoided participating in such interethnic situations. Even when they received sincere invitations to attend, compatriot friends had a habit of saying that they would come another time when they heard that Norwegians would also be there. As a result, ethnically mixed gatherings are often restricted to more formal gatherings such as weddings, housewarming-parties and birthdays. If the possibility of a spoiled self-presentation is considered high, however, even formal occasions such as these may be avoided.

The practical difficulties of communication are not the only reason why immigrants avoid situations where Norwegian and compatriot friends meet. Immigrants also separate these interactions and relations because they sometimes behave differently with compatriots and Norwegians. Immigrants have many reasons for adapting masks to suit different situations and relations.

9.4. Hyphenated identities and divided networks

I observed many situations where my informants under-communicated their ethnic identity and acted in accordance with Norwegian codes of conduct and values during interactions with Norwegians. Together with their compatriots, however, they adjusted their behaviour according to the norms, values and religious beliefs of their own ethnic group. It is not difficult to imagine that finding it necessary to assume different identities within the ethnic community and the world outside may lead to a division of 'audiences', 'stage settings' 'social worlds' and of 'the self'(Goffman 1959; Hewitt 2003). Situations where both Norwegian and compatriot contacts are present may sometimes undermine the self-image of the performing immigrant in relation to one or both of them. For example, Iraqis who had invested a lot of energy to appear like atheists with a Western lifestyle to their Norwegian friends may undermine their efforts if the Norwegian contacts find out that they have recently decided to have their sons circumcised (for religious reasons or to please their relatives and their ethnic community). Immigrants may also consider physical punishment a normal part of child rearing, but such behaviour will provoke and outrage Norwegians. On the other hand, these kinds of rituals and acts may in certain situations be legitimized and even expected by ethnic friends. Similarly, ethnic, Muslim friends may be quite astonished if they see an immigrant and his wife drinking alcohol and eating pork together with Norwegians.

After attending a Norwegian party, one Iraq informant who was an atheist with a western oriented lifestyle told me that he was taken aback when he saw some Iraqi women guests drinking alcohol. He remarked: 'If it was strange for me then I could just imagine how strange that scene was for other Iraqis who were present'. These episodes can easily become a source of gossip and result in different forms of social sanctioning. Therefore, in instances where representatives from both milieus are present, an immigrant will often become ambivalent about which type of self-presentation he or she should perform if the roles he or she normally plays involve any element of contradiction.

Both performers and their audience often know that a displayed image is an idealized picture of the person. Despite this, both sides may make joint efforts to maintain this image (Goffman 1959). This collaboration will work as long as the accepted reality is not contradicted by some direct evidence that cannot be overlooked by the audience. Direct confrontation with such evidence may force an audience to redefine their image of the person. Drawing on previous studies,[163] we may distinguish between at least two different types of ethnic identity work. In the first, immigrants are like chameleons that change their presentations from situation to situation. They behave like Norwegians when they are with Norwegians, but act very differently in the company of their compatriots. In contrast to 'chameleons', the second strategy is closer to an 'amphibian approach' where immigrants combine their Norwegian traits and their original ethnic characteristics in one consistent entity (Gullestad 2006). These immigrants emphasize that they are not only proud of their origin and culture, but also proud of their integration endeavours claiming that their post-immigration identity is a synthesis of the both (Modood 2003).

In line with Prieur (2004) I could call my informants 'balansekunstnere'[164] – they are immigrants who try to balance between minority and majority cultures and manage to juggle

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[163] See Barth (1969); Gilroy (1987); Hogg and Abrams (1988); Ålund (1991,1999); Modood (2003); Gullestad (2003, 2006).
[164] The Norwegian word 'Balansekunstner' is composed of two words – 'balanse' (balance) and 'kunstner' (artist). It normally refers to tightrope walkers but also to trapeze artists and other equilibrists.

both sets of codes in their everyday lives. My research seems to suggest that the identity negotiations of immigrants are often somewhere in between these two ideal types. Together with their fellow compatriots, they often claim that they have either not changed at all or made only minor adjustments to some superficial things. At the same time, immigrants know that if they want to get positive feedback from locals, they had to adjust and deploy some reconcilable hybrid composed of Norwegian traits on the one hand and an adapted version of their ethnic identity on the other (an image of being a westernized Muslim is a good example). Maintaining such an 'amphibian-look' involves certain periods of 'chameleon-work' from time to time, since in real life, certain irreconcilable expectations may always emerge from different ties in a person's network. The story that follows illustrates these concerns quite nicely.

> I sometimes have to act differently when I am with my compatriots and when I am together with Norwegians… When I am with Norwegians, I adjust to them. However, you cannot appear like a perfect Norwegian because you are not. No matter how much I tried, people would still look at me as a foreigner…When I am with my compatriots, I act differently, and I do not try to come across as a perfect Iraqi either. They know that I have adjusted to the Norwegian lifestyle in many ways…One tries instead to take off the sharp edges, to avoid things that may provoke…For example, I live with Norwegian women, but I did not tell my compatriots and my parents that we are not married…I also have friends who do not try to convince anyone that they are perfect Muslims. However, they do not advertise or let it be known to everybody that they drink alcohol and eat pork when they are with Norwegians (Iraqi man).

Most immigrants knew or anticipated that the majority of their compatriots would accept that not all of the old ethnic ideals were equally valid in the new context. Nevertheless, if it is at all possible, immigrants will avoid displaying irreconcilable practices in order to prevent direct confrontations with people in their personal networks. It is in the person's interest to conform to interactional orders and the expectations of different audiences without provoking his friends directly. In order to do that, the immigrant has to keep certain relations separate and to exclude an incompatible audience from certain situations. In that way, the immigrant can keep up her or his idealized ethnic images with respect to what he should do and what he should be. As long as the immigrant is successful in managing networks, it matters little that parts of the audience will know that the displayed reconcilable hyphenated ethnic identities and amphibian-look images are idealized ones, for they will be not forced to take a stance and respond to actual deviant behaviour. The pretence will be maintained as long as an individual's identity claims are not widely questioned by the people in the network.

> My parents know that I live with my boyfriend in a collective along with other Norwegian students. We are not married; however, they somehow overlook this fact. As long as I have a reputation as a respectable and serious girl, I don't think that they really mind…If people started to gossip about me, things would change...I think that this will not happen. Anyway, I very rarely meet Bosnians, so they do not know much about my life (Bosnian woman).

As the informant indicates, an 'out of sight, out of mind' philosophy is seen as a solution to the aforementioned conflicts of loyalty. It should be noted that the strategy of separate relations and self-presentations does not only follow ethnic division lines. Several immigrants I met have indicated that that they also keep some of their compatriot friends apart. Compatriots in a network may be too different and immigrants may display different sides of their self to them too. For example, some compatriot friends may be quite conservative, while others embrace the new codes. Immigrants knew that if they invited these people to common

social events and introduced them to each other, both sets would feel uncomfortable. Therefore they try to isolate these relationships from each other. Nevertheless, these processes of 'keeping apart' are much more emphasized along the ethnic division line. It seems that the chances of conflict, inconsistencies, and embarrassing episodes taking place are much higher when compatriot contacts meet Norwegian contacts than when compatriot contacts meet each other.

9.5. Fighting with imposed identities: 'I blushed with shame because of them'

One Bosnian immigrant once said: 'People at school always call us Bosnians. I am not happy with this because I actually have my own name' (Olsen 1998: 135). Immigrants are aware that, in the eyes of indigenous locals, they share certain common identities. If the immigrants choose to present themselves collectively, for instance together with their compatriot friends, to their hosts, then the chances that each immigrant will be perceived as an individual are considerably reduced. It is easier to be recognized as an individual 'with your own name' if the immigrant plays the game alone. For example, if an immigrant spends time on his own in the company of Norwegians, they will say that they were in town with 'Omar'. If the Norwegians were with Omar and two or three of his compatriots, however, they are more likely to say that they were in town with some Iraqis.

Immigrants who spoke with me indicated that they are reluctant to have Norwegians together with compatriots because the former cannot distinguish so easily between what are immigrants' personal characteristics and what are their common cultural practices. If one or more of the compatriot friends starts to behave in a way that embarrasses the immigrant, s/he can still be reasonably sure that other compatriot friends will hold the individual or individuals concerned responsible for the deviant behaviour. In the case of Norwegian contacts, the immigrant will be less certain, because embarrassing actions may be related to a shared cultural background. In what follows, an elderly woman recalls an episode where some compatriots behaved in what she felt to be an improper manner:

> I blushed with shame because of them. What could I do, I belonged to that group. Norwegians couldn't make distinctions. We were Bosnians, nothing more. I couldn't say that I disprove of that kind of behaviour and that I did not identify myself in any way with those fools… If some of us were crazy, I felt responsible (Bosnian woman).

This woman felt that it was not only her own actions that mattered in interactions with Norwegians – the behaviour of her compatriots also mattered when she was in their presence, since she and they were linked through a common collective identity. If we paraphrase Goffman, we might suggest that if several immigrants are involved in face-to-face interaction with Norwegians, they often find themselves judged as a 'performing team' (Goffman 1992) because of their common ethnic identity. As long as immigrants are anxious that the performance of the team may disturb and undermine their individual self-presentation in any given situation, they will try to interact with Norwegians while their fellow compatriots are not present.

> Generally speaking, I feel much more comfortable with Norwegians when other immigrants are not present…In the beginning I attended school with my compatriots. I was embarrassed many times…Once, one of my compatriots described how people in Yugoslavia lived to the teacher and other students in the class. The whole story was really embarrassing and had nothing to do with my experience…He was from some

underdeveloped part of the country…It was much better when I started in an ordinary Norwegian class. In the new class, there was just one other person who was from the former Yugoslavia and he was quite different from my compatriots in the first class. Everyone thought that he was cool. He provided us Croats with a totally different image (Croatian woman).

In addition to the concern mentioned above, there may be other related tensions and interplay between immigrants' social and individual identities, which in turn finds expression in their strategies and personal networks. Among other things, immigrants may not only construct an idealized coherent personal hyphenated identity, but also construct an idealized collective identity on their own. This (re)construction is carried out via the immigrant's personal impression management and through positive stories about the social group. An immigrant's everyday performances, lifestyle and general social practice tell others something about who s/he is, but at the same time may suggest something about the social category s/he belongs to. This strategy is in line with similar strategies identified in other literature on this topic: Tajfel (1987), for instance, suggests that if changing the group is not feasible, anyone who is unhappy with the existing group identity may attempt to improve and redefine the identity of the group by assigning a new meaning to that identity (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Tajfel 1987; Snow and Anderson 1993).

No matter how successful an immigrant may be in 'breaking through' (Goffman 1963) with the hosts, he or she may sometimes experience being partially judged on the basis of her ethnic identity. Therefore, the immigrant may engage in a private construction of her ethnic identity, making her own version of how Bosnians, Croats, Iraqis, etc are. Again, in order for this kind of individual reconstruction of social identity to succeed, her/his Norwegian contacts must be kept separate from compatriot friends who do not fit in with this revised and idealized picture of the ethnic group, this social identity that it takes considerable efforts to (re)construct.

When we are with Norwegians, we speak proudly about our compatriots who have done well while we avoid mentioning compatriots who we are not so proud of… We do not want Norwegians to think that people from Bosnia are bad. We want people from Bosnia to be thought of as highly educated, hard working people from Europe…We mention that some of our compatriot friends are executives, engineers, or teachers, but we seldom dare to introduce some of our compatriot friends to our Norwegian friends. You never know how they will behave. For this reason, we are very careful about choosing which of our compatriot friends we shall introduce to Norwegians (Bosnian man).

As the informant suggests, by choosing the individual strategy of self-presentation in interethnic interactions and relations with Norwegians, immigrants reduce the chances of their compatriot friends discrediting them. The individual strategy gives them the possibility of reconstructing their ethnic identity through their own actions, and independently of the compatriot performing team. These reasons may also explain why several of my informants felt that compatriots often kept their Norwegian friends to themselves.[165] The one possible interpretation must simply be that they were unsuitable for display, since they were not the proper specimens of their kind. During my fieldwork, I have participated at many social events and seen these selection mechanisms at first hand. Immigrants who invested a lot of energy in reproducing fragile ethnic identity constructions mixed only a few of their most

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[165] Norwegian contacts are among some immigrants considered as social, economical and symbolical resource. Immigrants who were lacking them complained that their ethnic friends did not want to share these contact with them.

respectable compatriot friends with their Norwegian contacts, while other compatriots were kept separate. Sometimes, even the best people will be kept separate. For example, immigrants may sometimes criticize and even ridicule their own ethnic group and homeland to give the sense that this group identity and prejudices associated with it do not apply to them (and thereby maintaining an image as being an exception to the general rule). A broad reduction in the contact an individual has with the ethnic community, which will include avoiding being seen together with other members of that community, will then strengthen the image the immigrant wants to display to Norwegian contacts.

9.6. Summary: Immigrant network management and the self

To sum up: the personal networks of most immigrants I met have at least two common structural characteristics: a) they are stratified along ethnic lines; b) the compatriot part of the network is in most cases characterized by higher density. In this chapter, I tried to make sense of these patterns of immigrant social integration. I argued that some of the structural characteristics of immigrant networks could be explained by chain migration, the size of the ethnic community, life in the reception centre and common migration experiences. Furthermore, I suggested that feelings of solidarity and fellowship that emerge between compatriots after resettlement may also contribute to the density of their ethnic networks. While the ties an immigrant has with Norwegians are often anchored in different social arenas (a neighbourhood, school, workplace, etc), an immigrant's compatriot friends may be connected independently from these social arenas. Through actualizing their common ethnicity, origin and exile experience, compatriot friends strengthen the relations they have with each other.

I argued that there may be a certain duality in the ethnic identity deployment of immigrants – a duality which both consolidates and fragments their personal social networks. On the one hand, shared ethnicity, culture and language is actualized and used to compensate for differences that exist among compatriot friends. In this context, an ethnic identity and the cultural practices associated with it may connect people and contribute to the increases density of immigrant personal networks. On the other hand, I met immigrants who distanced themselves from their own ethnic group and from practices associated with it while they were together with Norwegian friends. This flexibility in identity deployment presupposes a separation of the social life.

I uncovered three main motivational factors that propel this segmentation of a person's social life. *The first* is connected to the practical problems that accompany encounters between immigrants and their hosts. There are several practical dilemmas connected with mixed gatherings – among others, uncertainty about whose codes, language, etc will be used. These situations are often awkward and uncomfortable, which is why some immigrants will try to avoid them. *The second fact*or is related to the finding that immigrants resist being identified as members of a performing team who are responsible for each others actions. Interacting with hosts as a group means that immigrants risk being perceived collectively, which may in turn mean that – in the case of spoiled performances – they end up being categorised as having a uniformly backward culture. As a result, some immigrants preferred the one-man approach. Entering Norwegians arenas and networks alone, without compatriots, they had a better chance of appearing to have specific individual characteristics. If the one-man approach was not possible, they carefully selected compatriot teams, preferring those who supported the desired individual and collective identities. *The third factor* that contributes to the

segmentation of immigrant social life is connected to the maintenance of coherent identities which presupposes the separation of different audiences and channels of social control. We have seen that proper network management may enable the undisturbed reproduction of coherent identities both in relation to compatriot and to Norwegian friends.

Based on the arguments presented in this chapter, it is possible to argue that network fragmentation – commonly associated with a weak degree of social integration – is not necessarily an indicator of unsuccessful integration or segregation. For some immigrants, network fragmentation may be an important precondition for integration into mainstream society. Sometimes, people openly rebel against others if their expectations are too inconsistent with a person's identities, interests and current behaviour. There are other cases where immigrants will suffer from the sanctions of others – with occasionally tragic consequences. In still other instances, immigrants may find themselves in a position that enables them to challenge the normative expectations of their ethnic community – expectations and rules which individuals or small groups may believe are no longer relevant or valid in the new social environment. Most immigrants, however, rebel against the expectations of the other in more disguised ways, through partial adjustments, selective acculturation and synchronic identities, and without risking direct confrontations and sanctions. Balancing between these different sets of expectations, they may unwittingly contribute to preserving the dominant and pre-existing rules about what actions and identities are appropriate for members of their ethnic community or network. On the other hand, these adjustments may silently undermine the old institutions. Although introduced through the backdoor, such innovative practices may gradually spread wider, altering the attitudes and ethno-social practices of other immigrants.

Chapter 10: Social interaction and social structure

So far, I have shown that the self-work of immigrants is very closely connected to the rearrangement of social relations and networks. In this chapter, I argue that immigrant strategies not only influence these micro structures, but are also strongly influenced by them. The kind of strategy adopted depends on the type of relational and social contexts that frame the particular ethno-social behaviour. In what follows, I firstly outline some of the major strategies immigrants deploy in face-to-face interactions with indigenous locals, before subsequently linking these strategies to their structural frames.

10.1. Strategic interactions and stigmatized ethnic identity

In many situations, the social identity of immigrants is primarily associated with their discredited ethnic origin. There are several ways of coping with stigma which are described in previous research (Ruggiero and Taylor 1997; Miller *et al.* 1995; Miller and Kaiser 2001). One way of coping with stigma is to deny or minimize the existence of the problem (Ruggiero and Taylor 1997; Miller and Kaiser 2001). Furthermore, stigma may also be coped with through compensation, where the stigmatized person behaves in a socially skilful or stereotype-disconfirming fashion (Miller *et al.* 1995; Miller and Kaiser 2001). These strategies may also be found among immigrants in my study:

> We constantly try to convince them that we are not as they think we are. They have so many prejudices about immigrants…. We confront some of these stereotypes every day… I sometimes lose my temper and pick arguments. Sometimes, I just ignore the whole thing… I think that most of us, however, try to show that the stereotypes are wrong through our behaviour…I am more conscious of good manners when I am with them than when I am with my compatriots (Bosnian woman).

> Many of them think that we are uncivilized, or that we are criminals, fundamentalists, parasites who do not want to work, etc…I do not want to be seen in that way...Therefore, I think about what I say, what I do and what clothes I wear (Iraqi man).

In everyday life, the strategies described here are activated in different forms, and together with other types of self-work. For example, during my fieldwork, I have heard anecdotes intended to illustrate and ridicule the ignorance and prejudices of the hosts. I have witnessed how immigrants have handled being stigmatized and categorized in stereotypic ways through ridicule, self-irony and sarcasm. The immigrants I have met have frequently used similar strategies in order to make sense of and play down the significance of the humiliations they experience in daylight encounters.

> The lady who was selling the tickets noticed that we were foreigners and informed us that they had unisex bathrooms in the swimming pool…This was little bit insulting, but we joked about it afterwards…Before we went in the bathroom we recalled her comment. We said to each other 'haram' and went inside. We got a good laugh because of that woman's comments (Iraqi man).

Many anecdotes circulating in ethnic networks demonstrate directly or indirectly how the prejudices of natives reveal how ignorant and even stupid they may be in respect to migrants. The informant above describes a concrete situation and the way in which he and his friend coped afterwards with the stereotypes they were subjected. Immigrants have also used irony

and sarcasm in interacting with indigenous locals. They sometimes even consciously tried to embarrass those indigenous locals who treated them in negative and stereotypical ways (for example by exaggerating stereotypes about their own ethnic group in an amusing or ironic manner) in order to expose or ridicule the absurdity of these categorizations. In that way, they demonstrated to the Norwegian audience that the stereotypical images and roles indigenous locals associated them with did not coincide in any way with their real self.

> I sometimes provoke my workmates and neighbours when they ask me stupid questions. I tell them incredible things. I said once that I received 2 million NOK when I was given asylum in Norway, and they believed me. They are sometimes embarrassed when they realize that I take the mickey out of their ignorance and out of Norwegian prejudices about foreigners (Croatian man).

The informants above speak primarily about the intrapersonal and interpersonal mastering of felt and enacted stigma via 'role distance behaviour' (Goffman 1961). Another way of dealing with a discredited identity in the course of face-to-face interaction is by the positive self-promotion of aspects of their identity. In order to deal with discrediting interpretations of the self in a particular situation, immigrants may actualize other, more affirmative, sides of their social identity. If immigrants occupy a prominent occupational, economical or cultural position in the community, they tend to actualize these aspects of their social identity during everyday encounters in order to downplay ethnic stigma. Alternatively, immigrants may try to minimize the ethnic aspect of their social identity by emphasizing their personal and situational identity instead. In such cases, the immigrant will foreground their current role and the status it brings, in an attempt to convince the others that it is the here and now that matters – not where the person came from, or which group the person belongs to etc. However, in order to deploy positive situational identity, the immigrant must have the possibility of choosing to occupy a favourable role in these situations. Therefore, if the situation is defined in such a way that actualization of these roles and status is not permitted, the immigrant may have to redefine the situation or strategically to select arenas where it is easier to actualize the favourable aspects of one's identity (or at least to seek out arenas where the possibility of ethnic discrediting is lesser).

> I choose where I go. I avoid certain places and situations. Conversations with people in the taxi queues or in cafes late in the evening may be quite unpleasant…I often feel insecure when I encounter Norwegians for the first time. They will ask me where I am from, etc. I avoid such situations (Iraqi man).

> I feel most comfortable when I am at work. Everybody knows me there. The fact that I am a foreigner is more or less irrelevant there. People do not focus on that. The most important thing is who is in charge. People respect me there, partly because of my position. If anyone says anything to me, I can always remind him that I am the boss here (Bosnian man).

In order to be seen in the light of their personal identity, immigrants have to have some opportunity to present the full complexity of their composed identities to other people. We know that these kinds of opportunity will present themselves if the immigrant interacts with the same person over a longer period of time. However, it is often the case that immigrants simply do not have these opportunities in their daily lives. Therefore, in everyday situations they risk being seen as simplified, comic strip figures rather than real human beings with composite identities. Many of them also have to play low status roles connected with occupations (as cleaners, paperboys or simply as foreigners), and do not have any possibility

of making their individual self-biography and uniqueness known. If immigrants are confined to deploying discredited situational identities in interacting with their hosts, there is a strong chance that they may get the impression that there is no social aspect of their ethnic, social and personal identity that the hosts will value. Active strategies such as those presented above do not constitute the dominant strategies among these people. Instead, they more frequently resort to different forms of withdrawal during mixed interaction, often in combination with a minimizing of their ethnicity via 'passing' and 'covering'.

10.1.1. Passing and Covering

Goffman (1963) distinguished between 'passing' and 'covering' when he outlined the different strategies that 'discredited' and 'discreditable' people use in everyday life. Passing is mostly associated with strategies of information management that the discreditable use in order to pass for normal, while covering is mostly associated with the strategies of discredited people who try to reduce the obviousness of a known attribute. It is common for potentially stigmatized ethnic minorities, immigrants and refugees to change or adjust their accent, names and appearance in order to fit in better and to get positive feedback in interaction with the indigenous local population (Goffman 1963; Tajfel 1987; McIntosh *et al.* 2004). Most of the immigrants that I met during my fieldwork invested a considerable amount of energy in looking, behaving and communicating in conformance with Norwegian rules of conduct. Being distinctive, and knowing that such distinctiveness was perceived as something negative, meant that immigrants would resort to different ways of reducing the degree of their singularity.

> We adjust to the Norwegian way of living. People gradually change their clothes, hair styles, etc. People go to work by bicycle, and eat lunch packs like the Norwegians. Some of us do that because we want to accept the positive sides of Norwegian culture. Some adjustments are for certainly made because we do not want to stick out too much. You know what they say - when in Rome… (Croatian man).

What emerged from my study was that immigrants, in one way or another, would attempt to adjust or make their personal appearance conform to Norwegian norms and styles. Especially in situations where they had to interact with strangers in public, potentially stigmatized immigrants attempted as much as possible to blend in and to hold a low profile. In some cases, this is done in order to draw attention away from their assumed negative attributes, without trying to pretend to be someone else. But such strategies can be taken even further. Those who are physically undistinguishable from Norwegians, may in some situations try to pass themselves off as Norwegians, while those whose appearance makes this difficult will occasionally attempt to present themselves in association with some 'high status' foreign European county (for instance Italy, France or – if they are black – with Jamaica or the USA).[166]

> They usually think that I am from southern Europe. When I am asked where I come from, I often refer to the name of the city of my birth which they have never heard of, and I then change the subject of conversation…I used to do this because I felt that they would look down on me if they heard where I came from. I am not used to be viewed with disrespect (Bosnian man).

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[166] There may be cases where members of one stigmatized group deal with their ethnic stigma by pretending to be members of another, less stigmatized immigrant group. Fernandez-Kelly and Konczal (2005) show, for instance, how Nicaraguans in Miami pretend to be Cubans in order to reduce stigmatization.

Minorities who mange to 'pass' will constantly face the danger of being unmasked (Tajfel 1987, 1970). The discreditable person will be concerned with the possibility that others will discover discrepancies between their 'virtual' and 'actual social identity' (Goffman 1963/1990: 12). Therefore, the people whose distinguishing characteristics are not visible face the constant task of managing information when in public (Gaines 2001). For example, if immigrants are 'invisible' in the sense of race and physical appearance, but easily distinguishable from the way that they speak, they may, as this informant indicate, in certain situations cover, pass and merge via strategic communicative action or withdrawal.[167] People who are very obviously members of an non-western immigrant category use other types of strategy. Visible immigrants may for example counteract their visible ethnic markers with status symbols in order to signal that they have to be associated with other and more favourable social, situational or personal attributes. During my fieldwork, I could observe how visible, non-western immigrants undermined their stigmatized ethnic identity with 'disidentifiers' (Goffman 1963) in order to cope with stigma in everyday life.[168] I had the opportunity of seeing how immigrants used various symbols in order to communicate their occupational status, jobs, class position etc – for example by emphasizing contemporary taste and sophisticated style in their clothing, or by wearing t-shirts with the logo of the company where they worked, etc).

It is important to note that the strategies presented above should not be understood as social ideal types. There is no single pure case that can be described as entirely representative of the social practice of immigrants. It seems rather that immigrants change between different strategies of self-presentation in their everyday lives, depending on situational frames and their personal capacities and predispositions. In some circumstances, immigrants pass, while in others they rely more on covering. There are some encounters during which immigrants remain passive in relation to the frames of interaction. In such situations they adjust their impression management to conform to the norms of the majority and to already existing definitions of the situation. In still other cases, immigrants have worked actively to influence and negotiate pre-established definitions of given situations, or have strategically selected those social contexts which best facilitated the deployment of their situational identities.

Nevertheless, it is possible to make distinctions between the different patterns of behaviour. For instance, those immigrants who have the best predispositions for passing will be more inclined to use passing-strategies than those who do not have these predispositions.[169] Similarly, immigrants whose status is higher than their low ethnic attributes will be more inclined to re-establish or redefine interactions in ways that make such status relevant. Immigrants whose status is congruent with their potentially stigmatized ethnic status will not have the same possibility or inclination for such redefinitions.

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[167] For more on this category of immigrants and their 'communicative withdrawal', see chapter 5.

[168] Goffman (1963) calls signs that are the opposite of 'stigma symbols', 'disidentifiers'. Disidentifiers are signs that tend to break up an otherwise coherent picture, giving them a positive direction desired by the actor, and calling into question the validity of virtual, potentially stigmatized, identity (Goffman 1963/1990: 60).

[169] For example, communicative withdrawal was part of passing for many Ex-Yugoslavs who ordinarily could pass as Norwegians when in public. Therefore, 'to start to speak' was a risky action that had social consequences for the given interaction and their self-presentation. This act influenced the definition of the situation and increased the possibility that their ethnic identity would be actualized in the course of the interaction.

10.2. Strategies within the frame of different relations and situational contexts

Some relations provide better conditions for a more favourable presentation of the self in face-to-face interactions than do others. Affirmative feedback within one specific social relation, or within a type of relation, can motivate the immigrant to maintain or evolve this specific social relation (or to try to initiate new relations of this type). Via strategic interaction, the immigrant may achieve breakthroughs in social relations with members of the host population. Personalizing relations in this way may have an impact on what kinds of further strategies the immigrant adopts at the interactional level. I already argued that immigrants constantly distinguish and select between different types of contact and ties with indigenous locals, among other things, and between strangers and friends. It appears that different contacts and ties embed different tensions and constraints. Therefore, the type of strategy used by the immigrant depends very much on what type of relation the interaction happens within and on the situational context that frame the given encounter. For instance, avoidance and passing seem to be mostly used in casual or random interactions with strangers in public. But it is pointless hiding one's ethnic identity with people who know the immigrant well. In these relations, they will prefer to draw attention away from their ethnicity (if they experience their ethnic background as a discrediting factor in the given situation) than to hide it totally.

Passing is primarily used in interactions with hosts whom the immigrants do not expect to meet again, or with people whom they will not develop further relations with. Passing is closely connected to issues of information control and the possibility of information spreading. Passing as someone else depends on how feasible it is to disguise one's immigrant background from the other, and what consequences this might have. If, for instance, an Iraqi or Bosnian immigrant tries to pass as a French student to a potential girlfriend, and she later finds out that he actually lives in a reception camp and is not from France, the person will appear dishonest and pathetic in his own eyes and in the eyes of others. The individual will be discredited because he hid his potentially discredited background. In situations where there is a high risk of such disclosure and discrediting, the immigrant will not choose passing as his strategy. The discreditable person will prefer the risk of rejection in order to stand out as someone who is honourable and proud. Several immigrants who took part in the study have spoken about embarrassing episodes where they or some of their compatriots had disguised themselves in this way. It is pointed out in these stories how problematic it may be to pass as somebody else in contexts other than those that involve occasional interactions with strangers.

> I know boys who say that they are from Italy or France when they are out on the town. They want to impress the girls. It is not difficult to understand why they do so… It may work if it is a one night stand. At the same time, I cannot understand how they dare to do that… I know one Bosnian guy who said to one Norwegian lady that he was from Italy. The problem was that they became close. I think that they live together now. They were together several months, but he did not want to admit that he had lied. He persisted with this masquerade even though everyone knew the truth - including her. The whole thing was quite embarrassing (Iraqi man).

Another way of coping with potential stereotypes is through the use of narratives and individual reconstructions of a particular ethnic identity. The self may be presented via narratives, but what it is possible to tell people about oneself will differ from situation to situation and from relation to relation. Immigrants construct positive identities of themselves through narratives, primarily in speaking with their Norwegian friends. In interactions with these friends, immigrants have a better possibility of presenting their life-stories. Through strategic accounts of themselves immigrants may emphasize their personal selves. Presenting

their biography and supplying explanatory information and photographs, etc, immigrants may show their Norwegian friends who they were before they left their home country. In this way, individuals attempt to show that the way that they are perceived in society needs to be modified, and can further argue that their situated virtual identity does not reveal the full complexity and truth of their actual social and personal identity. In occasional interactions with strangers and acquaintances, most immigrants have very limited opportunities to present such extensive self-narratives.

Generally speaking, immigrants find that in interactions with Norwegian friends, they can allow themselves to do things that they would refrain from in interactions with strangers. For example, the ridiculing of discrediting categorizations, and the use of sarcasm and irony that I mentioned earlier, were more appropriate during conversations with friends. These strategies are mostly used in interactions with those members of the indigenous population whom the immigrant knows and trusts.

> You cannot use self-irony or sarcasm because you don't know how people will react. People who know you well will realize that you are joking, while others who do not know you and who are ignorant of your culture may think that are being serious…If you say to people who do not know you well that your wife is not obedient enough and that you will have to beat her soon, they will not understand that you are ridiculing Norwegian stereotypes about Muslim men. People are ignorant and may take you seriously (Iraqi man).

As the informant suggests, there is a danger that strangers may misunderstand longer explanations, the use of self-irony and provocative statements. The relational and situational frames influence the deployment of other strategies as well: for example, status symbols and disidentifiers that can be used to counteract and draw attention away from a stigmatized ethnic identity are not equally relevant during interaction with Norwegian friends. Statements made through such status symbols as clothes, cars etc, are primarily used in public interactions with strangers where visible immigrants cannot say to everyone they meet, 'You know, I am not what you think that I am, I am actually a law-abiding hard working family man who deserves to be treated with respect'. The Norwegian friends and acquaintances of immigrants already know this, so immigrants do not need to use such disidentifiers in their company. But disidentifiers which place too much emphasis on a directly superior class-position may actually be contra-productive, since an individual may risk giving the impression of being a boaster and a snob to friends. Therefore, in the course of face-to-face interaction with Norwegian peers, immigrants will instead try to foreground only those aspects of their status, habitus and of their personal characteristics (for example, good manners, distinctive taste and redefinitions of situations) that entitles them to membership in that particular peer group.

