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# Living Transnational Lives: Investigating the Role of ICTs in Transnational Migrants' Identity Formation

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# Abstract

In a globalized world, the recent developments in information and communication technologies (ICTs) and transportation have facilitated international migration in ways that have led to great increases in this type of migration over the last decades. In the host country migrants are influenced by new cultural impulses that are different from the ones in their homeland. Over time, these may be incorporated into the migrants' cultural identities and as time passes, the migrants may start to identify with more and more aspects of the host culture, creating a belonging to the new country. By adopting a transnational lens, the objective of this thesis is to examine how transnational migrants' cultural identity is challenged, negotiated and formed through the use of modern ICTs that allow for frequent communication with homeland relations. This was done by investigating the role of ICTs in the migrants' practices of ways of being in and ways of belonging to transnational social fields and the research questions that have been discussed and answered are as follows:

1) What is the role of transnational communication networks and technologies in identity formation?
   - Can gender differences be identified?

2) Can today's extensive use of information and communication technologies show that migrants maintain more of their 'old' identities?
   - Are identities gendered?

It is found that ICTs play a large role in the identity formation of transnational migrants and that migrants who live transnational lives constantly (re)negotiate and form transnational identities in relation to their respective social fields. In addition, analyses show that ICTs available today facilitate both practices of ways of being (transnational communication) and ways of belonging (identity-conscious practices) in transnational social fields, and may indeed contribute to the maintenance of more of migrants' 'old' identities. The migrants are anchored in both transnational social fields and are rational actors that actively choose what to keep of

their old and new identities through a constant (re)negotiation of their identities. Both analyses show that migrants' identities are gendered and this, in combination with the constant reworking of identities, show that the migrants are reflexive life planners.

# 1      Introduction

'The most conspicuous development in the globalization context has been the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) influx. It seems to have turned the world into a global village. Endless connectivity, interactive organizations, information sharing and infinite access have all become the new ICT buzz words.'

(Dhameja and Medury, undated)

Since the late 1980s, globalization has become one of the most important academic topics of research and discussion. According to Steger (2009:18) the multidimensional and interconnected processes of globalization have to do with the expansion and intensification of social relations and consciousness across world-time and world-space. This intensification of worldwide social relations link distant localities to each other, implying a fundamental reorganization of time and space in social and cultural life (Inda and Rosaldo, 2008). In addition, the rapid developments of new information and communication technologies, as well as transportation technologies have reshaped the social landscape of human life. Although international migration is by far not a new phenomenon, the magnitude of this type of migration has exploded in the last decades as a consequence of these new technologies. Collins (2009:841) notes that the proliferation of these new technologies has made possible a world full of movement, linkages and cultural exchange affecting the everyday lives of migrants significantly:

'The implications of the rapid uptake of these technological developments include the ability for migrants to be socially, politically and economically involved in their homeland while residing elsewhere; the formation and maintenance of familial relationships; and the development of new transnational identities.'

From this it becomes clear that contemporary migrants are no longer uprooted individuals forced to adapt to a new culture and society; they are able to maintain strong connections to

their homeland, while living in a new country - they navigate between two worlds, the origin and the host country, and they belong to both countries (Bradatan et al., 2010). Thrift (2006) notes that the multiple possibilities of combining 'here' and 'there', absence, presence, ascription and disavowal, in everyday life are central to understanding social life in our contemporary world. Consequently, among international migrants one is witnessing a shift from territorially-based national identities to other forms of identities that are of a more transnational nature.

## 1.1    The relevance of the study

Although the literature on transnationalism continues to increase, most of the research involving migrants and ITCs focus mainly on their contact with relations in the country of origin and much less is said about the ties migrants have to their host countries. Because the very definition of being transnational is to have ties to, and engage in, both origin and host country, I believe it to be important to add to the literature a study where both sides of the 'transnational' are examined. In addition, globalization and transnational migration change the frameworks for developing identities and belonging (Christensen and Jensen, 2011). Globalization has brought about closer international relations, and internationally, more and more discussions on migration now include in what ways migration should be understood in light of these closer relations. In the case of Norway, however, it seems that discussions on migration continue to primarily circulate around the structure of immigrant adjustment to the Norwegian culture. I believe that it is important to examine the ways in which identity is negotiated in transnational social fields, and how the identity of immigrants is challenged or changing as a consequence of this on-going negotiation. Through sharing transnational migrants' own perspectives, this thesis seeks to give a widened understanding of the experiences of leading a transnational life and shed light on the possible formation of new or multiple identities that may not 'fit in' perfectly in the Norwegian culture. But does this really matter? With this in mind, I hope to contribute to the ongoing discussion on identity negotiations in a transnational context.

## 1.2 Objective and research questions

The objective of this thesis is to examine how transnational migrants' cultural identity is challenged, negotiated and formed though the proliferation of new information and communication technologies that allows for high frequent communication with homeland relations. This will be done through finding answers to these two research questions:

1. What is the role of transnational communication networks and technologies in identity formation?
   - Can gender differences be identified?

2. Can today's extensive use of information and communication technologies show that migrants maintain more of their 'old' identities?
   - Are identities gendered?

While recognizing that power permeates all social relations and that people living in transnational social fields are shaped by the power structures of the respective nation states in which they engage and negotiate their identities, this thesis focuses in particular on identity formation at the individual level and on the cultural and social aspects of migrant transnationalism. The informants in this thesis are defined as transnational migrants because they navigate between two worlds, the origin and the new country, and they are connected to their country of origin through transnational social fields where they interact with family and friends, while residing in a new country. The thesis will, however, use the notions 'transnational migrant' and 'migrant' interchangeably, both referring to the former.

## 1.3  Thesis outline

The thesis is organized in six chapters;

*Chapter One* gives a brief introduction to the thesis topic, followed by an explanation as to why this is a relevant study to undertake. Then, the objective of the thesis is presented, followed by the research questions that will be examined throughout the thesis.

*Chapter Two* introduces the conceptual framework of the study. It starts with a presentation of immigration to Norway and go on to look at the workings of the introduction program in which immigrants take part. Finally, it presents an overview of Unit for Adult Education in Trondheim where parts of the contents of the introduction program take place.

*Chapter Three* consists of the theoretical framework which offers the basis for my research questions. This chapter starts with a presentation of the concept of globalization before looking at the notions of transnationalism and transnational social fields as well as identity. The, it looks at hybrid and transnational identities and presents a gender lens to the study. The chapter ends with the thesis' analytical approach.

*Chapter Four* gives a detailed presentation of the whole research process. In this methodology chapter, I explain the choice of research method and how informants were selected before providing a description of the data collection. Then, the focus moves to the processes of analysis and writing before looking into the ethical concerns of the study. Finally, an assessment of the validity of the study is presented.

*Chapter Five* presents the findings and analyses. The chapter is divided into two parts where Part One is dedicated to the first research question and looks at ways of being in a transnational social field through communication with relations in the migrants' country of origin, and its effects on identity formation. It also presents gender differences that occur in the negotiation between social fields. Part Two goes on to examine whether the use of ICTs in contacting homeland relations as ways of belonging to a social field show that migrants maintain more of their 'old' identities. In addition, this part examines whether the identities are gendered.

*Chapter Six* ends the thesis by offering a concluding discussion that sums up the two analyses and the main conclusions of the thesis are presented.

# 2 The context

Because the thesis concerns transnational migration, and before presenting the theoretical framework of this thesis, I believe it may prove useful to present some background information concerning migration to Norway and the introduction program with which immigrants to Norway are familiar. This brief chapter will look into the function of the Norwegian introduction program and how this program helps to facilitate language training for newly arrived immigrants. The last part of the chapter narrows the Norwegian immigration context down to Trondheim municipality and gives an overview of Unit for Adult Education in Trondheim, where the thesis' informants attend, or have been attending, Norwegian language and society classes.

## 2.1 Immigration to Norway

Immigration to Norway started later than in many other Western European countries, but has developed along lines that are rather comparable to those of better-known countries of immigration. The first significant number of labor migrants from poorer countries arrived in the late 1960s. In 1975, Norway implemented an official ban on immigration that remains in effect today. The ban does not apply to specified refugee groups and asylum seekers. There are annual entry quotas for these groups, and a certain amount of leeway is also granted for family reunification purposes (Hagelund, 2005).

The number of immigrants in Norway continues to increase. In 2004, the immigrant population, comprising the first generation immigrants and their children, constituted 7.6 per cent of the population while in 2012 there were 547 000 immigrants and 108 000 Norwegian-born persons with immigrant parents living in Norway. Together, these two groups represent 13.1 per cent of Norway (Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2012).

## 2.2 The introduction program and Norwegian language tuition

Immigration and integration have been heated issues in the Norwegian public debate since the mid-1980s, stirring strong feelings and often provoking highly polarized positions. One of the most concrete measures Norwegian authorities have ever taken to produce integration of immigrants is the establishment of a compulsory two-year introduction program, effected nationally in 2004 (Hagelund, 2005). The Introduction Act (Ot. prp. nr. 28, 2002-3:7) states:

'The Government is of the opinion that the natural starting point is that it is primarily the newly arrived immigrants themselves who are responsible for participating actively in society. The society must arrange conditions in an appropriate manner so that this may actually be possible.'

The introduction program is an activation-style program with the aim to give newly arrived immigrants basic skills in the Norwegian language and insight into the Norwegian society. The program involves both an educational and a financial component, where out-payments depend on participation in a full-time education and training program aimed at enabling participants to become self-sufficient members of Norwegian society by increasing their possibilities of education, finding work and participation in social life (Hagelund, 2005:670). The economic incentive structure demonstrates that immigrants have both rights *and* obligations as newcomers to Norway. In addition, it is designed to encourage participation. The out-payments are administered by The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service (NAV) (Hagelund, 2005 and Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, 2012). The program's target group comprises people between 15 and 55 years of age who need basic qualification about Norwegian society and who have been granted asylum and thus refugee status, those who are resettlement refugees, those who have been granted residence on humanitarian grounds after applying for asylum, family immigrants with the groups already mentioned, and persons who after a breakup of a relationship have been granted a residence permit on an independent basis due to abuse in the relationship (Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, 2012).

The municipalities have an important role in promoting integration and diversity at the local level. Since the implementation of the Introduction Act, part of the municipalities' integration

work has been regulated through the Introduction program. Each municipality receives grants from the state and is obliged to provide an introduction program and Norwegian language and social studies tuition to newly arrived immigrants in the respective target groups who are settled in the municipality. The right to participation in the introduction program only applies in the first settlement municipality. The Introduction Act also gives municipalities a legal framework for their integration activities. As for the Norwegian language and social studies tuition, the municipalities have the obligation to give the qualified immigrants up to 550 hours of instruction in the Norwegian language and 50 hours of social studies. The municipalities are also responsible for offering tuition in the Norwegian language and social studies to other groups of immigrants covered by the Introduction Act, like for instance labor immigrants from countries in the EEA/EFTA area who have the right and obligation to attend 300 hours of tuition. Asylum seekers have the right to 250 hours of Norwegian language and society tuition. The municipalities must also ensure that their municipal services are adapted to cater to a multicultural population (Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, 2012).

## 2.3    Trondheim Municipality: Unit for Adult Education

Trondheim municipality has offered education to immigrants through Unit for Adult Education for 25 years. The Unit employs 170 people and 130 of them are teachers. The teachers have long experience from teaching students with little knowledge of the Norwegian language and have backgrounds from a wide range of special needs education areas. At the end of 2012, Unit for Adult Education had 1400 students enrolled in different classes and tuition is offered to eligible newly arrived immigrants living in Trondheim municipality or the two municipalities of Klæbu and Malvik in which Trondheim has a cooperation agreement (Trondheim Kommune, 2013a).

Unit for Adult Education has five tuition units in Trondheim. Four of them are situated in the Lade area where elementary school education and basic Norwegian language training for youth and adults are offered, as well as tuition in Norwegian language and society for students who has finished elementary school and the basic Norwegian language tuition. Two of the units also offer special tuition for immigrants who are visually or hearing-impaired and appointments with speech therapists. The last unit is situated in Flatåsen, where tuition in

basic Norwegian language is offered, as well as basic Norwegian language training for asylum seekers (Trondheim Kommune, 2013b).

# 3    Theoretical framework

In order to understand how transnational lives are led and identity negotiated and formed, I believe it to be important to employ a transnational framework to the study. The first section of this theoretical chapter will therefore give a brief introduction to the phenomenon of globalization. The second section is dedicated to present the transnationalism approach and transnational social fields. The third section looks at the concepts of identity, hybridization and transnational identities, and gives some insights to the different dimensions of gender. The analytical approach of the thesis is presented at the end of the chapter.

