

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Abstract**

The right to education for young immigrants above 16 years of age with a need for Norwegian courses and primary/lower secondary education, falls under the responsibility of the municipalities in Norway. This education is generally taken care of by the local Adult Education. However, there are no clear guidelines on how the education for the young immigrants should be organized, which creates many different ways of organizing the education in Norway's many municipalities. I have therefore, through semi-structured and focus group interviews, conducted my research with young immigrants in three different municipalities. As a result I have obtained experiences from adolescents experiencing three ways of organizing this education: the first was organized at the local Adult Education but in a building for adolescents only, the second was also organized at the local Adult Education, however at this school both adolescents and adults attended the same school. The third school was located at the local Upper Secondary School.

It became apparent that the way the schools were organized affected the adolescents' everyday life at school. Space appeared as an important topic for the participants. Some of the topics that were highlighted by the participants were: The significance of getting to know Norwegian peers, and the significance of learning the Norwegian language. In this case they also emphasized how knowing Norwegians is vital for their language learning. Also being able to feel that they attend a 'normal' school was emphasized by several participants. And finally, whether the school is located with adults or adolescents, and with only foreigners or Norwegians, was a repeated issue during the interviews.

In the last part of the analysis I discuss these themes, and to what extent the adolescents, through their experiences, may be said to have the opportunity to act as citizens in Norway. However, the data has shown that the young immigrants meet various challenges, and that practicing their citizenship therefore may be challenging. These are complex questions, however my aim is that this thesis may contribute with more insight for the topic on young immigrants and the way their education is organized.

## Table of contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>List of figures</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>List of tables</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 <i>Choice of topic</i>	1
1.2 <i>Aim and research question</i>	1
1.3 <i>Clarifications</i>	2
1.4 <i>Structure of the thesis</i>	3
<b>2 Background and previous research</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 <i>Previous research</i>	4
2.2 <i>Immigration in Norway</i>	5
2.3 <i>Migration flows and migration policies</i>	7
2.3.1 <i>Integration</i>	10
2.3.2 <i>Inclusion</i>	11
2.4 <i>Education in Norway</i>	11
2.5 <i>Education for young newly arrived immigrants</i>	12
<b>3 Theory</b>	<b>14</b>
3.1 <i>The (new) sociology of childhood and theories of citizenship</i>	14
3.1.1 <i>A historical look at citizenship</i>	15
3.1.2 <i>Traditional and difference-centered view on citizenship</i>	16
3.1.3 <i>Socialization</i>	18
3.2 <i>Space approach</i>	18
3.2.1 <i>Space</i>	19
3.3 <i>Second language acquisition</i>	20
3.3.1 <i>Linear thinking</i>	20
3.3.2 <i>Circular thinking</i>	20
3.3.3 <i>Language learning as a social process</i>	21
3.4 <i>Membership and Visitorship</i>	21
3.5 <i>Psycho-social health and self-esteem</i>	22
<b>4 Methods and Methodology</b>	<b>23</b>
4.1 <i>Entering the field</i>	23
4.2 <i>Strategic sampling</i>	24
4.2.1 <i>Mellomåsen Adult Education</i>	25
4.2.2 <i>Ravnbakken Adult Education</i>	25
4.2.3 <i>Vestlia Upper Secondary School</i>	26
4.3 <i>Sampling of participants</i>	26
4.3.1 <i>Age and social age</i>	27
4.3.2 <i>Participants</i>	27
4.3.3 <i>Building Rapport</i>	28
4.4 <i>Data gathering</i>	28
4.4.1 <i>Semi-structured interview</i>	29
4.4.2 <i>Focus group interview</i>	30
4.4.3 <i>Informal interview</i>	31
4.5 <i>Ethical considerations and challenges</i>	31

4.5.1 The researcher's role	32
4.5.2 Informed consent and confidentiality	32
4.5.3 Reciprocity	34
4.5.4 Use of recorder	34
4.6 <i>Challenges and limitations of the research</i>	35
4.7 <i>Data analysis</i>	36
<b>5 Experiences with school</b>	<b>37</b>
5.1 <i>The power of name</i>	38
5.2 <i>Experiences from Norwegian course and The Class at Vestlia</i>	40
5.3 <i>Feeling 'normal'</i>	44
5.4 <i>"After a while you do not have any hopes for the future"</i>	46
5.5 <i>"I am becoming an adult"</i>	49
5.6 <i>Studying with relatives</i>	52
5.7 <i>Summary</i>	54
<b>6 Experiences with everyday life</b>	<b>56</b>
6.1 <i>Language is the key</i>	56
6.1.1 <i>The importance of learning the unspoken language</i>	60
6.2 <i>Significance of fellow students</i>	61
6.2.1 <i>"Hello, do you want to be my friend?"</i>	61
6.2.2 <i>Attending courses with upper secondary classes</i>	66
6.3 <i>Significance of attending organized activities</i>	67
6.4 <i>Summary</i>	69
<b>7 Challenges of social inclusion and sense of belonging</b>	<b>71</b>
7.1 <i>Sense of belonging, or non-belonging?</i>	71
7.2 <i>Human 'becomings'</i>	77
7.3 <i>Concluding remarks</i>	79
<b>Literature</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Appendix 1 - Informed consent form</b>	<b>I</b>

## **List of figures**

Figure 1 Immigrations by reason for immigration 1990-2012.....	6
Figure 2 Lefebvre's spatial triad .....	19

## **List of tables**

Table 1 Education system in Norway.....	12
Table 2 Methods used.....	31

# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Choice of topic**

The topic of this thesis is young immigrants' experiences of education in Norway. The research was conducted in three schools in three different municipalities in Norway. All together forty adolescents took part in the research, through individual and focus group interviews. When young immigrants arrive Norway, many need some primary/lower secondary schooling, either because of lack of education from before, or because they need to learn the Norwegian terms before starting Upper Secondary School. This topic was chosen as there are no governmental guidelines on how this education should be organized. Thus, the schooling for immigrants can be put into practice in different ways, producing various practices around the country.

Since education of young immigrants is organized differently I also found it interesting to look at experiences from different schools. Earlier research (NOU, 2010; Sletten & Engebriksen, 2011; Valenta, 2008) has shown that there is a need for better organizing, or clearer guidelines on how to organize the young immigrants' schooling, and that there is a need for more research on the young immigrants' own perspective on the topic. Hence, I decided that I wanted to research on young immigrants' experiences and their perspective on this topic. I chose to do the research in three municipalities that organize the education differently in order to see whether the various methods had various outcome and impact on the young immigrants. Previous research, as will be presented below, has also shown that school and education are topics many of the young immigrants are interested in talking about. I will therefore in this thesis present some of the experiences the young immigrants have had with the education system in their municipality.

## **1.2 Aim and research question**

My aim with this research is to explore how the participants of this research experience and perceive their school and how it is organized. It is a topic that has been touched upon by various scholars. However I want to highlight the young immigrants' voices, and hear their opinions and experiences with their school. I argue that it is important to hear the experiences

by those who live them. This has also been highlighted as an important factor in the (new) sociology of childhood: children are social actors and worth of study in their own right (James & Prout, 1990). As many scholars argue (Clark & Statham, 2005; Jan Mason & Danby, 2011), I agree on that the participants are experts on their own lives. Understanding the experiences of the participants is therefore the main aim in this research. What the participants highlighted as important issues regarding their education and being new in Norway is hence what will be addressed in this thesis.

To explore the aim, three research question has been constructed:

- How do the young immigrants experience and reflect upon the way their school is organized?
- How are the young immigrants experiencing the everyday life at school?
- How can the way the schools are organized affect the participants' inclusion process and citizenship?

### **1.3 Clarifications**

There are two word choices that should be explained before going further. In my thesis I have chosen to term the participant group in the research 'young immigrants', and to use the concept of 'inclusion'. Social inclusion is a topic that is closely linked to the debates concerning immigration policies in Norway, thus I chose to focus on this concept. In other countries, other concepts, such as multiculturalism, may be more relevant as the situation and debate call for other concepts. However, in the Norwegian debate on migration, firstly integration and later inclusion are two concepts that have become significant (Kermit, Tharaldsteen, Haugen, & Wendelborg, 2014; NOU, 2009).

The term “young immigrants” is being used to describe the group of participants in this thesis. This could be a problematic choice of words as the term immigrant is wide and consists of many ethical, cultural and social variations. This diffuse group comprises of many different subgroups; people with very different life stories, challenges and future prospects. Using the term immigrant I relay on the same definition as The Directorate of Integration and Diversity; all people in Norway who are born abroad, by two foreign-born parents (IMDi, 2012). Regarding my research topic I view this term as relevant as I am going to look at how the



education system for immigrants in Norway is organized. It is not significant for the thesis what type of immigrants the participants are, just that they are all receivers of the same type of education. I say *young* immigrants to emphasize that I am in this thesis writing about adolescents immigrating to Norway. The participants in my research are between sixteen to their early twenties. One of the largest group of immigrants to Norway are Swedes (SSB, 2013d), many of them being young migrant workers. However, for this thesis it will be immigrants coming from outside Scandinavia that are of most interest. For the participants in my research work is not the reason for immigrating.

#### **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis consists of eight chapters. *Chapter one* provides a general presentation of the research and the thesis. *Chapter two* presents the background and context to the study. Previous research on the topic will be presented, and an introduction to immigration history and policies will additionally be provided. Following, the Norwegian education, and particularly the education relevant for the participants in this thesis will be presented. In *chapter three* theories used in the analysis are described, giving an understanding of the theoretical framework of the study. Next, *chapter four* is the methodology chapter, providing information about methodology and the methods used in the research. In this chapter the participants and the research site will also be described.

The analysis is presented in chapter five, six and seven. *Chapter five* discusses the first research question: How do the young immigrants experience and reflect upon the way their school is organized? A space approach, inspired by Lefebvre's spatial triad, will be used throughout both this and the following chapter six. *Chapter six* analyzes research question two: How are the young immigrants experiencing the everyday life at school? The way the schools are organized works as a basis also through this chapter. The last analysis chapter is *chapter seven* which looks at the participants' experiences of the education in connection with the concept of citizenship. In this chapter the third and last research question will be discussed: How can the way the schools are organized affect the participants' inclusion process and citizenship? In the end of chapter seven I will give some concluding remarks, and recommendations for further research.

## **2 Background and previous research**

In this chapter I will present a brief overview of previous research and the Norwegian context of the thesis. This will be helpful to understand the context of the research. In this chapter I firstly write a section about previous research, arguing why I find the topic for the thesis relevant. Secondly I present the immigration and integration policies in a Norwegian context. Finally, I go through the school system in Norway in general, and more specifically for the target group of this thesis.

### **2.1 Previous research**

In the past years, much research have been conducted and many books written on topics related to young immigrants in Norway (Eide, 2012; Meld.St.27, 2011-2012; NOU, 2010; Kristin Thorshaug, Paulsen, Røe, & Berg, 2013; K Thorshaug & Svendsen, 2014). When preparing for this research, I found that education, and young immigrants' experience of education emerged in various researches. I here give a short presentation of previous research conducted on this topic, which helped me approach the research and which will also be used in the analysis.

Previous research has shown, among other things, that young refugees find it hard to get to know their Norwegian peers (Svendsen, Thorshaug, & Berg, 2010; Valenta, 2008). In a report by Svendsen et al. (2010) unaccompanied minor refugees living in Trondheim and Levanger were interviewed about how they experienced their housing after having been resettled in the municipalities. Both municipalities organize the young immigrants' schooling at an Adult Education Center<sup>1</sup>. In the report the question of school also appeared. One of the unaccompanied minors living in Levanger, explained that “No, we are not really meeting any Norwegians. The only ones we meet are the teachers at school” (Svendsen et al., 2010, p. 99, own translation). In addition, the unaccompanied minors who were interviewed from both Trondheim and Levanger argued that they would have preferred to go to the same school as the Norwegian youth, to easier get to know them and learn the language (Svendsen et al., 2010). These findings made me want to learn more about young immigrants' experiences with school and their Norwegian peers.

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<sup>1</sup> In Norwegian this is called Voksenopplæringscenter (Adult Education Center), or Voksenopplæring (Adult Education). This is a center providing people above 16 years old

Previous research on topics on young immigrants' well-being and psycho-social health has also been of relevance for this research. Social relations and interaction with others affects a person's self-esteem (Valenta, 2008). How you are met by others may therefore be important for how you feel. Valenta (2008) presents in his research that immigrants having little contact with ethnic Norwegians resulted in a feeling of non-belonging to Norwegian society. He argues that having a sense of belonging may be important for one's self-esteem and to feel like being a part of society.

Another interesting research topic is on the dichotomy normal/different. The adolescents in my research are in many ways the same as any other adolescent in Norway. However, they have also come to a new country, where they have to learn a new language, and make new friends. Some may also have fled from war, conflict or other difficult situations. The possibility to have a normal everyday life as possible may then become important (Pastoor, 2012). Although normal may be difficult to define, it may be seen as the average person (Haugsgjerd, Karlsson, & Løkke, 2002). What the average person has and does define what it is to be normal. The ones who are not fitting into this definition may then be seen, or they themselves feel that they are different. This may then again affect the person's self-esteem. Bengtson and Ruud (2012) stress that feeling normal is important in both childhood and adolescence. Going to school may be one way of normalizing the everyday life (Pastoor, 2012). This will be discussed further in the analysis.

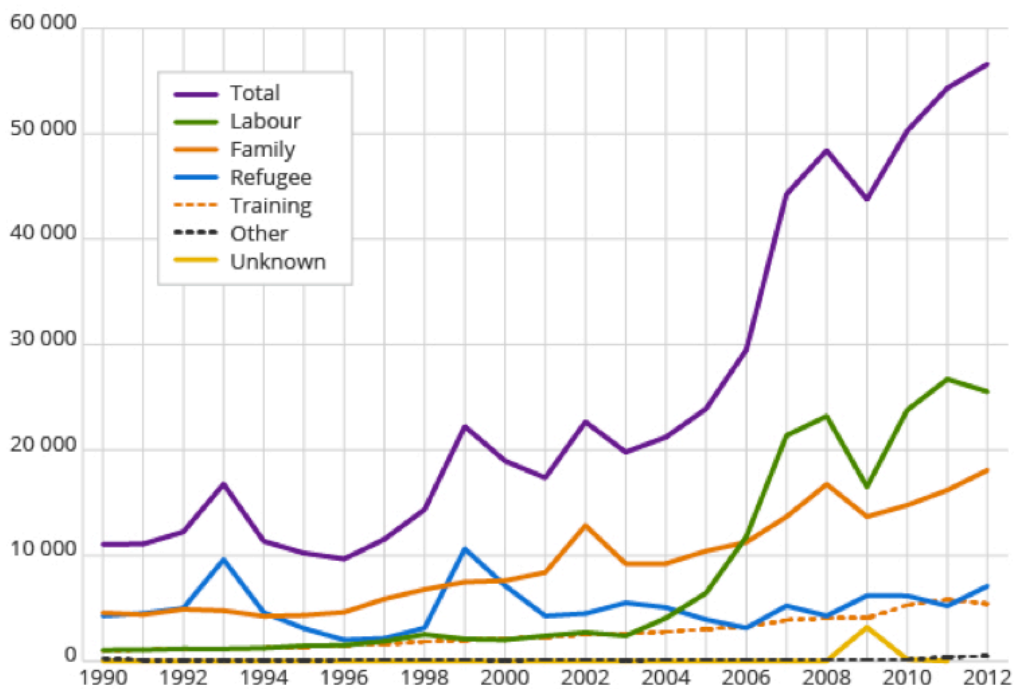
## **2.2 Immigration in Norway**

Several scholars have been studying the field of immigration in Norway (Berg, 2010; Døving, 2009; Eide, 2012). The first migrant workers came to Norway in 1967, and are defined as a "person whose grounds for residence are work" (IMDi, 2013, p. 10). However, in the 1970s immigration increased (Døving, 2009). These were immigrants that initially did not plan to stay. They had come to Norway to work and to earn money, and were supposed to leave when this goal was achieved (Døving, 2009). Nevertheless, many stayed and their family members followed. In the 1970s, as it became apparent that the migrants were staying, integration became a topic in Norwegian politics (Døving, 2009). This also made the Norwegian authorities introduce an "immigration stop" in 1975 (Gullestad, 2008). Consequently, only experts, family members (from family reunification), students, refugees and asylum seekers, were allowed to move to Norway (Gullestad, 2008).

The immigration to Norway has increased the last decades. In 1980, immigrants constituted 2% of the country's inhabitants, while in 1996 they constituted 4,4% (NOU, 1998). Today 12% of the inhabitants in Norway are immigrants (SSB, 2013c). As Gullestad (2008) mentions, what is special with Norway and the Nordic countries, is that the migrants does not come from one special region or country. Statistics Norway states that there are immigrants from as much as 220 different countries and autonomous regions in the country (SSB, 2013c).

Figure 1 illustrates for which reasons the immigrants come to Norway. As we can see, since 2006 and up until today, most people come due to labor. By looking at the figure one can see how the immigration has increased since the 1990s.

**Figure 1 Immigrations by reason for immigration 1990-2012**



(SSB, 2013b)

As mentioned, and as can be seen in Figure 1, immigrants to Norway are a large and varied group. In 2012 there were 547.000 immigrants in Norway (IMDi, 2012). For the young immigrants in this research, labor has not been the (main) reason to immigrate. Many of the young immigrants that immigrate to Norway come as asylum seekers or refugees. In 2011, 6105 asylum seekers (both adults and children) were granted protection in Norway (IMDi,

2012). 32510 children and youth under 18 years had immigrated to Norway by 2003 (Dzamarija & Kalve, 2004). One of the groups of young immigrants coming to Norway is the unaccompanied minor asylum seekers. In 2011, 2359 asylum seekers below 18 years old arrived to Norway (Meld.St.27, 2011-2012). Out of these, 858 were unaccompanied minor asylum seekers (Meld.St.27, 2011-2012). An unaccompanied minor asylum seeker is a person under 18 years of age wanting to obtain the status as a refugee, and who are separated from both of his or her parents or the adult who by law or custom is the one responsible for him or her (UNHCR, 1994, p. 121). However, the unaccompanied minor asylum seekers are just one subgroup in a heterogeneous group of young immigrants.

