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Digital Migrants

Transnational Practises and Maintaining Cultural Identity among First-Generation Afghan Migrants

Master's thesis in Geography with Teacher Education

Supervisor: Ståle Angen Rye

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Abstract

Globalization has led to more interconnectedness between people and facilitated migration in the past several decades. This has become even more apparent with the advancements in modes of transportation and information and communication technologies (ICTs). As migrants add to the demographics of host countries and incorporate themselves into society, they still maintain many aspects of their 'old selves' through their transnational practises that span continents and manmade borders. A big aspect of this can be credited to their use of new ICTs that have emerged in the past three decades.

The objective of this thesis is to explore the various ways in which first-generation Afghan migrants engage in sociocultural transnational practises that encompass their host country and country of origin to preserve their Afghan cultural identity and what the role of ICTs are in this process. This was done by highlighting their experiences since arrival to Norway through qualitative interviews. Considering the theoretical approaches on migration, migrant transnationalism and ICTs, various experiences are presented and discussed. This thesis sheds some light on the interplay between migration, identity, transnational practises, and ICTs.

Findings in this thesis illustrate that the experiences of first-generation Afghan migrants with engagement in sociocultural transnational practises have changed significantly since their arrival. In large parts thanks to their gained digital literacy and the emergence of new ICTs. However, ICTs and sociocultural transnational practises both play a causal relationship in explaining how this group of migrants have preserved their cultural identity since their arrival.

Sammendrag

Globalisering har ført til mer sammenkobling mellom mennesker og lettet migrasjon de siste tiårene. Dette har blitt enda tydeligere med fremskrittene innen transportmåter og informasjons- og kommunikasjonsteknologi (IKT). Ettersom migranter øker demografien til vertslandene og inkorporerer seg selv i samfunnet, opprettholder de fortsatt mange aspekter av sitt "gamle selv" gjennom sine transnasjonale aktiviteter som spenner over kontinenter og menneskeskapte grenser. En stor del av dette kan tilskrives deres bruk av ny IKT som har dukket opp de siste tre tiårene.

Målet med denne oppgaven er å utforske de ulike måtene førstegenerasjons afghanske migranter engasjerer seg i sosiokulturelle transnasjonale aktiviteter som omfatter vertslandet og opprinnelseslandet for å bevare deres afghanske kulturelle identitet og hvilken rolle IKT har i denne prosessen. Dette ble gjort ved å fremheve deres erfaringer siden ankomst til Norge gjennom kvalitative intervjuer. I lys av de teoretiske tilnærmingene til migrasjon, migranttransnasjonalisme og IKT, presenteres og diskuteres ulike erfaringer. Denne oppgaven kaster litt lys over samspillet mellom migrasjon, identitet, transnasjonale praksiser og IKT.

Funnene i denne oppgaven illustrerer at erfaringene til førstegenerasjons afghanske migranter med engasjement i sosiokulturelle transnasjonale praksiser har endret seg betydelig siden de kom til Norge. I store deler takket være deres oppnådde digitale kompetanse og fremveksten av ny IKT. Imidlertid spiller både IKT og sosiokulturell transnasjonal praksis begge en årsakssammenheng når man skal prøve å forklare hvordan denne gruppen migranter har bevart sin kulturelle identitet siden ankomst til Norge.

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1. Introduction

In recent decades, the rise of world markets, technological revolutions in transportation and communication, and the flood of images and messages from new media have brought what was once distant and inaccessible within easy reach of the individual. (Mau, 2010, p. 1)

It is apparent that globalization has changed people's interconnectedness, but it has also changed migrants' patterns and behaviour. Whereas migration entailed losing all forms of connections to place of origin before, in our present ever more globalized world, migrants seem to be at the frontier when it comes to maintaining connections that span continents and manmade borders (Fuglerud, 2017; Martin, 2014). Martin (2014) and Fuglerud (2017) points out that in 2014 more than 200 million people lived outside their home country and that this number might increase profoundly with not only new modes of transportation, but also increasingly uncertain security situation in the third world and climate change induced migration. Furthermore, as Mau points out, emerging information and communication technologies have allowed migrants to become transnational, in that their social networks/fields extend beyond just the locale in which they live in (Levitt and Schiller, 2004; Basch et al., 1994; Alonso & Oiarzabal, 2010; Fuglerud, 2017). This has allowed migrants to be their old selves, but at the same time embrace host country.

In many ways I feel like I never left my country, as my Afghan friends in Norway allow me to feel at home here and my family [in country of origin] on Facebook allow me to also feel like I am there. So, you could say I am both here and there simultaneously (Nadia, 20).

Nadia's sentiment is living proof to the duality of a migrant's life. It becomes clear that a contemporary migrants' life is not limited to the boundaries of certain manmade borders. Instead, they maintain strong connections with each other on a transnational level that encompasses both host country and country of origin (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). As migrants are a diverse group of people, this might, however, vary among different nationalities. Therefore, this thesis intends to explore the digital boundaries of migrant transnationalism by examining the experiences of first-generation migrants since their arrival to Norway.

1.1. Relevance of the study for future research and my profession

In Norway and western nations, there has been a growing concern over the influx of migrants the past decades. As a result, we have seen far right political parties coming to power (Fuglerud, 2017). These parties base their entire ideology on prejudice by conflating and over-exaggerating differences between migrants and host country population (Fuglerud, 2017; Martin, 2014). Their rhetoric extends beyond just our physical worlds as ICTs have allowed their individual followers to conflate what I believe to be non-existent issues on social media platforms. This kind of polarization is due to people having little understanding of a migrant's perspective on life. Therefore, as migrants start to become an inherent part of not only Norwegian society, but also other western societies, it is important to highlight why and how migrants do things differently and behave differently. Migrants are, therefore, a truly relevant topic to study.

However, in Norway most research on migrants and migration tend to revolve around host country participation and integration. I believe that to understand how we can better integrate migrants to host society, we need first understand their "old selves" and why they insist on preserving their old selves. A big portion of their old selves involves engaging in activities in host country and/or otherwise engaging in cross-border activities that might seem alienating to Norwegians. Which is why I believe studies on migrant transnationalism can allow us to uncover "some of the 'hidden' aspects of many migrants' lives" (Al-Ali & Koser, 2002, p. 3). Transnational perspectives offer us, as Al-Ali and Koser (2004) and Basch et al. (1994) point out, new insights into migration which focuses on how migrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement together, in our evermore digitalized world.

While it also leads to building bridges between host society and migrants through mutual understanding of each other, I also believe migrant transnationalism and migrants' utilization of ICTs is relevant for my profession as a geography and English teacher. One of the competence aims for pupils in the geography curriculum in upper secondary school, is as follows; "explain causes behind demographic changes and discuss different living conditions in different parts of the world" (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). Elaborating further on its relevance and central values that I as a teacher should teach my pupils how to see the connections between the use of resources, nature, environment, and society, and motivate them to learn by reflecting on local and global issues (The Norwegian

Directorate for Education and Training, 2020). I believe my gained knowledge on migrant transnationalism, ICTs as a resource, and global interconnectedness through this study, not only help highlight aspects of Afghan migrants' lives but can also be valuable in the classroom. My topic might allow me to offer my pupils a new insight into migration, changing demographic patterns and humans use of resources, the internet being the resource in the case of my thesis.

1.2. Afghan migrants

As mentioned previously, the migrant group I based my research on are Afghan migrants in Norway. Afghans come from a country that is situated at the crossroads of Asia. Afghanistan's geography makes it strategically important but has also become its curse. As it has been the subject of many foreign invasions throughout history (Najib and Afroz, 2013). The modern age has not done it any favour either, as in the past decades it has been the centre of turmoil and conflicts in the region. This has led to the mass dispersal of its inhabitants to neighbouring countries. In the past two decades, however, new modes of transportation and technology has allowed Afghans, like other migrants, to migrate further.

According to Statistics Norway (SSB, 2022), there are currently 18 163 first-generation Afghan migrants living in Norway. With a further 5 307 second-generation Afghan migrants (SSB, 2022).

1.3. Overreaching focus of inquiry and research questions

This thesis aims to explore the experiences of first-generation Afghan migrants that have lived in Norway longer than 10 years with sociocultural transnationalism and preservation of cultural identity amidst the development of new information and communications technologies (ICT), since their arrival. The central research question for this thesis is:

How has first-generation migrants maintained their Afghan cultural identity through their sociocultural transnational practises since arrival to Norway? And what is the role of ICTs in this process?

A central research question like this requires of me as a researcher to look at how their experiences have changed from when they first arrived in Norway. Meaning that, first, I must find out how first-generation Afghan migrants reconfigure their cultural identity in host society. This entails identifying their sociocultural transnational practises. In this instance, I differentiate between sociocultural activities in host country and sociocultural ties to country

of origin. I interpret sociocultural ties to country of origin as the flow of information stemming mainly from country of origin. Therefore, I will be identifying both the sociocultural activities they engage in with other Afghans in Norway and the ties they have to country of origin.

The research question also requires of me to examine how the development of ICTs has changed how first-generation Afghan migrants engage in sociocultural transnational practises since their arrival. Lastly, to find out what role sociocultural transnational practices combined with the use of ICTs play in preserving Afghan cultural identity for this specific group of migrants.

The central research question is, therefore, narrowed down and answered through the following sub-questions:

1. What are first-generation Afghan migrants' sociocultural transnational practises?
2. How has emerging ICTs changed the sociocultural transnational practises of first-generation Afghan migrants since arrival to Norway?
3. What role does ICTs, and the sociocultural transnational practises of first-generation Afghan migrants play in preserving their Afghan cultural identity?

1.4. Thesis outline

Excluding list of reference and appendix, this thesis consists of 6 chapters:

Chapter 1: The introduction of the thesis providing the relevance of my study and research questions

Chapter 2: Provides the theoretical framework of my thesis. Here, key concepts that will be utilized in my findings and discussion will be presented.

Chapter 3: Provides the methodological framework my thesis. Here, I will be describing the choice of research methods, presentation of informants, description on how the actual fieldwork was conducted, the processing of data, and lastly, ethical considerations that need be

Chapter 4: Presents my findings and discusses them in light of key concepts provided in chapter 3 and other contemporary theoretical perspectives on migration and transnationalism. Here, the first sub-section involves the sociocultural transnational practises of my informants and the symbolic value of them for my informants. The second sub-section will revolve

around how ICTs have changed the sociocultural transnational practises of my informants since arrival to Norway. Last subsection will present and discuss some of the unintended findings that spurred out of my data. These are, however, still relevant to the topic of my thesis and my research questions.

Chapter 5: Will reflect my introduction, whereby I will be trying to answer each of my research questions in light of my findings and conclude the thesis with a main conclusion in the end.

2. Theoretical framework – Key concepts

In this section of my paper, I will be outlining the theoretical framework for my research project. I will be encompassing and touching upon several theoretical concepts which I consider to be essential in shining a light on my results and discussion later in the thesis. Subsequently, I will, first, be describing key concepts such as migration and transnationalism. Second, to gain an understanding of the different types of transnational migrants that exist, I will also, be elaborating on the mobility and locality of transnational migrants.

Furthermore, theoretical approaches on ICTs within the context of migration and transnationalism will also be provided. Lastly, a detailed understanding on the concept of identity within the context of migration and transnationalism is needed. As it is invaluable in answering my research questions. Lastly, a theoretical description of information and communication technologies within the context of transnationalism and migration.

2.1. Migration and Transnationalism – Social networks

Daswani (2013) explains that *globalization* as a concept has been used to refer to the dramatic transformation of the modern world – an economic and societal transformation brought forth by political shifts, ICT and transportation advancements, and economic restructuring. As globalization operate between different spheres simultaneously, it has also led to more interconnectedness between migrants and changed their migratory patterns substantially (Fuglerud, 2017). Martin (2014) explains that “every period of globalization has seen rapid increases in international migration” (p.10). However, Martin (2014) points out that migration remains the exception as “most people do not want to leave family and friends for another country” (p. 10). She goes on to mention that most migrants are forced to move and that moving to another country is not even worth the temporary loss of their connections (Martin, 2014).

However, in the information age of ICT advancements, when migrants do migrate, they still maintain different types of connections to country of origin (Martin, 2014; Vertovec, 2009). Thus, the active role of migrants cross-border activities has been the subject of growing interest and consensus among researchers. However, while globalization suggests interconnectedness between different actors, Cooper (2005) points out that “the term globalization has become a dumping ground for all sorts of different meanings, and theoretical battles over what is and what is not” (as cited in Daswani, 2013, p. 34). Therefore, *transnationalism* has been suggested as an approach to limit focus on the interconnectedness between people, in particular migrants (Daswani, 2013; Hannerz, 1996; Levitt & Schiller, 2004; Kennedy & Roudmoteof, 2002; Yeoh et al., 2003; Basch et al, 1994; Vertovec, 2009). Hannerz (1992) describes that *transnationalism* is a “more adequate label for phenomena which can be of quite variable scale and distribution” (p. 6). Similarly, Daswani (2013) explains that transnationalism uses “less abstracts ways to address the cultural specifics of these changing global conditions as they are experienced by people in, and through nation-states” (p. 35).

Hannerz (1996) proposes that transnationalism makes the point that “in the international arena, the actors may be individuals, groups, movements, business enterprises” (p. 6). Migrants have throughout history contributed to representing the “individuals” category.” Lima (2010) points out that international migration has become a crucial driver for transnationalism as migrants have now become an integral part of the demographic future of many developed countries. Basch et al. (1994) define transnationalism as:

The processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders. Immigrants who develop and maintain multiple relationships—familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political—that span borders we call “transmigrants. (p. 8)

They also mention that an essential element of transnationalism as “the multiplicity of involvements that transmigrants sustain in both home and host societies” (Basch et al., 1994). Similarly, Vertovec (2009) points out how these multi-stranded social relations of migrants do not withstand “the presence of international border (an all the laws, regulations, and national narratives they present” (p. 3). Vertovec (2004) explains that a transnational lens on migrant activities is important as it “allows social scientist to view the way some significant things are

changing” (p. 1). He maintains that conducting research through a transnational lens “show clearly that many migrants today intensively conduct activities and maintain substantial commitments that link them with significant others” (Vertovec, 2004, p. 1).

Individuals in the international arena may engage in transnational practises based on shared interests. Vertovec (2009) describes these shared interests as “as religious beliefs, common cultural and geographic origins” (p. 3). Along the same lines, Faist (2010) mentions that migrants engage in various activities, to give a few examples, reciprocity and solidarity within kinship networks, political participation in both host country and country of origin, sending remittances, cybernetworks and “the transfer and re-transfer of cultural customs and practises” (p. 11). The sustained ties and ongoing exchanges among individuals who share the same interests have become significantly more relevant in the past decades with the increasing influx of migrants escaping manmade conflicts, shifts in the economic situation and natural disasters induced by climate change (Lima, 2010). To understand how migrants' transnational practises encompassing both host country and country of origin, and the significance of their engagement for them, Levitt and Schiller (2004) propose the *concept of transnational social fields*. As this concept is important for understanding the symbolic value of migrants' transnational practises, it will be elaborated upon further in sub-section 2.3.

Furthermore, Contemporary analysis on migrant transnationalism also suggests that *social network* and *social capital analysis* be taken into consideration when discussing the topic of sustained cross border linkages between migrants (Ryan et al., 2022; Vertovec, 2009; Haug, 2008; Özveren & Faist, 2017). Ryan et al. (2022) and Behtoui (2022) suggests referring to social networks as the relationships between migrants and social capital as the resources (economic, cultural, and symbolic) which these social networks ascertain. As the wide variety of ways in which migrants engage in transnational practises is shaped by their social networks and social capital that they have and create prior to- migration and after settlement in host country (Haug, 2008; Sha, 2021). Herz and Olivier-Mensah (2012) coin the social networks based on transnational practises as *transnational social networks*. Sha (2021) mentions that “migrant networks are understood as social capital and function as migration infrastructure, providing a range of benefits to members involved in transnational migration” (p. 21). He points out that a migrant's social network help sustain a transnational network by an important flow of resources between host country and country of origin (Sha, 2021). Furthermore, Haug (2008), Özveren and Faist (2017), and Sha (2021) maintain that social

capital is an important aspect of migrant social networks as it explains how migration and transnational practises are encouraged and facilitated.