## 3.1    The globalization era

All through history, the world has changed in various ways and both small and more dramatic developments have led us to today's globalized world. The rapid flows of capital, goods, images and people draw increasingly larger parts of the world into webs of interconnection. According to the globalization scholars Inda and Rosaldo (2008:4), this intensification of global interconnectedness suggests "full movement and mixture, contact and linkages, and persistent cultural interaction and exchange." Such global interconnectedness compresses our sense of time and space and makes the world feel smaller and distances shorter (Inda and Rosaldo, 2008). Because globalization processes are multifaceted and complex - operating simultaneously within several spheres such as the economic, political, cultural and environmental - definitions of globalization tend to be just as complex. Scholars from different disciplines such as Harvey, Castells, Appadurai and Giddens have all contributed significantly to the globalization debate. Although their definitions of the phenomenon are diverse and in relation to their respective academic disciplines, they invite the reader to some common features; the reorganization of time and space, the speeding up of connections, the stretching out of social relations, and the increasing transcendence of flows (Harvey, 2000; Schirato and Webb, 2003; Inda and Rosaldo, 2008). Based on these features, this thesis

defines globalization as *the extensive, intensive and rapid flows, movements and networks across the world that make the world more interconnected*.

Commonly known forces associated with globalization such as advancements in communication and information technologies, the expansion of the media and fast and cheap means of transportation, has contributed to two of the main trademarks of globalization, namely the increasing flow of people and cultures across national boundaries. In international migration studies, researchers have embraced topics that include the processes and consequences of globalization, and today, globalization is a phenomenon that no researcher of migration can ignore.

Both migratory practices and the ways migration and mobility are experienced by migrants have been revolutionized. The increased speed and size of modern means and modes of communication and transportation, such as international air travel, telephones, satellite TV and the Internet, have intensified the mobility of people, information and all sorts of cultural texts around the world (Moslund, 2010:1).

One of the most important aspects of the globalized world is the development of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) that have become widespread throughout the world. Communication and information exchange networks have been recognized by historic research as a diachronic vector of migrant mobility. From letters to telephones and from mobile phones to Internet possibilities, communication networks indeed play a central role in migrant lives (Diminescu, 2008). As Hylland Eriksen (2007:3) observes, the use of the Internet began to grow massively around 1990 and during the next decade, media buzzwords were about bandwidths, Web sites and portals. The Internet has grown faster than any other previous technology and with huge impacts throughout much of the world (Urry, 2007). In 1992-1993, the World Wide Web was introduced, and mobile phones became universal in many countries. Hylland Eriksen (2007:3) states: "The impact of this double delocalization – the physical letter replaced by e-mail, the fixed phone line replaced by the wireless mobile – on the everyday life of people has been considerable."

The mobile phone, the Internet, and satellite and cable television have made instant connectivity a reality: family and friends living far apart are within instant reach - 'home' no longer needs to be 'imagined'. One's preferred culture can be enjoyed and participated in across cyberspace where people simply 'plug into' global networks of information through

which they can talk to people without being present in any particular place (Urry, 2002). Urry (2002:269) notes: "As virtual travel...becomes part of everyday life, so it produces a life that transforms what we think of near and far, present and absent. It indissolubly changes the character of co-presence, even where the computer is resolutely fixed in place."

## 3.2    Transnationalism

As a response to globalization and the speed and density of border-crossings between nation-states, studies on transnationalism have emerged. The term 'transnationalism' overlaps globalization somewhat but has a more limited view. While the globalization discourse focuses on processes that are largely decentered from specific national territories, research on transnational processes depicts transnational relations as *anchored in* while also *transcending* one or more nation-states (Yeoh et al., 2003:17). Globalization discourses often assume the growing insignificance of national borders, boundaries, and identities. For transnationalism, however, Smith (2000:3) observes that the framework of transnationalism "insists on the continuing significance of borders, state policies and national identities even as these are often transgressed by transnational communication circuits and social practices."

Thus, transnationalism is a theory that serves well to illustrate the increased movement of people, objects and ideas without ignoring the continued significance of place. Despite a lack of consensus on a specific interpretation of transnationalism, both scholarly interest and the frequent use of the term not only persist but are increasing (Yeoh et al., 2003). Alejandro Portes (cited in Yeoh et al., 2003:3) states that transnationalism is experienced and comprehended in popular consciousness by:

> '…the growing number of persons who live dual lives; speaking two languages, having home in two countries, and making a living through continuous regular contact across national borders.'

In relation to migration studies, Kambouri and Parsanoglou (2010:6) argue that most of the static approaches in migration research have left their place to more mobility and multi-locality sensitive approaches, and in terms of migration patterns, transnationalism refers to a

recent shift in international migration since the 1980s. Instead of a one-directional movement with a point of departure and arrival, migration has become to be seen as an ongoing movement between two or more locations. According to Yeoh et al. (2003), transnationalism as a term has been gaining currency and coherent shape in migration studies ever since Basch proposed the following, now classic, definition:

> 'We define 'transnationalism' as the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders. …An essential element…is the multiplicity of involvements that transmigrants sustain in both home and host societies.'

> (Basch, quoted in Yeoh et al., 2003:3)

From what we have seen, migrant transnationalism reflects the argument that the contemporary world is structured in a way that permits migrants to engage simultaneously in more than one locale.

As migrant transnationalism becomes the way of life for many, the saying 'no one can have two countries' (Murphy, 1998: 369) is no longer true. The lives of an increasing number of people can no longer be understood by looking only at what goes on within national boundaries. While nation-states are still important, social life is no longer confined by nation-state boundaries. Accordingly, Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004:1003) argue that the analytical lens must be broadened from simply studying the lives of migrants within nation-states because migrants are often "embedded in multi-layered, multi-sited transnational social fields, encompassing those who moved and those who stay behind." As a solution to their argument, they propose a 'social fields' approach to the study of transnational migration and social life that distinguishes between the existence of transnational social networks (*ways of being)* and the consciousness of being embedded in them (*ways of belonging*). I agree with Levitt and Glick Schiller when they argue that such an approach is crucial to understanding the experience of living simultaneously within and beyond the boundaries of a nation-state and that it might serve as a useful tool for conceptualizing the potential array of social relations

linking those who move and those who stay behind (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004:1003). Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004:1009) define social fields as "a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed."

National social fields are those that stay within national boundaries while transnational social fields connect actors through relations across borders. By conceptualizing transnational social fields as transcending the boundaries of nation-states, Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004:1010) also note that people within these fields are influenced by multiple sets of laws and institutions through their everyday activities.

## 3.3     Transnational social fields: ways of being and ways of belonging

Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) make two distinctions to the concept of social fields:

1. Ways of being (in social fields)
2. Ways of belonging (to social fields)

*Ways of being* refers to the actual social relations and practices that individuals engage in rather than to the identities associated with their actions. Social fields contain institutions, organizations, and experiences, within their various levels, that generate categories of identity that are ascribed to or chosen by individuals or groups. Individuals can be embedded in a social field but not identify with any label or cultural politics associated with that field. They have the potential to act or identify at a particular time because they live within the social field, but not all choose to do so (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004:1010).

In contrast, *ways of belonging* refers to practices that signal or enact an identity which demonstrates a conscious connection to a particular group. These actions are not symbolic but concrete, visible actions that mark belonging such as wearing a Christian cross or a hijab, or choosing a particular cuisine. Ways of belonging combine action with an awareness of the kind of identity that action signifies. Individuals within transnational social fields combine

ways of being and ways of belonging differently in specific contexts. If individuals engage in social relations and practices that cross borders as a regular feature of everyday life, they exhibit a transnational way of being. When people clearly recognize this and highlights the transnational elements of who they are, then they are also expressing a transnational way of belonging. These two experiences do not always go hand in hand. For instance, one person might have frequent contact with several people in his country of origin but does not identify at all as belonging to that homeland. This means that the person is engaged in transnational ways of being but not belonging. Another person may eat a certain type of food because it is what his family has always done. Because the food is chosen based on just an eating habit rather than a conscious identification with a specific ethnicity or family homeland, he is not expressing a transnational way of belonging. That being said, people with no or few social relations with people in their country of origin can behave in a way as to emphasize their identification with a particular group. Their connection to a way of belonging could be through memory, nostalgia or imagination and because of this connection they can enter the social field whenever they choose to do so (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004:1010-11).

## 3.4    Identity in the globalization era

Although the concept of identity has been extensively examined for centuries, identity studies have grown in importance in a wide range of academic disciplines the past few decades. Globalization processes have led to a proliferation of cultures across national borders through people, merchandise, communication technologies and the media, which has led to an increasing interest in the concept. Despite this much increased and broad-ranging interest in identity, the concept has been difficult to pin down. Discussions of identity use the term with different meanings and because of this, definitions are plentiful.

In the interconnected world of the present, Hall proposes that identity should be seen as a process in order to take into account the reality of diverse and ever-changing social experience (Hall and du Gay, 2011). Because the effects of cultural globalization have clear impacts on the lives, aspirations and understandings of people, Appadurai (1996) argues that the imagination has become a central component to all forms of agency and that culture and identity has taken to be above all *a matter of meaning.* Through experience, interpretation,

contemplation and imagination, people make sense of their lives (Hannerz, 1993). Fearon (1999) suggests the idea of identification as a way of studying identity, where identity is made up of various components that are identified and interpreted by individuals. The transcending cultural flows allow for more complex and various identifications, involving choice, negotiation and diversity. In this way, identity is just as much a matter of 'becoming' as a matter of 'being' (Robins, 2005; Hall, 2003). By identity, as it refers to social actors, Castells (2009) understand the process of construction of meaning on the basis of a cultural attribute, or a related set of cultural attributes, that is given priority over other sources of meaning. Looking at identity through the lens of an interconnected world, Giddens (1991: 53, 35, 32) agrees that identities are sources of meaning for the actors themselves, and by themselves, and argues that these identities are constructed through a process of individuation:

'…self-identity is not a distinctive trait possessed by the individual…It is the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her/his biography…to be a human being is to know…both what one is doing and why one is doing it…In the context of post-traditional order, the self becomes a reflexive project.'

What Giddens means is that the more tradition loses its hold, and the more daily life is reconstituted in terms of the dialectical interplay of the local and the global, the more individuals are forced to negotiate lifestyle choices among a diversity of options which is especially true for transnational migrants. This means that reflexively organized life-planning becomes a central feature of the structuring of self-identity (Giddens, 1991). In the world of the transmigrant, Calhoun's (1994: 9-10) observation of identity may prove especially useful:

'We know of no people without names, no languages or cultures in which some manner of distinctions between self and other, we and they, are not made… Self-knowledge – always a construction no matter how much it feels like a discovery – is never altogether separable from claims to be known in specific ways by others.'

In this thesis, identity is understood as a process and from a perspective of everyday interaction. Jenkins (2008:40-45) argues in the lines of Barth that identities emerge as a product of simultaneous internal (self-identification) and external (imposed) categorization. Internal identification involves identifying self or group qualities and categorization (e.g. through differentiation). External categorization refers to labeling and categorizing processes

in everyday interaction by others, institutions or organizations. Consequently, not only do we identify ourselves in this internal-external dialectic between self-image and public image, but we identify others and are identified by them in return. Haikkola (2011:158-195) notes that the production of identity can be both harmonious and unharmonious:

> '…the external and internal identification can reinforce each other, validating the maintenance of an identity. On the other hand, especially in the cases of migrant minorities, the external attribution and how others see the migrants in question can be in conflict with the self-conception.'

Discourses of migration and identity in today's world open up hybrid spaces where there is more flexibility in constructing multiple positions concerning identity (Farrell, 2008). According to Azmi and Lund (2009), migrants that live partly 'here' and partly 'there', establish identities that not only represent 'here' and 'there' but also hybrid forms of belonging to more than one place. In light of this, a way to better understand how identity is negotiated and renegotiated by transnational migrants may be to look to the concepts of hybridization and transnational identities.

## 3.5    Hybridization and Transnational identities

> 'Hybridity is one of the emblematic notions of our era. It captures the spirit of the ties with its obligatory celebration of cultural difference and fusion, and it resonates with the globalization mantra of unfettered economic exchanges and the supposedly inevitable transformation of all cultures.' Kraidy (2005:1)

Although not new, the concept of hybridity has become increasingly used by scholars. As the transnational flows of people, merchandise and other cultural objects have increased throughout the world, the consequences of cultural encounter, contact, interaction, and exchange have increased accordingly in attention (Burke, 2009). As observed by Smith (2008), cultural globalization tends to produce one out of three outcomes: differentiation,

assimilation, or hybridization. Like other concepts relating to globalization processes, hybridization offers a wide range of definitions in several academic disciplines. According to Pieterse (2009: 64), hybridization refers to "the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices." In the context of transnational migration, Moslund (2010:4) shows that cultural hybridization is indeed a relevant phenomenon:

> '…cultural hybridity usually manifests itself in tropes and thematisations of the experience of cultural in-betweenness, processes of intermixture, fusions or doublings of two or more cultures or two or more systems of signification.'