10.3. Immigrants as an ethnic minority in interactions with Norwegian friends

In face-to-face interaction with Norwegians, immigrants may try to establish a definition of the situation whereby their ethnic status is seen as positive or at least in contrast with other, less favourable, aspects of their status. Here, it is important to recall that the feeling of being interpreted through the stigmatized ethnic identity is typically reduced in interaction with

Norwegian friends and acquaintances.[170] The real problem in these relations is that they are structured as majority/minority relations where the Norwegian language and Norwegian codes of conduct have to be used. Consequently, the immigrant's self-presentation is primarily directed at providing a good self-presentation despite occupying a minority position.

There are several ways in which immigrants cope with their minority position in face-to-face interactions with members of the ethnic majority. In situations where immigrants are not familiar with the main codes of conduct in Norway or with the subject of conversation (or at times when the communicational requirements are too high), an adopted passivity appears to be thought of as the best way to avoid a discrediting performance. One Iraqi man said:

> When they speak about things that I am not familiar with simply because I was not born in Norway, I just listen and wait until the topic of conversation changes to something more neutral, or to more international topics… They might talk for example about their experiences or exchange anecdotes from school or childhood. The same thing happens during discussions about Norwegian writers or music, etc. How should I know who was a popular Norwegian musician or actor when they were teenagers?

The most common strategy adopted by many of my immigrants, when they interact with their Norwegian contacts, was to let them have the initiative. Again, immigrants are sometimes reluctant to speak in other situations, but this is not the same as communicative passivity in interacting with strangers and it is not linked with stigma, ethnic markers and passing. On such occasions, rather, passivity is one way of coping with interactions that are framed as majority/minority relations – relations where the Norwegian language and Norwegian codes of conduct have to be used. However, even if passivity is perhaps the most dominant line of adaptation, it is certainly not the only one. If the situation and the abilities of the actor allow, immigrants may try a more active mode of involvement.

In order to control or partially direct the process of interaction, immigrants engaged in an activity known as 'altercasting' (Weinstein and Deutschberger 1963). This means that their actions were meant to constrain and limit what others could be and do in relation to them (Hewitt 2003: 173).[171] I observed from time to time how immigrants attempted to influence the subject of conversation, the self-presentation of others and even how the situation was defined when interacting with Norwegian friends and acquaintances. Immigrants for instance attempted to change the definition of situations that began as friendly conversations between co-workers when the dialogue switched to subjects that were totally unfamiliar to them (episodes from Norwegian military service or high school, for example). Immigrants transformed these situations into serious professional discussions between co-workers, or steered the conversation towards more international topics. These restrictions on what roles indigenous locals were allowed, and the interaction that resulted from these constraints, led to a greater comfort level for the immigrants involved. Consequently, successful redefinition results in more inclusive and safer interaction for immigrants, with fewer limitations on their

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[170] Goffman's concepts (Goffman 1963) of breakthrough and mixed interactions are discussed earlier in the study. Since a breakthrough in these relations has already taken place, face-to-face interactions that happen within the frame of these relations are not primarily characterized as 'mixed'. In these relations, immigrants enjoy being seen and accepted on the basis of their personal identity, not on their potentially stigmatized ethnic identity.

[171] The term altercasting is usually associated with the process in which one person's actions constrain the actions of another by 'casting' the other into a particular role proffered by the 'altercaster'. Altercasting may be an effective strategy for controlling the definition of a situation (Weinstein and Deutschberger 1963; Hewitt 2003).

own self-presentation, because the interaction will be more clearly defined and will require less familiarity with aspects of the Norwegian code.

> I prefer to speak with my workmates about things that are directly related to our job. We are equal in such discussions because we refer to clearly defined issues and use our common engineer-vocabulary… It is much more difficult to participate in vaguely defined talks and gatherings where people speak about everything and nothing. In such situations, you have to react quickly if you want to participate. Sometimes, the conversation goes too fast – too fast for me at least (Bosnian man).

I observed various situations where immigrants intervened actively in discussions in order to avoid talk about local, 'Norwegian' issues that they knew little about. Immigrants even tried to place themselves at the centre of the interaction, if only momentarily. Some of these informants indicated that they sometimes deliberately engaged more actively in face-to-face interactions in order to steer away from problematic situations. It seems in certain cases that these strategies prevent embarrassing lapses in the conversation and reduced feelings of communicative subordination when interacting with the ethnic majority. In such situations, immigrants lead and steer conversation in order to cope with broader cultural and communicational aspects of inter-ethnic interaction. When they took the initiative in this way, other actors responded directly to the statements they had made. Since Norwegian friends spoke directly to them about whatever topics they brought up, it was also easier for them to understand and to give adequate answers.

Furthermore, some immigrants tried to avoid active participation in conversations and self-presentations when there were many Norwegians present since, according to my informants, the conversation got out of control and it was difficult for them to follow its high tempo. Others claimed that steering and actively controlling the interaction was especially important in these situations (see also Valenta 2001).[172]

I also witnessed immigrants taking the initiative even when they had little familiarity with the Norwegian language. Nevertheless, they appeared as self-confident individuals with a strong personality. They did not try to hide their deficient Norwegian. They openly invited Norwegian counterparts to help them if they could not find a proper Norwegian word and formulation, or supported their self-presentation with gesticulations, body language and English parlance.

10.3.1. Emphasizing one's own ethnicity and culture

The way that immigrants negotiate their identity may in certain contexts also include emphasizing their ethnic markers: Here, they try to introduce their own culture instead of suppressing it. This can be achieved by placing such self-presentations in contexts where the positive aspects of their ethnic identity and culture can be actualized. Some immigrants organized evenings where they taught their Norwegian friends to cook ethnic food. Some organized courses where they taught them their language, while others taught their Norwegians contacts how to play ethnic music or to perform certain traditional dances.

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[172] There is a variety of other strategies that immigrants may use in these situations. For instance, if several Norwegian friends are involved in the interaction, immigrants may try to pull someone out of a group conversation that they feel uncomfortable or uncertain about, usually the person who is sitting or standing closest to the immigrant, and to establish more manageable one-to-one interaction with the counterpart in interaction.

Within these defined situations, immigrants could play roles that contributed to the establishment of favourable situational identities. These definitions enabled them to gain praise and admiration for their cultural skills.

Immigrants will sometimes gain control over the process of interaction through actively determining the physical and social contexts that frame and define inter-ethnic encounters and relations. Immigrants choose situated identities based on their estimation of how these may contribute positively to their desired social and personal identity. Some immigrants would visit public places where their particular ethnic identity might have positive connotations. They arranged for presentations of the self to take place in various situations where it could be demonstrated that they had qualities and attributes that were valued by others. Within certain arenas, immigrants may experience even casual interactions with mere acquaintances and strangers as pleasant. For example, I met immigrants who told me how marvellous it was to be in the city during the evening and to dance Salsa and Marengue at popular discotheques and dance clubs. In these contexts they were able to be recognised for the cultural knowledge they possessed.

While attending a dance club during the period of my fieldwork, I heard one immigrant say, 'Of course I dance Salsa, I am from Chile, let's dance'! For immigrants, it would be counterproductive to suppress aspects of their ethnicity in those social contexts where they become important resources, valued and appreciated by members of the majority population. In the aforementioned contexts, immigrants communicated their ethnicity because it gave them authority in the shape of cultural rules that were relevant in the given situation. Although the ethnic dimension was still relevant in interacting with the Norwegians, these situations constituted an ideal frame for presenting themselves as members of an ethnic minority. The codes that immigrants are familiar with come to be the rules of the game in such contexts. Compared with the rest of the public space, where they had to present themselves in less favourable minority roles, this particular social context gave them the opportunity to decide, at least for a moment, what was right and wrong and who was 'cool' and who was not.[173]

10.3.2. Suppressing one's own ethnicity and culture

Immigrants try to adjust their self-presentations to fit with cultural, situational, and relational expectations. Withdrawal, passing and self-presentations that conform to minority roles seem to dominate the behaviour of immigrants in everyday life. From time to time they may also manage to redefine these frames. Generally, the more immigrants feel that they are seen in the light of their personal identity (or positive aspects of their social identity), the more active and self-confident they will be while presenting their situational identities in face-to-face interactions with the ethnic majority. In these encounters, immigrants are maybe less insecure about how they are perceived. Since their anxiety about how they might be categorized is reduced, they become more involved in the interaction.

My data suggests that immigrants who want to become integrated in Norwegian networks, try to make the best possible impression within the frames that the majority has determined. The experience of my informants is that their culture is often perceived as backward by their hosts.

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[173] In other words, in these social contexts, the majority-minority relation is temporarily turned upside down. This kind of redefinition is described in other studies: see Gotaas (1996); Høgmo (1998); Sandberg and Pedersen (2007).

They felt that their ethnic markers and their ethnic identity more often are a cause of stigma than a resource in everyday life. They found that each deviation from what the majority prescribed as normal had its price. The impression that cultural persistency and the maintenance of original ethnic markers reduced their possibilities for bridging with their hosts was often expressed.

Though they sometimes received positive feed back and social recognition because of their culture and ethnic identity, these cases were the exceptions that proved the rule. Immigrants soon realize that political rhetoric about an inclusive, multicultural and pluralistic society is not always followed. The naive expectation that the indigenous local will accept and respect the distinctive characteristics of their culture evaporates during the cumulative process of brutal personal everyday experiences. Therefore, for most informants who had bridging as their goal, the main aim of self-presentation in interactions with Norwegians was to act in a way that disconfirmed the stereotype rather than to promote their ethnicity and culture more actively.

10.4. Immigrants' identity work in interactions with indigenous locals: A Summary

Coping with the burden of ethnicity is a substantial part of the social life of immigrants who have to re-establish themselves in the host society within the frame of a prejudiced social reception. In this chapter, I presented two main arguments: a) In order to avoid or confront the negative aspects of daily reality, these immigrants will engage in a mastering of the self in face- to- face interactions with the hosts; b) the particular types of situational contexts and relationships immigrants have with their counterparts in interaction influence their own actions and the course of their self-presentation to a great extent.

If we draw on Cooley's analogy of the mirrors, we can say that immigrants try to do something with mirrors in which their self is reflected. Mirrors may be manipulated at different levels. In this chapter I showed how immigrants cope with the burden of their ethnicity in face-to-face interactions with indigenous locals, their friends, acquaintances and strangers. They cope with interethnic encounters and ethnic discrediting through the use of irony, sarcasm, disidentifiers, narratives, passing, and covering, etc. In some situations they rely on altercasting or they renegotiate how the situation is defined in the course of interaction: in others, their impression management is tailored to fit with the cultural codes of the majority. Furthermore, in some contexts, immigrants have to suppress their ethnic identity in order to gain positive evaluation, while in others they may gain acceptance and social recognition if they foreground their ethnic identity. I showed that some frames give better opportunities for passing and using disidentifiers, while others allow for the use of narratives and redefinitions of situation. Passing, avoidance and the use of disidentifiers are the most common strategies in occasional public interactions with strangers. The choice of strategies differs considerably during interactions with people who know immigrants personally: passing, for instance, would not be appropriate. Within these relational frames, they will not concern themselves so much with dealing with stigma, which also influences which strategy will be deployed. In relations with Norwegian friends where immigrants feel that they have a chance of being more realistically assessed for their personal qualities, they may prefer to engage in verbal identity negotiations and various redefinitions of the situation.

Immigrants are constantly engaged in producing definitions of situations that actualize the best aspects of their self. In some situations and contexts they will draw attention away from

aspects of their identity that they suspect may discredit them. In other situations and arenas where the majority and minority relations are turned upside down, they will not use covering as a strategy, but will instead emphasize their own ethnicity and culture. However, it seems that the most common strategy is to cover, compensate for and conform to established frames of interaction and to norms prescribed by the majority culture. If they have acquired a predisposition to do so, most immigrants adjust and merge in order to avoid being evaluated on the basis of a stigmatized culture and ethnic identities. In conforming to the existing relation of power, immigrants who want to break the barrier of misrecognition and exclusion will suppress their ethnic identity in interactions with the indigenous locals in the hope of achieving affirmative reflections and social acceptance.[174] Such an inclination to integrate, which may include behaving according to the normative expectations of the majority, may indeed result in gradual assimilation into the mainstream. Nevertheless, such efforts do not always led to gradual admittance into primary groups of the indigenous local majority population.

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[174] See also Eidheim (1969).

Chapter 11: Social trajectories and trajectories of the self

In this chapter, my focus is on how immigrants experience the process of social integration in the receiving country over a longer period of time. I outline dominant patterns as well as varieties in how the immigrant networks develop. My primary goal is to explore how the social trajectories after resettlement are linked to changes in personal networks and identities. I will argue that the ethno-social practices and identities of immigrants need to be seen in the light of their migration biographies, everyday experiences and anticipated future.

11.1. The ethno-social trajectories of immigrants

Relations between immigrants and their compatriots, or between immigrants and indigenous locals, may be stable or alter in several respects. The number of ties a person has to a social network may change and the intensity of relations may change. The stories immigrants tell reveal how they define the importance of relations with indigenous locals and with their compatriots. In what follows, I distinguish between strong and weak ties in ways that are similar to the trends in figure 3 (see chapter 7). For the sake of simplicity, the bonds between the immigrants and their own ethnic community are not included in figure 6.[175]

Figure 6: Modes of integration over the time
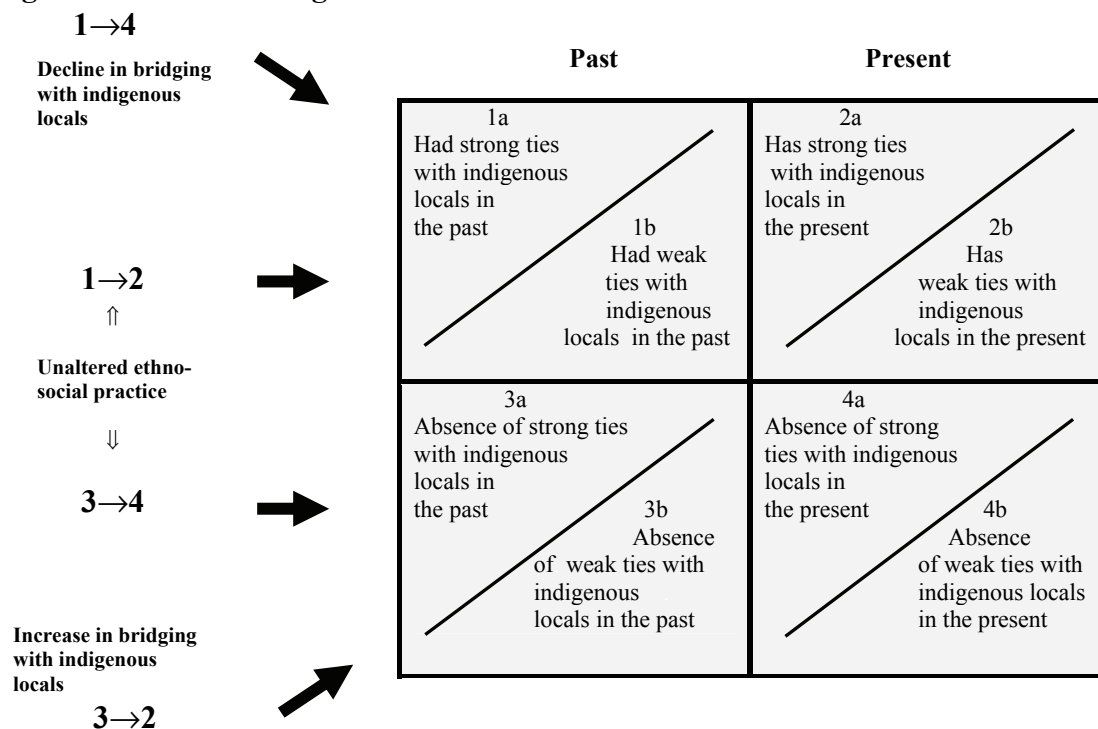
My data indicates that some modes of incorporation are more common than others. There are three dimensions of immigrants' social trajectories that are worth mentioning: a) Over time most of my immigrants do not increase the amount of spare time spent with the hosts; b) they increase the number of weak ties with Norwegians (relationships with workmates, neighbours, acquaintances, etc), but the number of strong ties with Norwegians remains stable or even

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[175] The social trajectories of immigrants also include ties with compatriots. In some periods, immigrants are more oriented to their fellows, while in others, they are more oriented to indigenous locals. These strategies will be outlined subsequently in the chapter.

decreases; c) the structural dimensions of informant personal networks appear to remain stable over time. My material suggests that the ethnic part of an immigrant network and the Norwegian part of the network do not fuse over time, even in the case of immigrants who had succeeded in establishing several friendships with indigenous locals.

11.2. Biographical identity, current day-to-day reality and the anticipated self

The sense of 'who we are' is connected to what ideas we have about who we were in the past and where we are going in the future. As we shall soon see, immigrants cope with antagonism by shuttling between these reference points. One strategy is to reconstruct the past and to modify the anticipated future in order to make it fit better with the person's actions in the present. We may call this worshiping the current interactional self. Another approach is to worship the self that a person has established in the past by selecting or strategically avoiding interactions and relations that may endanger this self-image. We could call this strategy worshiping the biographical self. The anticipated self may influence the current actions just as much, contributing to a reconstruction of past memories. The dream of the return, frequently discussed in migration studies, can be called worshiping the anticipated self.

Immigrants' identities are in some cases reproduced with an emphasis on the interactional self, while in other cases they are mostly nourished by the past or anticipated future. Nevertheless, immigrants have to deal with all three points of reference, since they cannot in the long run continue to reproduce the anticipated self and the self established in the past independently from an already existent day-to-day reality.[176] Immigrants can not maintain identities which are recognized and accepted by locals without interacting with them. They can not live forever on their old 'victories'. By extension, the biographical self is seldom totally erased and suppressed. The stories that I will present below show that immigrants fight continuously on several fronts in order to facilitate more compatible references for self-interpretation. On the one hand, immigrants cope continuously in their everyday lives with interactions and relations in the way that they reproduce and confirm the positive or desirable aspects of their previously established self. On the other hand, as self-monitoring actors, immigrants modify, via constant and reflexive self-examination, the self they have established in the past to fit in with existing actions and with their anticipated future (Giddens 1991).

11.2.1. Decline in ethnic bridging

The five immigrant stories presented here serve as examples of how networks and identities develop over time.[177] They also illuminate the 1-4 pattern in figure 6 (demonstrate how attempts at bridging with the mainstream may gradually fall off). The first story is about *Rashid*, an Iraqi man who came to Norway in 1997.[178] I interviewed him for the first time in

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[176] To paraphrase Giddens: The individual's biography, if she is to maintain regular interactions with others in the day-to-day world, cannot be wholly fictive. It must continually integrate events which occur in the external world, and sort them into an ongoing story about the self (Giddens 1991: 54).

[177] I will restrain from a more extensive presentation of the narratives. Only a small part of the narratives will be displayed (in the form of quotations).

[178] Some information in the story is changed. Certain information is irrelevant for us, but with the aid of minor adjustments, I may effectively disguise the informant's identity. I have done the same with other cases in the study.

2000.[179] Rashid was 28 at that time, and single. He had a university education from his home country. I interviewed him again in 2003 and 2006.

When I first spoke with Rashid in 2000, his social network was ethnically heterogeneous. Rashid socialized with compatriots who had previously lived in the same reception centre as him. He also spent a lot of his spare time with Norwegians. He became a member of a peace movement that mostly attracted Norwegian students. Rashid participated in meetings and demonstrations, but also developed friendships. He was invited to parties and trips, and slept over in their homes, etc. In 2000, Rashid also followed intensive courses in Norwegian and found part time employment as a mother tongue teacher at a local primary school. Rashid's social life was mostly spent with Norwegians. Bridging with the mainstream society was one of his main preoccupations. He expressed this concern directly in the course of the first interview, saying that one of the most important things for him was to get Norwegian friends and to be accepted and recognized by Norwegians as a normal person:

> I prioritize my Norwegian contacts. I have enough compatriot friends. They are also so preoccupied with the past and with the situation back home. I also worry about the situation in my homeland, but at the same time, I now live here in Norway. I also have to think about building a new life. Many of my compatriots do not have any contact with Norwegians. How can I feel a part of this society if I do not have any contact with Norwegians (Rashid)?

Rashid's integration endeavours gradually led to incorporation within mainstream Norwegian society. Three years later, Rashid spoke fluent Norwegian and had his own flat, car and full-time job. He lived together with a Norwegian woman and had a child with her. They planned to have a second child. Rashid spent most of his spare time together with his family. However, he now spent the rest of his time with his compatriot friends, and not with Norwegians as before. Rashid had many Norwegian acquaintances, but he seldom socialized with them in his spare time. He socialized with Norwegian co-workers at the workplace only. They met and socialized almost exclusively within the frames defined by the workplace (on business trips, at seminars, during the Christmas dinner arranged by his employer, etc). Rashid had almost no contact with his Norwegian friends from the peace movement. In short, it seemed that Rashid has gradually reconstructed his relation to his compatriots. He said:

> During my first years in Norway, I was very interested in contacts with Norwegians. I had several compatriot friends, but I did not have Norwegian friends. I maybe had a need to prove to my self that Norwegians accepted me…I am not as bothered about all that as I was before…Perhaps because I have proved to myself that they respect me. I live with a Norwegian woman and have a child with her. I have Norwegian colleagues who respect me and like me…I prefer to be with my compatriot friends…In order to maintain my friendships with Norwegians from the peace movement, I have to participate at meetings, demonstrations, etc. I participate in demonstrations sometimes, but do not feel that I am a part of that milieu. I am more relaxed when I am together with my compatriots. I share more with my compatriots…I have a lot of things in common with my compatriots (Rashid).

We may see from the story how relations with compatriots become more important for Rashid. Compatriots are prioritized both in terms of sociability, but also as significant and generalized others. This received its clearest expression, when Rashid discussed his dilemma about what name to give his second child. In these discussions, it seemed that he took the role of the

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[179] I met Rashid for the first time when I worked with undertaking my MA thesis.

ethnic community much more seriously than he had before. He was more concerned about the perspectives of his relatives and his compatriot friends. Whereas Rashid had previously even considered westernizing his last name, in order to 'make it easier for himself and his children in Norway', now he was no longer concerned with that problem. He felt quite confident in his connection to the mainstream. As Rashid himself puts it in the excerpt above, he has proved to himself that he was accepted and respected by indigenous locals.

I interviewed Rashid twice in 2006. He still worked at the same place, and I had the impression that his social life had not changed dramatically since 2003. Rashid was still married. He spent most of his spare time with his family, busy with the task of restoring the new home he and his wife have bought. He was even more oriented to his compatriots than before. Rashid has lost contact with his old Norwegian friends and acquaintances (from the time he was primarily oriented to bridging with Norwegians). He had met and got to know many more Norwegians through his job, but these relations were uniformly defined by him as mere acquaintanceship. In other words, Rashid's efforts to bridge with the mainstream declined in terms of sociability. Nevertheless, Rashid still felt strongly anchored in that mainstream. This development may be understood in the light of my distinction between biographic and interactional identity. Rashid's ethno-social preferences and practices have changed in the course of time, but his identity as someone who is accepted and respected by indigenous locals has remained stable. Rashid has always combined bonding and bridging. However, during the first years in Norway, he was more oriented toward ethnic bridging to the detriment of bonding with his compatriots. In this period, he primarily acquired his identity as someone who was accepted and respected by the locals in daily practice and through his interactional self. Later, he was more oriented towards his compatriots while the degree of ethnic bridging declined. Despite this he remained, in his own eyes, sufficiently attached to the mainstream. Although Rashid has withdrawn from the mainstream (in the sense that there is little fraternization with Norwegians or socialization with indigenous locals during his spare time), he has reproduced his identity as someone who is accepted and respected by Norwegians. He maintains these constructions partly by worshiping his biographical self. These idealized memories from the past are supported by means of a select few relations with Norwegians who appear to him as symbols of acceptance. The fact that he is married with a Norwegian woman is the prominent factor here. Rashid's case shows that different phases in a person's life may influence his social network. Rashid has now fulltime job. Furthermore, establishing a family had a very obvious influence on his network. Firstly, when he comes back home from work, as a husband and father he has to prioritize his family. There is little time left in his spare time for his former activities in the peace movement. Secondly, and even more importantly, by marring a Norwegian woman he can afford to see his Norwegian friends less often without losing a sense of being connected to the mainstream.

11.2.2. Fluctuations in ethnic bridging

My second case illuminates patterns where immigrants firstly lose any inclination to bridging with the host, but then regain it. This story serves as a good example of how immigrants continuously reconstruct their past and anticipated future to fit better with their current ethno-social practice. The case features *Goran and Mira,* a Croatian couple who came to Norway in 1998. I interviewed them for the first time in 2000, and again three years later, in 2003. The last interview was conducted in 2006. When I first spoke with Goran and Mira, their social network consisted almost entirely of relations with compatriots. They mostly socialized with other people from Croatia and Bosnia who lived in the town, but they were also in touch with

two Norwegian families who they considered friends of theirs and with whom they spent a considerable amount of their spare time. Although they still lived in the reception centre at that time, they were optimistic about their prospects of social integration in Norway.

When I did the follow-up interview with the couple in 2003, they had their own flat and car, and worked in relatively well-paid jobs. They appeared well integrated in Norwegian society. However, they no longer had any friendships with Norwegians. Goran and Mira complained that they never managed to establish satisfying social relations with Norwegians. They felt that the relationships they had with them were not based on mutuality. They were in general disappointed with their Norwegian contacts.

> We had Norwegian friends who we often invited home. They used to visit us and we had a nice time with them, but they seldom invited us to visit them back, so we just stopped inviting them. After that, we visited each other quite seldom…. Since we now live far away from each other, we do not have much contact with them any more… Our general impression is that it is too difficult to mobilize Norwegians. Everything has to be arranged several weeks in advance…They are distanced. It is difficult to know whether they behave in such way only with us or not (Mira)

> We are not youngsters any more and it is not easy to adjust to all that…It is much easier with our people. They just drop in, drink a cup of coffee and go…We do not invest energy in relations with Norwegians any more. We do not socialize with Norwegians in our spare time…We have contact with Norwegians at work, and this is enough… We will never be part of this society…When we are in our home country, people are different. They are more social. We meet people who know us all the time (Goran).

As their account suggests, Goran and Mira had given up the idea that they would be fully integrated in the mainstream society by the time of the second interview. The initial optimism they expressed when I first met them gradually diminished. They were quite pessimistic about their future social integration into the Norwegian society and expressed strong feelings of non-belonging. Both were dissatisfied with their life in Norway, and especially with their social life. They felt lonely. They were also giving serious consideration to returning to their homeland. When asked if they anticipated that the quality of their social life would improve in future, the answer was 'yes', because in a few years time they would no longer be living in Norway. They thought that they would repatriate in 4-5 years, when they had saved enough money.

When I interviewed Goran and Mira again in 2006, they had adopted a much more optimistic stance to ethnic bridging. This change may have been brought about by the fact that they had established satisfying and friendly relations with a Norwegian family. These people were the parents of their children's friends. They introduced Goran and Mira to other Norwegians in the neighbourhood. This time, Goran and Mira were happy with their new friends. These relations were experienced as mutual, based on reciprocal respect. Since the last interview, Goran and Mira had also become more familiar with the Norwegian language and cultural expectations. In addition, they felt that their ethnic identity was seen in a more positive light by the locals. As a result, they received more gratifying feedback in their interactions with Norwegians. Goran mentioned that they planned to spend time together in Croatia with their Norwegian friends.

> Now, Norwegians know much more about Croatia. Before, Croatia and Kosovo were the same for them…The situation has changed; people ask us all the time about advice about where to go in Croatia. When people meet us they say how beautiful it is down there. I

look forward to spending summer vacation with our friends. It is better to be with Norwegians. Our people are jealous and like to gossip……We have had Norwegian friends since we arrived in Norway…We were accepted easily since we decided beforehand to adjust to the new environment (Goran).

While he expresses discontent with his compatriots, Goran also reflects on the rewarding nature of his contact with Norwegians. The current situation where Goran and Mira are accepted and respected in Norway has replaced their old pessimism about their relations to the mainstream society. The couple's general sentiments about Norwegians and compatriots have been redefined, compared to the stance they took in 2003. This account shows a different set of ethno-social preferences, with Goran and Mira now seeing ethnic bridging and adjustment to the mainstream as something affirmative. We can also see how the couple gradually started to reconstruct their biographical selves. They adjusted their old identities of non-belonging in order to fit better with their new ethno-social practices, and to reflect the sense they now had of belonging and being accepted by the mainstream. The new sentiments that the informants express here also influence their anticipated future in the homeland. The plans to repatriate were not emphasized as strongly as they had been when we last met. Goran and Mira have not abandoned these plans completely, but they were now less concrete. Their ideas about life in their home country were more abstract and distant, to such an extent that Mira has said that they will perhaps return after they have retired.

11.2.3. Gradual assimilation

The third case may be seen as a version of the gradual incorporation through acculturation of an immigrant into closely-knit Norwegian networks (pattern 3-2 in figure 6). The is illustrated by *Eva*, a young woman from Croatia who came to Norway in 1997. I interviewed her for the first time in 1999. I re-interviewed her in 2003 and 2006. The first time I interviewed her, Eva was attending a secondary school. She socialized mainly with her compatriots or immigrants from other countries, boys and girls she knew from the reception centre. She liked her friends, but she also hoped that she would get Norwegian friends. By 2003, Eva had a full-time job. She was single and lived with her parents. Her former compatriot friends were no longer part of her personal network, with the exception of one individual whom she met quite seldom. Her network was almost exclusively composed of relations with Norwegian friends and acquaintances. Most of her friends were her ex-schoolmates and her workmates.

Norwegian schoolmates have accepted me very easily. I think that this was because I learned the language very quickly...I was also quite similar to them. I looked and behaved like them… In the beginning I went to a school for foreigners and lived in the reception camp. Therefore, almost all of my friends were compatriots or other foreigners. After that, I was transferred to an ordinary Norwegian class, I spent the whole day in school with Norwegians…I did not seek out compatriots when I started the ordinary Norwegian class... Some foreigners seek each other out and in this way exclude themselves from the rest of the class. I did not want to end up like that …I have gradually lost contact with my old compatriot friends. We do not live close to each other. They also went to other schools…I also feel we have quite different opinions about many things…Serbians from the former Yugoslavia organize various get-togethers. I feel that we are too different, so what is the point in meeting other Serbians of my age…Their preoccupation with their ethnic background and their attitudes to Norwegian society irritates me. Unlike them, I feel that Norway is my home (Eva).

Unlike many other immigrants in my study (who gradually moderated their initial optimism when meeting the hard realities of life in their new environment), Eva expressed the same strong optimism and ardency about her integration into mainstream society each time I met her. She seemed to manage interactions and relations with indigenous locals very well. The suppression of her own culture and ethnic background seemed to be the core of her strategy. As her story shows, she gradually distanced herself from her home country and her compatriots. In this process, Eva became undistinguishable from Norwegians in terms of her looks, speech and behaviour. She mastered the Norwegian code and embraced the Norwegian lifestyle and people. At the same time, Eva felt that they had accepted her.

> Many people think that Norwegians are arrogant or even racist…I know that many Norwegians are racists. I have heard many racist comments from elderly Norwegian people that I met at my job…No, the comments were not directed at me personally, but it is not unusual for people to say that they do not want to be treated by Africans or Muslims. They sometimes complained to me about foreigners since they think that I am Norwegian. However, I know that there are many different types of Norwegians…My Norwegian friends like me (Eva).

Eva has persisted on her path of assimilation, thanks to supportive constructions of her past, present and anticipated future. These adjustments appear not only to include her self-presentations in daily interactions, but also Eva's private feelings about whom she is. When encouraged to speak about her sense of belonging and ethnic identity, Eva expressed the sense that she has more in common with Norway and Norwegians than with her compatriots and her home country. She did not feel Croatian or Serbian. Her home is Norway. Repatriation was not something she ever considered: indeed, she claimed that she had never actually liked her country of origin. She now considered Croatia and its neighbours as places for summer vacation, and no different from any other holiday destination. Unlike other informants from the former Yugoslavia, Eva now even preferred to travel to other, more exotic countries, since she had been too often in Croatia and Serbia.

> When I am on vacation in Croatia or Serbia I cannot avoid seeing all the negative things…I see Nationalism, the class gap, pollution, etc. This annoys me. It seems that many of my compatriot friends do not see these problems. They dream about the home country and are very interested in what happens down there. I am not as preoccupied with the ethnic background of my parents as some of my old compatriot friends are (Eva).