Furthermore, as migrants maintain social ties in a transnational setting, a central attribute to the migrant social network is, therefore, the differentiation between “*strong*” and “*weak*” ties (Granovetter, 1973; Ryan et al., 2022). Granovetter (1973) differentiates the strength of ties based on “combination of amount of the time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie” (p.1361). Within the context of migration and transnationalism, researchers have used Granovetter’s differentiation of weak and strong ties to study the ties of migrants within migrant networks in both host country and country of origin and the value that these ties signify for them (Guilletti et al., 2018; Ryan, 2022; Blumenstock et al., 2019; Vertovec, 2009).

However, while we have established the connection between international migration and migrant transnationalism, not all migrants engage in transnational practises to the same degree or the same. In the next section, I will be elaborating further upon the four different types of transnational migrants that Dahinden (2010) differentiates between.

2.1.1. Mobility and locality: different groups of transnational migrants

Dahinden (2010) proposes a separate way of analysing migrants’ transnational practises by considering *mobility* and *locality*. Her understanding of mobility in this context is the physical movement of people in transnational space, moving across borders (Dahinden, 2010). While “locality means being rooted or anchored – socially, economically or politically – in the country of immigration and/or in the sending country; it means developing/having a set of social relations at specific places” (Dahinden, 2010, p. 51). Her main argument being that migrants’ transnational practises, spaces and ways of being should be studied as the combined effect of both mobility and locality. As it allows us to gain interesting insights into the different ways in which migrants engage in transnational practises. Using the dimension of mobility and locality, Dahinden (2010) identifies four different ideal types of the transnational migrant:

1. Localized diasporic transnational formations
2. Localised mobile transnational formations
3. Transnational mobiles
4. Transnational outsiders

Localised diasporic transnational formations are characterised by “low levels of transnational mobility with high levels of local anchorage in the receiving and low levels of local anchorage in the sending country” (Dahinden, 2010, p. 53). It is a transnational group who have not returned to country of origin since leaving and who are – with their offspring – settled in the host country. They are, as the name suggests, diasporas that were dispersed several generations ago, i.e., Jewish diaspora, Armenian diaspora etc. These types of transnational groups usually have ascertained citizenship in the host country generations ago and are very well integrated into the culture and society of the host country. However, they still maintain their culture and social, economic, and political relations to country of origin through their transnational practises. Despite many of them not having visited their country of origin.

Dahinden (2010) characterises *localized mobile transnational formations* as a transnational group who simultaneously have high levels of mobility and high levels of local anchorage in host country and country of origin. These are migrants who themselves have experienced migration or are born in host country to first generation migrant parents. These migrants usually have residence in the host country but travel frequently back and forth between host country and country of origin. Dahinden (2010) points out that the transnational practises of these type of migrants are, due to their high degree of mobility, less conditioned by collective representation of ethnicity or religion. But rather through family networks and the economic practises of sending remittance and goods between host country and country of origin.

The third type, *transnational mobiles*, is characterised by low level of anchorage in the host country and a higher degree of mobility as they are permanently on the move (Dahinden, 2010). These types of migrants usually maintain a sense of locality in their country of origin and do not wish to settle in another country, however, they tend to stay mobile in order to maintain or improve their quality of life (Dahinden, 2010). Examples of such migrants are seasonal workers and other migrants seeking a better salary in developed countries, i.e., Indian working in the UAE or poles working in Norway. Their transnational practises can either be symbolic, cultural, social, or economic, but are typically characterised by the activities they conduct in transnational space along professional lines.

The transnational outsiders are “characterised by low transnational mobility and, at the same time, a low degree of local anchorage” (Dahinden, 2010, p. 57). This transnational group is mostly comprised of asylum seekers, recently arrived migrants from non-EU countries and sometimes even legal refugees. Their low mobility is because they do not travel between their country of origin and host country because of persecution in country of origin,

but also, more generally, due to their legal status in host country not allowing them to travel outside. Along the same lines, their low level of local anchorage in host country is again due to their legal status limiting their access to jobs and other resources in the host country (Dahinden, 2010). This transnational group are usually cut off from their transnational networks in country of origin and engage very little in transnational activities due to having neither the resources nor the capital to do so, and sometimes they are not even able to maintain economic ties with relatives.

While Dahindens four groups of transnational migrants provide a detailed understanding of how mobility and locality can affect the transnational engagement of migrants and diasporic communities, they do, however, not mention the increasingly significant role of *information and communication technologies (ICTs)*. Consequently, in the interest of my thesis, I will be elaborating further upon ICTs within the context of migration and transnationalism.

2.2. Information and communication technologies

Technological development in the past decades has given way to new revolutionising modes of transportation and communication, and the subsequent flood of images and messages from new media has, as Mau (2010) stresses, “brought what was once distant and inaccessible within easy reach of the individual” (p. 1). There is a growing interest within the paradigms of migration and migrant transnationalism in the different ways in which migrant employ the use of ICTs to maintain transnational practises (Vertovec, 2009; Wessels, 2010; Hiller & Franz, 2004; Tettey, 2013; Kupiainen, 2004; Mau, 2010). Alonso & Oiarzabal, 2010). Alonso and Oiarzabal (2010) argues that the spread of information and communication technologies “constitutes a new dimension in the study of emigrant and diasporic identities and cultures within the context of current processes of globalization” (p. ix).

Within the context of migration and transnationalism, it is argued that ICTs have enabled transnational migrant networks to become more digitalized, e.g., digital networks (Alonso and Oiarzabal, 2010; Kupiainen, 2004; Alonso & Reips, 2012; Gomes, 2018). For instance, Alonso and Oiarzabal (2010) mention that the digitalized migrant networks and the subsequent social capital “lead to chain migration, which, in turn, helps perpetuate migration flows between specific sending and receiving areas and among consecutive generations immigrants” (p. 6). Furthermore, ICTs also change how we view “strong” and “weak ties” within transnational migrant social networks (Hiller and Franz, 2004; Wessels, 2010; Alonso & Oiarzabal, 2010).

To establish the use of ICTs within the context of migrants and examine how their functions vary at different phases in the migrant experience, Hiller and Franz (2004) distinguish between three phases:

1. The pre-migrant
2. The post-migrant
3. The settled migrant

Hiller and Franz (2004) characterize the *pre-migrant phase* by how the migrants have “not yet moved and is still located in their place of origin” (p. 737). In this phase, the migrant is “considering the possibility of moving and typically is seeking information and linages to assist in making the decision to move or has already made the decision and is looking for informational supports to facilitate the move” (Hiller & Franz, 2004, p. 737). The *post-migrant phase* is characterized by how the migrants have arrived at another country “but has been away from the community of origin, or conversely located in the new destination, for less than five years” (Hiller & Franz, 2004, p. 737). However, Hiller and Franz (2004) mention that the five-year timeframe is somewhat arbitrary and can vary, but that it suggests a reasonable period of adaption to host country. The *settled migrant* phase is characterized by how the migrants, according to Hiller and Franz (2004), have been located in the new destination for more than five years. At the same time, Hiller and Franz (2004) points out that “obviously, not all migrants move only once and some may return, while others who return may repeat the migration” (p.737). However, they maintain that the typology of using three different phases and a five-year timeframe to distinguish between the post-migrant and settled migrant phase, did represent the majority of their study participants.

Migrants maintain different types of transnational practises, however, as we mentioned before, these practises are often based on shared interests such as cultural, political, or religious beliefs. As one of my research questions focuses on the first-generation migrants’ identity, in particular cultural *identity*, I will be elaborating further upon the concept of (cultural) identity within the context of migration and transnationalism in the next section of my thesis.

2.3. Identity

Kidd (2002) defines *identity* as a way in which we “relate to how we think about ourselves as people, how we think about other people around us, and what we think others think of us”

(p. 7). Similarly, Heller (2011), through a sociocultural lens, defines identity as “as the consciousness or the feeling of belonging to a social network or a locality or an area and the feeling of oneness with these” (p.1). Kidd (2002) maintains that discourses of identity often form a connection to culture as a concept. Whereas identity is how we fix or figure out who we are as a people, Kidd (2002) defines *culture* as the “way of life of a group of people” (p. 5). Way of life in this context meaning “the product of social undertaking: the result of collective, combined and interrelated efforts of all its members” (Kidd, 2002, p. 9). Along the same lines, Haller (2021) describes identity as “a more or less comprehensive and coherent self-image which determines our thinking and actions” (p. 34).

However, there is a distinction between the individual and collective on the topic of identity. Haller (2021) points that that there is a distinction between *personal identity* and *social identity*. Where personal identity includes all internal aspects of identity and is relative to the individual personally; social identity has more to do with the social and cultural context in which a person lives (pp. 34-45). Whereas Kidd (2002) differentiates between social identity and *cultural identity*. Kidd (2002) maintains that the two terms are related but describes cultural identity as “a sense of belonging to a distinct ethnic, cultural or subcultural group” (p. 26). However, Sevänen (2004) stresses that “in certain other cultures the relation between the individual and society is seen differently, and these cultures do not make a clear-cut difference between personal and cultural identity” (p. 5).

Unlike Kidd and Haller, Hall (1990) proposes two ways to define cultural identity. Hall (1990) mentions that the first position defines it in terms of “one, shared culture, a sort of collective “one true self” hiding inside the many other, more superficial, or artificially shared imposed “selves”, which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common” (pp. 443-444). Hall’s second position on cultural identity focuses more on how it is shaped. Therefore, I will be elaborating on Hall’s second position within the context of hybridization in the next section.

2.3.1. Hybridization and transnational identities

Hall (1990;1996) mentions that in second position cultural identities are constantly in the process of change and transformation, and never really unified. As in modern times they have become even more fragmented and fractures; “never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practises and positions” (Hall, 1996, p. 5). Hall (1990;1996) stresses that the second position on cultural identity is more evident

within all historically specific developments and practices, in particular the processes of globalization and migration in the present time. In the ever more globalized world, he maintains that we should focus more on using the resources of history, language, and culture in the process of becoming rather than focusing on what was or who we were (Hall, 1990;1996). Haller (2021) also insists that identity is something that is formed but continuously develops throughout life and is connected to both age transitions and changes in the social and cultural context in which we live in. Halls and Haller’s take on how our identities are continuously in the process of shaping itself and becoming is very evident within the context of migration and transnationalism:

As migrants frequently negotiate between the sociocultural aspects of two places, the ideas of *hybridization* and *transnational identities* has gained more consensus among researchers within the paradigms of transnationalism and migration (Yeoh et al. 2004; Haller, 2021; Wagner 2016; Vertovec, 2009; Hannerz, 1996). Yeoh et al. (2004) maintain that transnationalism subject migrants to constantly negotiating self-identities. They maintain that the identities, values, and behaviour of migrants who engage in transnational practices “are not limited by location; instead, they construct and utilize flexible personal and national identities” (p. 3). Wagner (2016) points out that “leaving the origin country, the migrant might suffer the loss of a part of his identity, especially regarding the cultural identity” (p. 242). In a bid to preserve some of “what was,” many migrants maintain several elements of loyalty to their original identities while also incorporating host country culture into their identities (Haller, 2021; Wagner, 2016). Which, in retrospect, leads to the development of dual, or even multiple, identities (Haller, 2021).

2.3.2. Using transnational social fields to understand migrants’ perception of identity

Vertovec (2001) suggest that “transnationalism and identity are concepts that call for juxtaposition” (p. 1). Vertovec (2001) explains that this is because, on the one hand, “many peoples’ transnational networks are grounded upon the perception that they share some form of common identity, often based upon a place of origin and the cultural and linguistic traits associated with it” (p. 1). Further, Vertovec (2001) express that such networks are usually emulate some sort of communication or exchange of information and resources “along with participation in socio-cultural and political activities”. While, on the other hand, “among certain sets of contemporary migrants, the identities of specific individuals and groups of

people are negotiated within social worlds that span more than one place” (Vertovec, 2001, p. 1).

What Vertovec is referring to here, is Levitt and Schillers’ (2004) concept of transnational social fields. According to Schiller et al. (1992), to understand transnationalism, one must understand the processes by which migrants build transnational social fields that link together their country of origin and country of settlement (p. 1). Levitt and Schiller (2004) use social field approach to understand not only the different border-spanning social relations and cultural practices transmigrants engage in, but also the varying ways in which they engage in it and the meaning of such engagement for the migrants’ identity and sense of belonging.

In their understanding of transnational social fields within the context of migration, they propose to distinguish between *ways of being* and *ways of belonging* (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). According to Levitt and Schiller (2004) “ways of being refers to the actual social relations and practises individuals engage in rather than to the identities associated with their actions” (p. 1010). Individuals may, therefore, be embedded in a social field, however, they can choose themselves if they want to identify with any label or cultural identity and politics associated with that field. While ways of belonging refer to “practises that signal or enact an identity which demonstrates a conscious connection to a particular group.” (Levitt & Schiller, 2004, p. 1010). Similarly, in the migrant experience, as Jones and Krzyzanowski (2008) suggests, a sense of *belonging* is fundamental in understanding how individuals become part of a collective identity. Jones and Krzyzanowski (2008) describe belonging as “a process whereby an individual in some way feels some sense of association with a group, and as such represents a way to explain the relationship between personalized identity and a collective identity” (p. 44). However, Levitt and Schiller (2004) remind us that this is not to say that individuals do not combine ways of being and ways of belonging and do so differently depending on the context.

3. Methodology

The objective and purpose of this chapter is to outline my methodological decision making in the process of choosing my research methods to address my research questions. While also outlining the techniques which were used to process, code, and sort the data in the aftermath of the interviews and observation. The chapter will commence by explaining my reason for choosing a qualitative research approach. It will then explain the selection of participants

where it will include the preliminary work that had been done before the data collection, my own reflections on recruitment, and a brief presentation of the informants.

Furthermore, the latter part of this chapter will give an assessment of the actual execution of my chosen research methods in the field. Which will then be followed by a description of the analysis and writing process. And finally, ending with an outlining on the ethical considerations during the data collection process

3.1. Choice of research approach

While conducting either *qualitative* or *quantitative research* approach involves their own individual and shared benefits, they do also have their own individual and shared drawbacks. However, this all hinge on the specific topic of the study and the research questions at hand. For my thesis I decided to use a qualitative research approach both in regard to the research design and the method I conducted. Hay and Cope (2021) explain how qualitative research is deeply familiar to all of us, by mentioning that "... as social beings, we learn about culture and environments, interpret others' actions and statements, figure out place, try to make sense of this world, and tell stories to each other that build on previous experiences." (p. 3).

Furthermore, they also explain how:

Qualitative research is useful for the overarching academic goal of knowledge production in several dimensions providing contextual and personal explanations for trends identified in quantitative studies; generating new insights into people's *experiences*, lives, emotions, communities; and mobilizing those insights to *explore* and build new theories of the human condition, the production of meaning, and human-environment relations. (Cope & Hay, 2021, pp. 4-5)

I feel compelled that these descriptions shared by Cope and Hay which highlights some of benefits of taking a qualitative research approach do indeed support my justification for choosing a qualitative research approach. As in the case of this thesis, my objective is to give a contextual and deeper understanding of experiences first generation Afghan migrants with sociocultural transnationalism and the use of ICTs. By studying meaningful content that is not necessarily obvious, qualitative methods study human behaviour through a hermeneutic approach. According to hermeneutics, there is no truth; however, phenomena can be interpreted differently (Thagaard, 2009).

Furthermore, by generating new insights to their transnational and digital lives, socially and culturally, I can explore how it has played a role in how they maintain their Afghan

cultural identity in Norway. It is therefore essential that I, as a researcher, select a research approach and subsequent methods where I am closely immersed in the Afghan community to be able to achieve a thorough understanding of their situation.

3.1.1. Previous knowledge and experience

Uwe Flick (2018) points out that the research we conduct comes from ideas and experiences (as cited in Stratford and Bradshaw, 2021). It is no doubt that me being a member of the Afghan community, ever since me and my family were reunited with my father in 2005, has shaped my project from the beginning. As a member of the Afghan community, I can share and understand, not only the difficulties which Afghan migrants face throughout their stay in Norway, but also the suffering and hardship which they had to face in their treacherous journey to Europe and, finally, Norway. As these are hardships which I have experienced and endured myself.

