



University of
Stavanger

FACULTY OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

MASTER'S THESIS

Programme of study: Joint Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations	2. semester, 2011 Open
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Thesis title: Labour Migrants' Decision Making in the Process of Adapting to the Norwegian Society	
Keywords: Labour migrants, international migration, adaptation, integration, work culture	No. of pages: 93 + Appendices/other: 6 Stavanger, 26.10.2011

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Master's Thesis:

Labour Migrants' Decision Making in the Process of Adapting to the Norwegian Society

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26.10.2011

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ABSTRACT

The principal aim of this thesis is to uncover what factors contribute to labour migrants' decisions of settling, or not settling, in their new country, and reveal what factors influence positively or negatively to the adaptation process in their host environment. It involves all the three levels of micro, meso and macro, however, it is particularly concerned with the work environment and the individual's decision making process. Young Yun Kim's theory on cross-cultural adaptation has served as a basis for this research, and it is carried out in the Stavanger area, interviewing labour migrants in both the high skill and low skill sectors.

The findings indicate that *age/generation, personality, and the search for fulfilling careers* are some factors that contribute negatively or positively to the decision of settling/living long term in the country. Moreover, personal interests such as sport and outdoor life may contribute to a positive adaptation process, as well as an ability to establish and maintain a personal network. This is where the international community in Stavanger plays an important role, serving both as a buffer between the migrant and the Norwegian society, and providing important support functions for newly arrived as well as for foreigners that have lived in Stavanger a while.

Keeping in mind the nation's continuous need for foreign workers in the future, this research may contribute to a better understanding of the interplay between the migrant, the work environment and the society, and can thereby be a resource in facilitating for migrant workers settling long term in the country.

Key words: Labour migrants, international migration, adaptation, integration, work culture

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Ongoing economical and social processes in the Stavanger Region.

When oil and gas exploration started in the North Sea in the 1960's, Stavanger got involved fairly early. This was the city where foreign oil companies established their offices, and in 1966 the oil drilling platform "Ocean Traveller" was towed to Rosenberg Mekaniske Verksted to be repaired after an accident. The oil platform towering in the fjord by the city centre of Stavanger became a visible symbol of the oil and gas industry that would dominate and greatly expand and influence the city and the surrounding areas.

In 1972 the Norwegian Parliament decided that a new governmental owned oil drilling company should be based in Stavanger, as well as the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate. Placing these two important institutions in the area lead to Stavanger getting its official mark as the Norwegian Oil Drilling Capital. Since then, the city has experienced rapid growth and an increasing international influence. In 1972 the population of the municipality of Stavanger numbered 82.450. In July 2010 the number exceeded 125.000. The areas surrounding Stavanger have also experienced substantial growth. Besides the population growth, the oil and gas industry lead to profound changes in the area, and provided new opportunities for the city and its vicinities.

1.2 Actor I: The employment situation for companies located in the Stavanger area.

As the oil industry developed, new companies established offices in the Stavanger area, both Norwegian and international. Since then there has been a continual expansion, new office buildings are continuously built, and this has resulted in a high demand for laborers in a number of sectors. After the EU expansion in 2004, the Norwegian labor market attracted a high number of workers from the new member states, predominantly to work in construction, cleaning or doing other non/low/medium qualified work.

37 % of the industry in the county of Rogaland, where Stavanger is located, employed foreign workers in 2008. This is nearly 10% more than the Norwegian average (<http://www.nav.no/805377681.cms>). This has led to the area housing people from many different nationalities.

1.3 Actor II: The labour migrants' perspectives.

As described above, a high number of foreign labour migrants have lived in the Stavanger area during the last decades, and this has led to the forming of a strong international community. The community itself is not formed as an organization, nevertheless, different support organizations exist within the community. This community consists, predominantly and traditionally, of highly skilled migrants. In the analysis chapter below, this community will be discussed further, as it has shown to be an important factor in the adaption process among the interviewees of this study. As the number of foreigners increased, they established new schools; an American school was opened in 1966, since then British, French and Dutch schools have been opened in the area (Gjerde, 2002). In addition, international kindergartens are also established.

In many respects there has been little knowledge about the labour migrants from the new EU countries. How they live their lives in Norway, and the nature of their working conditions have become a concern for researchers and politicians. Given that foreign workers are working in Norway for foreign companies, there is little control with their level of salary, living conditions etc. Moreover, also Norwegian companies are accused of social dumping, paying salaries below minimum wages, and expecting the migrants to work overtime without additional payment. Even though these unacceptable conditions are a reality, still many of the labour migrants are treated at the level of Norwegians, as this study also will show. It has been a general understanding that the present labour migration from EU countries is characterized by temporary migration, however, research shows that this might not be that case¹. Friberg and Tydlum's (2007) report show that many Polish workers plan to settle in Norway, and recent numbers from UDI show that there has been a significant increase in family reunions among Polish workers in 2007 (www.udi.no).

¹ This problem is already being addressed in i.e. the report from the Directory of Integration and Diversity (IMDI): Integreringskart 2007. Arbeidsinnvandring -en kunnskapstatus [Mapping integration 2007: Labour migration-a balance sheet of what we know]. This report is an important reference for this research, presenting research and reports from several authors, addressing historical perspectives as well as contemporary.

1.4 Focus of study.

Much of present research on labour migration to Norway has investigated into the migrants' living and working conditions in Norway, and the focus has been mainly on the recent flow of workers from the EU-10. Media, labour organizations and researchers are also concerned with the question whether the migrants will stay in Norway or not (Vågeng, 2007, Dølvik & Brochman, 2006, Friberg & Tydlum, 2007, IMDI Integreringskart 2007, Rogstad, 2007). In particular, this question seems to be raised with different intentions if it related to those working in low qualified positions, or those working in high qualified positions. There seems to be little disagreement in regards to the high qualified workers; the oil industry in particular has a continuous demand for high qualified personnel that will stay in the country. For those working in low skilled jobs the picture is a little different. It is expected that Norway in the future also will need migrant workers in low skilled jobs. However, researchers warn that the migrants who presently are attractive for Norwegian employers, over time might become a burden to the welfare state, moreover, that it will lead to social dumping, and creating an underclass of poor, non-integrated immigrants (IMDI Integreringskart 2007, Dølvik & Brochman, 2007). An arrangement where labour migrants work for a limited time in Norway, and then return to back to their home country, is suggested to prevent this. On the other hand, others hold that it is desired that labour migrants settle because of the permanent need for workers. In the future, Norway cannot take for granted that the country will be attractive for labour migrants, in particular not the best qualified ones.

It is the Norwegian authorities that naturally are Actor III (in addition to Actor I and Actor II, see above) by being the authorities regulating the policies in regards to labour migration. Even though the authorities are mentioned several times throughout this research, it has not seemed natural and necessary to bring up the regulating aspect as an additional element for analysis for this particular study.

This study will focus on the migrant's decision making process when deciding whether to settle in Norway or not. By that it is addressing the questions asked by organizations and

researchers (above), and will add a new perspective to the present research². The aim is to uncover on what grounds the migrant him/herself make the decisions to migrate and stay in Norway, and relate to the majority culture and institutions (to integrate). By viewing the migrant as an active *actor*, the elements important to the migrant will appear, and the importance of the structural elements will become secondary.

This research is to a large extent motivated by the following questions/concerns: When changes in the labour market come, and/or the economical conjunctures are changing, how adaptable are the foreign workforce in Norway? What action can be taken in order to better secure that the immigrant workers will stay in Norway and remain employed? What consequences will the lack of knowledge of Norwegian society and language have for integration into the Norwegian society?

1.5 Research questions.

This research has focused on the variables *intercultural transformation* (degree of integration) and *planned length of stay*, and investigated into how the migrants' background; *their predisposition, work environment and –culture*, and *communication* levels have influenced the outcome levels on these two variables. The main research question is: *How do migrants' predispositions, work environment and communication experience influence their decision of the degree of inclusion in the host society and the timeframe for living there?* Subordinate to the research question I will ask: *Do levels of integration and decision to settle influence each other, and if so, how??* At the core of this research is finding out more about individual decision making processes, and investigating into what migrants view as decisive factors when making the important decisions about living in a foreign country.

All the elements above are included in the study; however, the main focus will be on the work environment, which includes host receptivity and language learning. These two factors are areas where it is possible to make changes; by policies, laws and influencing change of

² This is not to say that the question of settling has not been asked before, as it has by i.e. Friberg and Tydlum, 2007. The difference is that this is a qualitative research, attempting to uncover the migrants' different motivational factors and how they cooperate.

attitude at macro and meso level in the society, and possibly also at an interpersonal (micro) level³. By understanding more about what elements migrants view as important when they make their decisions about staying in the host country, and how these elements might influence each other, this research might be of particular relevance in evaluating integration measures offered to labour migrants, and to differentiate the needs of different migrant groups.

1.6 Theoretical framework and methodology.

The challenge was to find a theoretical approach that combined all these three elements:

- 1 The conditions in the country of emigration
- 2 The country of immigration
- 3 Placing the migrants decision making processes at the center

Young Yun Kim's *Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory* (2001) focuses on the adaptation processes that happens when someone is crossing a cultural boundary. According to this theory, adaptation is to be understood as a dynamic interplay between the person and the environment. The theory takes on a communication approach, where the communication process is acting as the link between the individual and his/her surroundings. Moreover, it includes elements that will hinder adaption, as well as elements that will accommodate for adaptation to take place. In order to develop a research model (see page 25), Kim's structural model of *Factors Influencing Cross-Cultural Adaptation* (Kim, 2005, p.393) serves as a basis, and has been modified and developed further in order to accommodate for the focus of this particular study.

This is an explorative study, meaning that if during the research process more and/or other elements than the once proposed in the model turned out to be important, these were included in the study. This resulted in, when the model was evaluated towards the findings, the model was changed and new elements incorporated.

The timeframe of interest has been when a migrant arrives in Norway and up to his/her first three years of living here. This is a qualitative study, interviewing 10 labour migrants from

³ Defined in Faist (2000). Micro level: Focus on the decision making individual. Meso level: The ties people entertain with each other. Macro level: Political-economical-cultural structures.

three different countries, four working in low skilled positions, and 6 working in high skilled positions. The research was conducted in the Stavanger area, where there is a need for workers of all skill levels. All the interviewees had full time contracts at Norwegian based companies at the time of the interviews.

1.7 Some expected results.

For labour migrants there is very little institutionalized training in the Norwegian language and culture/society. TCN⁴s have a duty to participate in a language course, but EU citizens have neither the right nor the duty to participate in any kind of introductory program. However, companies employing foreign high skilled workers often provide language classes and some kind of introductory programmes for their employees. Often the high skilled workers are attractive on the international labour market, and for the companies employing them it is of great value to keep them employed long term. For those working in low skilled positions, the extent of language classes offered varies considerably, some recruiting companies provide classes in the workers' home countries, others receive no training. Furthermore, low skilled workers are likely not to participate in any kind of program introducing them to Norwegian society and culture. Research shows that Norway can possibly expect a high number of permanent immigrants among the low and medium skilled workers. If the research should confirm this, it will mean that the groups of workers who are provided the least amount of integration and language skills are the ones who settle. In addition, the results might also uncover aspects of importance for high skilled workers which might keep them longer in their companies. It is important to recognize this rough division in the group of labour migrants, both groups are presently very much needed to fill vacant positions in the labour force; however, they are occupied in sectors in the labour market that differ considerably.

1.8 Limitations of study.

The group of labour migrants interviewed in this study is not representative for the overall flow of labour migrants throughout the world. It is important to point out that the interviewees included in this study have contracts in place, securing them a stable income and a decent salary. They are welcomed, wanted and searched for (several of them),

⁴ TCN: Third Country Nationals; meaning countries from outside the EU.

something which puts them in a unique position compared to the general situation for labour migrants throughout the world.

It is important to point out that the term *length of stay* refers to how the interviewees consider the issue at the moment of the interview. The interviewees considered their present situation, what they expect of the future, which factors that may influence their decision, and by that they concluded what they thought they might do. The study is limited by the moment of the interview, and cannot predict unforeseen future actions and incidents which may lead to interviewees changing their mind in regards to their opinions stated in this study.

2.0 Approaching an Understanding of Labour Migration in Norway: Research, Theory and Public Documents

At an early stage of the thesis, the issues brought up by IMDI's publication PM 15/07 *Integreringskart 2007. Arbeidsinnvandring – en Kunnskapsstatus* [*Mapping Integration 2007. Labour Migration – a Balance Sheet of What We Know*] became valuable resources in gaining insight into the different aspects of labour migration, including how this migration also causes institutional challenges. 18 authors, representing different professional and research backgrounds, from Norway and abroad, have written the articles composing the *Integreringskart 2007*. One of the issues the *Integreringskart* brings up is the need for public regulations and better understanding of the specific needs of labour migrants. The 8th of April, 2008 *White Paper no 18* was issued and dedicated to labour migration. The *White Paper* views labour migration in a historical perspective and bring up topics representing specific challenges, as well as proposing changes in various regulations. One of these issues is the importance of labour migrants having the same rights as national workers; one of the main international challenges is avoiding segmentation in the labour market, meaning that the foreign workers will have less rights and lower standard than national workers. Another issue is the internationalization of the labour market, which results in Norway having to compete internationally to attract the best workers.

This is also one of the subjects Jon Rogstad brings up in his article *Arbeidsinnvandring: Hva skal til for at politikken lykkes?* [*Labour Migration: How can we succeed politically?*] (Issued 30.11.2007). Some of the questions he asks are how can we balance cynicism and humanism, how can we make sure we receive the ones we want (and need) but avoid receiving the rest, and how can we make sure that labour migration not will mean increased expenses? In competition with other western countries with low birth rates, we have to make sure that Norway remains an attractive country. If employers exploit foreign labourers this will, in turn, lead to Norway becoming unattractive for the best qualified workers.

So how do the foreign workers themselves experience living and working in Norway? The number of Polish workers coming to Norway has been steadily increasing since the expansion of EU in 2004. In 2007 Fafo publish a research focusing exactly on this particular

group of foreign workers: *Polonia I Oslo. En studie av arbeids- og levkår blandt polakker I hovedstadsområdet* [*Polonia in Oslo. A study of working and living conditions among Poles in the capitol area*]. They found four different groups of workers: 1. The Integrated Pole, 2. The legal labour migrant, 3. The day labourer, 4. The illegally employed. These different groups represent various challenges in regards to integration, and are to some extent reflected in this thesis. In 2007 Philippe Legrain wrote the book *Immigrants: Your Country Needs Them*. As Friberg and Tydlym holds, the need for migrant workers in Western countries will continue in the years to come because of population ageing. Legrain argues for more open borders in order to let migrants in; in doing so they will help their host countries by filling empty spots in the labour market, and (if they come from a poor country) help their own country by sending remittance. However, as a contrast to Legrain's view, Otto Brox (2005) holds in his book *Arbeidskraftimport: Velferdsstatens redning – Eller Undergang?* [*Importing Labour Migrants: the Welfare State's Salvation or Destruction?*] that employing people from poorer countries are not helping these countries, but rather undermining their economy. There is an evident danger that it will contribute to a segmentation of the labour market, making the poorer labour migrants a kind of second class citizens. Moreover, it does not in the long run benefit the receiving country because of the potential negative consequences such a segmentation of the society could lead to.

The Council of Europe Publishing issued in July 2004 the report *International Labour Migration*. This report presents a number of different aspects of labour migration in EU countries, both within EU and from countries outside of EU. Even though it deals with migration before the inclusion of new member states in 2004, it still shows important trends and changes over time. For example, it shows that one of three labour migrants are female, and it holds that this trend reflects the increasing feminization of the labour market. It also presents the countries constituting the immigrant population in various EU countries, and how these have changed over time.

Stephen Castles' article *International migration at the beginning of the twenty-first century: global trends and issues* (2000), Douglas S. Massey & al.'s article *Theories of international migration: a review and appraisal* (1993) and Joaquín Arango's article *Explaining migration:*

a critical view (2000), have all been helpful and informative in order to provide an overview over some of the main theories of migration, as well as their criticisms.

The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces (2000) by Thomas Faist and *Georges Woke Up Laughing* (2001) by Nina Glick Schiller and Georges Eugene Fouron both have transnational migrants as their main subject. Even though with different foci, they have been valuable sources in understanding more of the realities of being a transnational migrant. Transnational migrants are often labour migrants, and they will have ties and connections in two or more countries. This influences their lives and their understanding of personal identity in quite a different way than it will for people who belong only to one country. For the purpose of this study, getting a broader understanding of what it means to have *Transnational Kinship*, a *Transnational Experience*, feeling *Long-Distance Nationalism*, and belonging to *Transnational Social Spaces* has been particularly valuable.

Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov's (2010) book *Culture and Organizations: Software of the mind. Intercultural Cooperation and Its Importance for Survival* has as its objective to help dealing with the differences in thinking, feeling and acting of people with different nationalities. It identifies several aspects of thinking and behavior that will vary, as well as identifying differences in work culture across the globe. It is particularly concerned with how to cooperate productively in international businesses, recognizing the differences, and finding a basis for common understanding. This book has not been a guiding tool throughout the research, however, it may bring the findings into a broader perspective; in order to understand differences in behavior and attitude, and show that the findings can be symptomatic for more universal patterns and not only limited to the interviewees.

A theory that transcends the different aspects of migration and provides a system of evaluation regardless of distance, gender or type of migration is found in Young Yun Kim's theory of Cross-cultural Adaptation: *Becoming Intercultural. An Integrated Theory of Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation* (2001). Kim has developed a theory of cross-cultural adaptation that takes into account both a migrant's external and unfamiliar milieu as well as the migrant's internal conditions. At the heart of the theory is the role of the individual's ability to communicate in accordance with the host communication system as

well as his/her psychological and social engagement with the host environment. Kim's book has been central to this research, forming the basis both for the development of the adaptation model (page 25) and for the analysis chapter.

3.0 The Qualitative Research Process and Governing Theoretical Approaches

As seen above, the Stavanger region has been an area for immigration of different nationalities for many years. In choosing interviewees for this research, the intention was, to some degree, to reflect this variety of countries, without causing the research to become too broad. The interviews were carried out April to June 2008, and the interviewees represent three different countries; two EU countries, and one non-EU country.

This chapter will first deal with the methodological approach; both in terms of the method used, and in explaining core details from the research process itself. This is followed by a section introducing the theoretical approach.

3.0.1 Method and research design.

This is a research based on qualitative interviews, interviewing 10 labour migrants in the Stavanger area in Norway. By applying a qualitative approach, the hope was to get access to the interviewees' own personal stories, and to details that not necessarily were covered by the research questions, but relevant for the research. In this way, this is an explorative study, having a basis in the research questions and the model (see page 25), and simultaneously giving the interviewees opportunity to reflect further on issues of importance to them.

Already in the early stages of this research Holliday's (2007) book *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research* became a useful tool in designing and carrying out the research. Of particular importance to any qualitative research is, according to Holliday, *showing the workings*; meaning the need for the author to be aware of how he/she manages his/her own subjectivity throughout the research, and revealing this is the presentation of the research itself. This includes showing the *way* in which the research is carried out, and *how* this interacts with the setting (Holliday, 2007). One of the main tools in doing this is to take notes, in particular directly after interviews and other important occasions related to the research. This way, the researcher's own experiences will be more evident, and it shows *why* choices and decisions are made, and other discarded. Towards the end of this chapter I will

therefore also briefly recount my personal international and intercultural experiences, and, given my background, explain why I think this subject is particularly important.

3.0.1.1 Definitions of skill levels.

Before introducing the interviewees, it is important to explain the different terms used to describe skill levels, and define how they are employed in this research. The terms *high skilled/highly skilled*, *medium skilled*, *low skilled* and *non-skilled* are used to differentiate between different groups of migrants and their occupations. In this research, these terms relate to the migrants' original level of education, and not to their present occupation. Thus, a highly skilled person may work in a position requiring no education, and is still categorized as highly skilled.

There is no established international definition for who are defined by each category. However, for the purpose of this study, the OECD's standard categorization of the highly skilled professionals is applied. A high skilled worker has completed a third level education, and may have a broad range of backgrounds, for example: technical staff, IT specialists, medical staff, students, managers, researchers, business executives (OECD 2002). For the remaining definitions, this study has applied the following categorizations: The non-skilled category defines people without professional schooling. The medium and low skilled categories define those with professional schooling that has not led to a university degree.

3.0.1.2 The Interviewees.

10 labour migrants were interviewed, 6 working in high qualified jobs, and 4 working in low qualified jobs. The migrants are from three countries; 3 high qualified from Russia, 3 high qualified from Portugal, and 4 working in low qualified jobs from Poland. The reason for choosing two groups of high qualified workers was that I wanted to see if there was any particular difference between those from an EU country and those from outside EU. The reason for choosing migrants from Poland is that, by far, this is presently the main sending country for labour migrants to Norway (except from Sweden). The intention of the research is not to provide information that can be valid for all labour migrants. The selection of interviewees is far too limited in scope for that purpose. Nevertheless, the strength of the research is that it may provide vital information on decision making processes, giving voice

to migrants to tell their individual stories, explaining what were determining factors for them.

All the interviews were recorded and transcribed. Following the transcription, they were categorized according to the findings and the headings of the model.

3.0.1.3 The Interviews.

In preparation for the interviews an interview guide was developed and consisted of 14 questions, question 1-6 were personal details as name, age, nationality etc. Using Kim's (2001) adaptation theory as foundation, the questions were formed to cover the main areas of interest for this study. The intention was to keep the interviews fairly open, using the questions merely as subject headings, allowing the interviewees to tell their individual stories. In addition, issues relevant for the research that were not necessarily mentioned in the interview guide, would be followed up with additional questions. The questions and design were tested by a pilot study, interviewing the three workers from Portugal. By analyzing the data from the pilot, it led to some changes in the interview guide (see Appendix I and II). According to the answers, the employment situation (including type of contracts, payment, unemployment rate, and available positions) in their home countries was more important for their decision making about moving than previously considered. One of the questions that were added was: *If the labour market will change in your home country in such a way that you would expect to find a job with satisfying conditions, would you move back then?*

3.0.1.4 Criteria.

When it comes to the selection of the individual migrants, certain criteria have been determining. First, they should all be employed on permanent contracts in Norway. Many foreigners are employed on contracts where they are expected to move approximately every 2-4 years, or they are employed by foreign companies. In the latter case, this would mean that their perspective on staying in Norway, and also the degree of integration, will be limited. Since one of the questions of this research is what the labour migrants see as important factors contributing to the decision making on whether he/she shall stay in the country or not, foreigner who do not have the possibilities of having a long term perspective

on their stay, will therefore not fall in under the criteria for this study. Secondly, they should not have stayed in Norway for more than three years. It might be argued that foreigners who have stayed in the country only a few months or a year might not have had the opportunity yet to seriously evaluate what it means to stay in Norway, and make decisions in regards to integration etc. On the other hand, and for the purpose of this study, by interviewing migrants that have arrival in the country fairly fresh in mind, they can give first hand impressions of how they experience their new environment, without having dealt with it for an extensive amount of time. In addition, those who feel strongly negative to settling and integrating in Norway, may probably already have left after a couple of years in the country. And then their voice will not be heard; explaining why they decided not to stay. As the analysis chapter below will show, some of the interviewees already contemplated moving home again or to another country.

3.0.1.5 Finding interviewees.

In order to get in contact with potential interviewees, my internship supervisor in EURES⁵, Anne Ferkingstad, connected me with the Portuguese workers. My other internship location⁶ provided me with contact information to the Russian workers. These interviewees were scheduled and arranged just after a few phone calls and e-mails. It turned out to be much more difficult to find Polish workers that were willing or had the opportunity to be interviewed. After contacting a few construction companies, without much success due to the workers not fitting the criteria, I contacted a large manufacturing factory. Here, they were very positive to help finding interviewees; however, it took several phone calls and reminders from my side before they arranged for the interviews. Furthermore, one of the interviewees worked at a shipyard, and here it also was difficult to finalize the scheduling of the interview. It seemed that the workers in both companies were very busy, and it was difficult to time the interview with their working hours.

⁵ EURES: EURES (EUROpean Employment Services) is a cooperation between EU/EEA countries and Switzerland. The cooperation is designed to promote the free movement of workers within the EU/EEA (for more information, see www.nav.no)

⁶ For the purpose of keeping the interviewees identities untraceable, the name of the internship location will not be mentioned.

3.0.1.6 Interview setting.

Initially, the plan was to carry out the interviews in a neutral setting, preferably not at the interviewees' offices or other location at work. However, this only worked out with the Portuguese and one of the Russian interviewees; their interviews were conducted in the public library. For the rest of the Russian workers their employer provided a meeting room. These interviewees were given time to be interviewed during working hours, and they clearly expressed that they desired this solution. For all of the Polish workers, the interviews took place in their supervisors' offices, using three different locations. It turned out that one of the interviewees' supervisors needed to work at his desk in the same room during 20 minutes of one of the interview. The same office was also used as lunch room for the workers, resulting in one of the interviews being cut short due to several workers suddenly bursting into the room.

Interviewee 10 was interviewed during working hours, and it seemed that both him and his interpreter was given time off during the interview. The rest of the Polish workers were interviewed before their evening shift.

3.0.1.7 Ethical concerns.

The interviewees are given pseudonyms so that neither the interviewees nor the institutions they work for can be recognized. This created a challenge in regards to categorization; to what extent the migrant's country of origin should be mentioned. The decision was made that even though the county will be mentioned, the identity of the interviewees will still not be revealed since there are several labour migrants from each of the countries represented in this study.

3.0.2 My personal cross-cultural background.

I have spent nearly seven years abroad (Canada, the US and Egypt), living in international communities, often with people from several continents. Usually there were not many other Norwegians to socialize with, and I generally did not miss my home country or being with Norwegians. However, all my relatives lived in Norway. After completing MA studies in the US, I had to decide if I wanted to stay and work abroad, or move back home. On one hand I felt that my contact with home was getting more distant, so it was in due time to move back

if I wanted to keep the ties close. On the other hand, I enjoyed living in the US and felt I had settled well in the country. In the end, the determining factor for moving back was the distance to my relatives.

When I was a student I felt free to make the choices that suited me best, within the limits of my student budget. The importance of other factors became clearer when choosing a job; firstly, where I could find occupation, and secondly, where would I consider settling on a more permanent basis. These two stages involved different decision making strategies, the first being more carefree, while the second taking factors such as relationships, job possibilities and career, culture and society into a closer account.

It is exactly this interplay between the individual, his/her relations and the surrounding society in adaptation and decision making processes that Kim (2001) focuses on in the cross-cultural adaptation theory. Having had my own cross-cultural and re-settling experience, I found this theoretical angle particular relevant in regards to the topic of this study.

3.1 The Theoretical Approach

The following section is dedicated to the theoretical approach. Labour migration, its causes and impacts, may be dealt with from various theoretical angles, depending on the topic for analysis. Below will be a discussion of some theoretical approaches relevant for labour migration, concluded with the reason why I found the cross-cultural adaptation theory to be most suitable for this particular study.

3.1.1 Relevant theoretical approaches.

As a starting point, relevant theories are those which particularly deal with international migration (excluding internal migration). Migration may be defined in several ways, however Castles (2000) defines it the following way: "taking up residence in a foreign country for the minimum period of approximately 6 months to a year" (p. 270). The term *labour migrant* may have several definitions, depending, for example, on the length of stay or nature of work. In this study the term *labour migrant* means:

A person crossing a national border in order to find work. The term is used to describe people who come voluntarily and on their own incentives. This will naturally

also include people who are unable to find proper work in their countries of origin, and might feel that migrating is their only or best solution, but they are not first and foremost forced to move by a hostile regime, war or natural disaster (Aatland, 2008).

In order to find the most applicable theoretical approach to this study, several approaches were considered; from general migration theories, via theories on intercultural dimensions in organizations, and finally ending up with Kim's (2001) theory of cross-cultural adaptation.

Stephen Castles discusses in his article *Internal Migration at the Beginning of the Twenty-first Century: Global Trends and Issues* different theoretical angles on the causes of migration, and the following two, that are meant to explain causes of migration, are particularly relevant for labour migration. These approaches also take the individual decision making into account (not only focusing on structural cause and effect):

- 1 The *Neo Classical Economic Theory* focuses on an uneven geographical distribution of labour and capital, and individuals migrating from poorer to wealthier countries to maximize their income. It combines a micro perspective (individual decision making) with a macro perspective (structural determinants). (Castles, 2000), (Arango, 2000).
- 2 The theory of *New Economics of Labour Migration* developed out of the neo-classical tradition, and argues that migration cannot simply be explained by income differences between two countries. Also factors such as chances of secure employment, availability of capital for entrepreneurial activity, and the need to manage risk must be taken into account. Migration decisions are made not just by individuals – they often represent family strategies to maximize income and survival chances (Castles, 2000).

Both these theoretical approaches have elements that are core factors for this study, maybe in particular the New Economics of Labour Migration; individual's rational choice and conditions in the sending country. In the process of developing the research, these elements were particularly relevant and provided insight into the process of why deciding to migrate. However, this study's main concern is the conditions of the receiving country, namely, how

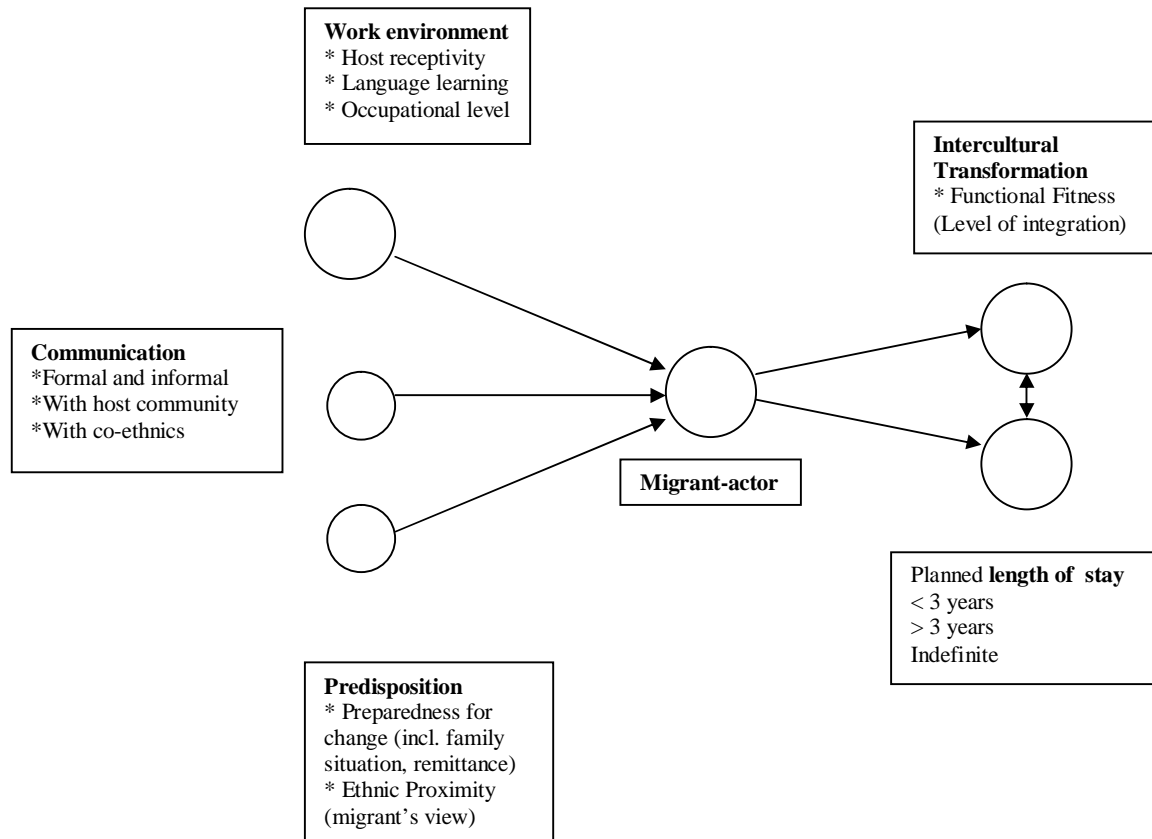
the labour migrants find and are able to deal with their new surroundings, which is not covered by these theories.

Theories of transnational migration are theoretical approaches explaining the nature of networks, linking multi-stranded social relations between the societies of origin and settlement. It focuses on feeling of belonging to more than one nation, and that having strong connections to the home countries does not necessarily hinder newcomers to adapt into their country of immigration (Faist, 2000). This transnational experience provides valuable insight into the daily lives of labour migrants, constantly dealing with strong ties in more than one country. In this respect, it has been particularly valuable to this study, however, the theory explains the functions of the ties in daily life more than the settling process itself.

3.1.2 Kim's theory of Cross-cultural Adaptation.

Young Yun Kim's theory of *Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation* (2001) will serve as the main theoretical framework for this research. This theory's aim is to provide a systematic insight into what happens when someone crosses cultural boundaries, where adaptation is to be understood in terms of a dynamic interplay between the person and the environment. The process of adapting is viewed as a natural and universal phenomenon; adaptation is a basic human tendency manifested in the "struggle of individuals to regain control over their life chances in the face of environmental challenges" (Kim, 2001, p.378). For the purpose of this study, the foundational premises in Kim's theory were particularly interesting and relevant. In order to develop a research model for this study, Kim's model of *Factors Influencing Cross-Cultural Adaptation* (Kim, 2005, p.393) serve as a basis. Kim's model has a much wider scope than this particular study, and the model (below) has been modified and developed further to accommodate for this study's focus. This model provides an overview of the elements in this research, and how they are proposed to influence each other.