A reflexive relationship between the local and the global produces the hybrid. The identities are not integrated or changed independently, but instead elements of different cultures are incorporated to create a new hybrid culture (Smith, 2008). According to Tsuda (2012:640), cultural hybridity is becoming increasingly common in a transnational world, especially among migrants, allowing them to simultaneously incorporate cultural elements from both social fields in which they engage. Thus, hybridity opens the door for cultural emergence. Lo (2002:199) argues that hybridity is about creativity and cultural imagination and observes that the creation of a hybrid identity involves the encounter and blending of "two ethnic or cultural categories which, while by no means pure and distinct in nature, is understood and experienced as meaningful identity labels by members of these categories." Another highly related concept to transnational migration and identity is the creation of transnational identities. According to Tsuda (2012:642) a transnational identity is based on a simultaneous affiliation and sense of belonging to two or more countries. For migrants, this refers to a dual identification with both the country of origin and country of residence. Thus, simultaneous engagement in both these countries, and their identity-constructing factors, lead to the establishment of a transnational identity.

## 3.6   A gender lens

The increase in international migration caused by processes of globalization has subsequently led to an increase in the percentage of women engaging in this type of migration. Recent

analysis shows that about half of the world's transnational migrants are female (Yinger, 2006). In order to get a better understanding of the perceptions and actions of transnational migrants and the way they form identities, I believe it may prove useful to adopt a gender lens to this study. It is important to recognize that women and men may perceive their worlds differently and act according to these understandings. By adding a gender lens to the investigation of identity formation, these metaphorical spectacles will contribute to understandings that are more refined and help us understand gender as something relational and something in process that is being (re)worked, not as something that simply 'exist'.

There are many ways of thinking about gender and identity. Hayes (2007:26-7) notes that the notion of gendered identities is based on several related assumptions. She argues that the identities available to us derive from our connection with various social fields and their respective discourses on gender. These discourses shape our understanding of what women and men should be like and therefore may have a significant effect on our own behavior and how we perceive and treat others. Gender identities may vary greatly as they interconnect with other identities or membership categories such as for instance race, class, and culture. Hayes (2007:27) adds that gender identities are acted out differently in different contexts and over time, meaning that identities are always negotiated in, and influenced by, the social fields in which people interact. This illustrates that individuals, whether male or female, actively negotiate their gender identities. It is negotiated differently in relation to possible identities available and the expectations that exist within a specific context. These possibilities and expectations may vary greatly between different social fields.

Davids and van Driel (2005) also see the importance of recognizing that gender is 'done' in different ways according to the environments in which individuals live and manage their lives. In addition, they argue in the same lines as Hayes (2007) that the individual take active part in shaping its gender identity. In order to recognize the different aspects of gender and identity and to better understand the relationship of identity and gender in transnational migration, Davids and van Driel (2005) argue for the use of a gender lens in which they have embedded three dimensions of gender; the subjective, the symbolical and the institutional. These three dimensions are interwoven in a constant dynamic interaction and consequently, the actors must always relate to them. The symbolic dimension is the dimension of symbols, representations, ideal images and stereotypes, that is, the dimension in which representations of masculinity and femininity obtain their substance. The second dimension is the structural

or institutional dimension that shapes the symbolic dimension within a socially institutionalized practice (e.g. division of labor or marriage). Within this dimension, the structural differences between men and women become apparent as well as among men and among women. The third dimension of gender is the one of the individual subject. This is the dimension in which individuals shape their identities and is concerned with the differences within men and women. It is about the process of identification of individuals with the multiple identities or aspects of identities that are handed to them. The variation in the way in which individuals assume different identities is the result of the negotiation space that they have. Because all three gender dimensions interact and overlap, the negotiation space is limited by these dimensions and varies from context to context and between different social fields (Davids and van Driel, 2001:159-60). However, the importance of agency and negotiations as part of the gender lens produces and eye for diversity and difference (Davids and van Driel, 2005). For instance, and according to Azmi and Lund (2009), transnational migration may cause qualitative shifts in economic and social roles that, in turn, change the traditional roles that women had in their country of origin. This consequently strengthens women's gendered identifications.

Against this theoretical background I have formulated an analytical approach which explains how I see identity formation in transnational social fields, as 1) ways of being in a social field and 2) ways of belonging to a social field. This is presented in the next section.

## 3.7 Analytical approach

On the basis of the theory presented, I seek to bridge the theory with the thesis' research questions to show the study's point of departure. The thesis has adopted a gender lens and applied a transnational social fields approach in order to answer the research questions at hand. The two distinctions to the approach, namely *ways of being* and *ways of belonging* will address one research question each:

1. What is the role of transnational communication networks and technologies in identity formation?
   - Can gender differences be identified?

By applying the transnational social fields approach of *ways of being* to this research question, the analysis will show how identity may be formed by information and communication technologies through *ways of being* in a transnational social field. That is, through different transnational communication networks and technologies that allows for communication (the *way of being* in this case*)* between the migrant and relations (family, friends etc.) in the country of origin. In addition, a gender lens is adopted to examine whether gender differences can be identified.

2. Can today's extensive use of information and communication technologies show that migrants maintain more of their 'old' identities?
   - Are identities gendered?

By applying the transnational social fields approach of *ways of belonging* to this research question, the analysis will show how identity may be formed by the extensive use of information and communication technologies through *ways of belonging* in a transnational social field. Because *ways of belonging* combine action and an awareness of the kind of identity that action signifies, the thesis seeks to investigate if the extensive use of information and communication technologies by migrants, made in an identity-conscious way, will show that migrants maintain more of their 'old' identities. In addition, a gender lens is adopted to examine whether identities are gendered.

# 4     Methodology

The objective of this chapter is to demonstrate what procedures were undertaken to address the research questions of this thesis. The chapter will start by explaining the choice of research method and then move to discuss the selection of informants. It will then provide information about the data collection process and the conduction of a focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews. A presentation of the analysis and writing process is given before the chapter turns to look at the ethical considerations of the study. The chapter ends with an assessment of the validity of the study.

## 4.1     Choice of research method

Both quantitative and qualitative methods are useful research methods depending on the specifics of the study and the research questions at hand. In the case of this thesis, where the aim is to give a rich, contextual understanding of the immigrants' views and feelings about their cultural identities and how they construct and manage their transnational lives, it is imperative that I seek close involvement with the immigrants so that I can genuinely understand their situations. The aim of qualitative research methods is to gain detailed information about a social phenomenon, often through the use of direct subject to subject relationship between researcher and respondent (Holme and Solvang, 2004). The context-specific nature of this study has made it only reasonable to adopt a qualitative research approach in order to fully investigate the research questions at hand. Also, qualitative research is a research strategy that usually emphasizes words, rather than quantification as in quantitative research, in the collection and analysis of data. It has an epistemological position described as interpretivist, meaning that in qualitative research the emphasis is on the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants. This stands in contrast to quantitative research where the goal is the adoption of a natural scientific model. In addition, qualitative research adopts an ontological position described as constructivist. This implies that social properties are outcomes of the interactions between individuals, rather than phenomena 'out there' and separate from those

involved in its construction (Bryman, 2008:366). These characteristics fit well with the research questions and the aim of this study.

## 4.2    The selection of informants

Finding answers to my questions relies on finding those who hold the answers. This led me to think of using purposive sampling as a sampling technique. Most sampling in qualitative research entails purposive sampling of some kind and it is a non-probability form of sampling. This means that the researcher does not seek to sample research participants on a random basis, but rather tries to sample participants in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed. The goal of purposive sampling is to sample participants relevant to the research question posed by my study (Bryman, 2008:458).

While designing the sample, I wanted to include not only informants with different cultural and educational backgrounds but also different reasons for migration, and with different patterns of transnational communication. Although there have been some limitations due to availability, I feel that I have managed to find informants with varied backgrounds as well as transnational communication patterns. The only exception is that all five male informants have a refugee background while the female informants have more varied backgrounds. The informants are from a wide range of countries, namely Poland (1), China (2), Eritrea (1), the Philippines (2), Thailand (2), Ethiopia (1), Somalia (4), Afghanistan (1) and Sri Lanka (1). Their ages are between 18-40 years old, and their circumstances of migration include work, job search, studies, family reunion, marriage and fleeing from war and political instability. The general level of education among them is fairly varied; out of the 15 informants, five have a university degree, two have had a vocational education, two have finished upper secondary school, two have started upper secondary education but have not finished, and three have finished secondary education while one informant has not finished elementary school. Their family situations are also varied. Six of the informants have part of their families here (their Norwegian or ethnic spouses and children). One informant came to Norway alone while his closest family members were granted residence permit through family reunification two years after his arrival. The last eight have family members and relatives in the country of

origin (in one case, the husband lives in a third country and other family members in the country of origin).

O'Leary (2004) notes that the nature of collecting qualitative data generally limits sample size. This is also true for this study, as it is based on a focus group discussion with 10 female immigrants and in-depth interviews with 15 informants, 10 of them female and five male. As mentioned in the contextual chapter, all adult immigrants with a residence permit as a basis for a permanent residence permit, has the right and obligation (if under the age of 55) to complete 600 hours of training in Norwegian language and society. Unit for Adult Education at Buran in Trondheim offers this kind of training in Norwegian language and social studies for immigrant adults over 16 years (Trondheim Kommune, 2013a). After two informative conversations with one of the course managers there, the school proved itself to be a natural choice of study area for this type of research. My initial plan was to interview the same number of male and female migrants. However, it became a problem to find the right balance of female and male informants. After having finished the interviews with ten female informants, the two teachers in charge of setting me up with male migrants failed to answer my emails and calls. I still strongly believed that it was important to the study to include male perspectives, so I decided to find another arena for the selection of the male informants. I searched a lot to find a proper arena for finding potential informants, and found five male migrants that had already finished their Norwegian language training at Unit for Adult Education. I got in contact with the first male informant through a mutual acquaintance. The informant introduced me to some of his friends and when explained about the thesis topic, they agreed to take part in individual in-depth interviews with me. Although I was not able to find all my informants at Unit for Adult Education, I am confident that I did the right thing in finding male informants elsewhere, and even though I was not able to find ten men for the interviews, the five have added valuable information to the study.

## 4.3    The data collection

In this section I will provide a description of how I have gone about collecting the necessary data for the study, namely by the use of a focus group discussion and individual in-depth interviews using semi-structured interview guides.

### 4.3.1 Focus group discussion

Focus groups have a long history in market research and have become popular in mainstream social research in recent years (Gomm, 2004). A focus group is a group of subjects interviewed together, prompting a discussion. The discussion focuses on topics provided by the researcher and sometimes also involves the use of stimulus material. Typical group size is between 8 and 12 (Gomm, 2004, Babbie, 2010). Krueger (1988:47) points to five advantages of focus groups: the technique is a socially oriented research method capturing real-life data in a social environment; it provides flexibility; it has high face value; it has speedy results; and it is low in cost. Krueger (1988:44-45) also mentions some disadvantages of the focus group method like for instance the fact that focus groups afford the researcher less control than individual interviews and that one needs to be aware of the problem of group conformity - the tendency for people in a group to conform with opinions of the most outspoken members of the group. Therefore, it is important to try to get everyone to participate fully on all the issues brought in the focus group interview. If this is done successfully, group dynamics could bring out aspects of the topic that would not have been anticipated by the researcher (Babbie, 2010). And if a comment by one of the more outspoken participants got the group to "trigger off" in a direction that needed exploring, then the stimulus of the comment is welcomed. I chose to do a focus group interview with the ten female immigrants for several reasons. First, I thought it to be an excellent method for obtaining background information. Secondly, the topics of this study may be seen by them as quite abstract and I wanted to make sure that each of the informants had a chance to reflect over their own immigrant situation before the in-depth interviews took place. I also wanted to gather different thoughts on the same topics in order to get more opinions on areas that maybe just a few of them would explore in an individual interview setting.

I had one encounter with the group previous to the focus group discussion where I introduced myself and the topics of the study. They were able to ask questions and I answered as best I could to all of their questions. The actual focus group discussion took place in a classroom at Unit for Adult Education at Buran (Lade area) and it was meant to last for an hour. However, the participants were more than willing to share own opinions and perspectives as well as short stories and examples from their own lives, and consequently the focus group discussion took two hours. Because of limited funds and the time frame of this study, I decided to take part in the focus group discussions instead of using an external moderator. I used a semi-

structured interview guide, with discussion topics and open questions. I made sure to lead the discussion towards areas relevant for the study (the functions of a moderator) in order to ensure I received the data I needed. If I saw a possibility that some perspectives given could lead to new relevant areas that needed further exploration, I also made time for those although the stories initially seems to be a bit 'off track'. The discussion was insightful in several ways. I learned more about the women and I found new interesting areas of study that I could include in the interview guide for the individual interviews. I used a voice recorder for the focus group discussion and transcribed it as soon as the focus group discussion was ended.