### **2.3 Migration flows and migration policies**

The migration flows have changed from being almost non-existing in the middle of the last century to increase in numbers in the recent years. With this, migration policies have also changed. Berg (2010) divides the political changes on immigration to Norway into five phases, from 1945 until now. Although she mainly looks at this in the light of asylum seekers and refugees, the policies have also affected other immigrants. In the following part I briefly go through these phases to better understand today's politics, and the context for this thesis.

#### *Phase 1: Working with refugees as a humanitarian work (1945-1978)*

Following the Second World War, Norway did not receive many immigrants. The few who came were mostly refugees due to the war, and were taken care of by humanitarian organizations. The idea was that they should become as 'Norwegian' as possible, following the assimilation policies, also called 'Norwegianification' ('fornorsking'). In the late 1970's one started talking about integration and pluralistic societies. The politics slowly changed from assimilation to emphasizing immigrants' rights and duties as citizens, and focusing on their right to keep their own culture (Berg, 2010).

#### *Phase 2: From special care to municipal responsibility (1979-1988)*

In the 1970's more immigrants came into the country, and the responsibility of the immigrants was divided between the state and the municipality. The state got the responsibility for operating the reception centers, and the municipalities were in charge of general education and language education. In this period there were discussions about whether immigrants should have special care or normal care, as any other citizen given by the

municipalities. With special care one meant that the refugees got more practical, economic and psycho-social care than Norwegians in similar situations. However, the difficulty of comparing Norwegians' and newly arrived refugees' situation was also highlighted. In 1982, nevertheless, it was decided that the municipalities should have the responsibility, giving the immigrants the same care as non-immigrants. There was however an acceptance for that one in periods could provide special treatment for those in need of this (Berg, 2010).

*Phase 3: State asylum contingency – building asylum centers (1989-1993)*

From 1989 the number of asylum seekers increased again. Around this time the asylum system was reorganized. The Directorate of Immigration was created and given responsibility for implementing, and aiding in developing the government's immigration policy (IMDi, 2012). In this period the division between the state and the municipality became increasingly clarified. The state became the responsible for the reception system while the municipality worked with the settling of refugees and integration. Where asylum seekers before was placed by applying casual and provisional solutions, the reception system was now responsible for placing them, and built up asylum centers (Berg, 2010).

*Phase 4: Collective protection and focus on return (1994-2001)*

Norway and Western Europe had a political turn in immigration policies at this time, and return was emphasized. Many refugees, coming from Bosnia-Herzegovina to Norway during the beginning of the 1990's, were given temporary residence permits, and their individual asylum process was then postponed for up to three years. The temporary permits created a situation where these refugees were integrated into society and placed in different municipalities around Norway, but with the intention that they would soon return to Bosnia-Herzegovina. This meant that the municipalities in addition to integrating the newly arrived, at the same time had to start facilitating and preparing the newly arrived immigrants for later return (Berg, 2010).

*Phase 5: Diversity and increased judicialisation (2002-2009)*

In this period, there were a few large modifications affecting the immigration policies in Norway. During this time three new laws that were relevant to migration and integration

where made: The introduction act<sup>2</sup>, the anti-discrimination act<sup>3</sup> and the immigration act<sup>4</sup>. Refugee policies, immigrant policies and welfare policies are all connected, and there has been a tendency that the attention has shifted from a refugee and immigrant specific focus towards a more general focus on diversity. Focus should not only be on newly arrived immigrants and their challenges, but on all immigrants and their children, and also the Norwegian inhabitants in general (Berg, 2010).

Looking at these phases we can see how the policies have gone from being almost non-existing concerning integration, to be concerned with the entire population being included into society, with their rights and duties, but at the same time be able to keep their culture. If we look at different green papers and white papers through this period we can also see how the concepts and policies have changed during time. A green paper on immigration policies from 1973 (NOU, 1973) started the debate on integration and pluralism in the official Norwegian documents (NOU, 1995). In this green paper from 1973, concepts such as assimilation and integration were defined, and was later to become official definitions in a white paper from 1973-74 (St.meld.nr.39, 1973-74). Assimilation was looked upon as something that should be avoided, however its definition was still quite mild: “an immigrant becoming as similar to a Norwegian as possible” (NOU, 1973, p. 69, own translation). Integration was defined as a “much weaker form of incorporation into society than assimilation” (NOU, 1973, p. 69, own translation). Integration was later, in the shift of the decade, said to be a process, working towards the goal of reaching a multicultural/pluralistic society (NOU, 1995). The definition of assimilation also became much stricter, in 1986 it was defined that “with assimilation one usually means that the minorities’ culture gets extinguished and disappears in a way that the group loses its’ ethnical identity (...)” (NOU, 1995, own translation).

There has been a tendency towards focusing more on integration, and later inclusion, in Norway, and also seeing school as an important factor for integration. School is where youth

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<sup>2</sup> An act on the "introduction system and Norwegian education for newly arrived immigrants" (Lovdata, 2003)

<sup>3</sup> "The purpose of the law is to promote equality, ensure equal opportunities and rights, and to prevent discrimination based on ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, color of the skin, language, religion and belief" (Lovdata, 2005, §1, own translation)

<sup>4</sup> An act on the "entry of foreign nationals into The Kingdom of Norway and their stay in the realm"(UDI, 2013)

spend most of their day, and also where newly arrived immigrants learn Norwegian and about Norwegian culture. The school can therefore be said to be an important place regarding integration and segregation processes. Below I go deeper into the concepts of integration and inclusion, since these are currently two very important concepts when discussing immigrants in Norway.

### **2.3.1 Integration**

Integration is a much debated concept with many definitions. In a white paper on diversity and inclusion (St.meld.nr.49, 2003-04), it is argued that integration can be seen both as a process and as a goal. By understanding it as a goal, “equal possibilities, rights and duties” (St.meld.nr.49, 2003-04, p. 28, own translation) become the means to achieve this goal, while integration as a process is a way of incorporating individuals into the society. When looking at integration, the interaction between minority and majority is being emphasized, and reciprocity is argued to be important in the sense that both minority and majority are active parts in the integration process (St.meld.nr.49, 2003-04).

The word Integration derives from the Latin word meaning “to make whole” (Døving, 2009, p. 8, own translation), which is not very different from how we use it today. Døving (2009) explains how integration is being used when somebody is on the outside and there is a need to include them. In this sense, the outsiders and the insiders are being put together as one unity. In other words, integration is a process of bringing both minorities and the majority together into society (Døving, 2009).

The Norwegian government (NOU, 2011, p. 28, own translation) defined in a white paper from 2011 integration as concerning:

- Qualification, education, work, living conditions and social mobility
- Influence on democratic processes
- Participation in civil society
- Affiliation, respect for differences and loyalty towards common values.

Depending on the results of these factors one can, according to the white paper, see how successful the integration is. They further argue that “integration is a bilateral process where immigrants and the majority both influence each other and the shaping of the society” (NOU, 2011, p. 28, own translation). However, how to measure the factors mentioned above brings up a different discussion on how measurable integration really is. Although it is difficult to



measure to which extent one is integrated, I still argue it is important to keep these factors in mind when discussing newly arrived immigrants' situation in a new country.

### **2.3.2 Inclusion**

The term inclusion has somehow almost taken over for the term integration in the political debate. Inclusion is about letting people participate, and to lower the barriers for this participation (Arbeids- og Inkluderingsdepartementet, 2007). Inclusion is different from integration in the way that you can be integrated but not included, if you speak Norwegian but cannot get the jobs you are qualified for (Arbeids- og Inkluderingsdepartementet, 2007).

The Norwegian government argues that inclusion “is a concept that partially is being used as a substitute for ‘integration’, and partially as a contrast to exclusion” (St.meld.nr.49, 2003-04, p. 30, own translation). While integration emphasizes reciprocity, inclusion needs someone to take the responsibility of including the other part. According to the government the one holding this responsibility should be the majority in the society, or the ones in power to hold people outside (St.meld.nr.49, 2003-04). Furthermore, where integration deals with immigrants, inclusion deals with society as a whole. Not only immigrants should be included, but all groups in society. Consequently the policies on inclusion are concerned with all people living in Norway, and that they are all entitled to equal opportunities and hold the same duties to contribute and take part in the community, and how society should be organized in order to achieve this (NOU, 2011, p. 27).

I will in the following subchapters describe the education system in Norway in general, and particularly the education system for the newly arrived young immigrants.

## **2.4 Education in Norway**

To be able to understand how the education is organized for the young refugees in Norway, I first explain shortly how the general education system in Norway is organized. The compulsory school age in Norway is from six to sixteen years (NOU, 2011). Schools in Norway are divided into three levels of schooling, and the first two levels form the obligatory education. The first seven years at school are carried out at Primary School, and the three last years of obligatory school is conducted at Lower Secondary School (SNL, 2013). After finishing the obligatory education, at 16 year old, the adolescents have the right to three years of upper secondary education (SNL, 2013).

**Table 1 Education system in Norway**

<b>Primary School</b>	<b>Lower Secondary School</b>	<b>Upper Secondary School</b>
Grade 1-7	Grade 8-10	Grade 1-3 (4)
Age 6-13	Age 13-16	Age 16-19
Compulsory	Compulsory	A right by law

The Upper Secondary School in Norway is divided into three grades: VG1, VG2 and VG3 (and sometimes VG4 in some study programs). The students can choose between vocational education programs or programs for general studies. The vocational education programs “mainly leads to a craft or journeyman’s certificate” (2007, p. 12). It usually lasts for two years, with following two years of apprenticeship. The general studies last for three years and give you the possibility to apply for university. If one wants to do this after the vocational education, one has to take one extra year of education at the Upper Secondary School either before or after the apprenticeship. The upper secondary education consists of 12 different choices, where nine of them are vocational (2007).

## **2.5 Education for young newly arrived immigrants**

Adults and youth above the age of 16 who need primary or lower secondary education have the right to this in accordance with the Norwegian Education Law<sup>5</sup> § 4A-1 (NOU, 2011). This educational provision was made to be able to “meet a need among the majority population who had fallen out of compulsory schooling” (K Thorshaug & Svendsen, 2014, p. 14, own translation). However, today 80 percent of the participant group are “speakers of minority languages” (K Thorshaug & Svendsen, 2014, own translation). Since the focus of this thesis is young immigrants’ experiences with this education, I will focus on how this education works for immigrants.

As argued earlier the target group is a heterogeneous group. One of the subgroups is asylum seekers. Asylum seekers arriving to Norway after age 16 have no right, by law, to primary

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<sup>5</sup> The Norwegian law on primary, lower/upper secondary education (Opplæringsloven).

and lower/upper secondary education. Although they have no formal right, municipalities may still offer them this, and also get subsidies to fund it (NOU, 2011). If they get asylum status, they are able to continue and obtain the right through the Education Law (NOU, 2011). Many young immigrants arriving as adolescent have had little schooling earlier (NAFO, n.d.). Even though they by age should be at Upper Secondary School, they often need some primary and lower secondary education before they can continue with Upper Secondary School. Law § 4A-1, the Right to Primary Education for Adults, give young immigrants these rights, which states that

*Those who are above compulsory school age, and who need primary education, have the right to this, as long as they do not have the right to upper secondary education, in accordance with § 3-1. The right to education includes the courses needed to be able to obtain the diploma for accomplished primary and lower secondary education for adults. The education shall accommodate the needs of the individual. The education and schooling material is free (Lovdata, 1998, § 4A-1, own translation).*

This law places youth and adults in the same group. Their common right is taken care of by the municipality where they live, and the county is responsible for their later upper secondary education (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2009). Placing adolescents in the same group as adults may have several negative implications. There have been no clear guidelines on how to organize the education for these adolescents, and the municipalities have therefore taken different approaches to the task. In general throughout Norway, the education for this group is either organized at the Adult Education Centers (who are the one responsible for their education) or at the local Upper Secondary Schools. I have taken a strategic sample by researching three schools that have organized the education in the different ways. The three schools are anonymized and given fake names for this thesis: Mellomåsen, Ravnbakken and Vestlia. Two of them are organized at the local Adult Education Centers (Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken), while one is located at the local Upper Secondary School (Vestlia). The three schools will be described in depth in chapter 4.2 on Strategic sampling.

### 3 Theory

The use of theoretical concepts is a way of helping the empirical data with "providing insight and understanding" (Nilsen, 2005). In this thesis I use theories and concepts that were found significant during the research and analysis process. I present in this chapter theories and concepts I later will be using when analyzing my data. First I present the (new) sociology of childhood, with a particular focus on citizenship theories. I then explain how I have had a space and time approach when analyzing. Then the theory of second language acquisition is presented, before explaining the concepts of membership and visitorship. Lastly I will go through some theories on psycho-social health and self-esteem.

#### 3.1 The (new) sociology of childhood and theories of citizenship

The thesis is written within a (new) sociology of childhood perspective. I write (new) because it is not new anymore, although this is what the Sociology of Childhood was called when it arose in the 1990s. However, childhood is not a new phenomenon, and was already emphasized by Ariès (1962). What was important with the this new paradigm in the 1990s was a "call for children to be understood as social actors shaping as well as shaped by their circumstances" (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998, p. 6). There was also a focus on seeing children as 'beings' rather than 'becomings' (Lee, 2001). This discussion on seeing children as human beings or 'becomings' is especially important for this thesis, and will be discussed further in chapter seven. Lee (2001) argues that viewing children as human beings means seeing them as important in the now, rather than in the future. While, by terming them human 'becomings' he argues that children are seen as dependent and incomplete. He further stresses that sociologists of childhood have argued that one should:

*See children as beings alongside adults rather than as becomings in distinction from adults because children deserve respect and recognition in their own right. In short, they have argued that the category 'human becoming' should be emptied and abandoned (Lee, 2001, p. 6).*

However, it is interesting to look at this distinction later when analyzing the possibility for the participants to act out their citizenship. Research and discussions on citizenship have also emerged within the sociology of childhood. Although citizenship is a broad theoretical concept having been discussed since Aristotle, it has in the later years also been discussed in

relation to children (Bjerke, 2012; James, 2011; Kjørholt, 2008; Moosa-Mitha, 2005; Taylor & Smith, 2009; Williams & Invernizzi, 2008). There are many views and theories on citizenship and what it is, or should be. I will in this thesis look at citizenship in connection to the experiences of the participants. To be able to discuss whether the participants in this research are able to practice their citizenship or not, and how we can see this being played out in society, we have to know what citizenship and citizens are. In the following section I present some theories of citizenship. I begin with giving a short historical introduction, and then focus particularly on the theories emphasized in the sociology of childhood, and discuss how and if children have been included in these.

### **3.1.1 A historical look at citizenship**

It might be interesting to first look at the term citizenship. There is no clear translation of the word citizenship into Norwegian. Brochmann (2002) introduced the word *Samfunnsborgerskap* to be able to gather the duality (*Statsborgerskap* and *Medborgerskap* - the formal and the substantive) of the concept of citizenship. As Brochmann (2002) argues, although one often have viewed citizenship as connected to the national state, the multicultural immigration has contributed to a change in the debate, emphasizing the substantive part of citizenship, such as identity and belonging. And it is at this level citizenship has been described as “an essentially contested concept” (Lister, 2008, p. 9).

The concept of citizenship goes back to Aristotle who defined the “human being as an active, moral, and political being” (Kartal, 2001-2002, p. 102). However, in Aristotle’s time, there were only a few men who could take part as citizens (Kartal, 2001-2002), most people were as a consequence left out of the citizenship. When discussing the concept of citizenship in modern times, an important contribution has been the work of Thomas H. Marshall. He defines citizenship as “a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed” (Marshall, 1964, p. 84). His definition is often brought up when discussing this topic, and he is also viewed as the one who started the debate on citizenship to better include a bigger part of the population (Bjerke, 2012). However, he did not include children.

Marshall focused on the rights that the citizenship status gives, and he divided them into three. First the civil, which includes “liberty of person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice” (Kartal,

2001-2002, p. 104). Secondly, the political, to participate and exercise political power, and thirdly social rights, such as welfare and right to live a decent life (Kartal, 2001-2002). The contractual liberals and civic republicans later developed his theory further, which has been called the traditional views.

### **3.1.2 Traditional and difference-centered view on citizenship**

The contractual liberals have an individualistic view on citizenship, where the individuals' self-interest is seen as crucial, and it is taken for granted that all human beings are independent of each other (Moosa-Mitha, 2005). This is an exclusive view, since it implies that those dependent on others are not citizens in the same way as those independent. By seeing citizens as individual beings you lose the bigger picture of power relations existing in society, and how people relate to each other.

The second traditional theory is the civic republic view. Kartal (2001-2002) argues that the civic republicans view participation in collective decision-making as the central duty of citizens, and that they see the political participation as essential for the common good in society. They highlight membership in society, however the exercising of membership is being done through political participation, which excludes those who cannot vote.

By looking at feminist, anti-racist, gay, lesbian and transgendered theories of citizenship, Moosa-Mitha (2005) discusses an alternative view on citizenship that also include children as citizens. This theory is called a difference-centered theory. The difference-centered theorists discard the notion of citizens understood in a universal term. Instead they take a more pluralist approach where "citizens occupying multiple subjects positions such as class *and* gender *and* race come together in solidarity to resist a common oppression" (Moosa-Mitha, 2005, p. 372). She further stresses the importance of re-defining the citizens' self, firstly by viewing the citizen as one having agency, and secondly, that citizens is relational, and therefore "gains a sense of self through relationships with the 'other'" (Moosa-Mitha, 2005, p. 375). Hence, citizens are not as the contractual liberals argue individuals working only for their own interest. Rather, the focus is on the interdependency between adults and children (Kjørholt, 2008).