3.1.2.1 Model: Migrants' decision-making: factors influencing integration and planned length of stay.



The dynamics in this model has a forward movement; the work environment, communication and predispositions influencing the migrant-actor. Following this, the migrant-actor will take these issues into account, combined with his/her individual preferences and personality traits, and make decisions on whether staying or leaving the country, whether integration into the local society or not. The model also suggests that decisions in regards to staying or leaving will influence decisions on integration, and vice versa.

The strength of this model is that it is focused on these specific elements, and will serve both as a tool guiding the research, and the following analysis. However, its role will be as a "point of departure", being open for including other perspectives during the analysis. The model has been a foundation for creating the interview guideline and the following categorization and thematic structuring of the interviews. It has also partly been guiding the headings in the

chapter of research analysis. In the final chapter, the model will be refined according to the research findings, to represent the development during this study and the final results.

4.0 Introducing the 10 Labour Migrants

The following is a short presentation of all the labour migrants interviewed in this study. Their individual “voices” may be lost during the analysis chapter, and these biographical portraits provide a brief, coherent overview over why they left home, how they find living and working in Norway, family situation and educational background.

4.1 We got together a lot of people from the company, from the outside, they're all friends (. . .) so we had this really nice party, and we relate very well. I think this is very good and I am feeling very welcomed and integrated with the people I work with, and the human contact I have here is so good that I am not missing, I am not feeling alone.

Rikardo Barros

Rikardo talked about a party he had participated in the day before, and he even expressed some surprise when thinking about how well his new life in Norway appeared to work out. He was 23 years old, and his first job after completing a five year engineering degree in Portugal was with a Norwegian company located in the Stavanger region. To move abroad was a big step, even though he desired this throughout his entire time as a student. By the time of the interview he had been in Stavanger for approximately 3 months, and was, as he himself described it, still being overwhelmed by the excitement of living in a new country, having a new job, living alone for the first time in his life.

We arranged to meet at the public library in Stavanger. I suggested this because I considered it a neutral ground and easy to find. During the conversation I found, too, that Rikardo already was using the library quite frequently. We had a bit of an awkward start of the interview; as we had arranged to meet outside of the library, I waited outside of the building itself and he waited on the second floor outside the main entrance to the library's fiction department. He seemed a bit annoyed about this, but it seemed to me that this feeling passed as we started the interview.

The interview itself took place in a peaceful corner in the library, and was conducted in English. For Rikardo, English was his second language; he learned the language in school.

Although often in loss for the right words or pronunciation, Rikardo did not seem to be particularly affected by this, he offered long and detailed answers. At that time he was learning a third language, Norwegian, at his company, after work hours.

Rikardo was well prepared for my questions. In particular he had reflected on why he decided to leave Portugal, why he chose Norway, what he was satisfied with/dissatisfied with in Norway and with his job, and his future plans.

I didn't have the time to start the process of going to Australia or Canada or (. . .) everything happened within perfect timing. They came to me right after I graduated, so I didn't think twice, I didn't have any personal constraints, of course my parents supported the idea, because it is a, I told you that, a qualified migration (. . .) so it is under control. This is a great country, this isn't, I am not going to Vietnam.

It was during his last spring semester that EURES held a presentation about working in Norway at Rikardo's university. The initial contact took place then, and in the fall, EURES held a job fair where he got introduced to several companies.

Although he wanted to go abroad, Norway had never been considered as an option for Rikardo, he said that he had dreamt about Australia, Canada, the US or Sweden. The reason was, as he explained it, purely lack of information; he knew quite a lot about Sweden and Swedish companies, but hardly anything about Norway. The presentation about Norway and the companies had impressed him, it was due time to look for a job, he had also recently broke up with his girlfriend, and he felt ready to take the big leap of moving abroad. After counting the pros and cons, he decided that nothing worse could happen than going back to Portugal if it did not work. Since he had no obligations to girlfriend or family, he felt free to make the choices that suited him best, something which he considered to be a significant advantage.

The main reason for moving abroad was very clear to him; lack of job possibilities, low wages, and no possibilities for fulfilling his ambitions. He wanted to be a part of developing new technology, and Portugal could not offer him this kind of career. Altogether, he considered Portugal not to reward those with higher education. His new job seemed to offer

him all these possibilities. In particular the fact that he worked with development, was what he said that he found very rewarding.

Concerning the culture and environment at work, too, he was positively surprised by what he found in his new company. One aspect was the international environment; on the one hand he enjoyed working with people with different national backgrounds, on the other hand, many of his co-workers were in the same position as him, namely as foreigners. This meant that he had a forum for sharing experiences and useful information. Another aspect was the hierarchical structure of the company; as he explained it this way:

I do not have working experience, but I can tell you it's radically different, working here or working in Portugal. (. . .) Here the hierarchy, in the company, it exist, but it's flat, I mean, we can relate if you were the, the, eh, the division general manager I could talk with you anyway if I needed help, if you were the only one person I could ask (. . .) it's no problems. And that, in Portugal, in those Mediterranean countries the hierarchy is in such a way that you just can't go and talk directly with the manager, you must follow the hierarchy and ask to and talk in set meetings, and it is impossible for your manager to show up in the pub and have a beer with you. It is impossible. It is impossible.

All together, Rikardo expressed that he was satisfied with both work and the society in general. Did he not find any negative aspects? Well, actually one: the weather and the short dark days during winter. Being used to sunny days in Portugal, Stavanger's climate of rapidly shifting conditions, and rain continuing for several days, was what he had experienced as the major challenge to well-being.

Concerning future plans, Interviewee 1 was not willing to give any definite answers. What would really count when making choices was an interesting job and possibilities for a rewarding career. Moving to another country or changing company would not hold him back. The only thing that could make him reluctant to move would be if he married and decided to raise a family in Norway.

4.2 I am aiming to stay here for the long term, or at least medium term, to make these decisions (. . .) it is really, it is depending on my girlfriend. If she finds a job here or not. I think I'll just wait for three more months which is the probation period that I have in my contract. And then I'll just talk to my company and say she didn't find a job, so I have decided, because I want to have a life, she is a part of it, and my dog as well.

Marques De Albreuin

After about four months working in Norway, Marques was convinced that he could spend his future life here. He was particularly satisfied with the conditions at work and with his co-workers, his working hours were the best part of the day. Coming home to an empty apartment, furnished by other people, was sad and lonely. The solution that would grant him his desired future, and meaningful afternoons and week-ends, was depending on his girlfriend's success with finding a job in Norway.

I also met Marques at the library. He was 30 years old, and before moving to Norway, he lived together with his girlfriend in Portugal. As him, she also held a 5 years engineering degree. Marques was also well prepared for my questions, he had made a long list with pros and cons concerning living and working in Norway. He seemed reflected about his situation, and was open about how he felt that it was difficult to create a social life outside of work when his girlfriend was not present. Actually, he said he was glad that he had this opportunity to share his experiences and feelings. Speaking in English seemed to be of little trouble to him, in Portugal he had attended additional private classes in English. He also had lived abroad and communicated in English on a daily basis before.

Some of what Marques expressed that he valued the most about his job, beside it being interesting and challenging, was the fact that he had a long term contract. Being 30 years old, he had already held a few positions in and outside Portugal, however, he had either not been given a contract, or they had been temporary. For him, this created uncertainty concerning the future, and he was reluctant to take financial risks:

So I stayed there and worked for them approximately one year as a free-lancer, so without any contract, or I could work today, but tomorrow possibly yes or no. So without any benefits, so. After that year they offered me a contract of one year, so I started that contract, but after seven months the company decided to close in Portugal.

Wanting to have a family, but not feeling the necessary financial security in Portugal, was one of the main reasons for leaving his home country. In addition, he complained that the salary he could expect to receive was really low, taking into account his engineering degree:

In my opinion for people that have degrees it's even harder for people to have a job (. . .) because they are not willing to pay you more because you have studies, they are not willing to invest in you because you want to continue growing with them. And so, they know it, they are not willing to do it, they know that if you have aspirations in life, you're only going to stay there for two months, so they're not going to hire you, they're going to hire some with less expectations, with less studies, because it's also easier to control. (. . .) The first job that I got when I was finished studying, they paid me less than the part time job I had during my studies. So when you see a company with really good job opportunities, with long term contracts, people are expecting you to stay and they give you training, and they invest in you, you really go to work with nice people, then I do not see any reason to go back to Portugal.

As with Rikardo, Marques also was hired through a job fair in his home country, arranged by EURES. At the time of the fair, he had been without work for one and a half month, and was depressed because of his situation. So suddenly one day he received an SMS inviting him to the fair, he got introduced to several companies located in Norway, and this resulted in the job he held at the time of the interview. Both he and his girlfriend were ready to move abroad at the time of the fair, which unfortunately, only resulted in a job for him.

Although Marques had many positive points concerning living in Norway, he also saw drawbacks and difficult challenges. One of his main frustrations was learning Norwegian:

The language is difficult. To learn, ok, it's also my fault because I should study more, but when you go home tired, it is a big effort, being tired after speaking English. (. . .)

Then in the end of the day you have to go and learn another language, Norwegian, and it's really tiring.

The bus system had also been a challenge; he had to take two busses to work, which would take a lot of time. In addition, the busses were not running on time, and the drivers were often unfriendly. Among the other things he had on his cons list was the Norwegian alcohol policy, he asked: why not sell wine inexpensive in the stores? And why are prices and taxes are so high in Norway compared to Portugal? However, these negative experiences were not what he described as major obstacles to overcome. The key to a future life in Norway was his girlfriend coming to the country. Then he wanted to buy a house and a car, and could avoid busses and the empty, lonely and impersonal apartment. Although he enjoyed socializing with co-workers, it could not replace the company of his girlfriend. So even though his present job more than fulfilled all his expectations concerning a job, it would not hold him in Norway without his girlfriend.

4.3 Of course I want to go back, but I want to have the experience of living somewhere else. I don't know, to see how it is to live in another culture, and to experience the things that I can't experience at home because you're in a more protected environment. Here you really have to, if you go abroad alone, you really have to grow up quite a lot, and I really wanted to experience that.

Francisca Pinto

Francisca was very clear about why she moved to Norway, and about her future plans; she would stay no longer than two years. She was 24 years old, and by the time she would turn 30 she was confident that she would be back in Portugal. After living in Norway, she wanted to move to Italy or possibly Japan. She expressed confidence in having the possibility of moving when and where she wanted, all due to her being attractive on an international labour market, or by being relocated to one of her employer's branch offices.

The main reason why she was so determined to move back was because of close relatives and friends back home. She was single, however, using this "freedom" to live wherever you wanted, as pointed out by Rikardo, did not apply to her:

I am so afraid of loose my friends, because that would be, that's, that means you lose the friends that are actually your friends. Because people that like you are always there. But I think it is very easy to lose contact, it gets really easy. And that 's something that I am very afraid of, because I really, really love them (. . .) friends that I have at home are friends that I used to see every week-end and that is a huge change.

Already in the middle of her studies Francisca started to think about moving abroad for a while, and when her present employer participated at a job fair at her university, she decided to try out the possibilities for going abroad. By this time she had been offered a job as an engineer in Portugal, and although her friends and family urged her to accept the offer, she declined. The job was not what she wanted to do, and she thought her years abroad would give her valuable experience which eventually would benefit her when looking for a job in Portugal.

By the time of the interview, Francisca had stayed in Norway about four months. Work, social life and living conditions had all worked out for her, she seemed satisfied and happy. The only thing that really bothered her was the weather and short days during winter months:

I think I am quite happy. The only things I am not happy with are not about work. It's about the weather. The weather has definitely been a problem. But I just feel that, if I go home now, these three months that I've been here won't mean nothing, because I still have a lot to learn. And I definitely have to stay here more to take an advantage of what I am doing here. But sometimes I feel like going home again. I mean, I am not unhappy here, I'm starting to have friends, I am decorating my own home, and I am doing all these activities, I am also with the organization CSIV here in Norway, I am working with them, so, I am going to have some really full week-ends from now on. So, I can't complain much. But sometimes it's just, oh, it is the food and it is the weather.

The difference in the amount of day light hours was also difficult to handle, in particular when combined with the effort of learning a new language:

Yes, I am taking a Norwegian class. I learned German (. . .) there are a few things that I find similar between the German and Norwegian, at least with the vocabulary. In the beginning I was just very tired, in January when I left, the days were really small, everything was new, a new language and everything, speaking in English also makes you tired, I was sleeping (. . .) I was going to bed at eight.

Francisca expressed that staying in Norway was some kind of a cultural and professional adventure for her, and a possibility for growth. She was used to living with people from different nationalities, and cultural differences in the sense of relating did not seem to affect her much.

4.4 The most important thing, I think, is to be interested in what you are doing. As soon as it is interesting, I will do it. But when I understand that it is not interesting for me more, I will try to think about other opportunities.

Vyacheslav Volkov

I also met with Vyacheslav in Stavanger's central library after working hours. At first he did not seem engaged in our conversation, and offered brief, and what seemed to be, superficial answers. He also looked tired, and I asked myself if this was going to work out, if we would get through the main subjects. After a little while, however, he appeared to be more engaged, and offered more thorough and complex answers.

After having moved to Norway and worked for the same company in for 1,5 years, he seemed to have reflected considerably on what he experienced as cultural differences in work and environment between Norway and his home country, Russia. He was 24 years old, single, and newly graduated from a 5 years engineering degree in Russia. Alongside work, he was doing a Ph.D. which he expected to complete even before the estimated 3 years. For him, challenging and interesting work was the main motivational force, he was willing to put considerable amount of effort and hours into projects he was occupied with. He had observed that co-workers might leave work at two and three o'clock in the afternoon, or would not be willing to sacrifice time with their family for the benefit of their job, something

which was very difficult for him to understand and relate to. This was not the way he was used to from home and he was not willing to adapt to this attitude. This was also one of the reasons why he considered leaving Norway soon.

I mean, first example, if I have a milestone or deadline or whatever, I, from one hand, but from the other hand I have my family and children and whatever again. In Norway you will choose your family. But if for example you are in Russia, we will choose work, and, some people they spend 12 hours a day on their works, 7 days a week, so, there are no limits, if you have to do something you should do it.

I think Norway is the best place to live for when you have family. But when you are young, we are all young now, and we would like to have fun, we don't always want to follow the rules, so that's why, if I have a choice, for example, Brazil or Norway, I would definitely choose Brazil. But in 15 years time, I would choose Norway. So it depends.

So why did Vyacheslav leave Russia in the first place, when he found that Russian work ethics and culture suited him better than the Norwegian? First of all, he wanted to move away from his home environment and become independent from his parents. He felt ready for new challenges, and when the opportunity to move to Norway came up, he wanted to make use of it. Secondly, the labour market for newly graduated engineers was not so attractive, low salaries and difficult to find proper jobs. Vyacheslav was positive to having the experience of living in other countries as well, before eventually deciding if he wanted to return home or not. This would all depend on the attractiveness of future job offers.

At the company where Vyacheslav worked, English was the official language. In addition, he started to learn Norwegian when he first arrived. Language classes were offered for free and during work hours. Since he was both working full time and doing his Ph.D., it was hard for him to find time learning a new language, so he only did one class. He had picked up quite a few words, but said that he was very hesitant to speak. However, he was still aiming to learn the language, because it might give him some keys to understanding the Norwegian culture better:

Stavanger is still cosmopolitan, but still not, for example, when I have my spare time, or if we take me and a Norwegian boy, I think he would prefer to be alone, or to go hiking or sailing or whatever, I would prefer to go and have something social. I like when I have a lot of people around me, so, I don't know, I am not fond of hiking, I am not fond of sailing, I am not fond of cycling, for example, so. But maybe this is because of, as I told, I should learn Norwegian and I should speak Norwegian. Because this is very important, when you come to a new country you should try to speak the language. When you can speak it you can understand more, because some things I don't understand.

Although he did not speak much Norwegian, this had not prevented him from having an active social life, both with Norwegians, Russians, and other nationalities. The benefit of living in Stavanger was exactly this, that there are so many nationalities and people who speak English. On the other hand, integration would be difficult:

It is difficult to integrate into the Norwegian society while you're living in Stavanger. I would say it is impossible. Because Stavanger is, I would say, oil capital, have different nationalities, so it is very difficult to find Norwegians here. But if for example I live up to the North, yeah, it would be easier to integrate into Norwegian society there. But it is very hard in Stavanger.

However, Vyacheslav did not express a need or desire to be more integrated into the Norwegian society. He seemed satisfied with his social life, and if he had practical problems or questions, the Human Resource Department at his company was ready to assist. So practically and socially, he was satisfied, however, Stavanger was, as he put it; "quite dull", and he might soon be ready to move to another country and a bigger city.

- 4.5 No, I am very quiet, Norway suits my character, really. In Norway, nobody is crossing your own private area, just to, it very suits to my character. I am not so addicted to, you know, if somebody is keeping his own secret, I am not addicted to find out what his secret is all about. It is his really private business. So, here I *really* [emphasis added] feel comfortable. You have your private space. Here in Scandinavia you are famous for your quiet life, really it can be boring. It can be boring if you're not busy.
- Bogdan Ivanov

I meet Bogdan during working hours in a meeting room at his company. He seemed pleased to share from his experience, and provided reflected and detailed answers. Sometimes his answers would bring him on tangents quite far from the main subjects, and I had to guide the interview back to the basic topics. I also felt that I could not keep the interview too long, since it was held during his working hours. However, this was the place and time of his choice, and he did not seem affected about the time.