## 4.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

In this study, in-depth interviews with a semi-structured interview approach have functioned as the main data collection tool. Rossman and Rallis (1998) argue that in-depth interviewing is the hallmark of qualitative research and that 'talk' is vital for understanding how informants view their world. According to Bryman (2008:438), semi-structured interviews have themes and open and closed questions that form interview guides which are used during the interviews. Because of their flexible structure, the interview guides can be adjusted somewhat as the interview proceeds, and one advantage of semi-structured interviews is that they allow for new questions to be brought up during the interview session depending on the informant's answer that, in turn, may introduce new findings or other data relevant to the study. Also, semi-structured interviews allow the informants to express themselves freely with stories and perspectives both from their past and present. Lastly, although semi-structured interviews do not allow for the same amount of comparability that structured interviews do (because the sequencing and the wording may be different in each interview), they still allow for some comparison of the collected data. Because of these reasons, choosing a semi-structured interview method was a natural choice for this data collection.

I conducted interviews with five men and ten women, a total of 15 interviews. The ten women were all interviewed in a quiet area in the library at Unit for Adult Education at Buran. There were never other students or school personnel present in that specific area during the interviews in order to make the interview setting feel as private as possible.

Seeing as the male informants did not attend classes at Unit for Adult Education, the interviews were conducted in their homes, except for two of them. These two came to the house of one of the other informants, one by one, for individual interviews.

The time-lengths of the interviews varied between 45-120 minutes. After the first two interviews, I adjusted two of the questions in the interview guide so that they would be easier to understand. Efforts were also made to ensure that each question was understood correctly by the informants. Although all the informants spoke Norwegian well, this was especially important realizing that none of them spoke the language fluently.

## 4.4    Analysis and writing

### 4.4.1  Transcription of data

The whole data collection process was recorded and Bryman (2008) argues that transcribing the data collected can be very useful. The transcription of both the focus group discussion and all of the individual interviews was done as soon as possible after they were conducted. They were transcribed word for word in order to make sure the informants' answers were understood correctly. Two of the informants chose to do the interview in English. The other 13 interviews, as well as the focus group discussion, were conducted in Norwegian and then translated into English. The transcription was a time-consuming affair. However, it is important that this process is done accurately (Bryman, 2008; Saldaña, 2013) and I was careful and attentive as to try to secure that the opinions and perspectives of the informants did not get lost somewhere in the transcription or translation.

### 4.4.2  Coding the data material

Bryman (2008:538) reminds us that because qualitative data from interviews typically take the form of "a large corpus of unstructured textual material", they are not straightforward to analyze. In addition, there are few well-established rules for the analysis of qualitative data. However, Bryman (2008) notes that coding is the starting point for most forms of qualitative

data analysis, whereby data are broken down into component parts which are given names. In addition Saldaña (2013) states that coding is seen as the critical link between data collection and their explanation of meaning. In order to organize and make sense of the data I collected, I made use of coding as a data analysis tool. Before starting the data collection, I made two sets of semi-structured interview guides – one for the focus group discussion and the other for the individual in-depth interviews. I made sure that both interview guides were based on the research questions and because the interview guides consisted of several themes that were closely related to the objective of the study, I continued to use these themes as thematic codes during the coding of the data. In the beginning, it became clear to me that I needed to create more codes which resulted in a myriad of codes. I read through the data material several times in order to be sure that I understood and was familiar with the data. Then, I started to merge similar codes and after a time-consuming coding process, I had again organized all old and new codes into the initial thematic codes of the interview guides. These thematic codes were used to organize and to find connections in the data material. Saldaña (2013:8) notes that coding is not just about labeling, it is also about linking: "It leads you from the idea and from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea." After the coding, I made a hand-written matrix in order to get a full overview of the data content. Important links were identified and as I began to work with theory parallel to writing up my findings and I started to identify clear connections between theory and findings.

## 4.4.3 The writing process

The initial parts of the writing process started parallel with the data collection. As I went on to interpret and link the thematic codes in the matrix and gather theory, the structure of the thesis became increasingly more apparent. It is my aim that the structure of the thesis follows a natural pattern in the investigation of the two research questions at hand, making the findings and analyses easy to understand.

## 4.5    Ethical concerns during the data collection process

When doing research it is important to pay significant attention to ethical considerations. I made clear the first time I met with the informants that this study was a part of my master degree and that data collected would be used in the master thesis. In a meeting before the focus group discussion, I gave an introduction to the aim of the study and the different topics that were to be addressed, and made sure that they all understood that participation in the study was voluntary. I encouraged the participants to keep the content of the focus group discussion confidential. However, seeing as there were ten participants in the room, I could not trust that all the participants would keep the content of the discussion a secret. Because of this, I avoided topics that could be perceived as sensitive or uncomfortable in any way (i.e. do no harm). Before each individual interview, I assured all the informants full confidentiality, and underlined that all interviews would be made with anonymity. In addition, before each interview I asked the informant for permission to use a voice recorder. All of them agreed to the recording, although one asked for the recorder to be switched off as we touched upon a sensitive topic during our conversation, to which I agreed. I started the recording again on the informant's signal.

## 4.6    Validity

There are many quality concerns surrounding the conduct of good research and I can only address a few of the issues in the space assigned in this thesis. All research should be evaluated for its quality, and the importance of assessing qualitative research is imperative, seeing as the nature of qualitative research generates descriptive information that to a much larger degree than in quantitative research will turn into findings and conclusions through researcher interpretation. Because of this, the findings and conclusions are more difficult to measure and a need for assessing the quality of the study arises.

There are several ways to assess the quality of research and there is an ongoing debate in social science research about whether the concepts of quality used to assess qualitative research should be roughly the same as those used to assess quantitative research (Bryman, 2008:376). While in quantitative research it is common to assess the quality by considering concepts such as reliability, validity and replicability, there now exist alternative approaches

to assess qualitative research that are more central to its purpose, nature and conduct. This thesis has adapted ideas from Lincoln and Guba (1985:290) and they argue that a quality assessment of qualitative research can best be done by examining the 'trustworthiness' of the research:

> 'The basic issue in relation to trustworthiness is simple: How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking amount of?'

Because this study has made use of a focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews which both fall under the umbrella of qualitative research methods, I believe it to be relevant to assess these two data collection strategies and the study as a whole through Lincoln and Guba's trustworthiness concept. Considering the 'live' nature of qualitative research, it is sometimes difficult to eradicate all methodological challenges. However, their four trustworthiness criterions are broadly used in order to assess these challenges and hence the thesis' quality:

- the 'truth value' of the study
- the accountability of the study
- the consistency of the study
- the neutrality of the study

Because this study has taken on a qualitative approach, the accountability criterion is less applicable. However, although the findings in this thesis may not apply to other contexts, the methodological tools used may be applicable to future research on the same topic. That being said, the thesis will focus on the three criterions of 'truth value', consistency and neutrality in assessing the study's quality.

## 4.6.1 The 'truth value' of the study

The 'truth value' or credibility tells us whether the findings in a study are believable. It asks whether the researcher has established confidence in the 'truth' of the findings for the informants and the context in which the study was undertaken (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:290).

A great challenge to this criterion is the fact that whenever someone is questioned it cannot be certain that they have told the truth. In an individual interview setting, answers may be influenced by what the informant thinks the situation requires. In order to put the informant at ease and to avoid this from happening, I made clear the purpose of the interview and topics to be discussed, and that all I wanted was to get his or her own stories and perspectives on these topics. Also, it is important to remember that informants may respond differently depending on how the informant perceives the interviewer. Certain interviewer characteristics may have an effect on the amount of information the informant is willing to share and his honesty about what he reveals. This can for instance be age, sex or race and such fixed characteristics may have compromised the study to a certain degree. Gomm (2004:230) states that only by developing intimate, trusting and empathetic relationships will informants feel able to disclose the truth. On the one hand, I agree with Gomm in his statement, but at the same time I believe that a too close researcher-informant relationship can threaten the truth value because the nature of the relationship might affect the interpretation of the data collected. Therefore, I was reflexive and attentive to my role as an interviewer when conducting the interviews. That being said, I feel certain that I succeeded in developing a trusting and empathetic relationship with my informants.

In order to answer the study's research questions, I believe that a focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews were good choices of data collection tools. The focus group discussion was valuable for several reasons. First of all, it was an excellent method for obtaining important background information about the informants and the cultural challenges they experience as immigrants in a new country. Secondly, the focus group setting was great for obtaining an overview of the communication tools used by the group as well as understanding the importance of keeping contact with relatives in the country of origin. I learned a lot about the topics of the research questions through the focus group discussion and I am certain that the in-depth interviewing process that followed would have been less fruitful had it not been for the focus group.

Semi-structured interviews have the advantage that they can generate rich data about the questions at hand, allowing for stories to be told or examples to be given to illustrate certain perspectives. This type of interview allows for thick descriptions and interpretation of human experience. Furthermore, this type of interview encourages the informant to talk freely which was imperative for finding answers to the research questions. Furthermore, this type of

interview makes room for follow-up questions which, in turn, allow for new and important findings to be discovered. In addition, I believe that because I chose a semi-structured interview approach with room for informant-interviewer conversations, the revealed data was talked over by the informant and me in a way in which the findings were audited by the informant and I was given a chance to discover any misunderstandings on both parts. This, unfortunately, does not apply to all questions and all informants, which presents a flaw to the study. However, follow-up questions were asked if I needed to clarify something or if the informants were vague in their answers. If I suspected that an informant had misunderstood a question, I asked a similar question from another angle to see if the answers corresponded.

'The truth value of a qualitative study resides in the discovery of human phenomena or experiences as they are lived and perceived by subjects.'

(Sandelowski, 1986:30)

Sandelowski (1986:30) suggests that a qualitative study has high truth value and credibility when it presents such accurate imageries or interpretation of human experience that people who also share that experience (other migrants in the same context) would immediately recognize the imageries. A study is also credible when other people (other researchers or readers) can recognize the experience when confronted with it after having only read about it in a study. In the findings and discussion chapter, it becomes clear that the findings are supported by theory of other scholars, which strengthen the credibility of the study. Also, I have tried my best to organize the thesis in a way that make the 'building blocks' of analysis evident. The readers should be able to understand how I have worked my way through the topics of theory, findings and discussion and see clear connections between these topics. I believe that my approach has been logically consistent and that this strengthens the credibility of the study.

### 4.6.2  Consistency of the study

Consistency can be seen if the findings of a study would be repeated if the study were replicated with the same or similar informants in the same or similar context (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Because the findings in this thesis speak to a unique group of informants at a specific moment in time, it is most likely that one would not arrive at all the same findings if

the study was repeated. Krefting (1991: 216) argues that "qualitative research emphasizes the uniqueness of the human situation, so that variation in experience rather than identical repetition is sought."

Throughout this thesis I have tried to describe as thoroughly as possible the methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation through findings and discussion. Such descriptions provide information to readers about how unique the situation is or how repeatable the study might be (Krefting, 1991). Although the situational uniqueness of the study makes it plausible to say that it is not likely to arrive at all the same findings if one were to repeat the study, the findings in this thesis show a consistency with other research on similar topics. In light of this, I do believe that there is reasonable chance to end up with *some* of the same findings if the study were to be replicated.

## 4.6.3  Neutrality of the study

Krefting (1991:216) explains Lincoln and Guba's criterion of neutrality in an easy manner:

> 'How can one establish the degree to which the findings of a study are determined by the informants and conditions of the study and not by the biases, motivations, interests, or perspectives of the researcher?'

If one looks at the two data collection methods used in this study, there are certain challenges to the neutrality of the study that should be addressed. As already mentioned, the informants' honesty and answers may be influenced by what the informants think the situation requires, or by how the informants perceive the interviewer. I gave a thorough presentation of the study topics before the focus group discussion and each interview, and tried to let the informants at ease by explaining that I all I wanted was to hear their personal stories and perspectives on these topics. I was reflexive and attentive to my role in the informant-interviewer relationship, although making sure the informants felt comfortable.

In addition to these challenges, two important threats to the neutrality, and hence the quality, of qualitative research are those of researcher bias and leading. Both of these threats involve

the subjectivity of the researcher, a term that most qualitative researchers refer to as "bias". According to Maxwell (2005:108), researcher bias is "the selection of data that fit the researcher's existing theory or preconceptions and the selection of data that 'stands out' to the researcher."

It is close to impossible not to have any bias when doing research (Maxwell, 2005). However, I have tried, through reflexivity, to avoid bias as much as possible. First of all, I have kept in mind through the whole process that I have to stay as objective as possible. This goes for all parts of the study, from the processes of selecting informants to the writing and analysis stages of the thesis. Because this thesis' aim is to shed light on a phenomenon, I have been interested in all kinds of perspectives and stories regarding this area of study. That is why I have tried to include informants with a variety of backgrounds and I have equally embraced all findings and not just focused on the few that somehow "stood out". At the outset of this study I had read a lot about different topics such as migration and transnational theory. The reading gave me ideas that may have influenced the selection of topics for this study. That is, what topics would be worth discussing and not. Because of this, some bias may still exist.