The difference-centered theorists also question the view of the citizen as a passive receiver of rights, since this view ignores the experiences of those who are different in the society (Moosa-Mitha, 2005). The citizen is participating and exerting agency, and is understood to

have the right to “participate differently in the social institutions and culture of the society” (Moosa-Mitha, 2005, p. 375). Moosa-Mitha (2005) further explains the importance of belonging, that one acknowledges the “citizens’ subjective desires to belong as a full member of the society rather than through a normative stance of socially prescribed activities assumed to be citizenry” (p. 372).

The concepts of citizenship and citizen do not have one clear definition, as can be seen in this discussion. Depending on how one defines it, children, and young immigrants, can be said to be citizens or not. I agree with Moosa-Mitha on the importance of seeing the differences in citizenship. There is no universal citizen, and it is important to view citizens as relational human beings. Lister (2008) presents four important factors of citizenship: Membership, rights, responsibilities and equality of status, respect and recognition. I argue that that these factors are vital for understanding citizenship today, and that they should be combined with Moosa-Mitha’s notion of difference. In a research conducted on children in Norway and their experience of citizenship, many of the children highlighted that they see themselves as citizens (Bjerke, 2010). When being asked about citizenship one of the girls of 14 years answered:

*Everybody are citizens (...) those who have applied for [formal] citizenship<sup>6</sup>, or have [formal] citizenship, those are [formal] citizens. But everybody are citizens, because we do live in a society and if you are... if you live in a society, then you are a citizen (Bjerke, 2010, p. 236, own translation).*

I believe this quote is important when looking at the discussion on young immigrants as citizens. Although one may discuss if everybody living in a society should be citizens, I still find this quote interesting in the debate on who to include in the term citizen. Werbner and Yuval-Davis (1999) have an alternative approach to citizenship, which is defined as “a more total relationship, inflected by identity, social positioning, cultural assumptions, institutional practices and a sense of belonging” (p. 4). Heater (2004) highlights differences and the sense of togetherness as significant factors of citizenship. This again stresses the importance of looking at the interrelations, membership and differences when using the concept citizenship. To be able to behave as citizens, it is important to have the opportunity to connect with others

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<sup>6</sup> As explained earlier, the word citizen in Norwegian (samfunnsborger) consists of statsborger (formal citizen) and medborger (substantive citizen). This girl in this quote used the words statsborger and samfunnsborger.

in society (Jans, 2004). The sense of membership, togetherness, and differences might help me nuance the ways in which citizenship can be practiced. These concepts and the difference-centered view of citizenship are important for the later analysis in chapter seven.

### **3.1.3 Socialization**

In relation to theories of citizenship I find it important to mention socialization. As explained above, it is important to feel a sense of belonging and togetherness to be able to express one's citizenship. Socialization is a process in which human beings acquire the "knowledge, skills and opinions which are necessary to be able to participate as a full and accepted member of society" (Schiefloe, 2011, p. 288, own translation). School is known as an arena of socialization (Pastoor, 2012). By attending school one is able to learn not only from the courses at school, but also more general knowledge through being with and talking to people. Through socialization one learn language, norms and develop one's personality and identity (Schiefloe, 2011). The knowledge is acquired through interaction with other members of society (Pastoor, 2012).

In a way the theories of socialization may be a bit contradictory to those theories of citizenship that argue for children to be a citizen. As Pastoor (2012) argues, socialization is essential to become an active participant in society. This contradicts the thought that children already are active participants in society. However, even though I do not agree on this point with Pastoor, I still argue that socialization is an important process, not only when growing up but throughout life, through which one can acquire the "rules of society, norms and values" (Pastoor, 2012, own translation).

## **3.2 Space approach**

During this research it turned out that space repeatedly came up as an important theme among the participants. I therefore chose to research the participants' experiences in light of the concept of space. The way they experienced their school was affected by how they experienced the space it represented and how the space was understood. I will be using this concept to understand the data, and also to see how the participants' experiences are connected to other theories.



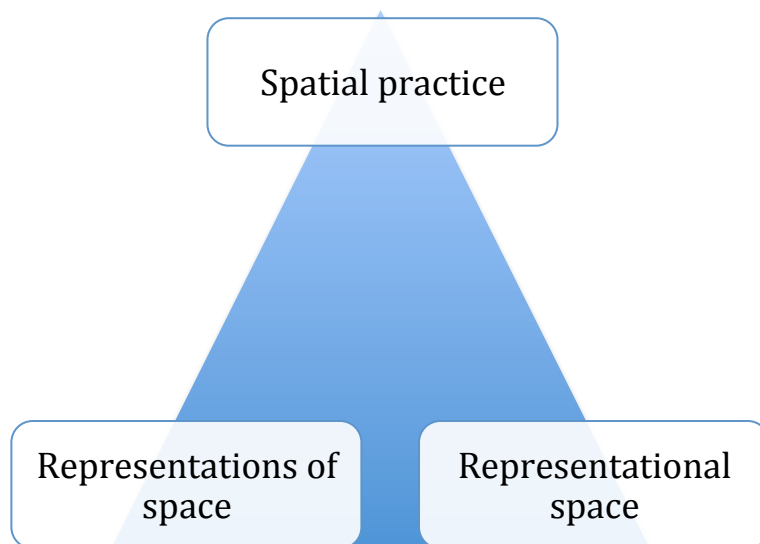
### 3.2.1 Space

Many scholars have defined the concept of space (Bourdieu, 1996; Lefebvre, 1991; Morgan, 1996). I am in the thesis mainly inspired by the theories of Lefebvre (1991). The aim of Lefebvre, with his theory on space, was:

*To discover or construct a theoretical unity between 'fields' which are apprehended separately, just as molecular, electromagnetic and gravitational forces are in physics. The fields we are concerned with are, first, the physical – nature, the Cosmos; secondly, the mental, including logical and formal abstractions; and, thirdly, the social (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 11).*

With his spatial triad, he connected all these fields in one theory, and showed the interdependency between them. Social space is produced in the interaction between the three elements of the triad: Spatial practice, representations of space and representational space.

**Figure 2 Lefebvre's spatial triad**



*Spatial practice* embraces the “particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 33). It also represents the routines and how the space is organized. How the schools are organized is an example of spatial practice. The three schools presented in the thesis are organized in three different manners, giving them three distinctive spatial practices. *Representations of space* is the mental space. It is the most dominant space

in society, and it embraces ideology, symbolism and the conceptions in society (Lefebvre, 1991). For this thesis, the representations of space are understood as the conceptions and expectations the participants and society have towards the different schools in the research. The third corner of the triad is the *Representational space*, or the lived space, and hence “the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39). In other words, this space is the experiences of its users of the spatial practice. For this research, the representational space illustrates the participants' lived experiences at the schools they attend.

Inspired by the three above mentioned concepts I approach the analysis by looking at the participants experiences in school. I will be analyzing their experiences, expectations and the organizational structures of their school, and how these are also interconnected.

### **3.3 Second language acquisition**

There are different theories and hypotheses of how to learn a new language. Øzerk (1992) present two views on how minority speaking students can learn the majority speaking language. When describing these views he looks at two factors: Learning the majority language, and taking part in the majority speaking society.

#### **3.3.1 Linear thinking**

The mainstream view, which Øzerk (1992) calls the linear thinking, assumes that one has to learn the majority speaking language (here: Norwegian) before participating in the majority speaking society. In other words, learning Norwegian then becomes a requirement if one wants to take part in Norwegian society. This way of thinking, Øzerk (1992) argues, presupposes that schools offer the minority speaking good and sufficient Norwegian courses, which will work as a foundation for the person to be able to interact with the majority society. He further argues that Norwegian lessons in this way functions as the key to “active participation in Norwegian speaking environments” (Øzerk, 1992, p. 72, own translation). Participation in society would in this way be the goal and the prize of learning the majority language.

#### **3.3.2. Circular thinking**

The other view Øzerk (1992) presents is what he calls a circular thinking. This view is an alternative to the linear view. The circular thinking, he argues, acknowledges the influence the Norwegian language development and participation in the Norwegian society have on each

other. Øzerk (1992) states that the participation in majority speaking environments depends on Norwegian skills, while participating in majority speaking environments also improve the possibilities to better their Norwegian skills. In this way the two factors are interdependent, and one does therefore not necessarily have to come before the other.

### **3.3.3 Language learning as a social process**

Crandall (1999) stresses that “since the mid-80s, discussions of effective language instruction have shifted from an emphasis on teacher-centered to learner-centered classrooms and from transmission-oriented to participatory or constructivist knowledge development”. This emphasizes interactions between people as important for learning languages. Øzerk (1992) argues that language learning, first as well as second language, do not happen in a social vacuum, but in contact and interaction with others. In this sense learning a language is a social phenomenon (Øzerk, 1992). He further claims that language education is not enough, but that the students’ Norwegian learning is dependent on “their [the learner’s] participation in and hence experiences with Norwegian speaking, accepting, including, involving social environment of activities”(Øzerk, 1992, p. 85). This is also an issue stressed by Stern (1972), who says that “to learn a language there must be adequate opportunity to use the language in true acts of communication” (p. 2). In the participants’ context this would mean that it is important for their language learning that the students get the possibility to interact and develop relationships with their Norwegian peers. This can also be seen in light of what was discussed above concerning socialization.

However, even though exposure to Norwegian speakers and language is emphasized as important to learning a language, Øzerk (1992) also stresses the importance of being involved and not only present in the situation. This can be seen in relation to the concepts of membership and visitorship which will be discussed below.

### **3.4 Membership and Visitorship**

Antia, Stinson, and Gaustad (2002) reveal another approach to inclusion. With the concepts of membership and visitorship they conducted a research, looking at the education for deaf/hard-of-hearing students. The concepts of membership and visitorship can be seen in relation to what was presented earlier in chapter 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 on Integration and Inclusion. On an analytical level, integration and inclusion can be understood by using the concepts of membership and visitorship. By using the concepts of membership and visitorship Antia et al.

(2002) explain the ways in which the students are included or not in their class. Members are seen as belonging to the environment and therefore having the same rights and duties as the others, while visitors, even though they are physically present, become outsiders, professionally and socially, because of the way the schools are organized (Kermit et al., 2014). Antia et al. (2002) argue that it therefore is important to “go beyond placement and communication access issues” (p. 214). These concepts are similar to what Øzerk (1992) pointed out about the difference between being involved or only present, as mentioned in chapter 3.3.3. Both being involved and being a member of a class, group or society are important to be included.

### **3.5 Psycho-social health and self-esteem**

How the participants experience the schools they attend, affect them in different ways. Many participants' experiences of the schools can be connected to mental health and well-being. Self-esteem and good psycho-social environment is important (Gonzalez, 1984; Øzerk, 1992), both in itself, and when learning a new language (Øzerk, 1992). When looking at the psycho-social environment it is interesting to connect this to what Antonovsky (1987) calls salutogenic or pathogenic orientation. While the pathogenic orientation is concerned with diseases and their causes, salutogenic orientation looks at the factors promoting good health. Antonovsky (1987) has argued that an important factor in the movement towards the healthy end is having a 'sense of coherence'. The 'sense of coherence' is defined as feeling of that

*the stimuli deriving from one's internal and external environments in the course of living are structured, predictable, and explicable; (2) the resources are available to one to meet the demands posed by these stimuli; and (3) these demands are challenges, worthy of investment and engagement (Antonovsky, 1987, p. 19).*

This definition of the 'sense of coherence' can also be defined as three core components: comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness (Antonovsky, 1987). This concept is useful when discussing the psycho-social environment of the participants, and their well-being. In the analysis I will be using the term well-being as a general term. I define well-being as the participants own experiences of their own well-being. However, when relating it to specific theory, I specify by applying the term used.

## 4 Methods and Methodology

Methods and methodology is an essential part of research. Methods, design and the ethical strategy chosen when carrying out the research determine the outcome of the data collection and how it is obtained. In this chapter I present the methods and methodology chosen for this research. Like Ennew et al. (2009) I define methods as the means “through which a research *participant*, is invited to communicate with a researcher” (p. 10.11) while methodology are the reasons why I chose the specific methods (Ennew et al., 2009).

First in this chapter, I present how I entered the field. Then I introduce the field where I did my research. I argue that it is important to understand the field to be able to understand the data I have collected, since my research field consists of three different locations. I then describe the participant group and the sampling process, and how rapport was built with the participants. Furthermore I present the methods conducted during the research, and the ethical challenges I had during the research. Lastly, the data analyzing process will be explained.

### 4.1 Entering the field

The aim of this research is to explore how the different ways the schools are organized may create various contexts for learning and inclusion. It was therefore important with a variation of the local context, as will be explained further on strategic sampling. Through NTNU Samfunnsforskning AS I was affiliated with a research project, researching a similar topic to mine<sup>7</sup>. Through this research project I was able to cooperate in some of their data collection. It was also through this cooperation I came in contact with two of the schools. By being affiliated to the project, the NTNU Samfunnsforskning served as gate openers. In this collaboration I and Svendsen attended some interviews together and some alone. Through her I received the interview with the key persons at Ravnbakken, to use as background information for the thesis. I attended the informal interview with key persons at Mellomåsen and two of the focus group discussions there was conducted by the two of us, while two was conducted by Svendsen. The focus group discussion at Ravnbakken was conducted by me alone. I contacted Vestlia through email. The project they have at Vestlia seemed very

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<sup>7</sup> In this cooperation I worked with Ph.D. candidate Stina Svendsen.

interesting, and important as it has quite a different organizing which gave a third and significant view on the research.

The three schools in which the interviews were conducted are located in three different parts of Norway. They are however similar in the way that they all provide education for youth that are above 16 years old needing primary and lower secondary education, before starting upper secondary education. As explained in chapter two, the municipalities may decide how they want to organize this education. In the following chapters I will explain how the sampling of schools and participants was done.

## **4.2 Strategic sampling**

For this thesis I have conducted a qualitative research, which “typically focuses on compiling a selection of micro-level case studies” (Mayoux, 2006, p. 118). In my study I chose to do three small case studies at three different schools. Using qualitative methods may unravel different realities (Mayoux, 2006), which also was my intention with this research; learning about the different realities and the different experiences the youth have and how they experience the school they go to and how this affect their everyday life. As Mayoux (2006) explains, one of the disadvantages with this type of research is that since it is small-scale it is open for bias. However, as Johannessen, Tufte, and Christoffersen (2010) argues, the purpose of qualitative research is not to get a random sample, but to get as much knowledge as possible about the phenomenon, through thorough descriptions rather than statistical generalizations.

When I selected the three schools, I therefore chose to do what Mason (2002) defines as a strategic sampling. Strategic sampling is “meaningful theoretically and empirically, because it builds on certain characteristics of criteria which help to develop and test your theory or your argument” (Mason, 2002, p. 124). The three schools were therefore chosen as strategic cases for my thesis. The participants from the three different schools will not be able to give a general idea of how this education affects young immigrants in Norway. However, they will be able to provide the thesis with three different cases: experiences from students studying at schools organized in three different ways. Further I present some background information about each school where I conducted the research. These cases may then capture the different local perceptions that the participants have and provide an in-depth image of how these specific adolescents experience their situation.

### **4.2.1 Mellomåsen Adult Education**

Mellomåsen has organized the education for the young migrants at the Adult Education Center. However, the adolescents do not study at the same place as adults. The adolescents are located in a separate building, in another part of town than the adults. It is a small school located between big warehouses. Their schoolyard is made of cement, and if it had not been for a sign saying "schoolyard", one could easily have passed without noticing. There are no other schools in sight from the school area, and the students have therefore no natural meeting point with their Norwegian peers.

The education at this school consists of five levels<sup>8</sup>. The first level is a Norwegian course, where the students can get to know basic Norwegian before starting other courses. The next four levels provide primary/lower secondary courses. The students have the possibility to study for up to six years at this school: Two years Norwegian course, two years Norwegian course with primary/lower secondary courses, and two years with primary/lower secondary education. The primary/lower secondary courses the young immigrants are offered are Norwegian, English, Mathematics, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences. All together these courses make 28 hours a week, where eight of them are Norwegian classes.

### **4.2.2 Ravnbakken Adult Education**

Ravnbakken is also situated at the Adult Education Center. The school is located a bit outside of the city center, looking down from a hill on the local Upper Secondary School. What is different between this school and Mellomåsen is that Ravnbakken does not have a building especially for young immigrants. Here, both youth and adults go to school in the same building, and may even attend the same courses. First the students who do not know Norwegian go through a Norwegian course, before starting the primary/lower secondary schooling. Then the school offers a Norwegian course for 30 hours a week, and later the same primary/lower secondary courses as Mellomåsen. The first level at this school is the Norwegian course, the second level is basic education, and then there are two levels for finishing the lower secondary education.

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<sup>8</sup> Levels does not necessarily mean years. One may skip levels if one is good enough for the next level

### **4.2.3 Vestlia Upper Secondary School**

Vestlia is located in the same building as the local Upper Secondary School. This is a new and large school. This project is a cooperation project between the municipality and the Upper Secondary School, making it possible for the young migrants to study in proximity to their Norwegian peers. The young immigrants have two classrooms at the school. Before coming to the school they have a short, intensive Norwegian course (around two-five months) at the local Adult Education. When studying at the Adult Education they attend the Norwegian course with adults. They further attend from a half a year to two years of primary/lower secondary education. At Vestlia they also have, in addition to the same courses as Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken, gym classes. At the school they have 30 hours a week, 12 of them being Norwegian classes (in comparison with Mellomåsen which have eight).

At this school the young immigrants are also able to attend courses with the students at Upper Secondary School, if they are particularly good in a subject, as for example mathematics, or English<sup>9</sup>. They then have the possibility to attend the exam at the end of the year, and in that manner finish this course and get an exemption from this particular course when they start Upper Secondary School later.

Since the schools are organized differently, it is interesting to explore how the students experience their everyday life at school in these different local contexts. This will be discussed further in the analysis chapters. In the next subchapter I present the participant group and how they were selected.

## **4.3 Sampling of participants**

Just as the schools were strategically chosen, the participants were a strategic sampling. The experiences of the participants in my research cannot be generalized as experiences for the students at this school as a whole. However, the participants from the different schools are heterogeneous groups consisting of people of different backgrounds and situations, which hopefully will give a broader view. Still, just as the sampling of the schools, these participants will only be able to present their own experiences.