Eva looked at her home country with distance and even aversion. In her own view, Eva felt that with time she would become even more remote from her ethnic community and her homeland. When asked how she expected her future family life etc to be, Eva answered that she would most probably live alone or together with a partner. She was quite confident that her partner would be Norwegian. When I interviewed Eva again in 2006 most of her expectations had been realised. By then, Eva had spent nine years in Norway. She no longer lived with her parents. She came across as a very independent young woman. She had a stable job, lived alone and had a Norwegian boyfriend. Her parents were the only remaining ties she had with her ethnic community. It is only with them that Eva spoke her mother tongue, since she now socialized exclusively with indigenous locals. She did not miss the company of her compatriots at all.

11.2.4. Weak-tie bridging

The fourth case may be seen as a version of persistent bridging via weak ties. The case features *Damir*, a Bosnian man who came to Norway in 1993. He was 33 years old when I interviewed him for the first time in 2003: I interviewed him again in 2005 and 2006. At the time of my first interview, Damir was involved in several organized social and leisure activities. Therefore, he had good opportunities to get acquainted with indigenous locals. He worked as a teacher and had a lot of contact with other teachers, pupils and their parents. As a result, Damir had a large network of Norwegian acquaintances. Nevertheless, he expressed his discontent with Norwegians. Damir believed that after ten years in Norway, he should have had several Norwegian friends. Although he had actively participated in the different arenas of mainstream society for a decade, Damir did not feel that he had any close Norwegian friends.

> I know many people because I am an active person and like to try everything. However, I feel that all these relations are quite superficial…It is difficult to establish close relations with Norwegians. I am disappointed when it comes to the relations I have to Norwegians… Do not misunderstand me. I have a lot of contact with Norwegians. I meet my Norwegian acquaintances and workmates all the time and they are friendly. The problem is that if I want to go to the pub with somebody, or if I want to have a party at home or visit somebody, I cannot rely on Norwegians. They are too distant. For instance, I speak with one Norwegian workmate every day, and I felt that we had started getting quite close, but he never discussed private, intimate, things with me. I was surprised when I heard from others that he was to be a father. I expected that he would share this information with me. It is obvious that he do not think that we were close enough. This is how Norwegians are.

Damir engaged in relations with Norwegians with the idea and expectation that these could develop into closer relationships, based on mutuality and trust – in other words relations that we may associate with those that Giddens (1991) labels as 'the pure relations'. These expectations were not fulfilled, resulting in a sense of rejection, and of not belonging to the mainstream: this nourished his discontent with Norwegians. When I encouraged him to explain why his self-identity was not affirmed, for example, and why the other side did not respond to him in a mutual way, he did not know whether it was because he was not Norwegian or if it was due to some other factor:

> Of course I ask myself questions about why they are indifferent to us…You never know. Sometimes I think that it is a matter of culture. Sometimes, I think they never will see us as normal people (Damir).

I met Damir again in 2005. He had a new job. He was now more optimistic about his relations with indigenous locals. It seemed that his relations with indigenous locals and with mainstream society were redefined in part due to positive experiences and expectations that he had acquired through his social life at the new workplace. Damir again took the initiative and proposed various social activities to his Norwegian workmates. He attended several parties with his workmates and had a good time with them. Damir admitted that he still did not have close Norwegian friends, but it appeared as if his earlier experiences had made him more cautious about his expectations. He redefined these expectations and also his sense of what was relevant in his social life. Damir was no longer quite as preoccupied about getting close Norwegian friends. He focused more on activities, parties, student trips and on the fact that he enjoyed spending time together with his workmates. This understanding of his social situation

was reflected in the way Damir now saw himself with new eyes – as did the indigenous locals too.

> Before, I understood the lack of friendships with Norwegians as evidence of discrimination, etc. It is possible that I misunderstood. The problem is that my transformation from the bachelor life of a student to a family oriented life as an adult coincided with my migration to Norway. Maybe I would have similarly lacked friendships even if I had stayed in Bosnia. I actually do not know what constitutes a normal adult social life there. Maybe it is normal for adult family members in Bosnia, like here, to have few friends. The problem is that I compared my life in Bosnia as a youngster with my social life in Norway as an adult (Damir).

People get married, have children, change jobs, become chronically ill, move from place to place, get divorced, and see their friends move to other towns, etc. It is not difficult to imagine that these changes may affect their personal networks. In the case of immigrants such commonplace events may be given an extraordinary or mistaken significance because of their migration experiences. As Damir pointed out, it may be difficult for the immigrant to decide whether these changes are due to a life in exile or if they would have also occurred even if they stayed in their home country.

In the last interview I had with Damir he reported that he was satisfied with his social life. I encouraged him to explain and contrast this with the dissatisfaction he had confessed to earlier. Damir said that he had previously believed that it was the indigenous locals, who had been the problem, and that he had wondered if the lack of mutuality was caused by his ethnicity. This time, Damir admitted that he had had unrealistic expectations in the past. He abandoned the possibility of getting close Norwegian friends in the future. In his day-to-day life, he modified his practical conduct, and his requirements from these relations, and now believed that uniplex, weak ties with Norwegians were the most realistic ones to achieve. He felt accepted by indigenous locals, 'as much as it is realistic to expect'. Damir did not have any strong friendships with Norwegians, but he felt that this had nothing to do with him personally or with any Norwegians scepticism against foreigners. As he pointed out: 'This is how the modern friendships are'. In that way, Damir expressed his intuitive feeling about the nature of most relations in the modern urban world. However, these redefinitions may be seen as an inherent part of his identity construction. In this way, Damir was now able to cope better with a sense of marginality and non-belonging.

11.2.5. Persistent ethnic segregation

The story that follows serves a good example of patterns 3-4 in figure 6. It exemplifies how certain immigrants experience more or less persistent ethnic segregation. Furthermore, it demonstrates how immigrants can cope with continuous ethnic segregation and stigmatisation through a constant reconstruction of their self-images. The subject in this case is Ali, an Iraqi man who came to Norway in 1998. I interviewed him for the first time in 2000.[180] He was interviewed again in 2002, 2004 and (for the last time) in 2006. The first time I spoke with Ali, he lived in the reception centre. He was highly respected among the Iraqi residents, and by staff at the reception centre. He had a university education and could speak English. He often assisted as a translator and intermediary in everyday interactions between staff and Iraqi residents. He had positive impressions of Norwegians and Norwegian society. At that time,

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[180] I met Ali for the first time when I worked with undertaking my MA thesis (Valenta 2001).

Ali did not have any Norwegian friends, but he wished to be better known with Norwegians. It was his opinion that his current situation was a temporary one.

> It would be nice to have some Norwegian friends. Maybe it will be easier to get Norwegian friends when we get jobs and when our Norwegian proficiency improves. Now, we do not have the chance to meet and get acquainted with Norwegians. When we get a proper apartment and work, we will have more possibility for contact with Norwegian neighbours and Norwegian work colleagues (Ali).

Ali had optimistic expectations about his future bridging with the mainstream and with the possibility of fuller integration within Norwegian society. When I interviewed Ali for the second time, in 2002, he still did not have any personal relationships with Norwegians. Ali's sentiments about Norwegians had changed, and had become negative. It later emerged that he had had a hard time over the last year. Among other things, the Norwegian authorities had refused his application to be reunited with his family, with the result that his wife and children were refused entry to the country. After a long, costly and psychically exhausting fight with the authorities, Ali was eventually reunited with his family and they now live together. However, he was deeply disappointed with Norwegians. It was very apparent that he no longer shared his initial optimism about and eagerness for bridging with Norwegians.

When I interviewed Ali again in 2004, he worked as a taxi driver. It seemed that the negative memories of life in the reception camp and of his struggles with restrictive asylum policies were no longer as important to him. However, Ali did not have any Norwegian friends, either at work or in his spare time. Unlike our last meeting, when he lacked the motivation for bridging with Norwegians, Ali now claimed that he would like to have Norwegian friends. But in his view, it was not he, but the Norwegians who were not interested.

> People say that we have to take the initiative if we want to get Norwegian friends. I have done that, -for example, I have invited Norwegians to dinner…Some people say that they will come, but they never do…They have not shown any interest. This society is not open to foreigners. Norwegians think that they are superior in everything…I have to defend myself all the time, to say that I am not the way that they think that Iraqis and Muslims are…Since we came here, I have made many Iraqi friends, close friends…I do not expect that I will get close Norwegian friends in the future. I know people who have been here much longer than I have and they do not have any Norwegian friends (Ali).

While Ali's ethno-social preferences and his self-identification as someone who does not belong were clearly connected to the problems he had had with Norwegian authorities in the past, this time, they were linked to his daily experiences and anticipated future. Previously, the lack of contact was understood as a temporary situation, but now anticipated that this social segregation would remain permanent. His expectations about the possibilities of mainstream incorporation were pessimistic: bonding within his own ethnic group appeared to be the informant's only alternative.

When I interviewed Ali for the first time, he expected that he would get Norwegian friends when he got a flat and a job. Four years later, he still had no personal contact with his Norwegian neighbours or workmates. Ali believed that he did not have the proper opportunities for getting more contact with Norwegians at his workplace or in his neighbourhood. While waiting for customers at a taxi meeting-point he sometimes spoke with other Norwegian taxi drivers, but most preferred to sit on their own in the taxi, to sleep or to read newspapers. He felt that they were not interested in further contact – and especially not

with migrants like him. He admitted that 'it is not comfortable being seen as Iraqi and Muslim these days'.

During the interview, Ali also expressed his wish to return to Northern Iraq. Such a possibility was not mentioned in earlier interviews, but he claimed that he had never ruled out this alternative in his plans for the future. Ali had recently visited his parents in Northern Iraq, and while there he had also met some of his old colleagues and friends. He described their situation and compared it with his current situation in Norway. Although Ali has a university education from Iraq, he works as a taxi driver in Norway. At the same time, Ali's friends and colleagues in Northern Iraq, people he used to identify himself with, still work as lawyers, teachers, engineers, judges, etc. They receive all the affirmation in their local community that he does not get in Norway. If he returned to his home country, Ali thought that he could regain his old social position: but he could not say precisely when this would happen.

When I interviewed Ali for the last time in 2006, his social life was still based on relations with his compatriots. He continued to speak about returning to his homeland, but his plans were postponed again. Ali's economical situation had improved and he had bought himself a new flat. He was more content with life in Norway. It seemed that he had moderated some of his sentiments about Norwegians. Previously, Ali had felt excluded and had less than optimistic expectations about the possibility of being more fully integrated in Norwegian society. This time, his segregation was not seen as a result of rejection by the host. Whereas Norwegians had been described before as intolerant, arrogant and almost hostile, this time, Ali took a more conciliatory and moderate stance.

> I never felt that Norwegians hated us or discriminated against us. It is normal that certain misunderstandings will occur. I think that if they moved to my country that they would experience much bigger problems…We have our preferences and they have theirs. This does mean that we disrespect each other. It is not strange that we prefer to be with our compatriots and they with theirs. They have their language and culture and we have ours (Ali).

Ali's interpretation of his social life may be seen in the light of his identity work. His earlier self-understanding was dominated, among other things, by negative experiences from the past, by his dream about returning, and by fluctuating anticipations about incorporation into the mainstream. The dream about returning was still part of Ali's anticipated self. He still saw his life in Norway as a temporary stage. He traced the origins of his social segregation to his own preferences and choices. Ali claimed that if he wanted to socialize with indigenous locals, he could get Norwegian friends, but he prefers his own people. As he stated, 'if I planned to live here forever, I am sure that I would be more motivated to get Norwegian friends'. This time, Ali's current self-understanding and reconstructed biographical self also included a suppression of the problems that he had experienced in the past and present. During the interview, I got the impression that the informant wanted to convince himself and the people around him that he was not the victim of exclusion and discrimination. Ali tried to see his social environment in a more positive light.[181] In short, Ali's construction was based on two images: first, that the society around him was not so hostile; and second, that his segregation is a result of his own choices.

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[181] For example, when encouraged to comment negative focus on Muslims in media and that xenophobic right wing parties are getting so strong support in Norway, he claimed that these sentiments are not representative, and that they should not necessarily be interpreted as result of xenophobia.

11.3. Social trajectories and trajectories of the self

My data suggests that immigrants may be more highly motivated to integrate externally and to bridge with the mainstream immediately after their arrival in the host nation. Immigrants may then feel that they have been given a fresh start and that everything is possible in their new life. However, the opportunities for getting in touch with Norwegians are limited. In the first period, they cannot speak the Norwegian language sufficiently well and do not have the possibility of participating in the various arenas of social life. As a result, they often depend more or less entirely on their ethnic network. We may say that for immigrants the first years after resettlement can be characterized by a pioneer spirit, which includes a great desire on their part to bridge with the majority population (and to integrate generally with the mainstream): at the same time, they often have few resources or opportunities for achieving these goals.[182] Significant changes come about with the acquisition of greater proficiency in the language and culture of the majority, and increased participation within the different arenas of the host society (such as in the workplace, at school and during leisure activities). As result, immigrants are able to establish weak ties with members of the local indigenous population. Most of my informants have achieved these weak tie links with Norwegians after they have lived 3-5 years in Norway.

The inclination to bridge seems to flatten out with time. Compared to earlier periods when the incentive for external integration may be higher than the ability to make it happen, immigrants may give up their desire to be more sociable with members of the majority population (even though they have an increased capacity and opportunity for doing so). The cases presented above show that several interpretations can be offered for, and several identities conferred on, this apparently paradoxical pattern of behaviour. It seems that different people attached different meanings to their behaviour and their social trajectories. Even if they appear to have very similar patterns in the ways that their social lives are reconstructed after resettlement, the immigrants seem to relate their ethno-social preferences to different experiences and anticipations. In some cases, reduced inclination for bridging may be explained by tensions embedded in interactions and relations with other people. The ethno-social trajectories of the immigrants may also, inter alia, be seen as a result of their attempts to get the best out of both kinds of relations.

> I remember the time when all of us wanted to have at least one Norwegian friend or couple. We were so eager to integrate and to belong somewhere, to be anchored in Norway. We socialized with Norwegians as much as possible…Compared with the situation before when we almost exclusively socialized with Norwegians, we now spend more time with our compatriots and other foreigners…We feel that we are sufficiently well integrated in Norwegian society…We feel that we may allow ourselves to do that. Before, we were primarily concerned with adjustment and integration (Bosnian women).

When one's desired identity is accepted and recognized by the hosts, then the motivation for further external integration may, paradoxically, decrease. As the informant puts it in the excerpt above, immigrants may indeed reduce their contact with the mainstream when they feel properly established and anchored within the host society. However, this does not mean that immigrants withdraw completely into their own ethnic communities. Although the

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[182] In certain cases, motivation for external contacts may be quite low during the first years in Norway, especially in the cases where immigrants and refugees anticipate that they will return beck to home in near future. Most of immigrants and refugees I met gradually acknowledged that they would be longer time in Norway than they anticipated in the beginning. This makes them to focus more at social context of the host country. This issue will be discussed later in this chapter.

frequency of interaction is drastically reduced, at least some of the old acquaintances with hosts will be maintained. As Giddens (1991) suggests, interpreting one's own biography and path of development from the past though the present to the anticipated future is an inherently fragile process which has to be continuously redefined (Giddens 1991). Relations with natives have to be maintained because immigrants cannot live forever on their old victories. And maintaining a certain self-conception requires continuous work in the present (Giddens 1991). On the other hand, immigrants may still feel accepted and recognized by the hosts even though they spend less and less time with them and more and more time with their compatriots. In order to preserve and replenish these feelings, it may be enough to keep up a few relations with hosts, even if the immigrants socialize only occasionally with them. Combining weak connections with the hosts and closer relations with their own compatriots, immigrants who are not successful at presenting themselves within the premises of the host nation will still have some opportunities at getting the best out of both sets of relations.[183]

As suggested in several of the cases presented above, there may also be immigrants who would say that it is not them, but the hosts who are the main hindrance to a fuller incorporation within Norwegian networks. Immigrants may be disappointed with the feedback they get from Norwegians. If they have experienced several rejections, they may modify their bridging expectations. They may start instead to invest energy in compensatory bonding within their own group, the social environment that provides them with a sense of belonging, mutual commitment, intimacy and positive affirmation. Indeed, most of the immigrants I have met end up with week connections to the Norwegian networks. The difference is that some of them will say that this is what they preferred, while others will claim that it was impossible to achieve a fuller incorporation into primary Norwegian groups.

11.4. Memories of the reception centre: first impressions of Norway

The current self-understanding that immigrants have, and how they interpret their relations with others, both have inherent reference points in the past and future. In this respect, my informants were especially preoccupied with: a) the memories they had of their time in Norwegian reception centers, b) the anticipations about incorporation into Norwegian society, and c) with the dreams they had about a possible future return to and repatriation in their homeland.

Most of my informants lived for 1-2 years in Norwegian reception centres for asylum seekers and refugees before they were granted residence permits and were able to settle in local municipalities. This period of life is generally experienced as problematic. The reception centre was primarily remembered as the place where they were exposed to various humiliations. During their stay in such places, relations between immigrants, indigenous locals and Norwegian authorities generally are full of tensions, conflicts and mistrust.[184] When they came to Norway, most of my informants had to struggle to convince the Norwegian authorities that they were in need of protection. This can be a quite humiliating

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[183] For example, this was the case for immigrants who experienced communication in Norwegian as unpleasant or exhausting. These people felt that they did not receive the proper affirmation of their self-presentations in interactions with their Norwegian friends.

[184] Several studies (Solheim 1990; Sollund 1994; Valenta 2001) have pointed out that the everyday interactions in the reception centre resemble Goffman's descriptions of total institutions (Goffman 1961). The nature of interactions in the reception centre and the humiliations that residents are exposed to can contribute to clientification and negative stereotypes about Norwegians and Norwegian society (Valenta 2001).

process, which may involve medical examinations, fingerprint samples, body measurements, police interviews, as well as communication with lawyers, rejections, and appeals. These experiences have been firmly deposited in the memories of several of my informants.

> Norwegian authorities treated us like we were criminals. Nobody believed us…The police used to come in the mornings and afternoons to collect people whose applications had been rejected for the last time. Sometimes they handcuffed them…We were so naive. Once, we believed that we would be treated as heroes in the West because we were against Saddam…Before we arrived here we thought of Norway as a democratic country. We believed that Norwegians were altruistic people. After all these humiliations, these impressions of Norway and of Norwegians have changed (Iraqi man).

Right after their arrival in the receiving society, newcomers hope that they will gain acceptance and recognition from their hosts (Sackmann *et al* 2003; Knudsen 2005). In instances where newcomers construct negative stereotypes about indigenous locals during their stay in reception camps, the initial inclination for bridging to the mainstream may diminish (Valenta 2001; Mestheneos and Ioannidi 2002; Korac 2003). For the above informant, it took a long time before he forgot and suppressed these negative first impressions of Norway and of indigenous locals. Even in cases where individuals were quickly granted a residence permit, they may still have experienced many instances where the applications of friends were rejected, and were they were then collected by the police, and sent back home. These situations may be dramatic and give rise to strong emotions (Valenta 2001). Such episodes may contribute to negative constructions of Norwegians. However, they are just one among several possible negative first impressions immigrants may get of Norway and Norwegians. As Ali's story shows, such cases often lead to the immigrant settling in a local community or social surrounding that s/he feels is hostile.

In the cases where the kinds of negative experiences described above are gradually forgotten or suppressed, individuals may gradually increase their inclination for interethnic contact and start to make bridges with the mainstream. However, I also found cases where negative experiences with the indigenous locals seemed to have been cultivated and nourished via a selective perception of daily interactions with the hosts. In these cases, the aversion to the mainstream lasts for a long period of time. Indeed, some of my informants bore grudges against Norwegians whom they had met in this period of their life. It is important to bear in mind here that some immigrants in my study, such as reunified family members, were not forced to fight with Norwegian authorities and to live in receptions centre in order to get residence permits. These people have not been directly exposed to the restrictive side of the Norwegian reception system. The focus in the mass media on Muslim fundamentalism and terrorism, for instance, has primarily affected first impressions of several of my Iraqi informants – since their arrival coincided approximately with the 9/11 attacks and with the start of 'the war against terror'. Prejudices about Muslims also existed when Bosnians arrived in the middle of the 90s, but were not as strong as the anti-Muslim xenophobia that followed. Compared with asylum seekers from Croatia and Iraq, Bosnians got more public sympathy in the early stages of their arrival. Unlike them, many Croats and Iraqis have been the direct targets of restrictive governmental policies, since they are regarded as potentially illegitimate asylum seekers and refugees. It is not difficult to imagine how these differences in the context of reception affected the ability of, and inclination for, incorporation within the mainstream society.

Individual resources also matters. I have met immigrants with distinctive characteristics which influenced their life in the reception centre and their relations with Norwegians. For

instance, some newcomers managed to profile themselves as representatives for resident groups: they were used as translators, and they served as arbitrators in the various conflicts between other residents, etc. What these individuals had more or less in common was that they regained control over their lives and felt respected both by the staff in the reception centre and by the Norwegian local community. In these cases, the initial encounters with indigenous locals did not contribute to bitterness and the construction of a strongly stigmatized identity in the early stages of their arrival. Consequently, these people were less sceptical about future ethnic bridging with Norwegians. They have primarily experienced the reception centre as a place of learning, where they were prepared for resettlement and life in Norway. Optimism about the prospects for social integration was still quite high among these people in the period when they left the reception camp and were given a flat of their own by local municipalities.

11.5. Relation to the mainstream and plans for return in the future

The process of social integration undergone by immigrants and refugees after resettlement is indirectly related to their emotional attachment to their country of origin and their anticipations about future return. There are several perspectives on how immigrants relate their self to their homelands and to the country that receives them. They may be seen as people who transmigrate, living dual lives and maintaining homes in both countries (Portes 1998; Levitt 2001; Sackmann *et al* 2003). The opposite argument is that immigrants and refugees lose their cultural identity and connection with their country of origin in the receiving country (Gordon 1964). They may also be seen as people who live 'neither here nor there' – in a state of limbo, in other words (Al-Ali and Koser 2002; Sackmann *et al* 2003). Several studies have also shown that immigrants and refugees dream about returning to their home country.[185] The people in my study went through several of these states or oscillated between them.

The ways in which immigrants understand the past in their homeland and the ways in which they imagine their future effect how they participate in the host society and vice versa. It seems that people who anticipate a long stay in the receiving country will be more motivated to invest energy in relating to this society than those who plan a shorter stay (Al-Ali and Koser 2002). Immigrants and refugees who are determined to return will normally pursue activities that are oriented to their home country. These people take the attitude that their present situation is little more than a short disruption in their lives, and that their stay outside the home country is a temporary one. This attitude may reduce their efforts to integrate into the receiving country. They focus less on the things that happen around them in the present, and more on a continuing idea of themselves as unwillingly and impermanently absent from life in their home country.

> I was not motivated to learn the language…I just waited for a chance to return. I felt like a guest in the apartment they placed us in Trondheim. I lived in this vacuum for almost four years. I did not care about Norwegians. I just waited to move back to my apartment in Sarajevo…We moved back right after the peace treaty. The siege came to end and there was peace so we really tried to re-establish our lives. We lived there for almost two years, and then we returned to Norway…We know now that there is no future for us in Bosnia.

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[185] See among others: Lundberg (1989); Ramirez (1990), Al-Rasheed (1994); Berg (1998), Stefansson (1998); Brekke (2001); Slavnic (2001).

We are more determined to adjust and re-establish ourselves here than we were before (Bosnian man).

An immigrant will not be keen to seek out relations with the hosts when the person thinks of her- or himself as 'just a guest'. Self-defined as a visitor who comes and goes, the immigrant who thinks this way will be less than eager to attain an identity that is acceptable to the mainstream. When immigrants are not driven by a need for acceptance and recognition, they do not have sufficient reasons for participating in relations and situations that might be experienced as problematic. This attitude was, for example, prominent among many Bosnians during the first years after their resettlement, since it seemed that the war in their own country would soon end. Moreover, they were not only visitors who come and go in their own eyes, but also in the eyes of others. The Norwegian authorities contributed to a construction of these attitudes by declaring year after year that Bosnians should be send back to their own country after the termination of the conflict.[186] Iraqis and Croats who were initially given rejection on asylum applications (or given only temporary permission to stay in Norway),[187] and told that they would be sent back to their home countries as soon as possible, also had problems seeing the point of adjusting socially and culturally to Norwegian society.

11.5.1. From refugee identities to immigrant identities

Most of the immigrants in my study had refugee backgrounds, but in the course of time the reasons that forced them to migrate, such as war or political persecution, have gradually disappeared. Consequently, these informants have gradually redefined themselves from being refugees and more in the direction of immigrants who are in Norway of their own free will. Adopting this attitude made some of them more determined to integrate in the new society. Others become even more insecure and ambivalent about their present and anticipated future.

Generally speaking, refugees gradually realize that homesickness would not automatically disappear when the conditions preventing repatriation were removed: what followed was not always a happy ending (Lundberg 1989; Al-Rasheed 1994; Valenta and Berg 2003). My impression is that permanent settlement in the receiving country does not prevent immigrants and refugees from sustaining the illusion that their stay in the receiving country is to be a short one. Immigrants and refugees may justify their presence in the host society by 'the necessity of the moment' – finding continuously new reasons for their temporary stay in Norway.[188] In this way, immigrants and refugees may stay many years in the host country while continuously reproducing the illusion that they will soon return to the homeland.

It should be stressed that some immigrants do not have strong attachments to their home country. These include people like Eva, who gradually assimilated into Norwegian society and considered Norway as her home. Several of them, like Rashid, married Norwegians, had children with them, and in this way felt permanently anchored in Norway. Furthermore, some immigrants experienced how the idealized image of the home country shattered in the

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[186] These processes are explored in several studies (Ålund 1998; Berg and Schierup 1999; Haagensen 1999; Jonassen, Holm-Hansen and Tesli 2000; Valenta and Berg 2003).

[187] I refer here to so-called MUF-cases (See: www.udi.no; www.noas.no).

[188] After the initial reasons for migration disappear, such as war or political prosecution, the immigrant may find new reasons for staying in the receiving country. Immigrants may say to themselves and others that they will return right after: they have earned enough money; they get a Norwegian passport; the children have finished the education that they have started; the children have become independent; or when the house in the home country is built, someone in the home country offers them a proper job, they retire, etc.

collision with its brutal reality. During their time in the receiving country, immigrants and refugees often idealize their homeland, and returning there is seen as the cure to all their existing problems. When they finally get a chance to return, they are frequently disappointed. Some of my informants found out that the homeland did not correspond with the country they knew from the past nor with the idealized image they had of it, constructed during their time in exile.[189] As we can see in the account of the Bosnian man presented above, these disappointments may result in identity reconstructions, where the person acknowledges that he is no longer a refugee: what follows is a reorganization of social life in the host country.

It should also be noted that the same person's relation to the home country and to the receiving country may shift during a relatively short time. As the case of Goran and Mira shows, there are some periods and situations where the immigrant glorifies the idea of returning to the home country to the detriment of becoming more attached to the receiving country: in other periods and situations, the same person can glorify Norway and Norwegians to the detriment of attachment with compatriots and the home country. People continually reorder their self-identity against the backdrop of the shifting experiences of everyday life (Giddens 1991: 186). It seems that how immigrants relate to the host society and to their home country is indirectly affected by their current experiences and by the level of satisfaction or discontent with the present situation in the host country. There are times in their daily lives when immigrants benefit from social inclusion and recognition by indigenous locals. These daily experiences may contribute to making Norway a place where a person feels at home. This current identity, composed of a sense of belonging, inclusion and recognition, may motivate immigrants to continue participating in the context of the host country to the detriment of 'the dream of return'. In other periods, an individual may be dissatisfied with work and friends in Norway, and feel unrecognized and excluded. At such times when the individuals disaffection is with the receiving society is at its peak, the yearning after the home country and a possible return may dominate. As Ali's case demonstrates, dissatisfaction with their present life may make some immigrants reinitiate ideas of an return-that-solves-everything where they contrast their current social problems in Norway with a nostalgic picture of the old home. In reinitiating these plans, immigrants also reinitiate the comforting idea that their current life in Norway is just a temporary state, preparatory to their 'big return'.

11.6. Social trajectories and trajectories of the self after resettlement: A summary

Most of the immigrants I met had not managed to gain access to primary groups of indigenous locals, even though they had been in Norway for many years. Even when they managed to establish some weak-tie relationships with Norwegians, these contacts were fragmented and separate from the rest of their ethnic-centred networks. In addition to this main pattern, I also found alternative ways in which immigrants reconstructed their social life after resettlement. I met, among others, immigrants who managed to make friends with Norwegian or who at least managed to build bridges to the mainstream via affirmative weak ties to Norwegian acquaintances. In other cases, the number of strong ties with indigenous locals decreased over time. Some migrants even drop relations with their Norwegian friends, with a concomitant reorganization of the self. Others try to maintain them, but primarily as loose acquaintanceships.

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[189] See also: Appadurai (1991); Ramirez (1990); Stefansson (1998); Valenta and Berg (2003).

Several explanations are possible for these changes. When feelings of belonging and recognition by the mainstream are achieved, the motivation for more intensive sociability with indigenous locals may lessen. Having achieved a measure of security in their new environment, immigrants may start to focus more on becoming sociable with their compatriots again. In such cases, having an identity which is respected and accepted by the mainstream is not primarily nourished via daily interactions, but through a worship of the past and an adequate construction of the biographical self. These changes are also linked to the transitions and different phases immigrants go through in their lives, as they establish families, become employed, etc. Nevertheless, the impact of these developments was somewhat understated in the narratives of my informants. Their social trajectories were mainly understood in the light of minority – majority relations and a sense of marginality and non-belonging to the mainstream. Their migration experiences meant that they often contrasted their currently low degree of sociability with more idealised images of the 'good old times' in their homeland.

I have argued that the bridging and bonding of immigrants is not only related to their past and present, but also closely linked to their anticipated self. We may distinguish between at least two types of anticipations that have an impact on their inclination to bridge with the mainstream: those linked to their repatriation plans and to the length of their stay in Norway, and others connected to hopes and anxieties about rejection or acceptance by the hosts. Immigrants who are satisfied with their current life and are optimistic about integration in Norway are less likely to plan repatriation. And immigrants who plan to return to their home country as soon as it is feasible may be less inclined to incorporate into the receiving society.

Refugee studies are often based on a static understanding of life in exile. This may partly explain why the term 'refugee' is often used both for people who arrive as refugees in the host countries, and those who have lived there for many years. Although most of my informants have refugee backgrounds, they have gradually redefined themselves. Their self-understanding is affected by changes that took place in their homeland and by the extended duration of their time in Norway. Most of my informants stopped perceiving themselves as refugees because of social and political changes in their homeland. They came to identify themselves instead as immigrants or in terms of their ethnic, occupational or other identities. For these reasons and more, it would be wrong to use the term 'refugee' about them.[190]

Acknowledging that they are in Norway of their own free will, some immigrants certainly come to define Norway as their permanent home. Sometimes, this redefinition of their relation to the host country may lead to an increased inclination to adapt and to form links with the majority population. Nevertheless, this is not likely to occur if anticipations about rejection by the hosts are high. Discrediting episodes from the past and repatriation plans may be suppressed in the light of current daily experiences, and this in turn may lead to increased contact with indigenous locals. In other cases, dissatisfaction with life in the receiving country may make immigrants revive ideas about returning, to the detriment of more social integration in the mainstream.

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[190] Nevertheless, I do not wish to argue that some other migrants cannot maintain their refugee identity over a longer period of time. In certain cases, such self-definitions may indicate the stance people adapt to a current regime in their home country. For example, 'associations for refugees from Vietnam' still exist in Norway. Vietnamese boat-refugees arrived in the 80s, but many still maintain their refugee identity. One possible explanation is that in doing so, Vietnamese people refugees seem to show that they are opposed to the current regime in Vietnam.

Chapter 12: Social integration and identity affirmation - arenas and sources

In this chapter, I explore how immigrants experience social life within various social contexts. The main focus is on arenas that are deemed important for the social integration and identity reproduction of immigrants – arenas such as the workplace, neighbourhood, family/relatives, clubs and ethnic organizations. Increasing participation within these arenas is often seen as a way of re-establishing immigrants and integrating them within their new social environment. In what follows, I argue that any such relation between increased participation and social integration is not a straightforward one. For some, such participation is a means of finding new friends and having their identity affirmed. For others, however, the opposite is true: the arenas mentioned may even seem to them as sources of social exclusion and discrediting.