Bias is also a concern in the data collection process (Maxwell, 2005). Both data collection methods in this study have potential for leading and bias so I had to take precautions and be reflexive in order to reduce the occurrence of these neutrality challenges. Before starting the data collection, I checked my discussion topics and questions in both the focus group and individual interview guides to make sure that there were no questions or wording that could be perceived as leading. After I had gone through the guides myself, I asked my fiancé to go over them in case I had overlooked something. The wording of the questions could steer responses in a particular direction or prompt a certain answer and that was what I wanted to avoid. When conducting the discussion and interviews, I made sure to watch my body language and try to stay as objective as I possibly could so that the informants would not be encouraged to answer in a specific manner. During the interviews there was a one-to-one dialogue between the informant and myself in which I tried my best to stay as neutral and objective as possible. This, however, was not always easy and for that reason some bias may exist. In light of all of this it becomes clear that even though I have done a lot to avoid bias in the study, there still exist some.

In addition to the limitations of trustworthiness, the limited time-frame of the study should also be considered. A longitudinal study would have enabled me to observe the developments

of the existing communication practices and how these practices affect the immigrants' identity formation over a longer period of time. This would have increased the depth of the analysis and I hope to get a chance at examining the thesis topic more thoroughly at a later time. That being said, I want to underline that although my informants' answers may not reach far into their future (seeing as identity formation is a continuous process), these moments are still critical points of identification and should not be dismissed as insignificant because they could be less permanent.

Through several attempts at increasing the trustworthiness of the study, I have done my best to communicate the informants' own perspectives, and making sure that their opinions and meanings are truly reflected.

# 5    Findings and analysis

The informants' own stories and perspectives are strong testimonies and contribute to a widened understanding of the experiences of being a transnational migrant in a new country. This chapter is divided into three parts where findings from the data collection are presented and analyzed.

Part One is dedicated to the first research question and will look at ways of being in a transnational social field through communication with relations in the migrants' country of origin and its effects on identity formation. Because dual participation in two or more countries is an essential component of migrant transnationalism, this part will start with a presentation of findings from the informants' lives in their host country Norway. This will help to shed some light on Norwegian cultural impulses and that may contribute to identity negotiations among the migrants. Secondly, it is important to investigate what ITCs the informants use when engaging in transnational communication to relations in the country of origin. An overview of communication frequency and the most common conversation topics will be given. Then, gender differences in transnational communication practices are presented. Before moving on to Part Two, the findings and analysis show how leading transnational lives may result in the creation of hybrid and transnational identities.

Part Two goes on to examine the second research question and will discuss whether the use of ITCs in contacting homeland relations as ways of belonging to a social field – that is, in an identity-conscious way – show that migrants maintain more of their 'old' identities. This part will also examine whether one could argue that identities are gendered.

Part One

## 5.1 Cultural impulses and ITC activities within Norway

Upon arrival in Norway, all the informants mention having had feelings of stress and uncertainty. For different reasons, the choice to migrate, or the process of migration, was emotionally challenging for them all. Migrating to a new country meant a discontinuity in their lives and absence from their loved ones. While some fled from their homelands because of war or political instability, others migrated to Norway to be reunified with ethnic or Norwegian spouses. The first informant arrived in Norway in 2005, followed by one in 2007, two in 2008, six in 2009, one in 2010 and four in 2011.

States adopt various tasks in response to transnational migration. Through the Norwegian Introduction program - an organized way of administering immigration to Norway - the informants were obliged to attend Norwegian language tuition and society classes at Unit for Adult Education. This type of tuition can be seen as an 'integration tool' to the Norwegian society. Because language plays a major role in any human interaction, little knowledge of the host country language reduces the chance of developing connections with the new culture, people and society (Bradatan et al., 2010). In that sense, one can argue that language tuition is seen as important to both the Norwegian government who wants immigrants to integrate well in the Norwegian society, as well as to newcomers who want to settle down and become part of the society. Norwegian language tuition and society classes at Unit for Adult Education quickly became an important part of the migrants' new life and their social milieus. Findings show that all the informants stress the importance of learning Norwegian. When asked why learning Norwegian is important to them, the answers were several; it would increase their possibilities of further education, of obtaining work, for improving everyday communication between themselves and Norwegians, and would increase the chance of getting to know both Norwegians and the Norwegian culture better. Through these statements, it becomes obvious that the migrants were motivated to learn the language for reasons that would make them engaged as active participants in the Norwegian society.

### 5.1.1  The awareness of difference

The migrants in this study come from countries with rather different cultures compared to the Norwegian (with the exception of Poland where more cultural similarities exist) and because of this, initial difficulties were felt by them all. This led to a heightened awareness of difference between themselves and Norwegians. When faced with new cultures up close, self-reflexivity becomes an important notion in a process of internal struggles between resisting and embracing cultural change and facing dilemmas of how to best adapt to new realities (Appadurai, 1996). Because ICTs compensate for distance and help reestablish the proximity that is threatened by geographic separation (Licoppe, 2003:139), difficulties in establishing new relationships in the host country led the majority of the informants to strengthen their ties to homeland relations through the use of ICTs. Butcher (2009) observes that this pattern is especially common in the first phase of migration and settlement and is done in an attempt to remove discomfort and regain a sense of control. However, in addition to a continuation of relations with former networks, the need to belong and the discomfort of not belonging drive a desire to form new relationships in the host country (Butcher, 2009:1359).

### 5.1.2  Social networks in Norway

Haikkola (2011) argues that characteristics of the social milieu are a key determinant of how much identity change any given individual experiences. At the time of the data collection, the informants had been living in Norway from almost two years to seven years during which time they have successfully learned Norwegian and established new social networks and identifications with the Norwegian culture. All of them report having friends, class mates, and a contact person in the municipality to whom they have contact with on a regular basis. Some of the migrants have several Norwegian friends, while others have one or two. Five of the informants are married and live together with their spouses. Clearly, this impacts their social network greatly, and this is particularly true for those with Norwegian spouses as their social network consequently consists of a significantly larger number of Norwegians (e.g. in-laws and friends of their spouses). This impacts the size of their social networks and more importantly, if these relations are positive, it impacts their sense of belonging to the host country. Findings show that the migrants with the largest social networks were also those who identified the most with Norwegian way of life. The informants' interactions with their social network impact processes of adaption and following formations of identity. Contrary to the

form in which identities are constantly invoked, identities are constructed through difference, meaning that it is through the relation to the other - in this case Norwegians and the Norwegian society - that 'identity' can be constructed (Hall, 1996). Butcher (2009) argues that the motivation for forming or maintaining relationships are often the need to manage relocation in a new cultural context and the need to re-create spaces of familiarity or comfort. As adaptation to new cultural contexts take place, former everyday practices, values and relationships on which previous understandings of oneself are based, becomes challenged.

Through Unit for Adult Education, the informants have gained work experience as part of work placements. These placements have allowed for more contact with Norwegian society and have also made them practice their Norwegian language skills actively. For the informants that later obtained part-time positions through these work placements, colleagues too make up part of their social network. The relationships in migrants' social network are marked by degrees of affective closeness and attachment (Butcher, 2009) and are important in influencing the expression of identities. These social relationships are important facilitators of Norwegian culture and as the migrants interact with and get to know different aspects of the culture, social network interactions may foster negotiations of the migrants' identity. According to Butcher (2009:1354), as contact with difference disrupts the familiar cultural frames of reference that underpin identities, a process of identity re-negotiation may be produced. People live in and create a new social and cultural space which calls for a new awareness of who they are, a new consciousness, and new identities (Glick Schiller et al., 2006). Through the Norwegian society in general, and through Norwegian friends, spouses and in-laws, the migrants are introduced to cultural aspects and values that are different from the ones in their country of origin. For the female informants, the greatest difference in cultural values has been the view of women and gender equality. An Eritrean woman shares: "It is just so different. It doesn't matter if it is 10 a.m. or 02 a.m., I can still walk home by myself. I would never do that in Eritrea in fear of being assaulted or raped." A Chinese woman explains how, in China, it is practically impossible for a woman to obtain work if there are male applicants to the position. Because the old gender values of the female informants was significantly lower and perceived by the women as limiting and restrictive, they have embraced the new and attractive gender value of the host country. In this case, there was a clear incentive for integrating the Norwegian gender value to their identity. However, as will be discussed later in the chapter, they do not discuss this incorporation with relations in their homeland.

Another aspect of the Norwegian culture that the migrants have embraced relates to Norwegian hair- and clothing styles. These cultural aspects have also been embraced and incorporated to their identity. Some of the informants note that the hair and clothing styles differ significantly from the ones common in their country of origin. These new styles have been incorporated both through curiosity and the desire to try out different possibilities that were not available to them before.

In addition, the migrants make use of ITCs on a daily basis. They go online to read Norwegian newspapers and to find information about cultural activities to which they can attend. They watch Norwegian TV shows, movies and series online, and are quick to 'Google' things about Norway or Norwegian cultural aspects that interest them. Although most of the tuition at Unit for Adult Education takes place in the classroom, language and society exercises and projects where ICTs are needed make these technologies an important part of school life. Because the migrants both look for available job positions and submit their applications online, ICTs are mentioned as highly important in their search for work. Also, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service (NAV), who administer the out-payments to the informants as part of the Introduction programme, uses the Internet as the main source of information about their services and benefits and information about different entitlements and duties. The mobile phone is the most used communication tool for staying in touch with their social relations in Norway and is used for both calling and texting. In addition to mobile phones, all of the informants mention Facebook as an important alternative when communicating with their social network relations in Norway.

The cultural impulses of Norwegian society mentioned above have challenged and contributed to a renegotiation of the migrants' identities. Everyday interaction with social relations has led to the establishment of bonds in the country of residence. Through a feeling of belonging thanks to cultural and social identification, the informants identify with the host country's society. This social and cultural identification, however, does not necessarily mean the rejection of the ethnic culture and the next sections will go on to examine the role of ITCs in transnational communication and its effect on the migrants' identity negotiations and formation.

## 5.2    Homeland relations: identifying communication tools

Although the frequency and number of relations are quite varied, all informants stay in touch with relations (family and/or friends) in their country of origin. They engage in transnational communication because they believe it is crucial for their own well-being to stay in touch with family members that they care about and miss a lot, even though they now live far apart. In addition, half of the informants believe it is important to stay up to date on news and developments in their country of origin. Because they believe that certain news agencies cannot be trusted for giving accurate information about the situations in their country of origin, homeland relations are asked about relevant news, both to verify what is said in the media and to give other kinds of information about the local community.

The list of ICTs involved in communication between the migrants and their dear ones is rather long. The mobile phone and the Internet have made instant connectivity a reality, allowing family and friends to be within instant reach.  This is highly appreciated by transnational migrants, and as findings show, the Internet and the mobile phone are the most favored channels for transnational communication. That being said, all ICTs are appreciated if their use is seen as convenient and affordable. The following paragraphs give a presentation of the informants' favored information and communication tools for their transnational communication practices.

## 5.2.1  The use of mobile phones in transnational communication

The use of mobile phones has made it easy to move around whilst keeping contact and findings identify a strong wish to remain close to homeland relations. All 15 informants own and use a mobile phone actively to stay in touch with friends and relatives in their country of origin. Not only do they use their mobile phones to call directly and to send text messages, they also use services such as Viber and Tango - free mobile applications that enable free international audio and video calls as well as international text messages and sending of photos. In addition, several use the mobile phone to access the Internet to stay updated on the latest news in their country of origin, especially when they do not have immediate computer access. Text messages are often sent while on the move, just to check in with each other, and also to arrange a chat or an appropriate calling time.

## 5.2.2 The Internet: a popular information and communication platform

The informants' use of the Internet is immense and according to Kahn and Kellner (2005), the Internet constitutes a dynamic and complex space in which people construct and experiment with identity, culture, and social relations. All of the informants use the Internet on a daily basis and the use stretches from searching for food recipes and reading the latest news about their countries of origin, to filling out NAV forms – and everything in between. Findings show that 8 out of 15 informants use the Internet to watch TV shows, news programs, series or movies from their country of origin - an action that may stimulate a feeling of, or re-energize, the homeland culture. Among the informants, the Internet is the most used communication tool after the mobile phone, as it facilitates contact through several web based communication options. Skype and Facebook are by far the most popular communication alternatives among the informants.

Skype is a popular communication tool that 12 out of 15 informants use on a daily basis. The reasons for Skype's popularity among the migrants are the low cost involved (often free), and the opportunity of not just hearing the voices but also seeing the faces of homeland relations through video calls. This function makes it possible for relatives and friends to see more of the environment in which the migrants live. A Filipino woman shares: "I sometimes turn the web camera around in my room to show my family and my girlfriends how I live. Last winter I brought my laptop to the window to show my parents all the snow."

The informants that use Skype on a regular basis underline the value of being able to see family members across large distances. Skype is also used to actively take part in family gatherings like for instance birthdays, Christmas dinners or other public holidays. Although far apart, one attends the family happening from the other side of the world through the computer. For the informants, this is a common way of 'feeling together' although a world apart. Skype is a popular alternative to the mobile applications Viber and Tango, and most of the informants using Skype are always logged on to the service. This way, relatives and friends in their home country are able to contact them at any hour of the day, whenever it is most convenient.