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<sup>9</sup> in Norwegian this is called 'hospitere' which means to take part in education (individual lessons or whole courses) without being a permanent student in the class (SNL, 2014)



### **4.3.1 Age and social age**

As has been mentioned, the participants in this research are from sixteen and up to their early twenties. Since this thesis is based in the field of Childhood Studies, one might question my use of adolescents as participants for this thesis. Childhood is in Oxford Dictionary defined as "the state or period of being a child" (Oxford Dictionary, 2014), and as UN claims, "a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years" (UNCRC, 1989, Art.1). Hence, childhood is the state or period of being a human being below eighteen years old. When I chose this topic for my thesis I knew I would have to include, in addition to those defined as children by the UN, adolescents above the age of eighteen. I argue that it in this setting may be useful to have a certain 'ignorance of age' (Solberg, 1996). Because more important than age in this setting, are their experiences. Allowing participants above eighteen years of age into the research also made it possible to draw on the experiences of people who had already been in the program for a while or who had finished it.

### **4.3.2 Participants**

When doing strategic sampling one as a researcher has to identify the target group one need for the specific research, and then pick out participants from this target group (Johannessen et al., 2010). The young immigrants interviewed in this research are not a representative group of all the young immigrants in Norway, but they will be able to give a view on how they themselves view their everyday life in schools, how they experience the organizing of their school and how this affects them. I chose, as mentioned earlier, to interview young immigrants from different municipalities, to be sure that I met youth with different experiences on how the schools were organized.

As mentioned above in chapter two on background and previous research, young immigrants are a heterogeneous group. Their background, where they come from and the reasons for why they have immigrated vary. The participants in this research come from different parts of the world (participants from four continents are being represented in this research). Some come from countries having educational systems that are more similar to the Norwegian, which may of course be beneficial for those experiencing this. Not only the similarities and differences between educational systems are interesting, but also how many years of education they have already attended before arriving Norway. The educational background of the participants ranged from almost no education to having finished almost the whole study program in their home country. However, since the education system was different where they had studied, or

they did not have papers with them, or just because they needed to learn Norwegian, they had to study when arriving Norway as well. However, even though there are differences in educational background, each of the three schools was represented by a heterogeneous group of students with different backgrounds. Still, they are facing similar challenges.

### **4.3.3 Building Rapport**

Building rapport, meaning “establishing mutual understanding and trust” (Ennew et al., 2009, p. 2.9), is important for a good research. Researchers and participants must be able to trust each other, and know that the other part tells the truth. Although, as Ennew et al. (2009) states, building rapport may take weeks and months, in my research I did not have much time to meet the adolescents before the interviews, because of time and distance. In one of the schools I was able to visit the classes beforehand to give out information about the project. At this school the Ph.D. candidate I cooperated with and I also showed up earlier to eat lunch with the students before the interview. Unfortunately I did not have the possibility to do this in the two other schools. However, the school had given out good information about the research and me before the arrival, and in that manner some rapport was already built. In every interview I also started by telling about the research and myself, and made sure that they knew everything they needed to know. I tried to make a calm and informal atmosphere so that rapport could easier be built. The participants seemed to have understood their right to withdraw and seemed comfortable in the situation.

### **4.4 Data gathering**

Before going into the field I decided that I wanted to use mainly interviews as a method. I did consider using other methods as well, but came to the conclusion that interviews would yield the best result in this research, by letting the youth talk about their own experiences through semi-structured and focus group discussions. In addition to these I also had two informal interviews with two of the employees at Vestlia, and teachers from Mellomåsen.

The main method in Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken were focus group discussion, while I in Vestlia conducted individual semi-structured interviews. The initial plan for the research was individual semi-structured interviews. However, when I started cooperating with the Stina Svendsen and the research project from NTNU, I opened up for using focus group discussions as well. This resulted in using different methods in the schools. I did try to also get some individual semi-structured interviews at Mellomåsen, however due to difficulties of reaching

the participants, I decided that I already had enough data from the focus group discussions. It could have been interesting to have individual interviews at the two other schools as well. However, I do believe that both the individual interviews and the focus group discussions gave me the information I needed for the thesis. Getting the focus group discussions in addition to the individual interviews was beneficial for the thesis by being able to get different viewpoints on the issue, and to see the collective interaction between the participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009)

#### **4.4.1 Semi-structured interview**

Semi-structured interviews has been defined as "an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 3). The interviews are in this sense a good way of getting in-depth stories and experiences from the participants. This gave me the possibility to talk with adolescents who are experiencing these different ways of organizing primary and lower secondary education, and to hear their thoughts about the topic. Interviews in general have also been described as "conversations with a purpose" (Ennew et al., 2009, p. 5.36). By having this conversation with the participants, I wanted to hear and discuss their thoughts and experiences.

By choosing semi-structured interviews, I was hoping to make the situation informal. As Ennew et al. (2009) claim, this interview situation makes the interviewer "free to phrase the questions, and to ask them in any order as long as they follow the broad themes of the research" (p. 5.36). One may then also easier form the interview to suit the particular participant. I agree with Ennew et al. (2009) in that this method gives more control of the conversation to the participants. They further explain that these are interviews that participants usually like (Ennew et al., 2009). One of the reasons why I chose this method is also because it might to some degree even the power balance. Power exists, in one way or another, in all human relations. So when doing research, it takes place in a world of inequalities, where few with much power, make decisions (Ennew et al., 2009). Hence, this may become even more visible in research, where one also have the relation researcher - participant, where the researcher is the one being in charge and conducting the research. I therefor believed that this could be balanced by giving the participants more control of the situation.

I had all together nine semi-structured interviews that all varied in time from twenty-five to fifty minutes. I experienced it as an interesting method, which was able to give me the data needed for the thesis. I do believe that the semi-structure interviews made the informal setting that was wanted for this research, and that the participants seemed relaxed and free to say what they wanted.

#### **4.4.2 Focus group interview**

In Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken I and the Ph.D., Stina Svendsen, conducted focus group interviews. As mentioned I conducted two with Svendsen, and one alone. The choice of using focus group interviews came because of different reasons. This was the chosen method for the research group I was cooperating with, and therefore also what was the deal with the two schools. However, having this opportunity made me realize that this method actually worked very well with this research.

Focus group interviews entered the academic social research in the 1980s (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). A focus group interview consists of normally six to ten participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), however, in this research we had from three to nine participants, since the number of participants joining varied. In this setting I and Stina Svendsen functioned as moderators. A moderator is someone who “introduces the topics for discussion and facilitates the interchange (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 150). I found this method very useful since one then is able to raise different viewpoints on the topics from the different participants. This is also what my aim of the research is, to get the different viewpoints from the students. These interviews resulted in very interesting discussions, which has proven especially beneficial for the later analysis. By having more than one participant at a time, they also helped each other to get started and I was able to see if there was a consensus in the group or if they were disagreeing and having different opinions within the group. Lloyd-Evans (2006) argues that one must make sure that peer pressure does not occur, for example in the way that some dominant members try to make others agree with their viewpoint. The participants from the focus group discussions did seem free to say what they wanted. Out of the experience of the interviews I believe that the participants was able to outer their own meanings, even if that was contradictory to the others in the group.

#### 4.4.3 Informal interview

In addition to the semi-structured interview I also did some meetings inspired by informal interviews, with key persons from Mellomåsen and Vestlia. In addition I was given the interview transcript of the informal interviews with the key persons at Ravnbakken to obtain contextual knowledge of the school. As explained above, interview could be described as a conversation with a purpose. This definition suits the informal interview at Vestlia very well. The purpose was to better understand how their way of organizing the education worked. At Mellomåsen the teachers discussed and explained their experience with the organizing of the school. These interviews therefore worked well as methods to obtain good background information on the schools and how they are organized. Also the participants gave me information about how the schools are organized and their view on this. This background information was very helpful to get the context at the schools before analyzing the young immigrants' views. In Table 2 an overview of the methods implemented in the research is given. As the table shows, altogether 52 participants took part in the research.

**Table 2 Methods used**

	<b>Methods and participants</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Mellomåsen</b>	4 Focus group interviews (3, 8, 9, 5 people in the groups)	25
	1 Informal interview with key persons at the school	8
<b>Ravnbakken</b>	1 Focus group interview (6 people)	6
	1 Informal interview with key persons at the school	2
<b>Vestlia</b>	9 Individual semi-structural interviews	9
	1 Informal interviews with 2 key persons at the school	2
<b>All Schools</b>		<b>52</b>

#### 4.5 Ethical considerations and challenges

Many researchers address ethical dilemmas when conducting research with children and young people (Abebe, 2009; Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Punch, 2002). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) argue that

*Ethical issues go through the entire process of an interview investigation, and potential ethical concerns should be taken into consideration from the very start of an investigation into the final report (p. 62).*

It is therefore important to keep ethical issues in mind throughout the whole process. In the process of the research and writing the thesis I kept the ethical issues in mind. Before going into the field, the research was approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services. In this chapter I present some of the ethical consideration and challenges I have met during this process.

#### **4.5.1 The researcher's role**

The role of the researcher is critical for the quality of the research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). When entering the research I thought carefully through my role as a researcher. The role can provoke a tension between having a professional distance and friendship towards the participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In this research I opted for appearing professional, however not so different from the participants themselves, what could be seen as something in between what Kvale and Brinkmann argue. As mentioned in chapter 4.4.1 on Semi-structured interview, one can in an interview situation find asymmetric power relations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Conducting interviews at school may in this sense increase this power relation, since at schools the "balance of power is heavily skewed towards adults" (Kellett & Robinson, 2004, p. 91). The role of me as a researcher in this way became important to be able to balance this relation. This was emphasized by my self-presentation, both how I presented myself through verbal and non-verbal communication (King & Horrocks, 2010). As mentioned, I opted for a role as professional however not so different from the participants. I believe that by presenting myself as a student helped to even out the power relations. This can also be understood by how the participants reacted during research. Several highlighted the fact that I also was a student (as themselves). Also when finishing one interview, one of the participants argued that of course he would attend, because we are both students, and students should help each other.

#### **4.5.2 Informed consent and confidentiality**

Informed consent involves explaining to the participants the "research aims, research methods and processes, research topics, what the data will be used for and that it is possible to withdraw from the research at any time" (Ennew et al., 2009, p. 2.15). After explaining this,

the participants may voluntarily decide to take part in the research. In the research I used both written and oral consent. In the two schools where I cooperated with another researcher, we decided that we would only obtain the oral consent. However we did make sure that they were well informed, and therefore able to give an informed consent. Some of the participants in this research had come to Norway as refugees. Broch (2012) mentions that the use of signature when interviewing refugees may make them feel unsafe. We as researchers felt that not using signature was more appropriate in the situation, since we made sure that they had understood the importance of the consent, and also because it may be easier to understand that it really will be anonymous, if we do not even have the participants' names.

At Vestlia however I did collect the written informed consent. The contact person from the school asked me to send over the informed consent forms before I came. They handed out these to the youth that was going to participate, where the same information was written as what had been given orally at Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken. When I came to meet the participants from Vestlia they had been told about the research beforehand, and had their consent-form already signed. However, when meeting them I also started by going through this information and also emphasizing the option to withdraw.

As earlier mentioned under use of recorder, the importance of securing confidentiality is vital. Masson (2004) defines confidentiality as:

*Taking considerable care not to pass information to those connected in any way with the respondent and disclosing information only in ways which protect the identity of those who provided it (p. 52).*

To ensure confidentiality, names were not collected during the research and the schools where the research was conducted have been given fake names (Ennew et al., 2009) This is also why I have chosen to use only gender when citing the participants, so that they will be less recognizable when one is not able to connect different quotes together. One may ask if this could affect the research. I however argue that the research is just as important even if not knowing ages or personalizing the participants by giving them fake names. The interesting part in this research is to hear their experiences with these schools, regardless of their background or age. I have through the thesis made sure that not only a few, but that the different voices of the participants are heard.

### **4.5.3 Reciprocity**

I decided to provide the participants with a small gift for showing my gratitude for their involvement in the research. Other researchers discuss this topic, finding different reasons for providing the participants with small gifts or paying them for having shared their time and effort (Abebe, 2009; Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Lloyd-Evans, 2006). Abebe (2009) argues that it can be seen compensating the participants "with service and/or material and/or monetary payments" (p. 461). Giving participants small gifts, however, can be problematic if it makes the participants take part in the research because of the gift, rather than wanting to take part in the research itself, hence one as a researcher might fall in the risk of bribing them (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). Another risk is that the participants tell the researcher what they think the researcher wants to hear (Ennew & Plateau, 2004).

However I decided to give a small gift, arguing as Abebe (2009) that this was a good reward for their time and effort spent on the research. Also since I gave a symbolic more than valuable gift, the risk of bribing the participants was not as relevant. When giving out the gift I was able to thank them properly for participating in the research. The participants' reaction also gave the expression of that they had understood that their time and stories had been important to the research.

### **4.5.4 Use of recorder**

I chose to use a recorder when conducting the interviews. By using audio recorder you make sure that you have gotten all words on the recorder, and one can therefor always go back and re-listen as many times as needed (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Being able to re-listen was particularly beneficial when conducting research with newly arrived immigrants with Norwegian as their second language. Using a recorder also "allows you to concentrate completely on the interview without having to worry about taking notes or remembering points to write up later" (Willis, 2006, pp. 149-150). As Ennew et al. (2009) state however, it is important to make sure that the participants "know and agree to the way in which a data-collection session is recorded and how this record will be used" (p. 6.23). I therefor always asked before starting the interview if they were comfortable with me using the recorder, and also explained that it was only to help me remember the interviews, that nobody else would listen to it, and that it would all be deleted when I was done with transcribing them. All participants I talked with agreed upon me using it.



Using recorder may also be problematic. Some participants might find it constraining to talk in front of a recorder (Willis, 2006). One reason for this may be that they are afraid of that information may be traced back to them (Willis, 2006). This may in particular be an issue when conducting research where refugees are being represented, such as my research. They might have fled from something or someone in their home country, and then getting their own voice on a tape recorder might make them afraid that someone could get a hold of it and recognize their voice. Broch (2012) argues that it may not always be easy to see the difference between a research interview and an asylum interview. Using an audio recorder may in this sense make it look more interrogatory and therefor also make the participants having experienced asylum interviews less comfortable in the situation. However, I still argue that if ensuring confidentiality, as described above, and thinking carefully through these issues when choosing methods and also during the research, I believe that using a recorder favoring for my research.

In addition to recording I however also wrote down my immediate thoughts just after the interview, to make sure that I would remember the points I had found important during the interview, and if something special happened. I was then able to write down important issues, such as questions and possible answers, impressions and feelings, ideas and what happened during the day, as mentioned in the manuals of Ennew et al. (2009).

#### **4.6 Challenges and limitations of the research**

The topic of the research is wide and involves many individuals throughout Norway. However, in this research only a few out of this group have been able to voice their opinion. This thesis is therefore only a presentation of the experiences of the participants in this study, and cannot be generalized as a consensus in the whole group. In addition I only conducted interviews with the students, and conducted informal interviews with key persons at the school. The informal interviews with the key persons also presented interesting views that should be looked at further in future researches. Hence, there are many views on this topic that is relevant. However, choices had to be made, due to set criteria, such as time and length of the thesis. I therefore chose to look at the students' experiences, being aware of that views would be missing. However, I emphasize the importance of hearing the young immigrants' view on this topic, and therefore wanted to present this. Other limitations and challenges may be that the interviews were conducted at the schools. This may result in the participants

feeling a "pressure to give 'correct' answers to research questions" (Punch, 2002, p. 328). However ethical considerations were taken, as explained above in chapter 4.4.1 and 4.5.1. Also time may in this way have affected the data collection, not having much time for building rapport, an ethical issue explained in depth in chapter 4.3.3 on Building rapport.

## **4.7 Data analysis**

Much of the data analysis already started while conducting the research. While interviewing I remembered topics that was repetitive and that seemed important to the participants. When finishing interviews I wrote down immediate thoughts, which also proved being helpful. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) argue that interpreting "as you go" helps in the way that "the final analysis then becomes not only easier and more amenable, but also rests on more secure ground" (p. 190). Jorgensen (1989) explains the process of analysis like this:

*Analysis is a breaking up, separating, or disassembling of research materials into pieces, parts, elements, or units. With facts broken down into manageable pieces, the researcher sorts and sifts them, searching for types, classes, sequences, processes, patterns, or wholes (p. 107).*

This definition shows the process of breaking up the data into pieces, for then joining it to a whole. Starting the process while still interviewing was valuable, however, also the transcribing process was a good way of starting the process. By transcribing I was able to go thoroughly through the data before starting coding and locating topics, similarities and differences between the three schools, and make sure that I found the topics and quotes representing the participants experiences.

In the next chapters I present three chapters of analysis. In the analysis I present views of young migrants from three schools located in three different municipalities in Norway. As pointed out in earlier in this chapter, these schools were strategically chosen because they are organized differently, according to location, time and which students who attend. The intention of this thesis is not to evaluate these schools, but to present the young immigrants' experiences with their everyday life and their views on their schools.

The analysis is divided into three main chapters. In chapter five I will look at space in relation to how the young immigrants experience the way their school is organized. In chapter six I will look at how the young immigrants experience the everyday social life at school. In chapter seven I will focus on the experiences mentioned in chapter five and six, and together with other statements from the interviews I will look at how the way the schools are organized can affect the participants' inclusion process and citizenship.

## **5 Experiences with school**

In this analysis chapter I discuss how the young immigrants experience and reflect upon the way their school is organized. Since the participants attend three schools organized in three different ways, it is interesting to look at how their experiences differ, and coincide. As mentioned in chapter 3.2 on Space approach, I have chosen a space approach to the research, since space was a recurrent topic emphasized by the participants throughout the interviews.

When using the concept of space I have, as presented, been inspired of Lefebvre's spatial triad, where he divides space into three parts: 1) Spatial practice (perceived space), 2) Representations of space (conceived space) and 3) Representational space (lived space) (Lefebvre, 1991). In this thesis I have interpreted the triad as 1) how the school is organized, 2) the expectations and preconceptions about the school and 3) how the participants experience the school.