Having settled for several years in Norway, one would assume that being part of the community you aim to study would implicate that one has a lot of social connections within said community. However, most of my connections to the Afghan community stem from outside the city where I currently study and live. While some of my informants were from my own Afghan diasporic community outside where I live now, I took it as a challenge upon myself to form some connections with Afghans that I did not have any previous acquaintance with within the Afghan community where I live. In the subsequent section I will be expanding on how I ended up selecting which type of informants I needed and the preliminary work that went into finding and recruiting informants.

3.1.2. Selecting and recruiting informants

Stratford and Bradshaw (2021) explain that exploratory work and/or background work, such as, reading, observation, YouTube videos and other methods, is also important as it will often give the researcher an insight to the perspectives of participants with whom we think we want to interact. In complex cultural situations they suggest conducting preliminary interviews or an observational method (Stratford & Bradshaw, 2021). Prior to conducting interviews, I had also been invited to a Persian New Year celebration hosted by an Afghan cultural centre in Trondheim through my connections outside of Trondheim. I saw my opportunity, accepted the invitation, and decided that I would make use of this cultural event, to not only gather data through observation, but also to recruit informants that fit my participant criterion. By presenting and discussing my project through casual talks, I was able

to gain their trust and arrange for my informants to be interviewed at a future date, either digitally or physically. The Persian new year's celebration also allowed me to arrange an interview with the administrative chief of the Afghan cultural centre responsible for hosting the event.

Furthermore, thanks to the ideas and feedback I had been given on my research design and research goals by members of the Afghan community prior to even having started the project, I was able to quickly gain an understanding of how I needed to sample my informants. I decided to sample my informants strategically by employing various forms of purposive sampling. As I had set two different criteria in the invitation/permission letter I sent to my informants, I realized that criterion sampling was highly relevant in sampling of informants. However, as I already had some connections in the Afghan community that fit my criteria prior to the project, I was also able to recruit informants by employing the snowball- and opportunistic sampling strategies in my process of recruiting informants.

Stratford and Bradshaw (2021) mention that “conducting in-depth interviews with a small number of knowledgeable informants will provide significant insights into a research issue” (p. 99). While designing my sample, the first criterion I had required of informants was that they were first generation Afghan migrants. Second criterion was that they had lived in Norway for 10 years or longer. There were several reasons for setting these criteria. Firstly, I wanted to include members of the Afghan community who have lived in Norway long enough to have settled in. This was mainly to see how ICTs had changed their sociocultural transnational practises. I was confident that 10 years of residency was sufficient time to do so. Secondly, I wanted to include members of the Afghan community who were first generation migrants. As I felt this group of Afghans were the ones who had engaged most in sociocultural transnational practises and, because of that, they could paint a better picture of what Afghan cultural identity entails and how they are able to maintain their cultural identity in Norway.

Lastly, as I mentioned earlier, some of my informants were aware of my project and we had, therefore, arranged to have interviews at a date of their choosing. And thanks to these informants and their suggestions, I was able to make acquaintance with other informants by contacting them formally on Facebook Messenger or through phone calls. I was also invited to a Persian new year's celebration, Nowruz, by one of my informants. This opportunity allowed me to directly recruit other informants.

3.1.3. Brief presentation of informants

Although circumstances for migration to Norway varied among my informants, I am confident that I have been successful in finding informants that share common patterns in their transnational sociocultural transnational practises. The informants vary when it comes to which region of Afghanistan they come from, however. The circumstance for migrating included fleeing from war, conflict, and persecution, or, economic reasons, marriage and/or family reunion. Some of them had also migrated to and lived for a short period in other countries prior to arriving in Norway, such as Pakistan and Iran.

Their length of stay in Norway varied from 10-20 years and all of them arrived in Norway between 2002-2012. Their ages also varied with five of my informants being between the age of 18-30, three between 30-50 and two that were 50+. Four of my informants were female and six were male. The general level of education among my informants also varies a lot with the older generations having pursued no form of education in Norway and having some or no education from their country of origin. Only two of my informants between the ages of 30-50 and 50 and older, had some sort of education from their country. While three of them had been able to achieve an education in Norway. Nearly all of the older generation was familiar with Norwegian and had completed the mandatory Norwegian language courses. The younger generation, between 18-30 years, had little to no education from their country of origin, however, all of them had attained some form of education in Norway and were currently either studying in university or working. The marital status also varied with most of the older informants being married or having gone back to Afghanistan to marry after arriving to Norway. Seven of my informants were married and all of them were married to Afghans while three had not married. Following is a list explaining the gender, age, how long they have lived in Norway and reasons for migration, with their names pseudonymized:

Informants	Gender	Age	Years in Norway	Education/work in Norway	Reason(s) for migration
Informant 1 (Nadia)	Female	20	16	Finished high school & currently working	Family reunion
Informant 2 (Ahmad)	Male	27	17	Studying and working parttime	Family reunion
Informant 3 (Najib)	Male	72	20	Pensioner	Migrated alone due to war & persecution
Informant 4 (Massoud)	Male	33	14	Finished high school & currently working in retail	Family reunion

Informant 5 (Mariam)	Female	26	10-11	Studying in University	Personal issues and war in Afghanistan, migrated alone to Norway
Informant 6 (Hanifa)	Female	40	10.5	Finished high school and working in the service sector	Marriage and family reunion
Informant 7, (Ali)	Male	28	14	Studying and working parttime	Migrated alone due to religious and ethnic persecution, war, and poverty
Informant 8 (Jalil)	Male	39	16	Finished high school & currently working as a mechanic	Migrated alone due to war, conflict, and poverty
Informant 9, (Dariush)	Male	25	16	Studying and working parttime	Family reunion
Informant 10 (Khadije)	Female	66	17	Finished mandatory Norwegian course & currently working in a cafeteria	Family reunion

3.2. Methods for collecting data

In this section I will be providing a detailed description of how data was obtained by employing qualitative interviews using semi-structured interview guides.

3.2.1. The qualitative interview

Prior to conducting interviews, I had to register my project and have it approved by the Norwegian Social Sciences Data Services (NSD). This registration was mainly done to ensure my project followed correct ethical procedures in terms of recruiting informants, preparing information/consent letter for informants and that the necessary procedures were in place for collecting and storing the data which would be obtained.

As part of this research, the *qualitative interview* is the main method used to gather information. The qualitative interview is designed to create a setting for a relatively free dialogue that revolves around some specific topics that the researcher has decided in advance (Tjora, 2021). A qualitative interview involves the respondents sharing their knowledge to analyse their everyday experiences. As I was to study some personal aspects such as belief and understanding of one's own identity, I used semi-structured interviews to give participants enough control and flexibility, while also giving the myself as the researcher some control to lead the conversation (Crang & Cook, 2007).

The interviews were conducted in the span of a two-week period between 20th of march till 1st of April. In agreement with my informants, five of my interviews involved me visiting my informants in their homes to conduct the interviews. Which was a pleasant experience as I was served tea and food prior to the interviews and after. While the remaining five interviews

were conducted digitally through the video sharing application Zoom. This was done to ensure the date and timing of the interviews were feasible for my informants. As some of my informants who lived in Oslo preferred conducting it digitally or could otherwise not meet up physically. Furthermore, some of my informants were female and in certain instances within Afghan culture it is seen as disrespectful for a man and a woman that are not related to be conversing together. And in the instances where this was prevalent, a digital interview was less intimidating and quite useful in avoiding the fear of a physical confrontation. I followed the tips given by Hay & Cope (2021), who also express that conducting video call interviews using "proper netiquette, focus, and preparedness" (p. 182) is as effective as face-to-face interviews.

The interviews were scheduled and arranged in agreement with my informants during February and early March 2022 during which they received a copy of my interview guide in Norwegian and Dari. The reason for including a translation of the questions to Dari was simply to make it convenient for my informants. As Dari is one of the official languages of Afghanistan and a lingua franca in central Asia. I wanted to make sure that informants who were not as proficient in Norwegian had the option of reading the question in their mother tongue available. Furthermore, a letter of consent/information informing them of their rights, the aims and goals of the project were also provided to the informants in a week's advance. Included in the consent/information letter was a signature slot and check boxes granting me consent to record audio and their permission for me to use the information they provide during the interviews in my project. None of my informants had any problem with their voice being recorded on a dictaphone and they granted me access to record the interviews by signing the consent letter or granting me consent verbally at the start of the interviews.

Six of the interviews lasted between 60-90 minutes while the remaining four lasted up to 60 minutes. While the interview guide included in this thesis is in English (Appendix 2), as I mentioned previously, I provided my informants with a copy in both Norwegian and Dari to make easier to understand some of the questions for my informants. However, I still had to adjust some of my question during the interview to make it easier for them to understand them. In seven of my interviews, I spoke with the informants in their mother tongue, Dari, as we both concluded it was easier for them to not only comprehend the questions, but also provide a conclusive answer in their own mother tongue. The remaining three informants preferred speaking in Norwegian during the interview.

3.3. Organizing data

3.3.1. Transcription

All the interviews were either transcribed right after the interview or the following day. The voice recordings were stored on a dictaphone provided by my institute and the transcribed information were saved in a private and encrypted digital storage service provided by my university. While there are, as Nascimento and Steinbruch (2019) points out, two types of ways to transcribe material, *denaturalised- and naturalised transcription*, I choose to keep my transcriptions denaturalised. The reason being that I conducted nearly all my interviews within a short span of time. As a result, a denaturalised approach seemed more time efficient. As including oral language intricacies in accordance with a naturalised approach would contribute to some of my longer interviews taking five more added hours to transcribe. As mentioned previously, some of my informants spoke in their mother tongue, however, for the purpose of this project I transcribed the voice recordings in English. Nevertheless, the interviews were transcribed word for word to make ensure that my informants' opinions and perspectives were not misrepresented and/or lost in the process.

However, as Tjora (2017, p. 173) suggests, having your informants review the transcriptions can be especially useful as mistakes can be corrected and supplementary information added by the informant. As a result, I sent my informants a copy of the transcription over email to have them proofread it. To avoid the issue of having informants change or delete valuable information, I made sure the transcripts did not contain anything controversial. Controversies can often scare informants into changing their opinions or participation (Tjora, 2017).

3.3.2. Coding

Cope (2021) lists three main purposes for coding qualitative material as “data reduction, organization, and the creation of searching aids, and analysis” (p. 361). As my interviews contributed to producing masses of data in forms which were difficult to interpret or digest all at once, a detailed reduction and organization seemed necessary. Cope (2021) makes mention of the CRAFT method where she suggests you look for “text related to conditions, relationships, actions, feelings, and themes and then generate codes that best reflect those” (p. 365). Coding my interview transcripts involved the same procedure. However, in this case, it was much easier as the interview guides were already organized in different sections where I could not only answer my research questions, but also visualize different themes. This proved

to be beneficial as the themes evolved to become thematic codes in the process of coding the data. However, it is also worth mentioning that my previous knowledge on the topic, the background literature and other research planning documents also provided a lot of help in producing themes.

At first, I tried to code the data from my interview transcripts manually, however, this proved to be a very time consuming and strenuous process. As a result, I found it more beneficial in terms of time and consistency to employ the use of NVivo. NVivo is a digital software licensed by my university, NTNU, and made available for all its students. It offers students the possibility of coding and analysing qualitative data material. By using NVivo and employing the CRAFT method, I was able to quickly code the interview transcripts and spot common patterns and analytical themes throughout the masses of descriptive codes that were produced. Hard as it was, this process allowed me to identify some immediate connections between theory and my findings.

3.4. Reflections regarding ethical considerations, validity, subjectivity, and the consistency of the study

3.4.1. Ethical considerations

As mentioned in the previous sections, an information/consent letter was sent in advance and reviewed together with the informant prior to all interviews. The informants signed the consent form, and/or gave consent verbally in the case of digital interviews. Informed consent is important in all qualitative research. This means that informants give permission to the researcher about getting involved in the research (Dowling, 2016).

When requesting informed consent, it is important that the premises for participation are clarified so that the participants know exactly what they agree to. As a researcher, you have a responsibility to provide sufficient information about this, as well as how privacy is to be ensured. It is also important to convey to the informants that participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw from the research at any time. Regarding privacy, confidentiality, informing consent, and harm, this is particularly relevant (Catungal & Dowling, 2021, pp. 30-32).

When using qualitative methods, information about someone's privacy will often come to light, and therefore, privacy and confidentiality are particularly important here (Dowling, 2016). Anonymisation means referring to people in a way that makes them impossible

identified, such as avoiding the use of name, place, or gender. As previously mentioned, I have chosen to pseudonymize my informants' name to maintain their anonymity.

In addition to anonymizing informants, it is important to assure them that information such as field notes, tape recorders and transcripts are stored in a safe place during the work, and that it will be deleted when it is no longer is needed for them. As followed by the ethical clearance from NSD.

Another ethical problem to consider is researcher bias (Cope & Hay, 2021). As an Afghan migrant myself who has moved to and tried to adapt into a new culture and country, I had a similar background as my informants. Since we had a similar background, I was able to establish relationship with the informants, which helped the informants to open up when asked personal questions and more. However, it was critical to refrain from disclosing personal information, as this could have resulted in biased responses. A participant may assume that I am simply understanding an aspect of their experience and thus decrease the depth of information they explicitly provide. Throughout the process of collecting data and when analysing, I tend to have transparency and reflexivity as much as I could, but as expressed by Cope and Hay (2021);

“For this, rather than attempting the impossible task of eliminating bias, we need to recognize that bias is always present in the social world of research because researchers are themselves social beings with distinct positionalities (gender, race, age, dis/ability, sexuality, and other dimensions of identity) and worldviews.” (p.11).

Although these issues have been completely addressed, there will be bias. The most significant approach I adopted has been to examine only concrete theoretical data, focusing on direct quotes from the informants to portray the narratives they decided to provide. I stayed within the boundaries of what they specifically indicated.

3.4.2. Subjectivity, validity, and reflections on my own role

Downling (2016) points out that maintaining complete objectivity in the research project will be virtually impossible due to social interaction between researcher and informants using interviews as a research method. In addition to social interaction during fieldwork, as a researcher I also want an interactive relationship and an active participation of informants in the rest of the research process, both in terms of how I prepare and shape the fieldwork, and

how I interpret the data material afterwards. This research work will thus include a certain degree of subjectivity. Subjectivity implies that personal opinions and characteristics influence the research (Dowling, 2016).

Considering this, I would like to explain my positioning regarding the research topic. The transnational lives of first-generation migrants are a topic that I have been interested in since I started studying in university. My personal interest and commitment may have influenced the research in different ways. For example, my interest in the topic may have meant that I have more knowledge of the topic than a researcher without significant interest, which can be one advantage when it comes to formulating good questions. It may also have led to extra motivation to make the task as good as possible. At the same time, personal interest and commitment can be considered as a disadvantage, in that one also considers prejudices in the research (Tjora, 2017). In addition, the data collection may be coloured by my personal interest, in that I might have unconsciously been guided by what I want to find during the fieldwork. It would be fair to say that, maybe a researcher with less interest and knowledge on the topic might have presented a unique perspective.

It is therefore important to recognize, and to reflect on, one's own subjectivity when doing qualitative research. In that way, subjectivity becomes a resource for deeper understanding and good research ethics rather than an obstacle. Similarly, I must point out that, despite my shared background with the informants and knowledge on the topic, the topic was something I had purposely tried to distance myself from. Due to having living in a small rural municipality with no other Afghans most of my life in Norway and reading negative headlines on the news about Afghanistan, I had tried to suppress my Afghan side. As a result, I had no transnational contact to Afghanistan or other Afghans in Norway, except for my family, for several years ever since arriving to Norway. Furthermore, having arrived here as a child, I did not share the same experiences as some of my informants. Thus, resulting in my limited knowledge on the topic, but also my growing interest for it.