Bogdan started the interview with speaking to me in Norwegian, telling me about the Norwegian class he attended. He said that learning the Norwegian language had been a good opportunity for self development, even though it was difficult. He liked challenging himself, pushing himself to learning new things, and learning Norwegian served this purpose.

Before coming to Norway and starting to work for his present employer 1,5 years ago, Bogdan had lived six months in the US. He had also held a few jobs in his home country, Russia, after completing his 5 years engineering degree. He was 29 years old, and single, and seemed to share Rikardo's view on singleness; it gave him peace of mind and opportunity to make his own choices. Two important reasons for leaving his home country were that job opportunities and salaries for newly educated engineers were quite poor in Russia, and he wanted to see more of Europe and the US. He actually said that he felt he shared the European values. Going to the US straight after his studies had made a great impact on him, and he was convinced at that time that he wanted to go abroad again. Coming to Norway, Bogdan found himself enjoying living and working here:

And comparing to Norwegian lifestyle, they are more keeping on enjoying life. They go to mountains, to see the nature, because in Russia you always have to think about that someone having more money than you, and you need to hurry up, and these things as nature, no, no, no, nature, no let's just talk about business and so on, here is more relaxable.

The thing that I realized is that here is not such a big gap between ordinary employees and high management. I guess in Russia it is a very big gap. It is like, you

know, just two different worlds. (. . .) That is more suitable, really. I find that the society, its tolerance when you're making a mistake is more tolerant. If you're in Russia, in your first year or first days of stay there and you behave (. . .) little bit outstanding, everybody is blaming at you that you're a loser. But here, if you're trying, of making the first steps or are not so clear or not so strong in something and making some mistakes, it's not a fact that you're just loser for your whole life.

Because of his positive experiences, Bogdan saw himself following the company's career plan, and obtaining experience from working in different departments within his company. In addition, he expressed that it would also be possible for him to temporary work for the company in other cities abroad, even on other continents. But eventually, he thought he would like to return to Norway.

Relationally, both work related and socially, Bogdan had spent quite some time to figure out how things work in his new setting:

When I came in January and in a few months I tried to keep my behaviour in a polite way, so I really, sometimes I was afraid to ask additional questions, what's going on, may be not to show myself. Now I regret about this. Here in this company you have to show yourself as a pro-active person, that's very welcome. And I sometimes was confused about, how, in a right way, try to behave with people. What kind of friendship can you keep with your colleagues, can you trust them, or, can I tell them everything, or what.

Combined with considering these issues, he also wondered what people would think when he told them that he is from Russia. What kind of stereotypes did they have about Russians? However, he concluded that: I would like to believe that it is not a fact that I am just from another country, it is really a fact what a person you are. Good or bad. That's the only question to keep in mind when I am telling I am from Russia. I don't know, positive or negative reaction in their mind, I really don't know.

4.6 You're [Norwegians are] very calm, you can rule your emotions; you're not in a hurry. I do not know what the not in a hurry is about, but in the beginning I was just like

“whhoo” [making a wind sound] I don’t know, hot tempered. It was too much, you know we’re quite nervous; it is our lifestyle, always in a hurry (. . .) sometimes it is too relaxed here (. . .) I think it is just because you have a better life conditions.

Nadja Solovyov

Being 25 years, newly graduated, and having lived her life in hectic St. Petersburg, Nadja was very clear about how she found working and living in Stavanger. Both in regards to relationships, work culture and society as a whole, she found profound differences. However, by the time of the interview she had lived here for 1,5 years, she found herself adapting to this new and different lifestyle. She said that she was enjoying life, had friends, did sports, and could see a future for herself in the company where she worked. She had also, together with her Russian husband, bought an apartment. She appeared to be content and happy, even though she still thought it was too relaxed at work.

I also met Nadja during her working hours at the company’s facilities where she worked. She appeared to be somehow reluctant to get into the interview at first. However, after a few quick and short answers, she started to give more details about her life in Russia, her family, her life now, and hopes for the future. As the interview proceeded, I could see how her description of having an attitude of living a hectic life quite suited her. It seemed to me that she restrained herself to talk in a formal and emotionally distant style, however, sometimes it appeared that she changed her manner to wholeheartedly involve herself, laughing and being animated. She described herself as “a not very serious girl”, fun loving, but, on the other hand, she appeared to be very serious about her job, her family, and her future.

Nadja held a five years engineering degree, and had originally planned a career as a scientist in Russia. When a friend told her about the opportunity to work in Norway, she discussed it with her mother and decided to give it a try. Working as a scientist would involve much work and little salary, and her engineering degree was more of a technical degree than a theoretical. This was how she explained her willingness to change plans. She also had obligations to her family; she supported her mother and her sick and handicapped grandparents financially. “If you have to earn money and help to your parents, you can’t just

go there and dig in books, doing something, but, I think I had to, I had to. It's your own choice."

Her mother had urged her during her schooling to learn English, since her mother herself never had the opportunity to do it. Nadja explained how many of her peers did not speak English; books used at the university were all in Russian, English speaking movies were dubbed and there was not much opportunity to practice. Nadja also learned Norwegian, however, she complained that she did not get to practice enough since the company language was English.

In regards to future plans, Nadja expressed that she was quite determined to not go back to Russia, even though she did not know if she wanted to stay in Norway or move on. She wanted to stay with her company, though, moving abroad would mean moving to branch offices in other countries:

I don't think that I am able to live in Russia after living here. If I am not going to stay, I am going to move to another country. Because it's tough. It's really tough. We're completely different. I think so. I can't imagine myself in Russia by now. Probably I will have a great nostalgia about Russia very much, and I will come back, but now, I don't know. I went home one month ago, *and I spent there two weeks*, [intensely whispering] and it is so hard, it is so tough. It is ugly, it is ugly in the underground, and 40 minutes that end, 40 minutes this end, and you do all this travelling all the time and it's awful. And, I am very calm, but I can see now that people are quite rude. They are angry because of all this.

Considering integrating into the Norwegian society, and getting closer to Norwegians, would, according to her, not be an easy task. She socialized with some Norwegians, as well as Russians and people from other countries, but the main challenge, as she expressed it, was that Norwegians were "cold"; she said they were calm and ruled their emotions, while Russians were "hot"; clearly expressing their emotions. Moreover, in practical terms, she only saw two main drawbacks with living in Norway. First, because of the weather, and secondly, the cultural life. At this point there was no use for her going to the theatre; she could not understand the language. And she was used to a wider variety of concerts etc.

than what was offered in Stavanger. However, as she concluded this subject: "this is why we have to enjoy mountains and nature".

Nadja clearly stated that she was happy she took the opportunity of moving to Stavanger. She was enjoying what she was doing, her family benefitted from her choices and she was actively engaging herself in what the region could offer in regards to sports and outdoor life. Buying an apartment also had been a big step; financially, but not the least in being challenged to trust the real estate agent. All the legal documents were in Norwegian, and without any translation, she and her husband just had to sign and hope that no one would take advantage of them not understanding the text. She now appeared to be proud and satisfied that they went through this process, she expressed that she felt settled, and had even gotten to know some of their new neighbours.

4.7 If, only if I can, if my health is good, I'll stay here for a long time. I will go back home but only for Christmas visits to my family, my family, my wife will come back here. I don't want to stay there because it is a, now it is very difficult situation. It is no work, and if they have work, they don't pay good money. It is a little money, and if you, you know my wife's take care of my child. She don't work, she stay home with the parents of my wife, she take care about my child. And I work for alone and that's enough when I stay here. But in Poland when I work alone it is not enough. That's a good reason because we live with the parents of my wife.

Crystek Wisniewski

Crystek was determined to bring his wife and his two year old son to Norway. He had stayed in Norway for six months, working full time, doing manual labour in a factory. Even though work was hard, and he had back problems, he was very satisfied with his work conditions, co-workers, how the Norwegian society functioned and, not the least, the opportunity to earn better money here than in Poland.

He was 28 years old and has basic education from his home country, Poland. At home he worked for several years at a warehouse, mainly in the office, doing paper work. However,

the salary alone was too low to support a household. And when his wife had a baby, they had to move to her parents in order to make ends meet.

I met him at his work, a couple of hours before his afternoon shift started. His manager generously offered me to use his office for the interview. Unfortunately the interview was cut a little short. It turned out that the manager's office also served as lunchroom for the department. In the midst of the interview, suddenly 6-7 workers entered, ready to have their lunch break.

Crystek appeared to be very optimistic concerning the future, and spoke enthusiastically during the interview. His English was quite broken, but that did not seem to hinder him in making sure that he got his thoughts and opinions across. When in lack of words, he became animated and used his hands to explain. He had learned English in school, and had now used it for six months at his work, together with a little Norwegian. The company's official language was Norwegian, and not all his co-workers understood English. He was eager to learn Norwegian, but the timing of the classes and his work schedule did not match well:

I was in the school in Bryne, we talked with the director about this course, but we work two shifts, morning and evening shifts, that's the problem because the lesson is one week on Wednesday in the evening. So, four lessons in a months, but two lessons for us. I can't be there. Because I work night at the second shift.

Another reason for him to leave Poland and settled in Norway is what he explained as the Polish mentality. He expressed firm opinions about this, and wanted to have as little as possible to do with most co-nationals even here in Norway:

Yes, I meet many here, people from Poland, but we have contact you know "hello, hello" but not more, because it is better for me if I have friends from the other countries. From Norway or French or something like this, or. This is, eh, it is, we have, we haven't good opinion of Poland, like Polish people, they haven't you know, they like drink, smoke and everything. (. . .) But not, I haven't many people here, no. It's, eh, for example, they are not so friendly. For, you know, if I have, I don't want you to have. No. Only for me. Everything, if I have these glasses [pointing to his glasses], you

can't have. I will make everything that you don't have these glasses. So, that's the difference. It is the Polish people. Envy.

Moreover, he was very self-conscious about being Polish. This seemed to be partly due to his own feelings about some of his co-nationals, but also what he had been told when first arrived in Norway. For example, he was told that he would never succeed in finding a place to live when he told a potential landlord that he was from Poland. He was told that he would need a Norwegian that could give him good references and who would find him an apartment. According to him, Norwegians in general have a negative opinion about Polish people, and, according to what he expressed, he did not think that this was unreasonable. Crystek found the relational atmosphere at his work to be genuinely friendly, and explained it by juxtaposing what he had experienced in Poland to what he had experienced in Norway:

Here it is very good, for example in Poland when you start work, everyone, all the workers "you are new", "you come and bring me this". Here is very kind atmosphere, everyone want to help, "you don't know, ask me", "ask me if you don't know anything", "ask, don't be afraid, just ask, I'll show you everything" they help everyone. There is a good atmosphere here. They want to help because you are the new, you can't, you don't know everything about this machine, ja.

Crystek clearly expressed how he was looking forward to his wife and child coming to Norway, and that he was very happy to give them the pleasant surprise of showing them around and introducing them to living in Norway. His new work situation appeared to have solved the major worries and challenges in his life; financial, social, and practical. He was ready to begin a life with his family in new surroundings.

4.8 May be, I'll tell you something about me, because this is really important. Because I don't, I am 43 years (. . .) and I must change my life. Because I am 43 years, and in Poland that is not a good way because I am too old. And I was working in a bank (. . .) and here the bank said to me, "ok, you can't work here because you're too old". I have good experience working in a bank, and many, many courses, but they said to me "hey, you're too old". I must change because I have family, you know. And I came here and start working here. This is my first job in a factory.

Darek Wojcik

Darek was talking very low, his supervisor was sitting at a desk 1,5 meters away. He sounded like he was stressed, speaking intensely and at the same time in a low voice. The facts that he was an educated man and had had his career within banking appeared to be very important for him to get across. Being a manual labourer was a completely new situation for him. It was very difficult to hear what he was saying, partly because he was speaking so low, but also because of the noise from the factory just on the other side of the wall (we could actually look through a window overlooking the workers and the machines), and because of his English pronunciation. Darek worked at the same factory as Crystek, and although his supervisor generously had let us use his office, he decided to stay at his desk for a part of the interview. The office was also used during lunch break and meetings, and there were no other rooms to use. Fortunately, his boss left the desk after approximately 15 minutes.

Back in Poland, his wife and 14 year old daughter were getting ready to join him in Norway in August [2008]. Darek had by the time of the interview been in Norway for 6 months, and was convinced that living here would be the best future for him and his family, even though he could not practice his profession:

I haven't work in Poland, you know, and I must, everything change, I many, many times work in bank, everything, everything because I must change. Because I must try, I must try to make lucky for my life. And, hey, I must go from Poland and stay here.

Even though he had a new job, he had to struggle with his wife who meant it was below his professional standards to do manual labour:

Yes, everything, we many, many hours talked about the places where I live, and where I am working, my wife: "Jesus Christ, Darek, what are you doing? You were working all the time in a bank". But when I many, many hours talked about this, how I working here and what I might, my wife "ok, if you like it, and you are happy, ok".

A friend introduced Darek to working in Norway. This friend had similar age and life situation as Darek, and this had been important for him in order to evaluate pros and cons. The decision to move was actually made quite fast, and he found contacts on the internet that helped him when he arrived in Norway. A Norwegian man helped him to find an apartment, because of the same reasons as Crystek, Darek explained:

Because this man who fixed it here, said me “you are from Poland, Darek, if you want help you say me, because if you go directly, you want to make a flat and everything, you have problem. You must come here because I am from Norway”. Polish people made bad opinion.

Although Darek’s English was not perfect, it was quite impressive that he had learned the language during six months prior to coming to Norway. He had not needed to speak English before, even though this was not his first time abroad. He had worked for a few years in a bank in Ukraine. He had also been attending Norwegian language classes for half a year and spoke partly Norwegian and partly English at work.

Concerning working conditions and relationships at work, Darek appeared to be satisfied. Even though work was hard, it solved the problems he had at home in Poland. And he explained that he got well along with his co-workers. During his leisure time he socialized mainly with a Polish and French friend, and was very positive to socializing in Norway:

Yes, everything is fine. Every people here is smiling and talking with me and ask me “how are you today” everything is ok. Relationship here is different like Poland. (. . .) Because in Poland people are closed. They are not talking about “how are you” or talking “what are you doing”. Every people life in Poland alone. It is different.

4.9 “No, I do not ask for help. I want to do everything by myself. Because this is a very, very good experience that will help me in the future. I can practice Norwegian and that is very good for me” [translated from Norwegian].

Wincent Kowalski

Even though Wincent had stayed in Norway only one year and nine months, he wanted to have the interview conducted in Norwegian, and managed the language impressingly well.

He explained that he had concentrated so hard on learning Norwegian that his mastering of English had suffered. When I met him he carried a thick, well used book under his arm; his Polish-Norwegian dictionary. We arranged to meet in the factory where Wincent worked and his manager lent us his office for the interview. The office was on another floor than the factory, and much more peaceful than the office where I interviewed Crystek and Darek. When Wincent went to language classes after moving to Norway, he found that the way they taught the class did not suit him, so he decided to learn the language on his own, using the dictionary. Unfortunately, making an English translation of citations from the interview cannot fully show to what extent he was mastering the language, however, he had an impressive vocabulary, and the mistakes were mainly grammatical. It was not only the language learning he did by himself, but he also was very determined to try to handle and find out how things worked in Norway without asking for help. Internet was his main source of information, reading in Norwegian and using the dictionary when translating. He explained his eagerness to take charge of his own learning in this way:

Yes, I have had motivation. I just finished my studies in Poland, so it has been a short time, you know, I am used to studying since it has been a very short time. And, you know, I want to do something. I can't just work, go home, watch TV, that is not for me, so that's why I learned Norwegian, among other things [translated from Norwegian].

Wincent was 26 years old, single, his parents were dead, and he had two sisters in Poland. Four months after finishing his university degree in Physical Education he moved to Norway. After working for a Polish employment company for a few months, he was employed by his present employer, and was working in the same company as Crystek and Darek. He did manual labour, and this was his first proper job after finishing his studies. However, he had had his university diploma evaluated at Nokut⁷, and at the time of the interview, he could apply for teaching positions in Norway. Nevertheless, he appeared to be satisfied with his present job; he explained that he would earn more money doing a manual job which

⁷ NOKUT: the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education – is a professionally independent government agency that contributes towards quality assurance and enhancement in higher education and tertiary vocational education. NOKUT's tasks include foreign higher education qualifications as well as Norwegian higher education (<http://www.nokut.no/en/About-NOKUT>)

required no skills than what he would earn as a teacher, something which he said was a great mystery to him.