Due to the fact that the schools I conducted research in are geographically located in three different parts of the country, and also organized in three different ways, they do in this sense represent three different spatial practices. As explained in in chapter 4.2 on Strategic sampling, both the students at Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken study at schools that are separate buildings, located away from their Norwegian peers. Mellomåsen have a building especially organized for adolescents, while Ravnbakken offers education for both adolescents and adults together. Vestlia, however, is located at the local Upper Secondary School and hence the young immigrants study in the same building as their Norwegian peers. The spatial practices at Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken are similar in the sense that the young immigrants on both schools are separated from their Norwegian peers. However, there are significant differences, and the schools still represent distinctive ways of organizing the school space.

It is interesting, therefore not only to look at the actual spatial differences, but how the young immigrants participating in this research experience this space and the expectations of the society and the participants to the different spaces, what Lefebvre (1991) terms as representational space and representations of space. The expectations towards the school are especially interesting when looking at how the schools affect the participants' well-being. As will be discussed, the expectations around the space seemed to have had negative influences on some of the participants. The expectations seemed to lead to a clash between what was expected and what was experienced.

Frøyland and Gjerustad (2012) claim that what happens at school affect how youth view themselves. Both their learning outcome and their social life at school may affect them (Frøyland & Gjerustad, 2012). Gonzalez (1984) emphasizes that “everyone needs a sense of self-confidence and self-esteem; children especially cannot navigate very well without it” (p. 14). It is therefore important that the school affects the participants in positive ways, so that it increases the children and adolescents' self-esteem. Self-esteem and self-confidence is important in life in general, however it is also important for the learning processes at school. Øzerk (1992) highlights the significance of the psychosocial environment when learning a language. Seeing the participants' situation in light of what Gonzalez (1984) and Øzerk (1992) claim, this means that the young immigrants need to be in an environment where they gain self-confidence and a good self-esteem to make the most out of their education.

In this chapter I focus on how the adolescents experience the spatial context at school. I look at how these experiences, of what can be viewed in relation to the different spaces of Lefebvre (1991), and the connections between them, affect the participants' well-being.

## **5.1 The power of name**

When the experiences within a space clashes with the expectations about a space, this may have negative effects for those inhabiting it. The participants from Ravnbakken questioned the logic of going to a school that is named “Adult Education” when they are still young. The name Adult Education is one example of how the expectations can affect the young immigrants. The school's name informs us about two things: it is a space for education, and it is for adults. The expectations when hearing this name is thus that adults attend this school.

Several of the participants from Ravnbakken highlighted the issue of the name 'Adult Education' as an important issue for them, and they explained it as frustrating. The following quotation from a boy describes how it can be experienced having to show the student card, where it says "Adult Education" even if they are only 17:

*For example, he is 17 years now (...) and they asked, do you have a school certificate? He [the one checking the certificate] sees "Adult Education". Where does he come from? What school is that? Maybe he thinks that I am old (Boy, Ravnbakken).*

This demonstrates how just attending a school with the name Adult Education in itself was enough to make some of the participants feel uncomfortable. The participants from Ravnbakken described the Adult Education as a place where they felt they should not be, since the Adult Education gives expectations that adults are studying there. This might be interpreted as how the representations of space clashes with the participants' experience of the space. What is expected from this space, from the participants and society, does not correspond with the participants' experiences.

What the participants also emphasized was that when they would start attending Upper Secondary School they would also end up in this clash between experiences and expectations, just the other way around:

*When I start there [Upper Secondary School] I will be 21, or more than 21. When they [his Norwegian peers] start they will be 16, don't you think that it will be difficult? (Boy, Ravnbakken).*

The Upper Secondary School gives the expectations that it is a school for youth from 16-18 years old; however most of the participants will be over 20 years old when they begin. In this way the expectations of the space does not correlate with the experiences the participants have neither at the Adult Education nor later at the Upper Secondary School. They do in this experience what could be called a contradiction between the representations of space and the representational space (Lefebvre, 1991). The way the school is organized and the participants' experiences and expectations relate to each other and may in this sense be said to have impact on the participant's everyday life. This may be seen as examples of how spaces interrelate: space should not be viewed as a "dead, inert thing or object, but as organic and fluid and

alive; it has pulse, it palpitates, it flows and collides with other spaces" (Merrifield, 2000, p. 171). The importance of seeing the interrelation between the way the school is organized, the participants' experiences and their expectations can be connected to the spatial triad of Lefebvre (1991). He argues that it is vital to see the different spaces as a 'unitary theory' to be able to see how the different corners of the triad interrelate. It is also interesting to look at this in the light of what Antia et al. (2002) describe as membership and visitorship. The experiences described by the participants can be understood as visitorship. In this sense the young immigrants may be seen as visitors at both the Adult Education and later in the Upper Secondary School since, as mentioned, they are outsiders in both places.

As seen above, the schools' name may have implications for what one expects from the school, and whom one expects would be studying at this particular school. Both Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken are called Adult Education. However, at Vestlia they have given the education a different name. Vestlia is a cooperation project between the Upper Secondary School and the Adult Education (the county and the municipality), and through this project they have given the education a different name. The name also contains the word class, which may help to emphasize that the young immigrants are studying in classes at an ordinary Upper Secondary School. Because of confidentiality I will in this thesis be calling it The Class where it is needed to specify. It is clear that this clash of representations of space and representational space affected the participants in Ravnbakken. Calling it something else may therefore have a positive effect. The symbolisms around the two names are different and may therefore encourage distinct expectations and reactions. We cannot know if a change of name would have affected the participants at Ravnbakken and Mellomåsen differently, or if changing the name at Vestlia to Adult Education would have affected them in a negative way. However, the experiences from Ravnbakken are still valid and interesting, and at least for their experiences a change of name could have changed their experiences to the positive.

## **5.2 Experiences from Norwegian course and The Class at Vestlia**

It is interesting to look more closely at how the participants from Vestlia have experienced their schooling. The students at Vestlia have experienced two different ways of organizing the schools, since they attended the Norwegian course prior to the The Class at Vestlia. The Class is situated at the city's Upper Secondary School, where they have their own classrooms inside the school building. The participants from Vestlia share the eating space and the gym with the

upper secondary students. However, the Norwegian course is being held on the city's Adult Education, and is much more comparable to the two other schools in this research. The Adult Education the participants from Vestlia attended is also segregated from other schools, and the Norwegian course is held for both adolescents and adults. When asking the students about the differences between the Norwegian course and The Class, they were more positive to their school than the Norwegian course. One girl said this about the Norwegian course:

*It was very boring. You cannot learn anything if you think it is boring and if you do not want to be there (...) Of course I did not like it, there were adults there (Girl, Vestlia).*

This quote is similar to those of students from Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken, who indicated dissatisfaction with having to study at a separate school without their Norwegian peers., such as the two participants in the following quotes. The girl quoted below had already attended an ordinary Lower Secondary School before starting the Adult Education at Mellomåsen:

*I think it is very boring here (...). It actually gave much more, much more meaning when I... At least when I attended Lower Secondary School, then it went well. While when I attend here then it is, yes, a bit difficult<sup>10</sup> (Girl, Mellomåsen).*

One of the boys from Ravnbakken also explains how he thought he should and would attend a class at Upper Secondary School when he arrived Norway:

*But I thought that the system could be as, like, for example for me who have education, Upper Secondary School, from my home country, or in [another country], so then I thought I could move to Upper Secondary School. That it would be a special class for those who come as new so that they learn Norwegian, and get to know the culture and the system here in Norway. And a bit more people and stuff like that. (...) So, I came here [Adult Education] and I became very, like, angry (Boy, Ravnbakken).*

The feeling of wanting to be attending ordinary schools was repeated by most participants from Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken. One may say that both the experiences and the way the

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<sup>10</sup> The girl is referring to emotionally and not academically difficult

schools are organized at these two schools and the Norwegian course for the participants from Vestlia have resemblances. However, one large difference lies within what could be interpreted as spatial practice (Lefebvre, 1991). The spatial practice for the participants is organized differently. The education for the young immigrants from Vestlia is organized so that they attend the Norwegian course for a few months only (the participants in this research attended from around two to five months). However, at the other schools the whole education took place at a space isolated from their Norwegian peers. One of the participants from Vestlia expressed how he experienced the difference between these two ways of organizing the schools:

*Interviewer: How does the difference between attending the Norwegian course, and attending here at the Upper Secondary School feel? How did it feel?*

*Boy: You feel a bit open, if you know what I mean. It was like, yes, you can try to think that you have a goal and you can try to reach it. But there [the Norwegian course], it was like a vampire house.*

*Interviewer: How?*

*Boy: I just felt it that way. Like a prison. That was what I thought. I will never become anything. I was thinking that way.*

*Interviewer: You became very...?*

*Boy: Yes, because the Norwegian you learn, you know, at the Norwegian course, you just learn it as it is. Only from the teachers. You cannot do anything more. But here, for example, if you learn something, you can just go and talk to a Norwegian, a Norwegian person.*

As can be seen from this quote, the two different ways of organizing the education had an impact on the boy. The two different schools provided him with different experiences, affecting him in distinct ways. A space that is experienced as being “like a prison” is not a place where your self-esteem and psycho-social environment can flourish and thrive. As Øzerk (1992) stresses, being in a good psycho-social environment is important for the



students' learning. A Norwegian official report on multilingual persons and the education system (NOU, 2010) shows that there is a connection between motivation and learning outcome, strengthening Øzerk's argument above. The environment described by the participant above does in this sense not represent a beneficial environment for his well-being. Another participant also demonstrated how starting The Class changed his motivation:

*I have lived in Norway for approximately five years. For three years I did not learn Norwegian. Not at all. I did not try. When I came to The Class, they told me about what I can become and things like that, and future and stuff. And I thought; yes, now I have to learn Norwegian. It is important (Boy, Vestlia).*

These quotes from the two boys above show that they have had similar experiences with coming from the Norwegian course to The Class. Their well-being and learning process were dependent on the motivation, information and good environment that The Class was able to offer them. As the participant explains, he did not even try to learn Norwegian the first three years. He needed the right information before he got the motivation to start learning Norwegian. Thorshaug and Svendsen (2014) also claim that inadequate information can affect the students' motivation. The boy above also continues by saying that when he started at The Class, he did homework for four hours every day. He explained that he did this because he had a very good teacher. Having a good teacher, he said, gave him the energy to try to do better. He ended up getting the best grades in class:

*Because my teacher was very good at giving me hope and that I should try harder and harder (Boy, Vestlia).*

This again demonstrates the importance of motivation and the psycho-social environment when learning a language. This proves what Øzerk (1992) stresses about the significance of the psycho-social environment for the students' learning. "A context where the students experience safety and positive self-esteem, positive attitudes and low proportions of anxiety (...) is being seen as the best situation for language acquisition" (Øzerk, 1992, p. 98, own translation). This is also being emphasized by Arnold and Brown (1999) who argues that "stimulating the different positive emotional factors, such as self-esteem, empathy or motivation, can greatly facilitate the language learning process"(p. 2). This shows that, not only is having a good psycho-social environment vital for the participants in itself, it is also

important for their language learning process. This will be discussed further in chapter 6.1 on Language is the key. The quote above however, can also be seen in relation to what Antonovsky (1987) terms as the sense of coherence. It can seem that this student obtained what Antonovsky stresses as the core components in the sense of coherence: *comprehensibility* and *manageability*, and therefore found *meaningfulness* in his situation. School for this boy therefore seems to have a salutogenic benefits.

Three of the participants from Vestlia particularly highlighted the topic of good class environment, arguing that The Class was like a family to them. These participants and one more also emphasized the class environment, arguing that they felt teachers and fellow students cared about them. As two of them expressed when talking about The Class:

*We feel that we are part of something* (Girl, Vestlia).

*You can always come to it [The Class] and feel as if you are a family* (Girl, Vestlia).

The experiences the participants present here are clearly helping to improve the psycho-social environment. This can again be seen in consideration of the 'unitary theory' on space of Lefebvre (1991). As mentioned in the forgoing chapter, it is important to see how the spaces interrelate. How the participants here experience what could be understood as the spatial practice, seem to affect the participants' representational space in positive ways. It gives them better motivation to learn and a good psycho-social environment. In the next subchapter the importance of being 'normal' or 'normalizing' the everyday life will be discussed.

### **5.3 Feeling 'normal'**

Being seen as 'normal' is important for many people, and maybe particularly adolescents (Bengtson & Ruud, 2012). In addition, not only being normal, but having a normalized life, when you have just started a new life in a new country, may be vital. As argued in chapter 2.1 on Previous research, being normal may be defined as the average person (Haugsgjerd et al., 2002). Not fitting into the picture of the average person may then make one feel different. Pastoor (2012) argues that the everyday life at school is one factor that can help normalizing the students' lives. However, this may depend on how the school is organized. The way the

school is organized in Vestlia, where it is located at the local Upper Secondary School may in this sense be a normalizing factor:

*I can see that there are adolescents here; I go to a normal school now (Girl, School Vestlia).*

This girl expresses how she feels that she is attending a 'normal' school. For her, seeing other adolescents her age made the school seem more normal to her. Another participant from Vestlia also expresses how attending this school was experienced as attending a normal Upper Secondary School:

*Boy: I just felt that I was at Upper Secondary School, I was never thinking that I was attending [The Class].*

*Interviewer: So you feel you are a part of the whole?*

*Boy: Yes. I, I study in a classroom here at the Upper Secondary School, here you see that everybody is Norwegian and. I feel, it is pretty good. I felt, I was attending Upper Secondary School, normal Upper Secondary School. I just felt that way, I don't know why.*

Making the adolescents feel that they are attending what the participants called a 'normal school', I argue ,helps them acquiring a 'normal' everyday life. This can therefore also be seen as important for their well-being. Out of how they explain 'normal', I understand this as in a way being the average adolescent, and therefore being where they feel it is expected from society and themselves that they should be. In other words, there is a coherence between the experiences and the expectations, and can in this sense be seen as contrasting to the clash explained in chapter 5.1 on The power of name. Seen in light of the spatial triad of Lefebvre (1991) one could say that the representations of space correlate with the representational space. Although normal or abnormal schools do not exist, one may understand that the feeling of being where other people your age are, may be found more appropriate, and therefore also make them feel more satisfied. Bengtson and Ruud (2012) highlights how for children and youth in general, it is important to be seen as 'normal'. Going to an ordinary school, as they do in Vestlia, rather than a special school may therefore help to 'normalize' their everyday life.

Attending a school where one's Norwegian peers also attend, and in this sense be able to feel more 'normal' may also be a way of helping the students become and feel integrated into the Norwegian society. Valenta (2008) found in his research that little contact with ethnic Norwegians resulted in a feeling of non-belonging. Contrasting this, being able to attend a 'normal' school, as the participants from Vestlia do, may then increase their sense of belonging. This is also important for what will be discussed further in chapter seven.

Normalizing the everyday life may be even more important to some of the young immigrants than others. As mentioned in chapter 1.3 on Clarifications, young immigrants coming to Norway is a heterogeneous group. They may have come to Norway for very different reasons. However, some may have experienced war, violence or other traumatic incidents. These adolescents may be in greater risks of psychological distress (Bengtson & Ruud, 2012). The importance of normalizing their everyday life is therefore even more vital. As illustrated by my data, the ways the schools are organized seem to have impact on the feeling of being normal. The situation may be experienced as more 'normal' if they do what their Norwegian peers do, as in Vestlia: attend Upper Secondary School. Even though the students at Vestlia do not attend the same courses as their Norwegian peers, the data indicate that the students value being in the same building as their Norwegian peers.

#### **5.4 “After a while you do not have any hopes for the future”**

This chapter has shown different ways the organization of the schools has affected the participants. The timeframe of the schools is another aspect of how the way the schools were organized affected them. As explained in chapter 4.2 on Strategic sampling, the timeframe at the three schools are organized differently. At Mellomåsen they had five different levels<sup>11</sup>, Ravnbakken had four and Vestlia who had two. How the schools were organized in relation to time affected the students' experience of what Lefebvre (1991) terms spatial practice.

Most participants from both Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken felt that the duration of their education was lasting too long. One way that this seemed to affect them was by weakening their motivation, which was a repeated issue. A boy that had studied one year of Norwegian

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<sup>11</sup> As explained in chapter 4.2 on Strategic sampling, levels do not necessarily mean years, since one may skip years if one is good enough for the next level

course and three years primary/lower secondary education was one of those highlighting the loss of motivation:

*It is just that when you begin first year, you have a lot of, you have a lot of, what is it called, motivation, that you will work a lot. (...) The first year I worked very well, I think. (...) Then suddenly it was four years. And then, yes, then I lose the motivation. It just, yes, it becomes boring I think (Boy, Mellomåsen).*

Most of the participants at Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken found their education lasting too long. As emphasized earlier, Øzerk (1992) highlights the importance of the psychosocial environment when learning a language. Some of the students seemed demotivated and negative because of the time they had to spend at school. Following what Øzerk (1992) argue, this again would affect their possibilities to learn Norwegian. This could therefore become a vicious circle, making the participants feel more demotivated and in the next step impairing their well-being. Another student also highlighted this topic, and explained how the motivation and future hopes was lost while seeing the years go by at school:

*There are many adolescents that think they want to study and have a good job in the future. That one could become a good teacher in the future. Everybody thinks about it. But we think that we are only losing our time here, and become sad and can only get a bad job. After a while you do not have any hope for the future or what you are going to do (Boy, Mellomåsen).*

This statement shows how the time spent at school does not only demotivate him in regards to his education, but also when thinking about his future. If one views this in light of Lefebvre's spatial triad (1991), one could say that the participants representational space becomes negatively affected by the time aspect of the spatial practice. The school is organized so that many participants found it long-lasting. Many of the adolescents felt that the way of organizing the school made the time pass by without the participants being able to enjoy their youth. As one of the participants from Ravnbakken said:

*You will miss your adolescence. Because it is only once, once in your lifetime, and then... (Boy, Ravnbakken).*

While most participants from Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken argued that the duration of their education was lasting too long, the teachers from Mellomåsen stated how important it was that the students stay long enough to learn Norwegian and the other subjects well before starting Upper Secondary School. This can be seen in light of what Pastoor (2012) argues, that many young immigrants want to finish their primary/lower secondary education too fast. There may be many different reasons for this, however, a research conducted with unaccompanied refugee minors by Oppedal, Seglem, and Jensen (2009) showed that many are worried about economy. Many immigrants send money back to their families. However, sending money back home is difficult when not working, and some do therefore choose to drop out of school to start working (Oppedal et al., 2009). Regardless the reason, the motivation of several participants decreased during the years attending the school. One could then assume that their learning curve also did so, in accordance with what Øzerk (1992) argue, that a good psycho-social environment is important for them to be able to learn. Since many find the time frame too long, it might not help them knowing that they also, in addition, have to study three or four years<sup>12</sup> of Upper Secondary School, as this boy argues:

*There are people here that are 18 years old. If they are going to stay here for four years, how old... yes, then they will be 22 when they start Upper Secondary School. And there you have to stay for four more years (Boy, Mellomåsen).*

It is not easy to define how much time is needed for the young immigrants to attend Primary/Lower Secondary School before they are ready for Upper Secondary School. It may therefore be understandable that the teachers are afraid of letting them go too early, since this might lead to the young immigrants dropping out of Upper Secondary School. However, even though the teachers' view and worries might be understandable, I find it interesting that Vestlia is the school that is organized with the fewest years of education, but also the school with a very low drop-out rate. This will be discussed further in chapter 6.2.2.