12.1. Ethnic networks as a source of social integration and exclusion

The feeling of ethnic fellowship seems to increase after resettlement in the host country. This sense of being in the same boat appears to catalyze networking among some of my immigrants. Therefore, newcomers are often given a warm welcome in networks of already established fellow compatriots. For most of the newcomers that I met, compatriot networks are actually the main source of social integration. Joining a previously established compatriot network is seen as the first step in establishing a new social environment. Some immigrants gradually create ties outside these networks, while others remain permanently and heavily dependant on them. In both cases compatriot networks are seen as important sources of information, sociability and social support.

> When I arrived in Norway, I felt lost. I felt lonely. I was depressed… Nobody cared about me and my problems…When I became acquainted with my compatriots, I felt liked again. Now, I also have contact with Norwegians, but if Norwegians let me down, I always have someone else to turn to if I need help. If I experience something negative at my job or somewhere else, I know that I can always rely on my compatriot friends (Iraqi man).

> When I arrived in Norway, I heard some people in one café who spoke my mother tongue and I approached them. They were positively surprised to hear me speak our language. They introduced me to others…I heard later about one Iraqi restaurant. I went to the restaurant and said that I was from Iraq and that I had come there because I missed my people. They invited me to visit them at home. They introduced me to other people. It was not so difficult to get friends from my home country (Iraqi man).

The above accounts show the perspectives of immigrants who are well integrated in the ethnic community and who as newcomers fit easily into already established compatriot networks. It is important to mention, however, that immigrants do not necessarily share the same experiences and perspectives of their fellow compatriots. Ethnic communities may be glad to recruit new members, but they may also embed certain frictions, mistrust and conflicts (Levitt 2001; Knudsen 2005). Established immigrants are sometimes reluctant to include newcomers in already existing networks, especially in cases and contexts where including new members may jeopardize their own position in the network or the image that they have built up in the local community (Knudsen 2005).

> We felt accepted in the local community. Everything changed after the authorities decided to establish a camp for asylum seekers. Asylum seekers from our country were involved in several incidents…Several families from the former Yugoslavia have recently settled

here…They have not adjusted… Norwegian people have accepted us. Some Norwegian friends wonder if all the people from the former Yugoslavia are like these newcomers… This is embarrassing (Bosnian man).

As the informant indicates, when the deviant behaviour of newcomers is explained with reference to their backward culture, such behaviour not only has consequences for the reputation of those directly involved, but for the reputation of other, more established immigrants. Immigrants know that in the eyes of indigenous locals they may share the same culture and social identity with their compatriots. If newcomers are associated with deviant behaviour (such as violence, domestic problems, feculence, criminality, immorality, etc.) by local indigenous people, immigrants who have already established themselves and who do not want to be associated with these negative attributes will be reluctant to socialize with them. In such situations, integrated immigrants may choose to avoid newcomers.

> When I spot newcomers in the city centre, I sometimes tell my children to speak Norwegian. If they hear us speaking the same language, they sometimes approach us. I do not want that. Although we are from the same country, we are different (Bosnian woman).

I have met established immigrants who indeed tried to make a distinction between themselves and newcomers. Since they were anxious in case the newcomers might try to actualize their common ethnic background as a reason for initiating and attempting to develop relations with them, they distanced themselves from these newcomers. Consequently, they did not appear as a possible source of identity affirmation and integration for these newcomers. Instead, they are perceived by the same newcomers as people who rejected and humiliated them.

> Some people are helpful, but I also noticed that some from Yugoslavia who came here before us avoid us. Maybe they think that they are better than we are…Maybe they do not want to be with us because we are Croatian Serbs – though I have not found that Serbs are better in that sense than people from other parts of Yugoslavia. I think that in general they do not want to have any contact with people who live in the reception centre (Croatian woman).

The most unfortunate were those newcomers who in the reception centre already experienced a double rejection - from indigenous locals and from their own people. The only people available to them as potential friends were other marginalized individuals in the immigrant community. These people were bounded by common feeling of rejection and common marginalized identities. They started to re-establish their social life in Norway constructing active reaction models that were not only opposed to the Norwegian mainstream, but also to the already established people in the ethnic community (see also Knudsen 2005).[191]

12.1.1. Ethnic organizations and associations as sources of social integration

Compatriots may opt to exclude each other at the individual level of socialization, as the above excerpts demonstrate, but still associate with each other at the institutional level by lending support to a variety of ethnic and religious organizations. Ethnic institutions and associations may have many positive effects on how immigrants re-establish themselves in the new country (Rex *et al* 1987; Vertovec 2000; Sackman *et al* 2003; McLellan and White 2005). In cases where there is tension within informal ethnic networks, the relative

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[191] Such reactions are described in other studies. Knudsen, for instance, describes frictions between newly arrived Vietnamese refugees and the Vietnamese who had already settled in Bergen (Knudsen 2005).

importance of religious institutions, ethnic clubs and associations as sources of social integration may increase. People in ethnic organizations emphasize a common ethnic background and a set of values that they share with their compatriots. In their case, ethnicity entitles membership. In addition, ethnic organizations often have the express intent of welcoming and helping newcomers, and have strategies for doing so.

> I got in touch with many people via a Bosnian club. People who worked there introduced me to others and sent me to different arrangements organized by club members…I was impressed by how supportive the club was for one family when one of their family members died. They mobilized people and arranged everything. People could really feel that they were part of a community that took care of people (Bosnian man).

Ethnic associations may indeed help newcomers to adapt to the host society and overcome isolation: they also provide a community culture, practical help, and information etc. I met informants who considered these organizations and the people they met there as an integral part of their social life and leisure time. Some of these organizations do indeed have high levels of activity. During my fieldwork, I found out that Kurdish, Serbian and Bosnian associations in Trondheim arrange various gatherings and activities for their members. The Bosnian association, for instance, organizes gatherings for children, the elderly, and family events, among other things, where Bosnian doctors, artists and intellectuals contributed with courses, cultural evenings and more.[192] One Bosnian man said:

> I got a new Bosnian passport via the Bosnian club. I made many friends there…I know that in other cities, Bosnians sent humanitarian aid via such clubs. Our Bosnian club arranges many activities that take up my spare time…If something happens to be organized, it is the people in the Bosnian club who do the organizing. Without the club, it would be difficult to mobilize people. We would have to rely on own private contacts, but some people are not so active and do not have so many friends (Bosnian man).

Ethnic clubs and organizations are conceived as important sources of social integration – and especially by people who do not have the opportunity to get acquainted with their compatriots in other ways. Most immigrants met with their compatriots at reception centres. When they left the centre, they inherited these networks. Some people, however, were relocated far away from the reception centre and the people they knew there. For these people, ethnic clubs and organizations may be an important stepping-stone in establishing new ethnic networks. Also elderly people, unemployed people and others who do not have the possibility of becoming acquainted with their compatriots in their own neighbourhood or workplace see the ethnic clubs as an important meeting place.

12.1.2. Tensions in ethnic associations and organizations

In some cases ethnic organizations and informal relations complement each other as sources of social integration and identity affirmation. They sometimes even compensate for the exclusionary behaviour of the other. Nevertheless, this does not mean that ethnic organizations are without tensions. On the one hand, ethnic organizations and clubs may appear as more visible and more stable arenas for inclusion in ethnic communities than informal ethnic networks: on the other hand, ethnic and religious institutions may also be

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[192] Serbian association also organised parties, barbecuing and gatherings where people got possibility to meet orthodox priests, etc. Iraqi-Kurdish association organised New Year parties and other gatherings.

characterized by differences within the group or associations. Internal divisions and factionalism may destabilize or limit the effectiveness of these associations (Vertovec 2000; Kelly 2003). Ethnic organizations and clubs are sometimes even experienced as arenas that exclude rather than include segments of the ethnic community. Political or ethnic disagreements or ethnic intolerance made some of my informants feel that they were not welcomed in such organizations. It is not unusual that ethnic associations and organizations are dominated by one ethnic group or party, which then discourages minority compatriots from joining (Brekke 2001; Al-Ali 2002, Sackmann *et al* 2003). In his study of Bosnians in Norway, for instance, Brekke (2001), demonstrated that local Bosnian organizations were important arenas for the social integration of Bosnians. However, Bosnians who were not members of the majority Muslim group felt that these organizations were first and foremost for Bosnian Muslims (Brekke 2001). I also met informants with similar stories:

> In this city, the Bosnian association, tries perhaps to be less uniform, but their orientation is still problematic…When you enter, the first thing you see is a picture of their Muslim president…This is a Muslim club, and so I cannot identify with it…Some Croats and Serbs go to the club, but only because they are willing to overlook that fact. They just want to meet some of their friends (Serbian man from Croatia).

Members of minority groups may even try to establish their own arenas and clubs as an alternative to ethnic clubs and organizations where they feel that one ethnic group is over-represented or otherwise privileged in some way (Al-Ali and Koser 2002). For instance, I met Serbians from Croatia and Bosnia who established Serbian clubs separately from pre-existent Bosnian clubs and organizations. They could not identify with their local Bosnian association because they thought of it as dominated by Bosnian Muslims. Arabs and Kurds from Iraq have also established separate associations.

I also met immigrants who were highly sceptical towards all kinds of ethnic associations, organizations and clubs. Although these associations may together represent a significant arena for networking, and although they may well contribute to enriching the social and cultural life of immigrants, they were still associated with strong negative stereotypes by some informants. Some of these associations were attributed to an irrational nostalgia, to anxiety about forms of social control, and to an unwillingness to adjust to the new life. Others implied that they were not proud of their nationality and ethnicity and therefore could not identify, or want to be associated by others, with ethnic organizations. As one Bosnian woman puts it:

> If I was French or Danish, I would probably be active in local French or Danish associations, but I cannot go to any of our associations without a bad conscience. Too many terrible things happened in Yugoslavia in the names of nationalism and ethnicity.

This Bosnian woman does not consider herself and her family to be a part of the Bosnian community and she does not want to be associated with her compatriots. Her stance reminds us that categories such as 'immigrant' and 'ethnic origin' should not be equated with collective groups, since 'these features do not tell us whether a given person considers him- or herself part of an immigrant community' (Sackman *et al* 2003: 159-160). Immigrants such as the women above implied that they could not avoid associating their homeland, and organizations that invoked their homeland or national identity, with political factions, primitivism, nationalism, and war atrocities, etc. They were sceptical about their compatriots in general, and had a particular aversion towards those compatriots who emphasized their

ethnic background. According to them, ethnic associations were places which attract such people. As a result, they kept their distance from these institutions. [193]

12.2. Perspectives on the workplace as an arena for social integration

The conventional assumption is that newcomers will meet indigenous locals at the workplace and get opportunities to learn the language as well as to establish social relations with locals. Nevertheless, several studies have suggested that jobs do not necessarily bring with them indigenous friends and a path to other areas of Norwegian mainstream society (Rogstad 2000; Korac 2003).[194] According to Rogstad (2000), immigrants often work together with their compatriots in segregated environments and seldom become integrated with the Norwegian workforce. Rogstad's findings are consistent with findings in other studies – for example, Borchgrevink's (1996) study of inter-cultural interactions at work. Borchgrevink's (1996) argument is that the situation at the workplace is in many ways a reflection of general tendencies within Norwegian society. The hostility and scepticism towards immigrants that are found in the host society also carry over into ethnic segregation at the workplace (Borchgrevink 1996).

Employment at the workplace is not necessarily congruent with the kind of social participation one normally associates with social integration. The job is not enough! If the work place is multicultural, this does not automatically mean that the workplace is a multicultural fellowship (Borchgrevink 1996: 53).[195]

Other studies, both in Norway and elsewhere, show that immigrants also experience racism at the workplace, and that there is ethnic discrimination with respect to work tasks, promotions, wages, etc (Næss 1997; Rogstad 2000, 2004; Miskovic 2002; Tibe-Bonifacio 2005; Portes and Rumbaut 2006). These experiences may reduce the immigrant's motivation for further contact with Norwegians at the workplace (Aakervik 1992; Anderson 1999; Grønseth 2006; Sandberg and Pedersen 2007).

It is also possible to see different perspectives about social relations at the workplace in the stories of my informants. Several of these suggest that feelings of being stigmatized, of non-belonging and of discomfort in interactions with Norwegians do not necessarily diminish with employment. Their stories also suggest that interactions with their Norwegian co-workers, peers and superiors, may even promote this sense of exclusion. If this is the case, then workplace interactions may contribute to reduce an immigrant's motivation to invest energy in external social integration. However, I also met immigrants who had a much more positive

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[193] Therefore, if these people had some hobbies or interests in organized leisure time activities, they preferred Norwegian associations. Although immigrant participation in organized Norwegian spare-time activities is low (Lund 2003), my research does include examples suggesting that these were arenas where in certain cases immigrants tried to initialize bridging to the mainstream. These people took part in similar activities in their home country – and for this reason could easily adjust to corresponding arenas and associations in Norway. They also knew which potential these arenas had as sources of sociability and social integration. They were musicians, dancers or basketball coaches and being active in this ways gave them the possibility to become acquainted with indigenous locals and to occupy their leisure time with meaningful social activities.

[194] See also Berg, Sollund and Svarva (1994); Djuve and Hagen (1995); Næss (1997); Grønseth (2006).

[195] My translation from Norwegian.

experience of their workplace. They pointed out that having a job was a very important predisposition for their further integration and for their social and psychological well-being.[196] Most immigrants in this latter category felt nonetheless that friendly relations with their fellow employees remained weak relations that were anchored exclusively in the arena of work (see also Berg *et al* 1994; Neckerman *et al* 1999). Some of the informants who had established relations with their Norwegian workmates were satisfied with these, while others are not. Those who expected something more from these relations were frustrated that they did not gradually become multiplex, close-knit friendships. However, I also met immigrants who emphasized that the job was the only arena where they participated in continuous face-to-face contact with the indigenous locals. These people saw the positive side of even weak ties with their Norwegian workmates.[197] Norwegian co-workers were not thought of as the 'most important contacts' in their personal networks, but relationships with them were defined as friendly ones.

12.2.1. Obstacles to social integration and identity reproduction at the workplace.

According to several of my informants, loose social relations with fellow employees at the workplace may provide positive feedback, as long as it was possible for the immigrant to have informal and personal interethnic contact within the working environment that was characterized by ethnic tolerance and mutual respect. Unfortunately, many of the jobs occupied by immigrants are very far removed from this ideal. For several of my informants, the workplace appeared not as a shelter, but as an arena where they felt isolated, alienated, humiliated, and marginalized. There are several factors which may explain why immigrants do not develop affirmative relationships with their Norwegian workmates. If we look beyond the general reasons for the absence of social relations between immigrants and hosts,[198] we may find some further explanations in the nature of the work immigrants tend to have. There are at least two mechanisms that influence their integration and identity reproduction at the workplace: a) Contact structure at the workplace (the type of relation immigrants have to the workplace); and b) the degree of occupational displacement that immigrants experience.

a) Contact structure at the workplace

The nature of the work has an impact on levels of intimacy and supportiveness in relationships between employees at the workplace. In her study of Tamil refugees in Norway, Grønseth (2006) describes relations between Tamil and Norwegian fish plant workers:

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[196] These experiences are similar to findings in other Norwegian studies. For example, Klepp and Roppen's (2003) study demonstrates that their informants thought that having a job was an important predisposition for their integration in the local community.

[197] As I have already noted, these differences in the ways that immigrants looked at apparently similar types of relations with indigenous locals, may be seen in the light of the different kinds of relationships they have with their compatriots, as well as the total degree of social integration they have achieved in Norway.

[198] Immigrants may lack the necessary competence for establishing affirmative relations with Norwegian co-workers. Even small talk with co-workers may be perceived as problematic, if the immigrant does not have the required cultural and communicative skills. As a result, immigrants may prefer to avoid rather than to engage in contact with Norwegians at the workplace – regardless of what kind of workplace it might be. In addition, Norwegians may reject immigrants because of scepticism about foreigners or simply because they do not attract them as potential friends.

...there was little or no informal interaction between Tamils and Norwegians. During breaks at work, the Tamils and Norwegians sat at separate tables and only rarely interacted. While working in the production hall, the filletters wore ear defenders and had little opportunity to talk with their colleagues (Grønseth 2006: 169).

Many of the 'typical immigrant occupations' in Norway (such as delivering newspapers, processing fish, driving a taxi and cleaning)[199] do not provide ideal conditions for developing personal relations with work-colleagues (Carli 1993; Næss 1997; Nilsen 1999; Grønseth 2006). Most of the immigrants who did not feel integrated at the workplace had such occupations. Their jobs were either solitary or by definition external in some way. One informant told me:

> I work as a taxi-driver. I meet many people when I am driving the taxi, but I actually have a lonely job. As a taxi-driver, one meets many people, but they are strangers. I am not only talking about costumers. I also include other taxi-drivers. While we wait in the line, taxi-drivers sometimes speak with each other. Relations between us are weak and superficial. I do not even remember their names (Iraqi man).

Some jobs require very little degree of active social interaction. Although they can work for several years at the same company – as taxi drivers, cleaners or newspaper deliverers – immigrants do not always get decent opportunities to meet their co-workers. The quotation presented below is a good example of this:

> I have worked several years as a newspaper deliverer. I do my job very early in the morning, while other people sleep. I am alone all the time…My job is not social. One may even say that my job partly hinders me from being more social. I sleep during the day – often to noon or later. Therefore, I do not have the opportunity to participate in normal everyday social activities (Iraqi man).

It seems too that the more unstable the job, the fewer the friendships. Many of the jobs occupied by my informants are part time, and are either regulated by short-term contracts or are arranged by the local labour office. These jobs do not last long enough for immigrants to have a chance of entering into the more stable, tight-knit groups of established employees. In short, we may say that relations at the workplace and contact structures at work often do not provide immigrants with favourable conditions for developing friendly relations with Norwegians. If friendships are to develop, the workplace must provide the opportunity for developing such relations. Nevertheless, a favourable contact structure is sometimes not enough. Even immigrants who worked at places with a favourable contact structure (in the sense of having a stable job contract, the possibility of frequent, informal and personal face-to-face interactions with co-workers over longer periods of time etc) sometimes experienced a sense of being outsiders at their workplace. For several reasons, these people could not associate and identify themselves with the social environment at their workplace. Among other things, immigrants did not 'fit in' because of their social background and occupational misplacement.

b) Occupational misplacement

When I refer to occupational misplacement, I mean primarily cases where someone's education and occupation in their country of origin is highly incongruent with their present

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[199] For more on 'typical immigrant occupations' in Norway see Statistics Norway- SSB (2006).

occupation in the receiving country. It seems that occupational misplacement is especially problematic for the social integration of immigrants at work when it leads to social class-related displacements. Although many of my informants brought with them a great deal of human resources (in terms of higher education and work experience) they did not attain the same class-positions and statuses in Norway as they had in their country of origin. In their case, migration resulted in brain waste. Among my informants, there were individuals who had occupied high profile positions in their home country (such as company directors, doctors, lawyers, engineers etc). Some of them ended up in part-time blue-collar jobs, or were employed in low-status service occupations (such as waiting, cleaning, assisting at nurseries or driving taxis). Such occupational degradation led to bitterness among the immigrants themselves, and increased their sensitivity to misrecognition by co-workers. Moreover, it also hindered their identification with the social environment at work. The quotation presented below is a good example of this:

> I am not a snob, but my colleagues and I do not have the same interests. I found that we could not be friends. I am high educated and have travelled a lot. They are simple people. Their perspective is very restricted. I used to have serious discussions about politics, literature and art. They have not. I have never had much in common with such people, because our usage of time is quite different. I did not socialize a lot with such people in my country either (Bosnian man).

The sociological literature reminds us that social class is an important determinant of group identification and of particular cultural patterns of behaviour, consumption and lifestyle (Lamont 1992; Bourdieu 1995; Bryson 1996). People who are in approximately the same social class have similar conceptions of reality and lifestyle (Bourdieu 1995; Tomlinson 2003). They may also share similar tastes and interests. All of this makes them feel 'comfortable' with each other. Several immigrants I met have a middleclass background. Due to occupational displacement, and the accompanying class displacement, their lifestyle and values were not compatible with those of people they had to socialize with at work. All of this made some of them feel uncomfortable with their co-workers. These individuals were not especially interested in developing friendships with their Norwegian workmates: on the contrary, they preferred to differentiate themselves from them.

It is well-known that members of different classes and social groups often attempt to distance themselves in this way (Bourdieu 1995: 61-62). Because of the combination of occupational displacement and ethnic devaluation, it may be especially important for immigrants to emphasize a sophisticated middle-class taste and lifestyle. In situations where former class distinctions cannot be supported by occupational positions in the present, the relative value of class-related lifestyle and taste as tools for separation and class identification may increase. In such situations, referring to their social background may seem to immigrants as the only means available to them for redefining minority/majority relations. One informant told me:

> I do not like to offend my work-colleagues, but sometimes I have to respond. Although they are really shallow and undereducated, they think that they are better than us… Sometimes, they are embarrassed when I show them how ignorant they are (Bosnian man).

I observed several situations where class and ethnicity were negotiated between immigrants and their Norwegian counterparts. Especially in contexts where immigrants felt devalued because of their ethnic background, the need emerged to actualize what they thought were more favourable aspects of their social identity. At the same time, such redefinitions of relations (from ethnic to class relations) and gestures towards distinction may be seen by

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Norwegian workmates as unsympathetic and snobbish forms of behaviour.[200] These processes contribute to isolating immigrants who are in positions of extreme occupational misplacement from their Norwegian workmates. Immigrants then sought out their own class peers elsewhere. However, since in most cases they did not have opportunities to meet and become familiar with people from their own social class on equal terms with indigenous locals, these immigrants often ended up finding them among their compatriots.

12.2.2. Situational identities, social identities and ethno-class position

Composite identities are made up of different intersecting positions (such as race, class, gender, etc), according to which people assume their multiple positions (Werbner and Modood 1997). Immigrants who achieved a superior status position within the workplace were in a favourable position. These statuses and the roles connected with them help these people in their self-presentations and in gaining social recognition within the working environment. In addition, their socioeconomic position helped them to acquire recognition within their personal networks – also outside the direct context of work. Occupational position influences different aspects of an individual's identity because it contributes to defining her or his status and role in everyday life. The position of the immigrant within the occupational hierarchy of Norwegian society may have an effect on her or his situational identity, but it also may locate the person in a social space which is much broader and longer lasting that any particular situation. The occupational position of the immigrant may in other words also have an impact on her or his social identity.

> Of course my occupational status makes me more self-confidant in conversations with Norwegians…People used to introduce me by saying where I work. People used to start conversations by asking where I came from and what I did…If you feel that they look down at you because of your ethnic origin, you can always tell then what you do for a living (Bosnian woman).

The occupational status of an immigrant can be combined and contrasted with another otherwise dominant aspect of their social identity. As the above immigrant suggests, one may use occupational identity more actively in order to suppress a potentially stigmatized ethnic identity. The multiple characters of identity and its fragmentation between different segments of social life lead immigrants to be constantly involved in such identity-negotiations. Although immigrants do not, for example, play the role of doctors or engineers outside their job, the status of their educational and occupational background may be used by them as resource in different social contexts and relations.

It has to be noted here that occupational statuses sometimes lose their force if they are not reproduced though role practice. An ex-player of a particular role may refer to the high status of the role previously played by the individual, but the effect will not be the same if, because of migration, the status which the immigrant wants to re-establish is disconnected from role-play and with the networks that the status of the person claims. One Bosnian dentist said:

> My workmates use to introduce me sometimes to other people by saying my name and that I was a dentist before. It is really humiliating. I used to reply that I am still a dentist… I was not the unqualified nursing assistant that they wanted me to be…I actually had a

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[200] Similar redefinitions of ethnic relations into class relations and the hosts' response to these are also discussed in other studies (see Høgmo 1998).

longer education and more working experience than they had, but because their dentist profession is protected from international competition I was degraded. Now, I am a dentist again. My wife also works again in her profession. If they recognized us as such we would probably never returned back to Bosnia.

One Iraqi medical practitioner who experienced degradation of his occupational status reported the following:

When I lived in Iraq, everyone addressed me as doctor… People used to do that both at work and outside, in the local community. Here, I took some courses, but I do not do the work I am professionally qualified for. If I even say to someone that I actually am a doctor, this means nothing. They do not believe me, or they think that Iraqi doctors are not good as Norwegian ones...Yes, my compatriot friends and acquaintances address me as doctor. They knew who I was in our home country and what this means.

Immigrants with high education who regained their high occupational position after resettlement were in a totally different position than the immigrants portrayed above. The high-level professions of these immigrants strengthened relations between them and their Norwegian work-colleagues. In their case, the redefinition of ethnic relations into class relations or relations based on a common professional background helped integrate these immigrants into the social life at work. During my fieldwork, I heard several Norwegians who were colleagues with immigrants say that they had more in common with 'Boris' or 'Sanela' (immigrants who like them were researchers, engineers, etc.) than with a Norwegian 'plumber' or 'carpenter'. I participated in meetings at different workplaces and observed informal interactions where by actualizing middle-class values and aspects of behaviour that they had in common, immigrants gave their hosts the impression that they were on the same side as them when it came to lines of distinction. Emphasizing similarities in their middle-class lifestyle and taste allowed them to demonstrate that they were closer to their Norwegian workmates than other Norwegians who did not share these values.

In short, it is possible to argue that access to work does not necessarily lead to the social affirmation of immigrants and their social integration. Nevertheless, the workplace can be a crucial arena for identity reproduction and social integration, on the condition that the immigrant succeeds in getting a 'proper job'. In cases where immigrants established a permanent and secure anchorage as well as a good position at their workplace, their jobs did not only give them an opportunity to gain economic resources, but also social ones. Immigrants with substantial human resources who regained their social positions after resettlement were in the best position (category III in figure below).

Figure 7: Occupational displacement and immigrant identities

Human capital/education

+   −

	Human capital/education +	Human capital/education −
Occupational displacement/ Status deprivation **+**	**Category I** relations with workmates: - strong distinction-work due to high degree of occupational displacement social identity: - low possibilities for identity negotiations - frustration, bitterness and shame due to large status deprivation	**Category II** relations with workmates: - moderate distinction-work due to low degree of occupational displacement social identity : - low possibilities for identity negotiations
Occupational displacement/ Status deprivation **−**	**Category III** relations with workmates: - culture and values contribute to strengthening relations with Norwegian workmates social identity: - inconsistencies in ethno-class position improve possibilities for identity negotiations	**Category IV** relations with workmates: - culture and values have moderate power to strengthen relations with Norwegian workmates. social identity: - low possibilities for identity negotiations

Several of my Bosnian informants fit into category III in the figure. In Norway, these people regained their former positions as academics, doctors, and engineers, etc. One of the reasons why Bosnians achieved these positions in the Norwegian labour market may be their 'human capital'.[201] The most educated informants in the study were from Bosnia. Working life may constrain or enable the development of a positive self because different occupational roles allow the self to be defined in very different ways by others. It is not difficult to imagine that life is less complicated and more comfortable for a migrant in Norway who works as a doctor, engineer or researcher than it is for someone who is a cleaner, paper deliverer or taxi driver. Due to inconsistency in their ethno-class position,[202] immigrants with high status positions had better provisions for negotiating their identities. In cases where immigrants regained prestigious occupational positions, the resultant occupational identity made their life easier by at least partly taking over as source of identification. They had more self-confidence in their relations with indigenous locals because the type of roles they played were respectable ones. They could not only show themselves more favourably in interactions with their Norwegian colleagues, but could do the same in areas outside those where the role was played on a daily

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[201] Moreover, it was easier for ex-Yugoslavs to have their education and credentials recognized by Norwegian authorities than it was for Iraqis.

[202] By 'inconsistency in ethno-class position' I mean cases where the ethnic identity of the minority person has a low value in the host society; while the individual's current occupational position in the host society is high. We might also associate the concept with cases where a person has a highly valued ethnic identity and low occupational position (in the Norwegian context this would mainly be Dutch, English or Swedish immigrants who work in low status jobs, such as cleaners or construction workers, for instance). None of my informants seemed to have a highly valued ethnic identity in Norwegian public life. Instead, they have seen their ethnicity as a burden in interacting with Norwegians.

basis. The hosts tended to consider these immigrants as unique individuals or at least as exceptional members of their otherwise stigmatized ethnic group. As a consequence, these people were also more motivated for external networking.

On the other hand, we have immigrants whose situational identity at the workplace was based on very low status roles. These people had a congruent ethno-class position which did not provide them with favourable opportunities for identity negotiation. In extreme cases they risked dual discrediting: both as potentially stigmatized foreigners (ethnic stigmatization) and as members of the lowest strata within the labour market (class related stigmatization). Some of these immigrants came to Norway without considerable human resources and nevertheless ended up in unstable, unskilled and low paid jobs. They sometimes had a similar social background as their Norwegian peers at work. Nevertheless, their class-based values often could not help them transcend perceived cultural differences and the prejudices of their Norwegian peers in the ways that people who achieved high positions in the Norwegian labour market could.[203]

Other immigrants were primarily engaged in work that brought them distinction and frustration because of occupational displacement. Immigrants who had substantial human resources (in terms of higher education and profession), but who experienced severe status degradation and occupational/class misplacement in Norway belonged to a category that was especially frustrated. They suffered in several ways. As the informants pointed out above, their old occupational positions and qualifications were not taken seriously after resettlement. Their sense of who they were contrasted strongly with how others saw them, and this also isolated them from their workmates. We may say that their occupation contributed in a negative manner to their already problematic social identity. As I noted, several of my Bosnian informants secured prominent occupational positions for themselves. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that not all Bosnians had the same workplace experience. In my study, Bosnians dominated both categories I and III. It was among Bosnians that I found the most extreme examples of occupational misplacement. Bosnians with certain academic qualifications and occupations, such as engineers, nurses and doctors, easily regained their positions in Norway, while economists, dentists, lawyers and judges (to take some examples) had problems having their education and former professions recognized in Norway. Due to their ethno-class position in Norway, the latter category had fewer favourable opportunities for self-presentation within the workplace and outside it. Given this information, we should also look at how inclined they were to bridge to the mainstream.

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[203] Newcomers with a high education who gained high positions in Norway were usually fluent in the Norwegian language. They were also people who had already been familiar with the global (western) middleclass culture in their homeland. Such immigrants could not only refer successfully to their high position and profession as things they had in common with their Norwegian peers at work, but also had a distinctive middleclass taste, etiquette and knowledge about music, books, clothing, food, and wine etc that they shared with their 'Norwegian equals'. On the other hand, I got the impression, which is also in line with several previous studies, that immigrants with low education/human resources who work in low status occupations (category IV) often risk being seen by their Norwegian workmates as competitors or through an ethnic lens rather than in the terms of a solidarity based on their shared occupation or class position (See Carli 1993; Næss 1997; Nilsen 1999; Grønhaug 2006; Sandberg and Pedersen 2007). Nevertheless, this does not mean that some immigrants in this situation cannot establish friendly and supportive ties with their Norwegian workmates.

12.3. Family and spouses

An important source of social integration and identity affirmation are the families and relatives of immigrants. I have already indicated that members of the nuclear family are crucial components of an immigrant's social life, both in terms of sociability and emotional support. Companionship with family members is usually time-consuming. Families indicated that they would like to have more social contacts outside the home, but that they did not have time for them. Hence, companionship with family members may sometimes reduce the inclination for further networking. On the other hand, it also compensate for a lack of contact with people outside the home. Therefore, single people may find the lack of friends to be a more significant problem than immigrants whose spouse and children accompanied them.

Members of the nuclear family not only take up spare time, providing important social feedback to immigrants, but may also contribute to each other's personal network – becoming members of a 'family networking team'. As members of such a team, family members will help to expand each other's personal networks through joined networking activities. When I asked my informants about how they get in touch with individuals listed in their personal network protocols, they often answered that the contact was the husband of his wife's workmate or the parents of his son's friends at school, etc. These answers show that as someone who is a part of the nuclear family, the immigrant is not as engaged in the process of reconstructing her or his social life after resettlement as a single person is. The quotation presented below is a good example of this:

> Most of my Norwegian friends are ex-colleagues of my husband. We became acquainted because he introduced me to them, but now some of them are closer to me than to him…I introduced my husband to some people too. My husband socializes a lot with one Norwegian man who is our neighbour. I am a good friend of his wife's, so I introduced her husband to my husband. We girls indirectly brought the boys together (Bosnian woman).