Wincent went for vacation to Norway just after finishing his studies, and that was when he decided that he wanted to move to Norway. He gave three reasons why:

- Beautiful nature
- He thought Norway to be the best country in Europe
- He found Norwegians to be calm and pleasant

He was very health conscious, and loved to spend time outdoor doing sports, biking or hiking, and had found that for him, Norway was perfect in regards to fulfilling his interests. In case he should decide to move to another country, the main reasons would be the unstable weather, and/or if he would find a girlfriend, get married and decide to live in another country.

At this point, he expressed that he did not see a future for himself in Poland. He found people there to be too concerned about money; making ends meet, which meant that the focus would be on work and not on how to spend the leisure time. He also found that in Poland people had different opinions about ageing than in Norway:

Adults, for example, when they are 40-50 years old, they go to a pubs, disco, concerts and it is normal. But in Poland this is considered inappropriate "oh, why, he is too old, he should spend his time at home, what does he want here". This is a little hard, and one of the differences. (. . .) And elderly people in Poland will spend their time at home and go the pharmacy, only, but in Norway, you know, you have many organisations, and here, elderly people lead an active lifestyle, which is normal, they are very involved. In Poland the attitude is more of "no, no you're too old". I don't think that is very pleasant [translated from Norwegian].

Socially, Wincent had had positive experiences both at work and from his leisure time. He explained that the attitude of his managers and co-workers was friendly and pleasant, and he said that this had helped him since he had no prior experience from this type of industry. His spare time he spent with friends from different nationalities, he had found friends with

similar interests in sports as himself. They would often go for trips or spend the day at the beach.

Wincent stressed that above all, when someone moves to another country, they need to speak the language. He expressed that presently this was his main task, learning the language to the extent that he easily could manage his life in Norway. He still spent hours in front of the internet translating Norwegian web pages, in search for new important information that needed to be translated.

4.10 "Learn the language or earn the money".

Andrzej Jankowski

Andrzej worked in a ship yard, was from Poland and spoke neither Norwegian nor English. He was 58 years old and had stayed in Norway for 3 years. His Polish foreman had come along in order to translate for him.

We meet during their working hours, and their manager let us use his office for the interview. They meet me in overalls and carrying helmets; clearly they were in the midst of some task at work. Andrzej seemed to be a man of few words, and it was challenging to speak *with him* rather than have the more vocal translator take over the conversation and answer *for him*.

Andrzej lived close by the shipyard, in barracks together with other co-workers and foreigners. He had a wife and a son, his wife lived in Poland and his son in another city in Norway. His son was married and had two children attending Norwegian school. His working arrangements were structured around 12 hours work per days for four weeks, followed by two weeks off. This was when he went home to Poland to spend the time with his wife. His employer would pay the travel costs for him. He had no plans of bringing his wife to Norway, or settling here permanently. The only reason why he was in Norway was because of work, he had no intentions of interacting more with Norwegians or integrating into the Norwegian society. When he retired, if he still worked in Norway, he wanted to live in Poland permanently.

Even though they worked long hours, they still had some free time, in particular when they finished early during the weekend. Fishing had become the main leisure activity:

Many, many of us go to the fishing, very often, you know. Evenings, or Saturday or Sunday after work. Because some of us stop working three o'clock Friday, Saturday and Sunday off, for example. Then some of us rent a boat, you know (. . .) we rent from a firm here, but [their employer] pays for it.

Spending money, going to town to take a drink and meet friends was out of the question, according to Andrzej. This was partly due to being tired after the long hours of manual work, but the main reason was that they did not want to spend the money. The interpreter explained it this way: "Everything is so expensive and the money is coming too hard for us, we have not office work".

Before coming to Norway, Interviewee 10 had worked in Italy, Germany and Poland, doing similar work as now. Comparing the different countries, he had found that the conditions for workers vary considerably, and he clearly was most satisfied with working for a Norwegian company. When he first came to Norway he worked for a Polish sub-contractor, but was not pleased with the conditions they offered. He explained that the main reasons why he preferred a Norwegian company was that they are working less hard, have a better salary, and that relationships with co-workers and managers are better. Another difference was the strict safety regulations they had to adhere to at the shipyard, which were completely new to him. When they first arrived he had had to join a course to learn the procedures. The translator adds that there had been no accidents during the three years they had worked for the company.

According to Andrzej, the arrangements he had at work and during his leisure time worked well for him, and he felt no immediate need to learn Norwegian. In addition, he was not willing to pay for courses, and it would be too hard to go for language lessons after 12 hours of work. However, his employer had informed them that they possibly would offer language classes free of charge for the workers. Andrzej did not seem to be particularly interested in the arrangement, even though he did not clearly express a negative or positive attitude to attending a language course.

5.0 Staying, Leaving, or Waiting It Out:

The Interviewees' Decision-making in their New Country

The research has so far presented the biographical portraits of all the interviewees. Their family and professional backgrounds as well as personal preferences vary considerably; from one person being in his late 50's and a grandfather to some being in their early 20's and single. Some of the interviewees did not have professional training, and others were highly skilled professionals. So how do they differ when it comes to integration and plans of settling in Norway, and are there similarities? What factors will influence in the decision-making process? These are the headlines for what this section will focus on; analyzing the interviews according to the given criteria (see below), but always keeping the focus on each individual interviewee as an *actor*. The rational individual who makes his/her personal choices is at the center of this study, and its importance is explained by Young Yun Kim:

This process "moves" with a structure of multidimensional and multifaceted forces operating simultaneously and interactively. Some of these forces are external to the individual, setting limits on the adaptive behavior of a stranger; other forces are internally located within the individual's predispositions and behaviors (2005, p. 379).

The foundation for criteria selection is from the adaptation model; *work environment*, *communication* and *predisposition*. Criteria that emerged from the interviews are qualifications and generation/age/gender/marital status. The sum of these sets of criteria will in the final chapter be evaluated towards blocking or promoting adaptation and encouraging or discouraging settling in Norway. The first part of the chapter will deal with the criteria *Qualifications* and *Generation/age/gender/marital status*⁸.

Throughout the chapter, the term *stranger* will be used. This term is adopted from Kim's theory of cross-cultural adaptation, and "incorporates in it all individuals who enter and resettle in a new cultural or sub cultural environment" (2005, p. 380).

⁸ The reason why generation, age, gender and marital status is combined is because they in this study are closely connected and interrelated. A separation of the topics would lead to several repetitions of the text under each heading.

5.0.1 Qualifications.

Although the labour migrants' *qualifications* was not a set criteria in the initial adaptation model, certain patterns emerged during the interviews. These were related to how professional education seemed to directly influence the interviewees' view on settling. Not necessarily directly negatively or positively related to long term settling, but more to a different outlook on future possibilities.

As shown through the biographical portraits, only two of the interviewees were without skilled qualifications, even though four of them worked in low or non skill jobs. This results in dividing the interviewees into three groups:

- 1 high skilled working in high skilled professions (Rikardo, Marques, Francisca, Vyacheslav, Bogdan, Nadja)
- 2 high or medium skilled working in low/non skilled professions (Darek, Wincent)
- 3 non/low skilled working in non/low skilled professions (Crystek, Andrzej)

5.0.1.1 High skilled working in high skilled professions.

In the international labour market there is a real competition for highly qualified labourers in several skill levels; this may be managerial, technical, or medical staff. Developing strategies and procedures to recruit specific skills in shortage occupations has traditionally been predominantly employer led, with governments acting as facilitators (Salt & al. 2004). Among the interviewees, all high skilled workers were either recruited directly by their employer, or through recruitment fairs facilitated by EURES.

Among the interviewees in this group there seemed to be a strong sense of knowing their attractiveness in the international labour market. They expressed that they were ambitious, and willing only to accept jobs that they found interesting and personally challenging. All of them seemed to feel that they had the power to decide where they wanted to work and when to make changes. The skill level and their attractiveness in the labour market empowered them to have an attitude of mobility and, to some extent, disloyalty to a long term relation to their company. However, it also meant an openness to stay with their employer and to move to the companies' international branches.

In regards to integration, all of the interviewees expressed that they were positive to integrate into the Norwegian society. However, they also expressed different reasons for this being difficult, partly due to circumstances in the Norwegian society, but also due to the international community in Stavanger. As Vyacheslav put it:

It is difficult to integrate into the Norwegian society while you live in Stavanger. I would say it is impossible. (. . .) Because Stavanger is, I would say, oil capital, have different nationalities, so it is very difficult to find Norwegians here.

This international community includes people of many different nationalities, and a high percentage of them are involved in the oil industry. Through their employer, Rikardo, Marques, Francisca, Vyacheslav, Bogdan and Nadja were connected to Stavanger Chamber of Commerce, which serves as one of the resources facilitating for social networking and cultural and practical information about living in Norway, all directed towards foreigners in the region. Both through Stavanger Chamber of Commerce and through other formal and informal networks, the interviewees quickly became a part of this community. This community consists mainly of highly skilled professionals and their families. Some of them stay for short amount of time, some for longer or permanent. All of them have in common that they have crossed international borders; many of them have a lifestyle of travelling quite frequently. Although not formally organized, within the community there are different support groups, and since it is so high in number, it serves as a cushion towards the Norwegian society. Being highly skilled and working in the oil industry, the interviewees naturally fit into this community. This is likely to prevent them, in varying degrees, from integration into the Norwegian society. It also provides an environment where travelling is a natural part of life, something that can influence a detached attitude to the permanent society around them, as well as a positive attitude to travelling and settling elsewhere. On the other hand, this community, by serving as a cushion towards the regular Norwegian society, can facilitate for an environment where settling seems less challenging, and actually make settling seem less stressful. This will be because of the experienced support from other immigrants and sojourners. Faist (2000) explains the importance social ties have in the adaptation process:

Once international migrants are in the respective country of destination, they face daily problems such as finding work and housing, childcare, and space for religious and political activities and cultural expression. Reciprocity and solidarity embedded in

kinship, friendship, and community networks, groups and organizations often help migrants to adapt to the new environment (p.123).

5.0.1.2 High or medium skilled working in low/non skilled professions.

Darek and Wincent are in this group, having university degree or several years of professional schooling. Darek had already had a long career within banking, and Wincent was newly educated from Academy of Physical Education in sports. The main difference from the previous group is that none of them work within their profession, but both work in a factory, doing manual labour. According to Friberg and Tydlum (2007) this is fairly common among Polish workers in Norway. Often they either hold a professional degree within the area they work without receiving additional payment. Or, similar to Darek and Wincent, they hold positions that are different from what they originally are qualified for. This may also be called *brain waste* where professional competence is exchanged for working in a non- or low skilled position. Despite the similarities between Darek and Wincent; both of them were skilled, but worked as non-skilled, their future plans and attitudes to the Norwegian society varied considerably. Both interviewees' stories are therefore described below:

At the time of the interview, Wincent was most likely in a transition period professionally; he had worked very hard learning Norwegian, and his Polish education was recently approved for teaching in Norway. He had the possibility of becoming a high skilled worker working in a high skilled job. However, one factor holding him back was the salary; he said that he actually would earn more doing manual labour than what he would earn as a teacher practicing his profession. He had a similar attitude as the high skilled workers (above), he expressed that he considered the labour market to be open for him in several countries, making him free to choose where he wanted to work and live.

Darek expressed quite a different attitude than Wincent. Given that he had lost his job and did not consider the possibility of a future in Poland any more, he now grasped this opportunity of moving to Norway, even though it is several steps down the occupational ladder for him. He did not express that he considered it possible to transfer his professional experience to Norway, rather, he expressed that he had to start from scratch again: "yes, yes, I must change. (. . .) My future is working here". Even though working in Norway meant

working as a non skilled person, he explained that for him this was still a much better option than living in Poland without a job within his profession. His priority was also to be joined with his family again: "I want to stay here and start a life here. I have all fixed it, to have my daughter and my wife." His daughter was already enrolled at school, and his wife was going to start language classes as soon as she arrived in Norway. Considering how he explained his present situation, it might be interpreted that he expressed certain bitterness towards Poland; he was determined not to move back, Norway was to become his home for the rest of his life.

The main difference between Darek and Wincent seems to be their feeling of having options in life. Wincent could have lived and worked in Poland, however, he moved to Norway, and believed that he had the possibility to move to another country and have proficient income to support a satisfying life for him. Contrary to him, Darek had to leave Poland because he had lost faith in finding a satisfying job, which would enable him to support his family financially. His experience after losing his job in Poland seemed to have been personally strenuous for him, he had financially suffered a great loss, and it seems like the job in Norway had lifted the heavy burden of surviving financially of his shoulders. Wincent expressed a more carefree view of life, trusting his professional resources, while Darek expressed a motivation of giving what it takes, as long as he could do his part of supporting a dignified life for his family.

When it comes to integration, Wincent had a similar attitude as the high skilled workers. He wanted to understand the Norwegian systems and make it work for him, he had international friends, and seemed quite content with his present situation. Darek expressed that he wanted to live as regular Norwegians, and had already made moves in this direction.

5.0.1.3 Non/low skilled working in non/low skilled professions.

Crystek and Andrzej were the only workers without professional schooling. Crystek worked in a manufacturing company, while Andrzej worked in a shipyard. Their work arrangements differed considerably, and suited their individual family situations and future plans.

Similar to Darek, Crystek expressed that his main motivation was to have a salary that would support his family, and to establish a home with them in Norway. Even though he suffered back problems and still had strenuous physical work, this did not appear to inflict on his plans. Andrzej worked in Norway, but had no intention of settling or integrating while being here. For him, it seemed like it did not matter so much which country he worked in, as long as working conditions were acceptable, and the salary was good.

Analyzing the data from the interviewees, it seems like it was not only an educational background, but the issue of *trust in the possibilities one's professional background provides*, that will influence decisions of leaving or staying, and the degree of integration. This would indicate that the lower the trust, the more determined a person is to stay and to integrate. However, this does not match with Andrzej, who is non-skilled, but does not want to settle, nor to integrate. Below follows the discussion of the criteria generation/age/gender/marital status, which, as demonstrated below, seems to be linked to the issue of skill level when it comes to deciding whether to stay and/or to integrate.

5.0.2 Generation/age/gender/marital status.

As we have seen above, occupational level seems to have an influence on integration and staying or leaving the country. The same was found taking gender/age/marital status into consideration, and it seems like the two are positively linked. The group of interviewees consisted of two women and eight men. Among these ten, four were married, one lived with his fiancée (although by the time of the interview they lived in different countries) and five were single. All the singles were less than 30 years. Those who were not single were from 25 to 58, and three of them had children. Among those with children, one had a 2 year old son, one had a teenage daughter and one had one adult son who had left home, plus two grandchildren.

5.0.2.1 Marital status/generation/age.

Here there are several variables, and by first focusing on the marital status/generation variable, three generations are actually represented in the group of interviewees:

- 1 young and single
- 2 young/middle aged, couple/married with or without children

3 older middle aged/grandparent

These three groups represent different patterns in regards to integration and settling, as will be demonstrated below.

5.0.2.1.1 *Group 1.*

Rikardo, Francisca, Vyacheslav, Bogdan and Wincent are in this group. None of them could provide a clear answer when asked if they wanted to stay in Norway. They were all considering the possibility of moving sometime in the future. Bogdan seemed to be the most willing to stay in Norway for an indefinite term. They were positive to integrate, but in practical life all of them related more to the international community in Stavanger than to the Norwegian community.

5.0.2.1.2 *Group 2.*

Group 2 consists of Marques, Nadja, Crystek and Darek. All expressed that they desired to live in Norway long term or indefinite. However, Marques only wanted to live in Norway if his girlfriend found a job in Stavanger, and he did not want to live here if his employer could not offer him interesting jobs. Nadja was hesitant to live in Norway if she had children; she had heard that the academic level of the Norwegian schools were not satisfactory. Among these four, Marques, Crystek and Darek was most positive to integrate into the regular Norwegian society, as well as expressing most understanding of what integration would mean for them.

5.0.2.1.3 *Group 3.*

Only Andrzej is in group 3. During most of his life he had lived abroad, but still having his home in Poland. He had no intention of changing this during the remaining years of his professional life before retirement.

Being young and single clearly is an incentive to keep the options open in regards to staying or leaving. As directly expressed by two of the interviewees; not having a girlfriend or other binding relational ties, provided them with the freedom of making their own choices in regards to where to live. Adding trust in the options ones' professional backgrounds can provide (see above), this combination seems to result in a strong sense of unwillingness to

commit to staying permanently in Norway or with their company, even though this definitely was not unthinkable. None of those who had ties to spouse/girlfriend and children expressed the same unwillingness to commit to permanency, even though Marques and Bogdan did not wholeheartedly embrace living in Norway in the manner of Crystek and Darek. Marques and Bogdan expressed that they were very aware what options their educational background provided. In case they were not satisfied with life and work in Norway, they would move to another country where the prospects of fulfilling their personal and family goals were higher. However, this would not necessary include changing employer.