Facebook is a social network service that is very popular among the informants. They all have a Facebook account, although five of them just use it to stay in touch with friends in Norway.

There is also a Facebook application for mobile phones and it is widely used by the informants. This enables them to stay in touch even when they are out, or for any reason, do not have access to a computer. The informants use Facebook to exchange messages – both inbox messages and instant messages through chat – and to stay updated on what is going on in the lives of friends and relatives in their country of origin (as well as relations in the host country). Through Facebook one can join groups that are either open to the public or for members only. A female informant mentions being member of a group set up just for her and her Ethiopian friends who also had to flee because of war. All of the members now live outside Ethiopia but stay in touch through this group and share experiences from their lives in Ethiopia, from when they were refugees on the move, as well as their experiences in a new country. They support and give advice to each other when needed. In my opinion, this type of communication is important to the negotiation of identity in two ways. First, part of this communication can be seen as strengthening homeland ties because the group members share a common national history, culture, cultural values and  they all have emotional ties to their homeland (although these may differ in strength from one person to another). Second, the fact that they talk about experiences from their new countries and support and give advice to each other regarding their new lives, opens up the possibility of a strengthening of ties and a feeling of belonging to their host country as well.

In addition to Skype and Facebook, findings show that instant messaging services like Windows Live Messenger and Yahoo! Messenger are frequently used. The services are free to download and use, and out of the 15 informants, six of them use Window Live Messenger and three use Yahoo! Messenger. In addition to their chat function, one can also share photos and play games together – a popular feature among the informants. A Thai woman shares:

> "If my nephew is home when I log on [Windows Live Messenger] to chat with my sister, he always asks if I have time to play a game. It is so much fun. It is like we are sitting at the same table playing each other. He loves it, and I love it too. It brings us closer."

Being able to play online games with relations in the country of origin is a factor that may strengthen ties between the people involved and produce a sense of togetherness across

distance. Although instant messaging services are popular, it becomes clear that the majority prefer Skype over these two chat alternatives.

Findings show that 5 out of 15 informants use e-mail to stay in touch with relations in the country of origin but none of these use e-mail as their main communication alternative. One of the informants says she sometimes writes handwritten letters and sends them by airmail to her family in Poland. She argues that it is always nice to get a letter in the mail – and besides, her grandmother does not own a computer.

### 5.2.3 The multiple uses of ICTs in transnational communication

From the findings above it becomes clear that the informants make use of several communication tools in order to stay in touch with relations in their country of origin. While one informant uses two different communication alternatives, the rest use three to seven alternatives each. The unanimous answer to this fact is convenience. Because there are so many alternatives available, the migrants choose the ones that suit them best at various times of the day and in different settings. For instance, Skype is mostly used at home when they have time to sit down and make a video call, while keeping in touch through mobile phones happens more on the go. A polish women states:

> "I just pick up the phone and call my mom whenever I feel like it. When I am on the bus or while walking to the grocery store. Some days I call her when we have short breaks at school, and in the evenings we sit down and talk through Skype."

Licoppe (2003:141) argues that the continuous nature of this flow of irregular interaction, illustrated in the example of the Polish woman, helps to maintain a feeling of a permanent connection, an impression that the link can be activated at any time and that one therefore can experience the other's engagement in the relationship at any time. Thus, the communication tools become a resource for maintaining and nurturing the link. The link is maintained by a strengthened 'presence' via short and frequent calls or text messages from mobile phones. Licoppe (2003:147) observes: "In the case of very close relationship, these calls tend to be as frequent as possible because the more that this presence maintained over a distance through mobile phones is continuous; the more reassuring it is in terms of the link."

This observation concurs with the fact that instant communication is greatly favored among the informants compared to 'slower' communication alternatives such as e-mail and letters where response is perceived as delayed. There is a common desire of instant connectivity, a desire of a feeling of being together. Among the informants, free or cheap communication options are favored in comparison to more expensive alternatives. For instance, there is a clear tendency of longer conversations when using Skype as opposed to mobile phones. However, because informants report the use of Skype calls mostly in the afternoons or evenings, one should also consider the possibility that these conversations are longer because there has been set aside more time to talk at these particular times during the day. In fact, although half of the informants argue that international mobile phone calls (without calling plans or applications allowing for free international calls) are quite expensive, findings show that whatever the cost, the instant connectivity to homeland relations offered by mobile phones makes the mobile phone the number one communication alternative.

## 5.2.4 Frequency of transnational communication

In terms of communication frequency, 4 out of 15 say they only talk to relations in the country of origin about once a month (through mobile phone). Two reasons for this somewhat low frequency (compared to the other informants) were identified; few relations left in the country of origin, and the risk involved in contacting their families making them to keep contact to an absolute minimum. As for the rest of the informants, six of them communicate with homeland relations through mobile phones 4-5 days a week while the remaining five communicate with homeland relations on a daily basis. It is important to mention that homeland relations too make calls to their loved ones abroad, although the majority of the migrants call them on a more frequent basis. This is, however, not the case as in the example of a Sri Lankan woman:

> "I think they call me too often. It is like they do not understand that I have my life here now. I mean, I love keeping in touch with them, it is just that sometimes we [she and her ethnic family] are busy with our lives here and do not have time to talk all the time it suits them."

Findings show that, in general, mobile phone conversations last from 3-120 minutes. Five informants mention costs as a factor affecting conversation time while others mention reasons such as time difference and other appointments that interfere with having a longer conversation (in addition to the safety matters of four informants). Texting is also a popular activity among the informants and findings show that 8 out of 15 say they text homeland relations at least once a day. 6 out of 15 connect to people in their country of origin through Facebook on a daily basis, and for the 9 informants using instant messaging services, five of these are 'logged in' on a daily basis.

Summing up, it becomes clear that the new ICTs of the contemporary world have indeed allowed for high frequency contact between migrants and their country of origin. Even though the migrants experience and reside in a country far away from their homeland, this highly frequent transnational contact may strengthen the ties that bind the migrants closer to their cultural roots, and re-energize the homeland culture and certain aspects of the 'old' identity. It must also be mentioned in the few cases where the contact between the informants and homeland relations are less frequent that migrants not always need to have very active transnational ties to maintain a sense of belonging and identification to the homeland. Tsuda (2009:25-27, 2012:643) argues that these can simply be a product of positive and nostalgic memories and imaginings of their country of origin from afar. In fact, findings show that out of the 15 migrants, the two with a future desire to move back to their country of origin, were two of the ones with minimal homeland contact. In this vein it is also plausible that if homeland contact was to decrease over time as the migrants become more integrated into and identify even more with the Norwegian society, their simultaneous identification with the homeland would not necessarily be considerably weakened.

## 5.2.5 Ways of being in a social field: topics of conversation

The most common conversation topics when engaging in transnational communication are those of family, health, and everyday life activities. The informants talk about their life in Norway, about the climate, the culture and food, and about school and their family situation in the host country (for those with a family in Norway). Their relations in the country of origin, on their part, talk about family and health issues, recent developments in the local community or country, and daily activities such as school or work. In addition, some informants have homeland relations that ask for money or for help to migrate to Norway. Because migrants are

familiar with the cultural codes, values, and speak the same language as relations in their homeland, the informants argue that communication runs more smoothly than with relations in the new country. This allows the conversations to run more freely and with more ease compared to conversations in Norwegian. Similarly, it is easier to add jokes and humor to the conversation when one masters a language fluently. The fact that they talk about 'familiar' topics such as family, school, work, the local community and daily happenings in which the migrants once took part, bring about old memories and feelings of belonging to these relations and to the homeland environment. Because of all the communication channels available, migrants separated from their relations cannot only maintain occasional contact with their loved ones in the country of origin, but also take part in family decisions and special events. A Sri Lankan woman explains: "My mother has a heart condition so we talk a lot about her health situation. We decided that she should go on a diet and be careful about her activity level." A Filipino woman gives an example of how she celebrated New Year's Eve together with her family through Skype: "They called me though Skype when they were about to sit down to eat and we talked through the whole meal…and when the clock turned midnight, we all yelled 'Happy New Year!'"

The findings show the great prevalence of communication as 'checking in' and the general talk or chat as catching up or keeping in touch with their homeland relations. I found that from the 15 informants, 11 of them use ICTs for checking in and for small talk chatting, and this is done on a daily basis. One of the women illustrates this well when stating that she texts her mom in Poland all the time: "Sometimes I just write "I love you." I just want my mom to know that I am OK and that I think of her…and then I get the feeling that we are not so far apart." A Filipino woman makes sure she is available for contact 24 hours a day:

> "The first thing I do in the morning is to go to my computer to see if anyone has tried to contact me during the night. You see, I make sure that I am always logged on Skype and Facebook so that my friends and sisters can contact me whenever they want. This morning, a Filipino girlfriend had left me a message on Facebook saying "How are you? Wish you were here." I replied to her right away, just to let her know that I care about her and miss her too."

Licoppe (2003:136) notes that there has been a gradual shift in which communication technologies that used to compensate for the absence of our close ones, are now being

exploited to provide a continuous pattern of mediated interactions. These, he argues, combine into 'connected relationships' in which the boundaries between absence and presence eventually may get blurred. Because of the high frequency, or the "continuous pattern of mediated interactions", as Licoppe argues, it is reasonable to believe that homeland cultural impulses are highly present in the lives of the informants. These impulses may regenerate parts of the migrants' old identity and as a result of this it is not particularly probable that the migrants will abandon their old identity but rather maintain parts of the old together with new parts from the country of residence.

Another interesting finding is that although almost all of the informants claim that they can talk freely with their relations in the country of origin, over half of them responded "yes" when asked if there are certain things they do not share. A follow-up question on this shows that there are certain subjects that are kept from homeland relations, either in order to protect their loved ones or themselves. An Ethiopian woman shares how this could be related to work:

> "I don't like to talk to my family about work…about cleaning. They don't understand that it is different here. They think that because I am a pharmacist, I can get work as a pharmacist here. It is not so simple. When they don't understand, I get frustrated. So I don't want to talk about work."

According to Anthias (2012:104), those who are embedded within two social fields with different normative systems have two sets of social relations, such as arrangements and expectations, that impact upon their lives. These could for instance concern behavioral norms. The fact that the informants have to negotiate expectations from two different cultures on a regular basis is seen as challenging. It is for this reason that some of them have decided to withhold certain types of information about their new lives. This is illustrated well by one of the Filipino women who states: "My family is very conservative so I don't tell them about going out in the evenings or that I stay up until late. They would not approve of such things." Several of the women and men say that they dress differently now than what they did in their country of origin and that they do not believe that their homeland relations would approve of their new style. A Somali man claims that he never tells his relatives about how he dresses and about his hair style:

"In Somalia, all men have to have a certain type of hair style and it is not even cool. Here [in Norway] there are so many different options and you can have the hair style you want and dress however you prefer. Everything is OK. I like that! But I cannot tell my relatives, they would not like it."

In order to avoid discussions on expectations and cultural norms, several of the informants – both male and female- think of what they wear and how they look before starting a video call with someone from the country of origin. Another topic that the informants are secretive about is dating. A Somali man shares:

"I don't tell my aunt about love. I don't tell her if I date someone. I used to date an Afghan girl, but now I date a Somali girl. I don't want to tell her about it because in Somalia you cannot always decide these things yourself. You cannot always decide about love, and you have to keep your love a secret. So I don't talk about it."

Lastly, almost half of the informants say that they try to protect relatives by not letting them know if they are ill, homesick or sad. An Eritrean woman illustrates this point well:

"We just talk for 2-3 minutes once or twice a month, and they cannot say my name because my family will be in danger if they [the military] find out that my mom and dad stay in touch with me and know where I am. So I cannot really tell them anything. But I always tell them that I am healthy, safe, and that I study. I always make sure that they can hear that I am happy but sometimes I am not and after we hang up, I cry."

These conversation topics and avoided subjects of conversation can tell us something about how the lives and identities of transnational migrants are negotiated. On one side, it is a crucial element for the migrants' well-being that they stay in touch with their loved ones – the more instant the connection, the better. Also, from the topics of conversation, I would argue that the everyday aspect of the topics, short conversations just to 'check in' on someone, and the part-taking in decision makings and special events from across great distance, nurture their feeling of participation and belonging together with relations in the country of origin. For someone who is far apart from family and friends and have a desire to feel close to these, such feelings of belonging may strengthen the ties to the homeland and revitalize old identities. On the other hand, since moving to Norway, the migrants have incorporated

Norwegian cultural aspects and behaviors that differ from the ones in their homeland environment. There may be several reasons for these incorporations. However, one could argue that, at least for the women and the case of Norwegian gender equality, the informants have seen obvious advantages in incorporating these cultural values compared to the less favorable gender values of the homeland culture. It becomes clear that because the migrants engage in two social fields with different cultures, the secrecy we are witnessing is their way of negotiating cultural difference and adjusting to the expectations of these social fields.