One might say that being demotivated and bored of school are feelings that are common amongst many adolescents in Norway. The feeling of having to attend school for too long may therefore not be something that only relates to the young immigrants. However, there is a difference between the situation of an adolescent attending ordinary school, and the

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<sup>12</sup> Young immigrants have the possibility to take Upper Secondary School in four instead of three years.

participants in this research. As has been presented earlier, many of the participants know other young immigrants studying in different municipalities. In this way they also get information about how long they have to attend school:

*When I arrived in [another city in Norway], I was there with some friends. They are finished with the second year [of Upper Secondary School] and when I talk to them, I am still at Primary/Lower Secondary School. They laugh at me, when they laugh at me, or when they say that they are finished with second year, I become very sad. Because we came here together, we attended the same class at the Norwegian course, so we were at the same level. They are now, they will finish second year, and I am still at [Ravnbakken] and Adult Education (Boy, Ravnbakken).*

This quote shows how the well-being of the participant decreases because of the difference in ways of organizing the schools. We may not know the reasons why the other young immigrants in this quote have finished earlier. However, the difference in how time is organized is a relevant topic. Using Vestlia as an example, one can see that the participants there studied half of the time of what most of the other participants did. Although they have organized the education so that it is much shorter than the two other schools, this does not mean that the young immigrants attending Vestlia are more intelligent or learn faster. They have the same variety of backgrounds at Vestlia as in the two others. The feeling of attending school longer than others may therefore be experienced as unfair, and therefore different from what adolescents attending ordinary schools in Norway may experience.

## **5.5 “I am becoming an adult”**

During the interviews, how the participants experienced the organization of time was a repeated topic in Ravnbakken and Mellomåsen. How Ravnbakken had organized the school for adolescents and adults together also seemed to strengthen the feeling of having to stay at school for a longer time. The participants from Ravnbakken especially worried about this. This quote demonstrates how three boys experienced getting older while attending Ravnbakken:

*Boy A: I was 17 [when he first began studying at the school] and now I am 20 years old. I am becoming an adult.*

*Interviewer: You become an adult while you are here [at the school]?*

*Boys A, B and C: Yes.*

*Boy B: Maybe people will retire<sup>13</sup>.*

*Boy A: Retired person<sup>14</sup>.*

*Interviewer: Before they are finished here?*

*Boy B: Yes.*

This shows the concern of time passing by that many of the students at this school had. Even though they at Mellomåsen actually have a longer time frame on the education, they seemed particularly worried about this at Ravnbakken. It may seem that the fact that the participants from Ravnbakken went to school with adults, affected how they experienced the way the time was organized. Seeing this in light of the spatial triad of Lefebvre (1991) again shows how important it is to look at the interrelations between the three spaces. In this situation one might find a contradiction between representation of space and the representational space. The participants at Ravnbakken study together with adults. Attending a school that is named Adult Education gives the expectations that this should be a school for adults. This expectation is reinforced by the fact that the participants see adults around them. However, the participants of this research are adolescents, and therefore feel that their experience is contradicting what is expected of the school. This contradiction further seem to affect how the participants experience the way the time frame at school is organized, or in Lefebvre's (1991) terms, the spatial practice. This is illustrated by one of the participants from Ravnbakken. He had studied in Norway for 2,5 years, and had been at Ravnbakken for about 1,5 years, and described how it in his eyes was for an adolescent to study at a school with adults:

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<sup>13</sup> Folk blir kanskje pensjonert (will retire)

<sup>14</sup> Pensjonist (a person who is retired)



*It affects a child. When you are sitting in the canteen and see the people who sit around you. Then you see that they are almost old, and then you think that, I am getting old here. I am throwing away my time here (Boy, Ravnbakken).*

As this quote explains, seeing adults around him affects his perception of time and how long he will stay at the school. This again seems to affect his well-being and motivation, as was further discussed in previous chapter 5.4. This was a view that was repeated by the participants throughout the interview at Ravnbakken.

Seeing adults around them, as was the situation for the participants from Ravnbakken, made the participants feel that they would stay at the school until they were as old as the others, or older, as seen in the quote above where the three boys said that maybe people would stay until they retire. Although they know they will finish school, it feels as if they would stay there forever. Saying this does not mean that they actually think that it could happen, but I argue that it says something about the boys' perception of time and the school. Another participant from Ravnbakken also highlights something similar:

*When a man or a girl comes to the school, the Adult Education, she must think that I am becoming an adult now, over 21, 20 years old, and then go to Upper Secondary School. It is a bit like a prison. You must be here until you are 30 years old (Boy Ravnbakken).*

This is another example of how many of the participants felt stuck at the school, and that time is passing without them being able to do anything about it. As the quote presented earlier of one of the participants from Vestlia in chapter 5.2, also this boy compares the school with a prison. In the earlier quote the other participant experienced the Norwegian course as a prison because of how he was segregated from Norwegians, while this participant compares it to a prison because the school feels like a place where he is forced to be, and for a long time.

It is interesting to look at two of the participants from Vestlia in comparison to what the participants above express. The two participants from Vestlia argued that they themselves chose to take a second year at The Class. They both argued that they felt they needed more Norwegian skills and basic knowledge before starting Upper Secondary School. Further they said that since the teachers were so good they would learn much more with an additional year.

This feeling of having chosen yourself if you want to stay longer or not, rather than being a place “you must be” (cf. quote above) may help the students to see the school as something positive rather than as a forced prison. This correlates with what K Thorshaug and Svendsen (2014) argue, that if good information is given and the choice is being understood as the students' own choice, rather than something they are forced to do by the system, this may increase the students' motivation to stay in school. They further claim that better information, or better ensuring of that the information given is understood, would provide the students with a higher level of participation, which could thereby increase their motivation (K Thorshaug & Svendsen, 2014). Pastoor (2012) argues that school can be highlighted a ”salutogenic arena - an arena which promotes mental health and wellbeing” (p. 236), by giving the students a sense of coherence and meaning in life. As mentioned in chapter 3.5 on Psycho-social health and self-esteem, the three core components of the 'sense of coherence' are comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness (Antonovsky, 1987). However, for the two students who compare their school to a prison, it may not seem like the school gives them this 'sense of coherence' and therefore has no salutogenic influence, but rather make them loose motivation and become more negative.

## **5.6 Studying with relatives**

As has been mentioned in chapter 4.2 on Strategic sampling, Ravnbakken and the Norwegian course at Vestlia are both organized so that the adolescents study with adults. The issue of studying with adults was highlighted various times by participants at Ravnbakken. However, for some participants studying at a school where also adults attend, this may also mean studying with parents or other relatives. Two of the participants, one from Ravnbakken and one from the Norwegian course before starting at Vestlia, experienced studying with their mother. I here analyze how this way of organizing the schools affected their experience of the schooling.

One of the participants from this research, a girl who had studied at Ravnbakken for 2,5 years, had experienced studying with her mother. When she first started attending Ravnbakken, she and her mother were placed in the same class. When being asked how this felt for her, she explained:

*Girl: It was very strange. But afterwards they moved her to another, another group, which was smaller than the one I had.*

*Interview: But you were still attending the same school?*

*Girl: Yes, same school.*

Also another participant, from Vestlia, experienced going to the same school as her mother when she was attending the Norwegian course. She also seemed to find it strange to study with her mother and other adults:

*Girl: In the Norwegian course for example, I attended with adults. I attended with, for example my mum was there with me, as an example. And it is not the same when I who then was 16-17 years old was with my mum who was 45.*

*(...)*

*Girl: When I did not know about The Class, I told my mum: what am I going to do here?*

*Interviewer: At the Norwegian course?*

*Girl: Yes. I only learn Norwegian, but you know I am with you [her mum], everybody is old, they are adults. And I have no social life here, what am I going to do.*

As these quotes express, it is a strange situation to be studying with one's parent. One can say that this changes what can be defined as the representational space for these adolescents. The way the school is organized with adults, opens up for the possibility of studying with one's mother, or other relatives. There may be several and various reasons for them to find it strange to study with their mother, even personal reasons. The reasons can therefore be difficult to grasp as an outsider. However, whatever reason the girls had when feeling that it was strange to study with their mothers, there are also some general reasons to why this can affect adolescents. Youth is a period to find out who you are, and a time when you have the freedom to try out different things and interests (Bengtson & Ruud, 2007; Aagre, 2003).

Therefore, Bengtson and Ruud (2007) argue, youth should be able to distance themselves from authorities. In a situation where you go to the same school as parents, family or older people in general, this distance may not be easy to obtain, which makes it interesting to look at the generational aspect of the situation. Alanen (2001) states that generation in the sociological study of childhood has been looked upon as a socially constructed system of relationships. Here, children and adults are holders of specific social and generational structures. However, when studying together they are in a way supposed to be equals, but at the same time they hold these generational structures. Mayall (2001) argues that children and adults have to “interrelate across age divisions, power inequalities and (in families) household norms and needs” (p. 2). This is a very different relation from what one expects from one’s schoolmates. Aagre (2003) claims that ‘youth culture’ can be compared to what has been called ‘children’s own culture’. He argues that both are defined as being driven by the spontaneous interaction in the child/youth environment (Aagre, 2003). This however, might be more difficult if one attend a class with adults, and even family members.

Furthermore, child-adult relations at school are normally between teacher and student, and are in this way also relations of power- and knowledge differences. Attending a school which is organized with adults (family or not) may therefore result in problematic situations, since it could be difficult to go behind these structures and meet adults without meeting these structures of power, family relations and norms.

## **5.7 Summary**

I have in this chapter looked at how the young immigrants experienced the way their school was organized. I chose Lefebvre’s spatial triad to shed light on the meaning of the spatial organizing, experiences and expectations. My empirical examples illustrate what is also pointed out by Lefebvre, that one must look at the interconnections between these different spaces. Seeing these connections has shown to be important, in the way that they illustrate clashes of spaces that seem to affect the participants’ well-being in a negative way, or in positive ways when they match.

The topics emphasized through the chapter are experiences that were highlighted by the participants during research. How the schools are organized, with an emphasis on where they were located, who one studied with and for how long one studied at the school, affected the

participants differently. Experiences from Ravnbakken illustrated the challenges with going into a school that was called Adult Education, while experiences from Vestlia showed how the way the school was organized could make the participants feel they were 'normal' and that they were attending a 'normal' school. The different ways the schools were organized according to the timeframe also affected the participants. Studying for a long time at the schools seemed to have a negative effect on their motivation and well-being. Also knowing that this was organized differently in other municipalities seemed to bring up a sense of injustice in some of the participants.

Both participants from Ravnbakken and Vestlia explained how it affected them in a negative way to study with adults. These experiences from Ravnbakken and Vestlia showed that organizing the education for both adults and adolescents may place adolescents in the situation where they have to study with parents or older relatives. Studying together with their Norwegian peers, however, was viewed as positive by all the participants. Nevertheless, even though Vestlia was organized at the local Upper Secondary School the participants experiences indicate that they did not have much contact with their Norwegian peers.

In the next analysis chapter I will look at how the participants experienced their everyday life inside and outside of the school. The experiences highlighted in chapter six are also connected to how the schools were organized. Since school is where the participants stay most of the day, how it is organized and their experiences of this organizing will necessarily affect their everyday life.

## 6 Experiences with everyday life

In this analysis chapter I discuss my second research question on how the young immigrants experience the everyday life at school. As already seen in chapter five the way the schools are organized is experienced differently by the participants. Although the topics emphasized in this chapter are also connected to the ways the schools are organized, these are topics that appeared as important for the social aspect of the participants' everyday life, inside and outside of the school. I start by looking at the importance of learning the language, before discussing the significance of fellow students. Then I look at attendance on organized activities, before I present a short summary.

### 6.1 Language is the key

Frøyland and Gjerustad (2012) argue that socialization between immigrants and native Norwegians may indicate a person's level of integration. In this situation, they argue that mastering the Norwegian language is an important key (Frøyland & Gjerustad, 2012). The significance of learning Norwegian and the learning environment has been recurrent topics during my research. Participants from Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken explained how they would like to attend the same school as their Norwegian peers, explaining that one of the reasons was to learn the Norwegian language. Various students emphasized the importance of hearing Norwegian from native speakers. They argued that they learn to write and read Norwegian, but that because of the lack of practice, they struggle to improve their talking skills:

*Here [at the Adult Education], it is like, we are all from abroad. We do not have Norwegian students who we can discuss with, to become better in speaking Norwegian. Here, everybody can just speak their own language when they are outside of the classroom. (Boy, Mellomåsen).*

The problem of learning Norwegian in a class where most of the students spoke other languages once they were outside of the classroom, was a factor mentioned by many of the participants. Also at previous research with young immigrants has shown this. One young immigrant from a research conducted by Svendsen et al. (2010) emphasizes the same experience: that learning Norwegian is difficult when everybody speaks their mother tongue

at school. The girl below expresses how she believes having Norwegian speaking students around them would help:

*Maybe it will get better [when she starts Upper Secondary School]. When we are here [Mellomåsen] we do not learn that much. We learn a lot but we cannot speak that good, you know. When there are Norwegian students here as well, it becomes better when you, when we, attend Upper Secondary School, you know (Girl, Mellomåsen).*

This correlates with what Øzerk (1992) and Stern (1972) stress about the importance of participating in the second language society for learning the language. As Stern (1972) argue, to learn a language one must have the opportunity to use it by communicating with others. This however, is difficult for the students in Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken, such as the participants quoted above, who have no natural meeting points with their Norwegian peers. Another participant also illustrated this point, drawing a comparison between Mellomåsen and when she earlier had attended an ordinary Lower Secondary School:

*Yes, it is much easier to learn Norwegian then [when attending school with Norwegian peers]. You can learn much better then because you have them around you, those who speak good Norwegian, or those who speak Norwegian. While we are kind of around with those who are on the same level as yourself, who don't know that much, so it becomes a bit difficult to be able to, yes, get much better then. It actually gives much more, much more sense when I... At least since I have attended [an ordinary Lower Secondary School], so it went well then. While when I attend here then it is kind of, yes, a bit difficult (Girl, Mellomåsen).*

She argued that she had learned much more when attending the Lower Secondary School. Another participant, from Ravnbakken, had also experienced studying at the same school as his Norwegian peers, when living in another municipality. He, as the girl from Mellomåsen, argued that he had learned much more Norwegian while studying there.

Also at Vestlia this topic was emphasized. Six of the participants from Vestlia highlighted speaking Norwegian as one of the most important factors for learning the language. Many of the participants in this research, as the boy quoted earlier in this chapter, claimed that most of the students speak their mother tongue with each other at school. They therefore heard little

Norwegian and, as a consequence, learned little Norwegian. Many therefore highlighted studying with their Norwegian peers as vital for learning Norwegian. One of the students explained the significance of going to school with other Norwegians by saying:

*If you do not have the key, it is a problem. And the key is the language. To get this key you have to be with those who have the language; the ones that are born here. Here [at the school] it is difficult to learn the language – to get the key (Boy, Mellomåsen).*

It is not only the students who claim that language is the key. A research done by The Directorate of Integration and Diversity presents that 77% of a representative sample of Norway's population said that "to have good Norwegian skills" (IMDi, 2011, p. 5, own translation) is important for integration. It may be difficult to measure integration; however it is interesting how both students and earlier researchers have compared knowing Norwegian as the key to society, and the key to become integrated into the society. However, if socialization between young immigrants and their Norwegian peers is a way of measuring their level of integration, as mentioned earlier by Frøyland and Gjerustad (2012), it may be argued that these students are not very well integrated. For the participants studying at Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken the way the school is organized makes it difficult for them to interact with their Norwegian peers. They do not get the possibility to socialize with their Norwegian peers when they do not have any natural meeting points. Another student from Vestlia also made this comparison of language being the key when being asked about learning Norwegian:

*Yes, very important. Yes it is the key to the country. To learn Norwegian (Boy, Vestlia).*

Symbolically, seeing language as a key has strong interpretations. In history the key has had many symbolical meanings. Biedermann (1992) argue that the key has among others been ascribed St. Peter, who has been understood as the gatekeeper of heaven. This is interesting when seen in light of the participants' quotes above. They also see the key as being able to open a door. However, instead of opening the door to heaven, the participants' seem to believe that the key - or the language, may open the door to society, in other words: learning Norwegian can help in the process of becoming integrated, or included in society.