5.0.2.1.4 *Travelling as a lifestyle?*

Rikardo, Francisca, Vyacheslav and Bogdan in particular seemed to hold that travelling and the challenge of experiencing new surroundings had in itself a value that they found attractive. However, according to Faist (2000) having a transnational lifestyle of continuous travelling will in the long run become a source of frustration and feeling of personal internal conflict. He gives the example of how an Israeli salesman expressed this experience: "‘Israel is my mother and America is my wife, so you can imagine the way I must feel’". Some of the problems involved are information overload and, sometimes, conflicting identities:" (pp. 310-311). This might mean that sooner or later, even those who enjoy the potential freedom of moving and are placing that as a priority in their lives, will eventually feel the need for settling and establishing a firm footing in one single place. When this happen, priorities will change, travelling will be less attractive and there might be a willingness to make compromises or sacrifices in order to have the opportunity to stay permanently.

Ulf Hannerz (1990) article *Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture* adds the perspective of how people regards travelling and experiencing new cultures differently, roughly dividing the world’s population this way: "for one thing, there are cosmopolitans, and there are locals" (p. 237). Being a cosmopolitan may be regarded as a lifestyle; where travelling and encountering new and different cultures are viewed as positive, and they may think of those belonging to the ‘local’ sphere as being somehow provincial. This means that being a tourist travelling often do not necessarily include that a person in the ‘cosmopolitan’ group. Cosmopolitans have their networks; friends, family and colleagues, all over the world, and do not view borders as obstacles, rather, they are happy to travel frequently. Even though

cosmopolitans often travel extensively, this will not be the case for all of them. Hannerz holds that cosmopolitanism is “a perspective, a state of mind, or – to take a more processual view – a mode of managing meaning” (p. 238). This means that a person with a cosmopolitan outlook on life, in theory not has to move at all. He also explains that not all that are travelling frequently are cosmopolitans; they might have to travel to make an income. These people may be locals at heart, wanting to be home, but leaving by necessity. Similar to Faist (2000) Hannerz holds that cosmopolitans also are “somewhat footloose” (p. 240), lacking a strong sense of a locality called home.

Among the group of interviewees, both ‘locals’ and ‘cosmopolitans’ are probably represented, and this may also shed some light on why they differ in their views on settling or not. For example, Andrzej has his personally close networks confined within close territorial boundaries, and he expressed clearly that he had no wish to, or intent to, get to know the local population more closely. Andrzej also expressed that the reason for travelling is earning a decent salary. Wincent, on the other hand, had settled well with the local customs and culture. However, he did not want to commit to settling long term, he was positive to move to other countries in the future, and had no particular intention of moving back to Poland.

All the interviewees, except Andrzej, seemed to think that they had a long professional career ahead of them. Andrzej, on the other hand, expressed that he hoped he could hold his present position during the few years left before retirement. His age and generation, the fact that he did not expect new children and that his son was settled with wife and their children, is probably is the main reason for him not to settle in Norway. Kim (2001) also writes that a feeling of being too old to make changes in lifetime habits will be a major factor preventing adaptation.

5.0.2.2 Gender.

Gender does not seem to have any direct positive or negative influence on the issue of integrating, staying or leaving. However, one prevalent difference was the view on *having ties*. Generally, the single male interviewees expressed that not having strong personal ties provided them with freedom to move (see above), which they considered being positive.

The female interviewees, on the other hand, both spoke positively about their strong personal ties to their home country. Francisca, however, was convinced that she would move back because of the ties, while Nadja was convinced that she would not move back to her home country, despite her strong personal ties. Nadja's view on migrating and still maintaining strong ties to her home country corresponds well with what Faist (2000) writes: "We have seen that in the course of international migration, adaptation to the new context of settlement and the maintenance of transnational ties usually goes hand in hand" (p. 311). According to him, there is not necessarily a conflict between maintaining ties to home and adapting to the new environment. The question is whether Francisca will experience the same, or if she will follow her plans of staying in Norway only for a couple of years⁹, and move back home before turning 30.

Young and single men regarded relationships as ties that would hold them back, however, three of them said that if/or when they found a girlfriend, they would settle. Marques and Vyacheslav said that this would most likely be in Norway. This corresponds well with the married male interviewees who were all positive to settling. Somehow contrary to this, Nadja, who was female and married, did not express that being married was a reason for settling. Although she was positive to staying in Norway, she was convinced that she would move if her criteria for staying in Norway were not met.

5.0.3 Work environment.

In the everyday lives of strangers, host receptivity (or lack of thereof) is manifested in a wide variety of explicit and implicit communication messages in the host environment. The forms such messages takes range widely, from public laws, policies, and practices to subtle messages embedded in the communication behaviors of individuals in face-to-face encounters (Kim, 2001, p. 150).

The remaining part of this chapter will analyze the *interviewees' experiences* in their new environment and their *predispositions*, for the purpose of finding how their incentives to settle and integrate are influenced by these issues. Their *experiences* are divided into *work*

⁹ By November 2010 Interviewee 3 still lived in Norway and worked for the same employer. Initially she said she would stay in Norway only two years, by November 2010 she had stayed in Norway for nearly three years.

environment and communication with the host environment. Even though work environment is a part of the host environment, they are still separate units, with unique work cultures, tasks and communication processes that not necessary are reflected in the general society. For labour migrants, work is their motivation to move, and the following section will concentrate on the work environment.

The importance of the work environment clearly emerged from the interviews. This is where the initial meeting with their new host culture and society takes place, where an important part of social life happens and appointments are made, and often provides the part of the day that seems most meaningful to many. For the labour migrants included in this study, their relation to the work environment seemed to be more important than the relation to the society at large. For all of them, the determining factors for staying or leaving were closer connected to their work (although with varying priorities) rather than their relation to the host culture.

Kim's adaptation theory does not differentiate between work environment and the larger society; rather the theory and its concepts may be applied regardless of level or unit of the society. The reason for this flexibility of the theory is that each sub level in the society is reflected in a meta level, meaning that the environment at a given level (such as a work place) manifest many of the forces operating in the higher levels of the environment (2001). However, for the Stavanger area, this seems to be only partly valid, because, as we have seen above, the employees of the many multinational companies operating in the area relate more to the international community than to the Norwegian society at large. Nevertheless, the workforce of the multinational companies may be viewed as a sub division of the greater international community. Over the years this community has become a vital part, even though it may be not totally integrated, of the larger community of the Stavanger region.

If cross-cultural adaptation shall take place, communication has to be happening between the stranger and the host environment. Communication, in turn, leads to new learning (acculturation), and the unlearning of old habits (deculturation) (Kim, 2001). The stranger him-/herself decides how fast and to what extent this process shall happen:

Each stranger must take into consideration the nature of the relationship he or she desires to establish with the host environment; the physiological, social and other 'cost' he or she is willing to invest; and the 'returns' that involvements in the host and ethnic social communication respectively provide for the personal goals he or she aspire to achieve in the host society (Kim, 2001, p. 145).

The following section will discuss what the interviewees have had to come to terms with in their new work environment, and how they individually have dealt with it. The topics dealt with are language learning, differences in work culture, relation to co-workers and management, and assistance to non-Norwegian workers.

5.0.3.1 Language learning.

For the purpose of this study, language learning is included under work environment. Often courses in the native language are offered by the employer, and by including this topic in the *Work environment* section it may also be more evident to what extent an offering, or lack of offering, of free language classes may influence on the labour migrants' decision making. It is also in the work environment that the labour migrants actively have had to deal with another language, or other languages, than their own.

Research shows that learning the Norwegian language is a key to integration, it is a vital tool in order to learn how the Norwegian society functions and to understand ones' rights and duties in the society (Integreringskart 2007). Labour migrants who came to Norway in the 70's were offered no or little language classes, and these migrants have generally had lower attendance in the labour market than Norwegians, lower knowledge of rights and labour agreements, and have been overrepresented in work physical strenuous jobs. Researchers warn that if labour migrants are not provided language classes, by public institutions or by their employer, this will hinder integration and will consequently have negative influence on their possibilities in the Norwegian labour market (Integreringskart 2007). Labour migrants coming from EU countries have no right to public language classes, this is the employer's responsibility. However, it turns out that only 21% of the employers having Eastern Europe employees offer language courses. Rather, they will often use bilingual superiors and interpreters, leading to the non-Norwegian speaking working separately from the Norwegian

speaking (as is the case for Andrzej). Labour migrants, who have worked in Norway for an extended period of time, hold themselves that the key to success in the Norwegian labour market is speaking the language (Friberg and Tydlum, 2007).

All the workers in high skilled positions were offered language courses at work, and none of the migrants working in low skilled positions were offered language courses by their employers. However, the interest for learning Norwegian varied considerably among the interviewees, as did the need for speaking Norwegian at work. It also turned out that the need for speaking Norwegian at work was not necessarily the sole motivational factor for learning the language. All the high skilled workers spoke English, which enabled them to fairly easily get by both at work and privately. For those working in low skilled jobs knowledge of English varied. Some of them mastered English satisfactory; however, many of their Norwegian co-workers did not understand the language. They felt, except for Andrzej, a stronger need for mastering Norwegian than the high skilled workers.

Rikardo, Marques, Francisca, Bogdan and Nadja participated in Norwegian classes. The classes for Rikardo, Marques and Francisca started after working hours and Bogdan and Nadja had classes during working hours. For all of them the classes lasted for 1,5 hours and were offered twice a week. Crystek and Darek started Norwegian classes privately, but had to quit since they often had to work evening shift during class hours. Wincent was learning the language without taking classes, and Andrzej did not speak English or Norwegian, and has no intention to learn the language.

So how does leaning Norwegian match with integration and settling? Marques and Francisca still struggled with having to speak English every day, they had only stayed in Norway 3 months, and expressed that it was difficult to deal with two foreign languages simultaneously. Both of them had also struggled with the lack of light in Norway during the winter, and they were missing family and friends at home. In addition, Marques had decided that if his fiancée did not come to Norway within 3 months, he would leave his job and move back to Portugal. All these issues probably influenced strongly to their lack of motivation to learn Norwegian, and must be taken into account. Those who expressed the strongest motivation to learn the language were interviewee Bogdan, Crystek, Darek and Wincent.

Bogdan expressed a high level of satisfaction with the Norwegian society, and would consider staying in Norway (even though he wanted to keep his options open). Crystek and Darek planned to settle in Norway, while Wincent had not decided yet. However, Wincent was very motivated for integrational purposes, for him it was important to find out how the society functioned and being able to read information published in Norwegian. The least motivated were Vyacheslav and Andrzej. Vyacheslav expressed a high possibility of leaving Norway, and Andrzej had work arrangements providing him with the opportunity to speak only Polish at work, not needing any other language.

Lack of permanent settling plans alone did not necessarily result in low motivation for language learning. Rather it seems like a lack of settling plans, combined with other difficult personal challenges (see above), would result in low motivation. In addition, for those who could use English at work, the motivation to learn Norwegian was lower than for those who needed to use Norwegian in order to communicate adequately with their co-workers. None of the high skilled workers, except Vyacheslav, expressed that if they learned Norwegian it was possible that they were more likely to stay. Vyacheslav, however, said that if he learned Norwegian he would most likely understand Norwegians better, which could, in turn, make him be more positive to living in Norway.

5.0.3.1.1 A culture of internationals.

As mentioned above, the high skilled workers spoke English at work, and got easily by without Norwegian. Moreover, they were not only surrounded by Norwegians, but by co-workers from different countries, among them were many that did not have English as their native tongue. As expressed by Rikardo and Francisca, this made the transition to their new job easier; they felt support and comfort by being among other 'foreigners' who were in a similar situation as themselves.

5.0.3.2 Work culture and communication.

As mentioned above, when communication happens, a process of acculturation and deculturation takes place. At work the strangers are forced to adapt to some extent to the work environment if they want to stay, and they need to be in continual communication with their co-workers. As the cross-cultural adaptation happens, their identities will change

from being bound to one culture alone, from *monoculturalness*, to becoming more flexible, to take on a greater *interculturalness*. However, this process is filled with ambivalence and internal conflict, and does not come about without a certain “costs”. Some of these costs might be deemed too high by some, others will more readily embrace them (Kim, 2001), as the examples below will demonstrate. Kim views intercultural identity as being rooted in, embracing, and not discarding the original cultural identity. By comparing it with language learning; learning the host language does not necessarily result in a corresponding loss of the original language.

5.0.3.2.1 *Relation to senior staff.*

One of the most striking differences in work culture expressed by several of the interviewees was the flat hierarchal structure, as expressed by Rikardo:

We meet a lot of people from other departments, and surprisingly last month even the CEO joined the party, I mean, we go there just to talk and drink some beers, and the CEO was there also. (. . .) I can tell you it’s radically different, working here or working in Portugal. Because here the hierarchy, in the company it exists, but it’s flat, I mean, we can relate.

Although surprising to most of them, this difference in structure was received positively. The interviewees, except Vyacheslav and Andrzej, compared it directly to the situation in their homelands. All of them stated that they would rather prefer a structure where they could directly relate to their superiors, than having a strong hierarchical structure, which involved a greater distance between regular employees and superiors.

5.0.3.2.1.1 *Power distance.*

Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010, p. 57 ff.) found that Russia scores at the top on *power distance* (acceptance for inequality in society), while Portugal and Poland is in the middle, and Norway among the countries at the very bottom. This is interesting in the view of the previous paragraph. Most of the interviewees expressed that they had observed a difference in the hierarchical structure at work, moreover, all said that they preferred the “flat” structure. Why then did none of them express frustration or stress by the lack of a stronger hierarchy when this would be prevalent (according to Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov’s

results) in their home country? Would it be different if someone in a position of senior staff had been interviewed?

5.0.3.2.2 *General atmosphere and relation to co-workers.*

All together, all the interviewees, except Andrzej, commented on the subjects of less pressure to perform, less competition between co-workers, a generous attitude to newcomers, a general openness and willingness to help out and share ideas among co-workers, and explained this as different from the work cultures in their home countries (the way they knew about or had experienced them). These issues deal with expectations both to their new work environment and to relationships with co-workers. Those of the workers who experienced that their new environment deviated considerably from the familiar home environment on several accounts, expressed feelings of frustration and of being uncertain how to handle relationships to co-workers and how to have an appropriate approach to their employee role.

For most of the interviewees these differences were positively met, however Vyacheslav , Bogdan and Nadja had found them most challenging. Vyacheslav explains it this way:

In Norway you will choose your family. But if for example you are in Russia, we will choose work, and some people they spend 12 hours a day on their works, 7 days a week, so, there are no limits, if you have to do something, you should do it. (. . .) I can't understand when people leave the office at 2-3 o'clock, it is strange.

Vyacheslav found it difficult to embrace this difference in work culture, and desired different challenges than what he experienced in his present job. For him, work was his first priority, something he felt his present job could not fulfill. Also, he found it hard to respect his co-workers who prioritized family life and having free time, rather than completing tasks at work. Bogdan, who also found the more relaxed atmosphere challenging, had found his individual way to deal with it:

I found it too relaxed in the beginning. But then I realized a while ago, for half a year ago that I have to keep myself at feet, and to be more pro active. (. . .) Here is, of course, relaxive conditions to sleep, may be, so I need to give myself more impulsive, orders.

It is interesting to compare these findings to Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov's (2010) results on how countries differ when it comes to *uncertainty avoidance*¹⁰, and can possibly provide an explanation why Vyacheslav, Bogdan and Nadja felt frustrated with the more relaxed atmosphere than they were used to. Russia scores high (high need for uncertainty avoidance), while Norway scores medium/low.

In strong uncertainty-avoidance societies, people like to work hard or at least to be always busy. Life is hurried, and time is money. In weak uncertainty-avoidance societies, people are able to work hard if there is a need for it, but they are not driven by an inner urge toward constant activity. They like to relax. Time is a framework in which to orient oneself but not something one is constantly watching (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, p. 210).

The description of an inner urge towards constant activity is to a large extent in accordance with Vyacheslav, Bogdan and Nadja explanations of their attitude toward work and how this might influence their daily lives.

In particular Rikardo and Francisca found the less pressure to perform positive, and concluded that this environment facilitated both better learning and better productivity. Even Nadja, who struggled in the beginning, now appreciated that she could ask for help or advice without being judged as incompetent. Crystek, Darek and Wincent felt positively received as newcomers, which they found important for their well being at work.

Vyacheslav expressed that he felt dissatisfied with the amount of rules and regulations the workers had to follow when working on a project. He explained that for him, feeling restricted in his work prevented him from performing his best:

There is one standard how to work, and everybody follows some rules and whatever, they just do what they should do. But again in Russia you can, it's not, eh, it is not important to follow all these rules. Because of you have some more solution which is outside of the rules that everybody follows, you could avoid following all the rules, so, you can come up with a smart solution without all these.

¹⁰ Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) holds that their concept of uncertainty avoidance differs from the GLOBE study's (2002) definition of the same term. See p. 198 for further details.

By referring Vyacheslav view on the disadvantage of following rules to Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010), it might seem a that high level of uncertainty avoidance will result in less creativity at work, and this will contradict their theory. However, interestingly enough Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov found that the opposite might happen. One of the reasons for this was namely that some countries practiced “a strict rule, but a lenient practice” (p. 210, further elaborated pp. 210-216). Moreover, it would also be dependent on other variables prevalent in the country, like, for example, high or low scores on masculinity, however, for the purpose of this study, this will not be discussed further.