## 5.3    Gender differences in ITC use and communication practices

Findings show no indications of gender differences in the use of ICTs in transnational communication. The female and male informants use ICTs in a similar manner, and although early Internet culture tended to be male dominated, there is no indication of any gender differences in the communication tools chosen by the informants. It is evident that both men and women know how to use the same types of communication technologies, giving both genders the same advantages and possibilities of engaging in transnational communication. That being said, there are some gender differences in the frequency of transnational communication. Findings show that 8 out of 10 female informants have higher frequency of homeland communication than the men in the study. That being said, findings did not show any particular signs of the women maintaining more aspects of their homeland culture and identity than men. On the contrary and as mentioned above, the heightened gender value of women open up to new opportunities in their host country. This may in turn lead to other impulses that also will be incorporated to their identity. The fact that the migrant women incorporate to their identities the Norwegian gender value, illustrates that they are reflexive agents that, through the subjective dimension of gender, (re)negotiate their gender identity as part of making sense of their transnational lives.

While there is a higher frequency of homeland contact among the women, the conversation topics are similar to those of the male informants. In relation to the avoided conversation topics, the majority of the women do not share information about their heightened gender status with relations in the country of origin. Gender norms and certain behavioral norms are particularly typical for women and the symbolic and institutional dimensions of gender may

contribute to a continuance of these norms in some transnational social fields (Anthias, 2012; Davids and van Driel, 2005). A Filipino woman illustrates how she felt trapped by the gender norms in the Philippines:

> "The first time I took the bus alone was just after my arrival in Trondheim. In the Philippines, a family member always accompanied me, most of the time it was my brother. My parents always decided what was best for me but now that I live here by myself, I feel much more independent and make my own decisions. I actually feel liberated."

She goes on to tell about how she feels uncomfortable about telling her family all aspects of her new life in Norway: "If they find out that I stay up until late and go out with friends during the weekends, they would disapprove greatly and I don't want to let them down."

From the above perspectives, it becomes clear that transnational migrants interact with relations in the country of origin while using a different set of norms and behaviors when interacting within the host country environment, as a way to respond to different expectations (Bradatan et al, 2010) and coping with the different symbolic and structural (institutional) dimensions of gender that exist in transnational social fields (Davids and van Driel, 2005). Transnational migrants construct and utilize flexible identities as they 'move' back and forth between the host country and country of origin and Hayes (2007:27) notes that gender identities are also acted out differently in different contexts and over time. They are also negotiated in, and influenced by, the social fields in which people interact, illustrating that transnational migrants actively negotiate their gender identities. They are negotiated differently in relation to the possible identities available and the expectations that exist within a specific context. These possibilities and expectations vary between different social fields and are shaped by the symbolic and institutional dimensions of gender (Davids and van Driel, 2005).

## 5.4    The establishment of transnational and hybrid identities

From what is shown, the informants clearly felt a stronger identification to their country of origin when arriving in Norway. As they settled down, created a social network and got to

know the host country culture better, however, they found aspects of the Norwegian culture with which they started to identify. Also, through the use of ITCs, they can now fashion transnational social practices by being both 'here' and 'there' simultaneously (Smith, 2001). Rather than being absent from the place of origin, migrants become simultaneously present and engaged in different geographical locations (Licoppe, 2003). In time, these two processes have led to an affiliation to both their homeland and Norway. Because a transnational identity is based on a simultaneous identification and sense of belonging to two or more countries (Tsuda, 2012:642) it seems plausible that the migrants in this study have established transnational identities. A migrant with a transnational identity interacts with relations in the country of origin while using a different set of rules and behaviors when interacting with the host country's natives, as a way to respond to different expectations (Bradatan et al, 2010).

Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004:1011) argue that locating migrants within transnational social fields makes clear that incorporation in a new culture and enduring transnational connections are not binary opposites. Individuals change and swing one way or the other depending on the context, thus moving our expectation away from either full assimilation or full differentiation but to a combination of both:

> 'It is more useful to think of the migrant experience as a kind of gauge which, while anchored, pivots between a new land and a transnational incorporation. Movement and attachment is not linear or sequential but capable of rotating back and forth and changing direction over time. The median point on this gauge is not full incorporation but rather simultaneity of connection.'

As any identity, being transnational is not fixed forever; it varies over time as people change through interaction with the multiple social fields (Bradatan, 2010). Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004:609) agree to this when claiming that transnational practices ebb and flow in response to particular incidents.

Vertovec (2001:578) argues that the experiences gathered in these different transnational social fields accumulate to contain people's cultural repertories, which in turn influence the construction of identity – or multiple identities. To sum up the above findings, it is now clear that transnational migration may lead to various implications for the notion of cultural identity. In addition to embracing and incorporating Norwegian cultural aspects and values,

the great prevalence of ITCs used in transnational communication combined with the high frequency of communication shows that maintaining ties with relations in the country of origin is very important to the migrants. Through these ties they are constantly reminded of their cultural roots and it is plausible that they maintain various cultural aspects and values from their homeland environment. In light of this it is highly unlikely that they will experience full cultural differentiation or full cultural assimilation as transnational migrants. Cultural hybridity becomes an 'in-between' alternative to these polarizations as it opens the door for cultural emergence and flexible identity negotiations that lead to the development of a hybrid identity. Schumann (2011:6) notes:

'People presenting hybrid identities walk on a bridge freely, from one culture to another. At some points of life one culture might be dominant, later on the other. Nevertheless, essential for hybrid identities is the permanent presence of both cultures, no matter to which extent.'

In terms of belonging, the answer to the question "who am I" is not an easy one for somebody who is part of more than one social field. An Ethiopian woman shares that for her, the feeling of belonging is situational and that she at times feels a stronger identification and belonging to Ethiopia and other times to Norway. All of the informants agree on this matter. When asked where 'home' is, they all pause but state that Norway is 'home' because this is where they live. However, they believe that they always will feel a belonging to their country of origin because that is where they were born and because they are connected to that place through close relations and their history. That being said, most of the migrants believe that their identification and belonging to Norway will increase as they continue to live here and particularly if they get married and have children. Schumann (2012:6) argues that this permanent, ongoing negotiation of belonging characterizes the dichotomy between retention of the ethnic and adoption of the host culture and it is this phenomenon that creates the in-between space of hybrid identities:

'The crucial characteristic, defining people with *hybrid identities* is the fact, that 'home' is neither represented by their country of origin, nor by their host country. The migrant rather feels affiliated to both places with both cultures…hybrid identities float between.'

In terms of the cultural identity and hybridization, a Somali man illustrates how his identity can be perceived as hybrid:

> "After I came to Norway, I immediately liked the way the guys here dress so I started to buy the same type of clothes myself. I feel that I look better in these clothes and also my hair style is different now from when I lived in Somalia. There are many things about the Norwegian culture that I like but nothing beats Somali food. I make Somali dinners almost every day, nothing tastes as good!"

These two aspects of the Somali migrant's life are clearly understood and experienced as meaningful parts of his identity and the example shows that transnational migrants can negotiate their identity to include the most favorable aspects from both social fields that they take part in.

# Part Two

## 5.5.   Ways of belonging to transnational social fields

As discussed in Part One a person's idea and identification of 'me' changes when life situations and relations change. Given this, it is important to keep in mind that negotiations and formations of identities are context dependent. Through ways of being in a transnational social field, identities are negotiated and formed anew. However, because being part of a social field does not mean that one has to identify with cultural aspects associated with that field, all parts of a migrant's identity do not necessarily change (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2006:189). Thus, it is very likely that some features of the homeland culture are maintained in the identity and that the migrant, through negotiations and renegotiations, forms a hybrid identity. Through ways of being, transnational migrants are merely *part of*, and *take part in*, social fields but do not necessarily practice ways of belonging to those fields. Ways of *belonging* to transnational social fields means that one acts in such a way as to show a conscious connection to the social field. As Levitt and Glick Schiller (2006) argue, these actions are concrete and visible, and mark a belonging to that particular social field.

### 5.5.1 Ways of belonging: transnational identity-conscious communication

It can sometimes be difficult to separate practices that involve ways of belonging from ways of being. Anthias (2012:105) reminds us that behaving in ways that conform to an ethnic pattern and participation within an ethnic context can be instrumental, rather than expressive of identity. People connect and engage not only in ethnic ways but also in terms of other social categories and social relations. When keeping this in mind and focusing on the use of ICTs and their effect on identity, we cannot conclude that all transnational communication with relations in the country of origin are practices involving ways of belonging. This also goes for the migrants who for instance search the Internet to find ethnic food recipes. In fact, from conversations with the informants it becomes clear that identity-conscious ways of belonging are practices they mainly engage in when they are in need of extra reassurance, comfort and support, for instance if they are sad, homesick or feel discriminated against in the host country. Through the use of ICTs, the migrants engage in different forms of identity-conscious practices to strengthen their identification and connection to the homeland or to other ethnics. Findings show that all the informants experienced initial difficulties upon arrival in Norway and during the first few months of living in the new country. These difficulties, including an unknown language, a new culture, and the lack of social relationships, created an awareness of the differences between themselves and Norwegians. The uprooted feeling that may come with migration led to stress and worries and accordingly to an increased need to identify and belong to somewhere. This led the majority of the informants to strengthen their ties to homeland relations in order to receive reassurance of their connection and belonging to the homeland culture and environment. Simone Weil (2002:43) states: "to be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul." This strengthening of ties to the country of origin illustrates the need to be 'rooted' somewhere – the need to belong to somewhere. This strengthening of ties demonstrates a conscious connection to a transnational social field, namely the country of origin, and has been the clearest way in which the migrants in this study have practiced ways of belonging. The following paragraphs present a few examples of how ways of belonging is practiced among the migrants.

One of the Chinese women participates in online discussions on a website that focuses on Chinese social disparities and political instability. For her, this practice is not about

identifying with her country of origin, but rather about identification and a feeling of closeness to other ethnics that have had to flee from China because of the political situation in the country. Through the Internet, they share their experiences and discuss certain topics relating to these. Through engaging in these discussions, she identifies with other Chinese victims of wrong doing. Even though she feels no close connection to the country of origin, as such, these online interactions make her feel a strong connection to other Chinese:

> "To be honest, I don't really like China. The political situation is extreme and it is like we are constantly being monitored. But I miss parts of the culture and Chinese people, especially people from my minority group because they are more like me. When I go online I meet with other Chinese that are in similar situations and it feels good to talk with them."

Findings show that the informants also engage in ways of belonging when there are national public holidays in their country of origin. Almost all of the informants claim to be more in touch with homeland relations at these times of the year. A Thai woman shares:

> "I miss Thailand especially during Wan Songkran. It is our celebration of Thai New Year and the holiday from my country that means the most to me. It is important to the Thai people and the whole family comes together. It is the time of year when I wish the most to be back in Thailand. Because I have my life here now, it is difficult. But because I wanted to be close to my family for the national holiday, I spent many hours on Skype talking with my family, and two of my friends called me from out in the streets. It was the closest I came to actually being there but even though the celebration was just through my computer and my mobile phone, I felt really happy and proud to be part of the celebration."

A Filipino woman shares that homesickness is another factor that may lead to practices of ways of belonging. If she is really homesick or sad for some reason, she goes online to watch Filipino TV shows and downloads Filipino series or movies to watch on her computer. For her, this works as a 'break' from her new and at times stressful life in Norway. Through these practices she is able to identify with the familiar homeland culture which gives a feeling of 'home'. It is soothing and brings about identification and a renewed connection to the homeland culture.

From these three illustrations one could say that the need for practices of ways of belonging changes in relation to different contexts and times, and are therefore not constant. Consequently, it is possible to engage in ways of being without engaging in ways of belonging, while at other times these two practices happen simultaneously. In some contexts and through certain time periods, the migrants may not feel the need for this extra reassurance or feeling of belonging to the country of origin and thus engage in fewer practices of ways of belonging (Anthias, 2012).

To examine ways of belonging through a transnational lens one must not forget the importance of looking at migrants' practices both in the country of origin and host country. Because practices of ways of belonging in this study tend to be about a reassurance of connection and belonging to the homeland in times of (for instance) insecurity or homesickness, a natural consequence is few practices of this kind relating to the host country. In fact, no such practices have been found in this study. It then becomes clear that, at least for the present time, ways of belonging is about the reassurance of an identification and connection to the *country of origin*. Today's world offers a wide range of cheap communication tools that allow instant connectivity facilitating frequent contact between the migrants and the country of origin. This assists practices of ways of belonging. It is plausible that the identification and connection which migrants search for through practices of ways of belonging is making them to actively choose to keep more of their old identities in order to secure a feeling of identification, connection and belonging to the homeland environment.