The validity of the project is about how the interpretations are valid in relation to the results that have emerged in the research (Thagaard, 2013). The internal validity is about whether the findings in the research say something about the phenomenon being researched, while external validity says something about whether the result can be generalized for similar contexts in other studies. I can relate to my informants' cultural and language background and know some of what they can struggle with. However, getting my informants to use previous experiences provided invaluable findings. Findings which came as a surprise to me and

differed from my own. This was a strength in understanding their stories and reflections on living in a transnational reality and using ICT. On the other hand, informants knowing I share a similar background as them may have meant that I gave the informant the same qualities that I knew from before in others, and that it became important for my interpretations of the informant's situation.

Another aspect that can influence the subjectivity and validity of my research is that the interviews were conducted in the preferred language of my informants. As I spoke my informants' mother tongue, I am certain that my informants were able to express their reflections and recall experiences much more easily than they would if I had conducted the interviews in Norwegian.

4. Findings and discussion

In this chapter of my thesis, I will be presenting my findings and discussing them in light of my theoretical framework on migration, transnationalism and identity. Subsequently, the first sub-section will involve their sociocultural transnational practises and the significance of them for preserving cultural identity, based on research question 1 and 3.

The second sub-section will be focused on research question 2 and 3, whereby I will present my findings on how informants use of ICTs has changed their sociocultural transnational practises since their arrival and discuss them in light of my theoretical framework.

The third and last sub-section involves unintended findings, but which are still related to my research questions.

Lastly, I want to point out that the structuring of each section in this chapter is done in a matter that, 1, I presents findings, 2, I analyses them and, 3, I discusses them in light of my theoretical framework. However, in some instances, theoretical perspectives might be applied directly after findings to further enhance the findings. This is mostly apparent in the case of unintended findings.

4.1. Sociocultural transnational practises of first-generation Afghan Migrants

In trying to identify the sociocultural transnational practises of first-generation migrants, I soon realised that there needs to be a distinction between the sociocultural activities in which they engage in with other Afghans in Norway. And the sociocultural ties that they have to country of origin, of which involves the flow of sociocultural information stemming mainly from different actors in country of origin. Therefore, in this section of chapter 5, I will first be identifying the sociocultural ties that they have to country of origin. After which, I will be identifying the sociocultural activities they engage in with other Afghans, in Norway. Lastly, the symbolic value of their sociocultural transnational practises for their cultural and the role of transnational social networks will also be discussed in this section.

4.1.1. Identifying sociocultural ties

Within the social aspect, all my informants maintain communication with close- and extended family and friends. Findings show that older informants maintain communication with country of origin much more often than younger informants. The older informants contact family and friends in country of origin daily. While younger informants mainly contact family and friends in country of origin during religious/cultural holidays or through the encouragement of parents. The topic of conversation also varies. Older informants tend to talk more with family and friends about politics, migration, economic situation of their family and friends in country of origin, weddings, and their situation in Norway. For instance, Najib, 72, explains that many family members have contacted him for advice on how to migrate to another country or Europe. While for the younger informants, it tends to be mainly interested-based conversation that are improvised. However, as Afghanistan has been a conflict-filled country for several decades, the frequency of communication is also dependent on the security situation of the country. For instance, many informants express that during the Taliban takeover in 2021, they worryingly maintained communication daily as they feared for family and friends in country of origin.

Furthermore, for many informants there was a moral obligation attached to their social ties. Guarnizo et al. (2003) points out that “remittance have become the most visible evidence and measuring stick for ties connecting migrants with their societies of origin” (p. 666). Similarly, a large part of my older informants’ social ties with family and friends in country of origin involved the sending of remittance. All my older informants maintained that they were

contacted twice or thrice a year by family members and friends in country of origin who requested monetary support. Furthermore, Vertovec (2009) mentions that “there is a long history of migrants associations sending money for the collective benefit in the hometown or village” (p. 111). Similarly, findings also show that 2 of my informants also maintain sociocultural ties to country-of-origin through charity organizations and political figureheads. By virtue of communicating with an Afghan charity organization, raising money for them in Norway and donating money to help villages where they used to live:

For example, a couple of years ago I gathered money by encouraging other Afghans in Norway to donate, money which I sent to a charity organization in Afghanistan... And I support different organizations that do charity work in Afghanistan, for example the Afghan committee in Norway who are my favourite organization, and I have been a member of that committee for several years now after having attended one of their meets in Bergen... all the while also helping gather money for the Afghan committee in Norway which they then use to do charity work in Afghanistan (Ali, 28).

Within the cultural aspects, all my informants mentioned that they for instance listen to Afghan music. This was usually at home with family, at Afghan events or just for themselves. They also watch Afghan TV shows daily on the television and YouTube. A peculiar finding in this instance was how all informants mentioned watching Indian Bollywood movies. Massoud, 33, explained that growing up in Afghanistan western form of entertainment had not reached Afghanistan as much, and that there were no Afghan TV channels and Afghan media entertainment because of decades of war. Therefore, due to proximity to Afghanistan, Bollywood movies and songs were highly popular and easy to buy. Several informants also mentioned reading Persian poetry and books often. Findings also show that most informants are updated by family and friends on social media and updates on the internet on different types of entertainment.

My informants consuming entertainment from country of origin and maintaining frequent contact with family and friends illustrate how their social networks are part of a transnational field that extends to their country of origin. Enabling us to conceptualize the potential array of social relations that links them with those who stayed behind in country of origin (Levitt and Schiller, 2004)

4.1.2. Identifying sociocultural activities in host country

Gsir and Mescoli (2015) point out that “each migrant abroad is potentially a cultural representative of the culture(s) of the country of origin through his/her daily behaviour and cultural consumptions”. Similarly, in section 4.1.1., I mentioned some of the sociocultural consumptions that my informants were provided through different ICTs. These included communicating with family and friends in country of origin, listening to Afghan music and watching Afghan television. These were, however, sociocultural ties that were provided by country of origin and my informants maintained such ties due to a sense of belonging to country of origin. However, findings show that informants themselves also recreate sociocultural activities in Norway.

One of such sociocultural activities is just regularly visiting each other. They mention how these visits are different from “the little formal visits that Norwegians do”:

In the first few years I remember my parents’ made acquaintance with other Afghans where we lived and because we could not speak the Norwegian language properly, we usually did not visit Norwegians much... I think because of the little social life, all Afghans in our area started visiting each other very often. This eventually evolve from visiting every other week to meeting up every weekend. Eventually as time progressed more Afghans were located where we lived and the social network grew bigger, and because of that people started making schedules of who to visit one weekend and who to visit the next weekend... And suddenly you had 30-40 Afghans visiting each other every weekend. People would bring their families and their newly arrived relatives to meet other Afghans... it was a good way of socializing and ensuring that everyone was doing okay.

Like Dariush, many other informants also recall how it is normal for Afghans to pre-plan weekend visits to each other’s houses. Often bringing all their family members to such visits. Which can result in a gathering of more than 20 people depending on the size of their social network. Furthermore, the consumption of food and drinks typical of their culture is common in such visits. Dariush mentions how in his experience, watching Afghan television, listening to Afghan music, and dancing together is a normal occurrence in these visits.

A second type of sociocultural activities are mandatory religious/cultural holidays that informants celebrate with their family and close friends. Informants recall some of these being the Islamic holidays Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha and Ramadan, and the Persian new year,

Nowruz. They mention how it is more difficult to celebrate such holidays due to not getting free from work/school compared to their country of origin where people get a week holiday to celebrate for example Eid. While the Persian new year, Nowruz, is usually marked by Afghans themselves by exchanging food, sweets, and other gifts in gatherings or amongst their own family members. Informants also mention that it is much easier to stay updated on when Afghan religious/cultural holidays are thanks to social media. All informants use religious/cultural holidays as an opportunity to contact family and friends in Afghanistan and Norway on social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber etc. Thereby updating each other.

Lastly, are sociocultural activities such as religious/cultural holidays, concerts, and other Afghan ceremonies arranged by Afghan cultural centres and Afghan solidarity organizations. Unlike the regular sociocultural activities organized by individuals within a small geographical range, the activities hosted by cultural centres are much bigger and are held in public locales and tend to invite Afghans across Norway. Ali, 28, mentions that thanks to social media it is much easier to advertise these events and gather more people. During such activities, Afghan artists are invited to perform. These are Afghan artists in Norway or living abroad. Just like regular visits, informants describe that Afghan traditional clothes are worn, Afghan food is prepared, and other sociocultural aspects of informants' culture is highlighted. Ali, 28, runs an Afghan cultural centre in Norway. He describes some of the different activities his cultural centre host and why they do it:

I was elected daily chief staff in my cultural center in 2020 and we have tried throughout the years to unite all Afghans regardless of ethnic group and tried to form a social network for all Afghans here in Trondheim. [...] Well, it is a cultural center which tries to unite Afghan people in different ways, for example we host celebrations for Afghan religious holiday, we host seminars for Afghans where they can discuss with each other, hold language learning classes in Dari for Afghan children, and we host cultural celebration and ceremonies for Afghans such as Nowruz, concerts, and such... and all the while we also try to bring together Afghans and improve their social network and unite them... And we are not the only ones, there is actually 4-5 different Afghan organization and cultural centres, and they have different backgrounds.

Gsir and Mescoli (2015) mention that the objective and aim of cultural centres abroad can vary as most often these are centres that funded by country of origin. In these cases, the

country of origin takes an active role in ensuring that their former nationals stay connected to the sociocultural aspects of their country. However, Ali explains that this is not the case with his cultural centre and other Afghan cultural centres in Norway. He mentions that his cultural centre is a combined initiative by Afghan social networks in his city and that their funding comes from hosting religious celebrations, cultural events, language classes, seminars, and various artistic performances. Ali points out that due to corruption and turmoil, his country of origin rarely has any contact with their expatriates.

Like cultural centres, informants mention that usually the Islamic holidays are marked by local mosques who invites them and other nationalities to pray on the day of the holiday. The mosque is a typical social and religious arena for many informants as they get to gather and pray during not only holidays but also typical days. However, unlike the cultural centres which are associated with Afghan nationality and culture, the mosques are more diverse. As informants converse with migrants from other nationalities as well as other Afghans.

4.1.3. Why maintaining cultural identity is important – Ways of being and belonging

In the previous section, I identified the different Afghan sociocultural activities that my informants engage in, in host country, and the sociocultural ties that they maintain to country of origin. These are, however, ties and activities that hold a big amount of emotional and symbolic value for my informants. In the subsequent paragraphs, I will be using Halls (1990;1996) first position on defining cultural identity, to describe why cultural reproduction by virtue of engaging in physical sociocultural activities and maintaining ties are important for my informants' cultural identity.

When asked how his sociocultural activities in Norway help him maintain his cultural identity, Massoud, 33, explains:

Afghans are more social than Norwegians, so therefore we maintain more contact with people from Afghanistan and Afghans in Norway [...] just getting together with other Afghans and attending Afghan events such as Ramadan, and Eid celebration after that or Nowruz... or visiting other Afghans where we talk about Afghan issues... we eat Afghan food and sweets, well these are all things that we do to help ourselves in remembering that Afghan identity and cultural identity we have and do not want to forget. So yeah, it does help us in maintaining our cultural identity.

Massoud reflects what Wagner (2016) coins as the “nostalgic migrant”. She mentions that these types of migrants do not lose their roots but, on the contrary, try to preserve them in the host country as well (p. 244). Like Massoud, many other informants reflect being the “nostalgic migrant.” As they express that the reason they hosted and engaged in sociocultural activities in host country was mainly to preserve their cultural identity. This was because they expressed a sense of fear over losing it due to, 1, few Afghans in Norway, and 2, the constant influence of western and Norwegian culture through films, music, and other media, on them. Similarly, three of my informants who came here as children, also expressed that attending sociocultural activities enabled them to reconnect with their Afghan cultural identity. As they expressed having come here as children, they had lost all aspects of their cultural identity that connected them to Afghanistan.

Because look at Norwegians, they don't typically meet up in groups of 20-30 people at each other's house every weekend, make food together, drink tea or play cards... you do not see them having that social life we have every weekend, Afghan families gathering up, or not even families, but just Afghan friends to be social... and unlike Norwegians we do not need alcohol to be social we just drink tea. (Dariush, 25)

Like Dariush, and several informants express that Norwegian culture is quite different from their own and alienating in the way that people “depend on alcohol to be social.” Therefore, many of my informants solely maintain regular visits with other Afghans rather than Norwegians. They express that this is not because they do not like Norwegian and Norwegian culture, but rather that the language barrier and different interpretation of hospitality makes it difficult “to know when Norwegians want to be social” (Mariam, 26). Mariam and Dariush both express that frequent visits among Afghans is part of their Afghan culture as it is seen as a sociocultural obligation to always invite family and friends' home for dinner, if you ever pass them in the street, and to accept their invitation if they invite you.

Gsir and Mescoli (2015) point out how religious/cultural events contribute to the cultivation of cultural identity among diasporic/migrant communities. Similarly, the regular visits have between my informants and other Afghans have become more frequent in Norway because they feel excluded from the larger social circles of Norwegians due to religious/cultural differences. Najib, 72, explains that “when visiting other Afghans, you already know what to do and what to not do, but it is harder to tell with Norwegians”. Furthermore, like regular visits, engaging in other Afghan sociocultural events in host country has also enabled them to either reconnect or reinforce their sense of Afghan cultural identity.

By highlighting sociocultural aspects of their Afghan cultural identity at sociocultural activities, they explain how they relieve things they had forgotten about or miss from country of origin.

Moreover, engaging in sociocultural activities with other Afghans in Norway has enabled many of my informants to discover new aspects of their cultural identity:

Before I moved to Trondheim I used to live in Bergen where me and other Afghans tried to form an Afghan committee or cultural centre and by doing that I was able to come in contact with different types of Afghans of all ethnicities, which led to me learning more about my culture and people, and in general who we are... and this was all because we wanted to do something Afghan together, do something that celebrates and represents our culture [...] And for example by trying to gather Afghans and by trying to maintain our culture in Norway, I learned that there were Afghans who were Hindu, Afghans who were Christian, and these are things that not only maintains your cultural identity in Norway, but also shapes it because you learn new things about your country, culture and people... It is all thanks to us wanting to have cultural ties... And despite having lived most of my life outside Afghanistan, the events we hold together as Afghans, and the books we read, the shows we watch and the topics we talk about, has led to me having a stronger sense of belonging and connection to Afghanistan

7 out of 10 informants also express that their direct communication with family and friends in country of origin helps preserve aspects of their Afghan cultural identity. Priours (2004) describes, that social relations with family in country of origin bears important significance for migrant families, as their social network in host country is significantly smaller compared to country of origin. Similarly, Hanifa, 40, describes the types of social ties she has and why they are important for her:

My social ties are mainly with my relatives, my mother, cousins, brother in laws, and sister in laws, and so on. [...] It is important, because for people, like their identity, their social ties are something that becomes part of them as they grow up in a place and when they move from there, they are still part of that Afghan community... of that place, so maintaining contact your social ties is a way of maintaining your Afghan identity. Therefore, we should always maintain our social ties and teach our children to do the same as we will always be from Afghanistan.

Hanifa's description reflects what Mau (2010) describes as "closeness with distance" (p. 56). He points out that "family relationships comprise a distinctive type of social network, because they tend to be more binding and less elective than other types of social relationships" (Mau, 2010, p. 56). Like Hanifa, many of the other informants describe social ties with family in country of origin as "very important," because, as Dariush, 25, explains it, "they are people you were born with and people you will return back to one day". Hanifa, and all my other informants, also pointed out that maintaining social ties to "whoever it might be" in country of origin was a religious/cultural obligation for all Afghans. Hanifa describes that "my culture takes checking up on your dear ones very seriously."

Furthermore, my informants' sociocultural transnational ties and activities illustrate how - just like people - cultures can also and do migrate (Kennedy & Roudometof, 2002). As made evident in section 4.1.1, all my informants enjoy different types of cultural entertainment from country of origin. This is everything from watching Afghan news on the TV, Afghan series and comedy shows, reading books/poetry in their mother tongue, listening to Afghan music, to engaging in digital forums meant for Afghans. For instance, younger informants recall how they watch music videos and Afghan shows for the sole purpose of learning how to perform Afghan dances, learn how to cook Afghan food, and stay up to date with the trends in their country of origin. These were things that enacted a sense of belonging to Afghan culture for them (Levitt & Schiller, 2004). Findings illustrate this by looking at musical preferences of my informants. Nearly all my informants who came here as adults and adolescent's favour Afghan entertainment over western/Norwegian entertainment. Ali, 28, explains that:

I feel more comfortable listening to Afghan music ... maybe because it gives me another feeling and another appreciation for the poetry in the music, the way it is sung, so I prefer Afghan music the most... and it is all because of the language, it is easier to understand and comprehend everything in Dari [his mother tongue]. [...] and even my kids prefer Afghan music over western and Norwegian music. I think the same applies for other forms of entertainment.