When we analyze attempts by married immigrants with families in Norway to bridge and bond, it may be useful to distinguish between the ethno-social practices of single family members and the family as a social unit that engages in bonding and bridging endeavours together. In some cases, family members have similar ethno-social practices and join in the effort to network and bridging with the mainstream. In other cases, the immigrant may be indirectly involved in bridging to the mainstream without that making any efforts to bridge on her or his own. I met immigrants who as individuals were primarily oriented towards bonding with their compatriot friends, but whose contact with Norwegians was facilitated by their family members. These people may, in one way or another, also become part of that individual's social life. One informant said:

> My husband introduced me to people he knew from the reception centre… Friends of my husband gradually become my friends too… They accepted me and introduced me to other people (Iraqi woman).

As the quotation illustrates, people who the immigrant socializes with and is supported by in the present, may first have been friends of a spouse – or will at least have been mobilized by the spouse or by the person's children in one way or another. In some cases and during certain periods of a person's life, members of the family may lack the required social abilities or access to important social arenas where being acquainted with other people might be possible. This inability to participate in a wider social life makes such individuals much less effective

in reconstructing their social life than other, more active and better integrated, members of the nuclear family. In such cases, the other persons in the nuclear family will become the primary source of new social contacts.

12.3.1. Iraqi and Ex-Yugoslav women and family networking teams

Among Yugoslavs, there were surprisingly small differences between women and men in terms of how they participated in community life. Among Iraqi families, on the other hand, women were less engaged than their husbands in networking and in bridging to the mainstream. These differences may be partly explained by cultural and social differences between the ethnic groups, but also by the fact that most Iraqis who migrated to Norway at the end of the 90s arrived in the country on their own. Their wives came to Norway afterwards through procedures for family reunion. The men were those who normally introduced their wives to other people and to Norwegian society in general since they were the first to arrive in Norway.[204] As a result, the women who followed them inherited their networks in Norway rather than achieving them independently.

> My husband arrived in Norway two years before me. In the beginning, I was totally dependant on him since I could not speak Norwegian. I did not know anybody. His Norwegian friends visited us several times… His Norwegian friends visited us too (Iraqi woman).

If an individual is unemployed, ill or cannot speak the language, this person's social integration and the integration of the whole family as a social unit depends (at least when we speak about bridging) on family members who have the skills and opportunity to interact and construct bridges to other people. As my informant's story shows, some Iraqi women were totally dependant on their husbands during the first phase of their integration process. Even after several years in Norway these women were not directly involved in bridging with Norwegians. They were mostly oriented to other Iraqi women, the domestic sphere and to the rearing of babies and children. They accepted or became accustomed to the idea that establishing and maintaining ties outside the family was primarily the responsibility of their husbands. In their eyes, the husbands had a better knowledge of their social environment. They were also the breadwinners, which gave these men better opportunities for bridging to the mainstream.

Unlike Iraqi women, many Bosnian and Croatian women arrived in Norway together with their husbands and children. Bosnian and Croatian women and their husbands were jointly engaged from the start in reconstructing their family networks. They also engaged themselves in bridging to the mainstream as active networking partners who contributed to enlarging each other's personal networks via joint networking activities. I met Bosnian women who even had leading roles in their families with respect to the establishment and maintenance of contacts outside the family. There are also several other factors that facilitated the social integration of Bosnian women. For example, the most educated women in the study were those from Bosnia. These women were more active in the labour force and organized more spare time activities, which gave them better opportunities for participating in community life.

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[204] Most Kurds who migrated to Norway from Northern Iraq came to the country on their own.

12.3.2. Norwegian partners

Most immigrants I met were married within their own ethnic group. Nevertheless, I met several immigrants who were married or lived together with Norwegians. In these cases, the spouse directly or indirectly influenced the immigrant's personal network, the immigrant's ethno-social practice and the immigrant's identities. The immigrant may also interpret the fact that s/he is married and has children with the native person as an important symbol of acceptance.

> Of course I feel accepted by the hosts… I live with a Norwegian woman and have a daughter who is half-Norwegian… I do not even need to have my own Norwegian friends in order to feel accepted. It is more than enough to have my family and to socialize with my wife's relatives and friends. The more relevant question is how I shall get enough time to maintain my relations with my compatriots, and how I shall balance and harmonize these two parts of my life (Iraqi man).

Immigrants who were married or who lived together with Norwegians had better opportunities for external integration and for bridging outside their own ethnic group. Having a husband or wife with friends and relatives allowed the immigrant easier access to primary groups among the hosts. These immigrants were given important sources of self-confirmation and felt a highly developed sense of belonging to the mainstream. However, marital integration does not always lead to Norwegian friends and to social integration within mainstream society. In certain cases, these relations may contribute to feelings of exclusion – as, for example, in the cases where the immigrant does not feel welcomed into the personal networks of their spouses. I met immigrants who were almost totally disconnected from the personal network of their Norwegian partners.[205] These individuals did not have better opportunities for external networking and bridging to the mainstream than any other immigrants. The personal network of a spouse could even be the source of humiliation. Relatives and friends of the Norwegian partner sometimes openly communicated their disapproval of the marriage or relationship to the informant.

It has also happened that an immigrant with a Norwegian wife or husband was given the chance to socialize with friends and relatives of the spouse, but still failed to present her or himself in a way that was acceptable within the premises of the ethnic majority. In these cases, people who the immigrant was compelled to socialize with, because of their relations with the Norwegian spouse, contributed to undermine her or his self-esteem. Instead of creating feelings of recognition, inclusion and a sense of belonging to the mainstream, face-to-face interactions and relations with these people contributed instead to a sense of inferiority and ethnic misrecognition. Immigrants who had Norwegian spouses preferred to socialize with ethnically mixed couples. They indicated that they enjoy their company better than that of 'normal' Norwegian couples. These couples were in a similar situation. In the company of mixed couples, immigrants were not forced to play minority roles since there was always more than one foreigner present. Immigrants in these couples enjoyed being with similar couples because relations between them were characterized by more neutral international frames. When together, their interactions were on more equal terms: for example, they sometimes spoke English rather than Norwegian, etc.

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[205] In these cases, the individual mainly socialized with his compatriot contacts, while his Norwegian spouse mainly socialized with her compatriot contacts.

12.3.3. Relatives and transnational networks

In cases where immigrants had parents, siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, etc living in close proximity to them, these relatives constituted an important part of their ethnic network, in terms of sociability, identity affirmation and social support. Even if the immigrants did not visit their relatives often, these ties were strong and stable. They were important social asset. If significant social support was needed, then individuals went to their relatives.

> When the brother of my wife came to visit us, he said that he and his family had a miserable life in the small town where they had been located by Norwegian authorities. My wife and I offered that they came and lived with us here in Trondheim. He moved into our small flat with his family. Can you imagine seven people in two rooms? They lived with us until they found a job in the city. It was a difficult time for us, but we are very happy now to have them here in Trondheim. It is nice to have relatives in the vicinity when you are living so far away from the home country (Iraqi man).

Immigrants who had relatives near the place where they lived were privileged in many ways. If they needed either emotional or practical support they could turn to their relatives. For many of these immigrants, relatives constituted stable, affirmative and reliable contacts that the immigrant would not otherwise have had in Norway. Having relatives in Norway may also give immigrants an extra degree of emotional comfort, in that they give a feeling of not being totally alone and far away from home.

> When it really matters, you can always rely on family and relatives. If I need to discuss something intimate, I do not go to my friends. I go to my sister or my mother. I think that life in exile is much easier when you have your family and relatives close by. We who have families here are really privileged…I spend a significant part of my spare time with my mother and my sister and their families. It is not only our kinship that connects us. We have common hobbies…They are my holiday partners, skiing partners, blueberry-picking partners etc. If I feel that I belong to someone, then it is to my relatives here in Norway (Bosnian man).

Family members and relatives may be important for immigrants even if they live far away. Although they are not as significant in terms of sociability, they are important in a symbolic and emotional sense. Immigrants live far away from their home country and family, but they also have transnational lives, in one way or another.[206] These people remind them that they are liked: they provide important messages of self-confirmation, especially to immigrants who feel lonely and excluded in the new place.

> Whenever I feel depressed or lonely here in this strange country, I call my brother or my sister back home or some of my old friends. Conversations with them give me new energy. Those people like me and miss me (Croatian woman).

Relatives and old friends back home are considered significant others in many ways. Immigrants speak often about them, discuss problems with them, help them via remittances, and receive supportive images and expectations from them. Although separated by considerable physical distances, these relatives still remain the immigrant's 'significant and

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[206] Most of immigrants in my study do not have relatives in Norway or at least in the town that they currently reside in, but they maintain contact with their relatives and former intimates in one way or another (i.e., by telephone, internet, or by regularly visiting relatives in the home country).

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generalized other' (Mead 1934).[207] Immigrants reflect on how their actions might appear to their families, relatives and communities back home.[208] These people are an important part of their identity as well as a source of emotional support and identity affirmation – even though they live far away.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that relatives are not only the source of sociability, identity affirmation and material support – as indeed the stories presented above may suggest. Although relatives may be supportive, relationships with them are not always ideal and characterized by harmony. The family and relatives may punish and ostracize family members who are perceived as challenging or breaking their norms. The relatives of an immigrant are also a source of transnational social control. One informant reflects on this in what follows:

> My relatives here are important to me in many ways…The picture my family back home has of me partly depends on the impressions my relatives who live here in Norway have of me. I know when my uncle in Norway visits my mother back in Sarajevo; the first thing she will ask him is how things are with me here (Bosnian woman).

What appears as a positive connection between relatives may under the surface hide various ambivalences, dilemmas and a large portion of 'mistrustful solidarity' (Levitt 2001). As the informant's account suggests, her relatives in Norway are in a special position. According to her, they represent ties with the homeland, monitoring her life in Norway. Moreover, they are in a position to transmit information to the family and relatives back home. I got impression that solidarity between compatriots is not simply a matter of pure love, but can sometimes represent the kinds of concerns mentioned by my informant. Occasionally, relatives help each other not because they want to, but because they have to. Relatives in Norway know that as long as they avoid conflicts and are nice to each other, there is a reduced risk of someone beginning to gossip and undermine the identity they display to relatives back home.

12.4. Perspectives on neighbourhoods as a source of social integration

The neighbourhood is often considered as a vital source of social integration and support, and for giving a sense of belonging. However, this assumption has been challenged by a number of studies that have investigated exactly what kind of social relations people have with their neighbours in urban environments (Putnam 2000; Phillipson, Allan and Morgan 2004). According to these studies, people do not seek out close social relations in their neighbourhood. It is common to have a certain amount of contact with neighbours, but people seldom have their most important and frequent relations with neighbours. Instead, people develop friendships and close relations outside their neighbourhood, with people who share some common interests with them (Fischer 1982; Albrow 1996; Phillipson, Allan and Morgan 2004). Therefore, Albrow (1996) speaks of a 'deterritorialization' of the community. He

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[207] When the names of newborn children have to be chosen, weddings are organized or remittances need to be sent, etc, the 'me' of the immigrant is not only mirrored by the relations s/he has in Norway.
[208] Maintaining positive identities in relation to relatives and the local community in the home country is an important part of immigrants' identities. For example, for some immigrants, being the person who supports family and relatives back home is an important part of their identity. Several of my informants have also invested considerable resources in appearing successful and wealthy in the eyes of their relatives back home.

claims that people's social networks are fare more extensive than the boundaries of the particular neighbourhoods in which they currently happen to reside (Albrow 1996).[209]

The studies I have mentioned have in common the claim that neighbours play a minor role in personal landscapes unless they are also considered as friends (Putnam 2000; Pahl and Spencer 2004). When we speak about ethnic minorities and their bonding behaviour, however, the situation seems to be a little different. Among the immigrants in my study, at least two distinct integration strategies and attitudes emerge in respect to ethnic neighbourhoods. While some immigrants reproduce their identities and networks via dense interaction with their compatriot neighbours, the others reconstruct their social lives by distancing themselves geographically from their fellow compatriots and ethnic neighbourhoods (Portes and Rumbaut 2006: 64).

a) Immigrants who live in ethnic neighbourhoods in close proximity to their compatriots

Immigrants who preferred to live among compatriots claimed that they felt safer and more relaxed in neighbourhood where many of their compatriots also resided.[210] They pointed out several advantages with these neighbourhoods. They emphasized that the cost of buying an apartment was much lower there than in other parts of the city. With such prices, they could afford to live in larger apartments. They also saw these ethnic neighbourhoods as important sources of social integration, both in terms of identity affirmation and sociability. Being in close proximity to people who shared their language and values, they felt better able to reproduce their cultural practices and to preserve their ethnic identities.

> Almost all the Iraqis that I know already resided in that part of the city or have plans to move there… There are a lot of Iraqis in that part of the city or close to it whom they may visit on a daily basis… These people speak my language... For the same money; we can also purchase a much bigger apartment there than in other parts of the city (Iraqi man).

Compatriot neighbours also offer considerable practical help: among other things, they help each other with babysitting, lending a hand in restoring apartments, purchasing daily necessities for the elderly, looking after apartments when their compatriot neighbours are on vacation, etc. Most immigrants in my study who lived in ethnic neighbourhoods did not therefore consider ethnic clustering as something negative. At the same time, immigrants who lived in ethnic neighbourhoods were aware of how these neighbourhoods were perceived by indigenous locals living outside elsewhere. Some of them claimed that they did not care what other people thought. It was their opinion that ethnic neighbourhoods were much safer and more pleasant to live in than the way that they were portrayed in the local media and by people who lived in other parts of the same town. According to them, these images were stereotypes that bore little or no relation to the actualities of everyday life in their areas. They thought of ethnic communities and neighbourhoods as the normal way of adapting to life in a foreign country. They referred to ethnic communities in England, Canada and United States – to countries where in their opinion there was greater acceptance for ethnic clustering than in Norway.

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[209] In a similar vein, Fischer (1982) has previously argued that in matters of minor need, people turn to neighbours, and in matters of great need they turn to intimates wherever those people live (Fischer 1982). See also Phillipson, Allan and Morgan (2004: 9).
[210] See Crow and Allan (1994); Høgmo (1998); Sackmann *et al* (2003).

> People do not know how it is to live in this part of the city, and who actually lives here. They are ignorant and full of prejudice. It is normal to cluster when you come to a new country. I am sure that Norwegians did the same when they arrived in the USA. Ethnic neighbourhoods should be supported. They make urban environments more exciting. Fortunately, some Norwegians know that (Bosnian man).

While some immigrants did not care about what others thought (or even tried to convince themselves that their neighbourhood was not stigmatized in the least), others did care. These people were more concerned about how they appeared in the eyes of the ethnic majority and regretted that ethnic neighbourhoods were associated with ghettos in Norway. In respect to identity-work, we may say that their social identity suffered – and this was a burden that they often experienced in interactions with people outside the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, they benefited from so much positive feedback in daily interactions with their compatriots within the densely sociable frame of the ethnic neighbourhood, that they felt it was worth it.

b) Immigrants who do not want to live among their compatriots

I also met immigrants who were reluctant to move into, or who had decided to move out from, ethnic neighbourhoods. These people did not want to live too close to their compatriots or to other minority immigrant groups. There are several motivational roots for this reluctance: among other things, it may be related to a desire to construct a more positive social identity is possible within an ethnic neighbourhood alone.

> …That area is considered a marginalized part of the city. In a few years, it will look like a real ghetto – actually, it already looks like a ghetto. My compatriots do not understand why I do not want to live there. When they heard that I wanted to live in another part of the city, they said that they could never do that since they would be too far away from their friends. Believe me - it will be much worse there in ten-fifteen years… I would never buy an apartment there. I do not want to live in the ghetto…It is also quite possible that the prices of these apartments will decline (Iraqi man).

Several immigrants have chosen to move into neighbourhoods where there are few compatriots or other minority groups, because they wanted to distance themselves socially and symbolically from these groups. In some cases, the choice of neighbourhood was determined more by their class positions and aspirations in relation to the mainstream than by their ethno-social preferences.

> I will never reside in these kinds of neighbourhoods. It is enough that I am a foreigner. I do not want in addition to live in stigmatized parts of the city. I do not want my children to become bitter and frustrated immigrants. I do not want them to be ashamed every time someone asks them where they live (Bosnian woman).

The symbolic and economical implications of such an action prevented these immigrants from moving into ethnic neighbourhoods, while others were anxious that living in such places would make it difficult for their children to learn proper Norwegian. The last category was especially concerned with the possibility that their children would end up in marginalized and underprivileged milieus and that they would construct stigmatized identities in opposition to

mainstream society.[211] Furthermore, several informants also indicated that they were reluctant to live too near their compatriots because they feared that they might be able to control them socially. Immigrants who invested energy in acculturation were conscious that ethnic neighbourhoods and networks could suppress any aspects of an individual's behaviour that deviated from the cultural norms of the ethnic community. Maintaining relations with their ethnic community presupposed in this case a bifurcation of their social life, including a separation of the different arenas for self-presentation. In other words, residing outside ethnic neighbourhoods allowed these immigrants to have parallel social lives. In that case, they could decide when they wanted to socialize with their compatriots and when they wanted to withdraw and distance themselves from then. Living at a distance from their fellows meant that they were not continuously 'monitored' by them (Portes and Zhou 1993; Lacy 2004).[212] As a result, these people could separate their 'audiences' (Goffman 1956) and in this way reproduce coherent 'synchronic identities' (Gilroy 1987; Hogg and Abrams 1988; Ålund and Schierup 1991).

c) Norwegian neighbours

Long-term residence in a local community may produce the feeling of belonging to the community even when the resident is originally a foreigner (Wallman 1984; Allan and Crow 1994). In these cases, members of the indigenous majority population and members of ethnic minority groups may be considered integral parts of a single local neighbourhood (Wimmer 2004).[213] Such expectations about the positive impacts of increased proximity between Norwegians and immigrants provide the authorities with a rationale for a wide dispersal of immigrants and refugees (Brox 1997).

I found very few immigrants who have managed to establish such close and friendly relations with their Norwegian neighbours. Most immigrants I met did not have any social contact with their Norwegian neighbours at all, beyond exchanging greetings outside their flats. Several of my informants even saw their Norwegian neighbours as a source of frustration, insecurity and anxiety. Some immigrants were frustrated mostly because their neighbours failed to greet them when they met. Others were irritated by complaints from Norwegian neighbours about the smell of their cooking, about conflicts between children, cleaning and noise.

> Several times when our friends visited us, neighbours called the police. They complained that we were too noisy, which is not true. Just imagine, we eat supper with some other family on a visit, when police officers ring at our door and say that the neighbours have complained that we were noisy. We cannot relax with such neighbours. You never know what they will do (Bosnian man).

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[211] These parents were concerned that other immigrants, if they lived too close, could provide their children with alternative reactive model for adapting to Norwegian prejudice and exclusion. These concerns and strategies are also reported among Punjabi Sikhs in California (see Portes and Zhou 1993).

[212] Similar practices of strategic integration are reported in other studies, for example Lacy (2004) indicated similar strategies among American middle class blacks.

[213] In his study of social relations in several Swiss neighbourhoods, Wimmer (2004), for instance, have shown that immigrants who came a long time ago are seen by their Swiss neighbours as 'one of us' in contrast to the newcomers. People who do not have long-standing connections in the area are considered as outsiders (Wallman 1984; Wimmer 2004).

Some immigrants even had to deal with Norwegian neighbours who were openly hostile:

> One neighbour openly said to us that everything was better before immigrants moved in. He said that he would do everything in his power to have us kicked out of his neighbourhood. He made our life terrible. He came drunk with his brother once and accused us of several things. He insulted my husband several times and physically attacked our son…We felt as if we were living under a siege. I did not know what to do, I cried a lot… We contacted the police…Fortunately he does not bother us any more. Now, he acts as if we do not exist. This suits us fine (Bosnian woman).

The informant quoted above was still anxious when she approached her apartment since she never knew what to expect from her hostile neighbours. Other immigrants have also complained that they found damage to their cars or other property, or that racist insults were written on their cars and mailboxes. In order to avoid discrimination and racism from Norwegian neighbours, some immigrants even decided to relocate. Fortunately, open insults and attempts at humiliation do not dominate interactions and relations with Norwegian neighbours. Nevertheless, it seems that immigrants do not necessarily need to be exposed to direct acts of racism in order to experience their neighbourhood as cold and xenophobic. A lack of contact with Norwegian neighbours may be taken as sufficient evidence of a more widespread xenophobia.

> I do not know them since they seldom speak with us or greet us when we encounter them. Contact with Norwegian neighbours is really minimal. I have lived here several years, but I do not know anyone in the neighbourhood…If I need some help, I have to call Iraqi friends that live in other parts of the town. Sometimes, I feel that neighbours avoid us. I am sure that some of them would be happy if we moved out (Iraqi man).

How immigrants made sense of this lack of contact with their Norwegian neighbours differed among my informants. Different people have different interpretations of themselves, their social reality and relations with other people. Some people, like the informant above, believed that the lack of contact with their neighbours was a sign of xenophobia and racism. Others established friendly contacts with their Norwegian neighbours, but suggested that these relations were too weak. However, I also met immigrants who interpreted such a lack of close contact with Norwegian neighbours in a more positive manner. For them, it was a matter of Norwegian culture, and even their own preference. In their homelands, these immigrants were accustomed to have close and supportive relations with their neighbours. They felt that Norwegians in general do not have strong relations with their neighbours. They seem to have recognized that they cannot fulfil their cultural expectations with their Norwegian neighbours.

> We should not explain everything with racism. It is simply different here. In my country, neighbours are almost part of the family – whereas here, they do not even want to know your name…It is not so easy to establish contact because both they and we do not know how the other side will respond…I notice that I also became more reserved as a result - for instance I seldom greet my neighbours first. I wait on them to greet me first, and then I respond (Iraqi man).

The last story throws light on several relevant issues. A lack of mutual understanding in respect to significant symbols may result in uncertainty about how counterparts will respond to each other's attempts at interaction. In addition to the cultural dimension of this insecurity, the caution that is mentioned here may also be seen in the light of the immigrant's anxiety about how Norwegian neighbours perceive and categorize him. As the above account amply illustrates, the fear of rejection may result in a reluctance to take any initiative, and may even

cause immigrants to avoid interaction with their Norwegian neighbours altogether. Several immigrants claimed that they were polite, but reticent and distanced towards their Norwegian neighbours. If an immigrant attempts to establish friendly contact and does not receive the appropriate response, it may jeopardize their self-image. If the Norwegian neighbours respond in a way that to the immigrants is not in keeping with their self-esteem, each subsequent encounter with these people may be embarrassing and unpleasant. After such episodes, immigrants may even be anxious about taking the initiative when it comes to new contact with their Norwegian neighbours.

12.5. Doors into Norwegian networks

There are several entry points to Norwegian networks. As we have seen, immigrants may use the workplace, organisations or neighbourhood as points of entrance.[214] Others establish contact with the mainstream through their Norwegian spouses, girlfriends or boyfriends. These entry points, however, do not necessarily lead to stable and strong connections with the mainstream. Among other things, they depend on the individual capacities of the immigrant and what phase of life they happen to be in. The sources of integration presented in this chapter should be thought of instead as sliding doors that continuously allow and deny access to Norwegian networks. For example, I met immigrants who socialized with Norwegians as long they had employment, but who became isolated from Norwegian networks after they had lost their jobs.[215] Similar developments may be seen in cases where Norwegian spouses, girlfriends and sexual partners were the most relevant entry points (or motivating factors) for contact with indigenous locals.[216] For example, since Iraqi men often arrived alone in Norway, several of those I met were eager to socialize with local women and their friends. However, after they were reunited with their Iraqi families and wives, or married within their own group, these immigrants entered a new phase in their life. They gradually cut themselves off from contact with indigenous locals and socialized with their compatriots instead. In some cases this withdrawal from the mainstream could become permanent, depending on the abilities of the person and her or his motivation to enter other doors that led into informal Norwegian networks.

There are also immigrants who from the very start give up the idea of ever becoming a part of the Norwegian mainstream. They felt that they could never adjust to certain aspects of Norwegian culture and lifestyle. Given such expectations, these people were not interested when different doors were opened to them (at the workplace, in the neighbourhood, etc), giving them the opportunity to gain access to Norwegian networks. These immigrants were convinced that however much they adjusted, they would never be accepted as normal and

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[214] The third arena for possible social integration into the mainstream is Norwegian voluntary organizations and organized social activities. These arenas are commonly seen as important sources of social integration among Norwegians. However, studies show that participation in organised spare-time activities is quite low among immigrants and refugees (Djuve and Kavli 2000/2001; Lund 2003). This was also the case among the immigrant participants in my study. It seems that low participation in the civic life of the mainstream society was a result of their more general tendency to avoid potentially uncomfortable interactions with the ethnic majority.

[215] Such withdrawals are not necessarily permanent: for example, if the immigrant regains employment, this may give rise to the possibility of external integration, and the immigrant's ethno-social preferences, practices and corresponding identities may again change and lead to new reconstructions of identity.

[216] Immigrants who had intimate relations with Norwegian men and women were influenced by these relations and had positive sentiments about Norwegians. There are, however, cases where these relations ended in divorce and family problems which resulted in feelings of bitterness. They sometimes caused generally negative attitudes towards Norwegians and Norwegian culture.

equal members of Norwegian society. Therefore, when the doors that gave them entrance into the mainstream appeared to open, they were seen as nothing more than an illusion. Other immigrants believed that they could perhaps be accepted if they could adjust, but felt that the requirements made of them were simply too high. For example, I met immigrants who considered learning Norwegian an impossible task. They have given up bridging attempts in advance since they felt that it was unlikely that they would ever learn the language. Due to language problems, then, they also experienced encounters with Norwegians as embarrassing and humiliating. As a consequence, they avoided interactions with Norwegians. In that way, they also reduced the possibility of practicing the language. Although they had sometimes been more than ten years in Norway, these people were still largely dependent on the public translation service and on their ethnic contacts.

12.6. Sources and arenas for identity reproduction and the integration of immigrants: A summary

My study reveals that immigrants have multiple links to the other people. Most have at least one or two connections with mainstream society. However, there are also immigrants who do not have any informal, personal link to the mainstream. I met people who were unemployed, or else marginalized at their workplace. They lived in close proximity to their compatriots or did not have any friendly informal contact with their Norwegian neighbours. They had lived for a long time in Norway, but they remained quite isolated from the mainstream, both socially and psychologically.

Some arenas help immigrants to attain recognition while others may reproduce feelings of non-belonging, exclusion and stigma. Immigrants are granted access to some arenas, while others remain closed to them. Neighbourhoods, and family, ethnic and kin-based networks, in combination with different ethnic organizations, are often seen as important sources of social integration by many immigrants. My data reveals that family members may indeed be important in providing identity affirmation, sociability and bridges to people outside the family. Relatives, neighbours and compatriot friends are important sources of social integration as well. If immigrants have relatives living nearby, they act as important social resource, both in terms of sociability and social support. Even if they live far away, they are still important to immigrants as their significant and generalized others. These ethnic networks – along with ethnic organizations – are important sources of support, identity reproduction and sociability. However, this does not mean that they cannot be suppressive and embed different tensions, feelings of mistrust and internal conflicts.

Employment also matters, and yet paid work is not the solution to all of an immigrant's problems. The workplace may be an important source of integration and identity reproduction – but only if certain conditions are fulfilled. Even if they are fully employed, immigrants may be excluded from social life at the workplace. The workplace is not always an arena that promotes the development of interethnic relations. Some immigrants experience the workplace as a source of humiliation and exclusion, while others experience it as a source of personal confirmation and inclusion. Acquiring a 'proper job' immigrants may indeed have opportunities to establish stable personal relations with their Norwegian workmates. The acquisition of favourable roles and statuses connected to work life has an impact on social identity, whether the person is an indigenous local or an immigrant. In the case of low status immigrants, however, attaining favourable social positions at work in the receiving society may have a higher relative importance. Because certain kinds of work bestow a positive class-

status on the immigrant, she or he may improve their social identity and compensate for an otherwise stigmatized ethnic identity. Alternatively, a low status job, characterized by short-term contracts and a hostile working environment, can have a detrimental effect on the immigrant's self-image. Such kinds of employment may reinforce initial ethnic discrediting and have a negative impact on a person's self-presentations and on her or his inclination to bridge outside the job arena.[217]

The outlined findings have direct relevance for governmental integration policies. An increase in the participation of immigrants in the workforce, a strengthening of immigrant communities and a wide dispersal of immigrants in order to counteract ethnic segregation in disadvantaged and marginalized areas - all these are measures that are commonly used by authorities in the host countries to bring about integration within mainstream society. My findings reveal that increased immigrant participation in these arenas is not the solution to all aspects of social integration. The measures have two sides: one that promotes inclusion and social affirmation, and another that promotes social exclusion and discrediting. If authorities neglect immigrant voices and the diversity of their daily experiences with social inclusion and exclusion within different arenas of social life, the aforementioned governmental policies may isolate certain groups of immigrants from indigenous locals rather than bringing them closer together. As we shall see in what follows, the same may be said about governmental settlement policies – for example, the widespread dispersal of certain categories of immigrants to rural parts of the country.

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[217] While some immigrants only have to cope with the burden of their ethnicity in opposition to the occupational position they may have achieved or regained in Norway, others struggle with dual forms of stigmatization, based on both their class and ethnicity.

Chapter 13: The social life of immigrants in the city and the small town

The city and the small town provide two different contexts for the reconstruction of social life in the period after resettlement. The social fabric of daily life in small towns may be difficult to cope with for many immigrants. Immigrants who do not manage to gain access to primary groups of indigenous locals may experience the small town environment as a very problematic context for identity reproduction. They think of the city as providing better contexts for reconstructing social life than smaller local communities. On the other hand, immigrants with highly developed capacities for integration may profit if they settle in a small town. They may experience a strong sense of belonging and of being recognized by the mainstream.[218]

13.1. Small towns and social control

In his study of how immigrants and refugees integrate in Norway, Aakervik (1992) shows how social networks respond to the appearance of undesirable new members. He illustrates these reactions in the following manner:

Some Norwegian friends say that it is exciting and exotic that I have foreign friends, while others do not understand why I consort with 'such people'. Some teenagers in my neighbourhood used to shout 'Pakistani-friend' to me or to say 'you, who only likes blackies'. At my job, people complain to me that it is not possible to say anything about these 'blackies' in my company, since I defend them all the time (Aakervik 1992: 14).[219]

The current members of a person's network are likely to resist any attempted entry by undesirable new members, i.e. people with different values, social positions and ethnicity (Jackson 1977). Even non-stigmatized individuals may be ostracized by their peers if they associate with stigmatized individuals (Allport 1979). Such tendencies may be found both in smaller local communities and in urban environments. My material suggests that the power social networks have to influence control over patterns of acceptance and integration may be especially strong in the smaller local communities. This may be related to the fact that small local communities are characterized by high social transparency and dense networks (Park 1952; Wirth 1969; Fischer 1982; Cook and Hardin 2001; Smith 2005).[220]

Typically found in smaller communities, social closure describes network relations that are dense, overlapping, and close-knit…Because ties are dense, overlapping and close, everyone is directly or indirectly connected to all others through short chains. The information channels that these connections create pass news and gossip throughout the network. As a result, there is little that anyone can do without having others in the network discover their actions (Smith 2005:10).

Although small Norwegian communities are characterized by lower degrees of social integration than they were before (Villa and Haugen 2005), they still differ in many ways from urban environments. Social control is more prominent in such social environments

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[218] When I speak about the social life of immigrants in small towns, I refer primarily to the experiences and networks of immigrants who live(d) in towns with 4000-6000 inhabitants. When I speak about the city, I refer to the experiences and networks of immigrants who live in the city of Trondheim (ca. 160 000 inhabitants).

[219] Translation mine.

[220] As Smith (2005) pointed out, 'we also know that residents of urban communities are far less likely to be embedded in closed networks-those that are dense, overlapping, and close-knit - than are residents of small towns and rural communities' (Smith 2005:48).

(Wadel 1978; Villa 2000; Klepp and Roppen 2003; Villa and Haugen 2006).[221] That places which appear to be idyllic social environments where everyone knows everyone else can generate a high degree of social exclusion, xenophobia and scepticism against foreigners is not news. Several researchers have shown that the most intense clashes between xenophobic locals and newcomers have taken place in small towns (Eidheim 1993).[222] According to their studies, small towns in Norway may be understood as cultural fellowships or moral communities that are reproduced through complex and multiplex networks. They are closed communicative environments, characterized by dense social networks that support conformity and suppress diversity. Relations in local communities between newcomers and the indigenous local population may seem superficially harmonious, but underneath the surface there often lurks currents of antipathy towards and gossip about immigrants and refugees (Brox 1997; Øvrelid 1997; Høibo and Høibo 2002; Grønseth 2006).