## 5.6    Gendered identities in transnational social fields

In terms of homeland contact, gender and identity, and as previously discussed in Part One, no gender differences were found in the use of ICTs in transnational communication. One of the differences found is the higher frequency of transnational communication among the women. It is, however, not found any indication that this means that women maintain more of their 'old' identities than the men do. In fact, findings show that female informants have an incentive to renegotiate their gender identities because of the increased gender value in the host country compared to that of their country of origin. Hayes (2007) claims that gender

identities are negotiated drawing on past identities and new forms of interpretation that are available and attractive. One would perhaps believe that the women would make use of their heightened gender status and new opportunities to challenge traditional gender relations in their homelands (Ypeij, 2005). However, the other gender difference found in the study show that when communicating with homeland relations, female migrants *avoid* discussing their heightened gender values and newly formed gender identities that differ from the traditional gender norms and their previous gender identity in the country of origin. In light of all this, it becomes clear that identities are gendered. In the case of ways of belonging, this method of action may take place to avoid potential discussions and conflicts that could disrupt the link to homeland relations and create more insecurity for the female migrants regarding their connection to their relations as well as the reassurance of belonging to the homeland. Hayes (2007) argues that because the desire for socially acceptable identities is strong one may feel pressure to conform to expectations of the transnational social fields in which one engages. I agree with Hayes and argue that in light of this, the avoidance of certain topics regarding gender norms may be part of a practice of ways of belonging. On the other hand, it is also possible that these actions are merely a way of negotiating and adjusting to certain social categories and expectations in the country of origin without relating to practices of ways of belonging. Either way, it becomes clear that transnational migrants are reflexive agents that 'move' back and forth between their respective social fields and negotiate their transnational existence differently in the various social fields in which they engage.

# 6 Concluding discussion

In this concluding discussion the two research questions of the thesis are discussed and a presentation of the main conclusions is given.

## 6.1 Identity formation through ICTs and ways of being in a transnational social field

Research question 1:

What is the role of transnational communication networks and technologies in identity formation?

- Can gender differences be identified?

Engagements in transnational social fields through ways of being (in this case communication) show that although migrants incorporate cultural aspects from the host country to their identity, they also retain cultural aspects from their country of origin. The development of several ICTs that open up for cheap and instant transnational communication has allowed transnational migrants to keep in touch with homeland relations like never before. Through mobile phones and the Internet, migrants stay updated on homeland news and speak with, text or chat with homeland relations on a high frequency basis. The possibility of instant connection allows for a more intense interaction between the migrant and his or her country of origin. Through this interaction, an identification and feeling of connection to the homeland culture and environment may be re-energized in ways never before possible. Against this background it becomes clear that ICTs play a large role in the identity formation of migrants as they practice ways of being in a transnational social field.

In terms of gender differences, all the migrants in the study have the same advantages and possibilities of engaging in transnational communication and there were no gender differences found in the use of ITCs in transnational communication. However, women engage in more frequent transnational communication than the men do, but there are no clear signs indicating

that this practice has led to a higher retention of old identities. This finding is quite contradictory to the conclusion that ICTs allowing for instant and frequent transnational communication make migrants identify more with the culture of the country of origin. Findings show that high gender value is important to the well-being of women and incorporation of this cultural aspect strengthens their opportunities in the host country as well as increase feelings of self-worth and self-esteem. Because of this it is highly likely that the women identify with this new cultural aspect and incorporate it to their identities. Because the incentive of incorporation is so strong, high frequency contact with homeland relations would not influence or affect this incorporation. This shows that although modern means of ICTs have facilitated the possibilities of keeping more of old cultural aspects in the identities of transnational migrants, the migrants must also be seen as active participants in their social fields, constantly (re)negotiating and (re)forming their cultural identity in ways that best suit them at all times, in all contexts and in their respective social fields.

## 6.2 Ways of belonging to a transnational social fields and the maintenance of 'old' identities

Research question 2:

Can today's extensive use of information and communication technologies show that migrants maintain more of their 'old' identities?

- Are identities gendered?

In this study, engagements in transnational social fields through ways of belonging are practices that transnational migrants mainly engage in when they need extra reassurance, comfort and support. This need arises if they, for some reason, do not feel at ease in the host country. Because no such practices are found in relation to the host country, ways of belonging is about the reassurance of an identification and connection to the *country of origin*. Today's world offers a wide range of cheap communication tools allowing instant connectivity that facilitates high frequency contact between the migrants and their homeland. ICTs assist practices of ways of belonging and through the use of these, migrants engage in different forms of identity-conscious practices to strengthen their identification and

connection to the homeland and to other ethnics. It then becomes plausible that this need for identification and connection to the homeland is making them to actively choose to keep more of their old identities. This is done to secure a feeling of connection and a sense of belonging to the familiar homeland environment. Summing up, it seems logical that the numerous ICT alternatives available to transnational migrants allow them to practice ways of belonging on a more frequent basis and thus facilitate the maintenance of 'old' identities. That being said, there is still the need to stress the reflexive agency of transnational migrants as they mix and match cultural aspects of both social fields, while constantly negotiating their identities in and between these fields. An example of this reflexivity are the female migrants who interpret, negotiate, and incorporate attractive gender values of the host country to their reworked gender identities and avoid discussing these parts of their new life with homeland relations. This is a conscious decision based on the fact that the new gender identity differs from the traditional gender identity as well as gender norms and expectations in the homeland. This can be seen as a practice of ways of belonging where female migrants conform to homeland expectations in order to secure a continuance of strong and positive connections to relations in the country of origin on which they can rely in times where extra reassurance and comfort is needed. It is, however, possible that these actions are simply a way of negotiating and adjusting to certain social categories and expectations in the country of origin and do not relate to practices of ways of belonging. No matter the reason for this behavior, it is clear that transnational migrants are reflexive agents that negotiate their transnational existence differently in the various social fields in which they engage. Identities are seen as gendered as gender is 'done' - (re)negotiated and (re)worked - by these reflexive migrants through negotiations and incorporations that fit with the expectations and norms as well as the symbolic and institutional dimensions of gender their respective social fields.

## 6.3    Main conclusions

In this thesis, ways of being in and ways of belonging to transnational social fields illustrate practices of transnational migrants and how they engage in and actively negotiate and form identities in relation to their respective social fields. The analyses reveal that migrants live dual or transnational lives and have established dual or transnational identities which are constantly being formed and reformed as the migrants interact with their social fields and try

to adapt to their respective cultural spheres, norms and expectations. ICTs play an important role in transnational migrants' identity formation and the large amount of ICTs available today facilitate both practices of ways of being and ways of belonging and may indeed contribute to the maintenance of more of migrants' 'old' identities. Through ways of being, the migrants stay connected through the use of ICTs with relations in the country of origin while residing in another country, and through ways of belonging they make use of ICTs to engage in identity-conscious practices towards homeland relations in order to receive support and a reassurance of their secure homeland connection whenever this is needed. The migrants are anchored in both transnational social fields and are rational actors that choose what to keep of their old and new identities through a constant (re)negotiation of these identities. Both analyses show that migrants' identities are gendered and this, in combination with the (re)negotiations of identities in the different transnational social fields show that the migrants are reflexive life planners.

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# Appendix

## 1.     Interview guide, Focus group discussion

Norsk kontekst:

- (a) Hvorfor er dere på norskkurs?
  - Hvorfor er det viktig å lære norsk?
- (b) Hva er deres framtidige boplaner?
  - flytte tilbake til hjemlandet, bli i Norge, eller evt. flytte til et tredje land?
- (c) Fritidsaktiviteter i Norge
- (d) Synes dere at dere har forandret dere etter at dere kom til Norge?
  - Hvordan?

Kontakt med hjemlandet:

- (a) Kommuniserer dere med noen i hjemlandet?
- (b) Hvorfor er det viktig å kommunisere med relasjoner i hjemlandet?
- (c) Hvilke kommunikasjonsmidler/nettverk brukes for å holde kontakt?
  - Benytter noen flere komm.verktøy og hvorfor?
- (d) Hvis du reiser til hjemlandet ditt nå, tror du at du vil være/føle deg annerledes enn før?
- (e) Hvor føler du at du hører til?
  - Er det vanskelig å høre til «her» eller «der»?

Kjønnsrelatert:

- (a) Er det annerledes å være kvinne i Norge enn i hjemlandet deres?
  - Hvordan?
- (b) Hvordan har livene deres endret seg etter at dere flyttet til Norge?
- (c) Har dere endret syn på dere selv etter at dere flyttet til Norge?

## 2.    Interview guide, In-depth interviews

1. Personlig informasjon
    (a) Opprinnelsesland, ankomst i Norge?
    (b) Alder, Sivilstatus?
    (c) Hvor lenge har du gått på norskkurs?
    (d) Utdanning og yrkeserfaring i Norge/hjemlandet?
    (e) Jobb i Norge/hjemlandet?

2. Migrasjon
    (a) Hva er grunnen til at du flyttet til Norge?
    (b) Hvordan opplevde du migrasjonsprosessen og det å komme til et nytt land?
    (c) I hvilket område i Norge eller land i verden kunne du mest tenkt deg å bo?

3. Kulturelle impulser i Norge:
    (a) Hvordan opplevde du den første tiden i Norge?
    (b) Kan du si litt om din tilværelse i Norge nå (sosialt nettverk, skole, jobb)?
    (c) Hva liker du best og dårligst ved det norske samfunnet og det norske kulturen?
        • Hvorfor?
    (d) Hvilke hobbyer har du?
        • Hadde du de samme hobbyene i hjemlandet?
    (e) Foretrekker du å se på norsk TV eller TV-programmer/serier/filmer fra hjemlandet?
    (f) Hvilke kommunikasjonsverktøy bruker du for å holde kontakt med ditt sosiale nettverk i Norge?
    (g) Hvor ofte har du kontakt med ditt sosiale nettverk i Norge?
    (h) Hvordan ønsker du at andre skal oppfatte deg?
    (i) Hva håper du å gjøre om fem år (jobb, familie, fritid, bosted)?

4.  Relasjoner i hjemlandet
    (a) Hvilke relasjoner har du i hjemlandet?
    (b) Hvem har du kontakt med (familie, venner, andre, organisasjoner osv.)?
        • Hvem har du mest kontakt med?

5.  Kommunikasjon med hjemlandet
    (a) Hvilke(t) kommunikasjonsvertøy bruker du for å holde kontakt med hjemlandet?
        • Bruker du flere typer? (Hvorfor?)
        • Hvorfor har du valgt å bruke akkurat den/de kommunikasjonsverktøyene?
    (b) Benytter du Internett for å se på TV programmer og serier/filmer fra hjemlandet?
    (c) Bruker du å delta på online forum som er relatert til hjemlandet?

5.1  Hyppighet av kommunikasjon med relasjoner i hjemlandet
    (a) Hvor ofte har du kontakt med familie?

(b) Hvor ofte har du kontakt med venner og andre?

(c) Er det spesielle årsaker som gjør at du tar kontakt (nyheter, følelser, usikkerhet)?

(d) Hvem og hva er det som avgjør hvor ofte du har kontakt med relasjoner i hjemlandet?

(e) Har hyppigheten økt etter hvert som forskjellige informasjons- og kommunikasjonsverktøy har blitt mer tilgjengelig for deg eller for de du har kontakt med i hjemlandet?

(f) Hvordan blir hyppigheten påvirket av kostnader?

(g) Finnes det perioder gjennom året eller spesielle begivenheter som fører til økt kommunikasjonshyppighet?

## 5.2 Kommunikasjonen

(a) Hvor lenge varer som regel samtalene?

(b) Hvilke faktorer spiller inn på samtalens varighet?

(c) Bruker samtalen/chatten å følge et mønster eller er den improvisert?

(d) Hva kommuniseres det om fra hjemlandet?

(e) Hva forteller du dine relasjoner om?

- Er det også enkelte ting det ikke snakkes så mye om (for sensitivt, farlig, ubehagelig)?

(f) Hvilke forventninger har samtalepartnerne (forpliktelser til de i hjemlandet)?

(g) Hvordan ønsker du at dine relasjoner i hjemlandet skal oppfatte deg?

(h) I kommunikasjon med relasjoner i hjemlandet, merker du at du har forandret deg etter at du kom til Norge?

- På hvilke måter?

(i) Klarer du å følge med på hva som skjer i hjemlandet (endringer i politikk, kultur, samfunn, slekt og familie) nå som du bor i Norge?

- Er dette noe som interesserer deg spesielt?

## 5.3 Identitet og kjønnsrelaterte spørsmål

(a) Synes du at du har endret syn på deg selv etter at du flyttet til Norge? (Hvordan?)

(b) Er det forskjeller på det å være kvinne/mann i Norge sammenlignet med ditt hjemland? (Hvordan?)

(c) Har du endret seg som kvinne/mann etter at du flyttet til Norge? (Hvordan?)

(d) Når du ser på deg selv og ditt liv, hva kan du si om din identitet (hvem er du og på hvilke(n) måte har du forandret deg etter at du flyttet til Norge)?

(e) På hvilken måte tror du alt vi har snakket om spiller inn på din egen identitet?

(f) Er det tilslutt noe du vil legge til, noe du har kommet på underveis?