However, even though the participants' wishes correlates with what Øzerk (1992) argues on participation in the second language society, it might not be as easy as the participants expect. If we look at the participants from Vestlia, their school is organized as the participants from the two other schools wish theirs would be. The experiences of the participants from Vestlia, however, do not correlate fully with the expectations that the participants from Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken have. Participants from Vestlia do not seem to get as much help with their Norwegian as the participants from Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken think they would if they had attended a school located together with their Norwegian peers. Regarding the spatial triad of Lefebvre (1991), we again see how it is important to see the three spaces together to see the whole picture. As explained in chapter 5.1 on The power of name, one can again see contradictions between expectations and experiences. Many of the participants from Vestlia highlighted the importance of speaking Norwegian with Norwegians to be able to learn the language well, just as at the other two schools. However, they also explained that it was difficult to get to know their Norwegian peers, even though they went to the same school. In this case, studying at the same school may not be as beneficial as is wished for by the students. Since being in the same space as their Norwegian peers may not help much if one do not interact with one's Norwegian peers (Øzerk, 1992). This will be discussed further in chapter 6.2.

Nevertheless, even though it might be difficult to get to know Norwegians, some participants from Vestlia still emphasized the importance of how the spatial practice is organized:

*Yes, it is good, because, you are in the canteen and stuff, so everybody around you speaks Norwegian. So you hear some words, and you take them, and you remember them (Girl, Vestlia).*

This shows that even though the participants from Vestlia might not make friends with their Norwegian peers right away, they are still somehow exposed to the Norwegian language. Their experiences might not entirely live up to the expectations of the participants from Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken, and as Øzerk (1992) argues, more is needed than being located in the same building. However, many participants from Vestlia believed they still got something out of studying in the same building as their Norwegian peers.

### 6.1.1 The importance of learning the unspoken language

Another topic that appeared when discussing language and Norwegian peers was, in addition to learning the Norwegian spoken language, the opportunity to learn the unspoken language. Various students from both Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken had perceptions on how knowing Norwegians could help them on different levels:

*You learn a lot from them, the Norwegian students. Because you can see how they communicate, and how they behave (Boy, Mellomåsen).*

This statement from the participant above shows the expectations he has about being with Norwegian students, and how this can help him and teach him things that his Norwegian course cannot. Another participant from Mellomåsen also emphasized the importance of learning not only grammar, but how to communicate:

*Yes, the problem is communication here. We know the rules, for example grammar. We are good (...). But communication, we do not know that (Boy, Mellomåsen).*

Again the argument circled around the value of being located together. Learning how to communicate was underlined as vital by the participants. However they meant this had to be learned by meeting Norwegians, which was challenging for most participants in this research. This can be viewed in relation to Lefebvre's representations of space (1991). Many of the students from Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken seemed to believe that talking to Norwegians and improving their Norwegian would be easier if they attended Upper Secondary School. The expectation of the space is that since there are Norwegians attending the school as well, one will in some way or another be exposed to Norwegian. If this is how the participants would experience what could be seen as their representational space if attending Upper Secondary School is however not certain.

A boy from Vestlia also highlights this when being asked what the school could have done to ease the integration process for the young immigrants attending the school:

*That we could get to know a little, kind of. That, how the Norwegians, how normal Norwegian adolescents think, kind of. That would make it easier then, when we know how. It makes it a bit easier (Boy, Vestlia).*

Learning how their Norwegian peers think, how they communicate and behave is something that is difficult to learn from a book. Being able to meet their peers while learning the language can therefore be said to be important. In line with what Øzerk (1992) argue, as explained in chapter 3.3 on Theory, we can find some similarities to what the participants above have expressed. Øzerk (1992) stresses the importance of a circular thinking around language acquisition and participation in the majority society. Participation in majority speaking environments depends on Norwegian skills, while participating in majority speaking environments also improves the possibilities to better the learner's Norwegian skills. He also adds how experiences from the majority society can give the students necessary references and contextual knowledge which they will need in the theoretical teaching at school (Øzerk, 1992). Harris and Cavanagh (2008) also claim that peers "may provide crucial information or contacts to help youth negotiate the social world, reinforce values and norms of behavior" (p. 259). These two statements correlates with what the students explained in the quotes above, about not only learning the language but also behavior and how to communicate, what Øzerk calls contextual knowledge. In this manner, the factors the young immigrants expressed as important for them is also what Øzerk (1992) stresses as central for them to be able to learn Norwegian. In the next sub-chapter I look at the significance of fellow students, and school as a social arena.

## **6.2 Significance of fellow students**

Pastoor (2012) argues that school is "a place to learn and a place to be" (p. 217, own translation). In addition to being where one get one's education, school is also an important space to be social (Frøyland & Gjerustad, 2012). It is a space to learn norms, make friends and socialize. As mentioned earlier, Frøyland and Gjerustad (2012) argue that what happens at school will affect the youth and how they look at themselves. How the school is organized and the social environment at school may therefore, as seen in chapter five affect the students' self-esteem. Who you study with may therefore also have a great impact. This will be discussed in the following sub-chapter.

### **6.2.1 "Hello, do you want to be my friend?"**

The participants' experience of the everyday life at school, and who the participants met there seems to have an importance in relation to their social life and well-being. At Mellomåsen and

Ravnbakken, the students study at a school without their Norwegian peers. When talking to the young immigrants there, several stated that they would have liked to get to know Norwegians. However, as a girl who is now studying the next to last level at Mellomåsen expressed, it is difficult to make Norwegian friends when they have no natural meeting point:

*How can you get Norwegian friends? On the street? 'Hello, do you want to be my friend?' (Girl, Mellomåsen).*

When the school is organized in a way that segregates the young immigrants from their Norwegian peers, getting to know Norwegian peers becomes more difficult. This was also shown in a research conducted by Svendsen et al. (2010) on unaccompanied minor refugees, where one of the participants who was studying at Levanger Adult Education explained that the teachers were the only Norwegians they met. This has implications for what Lefebvre terms as representational space (1991) in the sense that the way the school is organized influences the experiences of the participants. Thorshaug et al. (2013) also found in their research that when the schools for the young immigrants were located in a building segregated from ordinary schools, the young immigrants had very few meeting points with their Norwegian peers.

School is however said to have great potential as an arena that promotes inclusion (NOU, 2010). Yet, for the participants in this research, many of them are segregated from their Norwegian peers, which makes inclusion more challenging. This boy explained how school could be an arena for them to make Norwegian friends, however this is not the case for him:

*For example me, I have no Norwegian friends. I have lived here over four years now, and I have no Norwegian friends, since, when you become friends with some Norwegians it is, it is at the school you most likely become friends with some Norwegians. If not it becomes difficult. So, we have no Norwegian friends then actually (Boy, Mellomåsen).*

This quote illustrates a general experience by the students from Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken, where no one expressed that they had Norwegian friends. Several of the participants did highlight that they would like to go to the same school as Norwegian adolescents, and thought

that this could give them a better opportunity to get to know Norwegians, such as this participant:

*I think it is important that we are for example in the same building. Then in the breaks, the students may go out. When we go out now everybody speaks his or her own language. (...) But when it is one building you can sit and talk, you get to know others. You get a network. Now, I, for example, I have no Norwegian friends, so I become, I feel lonely. When I go home, I sit alone and, I have nothing to do. That becomes, I find this a bit difficult (Boy, Mellomåsen).*

This quote illustrates how the way the schools are organized may affect the participants' everyday life, and their well-being. As argued above, one might see this as the spatial practice influencing the participants' representational space. However, it may also influence their experiences in a positive way, as would be the issue if it was organized differently, as expressed by the girl below. She argued that it would be better if they attended a school with their Norwegian peers:

*It is much better when there are Norwegian students attending the school. It is much better, right (Girl, Mellomåsen).*

As Frøyland and Gjerustad (2012) stress, what happens at school affects the youth. The first quote presented above is also an example on how lack of social contact with Norwegian peers can affect the participants' well-being. The importance of getting a network and getting to know Norwegian students was emphasized among many of the participants. Many had the expectation that this would be improved when they would study at the same school as their peers. At Ravnbakken one of the participants explained that he had friends who studied in another municipality. They had already been able to start Upper Secondary School, and the participant argued how it was easier for them to make Norwegian friends when attending the same school:

*Boy A: It is much better, and they know much Norwegian and, know many people who, and they have a lot of friends, many friends. But this is very difficult here.*

*Interviewer: It is difficult to get to know Norwegians while you attend this school?*

*Boy A and B: Yes.*

Further, one of the participants from Mellomåsen argued that a friend of her studying at a different Adult Education Center, which was located at the local Upper Secondary School, also had a different experience in getting to know her Norwegian peers:

*I have a friend who lives in [city], and she attends the Adult Education, but they are with Norwegian adolescents. They do not attend the same classes, but it is the same school. (...) So, it is easier for her to make friends and to talk to Norwegian adolescents. (...) There, everybody sits together in the canteen, and they eat together, talk together. So, when you are not at school, you have friends. And they are not only foreigners, they are also Norwegian (Girl, Mellomåsen).*

A few other participants, both at Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken had examples of friends or siblings who by going to the same school as their Norwegian peers had made friends with Norwegians. These stories helped to reinforce their assumptions they had on that studying at an Upper Secondary School would help them make friends with their Norwegian peers. One participant said that:

*When an adolescent comes to Norway, it is better for him to meet a Norwegian group, to talk together. But here; only foreigners (Boy, Ravnbakken).*

It is interesting to see this in light of Lefebvre's spatial triad. Participants from Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken wish for an organizing that is more similar to how the participants of Vestlia experience their spatial practice. They want this because their expectations for the space, or what Lefebvre (1991) terms as the representations of space, indicates that they will have more contact with their Norwegian peers. Hence, it is interesting to look at the representational space for the participants at Vestlia, to see if they experience what is expected by participants from Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken. However, as mentioned previously in chapter 6.1 on Language is the key, also at Vestlia many found it difficult to make Norwegian friends, as this participant argued:

*I don't have that kind of relationship with the Norwegians. I don't talk much to them and stuff. It's difficult. Since I come from another country, I don't speak that well Norwegian and stuff. It's hard to get, like, yes, to talk with them [the Norwegians] or meet them or... (Girl, Vestlia).*

Another participant from Vestlia also expresses that it is difficult to get to know Norwegians, even though they are studying in the same building:

*It is very difficult to contact Norwegian people (Boy, Vestlia).*

These two quotes show that the challenge of getting to know Norwegians is present at Vestlia as well. Data has shown that participants from all the three schools experienced this challenging. The participants and their Norwegian peers at Vestlia are in the same building most of the day, but their education and school life are segregated. One of the participants now attending Upper Secondary School at Vestlia, explained how her Norwegian classmates did not know that these classes for young immigrants existed at all.

In this manner, even though the participants at Vestlia attended the same school building as their Norwegian peers, it might seem that little is done from the school's side to mix the students at Vestlia. The participants, as illustrated by the two quotes above, explained that they did find it difficult to make Norwegian friends. However, being in the same building was still viewed by the participants as something positive. Although the young immigrants and their Norwegian peers did not have much to do with each other, most of the participants gave the impression of being more positive. They knew that they had the possibility to talk to Norwegians if they wanted. And some also used this opportunity to get to know their Norwegian peers:

*And for adolescents this is, for minority speaking adolescents this is, totally, yes, fantastic (...). Because, here [Vestlia] there are both Norwegians and foreigners (...). I made a lot of friends, right. Norwegian friends. Because, yes, hey, you go in and I knew them a little bit from before and then you get to know them. And, I think that this is much better (Boy, Vestlia).*

However, this boy was the exception from the participants, by saying that he had made many Norwegian friends. Others argued that this was challenging as has been mentioned. However, many participants from Vestlia emphasized different positive factors when studying in the same building as their Norwegian peers. Among other things they argued that they felt they attended a 'normal school' and that they heard Norwegian being spoken in the canteen, as mentioned in chapter 5.3 and 6.1. One may therefore say that in general the participants from Vestlia were more satisfied with their situation. However, as has been presented, they still pointed out some of the same factors as was also presented by the participants from Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken. One of the factors that could be seen as positive at Vestlia was the possibility to take courses with upper secondary classes. This is explained in the following sub-chapter.

### **6.2.2 Attending courses with upper secondary classes**

The possibility to take courses at the Upper Secondary School can be seen as a factor that made it easier to integrate with the Norwegian adolescents. At Vestlia the young immigrants had the possibility to study one or two courses at the Upper Secondary School. They could take courses such as mathematics or English, subjects that the students may be good at although they do not know Norwegian well enough to start Upper Secondary School. Since they had to have good knowledge about the subject to attend the course, this was an opportunity only for a few. However, I still argue that this is a great possibility for those who are able to attend the courses. Three of the participants from Vestlia had chosen to attend Upper Secondary courses in mathematics. Doing this could have several positive outcomes for the students, as shown by this participant:

*Interviewer: Did you have any contact with Norwegian students before you started VG1 [First year of Upper Secondary School]?*

*Girl: A bit. Because I attended Mathematics at VG1.*

*Interviewer: Ok, you were attending Mathematics VG1 while you were attending the The Class?*

*Girl: Yes, so I was in a class with Norwegians. So then I had some contact.*



As this girl explained, the attendance at the Upper Secondary School made it easier to get to know her Norwegian peers. This changed the participants' experience of what Lefebvre (1991) terms as spatial practice at Vestlia in the way that they now experienced the space as organized together with their Norwegian peers, not only in the same building but in the same classroom. This also shows how spatial practice influences their experience of studying at the school. The data shows that it became easier for the participants to come in contact with their Norwegian peers when attending the same classes.

Another positive factor by being able to attend courses at Upper Secondary School is that they get the possibility to finish a course one year earlier, which later can give them the possibility to focus more on other courses when they start VG1 (Thorshaug & Svendsen, 2014). Further, Thorshaug and Svendsen (2014) argue that taking courses from the upper secondary education can also give them more insight in the different programs they can choose between when starting Upper Secondary School<sup>15</sup>, which may later prevent drop-out. This is an interesting point since drop-out is a big problem among young immigrants in Norway. Numbers from 2013 show that almost every second immigrant (47%) had not completed their upper secondary education within five years (SSB, 2013a). This is particularly interesting when looking at Vestlia, where the drop-out rate of last year was 1.8%. The option of being able to attend courses with other students from Upper Secondary School may therefore be one of the contributing factors to the low drop-out rate, if we see this in the light of what Thorshaug and Svendsen (2014) addressed.

### **6.3 Significance of attending organized activities**

In addition to seeing school as an important arena for inclusion, earlier research has also emphasized organized activities, such as volunteering organizations or sports activities as important arenas for inclusion (Dahle, Grindheim, Høgestøl, & Ryssevik, 2011; Friberg & Gautun, 2007). Sports have the benefit that you do not need to know a lot of Norwegian or be fully aware of cultural references and internal codes to take part in the activity (Friberg & Gautun, 2007). Attending activities is also an opportunity to meet Norwegian peers outside of school. Taking part in activities that are organized with Norwegians opens up for more

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<sup>15</sup> When starting Norwegian Upper Secondary School, you can choose between vocational education programs or programs for general studies (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2014)

contact between the young immigrants and their Norwegian peers, giving them natural meeting points.

One of the older adolescents from Mellomåsen, who had been in Norway for three years, explained that he took part in a Football team with Norwegians. Thus, he had regularly football practices with the Norwegian adolescents. However, when being asked if he met Norwegians through football he said yes, but that he did not really get to know them. He further explained that the others on the team went to school and/or work together, and therefore also hung out in their spare time and went to parties together. He, on the other hand, only saw them at football practice, where they only greeted each other, but nothing more. This shows that although it might be easy to take part in these types of activities, it might not mean that one is included. This can be connected to the concept earlier mentioned on visitorship and membership (Antia et al., 2002). In this situation one could argue that the boy is perceived as a visitor at the football practice. He arrives, and they greet one another, but he does not become a member of the team in the same way as the Norwegian team members. Had he however also attended the same school as the others, he felt this could have helped him feel more included in the team, as he explained with the other team members studying together.

One of the other participants, from Vestlia, had a similar experience when starting football while he was taking the Norwegian course at the local Adult Education. However, his experience changed after he started to attend The Class at Vestlia:

*I played football. And there, there I got to know some Norwegians who I played football with. I never met them outside, yes, that one and a half-two hours we had the practice. And then when I came here [The Class at Upper Secondary School], I got much better contact with them. Because I knew them a bit from before, and when I was with them, I got to know others all the time (Boy, Vestlia).*

If we go back to the first quote from the boy in Mellomåsen, he described himself as what could be interpreted as a visitor in the football team. He did however get the feeling that the other members in the team who met each other through school and work also did other social activities together. The second quote illustrates how attending the same school can be beneficial for the contact with other team members. This also shows how the expectations of Vestlia by other participants may sometimes correspond with how the participants from

Vestlia experience the social life at school. Seen in light of the spatial triad of Lefebvre (1991) one can say that the representational space and the representations of space are correlating. As in this example, studying at the same school may actually be helpful when starting to attend organized activities. In the second example the boy also became more like a member of the team, since he got to know the others through school as well. Antia et al. (2002) and Øzerk (1992) have pointed out the importance of being involved and not only present with their peers. There is therefore a need of more inclusive programs (Antia et al., 2002). Being able to meet at various arenas may help the participants in becoming more included in their Norwegian peer group. As seen in the quote above there was a clear difference between before the participant started The Class and after, and how he experienced being part of the team. Organized activities may have a positive effect on inclusion. However, even though one might be included in the activity this does not mean that one feels included in society as a whole. However, having several natural meeting points, as the data indicates, may increase the possibility of feeling included, and have general positive effects for the participants of this research.

## **6.4 Summary**

In this chapter I have particularly looked at the participants' experiences of their everyday life at school. Many of the participants seemed to find various challenges in their everyday life at school. The participants from Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken expressed a wish to study closer to their Norwegian peers. This they hoped, would make them get to know more Norwegians, and they also highlighted the linguistic benefits of talking to Norwegians. Vestlia have a way of organizing the school that resembles many of the factors the participants from Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken missed in their social life at school. However, even though they study in the same building as their Norwegian peers, in their everyday life they still met many of the same challenges as the participants from Ravnbakken and Mellomåsen: They did not have much contact with the Norwegian peers, and few had Norwegian friends.