Colic-Peisker (2002) argues that consuming sociocultural entertainment from country of origin, or otherwise engaging in activities, can help materialise the nostalgia associated with such entertainment and activities. Ali illustrates this by maintaining that he would always favour "Afghan things." As for him they were his connection to the life he used to have in country of origin. While informants were conscious about identity and enact a sense of belonging when consuming cultural entertainment from country of origin, Ali and many other

informants expressed that the language barrier was certainly an issue. It was not necessarily that they disliked western/Norwegian form of entertainment, but that it was easier to understand and comprehend the message when it was in their mother tongue.

Ali's sentiment and the experiences of other informants reflect Hall's (1992) first position on how shared experiences of people with a common heritage leads to the manifestation of a cultural identity during times of dispersal. As most of my informants were conscious about the type of identity their decisions signalled when engaging in sociocultural transnational practises, maybe it is true then that our identities, as Haller (2021) points out, determine our thinking and actions by creating a more or less coherent self-image of who we are. Furthermore, informants also illustrate how they use their culture and sociocultural activities to identify who they are as people (Kidd, 2002). Lastly, when questioned what identity meant for them, 9 out of 10 informants mentioned sociocultural aspects, such as country of origin, region they were from, religion, cultural clothing, and people they grew up with, as what constituted to identity for them. This illustrates how, as Sevänen (2004) argues, it can be hard to differentiate the relation between personal and cultural identity in certain cultures.

Furthermore, Levitt and Schiller (2004) explain that a person might have a lot of transnational ties to country of origin, "but not identify at all as belonging to their homeland" (pp. 1010-1011). They elaborate that such individuals are "engaged in transnational ways of being but not ways of belonging" (Levitt & Schiller, 2004, p. 1011). However, in the case of my informants, findings show that all of them engage in, for instance, sociocultural activities in host country to signal a sense of belonging to country of origin and reconnect with and/or associate with their Afghan cultural identity. In contrast to their sociocultural activities in host country, not all informants associate every aspect of their sociocultural ties to country of origin with their Afghan cultural identity. For instance, some informants maintain communication with family and friends in country of origin because they are encouraged to by their parents and/or otherwise do so because they just want to talk. These informants illustrate ways of being within a transnational social field as they are not as conscious about identity (Levitt & Schiller, 2004).

Lastly, Gomes (2017) argues that self-perceived identities within a migrant's transnational social network leads to them "forming parallel societies in which they can create a sense of belonging *in* the receiver nation yet not *to* the receiver nation" (as cited in Gomes, 2018, p. 35). This is also apparent among my informants and the creation of transnational social networks, or parallel societies, will be elaborated upon further in the next sub-section.

4.1.4. Building transnational social networks through sociocultural transnational practises

Moreover, looking at my informants' sociocultural ties to country of origin illustrates how they encompass their country of origin within their transnational social field (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). Blumenstock et al. (2019) argues that "social networks influence an individual's decision to migrate" (p. 2). Though Najib's did not specify whether his social networks influenced his decision to migrate, Najib giving advice on migration to his family and friends in country of origin reflects Blumenstock's argument. As Najib's social network is transnational, his social capital extends as strong ties to part of his transnational social network that is based in his country of origin (Haug, 2008; Ozveren & Faist, 2017; Granovetter, 1973). Furthermore, informants' ability to stay updated on sociocultural entertainment through family and friends and the internet, and in general expand their weak and strong sociocultural ties to country, further strengthens the idea that transnational flow of resources between host country and country of origin help migrants sustain their transnational social networks (Sha, 2021; Vertovec; 2009; Basch et al., 1994; Granovetter; 1973).

Along the same lines, their sociocultural activities in host country encompass their host country as part of their transnational social field (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). Granovetter (1973) points out that, among other things, emotional intensity and intimacy helps determine the strength of a tie. Here, Gomes (2018) points out that transnational migrants create networks with other fellow countrymen in host country because of their exclusive environments they occupy or shared experiences. Similarly, the sociocultural activities themselves, informants gathering with friends and family, and the informants making acquaintance with other Afghans at these activities further illustrate how their transnational social networks help them build new relationships consisting of both weak ties and strong ties (Ryan et al., 2022; Behtoui, 2022; Özveren & Faist, 2017; Sha, 2021; Herz & Oliver-Mensah, 2012). The consumption of cultural resources at these activities also reflects how the social capital of my informants hold a symbolic and cultural value (Ryan et al. 2022; Behtoui, 2022). This applies to their ties to country of origin as well. Behtoui (2022) mentions how self-organizing sociocultural activities "provide mutual practical aid, social solidarity and cultural support" (p. 130). Ali's cultural centre is a living testament to Behtoui statement. As his cultural centre not only increases the transnational network of Afghans in Norway, but also provide cultural capital to the Afghans who engage in the activities organized by his cultural centre.

Soehl and Waldinger (2012) express that “homeland ties are likely to be an integral part of immigrant households” (p. 784). My informants’ experiences illustrate both of these statements. Similarly, two thirds of my informants, mostly all the older informants, also found maintaining sociocultural ties to country of origin and engaging in sociocultural activities as important for their overall mental health and well-being. As living in Norway can make one become “very lonely” due to little interaction with other Afghans and people in general. This reflects how, as pointed out by Vertovec (2009), social networks connecting migrants across time and space can provide migrants with continuous social and economic information, as well as psychological support.

Furthermore, the sociocultural transnational practises of my informants, in both countries, reflect both localized diasporic communities and localized transnational formations (Dahinden, 2010). Though they do not fit all the characteristics of these groups as specified by Dahinden, however, their high degree of transnational practises do still reflect many other characteristics. Such as having gained citizenship, settled in host country and be part of a transnational community based on shared experience and identity.

4.2. Digital literacy and emerging ICTs change patterns

Having identified the sociocultural transnational practises of my informants in both host country and country of origin, in this section of my thesis I will be elaborating further on varying degrees of digital literacy, age and method of arrival can result in different experiences. Furthermore, a substantial portion of this section will focus on how ICTs development has changed the sociocultural transnational practises of my informants since arrival to Norway. Lastly, I will also elaborate further on how ICTs have been important in maintaining cultural identity for my informants and how their social networks have become more digitalized.

4.2.1. Age and method of arrival to Norway result in different experiences

One aspect that might shed some light on not only how my informants’ sociocultural ties and activities have changed, but also how their usage of ICTs has changed, is how and when they arrived in Norway. More specifically if they migrated alone or through the process of family reunion. And, whether they were able to maintain sociocultural ties to country of origin during migration or lost their sociocultural ties because of migration. Important in this aspect is also the age of the informants and digital literacy. As these variables can help

explain how fast informants settled in host country. This aspect reflects how Dahinden (2010) links mobility and locality of migrants to their transnational practises. She argues that transnational mobility and locality in host country can help describe the varying degrees in which migrants engage in transnational practises (Dahinden, 2010).

Similarly, findings show that 4 out of 10 informants migrated alone. 2 of my informants who migrated alone have, on the one hand, been successful in maintaining social ties with relatives and friends during migration and after arrival to Norway. And on the other hand, also successful in maintaining cultural ties to country during migration and after arrival to Norway. In large parts thanks to arriving in Norway between 2008-2012, when ICTs had become readily available in their country of origin. They have also been able to settle and become part of Afghan social networks in Norway much more quickly due to their high digital literacy. While the remaining 2 who migrated alone, did so in the early 2000s, when ICTs were not as readily available for use. They lost their sociocultural ties to country of origin during migration but has since settling in Norway been able to re-establish those ties over the years. Though at a much slower pace due to their limited digital literacy combined with their age. They also mentioned how discovering Afghan social networks took a longer time. Thus, limiting their engagement in Afghan sociocultural activities in host country.

For instance, 72-year-old Najib, who arrived in Norway in 2002 when he was 50 years. He explains that when he fled his country and decided to migrate to Europe, he lost many of his life long established social ties with family and friends in country of origin temporarily during migration:

During my migration I was not able to contact my family who I left behind, nor my friends ... It was difficult back in those days to prioritize communication because you had limited amount of money that you had to spend on food, smugglers and travel expenses on the road, and nobody had their own mobile phones as owning one was not common back in those days. However, once I arrived in Norway, the only thing in my mind was to apply for asylum because as an undocumented immigrant you could not learn the language, not work and more importantly it made contacting family in Afghanistan much harder ... because you had no money to buy food let alone a phone to contact people [...] It was only after having been granted residency and fully settled in Norway, in terms of learning the language, way of life and so on, that I established contact with family and friends outside Norway.

Najib's experience helps reflect how on the one hand, constant mobility can limit the transnational practises of a migrant across borders. And on the other hand, how locality in the host country can do the same. At the same time, we can also see how the availability of ICTs also adds to limiting or enhancing sociocultural ties and activities. In Najib's recollection, once arriving in Norway there were also too many hurdles to cross in terms of legal status, integration, and settlement, that re-establishing sociocultural ties were difficult and took longer time. In addition, Najib's age combined with no previous experience and knowledge with ICTs, due to the little availability of them in his country of origin, further contributed to him taking longer time to re-establish lost ties. He mentioned how "it is much harder to learn new things and patterns when you are 50 years old and know nothing of modern technology".

In contrast, 3 of my informants arrived in Norway through the process of family reunion when they all were under the age of ten. They were, therefore, too young upon leaving their country of origin to have established long lasting social ties. However, Levitt and Schiller (2004) mention that in a migrant's transnational social field there might be "one central individual who maintains high level of homeland contact and is the node through which information, resources, and identities flow" (p. 1009). Thus, by virtue of being in the same transnational social field as this one central individual, other migrants might be informed and connected so that they might re-establish social ties to country of origin if events motivate them to do so (Levitt & Schiller, 2004). Similarly, for my 3 informants who came arrived in Norway as children, their parents, older siblings, and different ICTs acted as the node through which they re-established sociocultural ties to country of origin. They also credit this to the fact that growing up in Norway ICTs were more readily available. Thus, gaining digital literacy faster than their parents and my informants who came here as adults/adolescent.

In contrast, informants who came to Norway as adolescents were, however, not as disconnected with the sociocultural aspect of their country compared to my informants who came here when they were under the age of 10. As they had lived in Afghanistan sufficient time to establish long lasting sociocultural ties to their country of origin. However, the difficult part for them was arriving in Norway as adolescent and trying to integrate and resettle in another country. And because of little technological development in country of origin due to war, they also recall how getting used to ICTs in Norway took a longer time for them.

Through the experiences of my informants, we can see how many of them reflect the four different transnational groups which Dahinden (2010) distinguishes between: 1, localised

diasporic transnational formations, 2, localised mobile transnational formations, 3, transnational mobiles, and 4, transnational outsiders. In the case of my informants, their method of migration, changing legal status, and the subsequent change in sociocultural ties because of the former two variables, reflects how some of them have changed from one transnational group to another. For example, Najib's experiences reflect a change from transnational outsider, engaging little in transnational activities due to migration and legal status hindering him, to representing a local mobile transnational due to having settled in the host country and re-established sociocultural ties over the years. On the other hand, Nadia is a prime example of someone who shows characteristics of all the transnational groups. We can spot this by how her sociocultural ties and visits to country of origin reflect a high level of transnational mobility. While her ability to successfully gain citizenship and integrate into host society shows a high level of locality in the host country. Based on the perspectives of informants above, it becomes therefore apparent that my informants age and method of arrival can tell us how they are able to maintaining and re-establishing lost sociocultural ties to their country of origin. And that their use of ICT is also dependent on their digital literacy prior to migrating.

Additionally, some findings in this section do at times reflect what Hiller and Franz (2004) coin as the pre-migrant-, post-migrant- and settled migrant phase of a migrant's involvement with ICTs. Characterized by how they employ the use of ICTs to "obtaining information, making contacts and obtaining assistance and advice about the possible move" before migration and during migration (p. 738). However, Hiller and Franz (2004) have not considered the digital literacy of migrants can vary prior to arrival in host countries and how little digital literacy in country of origin can limit a migrant's use of ICTs. For instance, in Najib's experience, the little existence of ICTs combined with his age limited his use of ICTs during migration and consequently resulted in him learning to use ICTs more slowly.

However, in the next section of my thesis, I will be using Hiller's and Franz's (2004) three phases to elaborate more on how ICT and gained digital literacy has changed my informants' sociocultural activities in host country and ties to country of origin.

4.2.2. Using ICTs to maintain sociocultural ties and engage in activities – Early years and emergence of new ICTs

Mau (2010) mentions that sociocultural ties and interactions have "expanded across physical space, leading to lives that are more transnational and mobile than ever" (p. 1). Baym

(2010), mentions how ICTs help explain how this is possible by mentioning that ICTs have “brought to all of its user the possibility of forming relationships that transcend space” (p. 100). Similarly, all my informants express that ICTs have helped them “tremendously” in maintaining sociocultural ties to their country of origin. As ICTs was the only way they maintained and/or re-established sociocultural ties to country of origin. They also stress how ICTs themselves have been revolutionised since their arrival to Norway.

To establish how the employment of ICTs are different for migrants in the various stages of their life, Hiller and Franz (2004) distinguishes between three phases: 1, *the pre-migrant*, *the post migrant*, and *the settled migrant*. This categorization resembles Dahinden’s (2010) four different transnational migrant groups, however, Hiller and Franz (2004) mainly focus on the migrant’s use of ICTs in relation to their transnational practises. In the previous section I outlined how age at arrival and method of arrival result in different sociocultural ties and activities, and varying digital literacy. I interpreted that as a dimension of the pre-migrant phase and the start of the post migrant phase of my informants. In the subsequent sections, I will be dwelling more into the pre-migrant, post migration and settled migrant phases of my informants. Exploring their transition from phone calls and parabolic antennas to the internet, smart phones, and social media, in order to maintain sociocultural ties to country of origin and engage in sociocultural activities in host country.

4.2.3. Phone calls and parabolic antennas – Post Migrants

One of the main methods of maintaining any sort of ties to country of origin for many of my informants in the early years after their arrival, was international mobile phone calls. Vertovec (2009) describes international mobile phone calls as the “social glue of migrant transnationalism” as they are one of the significant modes of transnational practice affecting migrants’ lives (p. 54). I interpret the 5-6 first years of being in host country as the post-migrant phase of my informants. In these first 5-6 years, findings show that all my informants employed telephone calls as the main method of communication and parabolic antennas as the main method of maintaining cultures ties. Even the informants who arrived in Norway when they were children recall speaking with family members on mobile phones. Largely to the encouragement of their parents.

However, whereas Vertovec (2009) credits the popularity of mobile phone calls due to its cheapness, my informants, on the other hand, do not recall it being cheap. Instead, they recall it being very expensive in Norway and consequently the duration of the phone call being

short. For instance, 33-year-old Massoud, describes how there were few methods of maintaining any sort of ties to country of origin after arriving in Norway in 2008

It has changed a lot because during the first years after my arrival to Norway, me and my family were placed in a small municipality where my dad was settled. There [the municipality] it was little to no people and no shops, and the first few years I had no connection to my people in Afghanistan or saw Afghan TV channels because, first of all, we could not speak Norwegian properly, second, we did not know how to use the internet and because there were no electronic shops. Because of little knowledge and no electronic shops where we lived it was difficult setting up an antenna for the TV and we did not have any money so I could not buy my own phone either ... Only my dad had one, but it was those old push button phones and because it was expensive, we rarely called anyone back home [Afghanistan] and if we did, me and my siblings did not speak because you could only talk for short time before your money ran out.