My informants have also told me stories that may be of relevance to this issue of social control in small towns. They believed that established networks hindered indigenous locals from developing friendships across ethnic division lines. This is especially the case where a negative discourse about certain immigrant or refugee groups has already been established among members of the indigenous local population. Within the context of the small town, a Norwegian who wants to extend her or his relations with a immigrant has to take into consideration what friends and others in the local community might think. I have met Norwegians who suffered negative reactions in their town because of socializing with immigrants in their role as 'refugee guides'.[223] People who work with recruiting new people in the program suspected that such reactions might partly explain why it was difficult to recruit new guides in some local communities. Small Norwegian towns have few public arenas where people may socialize within an environment characterized by dense sociability. In such environments, people have more chance if having their activities monitored. When the social life of an individual is also unframed by a dense network of friends and acquaintances who have a long common history,[224] it will be much more problematic, both in a social and a psychological sense, to establish and maintain friendships with people who deviate from the rest of the network. As a result, well-integrated indigenous locals may be reluctant to become involved with outsiders. In short, they prefer their own kind – people they can identify with, and with whom they have relationships at many levels. In such contexts, indigenous locals who decide to be together in public with newcomers must feel confident and secure that they will fit into their existing web of social relations.

13.2. The ethnic community as a source of social incorporation in the city context

Larger urban contexts, characterized by greater degrees of multicultural diversity, may seem like less problematic social environments for immigrants. Among other things, immigrants may rearrange their social life within previously established compatriot networks and institutions that already exist in the major Norwegian cities. Especially immigrants who do

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[221] Wadel (1978) for example argues that the social control that characterizes small Norwegian towns is a function of their distinctive physical and demographical characteristics. According to him, such characteristics allow people in town to have an overview of what is happening and what other people do. City dwellers do not have such a possibility, because the city is physically large and there are many more people living there (see also Schiefloe 1990; Bø 1993; Høgmo 1998).

[222] See also Bjørgo (1993); Øvrelid (1997).

[223] For more on refugee guides, see Valenta, Berg and Henriksen (2003).

[224] They are born in the same place, went together to the same kindergarten, the same school, etc.

not have the motivation, opportunity or capacity to interact with Norwegians in a satisfying, self-confirmative manner seem to prefer living in the city.

The city's institutional, territorial and ethnic diversity allows immigrants to minimize the possibility of unpleasant contacts with indigenous locals.[225] Immigrants who live in the city can carry out most of their daily tasks within the frames of international networks and institutions. If immigrants who live in the city want to eat in a restaurant, meet people in a café, buy food or clothes, have their hair cut, repair or fix up a car, visit a dentist, renovate the apartment, etc, they can do so without being forced to interact too frequently with members of the ethnic majority. Even when immigrants encounter members of the ethnic majority in the city, their chances of doing so within frames that ensure them a more favourable situational identity are improved. They may even constitute a majority of their own in certain neighbourhoods, arenas and situations. A number of ethnic associations, ethnic restaurants, cafés, discotheques, shops, dancing courses, hair salons, etc allow immigrants the possibility of reconstructing their social life (and interacting with compatriots and indigenous locals) within the arenas, institutions and networks where social norms of conduct are defined by themselves.

> When I am in the restaurant, I used to take the initiative. They eat oriental food and listen to our music. They ask about help and advice. I almost feel that it is cool to be a foreigner. I would feel differently if I worked in some Norwegian restaurant… I will never do that either. I prefer to go to places where there are many foreigners. I feel more relaxed there. In such cafés and restaurants people use many languages. Norwegian girls also used to come, but they have to adjust. They sometimes have to speak English, for instance (Iraqi man).

The quotation indicates how the multicultural urban context may influence self-presentation and identity negotiation among immigrants. The informant expresses his preference for venues that are mainly frequented by a foreign clientele, since the ethnic minority then becomes the cultural majority, and Norwegians have to assume the minority role. In these arenas, immigrants are given the opportunity to reproduce positive identities because they have the power of defining what the right code is in these contexts. But such arenas do not have the same power to influence in the smaller Norwegian towns (Gotaas 1996; Høgmo 1998; Grønseth 2006). In small towns, ethnic networks, institutions and arenas (such as, for example, ethnic restaurants, clubs and organizations) do not seem to immigrants to be a sufficient source of social integration. Immigrants and others tend to see their connections to them as primarily symbolic gestures. As we shall soon see, immigrants who live in small towns also have to enter deeply into primary groups of indigenous locals if they want to be included and accepted by them as 'one of us'. Therefore, immigrants may be reluctant to be associated with ethnic institutions and networks that exist in the towns. Joining such organizations and networks runs the risk of actualizing differences from the indigenous locals. On the one hand, it has the effect of emphasizing ethnicity, which may cause further distance from the hosts: on the other hand, it may not provide the immigrant with enough compensation in the form of in-group integration.

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[225] See Gotaas (1996); Høgmo (1998).

13.3. Passing and the context of awareness

Several immigrants felt too visible in small towns. The locals knew everything about them, including those aspects of their identity that immigrants preferred to downplay in their daily lives (for example – their discredited ethnic identity or religion, or the fact that they were once asylum seekers). In other words, in such places, the opportunities for managing information – for example by 'passing and covering' – are considerably reduced. We know that these strategies are an important way of coping with ethnic discrediting in everyday life. When this possibility is limited, it may leave immigrants feeling exposed and therefore intensify the feeling that their ethnicity is a disadvantage.

Successful passing presupposes a specific context of interaction. Glaser and Strauss are relevant and helpful at this stage of our discussion, having introduced the concept of the 'awareness context' (Glaser and Strauss 1981). According to Glaser and Strauss, an awareness context is the total combination of what each interactant knows about the identity of the other and his own identity in the eyes of the other. The awareness context has an influence on the interaction because what people know or do not know with respect to each other may influence how they will interact. Glaser and Strauss (1981) distinguish between several awareness contexts. Their distinction between open and closed awareness contexts may help us better to understand the possibilities that immigrants have for information management. The core of the distinction may be formulated as follows: Interactants are ignorant of other's identities in the closed awareness context; in the open awareness context, each interactant knows the identity of the other, and her or his own identity as the other sees it (See also Hewitt 2003; Stone and Ferberman 1981: 53-63).

To immigrants, smaller local communities can be seen as are open awareness contexts where the inhabitants know a great deal about them. In the small Norwegian towns, both immigrants and locals are visible when they are out in public (Høgmo 1998; Klepp and Roppen 2003; Grønseth 2006). When people in such places meet an outsider, they start to wonder about that person's presence, and may ask each other about who the person is, where s/he comes from, why s/he is here, etc. Indigenous locals soon know a lot about a person. In such open awareness contexts, it is pointless (or directly counter productive) to pass oneself off as somebody else.[226] We may say, paraphrasing Goffman (1963), that in such contexts it is difficult to hide discrepancies between the 'virtual' and the 'real' identity.

Passing presupposes interaction within close awareness contexts. Refugees and asylum seekers who live in a local reception centre, for instance, cannot pass as exchange students or present themselves as tourists from relatively high status countries, if they want to hide their ethnic background or background as refugees/asylum seekers. In the context of the small town, this kind of misinformation would be easily exposed. Even immigrants who are physically undistinguishable from the indigenous local population cannot pass as Norwegians in everyday life when most people in the local community know their real identity. The story that follows, illustrates these differences.

> When I was in Trondheim, I heard that some boys used to say that they were from Italy or Spain when they picked up Norwegian girls. It is impossible to do this here. Everyone knows who we are, and why we are here… Everyone knows that we were living in the refugee camp just a few years ago. When something negative happens in the reception camp, I feel that people here look differently at me already the day after (Iraqi man).

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[226] As I already illustrated, such disclosures may lead to new discrediting.

While local communities seem to be open awareness contexts, many public places and arenas in cities seem to be close awareness contexts. For many immigrants, strategies whereby they directly or indirectly suppress information about themselves are a part of their day-to-day reality in cities. In most situations, immigrants who live in the city encounter people who are complete strangers to them and who know nothing about them. They encounter people who as immigrants they are unlikely ever to meet again. In other words, they encounter the hosts in contexts where their virtual identities are much easier to reproduce. Because of this, immigrants may behave more confidently in many public encounters, since they know that their real identity and biography will not be actualized.[227]

> It is nice to blend in when I am in the city. I found out that as long as I do not speak most people think that I am Norwegian. It is quite a relief…Here, everyone knows who I am and where I come from…People here know that I am an immigrant and a Muslim. I cannot say that this improves my image (Bosnian man).

The feeling of relief that came with being able to merge anonymously into public life in the city is given clear expression here, and is similar to experiences reported by several informants. It seems that this sense of relief from blending in can also be found among visible immigrants who do not want to pass or who cannot suppress their ethnic markers in public.

> People in small places are not used to new things…They get their information about foreigners through the mass media. They have never spoken with immigrants, Muslims or asylum seekers in their life, but they have clear ideas about them. People in cities have seen all kind of foreigners in various situations… People in cities frequently visit foreign restaurants and stores. They are used to foreigners…I found the small places to be closed and xenophobic (Iraqi man).

The experiences reported by my informants are in line with conclusions in studies that compare the social integration of immigrants and refugees in small localities with their everyday reality in cities.[228] In these studies, it is argued that immigrants and refugees will more easily fit in and feel a sense of belonging to an urban environment (Carey-Wood *et al*. 1995; Høgmo 1998). People in urban environments characterized by diversity are also used to meeting and seeing people who are strangers.[229] Unlike the city, where immigrants become a part of the urban crowd and may achieve a less stressful anonymity, in smaller communities they will be more visible, and the objects of negative attention (Nagy 1991; Høgmo 1998; Neal 2002).

In short, we may say that both the visible and invisible minorities (or to borrow Goffman's terminology, discredited and discreditable categories of immigrants) seem to prefer urban, multicultural city contexts. The discreditable prefer the city because it is easier to manage information about themselves. The discredited prefer the city because its diversity and multiethnic character gives them an opportunity to merge and to be different without arousing too much attention (Høgmo 1998; Klepp and Roppen 2003; Grønseth 2006). In such a

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[227] Differences in opportunities for passing and covering between the city and the small town were especially emphasized among refugees who could pass as Norwegians or as 'high status foreigners' in everyday life.
[228] See Carey-Wood *et al* (1995); Høgmo (1998); Ray and Reed (2005). According to Høgmo (1998), for instance, immigrants will experience life in the city in a quite different way than life in a small local community. Unlike the latter, where people are not so used to foreigners, a considerable amount of immigrants live in major cities in Norway.
[229] As Fischer has pointed out, in small towns there are relatively few strangers to be seen in public places, whereas there are many in urban environments (Fischer 1982).

colourful environment, visible minorities become less visible in relative terms. As one of Høgmo's informants puts it: 'Black people are a common sight in Oslo. I was not stared at in Oslo in the way that I am here in Bodø. It is an unpleasant feeling to be seen as a strange animal when one actually is a human being' (Høgmo 1998: 68).

13.4. Combining internal and external integration in the city and the small town

Feelings of non-belonging in relation to the mainstream society and a general sense of loneliness may sometimes be reduced or compensated for by stronger integration within the immigrant's own ethnic community.[230] Therefore, in cases where immigrants experience social marginalization and ethnic stigma in their everyday life, it is especially important for them to have opportunities for compensation in the form of integration within an ethnic community or ethnic network. It seems clear that the possibilities for combining internal and external integration in this way are markedly different when it comes to small towns and large cities. The small town emerges as a narrow social environment, which restricts an immigrant's chances of bonding with their compatriots in addition to bridging with their Norwegian friends. Such narrow constraints hold true for both Norwegian and ethnic networks.

13.4.1. Constraints and narrowness in small town ethnic networks

There are several reasons why the Norwegian cities provide better opportunities for combining internal and external integration. The most obvious one is that Norwegian cities have larger ethnic communities than small towns. To recap: even if ethnic communities are to be found in a given town, they will usually be very small (Høgmo 1998; Grønseth 2006). For example, the largest immigrant communities in Trondheim numbered between 500-700 people,[231] while in the small towns that I visited, immigrant communities sometimes amounted to fewer than 20 individuals with a common background. Thus, even if there are persons who belong to the same ethnic group, this does not necessarily mean that the ethnic community gives an immigrant a proper opportunity for affirmative identity reproduction and social integration.

> Several families from ex-Yugoslavia lived in the town. Two of them were our friends, but these people moved to the south. I did not manage to become friends with the other ex-Yugoslavs in the town. We were simply too different. I actually tried to avoid them (Bosnian woman).

Due to the small size of the ethnic community, immigrants and refugees will have less opportunity to find like-minded persons who belong to their ethnic group. Furthermore, in such a small place, ethnic communities are sometimes characterized by strong social control. The story that follows reflects this.

> I like to socialize with my compatriot friends, but I do not like all of my compatriots. I do not want to be involved in certain Bosnian cliques…It is certainly much more difficult to

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[230] For an earlier discussion of this relation between internal and external integration, see chapters 7 and 8 of this thesis.

[231] For example, in Trondheim in 2004 there were: 522 refugees from Iraq; 520 from Bosnia; 776 from Vietnam; 578 from Iran; and 383 refugees from Somalia. Largest immigrant communities in Oslo numbered several thousand people.

avoid people who you dislike when you live in a small town. In the small town where I lived, there were maybe fifteen Bosnian families, so of course everyone knew everyone and you met them all the time. Here in Trondheim, the situation is completely different (Bosnian woman).

The immigrants who live in a small town have to deal in accordance with the narrow frames of its arenas, institutions and networks. If the ethnic community is also segregated from the rest of the local community, immigrants may additionally experience it as closed and suppressive. The city, on the other hand, permits immigrants to be more selective about their in-group contacts.[232] As the last informant implies, the size of the ethnic community combined with the general extent of the city gives immigrants better opportunities for choosing between different people: it also allows them the possibility of involving themselves with certain members of the ethnic community without the risk of having to relate to (or be controlled by) compatriots who they do not want to socialize with.[233]

Separating interactions and relations with Norwegians and interactions and relations with their compatriots is one self-work strategy immigrants can use to obtain individuality and maintain coherent synchronic identities. Several informants expressed the sense that it is more difficult to prevent information spreading to different parts of their network in a small town. Because of the constraining transparency of the small town, if an immigrant socializes with compatriots there, this may be easily observed by the Norwegian part of the network. In the city, it is easier to maintain close relationships with compatriots without jeopardizing their self. The territorial differentiation and low transparency of the city may improve an individual's chances of socializing with different kind of people. Unlike the city, the fewer arenas of the small town may force the immigrant to choose a side, because in smaller communities, people lead their lives largely in one another's presence.

Three new families from Croatia and Bosnia settled in town. I was happy. I missed the company of my compatriots. At last I could have friends from my home country…I remember that we were in a café and spoke our mother tongue. Several of my Norwegian friends and acquaintances come into the café, but they left us alone. They just greeted us and went away to find a table in another part of the café. I realized that if I started to socialize more often with my compatriots, I would isolate myself from the Norwegian community (Bosnian man).

As the informant makes clear, being in the company of one's compatriots may reverse the immigrant's individual attempts to integrate within the social life of the town. If immigrants who had begun to gain entrance into primary groups of Norwegians continue to socialize with their compatriots within the few arenas of the town, they may jeopardize their external networking. Each time they are seen with their compatriots, they signal to their Norwegian friends that they are members of a distinct alien group and not 'one of us'.

Several times, I heard my Norwegian friends react negatively when they saw groups of immigrants in town. They speak about 'them' and 'us' and make many strange assumptions about these people, forgetting that I too am an immigrant… I know that if I

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[232] See also Klepp and Roppen (2003); Grønseth (2006).
[233] Several studies have shown that the city is normally characterized by large ethnic networks and international institutions which allow immigrants greater freedom of choice and the possibility of different types of social incorporation (Høgmo 1998; Ray and Reed 2005; Grønseth 2006).

start to socialize with my compatriots more often in public, local people, including my Norwegian friends, will notice this (Bosnian woman).

The narrowness of the context does not allow immigrants to have fully separate relations with their compatriots and hosts. In company with their compatriots, they are not only excluded from communication with their Norwegian contacts when they meet them, but also risk being perceived on the basis of their collective identity. Several immigrants in the study were concerned about the possibility of a relapse in the way that they were interpreted by their hosts. Some of them have invested a lot of energy in making a breakthrough in their relations with indigenous locals. They did not want to spoil all that work.

> If I went out with my Iraqi friends to the café I knew that we would be perceived by Norwegians as some sort of clan or gang. I knew that none of my Norwegian friends would join me when I met them. If I decided to be with my compatriots all the time, I would lose my Norwegian friends (Iraqi man).

In short, there are several motives for clustering in an ethnic community, but there are also several motives for keeping one's distance from one's own ethnic group.[234] Immigrants have a vested interest in dissociating themselves from people they consider to be the less desirable members of their ethnic community: they worry about being subjected to social control, or the negative impact on their pursuit of individuality, respectability and a more favourable social identity (Knudsen 2005; Grønseth 2006; Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Established immigrants may also find that their situation worsens with the arrival of newcomers (Høgmo 1998; Høibo and Høibo 2002; Knudsen 2005; Ray and Reed 2005). These concerns may partly explain why immigrants in smaller local communities may have negative attitudes towards newcomers. Attitudes toward immigrants and refugees can change over night in small towns. Whereas the city is characterized by low transparency, small towns are such that the negative actions of a single foreigner are soon known about. Such incidents may change the indigenous population's attitude towards the group. Knowing that their collective identity is very vulnerable in such a narrow context, established immigrants will not only be anxious about how the other members of the group living in that town behave, but may also distance themselves from them in order to protect the self-image they have in the eyes of indigenous locals.

13.5. Different day-to-day realities in the small town

Up to now, I have argued that it may be difficult for immigrants to reconstruct social life in the narrow open awareness context of small local communities. However, relations between the size of the place one lives and the social life of immigrants is not straightforward, even if it is true that most immigrants may experience small places as a problematical environment for identity reproduction and social integration.

The most positive and the most negative stories in the study about social inclusion and exclusion were told to me by people who had lived in small Norwegian towns. On the one hand, informants who lived or still live in small Norwegian towns have provided some of the most striking stories, reflecting strong feelings of stigma, social exclusion and loneliness. On the other hand, I also met immigrants in small Norwegian towns who strongly emphasized how happy their relations with indigenous locals were. They found that such places were

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[234] See also Robinson (1986); Klepp and Roppen (2003); Knudsen (2005); Grønseth (2006).

warm, inclusive, environments where they were well protected from day-to-day racism and ethnic discrimination.

These variations in experiences prevent us from drawing straightforward conclusions about the opportunities and restrictions immigrants have for identity reproduction and social integration in small towns. However, this does not mean that we cannot argue that small town and cities provide different contexts for reconstructing social life after resettlement.[235] We should instead accept that the conventional view of how immigrants integrate in cities and small towns is not sufficiently nuanced. Once again, my material suggests that we have to distinguish between different realities and categories of immigrants.

Immigrants who were admitted to the primary groups in a local community experienced the small town as a supportive and friendly environment.[236] Once people in the small town accept an immigrant, s/he may experience this acceptance quite strongly in their everyday life. I had the impression that the same processes that cause and perpetuate feelings of exclusion can change in nature and produce feelings of inclusion that are just as strong. Social density in small towns makes the social life of those who live there common knowledge. Immigrants may well find this aspect of the small town suppressive. On the other hand, if a few well integrated indigenous locals start to define an immigrant as a social resource and accept this person, the immigrant will soon be known and introduced to other indigenous locals. This does not necessarily mean that the immigrant will then establish close relations with all these people, but they will know and recognize her or him as a member of the community.

> People in the town are not suspicious of me. Everyone here knows that I am a foreigner, but all of them know that my family contributes to this community in several ways. I am not seen as an intruder anymore. It is important to me that people know who I am and where I work and who my friends are. Most of the people I meet on my daily rounds know my name (Bosnian man).

Immigrants who have established friendships with Norwegians frequently meet them in the few arenas that are available in a small town. An important part of their everyday reality will therefore consist of interactions with hosts whose evaluations of them will be based on their personal identity. For instance, one Iraqi informant told me that almost every time he went to the café, there was someone there who knew him (friends, workmates, etc) and who asked him to join him and who introduced him to other people. He said that after some time, almost everyone knew him personally or at least knew who he was and where he worked. This kind of experience is also reflected in the following account:

> People get more out of friendships in a small town. This has maybe something to do with the fact that we meet each other several times during a single day. We get more out of friendships. I had a feeling that I was a part of that community… I simply felt accepted and liked by locals (Croatian man).

As immigrants in small towns meet their Norwegian friends, workmates and acquaintances within the contexts of dense sociability, these relationships have more of an impact on their day-to-day reality. When they establish personal relations with Norwegians in a small town,

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[235] See Solomos and Back (1996); Høgmo (1998); Ray and Reed (2005).
[236] The indigenous local population can establish such tight bonds with immigrants and refugees that they are sometimes even prepared to ignore national immigration policy in their efforts to support and protect their new friends. Both the media and academic researchers have drawn attention to such cases (see among others; Tilia 1999; Høibo and Høibo 2002).

these relations will be a significant source of positive feedback in their everyday lives. Locals will greet and chat casually with them when they meet in town. They will introduce them to others, with the result that they will be recognized and accepted by this new acquaintances as well, widening the circle of familiarity. Friends will also inform other people about the immigrant, reporting whose friend he or she is, and what their qualities are. In other words, the immigrant will become part of a circle where 'everyone knows everyone' in the small town. Immigrants gradually get the chance to participate in the small, polite, rituals of everyday life – but on a personal level, and not as anonymous members of an out-group.

> When I walk back home after work, I often meet at least ten people who I greet or have a brief chat with. Almost everyone knows who I am. They know my name, who my wife is, where I work, etc. I know the same about them. Of course I feel that people here have accepted me…We have not experienced racism or ethnic discrimination. The reason why I am so different from some of your other informants may be explained by the fact that we have lived in such a small town (Croatian man).

During my fieldwork, there were several occasions when I accompanied this informant in the town where he lives. We frequently met his Norwegian friends and acquaintances. From the post office to the barber shop, from the restaurant to the shopping centre, from the petrol station to the occasional encounters with friends and acquaintances at the street, he often stopped for a casual chat or to exchange greetings with people who knew him personally. They waved, nodded, tooted or flashed their headlights – as they would when greeting friends and acquaintances. All of these interactions would clearly have an impact on the immigrant's everyday experience, and on his sense of belonging and recognition. Most immigrants and refugees who rebuild their social life in Norway will face many challenges. However, some have a harder time than others. It is not difficult to understand that people like the above informant were in a uniquely privileged position.

13.5.1. Partial inclusion in the city: knowing and unknowing

The degree to which one is included in the mainstream may differ between the city and the small town. In the city, even the most integrated immigrant may risk everyday experiences that undermine her or his feeling of being accepted and respected by indigenous locals. This finding may be partly explained by the fact that even the most integrated immigrants who live in the city risk being seen in public life on the basis of their ethnicity only. Unlike immigrants who experienced a breakthrough in social relations with indigenous locals in the context of the small town, they do not have frequent or even occasional meetings with their friends in various public arenas. On the contrary, such encounters are usually with people who do not know anything about them and their biography. Consequently, an important part of the day-to-day reality of these people is still characterized by ambivalence about how others perceive, and respond to, their ethnic signs. One informant has summarized her experiences of life in a city and in a small town in the following way.

> I miss all the things that you can do in the city. It is overwhelming to see all these people, stores, cinemas, etc. I miss all that… However, many things are better in the small town. I know nearly everyone here and they know me. I feel at home here. If I go outside, I meet people who I know. There are always some colleagues from work, pupils of mine or their parents who greet me…The situation is different in the city. People do not know you. They see that you are a foreigner… They followed me in the stores. Maybe they thought

that I would steal something... Such a thing would never happen here because people know me. When I am here, I almost forget that I am foreigner (Bosnian woman).

This story serves well as a useful reminder that different degrees of 'the knowing and unknowing' characterize life in the city and in the small town.[237] It is important here to stress that the degree of 'knowing and unknowing' has a different importance for different strategies. In open awareness contexts, immigrants who want to pass or cover will find such 'knowing' environments as problematic for reproducing their virtual identities. By contrast, immigrants who have achieved a certain degree of acceptance and recognition from indigenous locals, will find the degree of 'unknowing' to be problematic. If the immigrant can be distinguished from indigenous locals, then others will not know who this person is: to them, that person will be a low status foreigner, who will be judged on appearance, ethnic markers, speech or behaviour.

In an urban context, it is simply not possible for everyone to know everyone else. Ethnicity, speech, skin colour and dress provide a set of expectations about individual behaviour and public identification (Rogers and Vertovec 1995). In the city, the degree of unknowing will be stronger due to the large size of the population, no matter how many Norwegians the immigrant knows.[238] Therefore, if they are visible immigrants, and in that sense discredited, they will still be forced to continuously evaluate whether these strangers look at them via the ethnic lens. If they are invisible minorities and in that sense discreditable, they well still have reason to be conscious of discrepancies between their real and virtual identity.

It is important to emphasize that an absence of ethnic discrediting, and an accompanying sense of inclusion in the small town community, such as is outlined in several of the accounts above, does not dominate my material. Among immigrants I met, who had lived in small towns, it was primarily younger people, and especially younger couples with children who came from urban areas of Bosnia and Croatia, who managed the greatest degrees of social integration and bridging to the mainstream. In other words, the most successful people were those whose appearance and lifestyle were almost identical with those of indigenous locals. Natives not only perceived them as being quite similar, both culturally and physically: it also turned out that these persons, in one way or another, also appeared as resources for the community and for indigenous locals they knew.

In contrast to the impressions of those immigrants who managed to enter the primary groups in a small town, other immigrants either dreamt about leaving the town or had already moved away. These people did not manage to become a part of the local community. Feelings of non-belonging, stigma and exclusion were especially articulated among immigrants and refugees who were unemployed and perceived as too different by the local population. I interviewed several immigrants from this category who moved to the city.[239] Although their relocation did not necessarily result in a higher degree of bridging with Norwegians, their stories suggested that in the city they experienced a lesser sense of being outsiders in relation to the Norwegian mainstream compared to the time they lived in the small town.

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[237] I refer here to Goffman's (1963) distinction. As Glaser and Strauss (1981), he also distinguish between several awareness contexts, inter alia, he between 'know and unknown people' (strangers).
[238] Even well integrated immigrants (including those who have achieved a prominent position within the host society) will still be forced to participate in many occasional interactions with people who perceive them in a one-dimensional manner, and primarily as foreigners.
[239] They lived in city of Trondheim at the time of the interview.

13.6. Experiences of social exclusion in a city and a small town

Differences in the social and physical contexts of a city and small town not only influence the possibilities immigrants might have for establishing relations with members of the indigenous local population – they can also influence their subjective experience and the way they interpret social exclusion and integration in their everyday lives. For example, a weak attachment to other people seems to be easier to bear in the urban context. My material suggests that in the urban context, immigrants who established only a few weak ties with Norwegians may nevertheless feel satisfied with their social attachment to the mainstream society. In a small local community, this degree of contact will be far from satisfactory. In social environments where everyone seems to know everyone else, those who lack this familiarity may experience intense social exclusion.

> Wherever you went - for instance the post office, grocery store, restaurant –, people knew each other…This is not the case in the city...I was there (in a small Norwegian town) for a long time, but I felt that I was not a part of that place.… For instance, when I waited in the queue in the grocery store, many people who knew each other would chat together. I was not a part of that. They also knew the shop assistant and she used to joke with them. When it was my turn, she behaved differently. She was polite, but formal…I felt like a total stranger there. Sometimes, I was embarrassed and sad because of that (Woman from Bosnia).

The stories of my informants suggest that immigrants who live in the city attribute different meanings to their interactions and relations with Norwegians compared to those who live in small local communities. Immigrants in the city do not experience an absence of strong ties with Norwegians so intensively. They did not have the expectation that casual public encounters had to be personal and informal.[240] City-dwelling immigrants explained any lack of strong ties with their Norwegian neighbours and work colleagues as a feature of modern urban life.

Several immigrants and refugees who lived in the city were even content with the low degree of attachment they had to the hosts, while for those settled in smaller communities, weak and single stranded ties were less than satisfactory:

> During the week, I mostly speak with Norwegians who are strangers to me, for example with employees in various shops...I cannot say that I am treated differently from other people. They are polite and helpful to all of their costumers… When I lived there (in a small town), I wanted sometimes to be invisible…I felt that I did not belong there…People use to greet one another in the street, but not me…People outside my apartment used to barbeque, drink beer, play football, etc. I was sometimes embarrassed when I just said hello and walked away…I sometimes feel that I am lonely here in the city too, but perhaps not as intensely so … Maybe I do not have the same expectations (Iraqi man).

> There is no doubt about it, I felt like a real outsider when I was in there (in a small town). Here in Trondheim, I am more relaxed. I don't feel that the neighbours are my friends exactly, but it seems that that Norwegians neighbours in the building are not friends with one another either. We just say hello to each other, and this is normal. I have not been

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[240] This is somewhat in line with the findings in other Norwegian studies: for instance Klepp and Roppen (2003) pointed out that if Norwegians living in the city fail to greet immigrants and refugees in public places, then the latter construct this as a practice associated with an urban lifestyle. They will not think of this as disrespectful behaviour – which would be the case if they lived in a small local community (Klepp and Roppen 2003).

invited for a visit by anyone, but this does not have anything to do with me. It is normal that city people mind their own business (Iraqi man).

These two accounts may be read as expressing an intuitive sense of modernity in an urban context, characterized by weak tie attachments between people, and by fluctuating segmented networks and identities (Giddens 1991). It may be also understood as an aspect in the process of their self-examination, where they try to rearrange the internal meanings of their relation with society around them. The stories demonstrate that the kinds of loose attachments to the hosts that many newcomers are limited to (or even find as the best way of dealing with ambivalences about their Norwegian contacts) are not so easy to deal with in smaller places. Bauman clearly articulates these experiences when he uses the concept of 'dense sociability' (Bauman 1990). He argues that small places are characterized by such 'dense sociability', where people rely on basic binary oppositions in defining each other as either friends or enemies. Unlike the urban context, where the migrant may stand outside such binary categories, small places allow people to be defined exclusively as either insiders or outsiders: there is not a lot of room for intermediate and vaguely defined categories when it comes to strangers (Bauman 1990). Therefore, in small towns, the problem is not only how to gain entrance into dense networks of hosts, but also that feelings of belonging and acceptance often take it for granted that immigrants have to enter deeply into the full complexity of local relations and networks.

We may say that immigrants who manage to integrate into close knit networks within small towns are the lucky ones. They will benefit from the solidarity of these networks within the frame of dense sociability – as the cases in the previous sections have indicated. In such environments, they will display their desired self within networks characterized by a predominance of primary relations, where people appear as whole individuals rather than as role-fragments.[241] They will enjoy being defined as insiders by indigenous locals.

> If I settled in a city, I probably would have as many Norwegian friends as I have here. Every year, I used to visit relatives who live in Oslo. Except through work, they do not have any contact with Norwegians and they seem content with that… Here, if you do not want to like a total outsider, you have to participate in all kind of activities…You have to adjust. If I were in Oslo I would maybe do the same as my relatives, take the easiest way out… I sometimes miss the city. I am a city girl, but I do not regret settling here… I do not have any plans to move. I have invested a lot of energy in order to melt into the local community, but I also get something back… I feel accepted here (Bosnian woman).

This immigrant has managed to present herself successfully within the premises of the ethnic majority. She achieves identity affirmation in face-to-face interactions with her Norwegian friends, and within the dense sociability environment of the small town. Unlike her, immigrants who do not adjust to the dense sociability of the small place are considered outsiders. In the dense sociability context, immigrants have to meet natives frequently and to have tight multiplex relationships with them if they want to reproduce their preferred identity as normal and recognized members of local community. As the above respondent has indicated, such pressure sometimes indeed results in increased participation and an inclination for melting into the mainstream. In most cases, these integration requirements are considered much too high. They discouraged immigrants from integrating in the primary networks of the

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[241] In a small town, immigrants see how others connect to each other through primary relations and as whole individuals, while they have to present themselves within the frame of secondary relations and role fragments (Bauman 1990; Bø 2005).

hosts. Many immigrants I met therefore rejected the small town. When the first chance presented itself, they relocated to urban areas.