Except for Francisca and Vyacheslav, who both are determined not to settle in Norway, the difference in work culture seemed to have an effect on the interviewees' plans of leaving or staying, either negative or positive. Vyacheslav was the most negative, and he strongly expressed unwillingness to accept his present work culture. Bogdan and Nadja, still found the work atmosphere too relaxed, but both expressed that they have found ways to compensate for the lack of work pressure, and to appreciate having more free time. They had learned to appreciate some of the effects of this atmosphere, as, for example, the inclusiveness from the rest of the staff. The rest of the interviewees seemed to embrace the lack of pressure to perform and what they found to be an open and generous atmosphere. For interviewee Rikardo, Marques, Bogdan, Nadja, Crystek, Darek and Wincent, the more relaxed atmosphere added to a positive view of staying and working in Norway, even though it would not be the only factor determining it. For Vyacheslav, his negative experiences with the work culture might even be the major reason why he considered leaving the country.

This section has shown that the interviewees varied considerably in the degree of feeling content with the work culture, from the very positive to the very negative, even though all are dealing with very similar issues. On the one hand it shows the impact the work environment can have on the stranger's feeling of well-being, and, on the other hand, it also shows how personal preferences and attitudes play an important role.

5.0.3.2.3 *Assistance to foreign workers.*

When arriving in a new country, finding a place to live can be a major challenge. For all the migrants working in high skilled positions, their employers had already found an apartment

for them and paid the rent for the first three months. In addition to this, the employers were flexible in regards to the first months' salaries. For some of the migrants it took several weeks before they had received a personal number enabling them to open a bank account. Crystek, Darek and Wincent had to find apartments through personal contacts. Andrzej lived in barracks close to his work, supplied by his employer.

The only interviewee who was not satisfied with accommodation was Marques. In order to get from home to work he had to take two busses. Since the busses often did not run on schedule, it happened that he missed a bus and ended up spending too much time on transportation.

None of the migrants complained that they did not get the help they needed as newcomers in a foreign country. All of them had received assistance with filing necessary paperwork when needed. In addition, much information seemed to go through informal contacts, at the work place or social gatherings during their free time. All of them had contact with migrants that had arrived in Norway previous to themselves.

In addition to the assistance to foreign workers, some of the Interviewees told about other benefits they greatly appreciated. For example, Rikardo and Marques how their company would lend out one of their vans for free, after working hours. They expressed how this had been of great assistance when they first arrived, helping them to move furniture from the store and to their apartment. Bogdan also told about a learning program offered by the company. Here he could participate in courses in Norway or abroad, improving his skills in a number of areas.

All together, all of the interviewees expressed trust both in their employer and their informal contacts to supply them with assistance and information when needed, which again has aided them in the adaptation process. Even though in varying degree, it seemed like all of the interviewees had developed a network they felt they could trust. None of them felt a lack in the assistance and support aided to them to be so severe that it would spur them on to leaving the country or the company, and the assistance they had received clearly was positively viewed.

5.0.4 Predispositions.

Migrants, come to their new environment with different levels of *preparedness*; that is, the mental, emotional, and motivational readiness to deal with their new environment. In addition, their preparedness is often influenced by the level of positive expectations toward their host society and of the willingness to participate in it (Kim, 2005). Strangers differ in their backgrounds, and this will influence their ability and willingness to adapt. Kim's cross-cultural adaptation theory employs the term *ethnic proximity* (or ethnic distance);

Low ethnic proximity that a stranger brings to the host environment serves as a kind of handicap in his or her adaptive effort. Conversely, a stranger with many ethnic characteristics that are close to those of the native population is likely to enjoy a smoother transition (Kim, 2005, p. 389).

In addition to ethnic proximity, Kim also employs personality as a parameter, and identifies three personality resources that will influence the adaptation process: openness, strength, and positivity. These resources will help facilitate strangers' adaptation by enabling them to endure stressful events and to maximize new learning.

For the purpose of this study, there is a focus on the interviewees' motivation to move, which again will influence their willingness to adapt. Kim (2005) identifies that immigrants who move voluntarily have a greater readiness to make adaptive changes than those who relocate unwillingly. Pages 70-71 present a short overview of the Interviewees' main motivational factors to move, followed by a more thorough description of two of the main incentives to leave their country; their *work situation* and *relation to home country*. Followed by this is a discussion on how this may influence integration and settling. Finally, the chapter concludes with their feeling of ethnic proximity and the importance for staying and integrating.

5.0.4.1 "Why did you leave your home country?"

Castles (2000) writes that "The most obvious cause of migration is the disparity in levels of income, employment and social-well being between different areas" (p. 272). When considering economic theoretical approaches to migration, the Neo-classical Economic Theory: macro perspective, international migration is explained as caused by geographical differences in the supply and demand for labour. The resulting differences in wages cause

people to migrate from low wage countries to high wage countries. According to Massey & al. (1993), this approach and its view on migration has traditionally been the best known. Furthermore, the Neo-classical Economic Theory: micro perspective focuses on the individual choice, where the individual calculates the cost-benefit of migrating, where migrating happens when the net returns are expected to exceed the costs of migrating (Massey & al. 1993). The theory of New Economics of Labour Migration challenged these two approaches, by arguing that migration cannot be explained only by considering the macro or micro levels. Migration decisions are often made by families, representing strategies to maximize income and survival chances (Castles, 2000). These three approaches varies in what they consider as cause for migration, however, what they have in common is that the migrant considers migration to provide for a better livelihood for him/herself (and the family).

These theories focus on the economical net outcome and financial security a migration project will lead to. For all the interviewees, low salaries and lack of jobs were reasons for deciding to leave their home country. However, these were not the only important reasons; several factors were taken into account. In order to demonstrate the complexity of such a decision, the list below shows what each Interviewees' stated as their reasons, ranged according to level of importance expressed by the interviewee; the most important coming first.

Rikardo Barros: Lack of interesting jobs, low salaries, desire to move abroad, no personal obligations.

Marques de Albreuin: Lack of long term contracts securing the establishing of a family, low salaries, lack of interesting jobs.

Francisca Pinto: Becoming independent form parents, lack of permanent contract that would secure a bank loan so she could buy her own apartment, lack of interesting jobs.

Vyacheslav Volkov: Becoming independent from parents, new personal challenges, low salaries, lack of interesting jobs.

Bogdan Ivanov: Wanting to move to Europe, no personal obligations, lack of interesting jobs, low salaries.

Nadja Solovyov: Low salaries, obligation to send money to parent, spending several hours at the metro every day.

Crystek Wisniewski: Low salaries/not enough to support his family, opportunity to start a new life with his family.

Darek Wojcik: Lost his job and no prospect of finding a new job, opportunity to start a new life with his family.

Wincent Kowalski: Low salaries, wanting more free time for hobbies, experience other parts of Europe.

Andrzej Jankowski: Low salaries, better working conditions in Norway.

5.0.4.1.1 *Motivation for change: Work Situation.*

Generally, a feeling of distrust in the offers their home labour markets could provide them seems to ring true for all the interviewees. None of them were offered jobs comparable to what they had now, and none of them seemed to think that this could happen in the near future. Rikardo explained the situation in Portugal this way:

Portugal is a great country to visit, and a great tourism place (. . .) but for engineering; to work there it is not a good option. (. . .) there is no product development, or there is very few. (. . .) If I wanted to do engineering in Portugal it is only maintenance and customer support, so there is very little fulfillment.

However, Francisca thought her experience abroad would give her better options in the labour market at home when she eventually moved back, and Vyacheslav mentioned that starting a business would be better than working as an engineer in Russia.

Among the interviewees, some seemed to be more distressed with their home situation than others. This was the case for Marques, Crystek and Darek, who all experienced that job possibilities at home could not provide what they needed to fulfill their hopes and plans for themselves and their families.

5.0.4.1.2 *Motivation for change: Relation to country of origin.*

Does a negative view on conditions in the country of origin influence on a more positive view on the host country/increased willingness to adapt to the new environment? Below will be a presentation of the interviewees' negative views of their countries of origin. Bogdan, Nadja, Crystek, Darek and Wincent expressed the most dissatisfaction with issues in their home country. Although this was not a topic in the interview guide, the interviewees naturally brought this up during the conversation. As expressed by Bogdan, Nadja, and Wincent:

And comparing to Norwegian lifestyle, they are more on keeping on enjoying life, they go to mountains, to see the nature, because in Russia you always have to think about that someone having more money than you, and you need to hurry up, and these things as nature, no, let's just talk about business and so on (Bogdan).

"We still have some mafia everywhere. It seems like so far, but our mafia just went to governmental levels, so unfortunately it is true. Sometimes people can be frozen everywhere, all your deals. And you can do nothing" (Bogdan).

In Poland, you know, we have a huge problem, I think, which is money. If you have to worry if you have enough money for food, or to pay the rent, this is very difficult when you have a family. I want to live at a higher standard. But in Poland I would have to work more, more than here. And I have interests, I want different world (Wincent) (translated from Norwegian).

The Interviewees from Russia and Poland had several issues in common when they expressed their negative views on their homelands. They experienced a strong focus on money, either because of a strained personal economy or because of competition, and a felt attitude of envy towards those who had a better financial situation. In addition, Bogdan, Nadja and Wincent also brought up the fact that they now can enjoy being outdoors in Norway. Back in Russia, Bogdan and Nadja spent much time every day in the underground, leaving no time for other activities. In addition, they expressed that having money was the main status symbol in Russia, having spare time for outdoor activities was not given particular value.

How do these motivational factors to move match with integration and settling in Norway? First, let's look at Bogdan who describes a process of adapting to his new environment; in this case he sees it as a positive experience, something that has not been hard to give up; changing from being focused on money, to include enjoying having spare time spent outdoors. Kim (2005) describes this process this way:

As strangers experience a progression of internal change, they undergo a set of identifiable changes in their habitual patterns of cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses. Through deculturation and acculturation, some of the 'old' cultural habits are replaced by new cultural habits (p. 391).

Integration is taking place, which, in turn, causes the process of settling in a new environment more enjoyable (Kim, 2005).

All of the interviewees were dissatisfied with the labour market at home, even those who wanted to move back. The dissatisfaction in itself does not seem to be a strong incentive to settle. However, Marques, Crystek and Darek had lost hopes in finding satisfying jobs at home, and they were all very positive to settling and to integrating. For them, a strong motivational factor was to establish good conditions for settling with their families. However, Marques still held that if his employer could not provide him with an interesting job, he would still move, even if he lived with a family in Norway. Bogdan, Nadja, Crystek and Darek and Wincent all had fairly high negative views on issues with their home countries, expressed no present interest in moving back, and Nadja, Crystek and Darek were determined not to return. All of them considered settling in Norway, and were actively, but to varying degrees, adapting to the Norwegian way of life. However, Interviewees Bogdan, Nadja, Wincent were still open to move to another country sometime in the future, in particular if the hopes and desires for themselves and their families could not be met in Norway.

5.0.4.2 Ethnic proximity.

Ethnic proximity deals with the migrants' view on how similar or different the interviewees felt from the people in their new homeland. Kim (2005) divides the concept into two: (1) the degree of similarity (or difference) in *extrinsic ethnic markers*, such as ethnic group-related physical and facial features and material artifacts such as food, dress etc. (2) compatibility

(or incompatibility) of *intrinsic ethnic markers* such as internalized beliefs, value orientations, and norms. Although most of the interviewees expressed thoughts around this, their main concern was mainly what they thought people from other nationalities/Norwegians would think about them.

5.0.4.2.1 *Extrinsic ethnic markers.*

Rikardo had expected that his Latin features, dark hair and a slightly darker skin tone, would cause some level of prejudice, however, he expressed that he was positively surprised that this had not happened. Bogdan, Crystek, Darek and Wincent were concerned with what people might think when they introduced themselves and their nationalities, however, none of them expressed that they had felt disrespected because of this. Moreover, none of the interviewees, except the concerns expressed by Marques, said that they felt culturally different, or that they had been discriminated against, because of their looks or other extrinsic ethnic markers.

5.0.4.2.2 *Intrinsic ethnic markers.*

Vyacheslav and Nadja, expressed that the differences they felt due to cultural backgrounds, to be so significant that they were complicating their relations with Norwegians or with fitting in into the Norwegian society:

When I have my spare time, or if we take me and a Norwegian boy, I think he would prefer to be alone, or to go hiking or sailing or whatever, I would prefer to go and have something social. I like when I have a lot of people around me, so, I don't know, I am not fond of hiking, I am not fond of sailing, I am not fond of cycling (Vyacheslav).
 "You're very cold, we are more hot, You can rule your emotions, which is not how we are" (Nadja).

The issue of ethnic proximity seemed to complicate integration and settling only for those who felt considerable culturally difference from the host population, for the interviewees of this study it concerned only *intrinsic ethnic markers*. As we have seen above, in addition to feeling alien to the image he had of Norwegians he would identify with, Vyacheslav also had difficulties accepting the work culture in his company. Moreover, he felt culturally close to, as we shall see below, fellow Russian engineers living in Stavanger. It was difficult for him to

continue an effective adaptation process to what he personally felt distant to. Nadja felt integration to be difficult due to cultural differences, however, she expressed that she had adapted to her work (she did not feel so frustrated by cultural differences any more) and to enjoy several aspects of living in Norway. Faist (2000) explains the feeling of belonging by where the migrant has his/her ties and the stage in a person's life course:

First, the stage of a person in her life course, earlier resolutions, and the strength of local and transnational attachments crucially affect not only the decision to stay or to go, whether to stay in the immigration country or return but also the likelihood of shuttling back and forth in transnational social spaces, materially and symbolically. (. . .) Second, local ties of immigrants and return migrants are fixed in places that signify a 'whole' to the migrant. (. . .) It is plausible to assume that the more strongly persons are engaged in local projects, such as reproduction, community, work and business, religion, arts, sports, and politics, the less likely they are to migrate for long periods of time. The same should apply to return migration (p. 310).

According to Faist, staying or leaving may be depending on an individual's ability or willingness to establish ties in their new environment, and *how they value* their different ties; the stronger the ties, the less willingness to move, and vice versa. This connects to and is similar to Kim's *intrinsic ethnic markers*; the degree of ability or willingness to establishing ties compatible with the migrant's convictions in their new environment. This might also be one of the explanations why Vyacheslav seemed quite willing to move, while Nadja, in spite of the felt cultural differences, seemed to be less likely to move.

5.0.5 Communication with host environment (except work) and ethnic communities.

As demonstrated above, communication is a key for adaption to a new cultural environment to happen. There has to be involvement between the stranger and the people and the surroundings of his or her host country. Kim explains the foundation for the cross-cultural adaptation this way: "Focusing on the communication activities linking the individual (the 'figure') and the environment (the 'ground')" (2005, p. 378), and shows how, without communication, there will be no process of adapting and integration.

This communication section will cover how the migrants say they experience the quality of formal and informal communication with their host community and with co-ethnics in their host community. For professional communication at work, this is dealt with in the *work environment* section. However, since all of the interviewees have much of their informal network and friendships with co-workers, this will be mentioned when the communication taking place is not specifically related to the work situation itself. As this section will demonstrate, communication and ethnic proximity are closely linked together. Here this means that experience of cultural distance influences the quality of communication they feel they can have with Norwegians and vice versa.

5.0.5.1 Formal and informal communication with host community.

Formal communication will here mean communication with public offices and similar institutions. Informal communication will include communication with friends and acquaintances. The formal communication will be dealt with first.

5.0.5.1.1 Formal communication.

All migrants will have to communicate with quite a number of different public institutions after entering the country, except for those migrants whose employer takes care of this. Among the interviewees in this study, Andrzej had dealt the least with the public system in Norway. According to him, his employer took care of all the paperwork related to work permission etc and supplied him with accommodations including internet and TV. Since Andrzej said that he did not feel a need for contact with the Norwegian society, he did not have any particular views on formal and informal communication with the host community. The rest of the interviewees, except Francisca, brought up a number of differences and/or challenges they had felt when communicating with public institutions.

For those who mentioned public offices, there was an overwhelming positive reaction to the way they were received. Rikardo, Marques, Crystek, Darek and Wincent all compared it to their experiences with similar offices in their home countries. They were pleased with both efficiency and level of trust they had experienced, which was different from what they had experienced at home. In particular Crystek, Darek and Wincent seemed relieved and hopeful for the future that processes would go smoothly. The only negative experience was waiting

for necessary documentation needed for a labour migrant; work permit and identification number. Some experienced this process as unfair; telling that some migrants received permits before others, and it caused strained financial situations and inability to travel (Vyacheslav could not go home for Christmas).

Marques complained about the high taxes and fees in Norway. In the short amount of time he had been in Norway, he already had had representatives for NRK (Norsk Rikskringkasting: The Norwegian Broadcast Cooperation) knocking at his door, claiming that the license was not paid. He had also received a bottle of liquor as a gift from his Dad, and experienced that it was more expensive for him to pay custom for the bottle than for his Dad to actually buy in Portugal. He expressed a strong dissatisfaction with both incidences.