My informants recall that the short duration and expensiveness was due to them having to pay a lot of money to top up their sim card balance. And since international calls were much more expensive than normal calls, they could not talk for long before their balance was depleted. Similar to Massoud's experience, all my other informants recall the same difficulty when using mobile phone calls as a method. Despite this, however, it remained a popular method of maintaining social ties to country of origin among my informants. Mainly by default as my informants recall there not being any other viable method.

Furthermore, the frequency of communication with family and friends in country of origin in the years after arrival to Norway also varied among my informants. 5 out of 10 informants recall contacting family and friends 3-4 times or. While 2 of my informants, recall being more frequent and contacting family and friends 1-2 times every two month. The remaining 3 recall having no contact for 3-4 years due to poor economy, legal status, or little knowledge on how to do so. Since the age of my informants varies, I have based this on direct contact done by themselves or indirect contact where they were encouraged by parents or other family members.

Additionally, when it comes to methods of maintaining cultural ties, 7 of my informants recall themselves or parents setting up parabolic antennas to connect to international TV channels, and thereby Afghan TV channels, in the first few years of their arrival prior to learning about new emerging ICTs. However, my informants expressed that this method was

very difficult as it took several years before they had learned about parabolic antennas let alone knowing how to set up one. They also mention that there were only two Afghan TV channels, Ariana Afghanistan, and VOA, among hundreds of international TV channels “back then.” However, since all my informants understood their mother tongue, they could also watch Iranian TV channels. As they also speak Farsi in Iran which is much alike Dari.

At the same time, my informants’ use of ICTS to engage in Afghan sociocultural activities in host country were also limited in their post-migrant phase. Many informants describe how little digital literacy in the first 5-6 years prevented them from discovering about for instance concerts held in bigger cities or long-lost friends from country of origin having arrived in Norway. Apart from the few Afghans around them, informants describe they did not really realize how big the Afghan social network was until several years had passed and other Afghans started adding them on Facebook. Many express that they were secluded to only their county or municipality.

Younger informants also mention that during their first few years after arrival, they would download music and movies from country of origin illegally, using third party pirate applications such as “ThePirateBay” and “LimeWire.” They express that this was due to little availability of Afghan related entertainment in Norway. It was therefore easier to pirate/illegally download entertainment and then watch it on the computer. Or in the case of Afghan music, burn it to CDs or transfer it to USB memory stick, and their pushbutton phones and MP3s using Bluetooth.

From the findings above it becomes apparent that my informants’ ability to maintain sociocultural ties to country of origin can be seen in relation to not only their different methods of arrival, age, and settlement in country of origin, but also their little experience and knowledge with ICTs prior to arriving. However, despite the differences, all my informants recall that once they had gained citizenship and settled in Norway, economically and socially, they started to learn more about and gain more experience in the use of ICTs. Consequently, this led to discovering new ICTs. Understandably, the informants who came here as children and adolescents learned how to use different methods of ICTs much faster than the older generation. The younger informants recall that this was due to going to school for a longer period, interest in videogames and being more immersed in Norwegian society culturally and socially. Within all this factors they were surrounded by ICTs and thereby gained knowledge much more quickly.

Lastly, it is important to remember that nearly all my informants arrived in Norway prior to the arrival and popularity of smart phones, smart TVs, and new social media platforms. Though many of these ICTs were gaining popularity in the west, many of my informants' lack of digital literacy hindered them from discovering and learning about them in the first 5-6 years after their arrival. Nevertheless, findings still show a transition from short lived phone calls to use of the internet, new smart phones, and social media. These findings illustrate aspects of what Hiller and Franz (2004) describe as the *settled migrant phase* in the life of migrants. For my informants, the transition from post-migrant phase to settled migrant phase is the period where they have settled long enough in Norway to either started/finished studying, gained citizenship, and/or are currently engaging actively in Norwegian society through school and work. In the next section, I will be describing the transition from post-migrant- to settled migrant phase for my informants through their experiences, looking at how they employ the use of new emerging ICTs to maintain sociocultural ties.

4.2.4. Transition from short lived phone calls to the internet, smart phones, and social media – Settled migrants

Hiller and Franz (2004) argue that in the transition from being post-migrant to settled migrant phase, migrants showcase a more skilful employment of ICTs to not only facilitate integrations but also use “the internet to research for connections to place of origin in multiple forms” (p. 739). While the internet has been available for a long time, the digital literacy of many of my informants limited them in using it to its fullest potential in their early years after arrival. As mentioned previously, my informants who came here as children and adolescents gained digital literacy much more quickly than their parents and adult siblings, regardless of method of arrival. Thus, discovering new emerging ICTs and employing the use of them to maintain sociocultural ties to country of origin despite their little digital literacy prior to arriving. However, despite their age, my informants who arrived in Norway as adults also recall gaining digital literacy because of being exposed to them through their children and other Afghans. Thereby, my adult informants also discovered new emerging ICTs and consequently new ways of maintaining sociocultural ties to country of origin. Albeit, as Najib recalls, “at much slower pace than the kids.”

When we first came here back in 2006-07 Facebook was not as popular and we did not use it... social media in general is something that we [Afghans] in Norway and Afghans in Afghanistan have grown to use more over the years due to more improvement in the technological field and the availability of internet and smart

phones. Back when we first came here, we used to call people directly over paid mobiles and sometimes used something called MSN, but MSN and email was mainly when talking with other Norwegians. Email and MSN were unheard of in Afghanistan... However, we contact relatives in Afghanistan more now because it is much easier now than back then. (Jalil, 39, arrived in Norway in 2005-2006)

Similar to Jalil, many of my informants describe a transition from push button phones and parabolic antennas to new smart phones, tablets, and computers in order to maintain sociocultural ties to country of origin. Accompanying new smart phones, tablets and computers were new emerging applications and social platforms. One of these new social platforms was Facebook, which nearly all informants described having an account on. Apart from one informant, Khadije, 66, who maintained that her no education in country of origin combined with her age and non-existent digital literacy made Facebook extremely hard to navigate on both the laptop and smart phone. Despite, she mentioned that she had a smart phone with the messaging app that accompanies Facebook, installed by her children. On the messaging application, her children had logged onto their account so Khadije could call family and friends in country of origin.

Nevertheless, all informants recall Facebook being the first platform that they were introduced to when having settled to life in Norway. This was for several reasons. As informants recall it, first, it was because “word spreads” and Facebook was widely popular in Norway. Second, my informants mention that Facebook allowed for image and video sharing, and video calls, which compared to the old telephone calls was revolutionizing, as now “you could be more intimate in that you could see the person you were talking despite not being physically present” (Najib, 72). Third, informants recall that throughout the years their family and friends in Afghanistan were also gaining digital literacy:

in Afghanistan even in 2012 it was hard for people to contact others as it was expensive to gain access to internet or own a smart phone, but now the technological development has reached Afghanistan and the availability of internet is apparent everywhere... you see people have smart phones everywhere and people actively engaging in social media despite it being a poor underdeveloped country. (Mariam, 26, arrived in Norway in 2012)

Ali, 28, also explain that his cultural centre has a Facebook group through which they broadcast and advertise sociocultural events to Afghans all over Norway. The experiences of

my informants with Facebook illustrate how, as Dekker and Engbersen (2014) mention, “social media enhance the possibilities of maintaining strong social ties with family and friends and establishing new infrastructure consisting of latent ties” (p. 2).

However, Facebook was not the only platform that my informants was actively using. Rather they used several simultaneously. But preferred one over another. The older informants seemed to prefer Facebook as they mention it was the first platform that they were introduced to and one that nearly all their friends and relatives used in country of origin. WhatsApp and Viber were some other platforms many were actively using. As informants mention, WhatsApp and Viber has better image and video quality than Facebook and was therefore better in their opinion. Instagram and Snapchat were applications that mainly younger informants used due to its popularity in school and among youth in country of origin. Lastly, informants mentioned also using Imo, an application they claimed was popular among Afghans in Afghanistan and other migrants, though not as popular in Norway.

As a result of the findings mentioned above, the frequency of communication has also changed. Some informants mention communicating with family and friends in country of origin daily. While others mention weekly or monthly depending on if it was close family or extended family members they were communicating with. Some only contact family and friends in country of origin during cultural and religious holidays to exchange happy wishes and congratulations. Dekker and Engbersen (2012) point out that social media also “lays the groundwork for formerly unacquainted individuals to connect” (p. 6). Similarly, younger informants also recall how they were able to reconnect with family members that they had forgotten. In large parts thanks to Facebook suggesting new friends to add.

4.2.5. Social Media offers new forms of cultural entertainment

Within the cultural aspect, all my informants employ the use of ICTs to maintain cultural ties to country of origin. Within the domain of ICTs, informants mention having smart TVs that allows you to download applications like YouTube or connecting internet based tv boxes, such as Jadoo. Informants describe Jadoo as a subscription-based ICT where upon having paid and subscribed, you would be mailed an android TV box which you connect to your TV and Wi-Fi. This allowed informants to watch a plethora middle eastern and south Asian TV channels, among which are many Afghan and Dari speaking TV channels. These TV channels aired everything from the Afghan news, Afghan comedy shows, and Afghan music videos to western and Indian movies, news and music that were either dubbed to Dari or included Dari

subtitles. These TV channels allowed informants and their families to stay in touch with the cultural aspect of their country while living abroad. All informants described their families had Jadoo connected to their TVs.

Furthermore, informants also mentioned watching different YouTube channels run by TV channels or private individuals. YouTube channels such as Tolo news, Ariana Afghanistan, Gem TV, which are essentially TV channels, but that uploads their aired sendings on YouTube. Informants mentioned that whenever other methods, such as Jadoo, was not working properly, they would usually switch between apps on their smart TVs “very quickly.” Burgess and Green (2018) point out how YouTube became the primary outlet of user-generated content on the Internet, and allowed anyone to upload, share, and browse content (p. 3). Similarly, informants mention how private individuals in Afghanistan has in the past 10 years picked up their cameras to display daily life in Afghanistan by uploading videos of them walking around different cities and rural villages interviewing common folk on YouTube. Informants mention that these videos have become exceedingly popular among Afghan diasporic communities because they want to stay constantly updated on what is happening “down there” (Dariush, 25).

Spotify is another application that many informants use to enjoy music from country of origin. Though they recall that not all popular Afghan songs are available on Spotify. Therefore, they opt to switch between Spotify and YouTube to listen to Afghan music. This is however more apparent among younger informants. Older informants only use YouTube or opt for music burned on CDs or transferred to USB memory sticks by their children:

“I often listen to Afghan music videos on YouTube and every now and then I ask my sons to make a CD [burning CD on the internet] or connect my phone to the DVD player on my car" that I play in the car. (Najib, 72)

My informants’ employment of different ICTs to reconnect weak and strong sociocultural ties to country of origin reflect how ICTs further enhance the transnational experience of a migrant in a transnational social field that exists both “here” and “there” (Levitt and Schiller, 2004; Hiller and Franz, 2004; Dekker and Engbersen, 2012). It also illustrates how my informants’ digital literacy increased as they started settling in host country in, what Hiller and Franz (2004) describes as, “the settled migrant phase” (p. 742).

Additionally, Gomes (2018) argues that certain ICTs, such as Facebook or YouTube, can be “culturally specific”. In that these ICTs can be employed differently in country of origin

versus host country. Thus, migrants might not be automatically able to adapt to the way for instance Facebook is used in host country. She mentions that language barriers and cultural nuances are issues that dominate how different migrants use ICTs differently than host country residents (p. 47). In the case of my informants, nearly all of them spoke Norwegian and English well enough to navigate through the different ICTs with ease. This was apparent among the settled ones who had since arriving to Norway increased their digital literacy profoundly. While language was certainly an issue for older informants, they mention that as time went by, they learned to navigate through ICTs by memory using symbols and emojis to guide them. The actual messaging between informants and their loved ones was not affected by any language barrier as most smart phones allows users to type in their mother tongue.

4.2.6. Engaging in diasporic online groups/forums

Several of my younger informants also mentioned following diasporic groups designated for Afghans on Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, and Instagram. Members engaging in these groups/forums were Afghans in Norway or elsewhere in the world. Informants also mention that it was not unusual for Norwegians and other nationalities to follow these groups/forums through their Afghan friends. Furthermore, informants mention how activities in these groups/forums ranged from sharing Afghan related “memes” to free engagement on various topics (political, economic, or sociocultural), between Afghans in Norway or elsewhere in the world. These groups were also a source of help and support with migration and other difficulties faced by Afghans in Norway or elsewhere in the world. Informants also mention that other members would utilize these groups/forums for charitable fundraising to help other Afghans in Norway or country of origin, or elsewhere in the world. These fundraisings were most often self-organized. Ali, 28, mentions how he used his group’s Facebook page to raise funds to help host different sociocultural activities in Norway or, otherwise, help Afghans in country of origin.

These varied among informants, as older members mentioned not knowing much about these types of groups despite having accounts on several social media platforms. The engagement in online groups/forums were mostly apparent among younger informants who wished to connect with other Afghans in Norway. Kupiainen (2004) argues that these kind of cybernetworks act as “cultural brokers” that exchange sociocultural information between members of a migrant’s digital social network (p. 358).

4.2.7. Importance of ICTs for maintaining cultural identity

Furthermore, the role of emerging ICTs and the consequent increased digital literacy of my informants as they settled in Norway cannot be ignored within the context of cultural identity preservation and/or transformation. Findings show that my informants mention that newly emerged ICTs changed their perception of what it means to be Afghan drastically, since their arrival to Norway. As we established previously, my informants' sociocultural activities in host country are especially important for maintaining cultural identity. Findings show that this can be credited to the how much easier ICTs has made for example attending sociocultural activities, as Massoud, 33, illustrates:

It has become much easier now compared to when we first came here [Norway], as back then we used to live in a remote municipality and did not know much about the internet. But over the years we started learning more about the internet and used Facebook daily [...] Facebook made contacting and getting to know other Afghans in Norway easier despite living in the remote place that we did, because on Facebook you are invited by friends to Afghan parties and celebrations, and then you meet more people that you become friends with and like that your circle grows much bigger despite living across the country [...] and because it is so easy to find out where and when the party is, you can just jump in your car and let your phone GPS show you the way... it does not matter if it is in Trondheim or Oslo, you can always find a place to stay through friends on Facebook.

Similarly, looking at other informants' engagement in Afghan sociocultural activities in host country, it becomes apparent that they are highly dependent on ICTs. Dependent in the sense that they use ICTs to discover different Afghan sociocultural activities to engage in. Not only in their municipality, but also across Norway. Findings show that these sociocultural activities are often hosted by Afghan cultural centres in various parts of Norway. The emergence of Facebook and other social media platforms has made Afghan cultural centres more noticeable. Making groups on social media platforms, these cultural centres use social media platforms as the medium through which they advertise religious/cultural events regularly to their followers in Norway. For instance, Ali, 28, mentions that his cultural centre has been able to invite more Afghans using Facebook than other methods. These experiences reflect how migrant and diasporic communities use ICTs to re-configure identities by sharing opportunities and spreading their culture (Alonso and Oiarzabal, 2010).

ICTs have made it easier to maintain transnational ties, social and cultural, to country of origin for my informants. Informants use smart phones and TVs to consume different types of entertainment from country of origin. These are, however, not ways of being within a transnational social field for my informants. On the contrary, they maintain that they can at any time watch western/Norwegian entertainment but choose to watch Afghan entertainment as they are very conscious about the type of cultural identity Afghan entertainment invokes:

I often listen to Afghan music videos on YouTube and Spotify. It has helped me find songs that I had heard when I was growing up but that I had forgotten completely. [...] YouTube is great because in the music videos you have people wearing Afghan clothes and dancing traditional Afghan dances. I personally use them to learn Afghan dances in case I ever have to dance in Afghan ceremonies. (Nadia, 20)

Nadia's sentiment is shared by other informants, who also recall watching for instance videos by other Afghans in Afghanistan on social media, in particular Facebook and YouTube, where individual walked around filming daily life and giving a commentary and interviewing Afghans on the street. Many informants stated that such was really interesting to watch as "you were not there but still know what is happening" (Mariam, 26).