13.7. The social life of immigrants in the city and the small town: A summary

Cities and small towns provide different contexts for the reconstruction of social life after resettlement. Immigrants who have the qualities needed to gain admittance into primary local groups enjoy the dense sociability of the small town. In contrast to immigrants in the city, the most significant interactions these people have with Norwegians happen within primary relations. They experience strong individualization and a de-ethnification of the self in everyday life. In the city, immigrants may more easily follow the path of selective social integration.

No matter how many Norwegian friends they have, immigrants in the city cannot avoid interacting with indigenous locals who may perceive them primarily as foreigners. On the other hand, immigrants who do not have the ability to forge strong ties with the mainstream will prefer to settle in the city where they may blend into multicultural urban environments. For these immigrants, it may be difficult to achieve the same sense of belonging and social recognition in smaller communities. In small towns, this sense of belonging to a local community demands considerable adjustment and a high degree of social integration into the informal social networks of indigenous locals.

For immigrants who did not gain admission into primary groups of indigenous locals, the small town seemed like a cold, unpleasantly transparent and xenophobic environment. After they moved to the city, these individuals found the urban environment to be a more favourable frame for reconstructing their social life after resettlement. They also felt that forming weak tie bridges with the mainstream society was more straightforward in an urban city context. In their view, it was less problematic to be loosely attached to others in social contexts predominantly characterized by interactions that took place within the frame of secondary relations. As the above stories indicate, the meanings that immigrants assign to their social marginalization and exclusion are not only projections of their 'real' social attachment to their hosts, but are also related to their ideas of what constitutes a normal level of inclusion in a particular location. Nor are these meanings disconnected from their contextual frames. In the city, immigrants who are weakly attached to the host society may still interpret their situation as the norm. They can more easily convince themselves that their segregation has nothing to do with them as individuals, or with Norwegian hostility to their ethnic group. Instead, they imagine and accept that it is normal for people living in modern urban environments to have weak attachments to their neighbours, workmates and friends. The everyday experiences of immigrants in small towns allowed for no such 'positive' interpretations of their marginal position. They experienced being visibly different. They were real outsiders. Unlike the city, where both immigrants and indigenous people often engage in impersonal interactions with each other in public life, immigrants in the small town felt that they were in densely sociable contexts where their state of social isolation was unusual. They gradually began asking themselves why they were not included. As a result, marginalized identities of non-belonging were constructed, as well as an eagerness to move out of the town.

The findings presented in this chapter are very much in line with classical sociological descriptions of social relations and networks in cities and small towns (Park 1952; Wirth 1969). However, in respect to the settlement/integration of immigrants and refuges they are

still highly relevant. Norwegian authorities have made known their policy that newcomers should be settled in municipalities of a certain size in order to reduce uncontrolled secondary migration from local communities to urban areas. It seems however, that during the implementation of this policy, that the Norwegian authorities still did not and does not focus enough on how capable peoples might be in achieving identity reproduction and social incorporation in different local communities. The fact that certain categories of immigrants and refugees will have difficulties melting into the smaller local communities is still not taken seriously enough. This negligence may partly explain why a majority of non-European immigrants relocate to urban areas not long after being settled in small towns and villages.[242] In extreme cases, this means that some people stay first in one or several reception centres. Afterwards, they live a few years in the place allocated to them for settlement, before moving again. After each resettlement, they have to reconstruct their social life from scratch. Some of my informants have been moved two or three times between different reception centres, then settled in a rural district before finally moving to more urban areas. With each migration, they lose contact with most of their friends and acquaintances from their previous place. It is not difficult to see that such uprooting has negative effects on their social integration.

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[242] While immigrants from certain countries, (for example the Netherlands), are warmly accepted and enjoy life in Norwegian small towns and villages, non-western immigrants and refugees dream of moving away from small towns. Between 30-40 % of the refugees and their reunified family members who were settled in 1994-1996 have left the municipality they were first settled in, until the end of 1999. Eight of 10 Somalis who were settled in Northern parts of Norway have moved away from the region. The path of migration is from rural to urban areas and especially to the capital (Sørlie 1994; Djuve and Kavli 2000; SSB 2006).

Chapter 14: Social structure and social life in the period after resettlement

In this chapter, I look at how the everyday strategies and experiences of immigrants are linked to their cultural/ethnic background, social status and gender. I will argue that bridging and bonding practices and identities should be seen in the light of integration efforts and in anticipated rejections.

14.1. Cultural distance, acculturation and bridging to the mainstream

When we speak of the opportunities immigrants have for bridging and social integration within the Norwegian networks, it is important to distinguish between the human resources of the individual immigrant, which includes communicational skills and coping abilities, and the collective potential of immigrants (their ethnic identity and culture, etc). This distinction helps us to understand the process of initiation, as well as the maintenance and collapse of interethnic interactions and network connections. An immigrant's self-presentation in encounters with Norwegians depends mostly on the person's knowledge of the Norwegian language, but also on how familiar s/he is with Norwegian codes of interaction, role expectations and Norwegian culture in general.[243] These skills, together with a person's ability to cover their lack of such knowledge, influences the individual's identity reproduction and her or his inclination for networking outside their own ethnic group. If the immigrant is unable to get affirmative feedback from locals, s/he will be less motivated to engage in interactions and relations with them. Moreover, without these skills, no immigrant will appear to Norwegians to be a meaningful and socially attractive person.

> The main reason why many of my compatriots do not have Norwegian friends is that they lack the cultural competence necessary to get them…One thing is the language problem. Even more important is that they simply do not fit in. They do not know how to behave in order to attract attention…Due to their lack of social skills they repel Norwegians rather than attract them…I often feel that we are boring to Norwegians. We are often not able to contribute to conversations. Sometimes, we lack information about Norwegian culture or politics (Iraqi man).

In addition to communicative and interactional skills, the success of any attempt at bridging with Norwegians will also depend on how ready the immigrant is to act in accordance with Norwegian values, codes of interaction and role expectations. People generally find it difficult or uncomfortable to interact with people whose values they do not share – and as a result they will choose their friends from groups whose values are compatible with their own (Jackson 1977; Abercrombie 2004). In other words, immigrants have to be familiar with certain aspects of Norwegian culture in order to be accepted by Norwegians. They learn very quickly that if they want to participate in Norwegian social life that they have to be familiar with Norwegian expectations and with how they define certain situations. This knowledge of and respect for Norwegian codes of conduct is also an important recipe for successful self-presentation in daily interactions. In short, an immigrants' opportunity for bridging and for getting affirmative feedback from locals is often a question of acculturation and perceived cultural distance.

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[243] See my earlier comments on communication problems, insecurity about cultural codes and role expectations. We have to keep in mind that even if an encounter is not defined as a mixed interaction (Goffman 1963), it may still be experienced as a distorted act of intercultural communication between the ethnic majority and the ethnic minority.

If we look beyond variations in individual capacities within and across ethnic categories, it seems to be the case that members of certain immigrant communities invest more energy in acting in conformance with the codes of the ethnic majority than members of other immigrant communities (Gordon 1964; Portes and Zhou 1993; Diaz 1993, Sackmann *et al* 2003). Some immigrants easily adapt to the social practices of their hosts because their cultural codes are so similar. Adaptation then becomes a matter of making fairly uncomplicated adjustments to new social conventions rather than a more profound matter of taking on cultural values that are fundamentally different. By comparison, other immigrants often have to adjust their original social practice to a much greater extent, in order to behave according to the codes of the majority. For example, most of my informants from the former Yugoslavia were able to see similarities between their life in the home country and their life in Norway. Although there were certain differences between Norwegian culture and their own culture, in their opinion these were possible to overcome. Unlike them, Iraqis primarily focused on differences. They spoke about how difficult it was to accept certain aspects of Norwegian culture.[244]

14.2. 'What would you prefer to be – French, Bosnian or Iraqi?'

Culture matters: however, according to Barth (1996), it is not cultural contents or its core that we should primarily focus on when we explore how ethnic groups perceive each other's differences. It is more important to look at how ethnic boundaries are produced and reproduced in everyday life. The attitudes of indigenous locals toward immigrants (including how they perceive certain ethnic groups and the country they come from) influence the possibilities immigrants have for identity reproduction and for the establishment of inter-ethnic relations. Immigrant groups who are especially stigmatized, or who are in an ethnocentric manner defined as socially too different from the hosts, experience greater resistance from the ethnic majority than others (Portes and Zhou 1993).[245] As one informant pointed out: 'If you went out tonight to a discotheque in the hope of picking up some Norwegian girl, what would you prefer to be - French, Bosnian or Iraqi?' Certain immigrant groups have identities which allow for a better negotiation potential, which makes bridging outside their own group less problematic in respect to reproducing the person's desired self. Sometimes the ethnic identity and culture of certain immigrant groups are even positively valued by indigenous locals. In such cases, cultural differences between them and the hosts are seen as irrelevant or even positive, which may mean that these people do not even have to acculturate in order to be accepted.

> When African students make food, it is not unusual that Norwegian students complain about the smell. However, when my French neighbours make food, the reaction is quite different. People even come and ask them for a recipe or for advice about wine…It is not only that Norwegians are more accustomed to French cuisine. They are not accustomed to snails, for instance. However, if the French make snails, everyone thinks of it as a delicacy. If Tanzanians do something similar, they will be considered as barbarians. It is not only what you do which is important, but also where you come from… (Bosnian woman).

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[244] Here, it is important to note that although there are clear differences between ex-Yugoslavians and Iraqis in my study, I have found variations within each of the mentioned categories of immigrants. Some of my Iraqi informants who had an urban middleclass background had already been incorporated in Western culture before they migrated to Western Europe.

[245] See also Gordon (1964); Portes and Rumbaut (2006).

We may distinguish between prejudiced and non-prejudiced responses in the social acceptance of immigrants (Portes and Zhou 1993). Moreover, within prejudiced immigrant groups there may be strongly and weakly prejudiced sections (Portes and Zhou 1993; Portes and Rumbaut 2006). In everyday life people make distinctions between western and non-western immigrants; Europeans and non-Europeans; Christians and non-Christian, Bosnians and Croats, etc. Each of these categories is valued differently (Sackmann *et al* 2003). The ethnic identities of my informants sometimes included more than one of these categories, giving them different opportunities for negotiation. Immigrants are aware that their ethnicity is important when their hosts place them in certain categories of foreignness. Therefore, if immigrants feel that their ethnicity undermines their social identity in the eyes of the hosts, they sought out alternative interpretations of their ethnic group. In certain contexts they might place more emphasis on the positive sides of their ethnic group, their culture and their home country. Even individuals with reasons to be bitter about their compatriots and their homeland would sometimes describe both in a positive vein, and thereby (re)construct their ethnic identity.

Among my informants, there was a Serbian man from Croatia, who lived in Norway because he could not stand the abuse he received from Croatian nationalists:

> Since Croatia became a popular summer destination, Norwegians have started to associate the country with positive things… Advertisements about Croatia changed their impressions of the country and its people…When the first advertisements began to appear about holidays in Croatia, many of my compatriots here bought them…They were interested to see what image Norwegians were given of the country….Now, when I say to people that I come from Croatia, they respond with enthusiastic comments about my country.

The informant pointed out that he is concerned about what 'Norwegians would think about us after all'! Since his opportunities to negotiate his social identity improved, it became easier for him to present himself in encounters with Norwegians.[246] Although he is aware that it is still not easy being a Serbian in Croatia, the informant told me that he seldom focuses on negative things when his homeland becomes the topic of conversation. Instead, he wanted to give the impression that he comes from a civilized country. He preferred being associated with images of the blue Mediterranean and picturesque medieval towns than with nationalism, a backward culture, war and poverty. I found several versions of precisely this strategy among my other informants. Bosnian Croats, for instance, often over emphasized their Croatian ethnicity. Sometimes, such behaviour was part of a nationalist orientation. However, highlighting a Croatian identity was also an attempt to be associated with a country and culture which they felt had a better reputation in the eyes of indigenous locals than Bosnia. For many of my informants, it was especially important whether they were Muslims or Christians. Several Croats and Bosnians with recognizable Christian names stressed how they were spared discrimination in many situations because they were clearly not Muslims. Non-

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[246] Working with my master thesis in 1998, I met some of my informants for the first time. From 1998 and up to now, my informants experienced how their ethnic identities changed in the eyes of indigenous locals. Some of them experienced relative improvement, while others were not so lucky. While the collective identity of Muslim immigrants worsened, Croatian Serbs was perhaps those who experienced the greatest improvement. In the 90s, Serbs were associated with war crimes, ethnic cleansing and Milosevic's regime. Today, Serbian nationalism is no longer in focus. At the same time, Croatia, their home, is no longer associated with civil war, the killing of civilians and ethnic cleansing. The country improved its image in Norway and became a popular tourist destination for many Norwegians.

Muslim immigrants in general felt that they were mostly exempt from current anti-immigrant debates because these were primarily related to anti-Muslim xenophobia.

> Norwegians think that Bosnians are Muslims, since the majority of people from Bosnia in Norway are Muslims. At one level, this is true. At another, there are really very small differences between Bosnians who are born Muslims and those who are not. People in Yugoslavia were mostly atheists, at least in the cities, so when it came to religion and culture, there were indeed very small difference. Nevertheless, here in Norway, it may be important to emphasize that one is not a Muslim… Nowadays, there are so many negative images associated with Islam (Bosnian man).

> When I was in the reception centre, some residents tried to look like these MTV Rastafarian boys with American clothes and dreadlocks…They were actually Muslims from Somalia, but you could never tell… It was better to appear like a Rastafarian than a Muslim… I too sometimes used to wear a Christian cross to signal that I am a Christian. Some Norwegians tend to think that immigrants who come to Norway from Bosnia are Muslims (Bosnian man).

I traced different degrees of distancing from the Muslim religion among Bosnians. The informants quoted above include Christians, Bosnian Croats and Serbs, but I also met several Bosnian Muslims who insisted that Muslims in Bosnia are not real Muslims compared to Muslims from the Middle-East or Pakistan. It was their view that their relation to Islam was more relaxed and flexible. They claimed that they are Muslims in the same way that most Norwegians are Christian. But there is a variety of positions and identities among Muslims, both those from Bosnia and from Iraq. While some tried to distance themselves from what they thought were the most stigmatized aspects of their ethnic identity, others did the opposite, and embraced their Muslim identity. This identification with the Muslim or Arab world emerged partly in reaction to ethnic tensions in their home country and elsewhere (involving solidarity with oppressed Muslims in Bosnia and Iraq, and sympathy with the Palestinian cause, etc.) and partly in opposition to western/ Norwegian xenophobia against Muslims.

It seems that Bosnian Muslims have better opportunities for identity negotiation than Muslim informants from Iraq. Compared with my Iraqi informants, these immigrants had better possibilities for alternating between different identities and positions, depending on the social contexts within which they operated and the responses they received from others in their daily activities. For example, if they wanted to achieve greater acceptance by the hosts, they could suppress their Muslim identity and emphasize the European aspects of their identity (something they did through their personal appearance, style of dress, use of language, etc). In the eyes of my informants there was general agreement that the European/non-European dimension matters. For example, although immigrants from Bosnia and Croatia claimed that Norwegians have many stereotypes about Eastern/Southern-Europeans, they were convinced that as Europeans they were accepted much more easily than certain immigrant groups from the Middle East, Africa or Asia.[247] Iraqis complained that such distinctions were unfair, and the products of stereotype and prejudice. However, they also believed that these stereotypes and prejudices had real consequences for their relations with members of the indigenous local population.

> Norwegians distinguish between different immigrant groups. I know of municipalities that refused to accept refugees, but then extended warm invitations to immigrants from the

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[247] As one man from Croatia said - I heard Norwegians saying many times that if Somalis, Iraqis or Pakistanis were like us, they would be more easily accepted.

Netherlands. This is because of stereotypes and prejudices. People also think that Bosnians can learn Norwegian and get a job after two to three months in Norway, while Iraqis and other groups do not manage this even after many years in Norway. I have worked with various refugee groups over the last five years and I know that this is an exaggeration. When they have such attitudes, it becomes clear why they accept others more readily than they accept us (Iraqi man).

This quotation reminds us that terms such as cultural distance, foreignness or cultural similarity should have the prefixes 'perceived' or 'constructed' added to them as qualifiers.[248] The ethnic identity of a Croatian, the culture of an Iraqi and the Muslim-ness of a Bosnian cannot be seen in isolation from the contexts within which they are constructed and interpreted (Barth 1969). On the other hand, although stereotypic perceptions of certain immigrant category are unfair and wrong, they may nevertheless have very real consequences. Although sub-cultural variation in each category reduces most ideas about Iraqis, Croats and Bosnians pretty much to constructed or 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1983), they do achieve a social reification. They become part of a constraining social order that will be reproduced in inter-ethnic interactions and relations. These constructions may have implications for the social life of immigrants, since both they and local people may act in line with them. It is not difficult to imagine that immigrants who reconstruct their social lives within the context of a non-prejudiced social reception will be more optimistic and self-confident when interacting and relating with the ethnic majority. Even if they experience difficulty in finding Norwegian friends, they may interpret these difficulties in a more optimistic way than immigrant groups who bear the burden of a strong ethnic stigma. Whereas the first type of immigrants may explain a scarcity of Norwegian friends as an effect of an introverted Norwegian culture, the second may conceive it as evidence of Norwegian xenophobia and racism. Such differences of interpretation resulted in equivalent differences in the attitudes immigrants had to mainstream society, the identities of belonging/non-belonging, and the inclination they had to bridge with Norwegians.

14.3. Immigrant bridging, status positions and possibilities for identity negotiation

The next factor that influences immigrant bridging and bonding strategies is their status composition. An immigrant's position in social space influences her or his capacity to reproduce positive identities, as well as to engage in relations with the hosts. I chose to view 'position in social space' as the result of different statuses within different arenas of social life.[249] Social status can be defined here as 'a psychological system of attitudes in which superiority and inferiority are reciprocally ascribed' (Gordon 1964: 40). My material suggests that there are inherent connections between an immigrant's inclination to bridge to the mainstream and her or his position in social space.

In everyday encounters, social positions are negotiable, composed and dynamic. People meet each other everyday within the context of a wide spectrum of statuses, roles and identities. People often have a corpus of statuses and complex, multidimensional identities (connected to their occupation, ethnicity, race, gender, etc) that are not congruent with each other. This tension may be utilized in respect to identity negotiations in everyday life. I met immigrants

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[248] As Barth (1969, 1996) clearly pointed out, cultural and ethnic differences are perceived and constructed. The cultural characteristics that are used as relevant signs of cultural distance or dissimilarity are arbitrary, and do not necessarily have any relation to cultural fact (Barth 1996).

[249] An example might be: An attractive and highly-educated (wo)man. In this case both characteristics – 'attractive' and 'highly-educated' – can be a source of superior positions in different arenas of social life.

with more or less stigmatised ethnic identities who managed nonetheless to attain a high status, at least in one arena of their social life (for example at their workplace). The self-confidence gained through self-presentation and feedback in one area of social life may be transformed to other roles, situations and relations that do not lead right away to favourable situated identities. Therefore, immigrants who have achieved a superior position in relation to indigenous locals at least in one arena of social life appeared more content with social life. Generally, they were also more self-confident in interactions and relations with indigenous locals:

> It was much easier to speak with Norwegians after I reached these occupational positions. As a result, I am more self-confident…I feel that they look at me with different eyes…They are more interested in me. I also feel that it is easier to approach them (Iraqi man).

> When Norwegians hear about my education and where I work, there is always the same reaction: they are impressed. They change their attitude. I become much more confident in interactions with Norwegians because to that – even with those who do not know who I am (Bosnian woman).

> When I am in town I can approach Norwegian girls with self confidence. It is easy to charm them. You know, there are many situations where how you look and how you approach them is more important than where you come from (Bosnian man).

> I take the initiative more often than they do, but this is how I am. They still have a lot to learn about friendship. However, I never feel that my company is undesirable. I have much more to offer them than they can offer me… For some of those I work with, I am actually their superior. I am sure that this fact is more important to them than the fact that I am a foreigner – at least as long as we are at work (Croatian man).

As these accounts clearly show, an immigrant's inclination to involve her- or himself in interactions and relations with the hosts is related to the possibilities they have for affirmative identity-work – which is in turn dependent on their structural position within the host society. In at least some arenas and situations these immigrants could approach Norwegians in the secure knowledge that their status was superior. In the case of immigrants who had not achieved any position of prominence in Norway, their low ethnic status, communication problems, and other lack of mainstream skills will be congruent with other low statuses. I met immigrants who felt inferior in most arenas of mainstream society. As long as their self-presentations with hosts are characterized by feelings of inferiority, it is to be expected that immigrants will be reluctant to participate actively in the social life of the mainstream.

One of the first pieces of advice that immigrants and refugees get after they step onto Norwegian soil, is that they have to be active: they must not wait for invitations, and have to make the first attempts at contact. This advice is grounded on notion that the relative interactional passivity and rigidity is characteristic of Norwegians and their culture (Gullestad 2006), and if newcomers wait for someone else making the first step, that they risk waiting too long. However, for some immigrants it is not so easy to take the initiative. It is not so simple for them to be a generative force in the networking process because the situational identities and roles they play in everyday life are anchored in problematic statuses, roles and identities. From their position, the perceived chance for rejection seems relatively high, and actual rejection is humiliating. As low status individuals, they are therefore more careful to

involve themselves in social relations with Norwegians.[250] As one Iraqi woman said: 'We are afraid to reach out a hand because we are afraid of rejection. We do not want them to think that we are so desperate to be their friends'.

14.4. Immigrant networks and bridging with Norwegians

Immigrants form their personal social network according to their own aims and needs. At the same time, they are entangled in a network of social relations that influences their behaviour. Some of my informants were well integrated in relatively dense ethnic networks. These networks included relatives and compatriot friends who they had known for a long time, and were felt to be very important. Being sociable with their compatriots took up almost all of their spare time. They used a lot of energy to maintain or improve their position in the selected segments of the ethnic network. There was little time for bridging and developing closer relations with the hosts. The informants also reported either that they did not need close relationships with Norwegians, or that, if they did, that they did not want to build them up at the expense of relations with their compatriot friends.

We may say that the ties an individual has to her or his ethnic community can be seen as channels of influence. The strength of the influence depends on how deeply the immigrants bond with their compatriot network. So far, we may observe a general pattern – the stronger the bond with the ethnic network, the less inclined the immigrant will be to socialize with the hosts. However, this relationship is not completely straightforward. The bonding is not always a hindrance to the bridging. In some cases, compatriots may facilitate bridging, while in others, they may hinder the development of friendships with Norwegians. As Putnam (2000) pointed out, people may simultaneously bond along one social dimension and bridge across others (Putnam 2000:23).[251] Furthermore, segmented assimilation theorists argue that for some immigrants, strong involvement in ethnic networks may actually encourage and allow them to engage in some of the mainstream practices of the host society (Zhou and Bankson 1996; Nunez 2004).

These processes may also be found among the immigrants in my study. In order to comprehend these processes better, we have to distinguish between a) a person's own attempts at bridging and b) attitudes towards external integration among compatriots in the individual's personal network. We also have to look at the capacity others have to influence the person. In other words, we may say that the efficiency of the influencing channel and the character of transferred influence have to be taken into consideration when we analyze the influence of the ethnic network on the ethno-social preferences and practices of immigrants. For example, the ethnic network which the person is connected to may mediate anti-bridging/anti-acculturation influences, but the person may be so loosely attached to this network that the network cannot exercise social control over or her or him. Alternatively, an individual may be part of a dense ethnic network, but her or his compatriots may actually value and promote such bridging with indigenous locals.

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[250] However, their pride and self-imposed passivity have certain negative implications for the development of relations with indigenous locals. By not trying to initiate contact or the development of relations, individuals not only reduce the chances of rejection, but also the chances of being accepted as a friend.

[251] According to Putnam, we can distinguish between two types of social networks – one which bonds people together within the group and helps them to act cohesively, and another which provides bridges between individuals and groups (Putnam 2000).

In the cases where the relatives and compatriot friends of immigrants do not have ties with Norwegians, the ethnic network may indeed appear as an obstacle to bridging outside the ethnic group.[252] This seems to be especially important if the people in the network have developed out-group antagonism (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). If the network is also a dense, close-knit network, it will have the capacity to monitor and to implement constraints against any attempts at bridging outside the group.

> Many of my compatriots prefer their teenage children to socialize within the group. They are afraid that being with Norwegian youngsters will expose them to bad influences. Some children do not like how Norwegians behave, or do not want to defy their parents, so they socialize mostly with other foreigners…This concern is also found among adults. Strong adjustments to Norwegian society may provoke people. If you spend too much time with Norwegians and behave in a Norwegian way, other compatriots may start to speak badly of you. No-one wants that (Iraqi man).

Furthermore, if the compatriots in the person's network do not have relations with Norwegians, it will be less likely that the immigrant would be introduced to the mainstream by them. Even if these contacts have positive views about bridging, they will not be able to help someone establish contacts with the mainstream. As the informant below pointed out, they seem to represent a dead end. They offer bonded social capital without the potential for bridging (Putnam 2006).

> None of my friends used to socialize with Norwegians…My friends have the same problem as I have, but they do not see this as being a problem. I cannot get Norwegian friends via them. In order to get Norwegian friends, I have to rely on myself and my Norwegian acquaintances (Iraqi man).

It is not difficult to imagine that immigrants would be more willing to (and less hindered from) establishing and maintaining relations with members of the indigenous local majority population if their compatriot friends and acquaintances had also established such relations. Structural embeddedness of that kind will not only allow, but sometimes even catalyze, bridging outside the ethnic group. Compatriots may for example provide introductions to Norwegian friends and in that way function as bridges to the mainstream. In such networks, immigrants simultaneously bond along the lines of a common ethnicity and bridge across ethnic groups. I met immigrants whose compatriot friends and acquaintances had relations with their indigenous locals. And they did indeed feel free to establish personal relations with indigenous locals. They thought it unlikely that compatriots in their personal network would respond negatively to their attempts at bridging when they had the same ethno-social practices themselves. In cases where most of an immigrant's friends also had Norwegian friends, s/he might even experience a sense of inadequacy without Norwegian friends.

> I have seen on TV that some Pakistani girls in Oslo avoid their compatriots because they have a lifestyle that is disliked in the Pakistani community. They went to parties, had western clothes and had Norwegian boyfriends… My friends look and behave like any other Norwegian …Most Bosnians I knew were proud of having Norwegian friends. Most of my compatriot friends made friends with Norwegians soon after their arrival…I felt like a loser when several of my compatriot friends had Norwegian friends before me, while I did not have any (Bosnian woman).

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[252] Although an individual response is not determined by the expectations of others, we should not neglect the constraining influence of others (Hewitt 2003).

In the case above, the informant's compatriot friends have an influence: her identity as a successful person includes the bridging dimension. However, some immigrants try to adjust to the mainstream, combining bonding with bridging, even in cases where several of their compatriot friends were 'cultural preservers' who were sceptical about bridging with Norwegians. Most immigrants I met had personal networks that were characterized by a certain degree of diversity among their compatriot friends when it came to their cultural and ethno-social practices. In order to avoid frictions within the network, these people continuously adjusted their actions and self-presentations to comply with the contrasting expectations and attitudes of different friends. As I have already indicated, some immigrants may even try to separate interactions, relations and acts of self-presentation in order to reproduce a consistent identity in the company of various ethnic friends, as well as to reduce the network's capacity for monitoring.

Finally, it should be noted that bridging practices can be influenced not only by the personal networks of the immigrant's compatriot friends, but also by the personal networks of Norwegians that an immigrant has contact with. In several cases, the Norwegian friends were people who had recently resettled in the town or who were married to an immigrant. In other words, these people were in a similar situation as the immigrant. They had only just started to re-establish their social life after resettlement. By contrast, other Norwegian contacts had a network that prevented them from bridging beyond their particular setting.

14.5. Patterns of social integration in light of the discussed constraints

It is often claimed that ethnic segregation can be seen as either chosen or enforced. In my view, immigrants choose between different patterns of social integration, but these choices about 'who interacts with whom, why and how much' are constrained. How immigrants bond and bridge after resettlement may be understood in light of how they experience and anticipate the various constraints and effects of these strategies. Even if bridging to the mainstream is considered as something good, immigrants still have to consider how much effort realizing and sustaining this good will involve (Nannestad 2004). Based on my earlier arguments, we may say that bridging with Norwegians has several payoffs for immigrants. The benefits of having Norwegian friends may include positive feelings of social inclusion and recognition by the hosts and a sense of belonging to mainstream society. Acquiring these identities may be a sufficient motive in itself for bridging outside one's own ethnic networks. However, external integration and bridging to the mainstream also comes at a cost. To recap: such endeavours demand that one learns a foreign language and familiarize oneself with the codes of interaction that are necessary to successful encounters with indigenous locals. We know that some immigrants find it difficult to accept certain codes of conduct, especially those that contradict the values and beliefs they have internalized in their home country. Moreover, interactions and relations with Norwegian friends and acquaintances may be regarded as costly because they take place within the frame of 'mixed contacts' and 'distorted communication'. Finally, the reactions of compatriots to an immigrant's efforts at acculturation and bridging may have a constraining or an enabling effect. Such efforts at integration may provoke the ethnic network or attract praise. All these factors should be taken into consideration when analyzing the dilemmas associated with immigrant integration.

When immigrants perceive that the benefits of adjustment do not match the effort involved, immigrants may cope with and respond to stigmatization and anticipated rejection with even more self-imposed clustering. Such individuals will redefine their past attempts at

acculturation as a waste of time and energy. Alternatively, when the effort needed is manageable and the anticipated outcome of bridging endeavours is worth the energy expended, we can expect more motivation for external networking. In this light we may wonder why my informants from Bosnia and Croatia were more oriented to bridging to the mainstream than were my informants from Iraq. For most Iraqi immigrants I met, out-group networking will not only require greater efforts at adjustment – but they also get less reward in the shape of affirmation for their endeavours. It is again scarcely surprising that in their case the motivation for contact with Norwegians gradually evaporates, for the effort seems pointless. As a consequence, they try to avoid ending up in the worst possible situation: investing a lot of energy in bridging (which can often be the detriment of relations with own ethnic community), but not being rewarded with acceptance by the mainstream (Nannestad 2004; Portes and Rumbaut 2006).

14.5.1. Construction and reproduction of bridging and bonding identities

I met people who were real socio-cultural preservers and who were inclined to think that external integration was not something for people like them. Socio-cultural preservers wonder why they cannot be accepted as they are, and react by giving greater endorsement to their original culture. Unlike them, immigrants who are in possession of the socio-cultural capacities that is required for successful bridging have opposite but equivalent identity constructions. They tend to believe that one has to adjust to mainstream society in order to be accepted and recognized by the hosts. Immigrants gradually construct an image of themselves and of their location in the social order of the host society. In the first case, the immigrant's mental structure informs her or him that socio-cultural adaptation is not for her/him and 'people like us,' while in the second, it informs him that socio-cultural adaptation is typical for 'people like us.'

Both categories of immigrants will try to reproduce these identities with reference to these generalized images. Nevertheless, these constructions may have very real consequences. Through them, original tendencies may be reproduced. Just as an individual responds to external stimuli, s/he may also respond to the established image of the self and of others. Accordingly, the immigrant may prefer to live up to an identity (one that exists in her own eyes as well as in the eyes of others) as either being a socio-cultural innovator or being someone who sees the value in maintaining one's original culture and original ethnic markers. Opting for a secluded individual social practice and for verbalizations that legitimize this position may gradually produce a discourse of seclusion within the ethnic network. In this discourse, preserving an original ethnic social practice, bonding instead of bridging, and misrecognition of the host society, are considered virtues. This discourse may be reflected in the individual practice of immigrants and contributes to the reproduction of exclusive practices. In other cases, the discourse within the ethnic network tends to promote inclusive contacts, bridging and socio-cultural adaptation. In this case, affiliations with hosts will be seen as resource or as a symbol of success.[253]

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[253] We may say, paraphrasing Mead (1934) that some immigrants may have cultural innovators and bridge-makers as their 'generalized others', while others have socio-cultural preservers as their generalized others. If we borrow Bourdieu's terminology, we may say that immigrants (because of the various kinds of capital and abilities they possess) gradually shape different 'habituses'. The discourse in the first case results in a habitus of seclusion and cultural preservation, while in the last case, the discourse of the group or network results in a habitus of inclusion and innovation. These habituses in turn will contribute to the reproduction of certain ethno-social practices.