Another factor that was emphasized during the interviews was the issue of attending organized activities. Here, however, studying in the same building as the Norwegian peers seemed to have a positive effect. Meeting Norwegian peers both at school and at football practice provided the participant with greater opportunity to get to know his peers. This,

however, was not the experience for the participant from Mellomåsen who only saw the team members at the football practice.

Much of what the participants in this research have highlighted can be connected to becoming included, or becoming a member of society. I therefore find it interesting to discuss the participants' situation as newly arrived young immigrants studying to get their primary/lower secondary education, in connection with the concept of citizenship. In the next chapter I will discuss this.

## **7 Challenges of social inclusion and sense of belonging**

Archambault and Berg (2010) argue that seeing children as citizens is important since “a recognition of children as citizens concerns respect for children’s equality regarding human dignity, and a right to be included in society as competent contributors” (p. 213). Being a citizen of a country may be viewed as a right to be included. When defining it this way, one might say that being a citizen is both the goal and the means of integration and inclusion policies. In the two foregoing analysis chapters I have presented the participants' experiences when arriving to Norway as adolescents, and their experiences of the education system. In this chapter I discuss if one, by looking at these experiences, can say that the participants are included and integrated in Norwegian society, and therefore are able to act as citizens of Norway. By discussing research question three: How can the way the schools are organized affect the participants’ inclusion process and citizenship, I have in particular looked at the concepts of membership, sense of belonging and inclusion inherent in the concept of citizenship.

### **7.1 Sense of belonging, or non-belonging?**

Being included as a citizen means that you are viewed as a member (Roche, 1999), included in society (Archambault & Berg, 2010), and have a sense of belonging to the society where you practice your citizenship (Brochmann, 2002; Moosa-Mitha, 2005). Even though the participants are active agents (James & Prout, 1990), it is interesting to look at what is being done from the formal system around them to provide them the possibility to practice their citizenship. The three ways the schools are organized is thus noteworthy. As seen in the earlier analysis chapters, the young immigrants’ lives are quite segregated from those of their Norwegian peers.

Many of the topics the participants underlined as important to them in the interviews can be connected to citizenship. In chapter five, how the schools were organized was presented as an important issue for the young immigrants. Out of their statements it became clear that many of the participants struggled by getting a sense of belonging, and to feel that they were real members of the Norwegian society. I therefore found it important to explore these issues further.

Participants from Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken expressed a desire to attend a school with Norwegian peers. This has been illustrated in the two previous chapters. One of the participants from Mellomåsen explained in chapter 5.3.1 "Hello, do you want to be my friend?", that he wanted to get to know his Norwegian peers. He argued that school is where one most likely would get to know Norwegians, which makes it difficult for him as they study in a separate school without Norwegians. Another participant from Mellomåsen emphasized that it is difficult to become integrated when you cannot make friends with Norwegians:

*It is difficult to obtain, what is the word, integration. Because, they said, you have to make Norwegian friends. (...) It is difficult to integrate. Because we are only foreigners. We know each other, but it is difficult to make Norwegian friends (Girl, Mellomåsen).*

As this quote illustrates, it is difficult to become a member and included in society when you do not have the opportunity to somehow access the people forming it. As Jans (2004) argues, to be able to behave as citizens, one needs to have the opportunity to meet others in society. However, these opportunities are scarce for the participants from Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken. The same participant argued that a friend of her attended the Adult Education in another municipality where the young immigrants and their classes were located at the local Upper Secondary School. When asked if her friend has more contact with Norwegians, the participant responded:

*She has more contact, and she has a network, she has a job. She has like, she has a good life. Because I do not have a job, I do not have a network, so. It is difficult in [participant's city] I think (Girl, Mellomåsen)*

As shown in the earlier chapters, such as chapter 5.3.1, several participants had friends or siblings studying at schools located with their Norwegian peers. If this quote is seen in light of what was addressed above, one may argue that the participant's friend has greater opportunity to behave as a citizen because of her network and therefore the opportunity to meet others in society (Jans, 2004). The example of the participants' friend above gives the impression of a person who feels a stronger belonging to society. However, the girl from Mellomåsen explaining this does not seem to experience such a clear membership to the citizenship community. She is the same participant who, earlier in the analysis, underlined

that it is difficult to make Norwegian friends when you have no natural meeting point. In a way these two different experiences of herself and her friend can work as empirical illustrations of what Antia et.al. (2002) et al frames as the visitorship/membership. A society where you are a visitor is in this sense contrasting to a society where you feel you are a member, and therefore also a citizen, as was presented by the experiences of the two girls. When looking at this in relation to 'belonging', it is interesting to look at what Valenta (2008) found in his research. As mentioned earlier, lack of contact with Norwegians resulted in a sense of non-belonging (Valenta, 2008). This again reinforces the argument of Jans (2004) that having contact with Norwegians is important for the participants to practice their citizenship. Also participants from Vestlia emphasized the difficulty of integration:

*Interviewer: What is the most difficult part when coming to Norway?*

*Girl: I think it is the language, and integration, to integrate, yes. It is very, very difficult. Because, for example, when you come to Norway. (...) I can have everything that is possible. It is full of possibilities. I can have a computer, I can have all the material that I need, I can have food, I can have a house with heating and everything. But when it comes to learning new languages, and to integrate and social life and stuff, I think it is very, very difficult.*

*(...)*

*Interviewer: But what, or is there anything that could be done to make it easier to become integrated?*

*Girl: Yes but, I think Special Class is a very good way of integrating.*

*Interviewer: How is that?*

*Girl: At the same time as we learn Norwegian, we get to know people, we make friends.*

As the girl from Vestlia shows, becoming integrated may be one of the most difficult parts of being new in a country. She can get a good life in the material way in Norway, however, that

does not necessarily mean that she feels that she is a member of society. Earlier in the interview she argues, as shown in chapter 5.3.1 "Hello, do you want to be my friend?", that it was hard for her to get to know Norwegians. In this case, being integrated by studying at Vestlia, does not necessarily mean that she become included in the group of Norwegian peers at the school. As explained in chapter 2.3.1 on Integration, the importance of putting outsiders and insiders together as one unity has been emphasized when discussing the concept of integration. In one way one can say that this has happened at Vestlia, since the participants have been located at the local Upper Secondary School. However, since most of the participants say they have no or little contact with Norwegian peers, one can question if they are included. In a whitepaper from 2009 (NOU) it is being argued that one with inclusion must allow for differences within the community. This can be seen in relation to Moosa-Mitha (2005) and what she writes about the difference-centered theory on citizenship. She argues that one must accept the differences within the citizens in a society. In other words, the young immigrants at Vestlia, such as the girl quoted above, may be studying in a class that is to some extent integrated at the local Upper Secondary School. However, she does not seem to be given the possibility to act out her citizenship by becoming a member of the Norwegian society.

When being asked if the school could have done more to make the participants feel more included and make more Norwegian friends, many of the participants at Vestlia argued that they themselves had to do what was needed to become included and to get to know their Norwegian peers better. However, as presented in chapter 2.3.2 on Inclusion, when discussing the concept of integration, reciprocity between majority and minority in society has been highlighted. However, when defining the concept inclusion, it has been emphasized that the majority in society must be the one taking the responsibility for the inclusion to happen (St.meld.nr.49, 2003-04). This contrasts what the participants say about themselves being responsible for integrating into the Norwegian society.

Still, the way of organizing Vestlia seem to have been beneficial for the participants, and they did express satisfaction with their school, even though their level of inclusion might be questioned. When being asked about if they felt like they were a part of the Norwegian society, most of the participants from Vestlia said yes, such as this girl:

*Interviewer: Do you feel that you are a part of the Norwegian society?*



*Girl: Yes, actually*

*Interviewer: What do you think makes you feel this?*

*Girl: Mmm. eh. Nobody looks at you. They do see that I am not Norwegian (...). They take you as you are*

As this quote shows, the girl's Norwegian peers knew she was different, in the sense that she is not Norwegian, however they accepted her. Still, one may question if she really is included. She also expresses in the interview that it is very difficult to get to know Norwegians, since neither she nor the Norwegians are the type of people to go up to a person and start a conversation. When being asked what could make this better, or easier, she expresses:

*I think that when I begin, for example next year, I will begin Upper Secondary School, we will be in the same class (Girl, Vestlia)*

So even though she says that in a way she feels that she is part of Norwegian society, she still finds it difficult to get to know Norwegians. Hence, one may question if she has a sense of belonging and membership to Norway. Another girl from Vestlia also gives an interesting comment on this:

*Interviewer: Do you feel that the school here is working on integration? Or do they have any...*

*Girl: I don't think they do anything like that*

*Interviewer: Nothing you can see?*

*Girl: No*

*Interviewer: How is it to become a part of the Norwegian society?*

*Girl: It goes ok. I do not notice that I become left out or that I am outside of the group because I am not Norwegian. Yes I integrated myself pretty good.*

As can be seen out of this quote, she argues that she is integrated, however the school has not helped her, explicitly at least, to become integrated. As she explains it, she exercised her agency and "integrated herself". However, as mentioned earlier, the majority in society is said to have a responsibility to include the minority (St.meld.nr.49, 2003-04). And although integrating herself might have worked for the participant quoted above, having to integrate oneself might not work for others.

In chapter 5.3 it was presented that participants from Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken wished for a school being organized in a similar way to Vestlia. However, as discussed, the expectations from the two schools may not always correspond to the experiences of the participants from Vestlia. Even though the classes for the participants are organized at the Upper Secondary School, they still had thoughts on how the inclusion process at the school could have been improved:

*It could have been a bit, if we had had joint activities where we could integrate with them [Norwegian peers at the Upper Secondary School], or do some things together (Girl, Vestlia)*

Another participant, now attending the Upper Secondary School, also had some future ideas on how the young immigrants attending at Vestlia could get more included with the Norwegian peers at the school:

*I believe it could be nice then. For example they [the young immigrants] could tell others about their homeland then (Girl, Vestlia)*

Ideas like the ones of the two girls above, represent what could be viewed as more inclusive programs, as is mentioned by Antia et al. (2002) as important for the students to be able to be members of society. Placing young immigrants in the same school as their Norwegian peers without having any programs for helping them to become included may not give the positive results participants from Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken hopes for. As the data indicates, it may result in the young immigrants and their Norwegian peers living segregated lives within the

same school. Inclusive programs can therefore be said to be important for the participants to be able to act out their citizenship. The importance of more inclusive programs, and creating different arenas where the young immigrants could get to know Norwegians was also highlighted by the teachers. Such inclusive programs could help the young immigrants to get a sense of belonging by being members, and by living in a togetherness with their Norwegian peers (Heater, 2004). Kjørholt (2008) argues that

*Having an identity as a citizen in the present and in the future requires a sense of belonging, anchored in inclusive relationships with others. Being marginalized and excluded from social relationships and belonging means being deprived of the possibilities to practice citizenship (p. 29)*

This quote shows the importance of being able to practice one's citizenship. As seen through this chapter, most participants are experiencing it challenging to become a member in society, and are deprived for these inclusive relationships with Norwegians. Some of the participants express a feeling of being part of the Norwegian society, however one may still argue if they feel a sense of belonging. I agree with Kjørholt that being able to feel this sense of belonging is important both for their citizenship of today and for the future.

## **7.2 Human 'becomings'**

The discussion about the young immigrants, and if they can be said to be able to act as citizens is very much related to the discussion about children as human beings or 'becomings'. Traditionally children have been constructed as human 'becomings', contrasting to human beings (Qvortrup, 1994). The division between these two concepts is a division between "the complete and independent and the incomplete and dependent" (Lee, 2001, p. 5). Smith and Bjerke (2009) argue that

*This discourse of children as lacking competence and requiring protection and nurturance, and in the process of becoming persons rather than persons now, has often been used to deny them agency and limit their citizenship right (p. 18)*

By seeing children as 'becomings', Lee (2001) argues that children in a way are being seen as an investment for the future. The present, through education, care and upbringing, is then mainly seen as a preparation for their later adulthood (Lee, 2001). I find it interesting to relate

this discussion to what has been presented above on the participants' experiences and citizenship.

In Mellomåsen and Ravnbakken this is particularly applicable. The students at the two schools have to get to a certain level, both academically and linguistically, before they even get the opportunity to socialize with their Norwegian peers. As seen in chapter 6 on Time, many of the participants felt that the time passed by and that they therefore were not able to meet their Norwegian peers:

*But I think that, an adolescent, 17-16 years old, have to be together at an [ordinary school]. (...) Then you learn a lot during breaks or with friends and stuff, and to talk. It is better. If you come here, you are done, done with life and all (Boy, Ravnbakken).*

As explained in the previous subchapter, a sense of belonging and contact with Norwegians is important for enabling the participants to practice their citizenship. As this participant explains, he would like for them to be able to actually attend the same school as his Norwegian peers. However, as shown in the earlier chapters, the participants at Ravnbakken and Mellomåsen had to stay at the Adult Education Centers before being given the opportunities to behave as citizens. I therefore argue that just as one can say that children by being seen as 'becomings' prepares for adulthood through their education, one can see the participants as, through education, preparing for citizenship. In the distinction of human beings and human 'becomings', adults have been presented as a kind of standard model or the journey's end for the human 'becomings' (Lee, 2001). In the light of the participants' view, this could be compared to having come to the point where one study at the Upper Secondary School with their Norwegian peers and being included in society and as a result being given the opportunity to exercise their citizenship. As a participant from Mellomåsen explained:

*The main goal is that everybody wants to reach Upper Secondary School (Boy, Mellomåsen)*

Also the participants' from Vestlia looked forward to starting Upper Secondary School. Although they also argued that starting Upper Secondary School would make it easier for them to get to know Norwegians, they still felt to some degree more integrated by attending The Class at the Upper Secondary School, and as some of them highlighted 'normal' school.

If one views the young immigrants as 'becomings', this emphasizes their future. However if one would see them as beings one would see the importance of where they are in the moment, and make the best out of their situation in the here and now. I argue, however, that the participants to a large extent have been viewed as 'becomings'. This has further placed them in the situation where it is challenging for them to get a sense of belonging, and thus act as real citizens.

### **7.3 Concluding remarks**

In my thesis I have presented experiences of young immigrants arriving Norway, and their experiences with social everyday life, their school and their possibilities for acting out their citizenship. I have looked at experiences from three different municipalities, since the education for this group is organized differently depending on the local context. Conducting the research in three municipalities therefore gave me the opportunity to obtain different experiences from the participants. What has been illustrated through the data in this thesis is that these are complex questions.

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of this thesis is not to evaluate the different schools, but to give attention to the participants' experiences and challenges. The data has shown that the situation is complex and more research is therefore needed to get the whole picture. In this thesis I have chosen to look at the experiences from the adolescents. However, from the informal interviews with the teachers, it is clear that they also experience challenges with this education which should be researched further.

In this thesis the data has indicated that it was important for the participants to be located together with their Norwegian peers. This, they highlighted, was vital for the participants' well-being, their language acquisition and their inclusion process. Studying with adults and/or older relatives was shown to be problematic, making the participants at Ravnbakken feel they would stay there until they got as old as their fellow adult students.

The experiences the participants has made at the different schools, also showed to be important for their citizenship. As shown in chapter seven, the possibility for the participants to act as citizens met various challenges. These challenges are connected to what was

explained earlier in chapter five and six. I have with this thesis wanted to present these challenges, and hope that this can be fruitful for the discussion on education, young immigrants and citizenship in Norway. The data indicates that it is important to get the young immigrant's experiences about the topic, and that more research should be done to identify the complexity of the participants' situation.

Even though the participants in this research had different experiences, it is clear that the way the schools are organized is a significant point. The participants experiences have shown that it is important to identify the best solution for the young immigrants in this situation, and to decrease the differences between the schools. As a concluding recommendation for the young immigrants' education, I therefore argue that it is important to construct governmental guidelines on how to organize this education.

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## **Appendix 1 - Informed consent form**

### **Forespørsel om å delta i intervju i forbindelse med en masteroppgave**

Jeg er masterstudent i Childhood Studies ved NTNU og holder nå på med den avsluttende masteroppgaven. Temaet for masteroppgaven min er innvandrerungdommers erfaringer med skole og deres opplevelse av egen integrasjon. Jeg er interessert i å finne ut hva de ungdommene mener om hvordan skolen deres er organisert og hvilke tanker og erfaringer de har gitt seg i forhold til dette temaet.

For å finne ut av dette, ønsker jeg å intervju 10-15 personer i alderen 16-20 år. Spørsmålene vil dreie seg om erfaringene personene har rundt skoletilbudet, det sosiale hverdagslivet på skolen og deres følelse av integrering i det norske samfunnet. Jeg vil bruke båndopptaker om deltakerne synes dette er greit, og ta notater mens vi snakker sammen. Intervjuet vil ta omtrent en førtifem minutter, og vi blir sammen enige om tid og sted.

Det er frivillig å være med og du har mulighet til å trekke deg når som helst underveis, uten å måtte begrunne dette nærmere. Dersom du trekker deg vil all innsamlede data om deg bli anonymisert, og de vil ikke bli brukt i oppgaven. Opplysningene vil bli behandlet konfidensielt, og ingen enkeltpersoner vil kunne gjenkjennes i den ferdige oppgaven. Opplysningene anonymiseres og opptakene slettes når oppgaven er ferdig, innen 1. juni 2014. Dersom du har lyst å være med på intervjuet, er det fint om du skriver under på den vedlagte samtykkeerklæringen og sender den til meg.

Hvis det er noe du lurer på kan du ringe meg på [telefonnummer] eller sende en e-post til [emailadresse]. Du kan også kontakte min veileder Gry Mette Dalseng Haugen ved NOSEB på telefonnummer [telefonnummer].

Studien er meldt til Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste (NSD).

Med vennlig hilsen

Mira Mariella Fiskum Myhr

[Adresse]

Samtykkeerklæring:

Jeg har mottatt skriftlig informasjon og er villig til å delta i studien.

Signatur ..... Telefonnummer .....