Nadia explains that growing up in Norway she had always been given the "bad image of Afghanistan" as an "impoverished nation with backward sociocultural ideals" through western media outlets. This resulted in her distancing himself from anything associated with country of origin. However, having reconnected with family and friends in country of origin through social media platforms and watched videos on YouTube of people recording the daily life in Afghanistan, Nadia explains that he started to get another impression of Afghanistan and became less insecure about the Afghan part of his cultural identity. In fact, becoming confident and proud of his cultural identity heritage. Going as far as engaging in sociocultural activities with other Afghans and showing solidarity by actively voicing concern on political landscape and engaging in charity fundraising to help people in country of origin.

My informants point out that social ties with family and friends in country of origin also contributes to preserving their cultural identity in host country. In this regard, ICTs have provided informants the ideal means for continuous convenient connectivity for strengthening ties (Haythornthwaite, 2002). Informants express how new social media platforms has allowed them to stay in touch with all their family and friends in country of origin. Even reconnecting with people that they had otherwise forgotten or lost contact with. Informants

credit free videocalls as the reason they “forced themselves to learn how to navigate new social media platforms” (Mariam, 26). As they value seeing each other’s face over just hearing their face. And that everyone can be included in a videocall and thereby you get to see and “check up on everyone.” Reflecting how ICT used for communication purposes have evolved to become less on-to-one (Dekker and Engbersen, 2012). Mariam, also mention that due to different time-zones they did not have to plan when to call their family and friends in country of origin. They could now just leave a text message or send videos without worrying if they are awake or asleep as they would check it eventually and respond when they could.

Hiller and Franz (2004) mention that ICTs:

takes the migrant back home by creating and sustaining images through recipes, slideshows, community profiles and humour – all of which create an atmosphere of hyper-reality. (p. 746).

Similarly, five of my informants also mention that Facebook, other social media platforms, YouTube, and Afghan news websites lets “always know what is happening there” and stay up to date with the current trending cultural aspects of origin country. This was, in their opinion, due to there being little to no news at all about the sociocultural and political landscape of Afghanistan on Norwegian websites or TV channels. Combined with the experience that it was hard to understand and comprehend anything in Norwegian. Therefore, having family and relatives there to always keep you informed on what is happening on the ground was important for my informants in staying up to date with not only sociocultural aspects of origin country, but also economic and political aspects. As expressed by my informants, the notion of “staying up to date with what is happening there” has become highly relevant in the past two years with the collapse of the Afghan government and the re-emergence of the Taliban.

Hiller and Franz (2004) describe that in the settled migrant phase, migrants start using ICTs to re-establish ties to country of origin in multiple ways. Of which the function is to rediscover “an eroding identity in diaspora” (p. 739). Similarly, Brinkerhoff (2010) mentions “the internet provides important opportunities for creating a sense of identity and solidarity around a shared cultural heritage and diaspora experience” (p. 40). My informants’ experiences of my informants illustrate these two statements. As it becomes evident that once my informants became reasonably settled in host country, they utilize different forms of ICTs in a desire to sustain a connection to home driven by more by a sense of nostalgia and belonging (Hiller and Franz, 2004). Alonso and Oiarzabal (2010) argue that migrants have

always used ICTs as a way to overcome barriers of temporal, spatial and psychological distance. Nadia's experience contradicts this statement, but also reflect it at the same time. As her reading negative headlines on news outlets led to her distancing herself from her Afghan side. However, ICTs also made her able to reconnect with family and friends, through which she regained a better image of not only herself but also of her culture and country.

Furthermore, in his study on how the Basque diaspora use ICTs to design their identity, Oiarzabal (2010) found out that "the web allows diaspora Basques and their associations to portray and reimagine, on a global scale, certain Basque national representations about identity, culture, national, and homeland" (p. 346). Similarly, I maintain that my informants use of ICTs to maintain sociocultural ties to country of origin and recreate activities or engage with other Afghans in Norway, reflect Oiarzabal's findings. As most of my informants' flow of resources through different ICTs illustrate that these resources are imbued with a sense of preserving their cultural identity.

4.2.8. Impact of ICTs on transnational social networks since arrival

In section 4.1.4. I mentioned how my informants' social networks exist within a transnational social field that encompasses both host country and country of origin (Levitt and Schiller, 2004; Basch et al., 1994). As it has become evident in this section, 5.2, my informants gained digital literacy and introduction to new emerging ICTs have changed their transnational social networks. Several scholars point out how transnational migrants utilize ICTs, in particular social media platforms, to not only express their identities, but also form networks (Wessels, 2010; Kupiainen, 2004; Alonso and Reips, 2012; Alonso and Oiarzabal, 2010; Gomes, 2018; Hiller and Franz, 2004; Kupiainen, 2004). For instance, Kupiainen (2004) mentions that "recent ICT developments indicate that the diverse geographical locations of communal members and their absence from home are becoming increasingly important" in their daily lives (p. 351).

In the case of my informants, new emerging ICTs, such as social media platforms and smart phones since arrival, illustrates how their ties, both "strong" and "weak," have evolved from just ties to family and friends to other expatriates they would otherwise not have known in country of origin or host country (Hiller and Franz, 2004; Granovetter, 1973; Gomes, 2018). For instance, while Massoud mentions how ICTs have made it easy to connect with other Afghans in Norway and expand his social network. Other informants engage with other Afghans on online diasporic groups/forums that are neither in host country nor country of

origin but share the same circumstance as them elsewhere in the world. This also displays how their transnational social networks extend beyond the physical world and into the virtual world.

Wessels (2010) mentions that it is through everyday life engagement in activities by diasporic/migrant communities through their digital networks that ICT finds meaning and form. Similarly, Kupiainen (2004) mentions that ICTs contribute “towards the group’s ability to maintain its communality and social networks ... the internet should be regarded as real, casual effects in the lives of its members both abroad and at home” (p. 356). Along the same lines, the social capital of my informants has also been changed due to new emerging ICTs. For instance, Ali, 28, reflects Wessels’ and Kupiainen’s statements by how since he took over his current cultural centre, he started to use Facebook to advertise sociocultural activities to Afghans in other parts of Norway. Reflecting how his social capital expands to every part of Norway thanks to ICTs.

4.3. Hybridization and finding your way back to “Afghanness”

In this section of my thesis, I will be presenting some of my unintended findings. These relates to my informants’ challenges with living a multicultural life and, consequently, having to negotiate between identities.

4.3.1. Afghan enough? Eroding proficiency in mother tongue among first-generation Afghan migrant youth

An unintended finding was how 3 of my informants, who arrived in Norway through family reunion when they were under the age of ten, mentioned how the “sudden change” from their mother tongue to Norwegian upon arrival resulted in the loss of proficiency in their first language. For instance, Dariush, 25, who arrived in Norway at the age of 9, describes his experience with the gradual loss of mother tongue:

I did not really notice it, but over time and with feedback from my parents I started becoming aware of how little I spoke in my mother tongue ... It had become unnatural to speak in my mother tongue as I spoke Norwegian at school and with siblings. It was only when I tried to hold a conversation with my [extended] family outside Norway in Dari [mother tongue] that I noticed how bad I had become in my mother tongue, as my vocabulary was terrible, and I did not know what words to use when or where.

A common theme among my younger informants, were the loss of communication with extended family in country of origin and consequently “touch with their Afghan side” - due to not being able to communicate with them properly. My younger informants also expressed how not being able to read in their mother tongue hindered them from being able to enjoy and understand cultural entertainment from country of origin. Which resulted in them further losing touch with their Afghan culture and consequently resulted in a bad self-confidence and less socializing with other Afghans if they did not speak Norwegian.

They [his parents] spoke with family in Afghanistan a lot and would always encourage us children to do the same, and that was a good thing to be honest because by talking to them I started to notice how terrible my Dari [his mother tongue] was. But they [family in country of origin] were helpful and would help me out whenever I was stuck and could not remember a certain word or phrase [...] and I think those conversations were helpful in me not forgetting Dari. [...] My parents also took me to visit Afghanistan and there my cousins, uncles and aunts had a hard time talking to me because I could not speak Dari properly, and because of that many of my cousins would make fun of me and say, “I was not Afghan anymore,” and honestly, that motivated me to learn Dari even more. (Dariush, 25)

Dariush also mentions that consuming entertainment, news, and music from country of origin online helped him regain more proficiency in his mother tongue. Which consequently resulted in a better confidence when speaking in Afghan social settings as he learned more about the unspoken cultural norms and values. Like Dariush, 2 other informants express that return visits, other sociocultural ties and activities combined with the use of ICTs, helped them gain proficiency in their mother tongue and consequently resulted in a better self-confidence when being around other Afghans.

In contrast, my informants who arrived in Norway as adults and/or adolescents described that “maintaining their mother tongue was not as big of an issue.” As per their experience, “it was nearly impossible to forget it.” Despite many not having gone to school in country of origin or the lack of mother tongue usage in Norway. Therefore, many of them did not identify preserving mother tongue as one of the reasons for why they maintained social ties with family and friend in country of origin.

Guardado (2002) explains that one of the common problems for many migrants who arrive in a foreign country at a very young age is the loss of proficiency in their mother tongue. As

being exposed to a secondary language at an early age can be damaging to the development of a migrant child's first language (Guardado, 2002. Dariush's sentiment reflect this as impulses from school and friends in the host country led to Norwegian replacing his mother tongue as the dominant language. Furthermore, Dariush's and other informants' sentiments reflects how migration can lead to cultural bereavement in the sense that it can involve "the loss of the familiar, including language (especially colloquial and dialect), attitudes, values, social structures, and support networks" (Bughra and Becker, 2005, p.18).

4.3.2. Negotiating identities – Hybridization/Transnational identities

From the findings above, it becomes apparent that many informants engage in Afghan sociocultural activities in host country and maintain sociocultural ties to country of origin for the purpose of preserving and/or re-configuring their Afghan cultural identity. However, findings also show that several of my informants who arrived in Norway as children or adolescents, express becoming conflicted about their cultural identity. As they mention having to negotiate between identities in different situations where they had to play distinct roles. For instance, when asked whether he refers to himself as simply Afghan or Norsk-Afghan [Norwegian-Afghan], Ahmad, 27, explains:

The ones who come here at a young age are more, hmm, they grow up playing two roles, for example you are focused on being Afghan when you are with family and other Afghans, but then again you have school where almost everyone is Norwegian, so you also want to be a part of that sphere. So, the need for socializing with other people leads you to engage more in the Norwegian society and it impacts you, because you become more like Norwegians. You start to behave like them and think like them. So, you have a little bit of both, I am both an Afghan and a Norwegian... so you basically live a double life.

This sentiment is shared by many other informants who arrived here as children or adolescents. Who express that while they do maintain a sense of loyalty and belonging to country of origin, the impact of Norwegian culture and society has, over the years, changed how they feel about their cultural identity. Some hold a higher degree of loyalty to Afghan cultural identity while at the same time recognizing aspects of Norwegian culture as part of their cultural identity. While others held a higher degree of loyalty towards their adopted Norwegian cultural identity. As they felt their values were more in line with that of

Western/Norwegian culture. This was especially evident when questioned on if they have changed their role as a man/woman since arriving to Norway:

Ahmad: Yes, I have developed a new view of how women and men should engage in society.

I: In what way?

Ahmad: In how equal rights are valued very much here, it kind of affects everyone. Like for example myself, I think like everyone else in Norway that women should have the right to get an education, the right to work, the right to wear whatever they want and so on... I don't think I would necessarily have the same views if I lived in Afghanistan. So yeah, I have changed and adapted to Norwegian values and culture.

ICTs have only contributed to informant's reconfiguration of their cultural identity, "negotiating its boundaries and learning to live with multiple sense of self" (Nedelcu, 2012, p. 1348). Nedelcu (2012) argues that regular use of ICTs helps migrants enlarge their social horizons and adapt to sociocultural codes, constantly redefining what they perceive to be their "original identity". Illustrating this, Ahmad, and many other younger informants maintain that, on the one hand, entertainment and social ties with family and friends in country of origin assert a certain set of sociocultural codes. While, on the other hand, physical interactions with aspects of Norwegian culture and consuming Norwegian/Western entertainment online assert a separate set of sociocultural codes. Often conflicting codes, such as certain religious/cultural codes. In this dilemma, Ahmad, and Nadia, 20, for instance, suggest that they "pick out the best codes from each culture" and fuse them together to a hybrid identity.

Ahmad's and Nadia's sentiments reflect Hall's (1990;1996) second position on cultural identity. In this position our cultural identities are as much about becoming as being. Meaning our cultural identities are not fixed in the past, but on the contrary, undergo transformation (p. 445). Similarly, within the context of migration, Haller (2021) mentions that "migration requires a significant re-definition of identity after arrival in another country" (p.36). Gomes (2018) mentions that transnational migrants have multiple identities that allow them to make connections with others and "form sociocultural silos" (p. 73). Ahmad and Nadia also illustrate Haller's and Gomes' statements through how they fuse different aspects of host country culture and country of origin culture into one hybrid identity (Wagner, 2016; Haller,

2021). At the same time, their experiences also showcase the significant role of ICTs in the reconfiguring of one's cultural identity.

In contrast to Ahmad and Nadia who arrived in Norway as children, Van Oudenhaven et al. (2006) explains that certain migrants might adopt all the external trappings of host country culture but still identify strongly with the cultural identity of origin country. Similarly, my informants who arrived in Norway as adults expressed associating solely with being Afghan and Afghan cultural identity. However, these informants pointed out that they feel integrated in the sociocultural aspects of host country. For instance, many maintain that they have Norwegian friends and work colleagues, accept the Norwegian dress code, and have easily adopted other social norms of host country. Gomes (2018) argues that the reason these types of migrants tend to associate more with their origin culture is because they are reminded and perceived as foreigners in a foreign land by host country residents. Similarly, several informants mention how instances of racism and discrimination manifested the belief in them that they can "never become Norwegian" (Jalil, 39). They mention that their physical traits exempt them from ever feeling like they have a hybrid identity or Norwegian.

4.3.3. How first-generation migrants materialize Afghan cultural identity in their children through sociocultural transnational practises and ICTs

Furthermore, my findings illustrate that 4 of my informants who came here as adolescents, and who since arriving in Norway have been married and had children, expressed concern over their second-generation children's' little understanding of Afghan culture. They maintained that the influence of Norwegian culture - combined with constant influx of western/Norwegian entertainment through ICTs in the children's everyday life - would dominate too many aspects of their cultural identity and alienate any possibility of the children reconnecting with their Afghan cultural identity.

In their study of the cross-border activities of second-generation Mexican migrants within the transnational social fields of their parents, Soehl and Waldinger (2012) found that:

Parents' own engagement with the homeland and their retention of homeland practises are likely to exercise much influence over the degree to which their children will form cross-border social ties, attachments, and obligations in adulthood. (p. 807)

This was also an apparent theme among my informants who were parents. As they mention having taken initiatives to include their children in their transnational practises, in a bid to teach their children about Afghan history, culture and language. One of the methods my informants employed to manifest Afghan cultural identity in their children, was for instance encouraging their children to participate in Afghan sociocultural activities in host country to make Afghan culture seem less alienating to the children. Their proficiency in mother tongue was also a concern. Therefore, informants maintained they would always speak in their mother tongue when around their children and encourage their children to do the same when at home. Other methods were taking them to visit their country of origin, watch Afghan media entertainment, read books, or talk frequently with their families in country of origin. Interestingly, these methods reflect some of the methods many of my informants employed themselves or were employed by their parents to maintain, and/or reconnect, with their Afghan cultural identity.

Most importantly, however, is findings illustrating how my informants use of ICTs to teach their second-generation children about the sociocultural aspects of their Afghan culture and their mother tongue. For instance, Hanifa, 40, explains why it is important for her children and what she has done:

When it comes to why, well, it is equally important for me to learn about Afghanistan, Afghan culture and maintain my identity and it is just as important that I try to do the same for my children who have grown up here and do not have the luxury of growing up in Afghanistan, so they are more at risk of losing their Afghan identity if they do not learn about it from someone, like me. In this part, technology has really helped us as Afghan parents because we can also enrol our children in online classes over zoom with Afghan teachers in England, Germany, and Afghanistan, and they can teach our children everything from religion, and culture to Afghan history.