It is important to note that immigrants not only relate their actions to communities that they belong to in certain situations, but also to categories of people who are the opposite of their given idealized image.[254] Among other things, differences in ethno-social practices and a willingness to integrate with the mainstream may emerge as part of a person's self-image and ethnic identity after resettlement. Those who have socio-cultural innovators and social-cultural preservers as generalized others will not only be proud of their adaptation/preservation achievements and live up to them – they will also reproduce their identity in contrast to the socio-cultural practices of others. For a Bosnian, Croat or Iraqi, being a 'bridger' or 'preserver' also means following certain patterns of behaviour that the immigrant believes are common to the specific segment of the ethnic community s/he identifies with. At the same time, the individual will avoid certain patterns of behaviour or beliefs associated with others who s/he does not want to identify with. Immigrants may build and maintain a conception of themselves as successful, adaptable and open-minded by contrasting these idealized selves with the other categories of immigrants who they perceive as fundamentalist and unwilling to adapt (they may even in addition be held accountable for a generally negative impression of immigrants among the hosts). Such distinctions may even help to increase the inclination for socio-cultural innovation and bridging with the mainstream. Through such practice, they show themselves and others who they are and who they are not.

14.6. Gender and ethnicity

The clearest illustration of differences between socio-cultural innovators and bonding oriented cultural preservers is found when we compare women from Iraq and from the former Yugoslavia. While most Croatian and Bosnian women in my study experienced differences between Norwegian codes of conduct and their own as a matter of making minor adjustments to the new social conventions, many Iraqi women experience these as major departures from their original norms and values. Among the Croat and Bosnian women, especially those with an urban middleclass background, the effort to acculturate and to acquire Norwegian interactive skills was experienced as less problematic. They claimed that most of the Norwegian interaction codes were similar to those they had learned and acquired in their homeland.

There seemed to be fewer structural constraints in the way of sanctions from their own ethnic contacts in the case of immigrants from the former Yugoslavia than was the case for immigrants from Iraq. Especially Iraqi women who lived within conservative Iraqi networks who tried to be bridging oriented socio-cultural innovators risked sanctions from their own compatriots, family and relatives. Compared with Iraqi men, Iraqi women could not get away with the same degree of innovative socio-cultural practice without upsetting people in their ethnic networks. For instance, several of the Iraqi men in my study had Norwegian girlfriends. These immigrants could adjust certain aspects of their lifestyle and behaviour to Norwegian cultural expectations without any serious reactions from their ethnic community. In the case of Iraqi women, such behaviour would be much less tolerated. However, the most noticeable differences in opportunities for bridging were again between ex-Yugoslav women and Iraqi women. Croat and Bosnian women who embraced Norwegian codes and socialized with their Norwegian friends were not exposed to negative sanctions from their ethnic networks.

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[254] As we have seen, (chapter 8) self fostered among members of an ethnic group is defined, not just by the values, ethnic markers and behaviour of the group itself, but also by contrasts with other, different, groups. Immigrants strengthen the fragile images of the 'included us' by contrasting it with what might appear to be more excluded and more stigmatized others.

In general, the Iraqis I met were more concerned with 'cultural preservation', 'honour' and 'cultural contamination' than my informants from the former Yugoslavia. It was their experience that a common normative framework was eroded and diminished by their migration to Norway. In order to re-establish a sense of being in 'safe' surroundings, they preferred to settle somewhere close to their compatriots. Iraqis also preferred women to remain at home in their spare time to a much greater extent. Especially when it came to their teenage daughters, Iraqi parents seemed more reluctant to allow contact with Norwegians than were parents from the former Yugoslavia. The concern that their daughters could 'go astray' combined with resistance to what they considered a too liberal lifestyle was especially prominent among those who lived within conservative and religious Iraqi networks. In such cases, parents also pressured girls into not having much contact with their Norwegian peers by saying that such contact brought 'dishonour' to them and other immigrant families. These concerns were much less prominent among Croat and Bosnian informants.

Young men and women from Bosnia and Croatia did not find that bridging with Norwegians was an especially costly or risky form of socio-cultural behaviour. In families from the former Yugoslavia, women did not remain at home. Spouses functioned rather as social brokers for each other, creating joint family networking teams. Furthermore, parents supported rather than sanctioned bridging with Norwegians. For instance, I met parents from these groups who even spoke proudly about their teenage daughters and sons being Norwegian. They spoke openly about their children speaking better Norwegian than their mother tongue and socializing with Norwegian peers, having Norwegian boyfriends, etc. Indeed, when it was thought that teenage daughters and sons socialised too much with other immigrant offspring, parents sometimes even encouraged them to have more contact with their Norwegian peers. They were concerned about the possibility that their children would end up in marginalized ethnic milieus.

It has to be noted that not all Iraqi women conformed to their networks and ethnic generalised others. Some Iraqi women also socialized with Norwegians on their own terms, but while Croat and Bosnian women could engage quite openly in bridging and acculturation activities, Iraqi women had to be more circumspect and were more burdened by conflicts of loyalty and by a bad conscience. Due to the structural contexts within which they operated, the bridging and acculturation strategies of women were ambivalent and covert, and took the form of secondary adjustments and network fragmentation: they also avoided any direct confrontation with the conservative parts of their compatriot networks.

14.7. Constraining and enabling structure: A summary

Symbolic interactionists have often been criticized for overemphasizing the degree of freedom individual actors might have for ignoring social constraints. In this chapter, I argued that in addition to micro structures, the ethno-social practices of immigrants are influenced by several broader dimensions, including their cultural and ethnic background, social status, networks and gender. These have a considerable influence on the daily experiences, identity deployment and participation patterns of immigrants within different social arenas and spatial contexts.

I claimed that for immigrants gaining acceptance from the mainstream is closely linked to the process of acculturation, and that many of them have very different attitudes to this process. Their readiness and capacity to acquire majority codes depends on how costly these are seen

to be. Some immigrants have to make only minor adjustments in order to learn the majority codes, while for others it involves too great a change to their fundamental values.

More importantly, the ethnic identities and cultural practices of certain immigrant groups are sometimes negatively regarded by natives. Some groups have a better reputation, or a cultural practice to which locals do not attribute negative values. These immigrants have to make only a small effort if they want to integrate into the mainstream, while immigrants with strongly stigmatized ethnic identities may be rejected even though they can have made much greater efforts at acculturation. Therefore, it is not surprising that these people tended to drift towards greater proximity to their compatriots and favoured the preservation of socio-cultural identities.

I have argued that the structural position achieved by or allotted to immigrants in the host society also counts for a great deal. Some immigrants occupy better positions in society than others. Some immigrants engage in relations and interactions with indigenous locals from positions and arenas that give them better possibilities for reproducing desired identities. Therefore, these people are more inclined towards external integration than immigrants who deploy their ethnic identity in most situations in combination with other low statuses and roles. The inclination and possibility for bridging also depends on the people that surround an individual. The question of who bridges and who bonds depends a lot on what the dominant values within the immigrant community are, or the part of the ethnic network that appears to immigrants to be their 'generalised others'. In some immigrant communities, the dominant discourse within the ethnic network may bring about a tendency to social and cultural preservation, while in others it may encourage social and cultural innovation. The most significant factors here include the ethno-social preferences of compatriot friends, and what possibilities there exist for exercising social control. For some immigrants, compatriot friends and networks represented an obstacle in the way of bridging outside their own ethnic group. For others, compatriot friends and intermediaries were catalysts who encouraged and enabled such bridging.

In my study, most of the ethnic bonders were Iraqi women who lived within dense and conservative Iraqi networks, while most of the ethnic bridgers were well-educated young women and men who came to Norway from the urban areas of the former Yugoslavia. Their social practice of the latter was compatible with the lifestyle and values of their Norwegian friends. Furthermore, compared with Iraqi informants most of them re-established themselves in Norway within the context of a less prejudiced social acceptance. They were spared the least attractive sides of xenophobia among their hosts because of their European appearance and their apparently secular/non-Muslim orientation. They also rapidly acquired the majority code. Some of them (Bosnians with higher education, for instance) also attained prominent positions in the social and economical hierarchies of the mainstream society. In other words, these persons often had the structural opportunities, cultural capacity and individual resources which enabled them to negotiate their identities and present themselves successfully in encounters with the ethnic majority. Being sufficiently familiar with the majority code (and because of their structural position), they received positive feedback in everyday life. It is not surprising that these people were more inclined to bridging than other, less fortunate, categories of immigrants.

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Chapter 15: Social life after resettlement and the self

One of the many demands made by migration is that it requires immigrants to re-establish their social lives and reconstruct their identities. This process has been the focus of my study. I have tried to understand how different relationships and network patterns come into being, and how they are reproduced and reconstructed. Several interconnected findings, arguments and conclusions have been presented. In what follows, I primarily highlight three areas in which this study contributes to sociological literature: a) the debate on the relationship between self-work and social structure; b) the debate on the social integration of immigrants and; c) the impact of weak ties on identity reproduction.

15.1. The social life of immigrants and embedded selves

In this study, I adopted the notion that our self is built in relation to our social environment, and that people's actions are closely related to their self-work. I applied this understanding of human action in my analysis of immigrant social life. I argued that that how immigrants experience and cope with interactions and relations with others, as well as the meanings they attach to these dimensions are what their social reality is really about. Feelings of content and discontent after resettlement have a lot to do with the possibilities immigrants have to enter into new networks which enable them to get a sense of self-respect and belonging.

The interactions, relations and networks that immigrants engage in may be a source of integration, self-confirming, social anchorage and emotional support. It may also be sources of ethnic misrecognition and discrediting. I argued that the personal networks of immigrants and how they experience and deal with everyday life are in a multiple dialectic relationship. The nature of the interactions, relations and networks that immigrants engage in may influence their self and their experience of everyday life. At the same time, different aspects of the personal networks, relationships and interactions immigrants have with other people are influenced by their self-work. I argued that this interaction between everyday experiences and attempts at reproducing positive identities affect the process of social integration for immigrants.

Several aspects of an immigrant's daily experiences, such as stigma, discrimination and exclusion, are in conflict with their desired self. In addition, they find themselves in the minority position, which means that their self-presentations are built upon cultural codes and a language which they are often not completely familiar with. The everyday life of immigrants takes place in a frame of distorted communication, characterized by a lack of identification with the new social environment and by insecurity and anxiety about personal discrediting. The intensity of these negative feelings depends partly on the extent and nature of their attachment to other people – including the quality of the social relationships they have with indigenous locals and their compatriots.

Immigrants cope with these discrediting aspects of their day-to-day reality at several levels of their social life. At the interactional level, the concern for reproducing a desired self may result in both passive and active strategies: withdrawing from interaction; adapting to the interactional codes of the hosts; passing and altercasting, and struggling to define certain situations, etc. At the relational level, immigrants will select and sustain rewarding relations with indigenous locals, compatriots and other immigrants, which, inter alia, may affect the strength and intensity of contact they have with their friends. At the network level, immigrant

identity work has consequences for ethnic composition, density and the overall structure of their personal social networks. Nevertheless, these levels of social life are closely related. Through strategic interactions, immigrants redefine both themselves and their ties with others and in this way go about refashioning their personal networks. At the same time, immigrants searching for meanings about who they are in their new social environment are heavily influenced by ties and networks as well as by the broader social frames within which they are deployed. Generally speaking, it can be said that the inclusion of local contexts and the network perspective in my analysis of the daily life and self-work of immigrants adds another dimension to the symbolic interactionist approach. It allows us to see how its emphasis on human action can benefit considerably from the inclusion of small social structures. Recognising that the self is embedded in a web of constraining and enabling ties and social networks, may help us move beyond the notion of highly autonomous, individualistic social actors for which interactionist theory is often criticized.

15.2. Between integration and segregation

It is well-known that stigmatized categories of immigrants tend to cluster in their own ethnic enclaves and networks. In this study, however, I modified the idea of self-imposed ethnic segregation as the only response to ethnic discrediting. Ethnic segregation is only one among many ways immigrants cope with everyday life after resettlement. Indeed, the immigrants who participated in my study tried to avoid social contexts that did not favour their self-presentations. Such consistent avoiding of the hosts may lead to immigrants being ethnically segregated. Nevertheless, no matter how much they withdraw from the mainstream society, they cannot avoid meeting Norwegians in their daily rounds. They had to meet and interact with Norwegians at work, in their neighbourhood, and in public, etc.

What might sometimes seem like total withdrawal is actually a pattern of selective incorporation into mainstream society. It should be emphasized that even if immigrants could manage to isolate themselves, they would not do so. This study showed that wanting to get new friends from, and be recognized by the majority population is an inherent part of the resettlement experience. Although interactions and relations with indigenous locals are experienced as problematic, they still remain important for immigrants. If there is any hope of being incorporated into the mainstream, immigrants will try to do so - navigating between different interactions and relations, bonding and bridging in combination, rather than closing themselves off completely.

This study showed that social relations have a dual importance for an actors' self-work. A relationship between two people may be seen in terms of such dimensions as durability, plexity and frequency. However, it may also be perceived in terms of the meanings people attach to the particular relationship. Whether immigrants define a tie as important or not depends not only on how often they socialize and in how many roles. How satisfactory a relation is, and how it is defined, depends also on what expectations an individual has about the relation, as well as the degree of its mutuality, content and functions. I argued that social relations between immigrants and their friends may have a positive potential for immigrants in terms of the sociability and symbolic meanings they attach to these ties. This dual aspect of social relationships has implications for the ethno-social trajectories of immigrants after resettlement.

Immigrants attach different meaning to relationships with their compatriots and with the hosts. These relations also provide two different contexts for self-presentation. In interactions and relations with their Norwegian acquaintances and friends, immigrants have to present themselves in minority roles, and within the premises of the ethnic majority. Within such a context of distorted communication, the possibility immigrants have for successful self-presentations is weakened. Nevertheless, most immigrants invest a lot of energy in establishing and maintaining relationships with their hosts, since it is primarily through such friendships that immigrants get a sense of belonging to mainstream society.

Ambivalences and tensions, however, are not limited to attempts at bridging with the mainstream. Certain tensions and dilemmas are embedded within the relations immigrants have with non-Norwegians. By extension, relations with other immigrant groups may be experienced as more egalitarian than relations with the hosts. On the other hand, different immigrant networks and communities do not always perceive each other in positive ways. They may also appear as negative reference groups that immigrants prefer to distance or dissociate themselves from. Similar tensions and ambivalences may be found within their own compatriot networks.[255] Generally speaking, segregated social networks, including the relations and interactions an individual has with other compatriots and/or immigrants, do not give a feeling that one is part of the mainstream society (they may even nourish marginalized identities): but they do give immigrants an opportunity to present themselves on their own cultural premises and/or to appear as normal and equal interactants in their own eyes and in the eyes of others. By revealing these tensions and ambivalences, this study helps us to get a more informed sense of the psycho-sociological motivational background to selective patterns of social integration, including an alternation between integration and self-imposed segregation.

Clarifying these outlined tensions has sociological implications for the debate about how immigrants incorporate within host societies. By stressing the diversity of immigrant adaptation patterns as well as the selective nature of their ethno-social practices, I questioned the classical idea of a uniform incorporation and persistent segregation. I argued that immigrant strategies are not static or uniform, but that on the contrary they continuously construct and reconstruct their identities, their relations with others and their anticipations about a future in Norway/the homeland. Over time, their social networks change, as they learn the Norwegian language, become employed and go through different phases in their lives. With time, immigrants become admitted to certain majority arenas and gain bridges to Norwegian networks, but at the same time they can be highly selective about which arenas, interactions and relationships they participate in. I showed that selective incorporation does not only involve selectivity in relation to different communities and aspects of acculturation. I argued immigrants may also have a selective approach to matters of incorporation when it comes to types of sociability and ties. For example, immigrants may successfully establish bridges to the mainstream and maintain friendships with indigenous locals, but still not spend most of their time with them.

In short, by tracing the concepts of 'segmented assimilation' and 'selective acculturation', this study showed that immigrants want to establish friendships with their hosts, but not just with anybody. Something similar can be said about integration within the immigrant community:

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[255] On the one hand, immigrants may, for example, stress the similarities they have with people in some other, non-prejudiced, immigrant groups or with prominent members of their own ethnic group – people they belong with or aspire to belong. On the other hand, they may engage in distinction-work in relation to other immigrant groups and certain fragments of their own ethnic group.

for example, while certain categories of immigrants and compatriots are welcomed as friends, others are avoided. This study also demonstrated that in some cases it may indeed be advantageous to acculturate and assimilate, if this effort leads to social acceptance in desired segments of the mainstream. On the other hand, acculturation and bridging to the mainstream may also undermine the self-esteem of immigrants and lead to feelings of loneliness and marginalization. In order to reconcile ambivalences that accompany bridging and bonding strategies, many immigrants will therefore approach social integration in a selective and dynamic manner, continuously negotiating and renegotiating their relations to the mainstream and to their own ethnic community.

15.3. Social integration and other types of integration

In Norway, many non-western immigrants face a variety of challenges as they try to integrate in the host country. They experience marginalization in the labour market. They are overrepresented among those who drop out of the educational system. They are also overrepresented in marginalized parts of the city and city suburbia.[256] This study showed that certain categories of immigrants face similar if not greater challenges in respect to becoming integrated socially in the primary networks of the hosts. The social life and social integration of immigrants and refugees have been received much less attention in sociological and political debates in Norway compared to, for instance, the massive concern for their low participation in work-life, spatial segregation and their alleged lack of interest in cultural adjustment. Fortunately, there is growing concern about the everyday life and social integration of immigrants and refugees among politicians and scientists. It is not difficult to see how important networks are for the quality of life immigrants and refugees have, and for their participation in other segments of society. Social contact and informal networks are, if not a precondition of incorporation then at least a way of facilitating cultural and economic integration. Being excluded from the informal networks and social life of the mainstream society may lead to a general dissatisfaction with life in Norway among certain categories of migrants. A potential consequence may be the adoption of an oppositional stance vis-à-vis the norms and culture of mainstream society.[257]

In debates about immigrants, there is still disagreement about how acculturation actually affects their incorporation into the mainstream. Opinions also differ about how much inclusion within economic life, proximity and scattered settlement influence their social integration. On the one hand, there are those who claim that these processes catalyze integration within the mainstream and prevent ethnic segregation. On the other hand, there are others who question the assumption of such positive effects. This study shows that the relation between social integration and the processes I have just outlined is not straightforward. These interconnectivities should be contextualized and related to the local logic of different social environments. The different characteristics of immigrants - including their ethnic identity, culture, resources, gender, etc - should also be taken into account.

I suggested that we have to diversify the standard positive picture of social integration, if we want to develop the sociological debate about the settlement, acculturation and integration of immigrants into a host society. Firstly, my findings show the limitations of uniform interpretations of the different integration processes. For example, employment may have positive effects both on immigrant identity negotiations and bridging to the mainstream, but

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[256] See Brox (1997); Djuve and Kavli (2000); SSB (2006)

[257] See Portes and Zhou (1993); Gullestad (2006).

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only under certain conditions. Employment in the form of temporary contracts in the least desirable of low status occupations does not provide the best context for reconstructing identities and a social life after resettlement. Furthermore, any kind of employment that leads to brain waste and occupational displacement not only hinders social integration and identification with the hosts, but also isolates immigrants from their new social environments. On the other hand, jobs where their human resources are recognized within a stable and affirmative working environment may be an important access point to the mainstream society. Secondly, scattered settlement and physical proximity are just as likely to strengthen as to minimize feelings of social exclusion and misrecognition. For example, proximity and scattered settlement in small local communities may indeed catalyze bridging with the mainstream, but only if immigrants can enter the close-knit networks of indigenous locals. However, if immigrants do not have resources and the collective characteristics that are required to be absorbed in the dense sociability of a small town, social exclusion will be experienced even more intensively there than in a city. Thirdly, social integration and bridging should not be understood as the logical outcome of acculturation either. It seems instead that acculturation matters more in some contexts than in others. As we have seen, it is not necessarily immigrant insistence on ethnic identities and culture that is the major obstacle to social integration. While in some cases, cultural differences are overlooked or viewed with tolerance by indigenous locals, in others, their ethnicity and culture are interpreted in an almost primordial fashion. This study shows that the latter is especially the case for immigrants who reconstruct their lives within the context of a prejudiced social reception. Within such contexts, it matters very little how acculturated immigrants become, for indigenous locals may still perceive them as inherently different or even deviant, which in turn may reduce the possibility immigrants have for gaining entrance into informal Norwegian networks.

In short, external social integration – including friendships with indigenous locals - should not simply be understood as a given outcome of acculturation, increased employment participation, and more physical proximity. The findings outlined here have relevance not only for sociological debates about the integration of immigrants, but also have important political implications. Among other things, they strongly suggest the importance of diversifying integration and settlement policies. Interventions that work for one category of immigrants may not have equally positive effects for other categories of migrants. If not they are adjusted to the needs and predispositions of different groups and individual, policies may contribute to isolating immigrants from the hosts rather than bringing them together. In a worst case scenario, they may lead to resentment and increased feelings of non-belonging, and even to a sense of marginalization among immigrants.

15.4. Constraints in the way of integration into the mainstream

This study also has indirect implications for debates about governmental reception and refugee policies. The voices of my informants serve as good examples of how negative experiences with the Norwegian reception system may constitute the basis for future ethnic segregation. A pioneer spirit can be transformed into a stigmatized identity if immigrants and refugees are seen from the first day of their arrival in Norway not as a resource, but as a burden or even as a threat. Furthermore, as long as immigrants and refugees see themselves as guests who will shortly be forced to leave, it is understandable that they will be reluctant to pay the price required for entering and participating in community life. Recent political

inventions such as 'double track policies' and temporary protection policies introduced in the 90s by Norwegian immigration authorities seem not to recognize this fact.[258]

Nevertheless, immigrants gradually manage to gain control over their lives. Among other things, language proficiency and familiarity with the cultural codes of the majority increases with time spent in Norway. The negative images of Norwegians acquired during conflicts with Norwegian authorities and during life in the reception centre will also fade over the course of time. In short, time matters. Nevertheless, the relationship between time spent in Norway and the inclination for bridging to the mainstream is not straightforward. Even if immigrants tend gradually (of their own free will or by necessity) to change their ethno-social practices and preference in the direction of adapting to the new socio-cultural environment, it is not a foregone or straightforward conclusion that they will gain entrance into the primary groups among their hosts.

Different patterns of integration which have emerged during the course of my study may be understood in the light of perceived cultural differences, and of ethnic and social identities – including how these are anchored in a multiplicity of roles, positions and networks. The specific composition of these dimensions may influence immigrant identity negotiations, as well as their chances of achieving a breakthrough in social relations with indigenous locals. Each identity is given a variety of meanings depending to the social context, structures of power and the person's ability to present her- or himself in a favourable manner. Generally speaking, immigrants who were not directly exposed to current xenophobic debates had better chances of getting positive feedback in their everyday life. Therefore, these immigrants are in addition more motivated to spread their social life outside the frame of their own ethnic community.

Immigrants also reconstruct their social life within the frame of different networks. If an immigrant is attached to an ethnic network where people have developed an out-group antagonism against the mainstream, the ethnic network may appear as an obstacle to bridging outside the network. However, my material also shows that the impact of strong ethnic networks on the inclination for bridging is not straightforward. Bonding within ethnic networks does not always hinder bridging. For example, I met immigrants who felt that their compatriot friends expected them to integrate into the mainstream. If they did not find Norwegian friends they felt like losers in their own eyes and in the eyes of their compatriot friends. The conclusion to be drawn here is that people who were connected to ethnic networks which valued positive incorporation into the mainstream were also more inclined and likely to gain entrance into Norwegian networks.

Another important factor is the position of immigrants in the structural order of the host country. The social ranks matters: immigrants who achieved a relatively high position in the economic and social hierarchy of the mainstream society have a better predisposition for identity negotiations and for 'breaking through' in their social relations with the hosts. These people have more self-confidence. They engage as equals in interactions and relationships with the hosts, and sometimes even position themselves from above. Since there are fewer risks attached to their attempts at bridging, at least in terms of self-discrediting and rejection, they have less reason for isolating themselves from mainstream society. Furthermore, the specific composition of characteristics such as the age, gender, and social background of immigrants should be also taken into consideration if we want to show the complexity of how

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[258] See also Brekke (2001); Valenta and Berg (2003).

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immigrants experience the constraints just outlined. In some cases, one dimension may compensate for another, while in others they reinforce each other. The highly educated among my informants, for instance, managed to breakthrough in their relations with the hosts, because although they had stigmatized ethnic identities, their personal capacities and social position in certain arenas of the receiving society made up for this. In other cases, the same resources prevented them from being able to identify with the hosts they encountered in the neighbourhood or workplace, etc. People's age also matters. Compared with young immigrants, elderly people in the study seemed to be less able to acquire the language and cultural codes of the majority. This competence is an important prerequisite of successful self-presentations that are played within the cultural premises of the hosts. Due to this lack of competence, elderly people may experience trepidation in their everyday interactions with the hosts, which in turn makes them less motivated to socialize with them. Obstacles in the path to integration are perceived as huge in those cases where several forces pull in the same direction – as, for example, when elderly people arrived in Norway without any compatible or recognised human resources. For these people, extensive bridging outside their ethnic network may seem like an unworkable or undesirable achievement.

We may also look at gender as a factor in patterns of social integration among immigrants and refugees. If we combine gender with some of the other characteristics of my informants (for example, their ethnicity, social background) we may find differences in their identities and social practices. For example, Iraqi women living in traditional families and networks did not achieve a breakthrough in their personal relations with the hosts. They were more oriented to domestic life, compared with their husbands or compared with other categories of women. These women felt that getting close Norwegian friends was an impossible task, given all the cultural adjustments of behaviour that they thought such friendships would require. They also had to take in consideration the possibility that they might have been sanctioned by their compatriots for breaking the norms of female behaviour that prevailed in their ethnic networks. They anticipated being ostracized from their ethnic networks, at the same time as being accepted in Norwegian networks could not be guaranteed. In other words, by following the path of straight line assimilation in the mainstream they might risk a double exclusion. Therefore, those women who wanted to build bridges out of their own ethnic network, followed the safe line of careful, selective bridging with Norwegians without directly provoking their own compatriot network.

At the other extreme, there were women who were highly enthusiastic about following the path of socio-cultural adjustment into Norwegian society, but who had a much lower risk of double rejection. For example, Bosnian and Croatian women faced fewer of the social and cultural problems I have just mentioned, even if they followed the path of assimilation. They could afford to organize their self-presentations, personal networks and identities with the clear aim of attaining acceptance by the hosts. This pattern was reinforced when combined with high human resources and a young age. I met young and educated women (and men) of Bosnian and Croatian descent, and from a middleclass background, who have tried to adjust to Norwegian society almost to the point of social and cultural invisibility, and in the hope of being accepted and recognized by the indigenous locals. For most of them, this was quite a safe line to take, since there were few tensions between co-ethnic bonding on the one hand (within the particular segment of the compatriot community they were attached to) and acculturation and bridging with Norwegians on the other. If they did not achieve their aim of entering adequate networks within the host society, they always could temporarily compensate for the experience of being rejected by bonding more strongly within their own compatriot network.

15.5. The strength of weak ties

In the course of researching this study, I have gradually come to realise that my image of Norway as an inclusive and pluralist society was quite different from the more brutal realities of daily life. Newcomers have to find new friends and reconstruct positive identities in daily frames that do not fully match up to the ideal of a multicultural society based on mutuality and respect for each other. Being accepted into Norwegian social networks presupposes that immigrants subordinate themselves to the prescribed norms of the majority, but even this offers no guarantee that those who conform will be granted entry. Within such frames, it is difficult to achieve full social incorporation. It remains for me to define what might be a realistic aim with regards to the social integration of first generation non-western immigrants in Norway.

This study showed that immigrants follow different integration patterns. For example, immigrants from Bosnia and Croatia were more oriented to acculturation and Norwegian networks than Iraqis were. Nevertheless, when we speak about social integration into the mainstream, incorporation beyond weak tie bridging was difficult to establish and maintain for most of the immigrants I met – irrespective of which one of these three categories they belonged to. It was not always easy even for those immigrants who had Norwegian friends to reproduce a positive self in face-to-face interactions with them. Even if their friends belonged to a prominent segment of the mainstream, immigrants still found that intensive bridging with these people in some instances actually even reduced the quality of their social life.

As we have seen, immigrant networks are often fragmented, and their social life is based on selective ethno-social practices. Their social integration process is characterized by interrelated divisions: between public life and the private sphere; between dense networks and scattered ties; between work and leisure time; between ethnic bonding and bridging; between friends and strangers; between strong and weak ties; and between attractive connections and members of negative reference groups, etc. I argued that these selective ethno-social practices – along with the network fragmentation – are not necessarily an indicator of unsuccessful integration, but may be an important precondition for successful simultaneous bonding and bridging, the reproduction of synchronic identities and gradual integration into mainstream society.

During the first years of life in Norway, immigrants learn Norwegian and become more familiar with the cultural expectations of their hosts. These initial adjustments may lead to results. In that period of their life, immigrants get their first jobs, apartments and acquaintances. In this phase, the inclination towards bridging may be high since immigrants are eager to gain acceptance and affirmation in their new social environment. However, optimistic expectations may gradually be modified in the face of the hard realities of life in the new social and cultural environment. Immigrants progressively acknowledge that it is not easy to reproduce positive identities in interactions and relations with indigenous locals. As a consequence, they develop social networks made up of two zones, primary and secondary. The first is composed, almost entirely, of relations with compatriots: the second includes relations with indigenous locals. The last one, which primarily contains acquaintances, gradually expands as immigrants meet new people, change jobs and flats, and meet new Norwegian workmates, neighbours, etc.

The most realistic adaptation line for first generation non-western immigrants in Norway would appear to be different kinds of selective bridging to the mainstream, based on weak ties

with indigenous locals. Nevertheless, this kind of bridging to the mainstream should not be neglected and underestimated. 'The strength of the weak ties'[259] is not only a matter relating to working life. During the course of this study, I became more and more convinced that integration through stable weak ties with indigenous locals do matter. These friends and acquaintances become symbols of acceptance that help newcomers construct identities of themselves as people who are included and respected in their new social environment. Connecting to the mainstream society through weak ties is also a practice that is consistent with immigrant efforts to maintain a positive self in minority roles within the context of mixed cross-cultural interactions and relations. When we relate the desire immigrants have to be accepted and respected by the hosts to the constraints they face in their daily lives, it becomes even clearer that integrating through weak ties with indigenous locals may be the optimal path. Here, it should be emphasized that the overall volume of social integration also matters. Partial integration through selective weak tie bridging with natives may nourish positive identities among immigrants on the condition that such weak attachment to the mainstream is supported and combined with compensatory integration in proper segments of the ethnic community.

In conclusion, these arguments show that by combining symbolic interactionism and network perspective, my study adds a new dimension to Granovetter's notion about the strength of weak ties.[260] The ties immigrants have with the mainstream may be weak in terms of sociability, density, frequency of contact, etc. At the same time, the ties immigrants have with indigenous locals may have a certain strength at the symbolical level and may help to nourish positive identities. This study also contributes to existing research in the field and helps it to advance by showing concretely how different types of immigrant participation in social life depend on their daily experiences, the qualities of their networks, and society's attitudes to immigrants in general. In this way, my thesis lays the groundwork for a multilevel conceptual framework that may be useful for future, related, studies. For example, this approach may allow segmented assimilation theorists and researchers to see how their studies can benefit from the inclusion of immigrant voices and subjective positions, as well as the ties they have with others.

In this study, I focused on the local logic of social life after resettlement, which should not be taken as meaning that the social integration of immigrants is somehow disconnected from the broader social contexts that their migration is related to. Although there are certain variations within my material, we might say that most of the immigrants who participated in my study had to reconstruct their social lives in Norway within the problematic context of reception. They have to adjust to and search for the Norwegian code without provoking their compatriot networks; they have to contest ethnic stigma and cope with problems of communication; and they have problems being accepted to the primary groups of the hosts, etc. Their experiences should be compared with the realities of newcomers who re-establish in countries that are more pluralistically oriented, multicultural and diverse than Norway. More importantly, their experiences should be compared with the experiences of immigrants who may seem similar in many ways to their hosts, and who reconstruct their social lives within the context of a non-prejudiced social reception.[261] I take it that the social incorporation of these immigrants too is not without friction. Moving to another country can disrupt anyone's social life - but, who knows, for these immigrants it might also be realistic to expect adaptation patterns that go far beyond weak tie incorporation into the mainstream society.

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[259] See Granovetter (1973).
[260] See Granovetter (1973).
[261] See Portes and Rumbaut (1990); Portes and Zhou (1993).

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