Hanifa maintains that she resorted to ICTs because she and her husband works too much. Thus, the children have no physical node through which they can configure their parents Afghan cultural identity. O'Hara and Harris (2016) argue that ICTs facilitate motivation to learn among migrant youth due to its rapidly changing nature and user-friendliness. Similarly, Hanifa's experience is shared by other parents, who express those online classes with Afghan teachers who teach their children about Afghan religion and culture in their mother tongue is a method that has become popular the past years as the parents themselves have gained more digital literacy.

5. Conclusion

The main research question that established the overreaching focus of inquiry was: *How has first-generation migrants maintained their Afghan cultural identity through their sociocultural transnational practises since arrival to Norway? And what is the role of ICTs in this process?* This was done by answering the following three sub-questions:

1. *What are first-generation Afghan migrants' sociocultural transnational practises?*
2. *How has ICT development changed transnational sociocultural practises of first-generation Afghan migrants since arrival to Norway?*
3. *What role does ICTs and sociocultural transnational practises play in preserving cultural identity for first-generation Afghan migrants?*

The qualitative interviews that were conducted and the subsequent data generated provided invaluable insight to the transnational lives of first-generation Afghan migrants and how they have utilized ICTs.

5.1. What are first-generation Afghan migrants' sociocultural transnational practises?

To understand the experiences of first-generation Afghan migrants with sociocultural transnationalism, I had to find out what their sociocultural transnational practises were. Findings show that first-generation Afghan migrants are all part of a transnational social field which encompasses their country of origin and host country (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). One distinguishing feature in this instance were, on the one hand, their sociocultural ties to country of origin and, on the other hand, the sociocultural activities in which they engaged in, in host country.

Afghan migrants maintain diverse types of sociocultural ties to their country of origin. Within the social aspect, Afghans maintain communication with family and friends, and extended family, in country of origin. This does, however, vary among them. Afghan migrants who arrived here as children tend to have less contact with family and friends compared to ones who arrived here as adolescents or adults. Their social ties also carry a moral obligation to support family and friends economically and/or psychologically due to the uncertain security situation of their country of origin. An interesting finding in this instance is how they not only send remittances but also engage with charity organizations in country of origin and host country to support local villages and hometowns in the country of origin.

Within the cultural aspect, findings show all informants enjoy different types of entertainment from country of origin. The younger informants tend to like both western and Afghan entertainment. While older informants prefer Afghan entertainment due to the language barrier.

Findings also show that they engage in various sociocultural activities in host country with other Afghans. These are frequent visits between each other to marking religious/cultural holidays. An interesting finding in this instance is the emergence of Afghan cultural centres aiming to include Afghans across Norway in sociocultural activities. Though this has changed throughout the years. Their ability to engage in any kind of transnational practises have been influenced by legal status and where they were settled at the point of arrival.

Though unintended, findings show that the sociocultural transnational practises of first-generation Afghan migrants are further enhanced by their transnational social networks. Informants in these social networks have throughout the years been able to engage in sociocultural activities more often. However, their sociocultural activity in Norway has at the same time expanded their social networks and increased their social capital in the sense that they create weak ties and strengthen their existing strong ties. This can in large part be credited to their gained digital literacy.

5.2. How has ICT development changed the sociocultural transnational practises of first-generation Afghan migrants since arrival?

To answer this question, findings show that the age, method of arrival and digital literacy prior to arrival in Norway influences at what pace ICTs have changed their sociocultural transnational practises. Findings show that older informants with limited digital literacy prior to migration, who arrived in early 2000s, had much more difficulty maintaining sociocultural transnational practises the few five years after arrival. While informants who arrived here as children and adolescents were able to gain digital literacy much more quickly due to the sociocultural impulses of host country.

However, despite this, all informants have since arrival to country increased their digital literacy, reflecting what Hiller and Franz (2004) coin as the *settled migrant*. This was mainly due to new emerging ICTs. Findings show a transition from parabolic antennas and push button phones to more evolved ICTs such as smart phones and smart TVs. Following these

ICTs and my informants increasing digital literacy as the years passed, was their engagement in social media platforms. Which profoundly increased not only their sociocultural transnational practises over the years but also their transnational social networks that encompassed both host country and country of origin. Findings also show that engagement in online diasporic/migrant communities allowed informants to connect with other Afghans in Norway and elsewhere in the world. An interesting finding was how these virtual communities were utilized to support each other mentally or offer advice on migration and raise charitable fundraiser to help Afghans in host country and country of origin, and elsewhere in the world. Thus, new emerging ICTs provided a bigger influx of cultural entertainment and increased social networks.

5.3. What role does ICTs and sociocultural transnational practises play in preserving cultural identity for first-generation Afghan migrants?

Starting with sociocultural transnational practises, findings show that they have allowed informants to preserve cultural identity through participation in sociocultural activities in host country and sociocultural entertainment stemming from country of origin. Nearly all my informants expressed that they signaled a sense of belonging and were conscious about their cultural identity when engaging in their sociocultural transnational practises. Without repeating myself, I will say that sociocultural transnational practises have played an important role in my informants preserving their sense of Afghan cultural identity. As it has increased their social network, social capital and strengthened weak ties or created new ties with other Afghans.

ICTs have only enhanced their engagement in sociocultural transnational practises in both host country and to country of origin. Which, in return, has led to ICTs playing an important role in how my informants preserve their cultural identity. Apart from increasing their engagement in sociocultural transnational practises, they have provided increased cultural entertainment and more frequent communication with family and friends in country of origin and host country, only strengthening my informants Afghan cultural identity.

Furthermore, some unintended findings were how emerging ICTs and sociocultural transnational practises had led to either the re-configuration of my informants' identities or the creation of dual identities, hybrid identities/transnational identities. As findings show that many informants negotiate between being Norwegian and Afghan. This was apparent among

informants who came arrived as children or adolescents. Findings also show that older informants who were parents expressed concerns over their second-generation children's sense of Afghan cultural identity. By including their children in their transnational social fields and social networks by utilizing ICTs and attending sociocultural activities, these parents were able to manifest Afghan cultural identity in their children.

5.4. Main conclusion and looking forward

To summarize, how has first-generation migrants maintained their Afghan cultural identity through their sociocultural transnational practises since arrival to Norway? And what is the role of ICTs in this process? The answers to these questions are complex, but my study suggests that their digital literacy is a crucial factor for how they engage in sociocultural transnational practises and enhance their transnational social networks. A combination of these varied factors allows them to preserve their Afghan cultural identity in host country. Though my informant's method of arrival, digital literacy prior to arrival and age can also be included as factors in answering my main research question. The important causal relationship of ICTs and sociocultural transnational practises cannot be ignored either. Therefore, their experiences might vary based on all these factors.

Though there are a lot of research on migrant transnationalism and their use of ICTs in the global arena, I still hope this field is expanded upon further in Norway. I hope the same kind of research can be done on other migrant groups in Norway, as I believe they highlight why migrants might behave differently or do things differently. I do not claim to have provided all the answers in this thesis, but as I mentioned in the introduction, the only way we can better integrate migrants into host society is to understand how and why they preserve their 'old selves'/identities. Because it is only through mutual understanding that we bridge the gap between difference and coexistence in our polarized world.

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7. Appendix

Appendix 1 – Information letter and consent

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet:

Digital Migrants: Transnational Practises and Maintaining Cultural Identity in Norway

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å studere hvordan afghanere former og bevarer identiteten sin gjennom sine transnasjonale relasjoner til hjemlandet. I dette skrevet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Formålet med denne masteroppgaven er å studere hvilke relasjoner første generasjons innvandrere fra Afghanistan har til hjemlandet. Og hvilken rolle disse relasjonene spiller når det gjelder å forme og å bevare deres identitet i Norge. Samtidig vil jeg også kaste lys over rollen til informasjon og kommunikasjonsteknologier (IKT) i denne prosessen.

Hovedproblemstilling:

Hvordan har første-generasjon Afghanske innvandrere bevart sin kulturelle identitet gjennom sine transnasjonale aktiviteter siden ankomst til Norge? Og hvilken rolle har IKT spilt i denne prosessen?

Underproblemstillinger:

1. Hvilke sosiokulturelle transnasjonale aktiviteter engasjere første-generasjons innvandrere seg i?
2. Hvordan har nye IKT endret første-generasjons innvandrere sine sosiokulturelle transnasjonale aktiviteter siden ankomst til Norge?
3. Hvilken rolle spiller IKT og sosiokulturelle transnasjonale aktiviteter for hvordan første-generasjonsinnvandrere bevarer sin kulturelle identitet?

Dette forskningsprosjektet inngår som min masteroppgave for lektorutdanning i Geografi (5-årig) på Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelig universitet (NTNU). Opplysningene skal ikke brukes til noe annet enn masteroppgaven.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Institutt for Geografi - NTNU er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Kravene for å delta i dette forskningsprosjektet er:

- Du er 18 år eller eldre
- Du er førstegenerasjonsinnvandrere fra Afghanistan
- Du har norsk pass eller har bodd her lengre enn 10 år

Bakgrunnen for at du ble valgt til å delta i denne forskningsprosjektet er at du utfyller disse tre kravene. Frem til nå er du den [nummer] til å bli spurt.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

- Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at du deltar i et intervju med meg om temaet. Dette vil ta i ca. 1 time. Men avhengig av hvordan situasjonen utfolder seg så kan det ta mindre eller lengre tid.
- Deltakelse innebærer også at jeg har tillatelse fra til å samle noen opplysninger om deg i intervjuet. Dette vil være opplysninger om dine relasjoner til hjemlandet og din følelse av tilhørigheten/identitet i Norge.
- Opplysningene vil registreres ved at jeg tar lydopptak og notater fra intervjuet.
- Hvis barn under 18 år deltar så vil jeg opplyse om at foreldre kan få se intervjuguide på forhånd ved å ta kontakt.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Opplysningene som du velger å dele vil ikke påvirke ditt forhold til myndighetene, arbeidsgiver eller din nåværende situasjon i Norge.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

- De som vil ha tilgang opplysningene om deg til formålene er student, Mohammad Kazem Khajeh, og prosjektansvarlig/veileder, Ståle Angen Rye, ved institutt for Geografi – NTNU.
- Navn og kontaktopplysningene dine vil jeg erstatte med en kode som lagres på personlig navneliste adskilt fra øvrige data. Dette vil ikke lagres digitalt.

Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?

Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes 18.05.2022. I løpet av og etter prosjektslutt vil datamateriale med dine personopplysninger bli anonymisert. Dette gjøres ved at koblingsnøkkelen blir slettet og transkripsjonen av lydopptak blir omskrevet slik at det ikke fremkommer identifiserende opplysninger om deg, som for eks. navn, personnummer, epostadresse, telefon- og mobilnummer eller andre direkte personidentifiserende opplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra institutt for Geografi – NTNU har Personverntjenester vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer om eller benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Prosjektansvarlig: Ståle Angen Rye, stale.angen.rye@ntnu.no, eller student: Mohammad Kazem Khajeh, 40067904/mohammkk@stud.ntnu.no, ved Institutt for Geografi - NTNU
- Vårt personvernombud: Thomas Helgesen, 93079038/thomas.helgesen@ntnu.no

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til Personverntjenester sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- Personverntjenester på epost (personverntjenester@sikt.no) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen

Ståle Angen Rye

(Forsker/veileder)

Mohammad Kazem Khajeh

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet [*sett inn tittel*], og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju
- at du er 18 år eller eldre
- at Mohammad Kazem Khajeh kan bruke opplysninger om meg til prosjektet
- at det tas lydopptak av intervju

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix 2 – Interview guide

Interview Guide

1. Personal information:

- a) Gender
- b) Age
- c) Current Job
- d) How long have you lived in Norway?
- e) Work experience and/or education from country of origin?

2. Migration and ICTs:

- a) Reason for emigrating to Norway?
 - a) Alone or with family?
 - b) If alone, have you been reunited/reconnected with family and friends?
 - c) Did technology make your migration easier?
- b) What was your experiences with coming to a new country? Any challenges?
 - a) Have you overcome those challenges?
- c) How much knowledge did you have about computers, the internet, and mobile phones before arriving in Norway?
 - a) How has this changed for you since arrival??

3. Questions regarding cultural identity

- a) How do people perceive identity in your country of origin?
 - a. Is there a collective cultural identity?
- b) What does identity mean for you?
 - a. What does cultural identity mean for you?
 - b. Why do you think it is important to preserve your Afghan cultural identity?
- c) Do you feel you are integrated into Norwegian society?
 - a. Would you describe yourself as just Afghan or Norsk-Afghaner (Norwegian-Afghan)? Why?
- d) Have you changed your role as a man/woman after living in Norway for a while?

4. Sociocultural ties and activities and ICTs

4.1 Communication and social ties to country of origin

- a) Can you describe what type of social ties you have to Afghanistan? (For example, who or what do you have contact with? Family? Friends? Some type of organization?)
 - a. What language do you communicate in?
 - a. What do you guys talk about?
 - b. Do you feel that having conversations with family and friends from Afghanistan have helped you not forget Farsi?
- b) What modes of communication do you use to contact and talk with family and friends in Afghanistan? And why exactly these?
 - a. Which one do you prefer? And why?
 - b. How has this changed since arrival in Norway?
- c) Can you describe which factors weigh in on when and why you contact family and friends in Afghanistan?
- d) Can you describe why it is important for you to maintain the social ties that you have to Afghanistan?
 - a. How do you think that social relations in Afghanistan help you in maintain and shape your cultural identity in Norway?
 - b. Do you think that your social ties to Afghanistan play a role in your social life here in Norway, in any way? (ex. Do you have a diverse group of friends? Do you have more reference points?)

4.2 Cultural ties to Afghanistan and cultural activities in host country

- a) Can you describe some Afghan cultural events or holidays that you participate in and celebrate here in Norway? (nowruz, eid, events, weddings, visits etc.)
 - a. How does one see that these are Afghan events and ceremonies?
 - b. Have you noticed any differences between men and women at these events?
 - c. Have these events changed in Norway through the years or are they as any other event held in Afghanistan?
 - d. How do you think technological development has changed your engagement in Afghan sociocultural activities in Norway over the years?
- b) Can you describe some hobbies you had in Afghanistan?
 - a. Have you maintained these hobbies in Norway?
- c) Can you describe some forms of entertainment from Afghanistan that you have maintained in Norway? (Music, TV, books etc.)
 - a. How do you get access to this entertainment? Where do you find it?
 - b. Has this changed with technological development since you arrived in Norway?
- d) Do you prefer TV, films, music and such from Afghanistan over Norwegian and western ones? Can you explain why?

- e) Do you feel that your cultural ties determine how you behave in social situations? If so, how?
 - a. Do they determine how you portray yourself online?
- f) Do fashion trends in country of origin that you see online affect what type of clothes you decide to wear here in Norway?
- g) Have you revisited Afghanistan since you came here?
 - a. Has technological development made it easier and less dangerous to revisit Afghanistan?
 - b. Do you feel that visiting helps maintain your sense of identity, traditions and language?
 - c. If you have children, do you take them with you?
- h) How do you think your cultural ties to Afghanistan and activities in Norway have helped you in maintain and/or shaping your sense cultural identity since arrival?
 - a. Thinking back on what we just spoke about, can you describe the impact of technological development in this process?

5. Career choices

- a) Is social status something that is deemed important in Afghan culture? If so, how?
- b) Are there any career choices/jobs that are deemed more important in your Afghan culture? And is this something that Afghans also think in Norway? Why is it so?
- c) Can you describe your career choices after coming to Norway?
 - a. What was the reason for taking this path?
 - b. Was returning back to Afghanistan something that played a role in the career choices you have made or intend to make in the future?
- d) Do you think your Afghan culture has played a role in the career choices you have made?
 - a. Is this something that you feel applies to other Afghans in Norway as well?

6. Other questions

- a) If you have children or have plans to have children in the future, is it important for you that your children learn about Afghan culture, language and values? Why?
 - How do you intend for them to do so?
- b) When you think back on your identity after having lived in Norway for so long, what can you say about your identity?
 - Do you think technology has changed how you view yourself?
- c) Satisfied with where you live in Norway or do you wish to move somewhere else? Why?
- d) Is there anything else that you want to add? Or something you feel I forgot to ask?