Nadja and her husband had bought an apartment in Stavanger. Hardly knowing any Norwegian, they ended up signing the legal contracts without knowing what they actually agreed to because the entire text was in Norwegian. She also experienced that vital internet sites (internet banking, NAV) were in Norwegian, even the sites for foreigners. For her, it had been a process of calling and visiting offices until she found a satisfying solution.

The short descriptions of Marques' and Nadja's challenges also are examples of active communication processes. In dealing with the society, they found out how the different public processes functions in Norway, and whether they like it or not, they still had to deal with it. Nadja expressed confidence in having been through the process of buying an apartment, and said that she now could advise others in the same situation. And if she should go through it again, she would not be so threatened by it any more. Marques, who still seemed to be quite annoyed, had found out that if he wants his family to ship him liquor, it will be quite costly for him.

5.0.5.1.2 *Informal communication.*

All the interviewees, except Andrzej, had experiences and views on informal communication in the Norwegian society. Rikardo meant that, generally, the weather had an influence on Norwegians:

Here it rains a lot, we have more darkness so people are a bit more closed and, but it is easy for me to relate to them. (. . .) So I think that, in order for you to start talking and dancing you really need to drink a lot of alcohol. (. . .) You can really feel the difference here because in Portugal it is a nicer country in terms of weather, so we are all in that sense, we are positive and talking, you don't feel the difference when it is a good day. Here you can really feel the difference when it is a good day, people are more positive.

Generally, Rikardo, Marques, Francisca, Vyacheslav, Bogdan, Nadja and Wincent found that Norwegians are less open and accepting than what they are used to from home. Some of them were also in agreement that if you give a Norwegian time, he or she will open up. It seems like all of them had mentally been through a process in regards to relating to Norwegians. Vyacheslav put it this way:

But on the other hand I find Norwegians very open and friendly, but also you need time, because, for example, if you work together in one office and you will sit in front of me, I bet that you will spend at least a few weeks before you will invite me, and so, I think, if we get friends, I think I can rely on you a hundred percent. So you try to close yourself off from other people but if you open the door and let go, it would be a very good relationship.

Besides this, Rikardo and Francisca generally felt Norwegians to be similar to the Portuguese in the way they treated each other and when it came to friendships. The main difference was external; Portuguese would hug and kiss instead of shaking hands.

Among all the interviewees, Vyacheslav, Bogdan and Nadja, Interviewees had most difficulties relating to Norwegians. Bogdan explained that he spent the first six months trying to figure out if he could trust his Norwegian co-workers, and how to relate in a personal way. Vyacheslav and Nadja, both had negative issues with Norwegians that not readily seem to be possible to resolve, which generally had to do with inclusion, and getting personally close to. Vyacheslav also had heard from friends that some Norwegians, who were nice and friendly at work, did not even recognize their co-workers in the street. He concluded that for Norwegians, in their strong separation between work and free time, even co-workers counted as work and could not be included in the time off.

Clearly, Vyacheslav Bogdan and Nadja had struggled the most with relating to Norwegians. As described above, adaptation takes place in processes of communication, and “the successful adaptation of strangers is realized only when their personal communication systems sufficiently overlap with those of the natives” (Kim, 2005, p. 385). What also is important to take into account, though, are the personal values and preferences of the stranger. Is he or she willing to accept or embrace differences, or are traits of the host culture too far removed from his or her own conviction, beliefs and/or values? Bogdan seemed to be the most accepting, after his first months of relational struggle in Norway he seemed to have found ways to appreciate Norwegians and to positively relate. Nadja found that the differences prevented her to get close to Norwegians; however, she still had Norwegian friends and was active in getting to know her neighborhood. Vyacheslav had Norwegian friends, at the same times as he felt that there were several issues that he found unacceptable, and which would separate him from getting close to Norwegians. In similar degree as these interviewees felt toward Norwegians, they also seem to regard living in Norway on a permanent basis; Bogdan and Nadja considered staying in Norway, while Vyacheslav considered leaving Norway.

5.0.5.2 Communication with co-ethnics in host community.

Generally, ethnic communities provide strangers with access to their original culture, and have often organized some form of mutual-aid and support systems that will aid co-ethnics in need of some kind of social support. They often serve as adaption-facilitating in the initial phase of strangers' adaption process. Beyond the initial phase, these organizations serve the function of original cultural maintenance. If a migrant heavily relays on co-ethnics after a long term in the host country, this will prevent integration into the new environment (Kim, 2005). All of the interviewees had social relationships with co-ethnics; however, as contrary to the assumption that they would rely quite heavily on co-ethnics, none of them participated in ethnic organizations or expressed a desire to do so. Except Andrzej, who mainly only related to co-nationals, none of the interviewees expressed that they saw a purpose in meeting co-nationals only because they were from the same country. As Marques put it:

It's like one of the problems I have with all of the Portuguese people here, because it is good to know them, it's good for them to know me, but that's it. Because I'm not just going to socialize more with them just because they're Portuguese.

All of the interviewees pointed out that they met people of many nationalities, including people from their home country. Vyacheslav seemed to be the one who was most dependent on socializing with co-nationals; these would be other Russians working in the oil industry, however, they were not organized in any way. Even Crystek and Darek pointed out that they preferred to not meet with other people from Poland, but would rather have Norwegian and international friends. It must be mentioned that both a Russian and Polish organization are to be found in the Stavanger area.

Why is this so? One of the reasons might be the strong international community that already exists in Stavanger. Newcomers might identify with other foreigners, and not necessarily feel the need for support from co-ethnics only. Secondly, most of the Interviewees felt culturally close to Norwegians, thirdly, none of them expressed that they could not frequently travel back to their home countries, and fourthly, none of them expressed that they felt a strong conformity pressure to the host/majority culture. None of them seemed to consider that their cultural identity was being threatened, even though adapting definitely was happening. When it comes to integration and settling, none of the interviewees, except Andrzej and most Vyacheslav, will be hindered in the integration process because they rely too heavily on co-ethnics for support and social contact. Vyacheslav seemed to have much of his important social contact with co-ethnics, which at one hand serve as a cushion towards the Norwegian culture that he found was problematic for him to deal with, nevertheless, this might also serve as a hinder for integration.

6.0 Main Factors Influencing the Decision-making Process: Results and Conclusions

We have seen that the interviewees vary to a large extent in their opinions on staying or leaving, and concerning the question about integration. Even some of them that seem to have similar backgrounds and to be in the same phase in life might think quite differently in regards to these questions. Why is this so? Is it possible to give some explanation to these differences? These questions are some of the main concerns of this chapter; combined in a discussion of the results and summarizing the findings. The conclusion at the end of this chapter will include suggestions for actions to take in order to facilitate for a labour migrant's well being and to uncover possible frustrations based on living in a new environment, as well as suggestions for further research.

6.0.1 Staying or leaving.

The answers to the questions whether the interviewees planned to stay or leave were not definite for most of the Interviewees. However, the interviewees all seemed to have a reflected attitude to the question, counting pros and cons. And it is in particular these pros and cons, and the reasons for evaluating issues in favor or disfavor for staying or leaving, which are the main concerns of this section.

Four of the interviewees had firm convictions on their future plans; two wanted to settle in Norway, and two had definite plans of moving back home. For the rest of the interviewees, none of them expressed that they had definite plans in regards to staying in the country or leaving.

6.0.1.1 Decisive factors: Fulfilling careers.

For those who worked in companies with international branches, it is important to separate staying or leaving into staying with the company but leaving the country, and leaving the company *and* the country. It is a weakness of this study that this question has not been consistently separated; by the time of conducting the interviewees the questions did not differentiate the issue of leaving this way. However, it turned out that the interviewees often separated this, in particular those who had a desire to travel. They seemed to regard

this possibility as a benefit, fulfilling a desire to see other nations, and still do a career within the same company. Nevertheless, all of them expressed that they were willing only to accept jobs that were interesting and personally challenging, even if this meant leaving their company and moving to another country. As seen in the analysis chapter, the *trust in the possibilities ones' professional background provides*, led to a feeling of being free to make choices that suited themselves and their families best. This became most evident when comparing the stories of Darek and Wincent. They were both high/medium qualified workers; however, Wincent expressed an unveiling trust in finding a job in whatever country he would settle in. Darek seemed to completely have lost his trust in his educational background; his hope was now to do unskilled labour. Even though a majority of those who were single seemed to be the most unwilling to commit to settling, still, those who were married or planning to have a family, expressed that they prioritized an interesting career before settling permanently and having a stable location for their family. Apparently, none of them would consider holding a position that they would not experience as personally fulfilling. Furthermore, Nadja expressed that if she had children, a definite incentive to move to another country was if she did not find the Norwegian schools academically satisfactory.

As contrary to this, those who had little or no skill, or did not trust in their skills, seemed to be motivated largely by having a salary that would supply for a good and respectable life for themselves and their families. None of them expressed that they expected the job to be interesting or fulfilling, it was rather a positive and gratifying relation to coworkers, and acceptable work conditions that they pointed out as important and positive factors with their present job, and that motivated settling in Norway.

6.0.1.2 Decisive factors: Cultural and personal backgrounds.

As pointed out in the previous chapter, it is of vital importance to consider a migrant's internal factors in the decision making process of staying or leaving. The analysis chapter demonstrated that it is not only lack of satisfying jobs in the sending country and higher salaries and increased job possibilities in the receiving country that will determine if a potential migrant will migrate and, if he/she migrates, will settle permanently in the country of immigration.

6.0.1.2.1 *Relation to nature.*

The interviewees pointed out several factors important for their feeling of wellbeing in Norway. Interestingly enough, a few of the same factors were evaluated positive by some and negative by others. One of these was the interviewees' relation to sports and nature. Some of them even explained that this interest had increased in value for them, and that they had substituted former interests (that they were unable to practice in Stavanger) with spending time outdoors, doing sports, hiking, biking etc. in their everyday life. However, a lack of interest in sport and nature also seemed to potentially spur on a feeling of being different from Norwegians in general and not fitting in.

6.0.1.2.2 *Integrating into work culture.*

Similarly, there was a disagreement among the interviewees about to what extent they found certain aspect of their present work environment positive or negative. This related in particular to what may be explained as a more generous atmosphere, less pressure to perform, less competitive and more focused on cooperation, than what they were used to. Some of the interviewees seemed to wholeheartedly embrace this culture, while others were more hesitant, or expressed that they struggled with accepting the culture. What is particularly interesting here is those of the interviewees who expressed that they had struggled with staying motivated the first months, however, they had come to terms with it by finding their own, personal ways to maintain motivation (even though, this was still an ongoing process).

6.0.2 *Integration: Relating to Norwegians and the Norwegian society.*

Most of the interviewees, except Andrzej, answered that they were positive to integrating into the Norwegian society. However, since integration is a process of adaptation that lasts over a long period of time, and has various challenges depending on changes in life situation (i.e. buying house, getting married, having children) it is uncertain if all of the interviewees were able to relate to the challenges integration would mean for them. In particular this may be true for the interviewees that had been in the country for only three months.

Attitudes to life in Norway and what the interviewees experienced as the Norwegian culture varied. Those who seemed to feel the most difficulties with adapting to the Norwegian

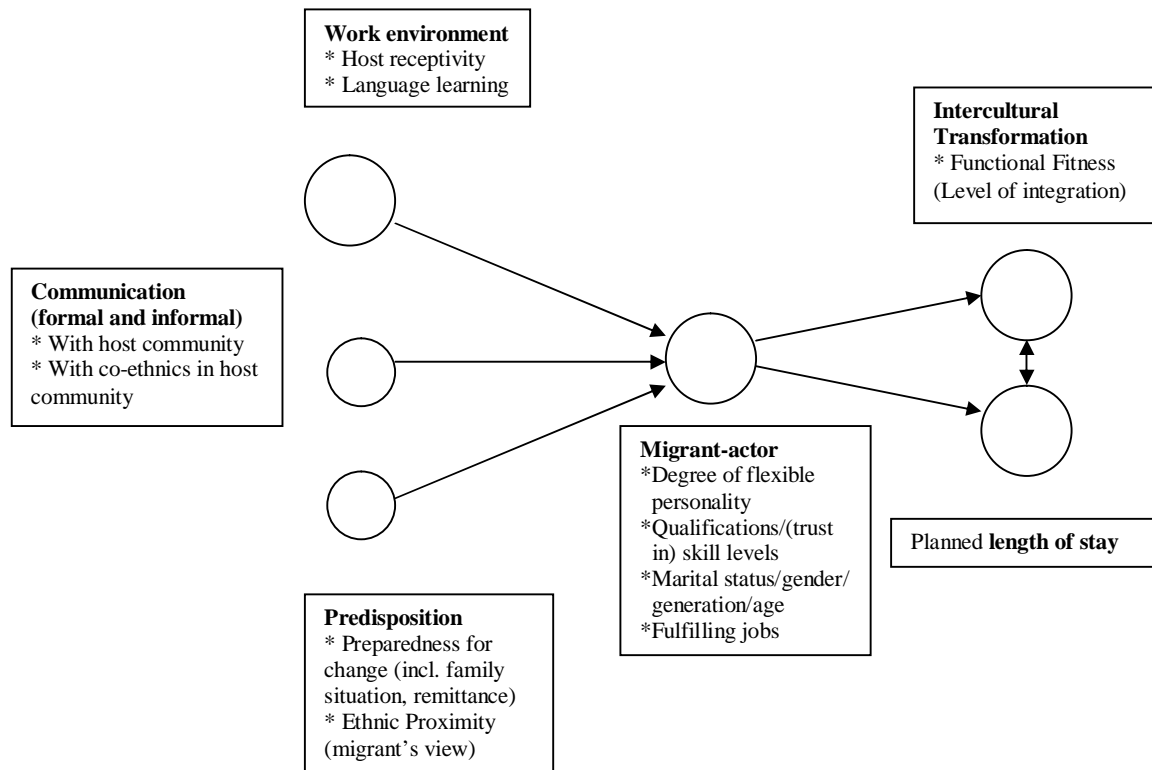
society, expressed that they had difficulties with what Kim (2005) calls *intrinsic ethnic markers*. This means that they found that foundational values, including how to relate to friends, were experienced to be so dramatically different from their own that they were felt to be hindrances for developing close friendships.

For most of the interviewees, relating to Norwegians could be challenging, partly because they were generally experienced to be less open and including than what the interviewees were used to, and partly because they were afraid that Norwegians would have negative attitudes to their nationality. However, several of them expressed that the initial work of getting to know a Norwegian eventually would pay off with a lasting friendship. As mentioned before, the Stavanger region consists of a strong community of internationals, and for the foreigners the international community is a part of the Norwegian community, but still somehow separate from it. Even though there are differences between the communities of those working in high and low skilled jobs, there are still many foreigners of various nationalities, working in the entire specter of skill level in the area. The communities seem to some extent to function as traditional ethnic communities are considered to do; a cushion towards the national culture, and facilitating in the adaptation process. None of the interviewees had only Norwegian friends, and Andrzej was the only one without friends from other countries than his home country. One might say that many of the foreign workers might experience more of an international exposure, than a traditional Norwegian exposure, which again most likely will result in a less stressful adaptation process.

When migrating to a new culture and environment the adaptation process starts immediately as the communication in and within the new location takes place. It is a process of give and take, evaluating advantages and disadvantages with home country and the new environment. As the old is evaluated towards the new, some issues are felt to become stronger, other weaker, some are felt more positive, some more negative. Some of the interviewees expressed that moving to Norway involved many positive factors, and had changed their perspective on their home country to the extent that they could not move back or were more hesitant when considering moving back.

6.0.3 Model of adaptation.

So what is it that will cause some of the Interviewees to settle and/or integrate, and some to leave, and how does this relate to the model of adaptation (page 25)? The model provided the basis for the research, and, as shown below, the results led to some alterations compared to the initial outline.



As the analysis chapter has demonstrated, both *work environment*, *communication* and *predisposition* will influence the migrant's experience of living in Norway, and ultimately influence the decision on staying or leaving. In this updated model the subject *occupational level* had been removed from the *Work environment* variable, the general occupational level in the work environment did not seem to have any particular relevance to the interviewees' experiences. Under the variable *Planned length of stay*, the three different time spans; *less than three years*, *more than three years* and *indefinite*, seemed to be irrelevant for this study and are removed. The most important change is found under the *Migrant-actor* variable. Four subjects have been added: *degree of flexible personality*, *(trust in) skill level*, *marital status/gender/generation/age* and *fulfilling jobs*. This study found that all these issues had relevance for the migrant's decision making process.

At the outset of this study, the interviewees' work situation was considered to be highly relevant for the decision making process. In addition, the pilot demonstrated that the interviewees' *predispositions* were more important as an incentive to move abroad than first expected, and were influencing the decision making process to a larger extent than initially assumed. This study confirmed the importance of the *work environment*, however, as the findings have demonstrated, interviewees with similar backgrounds reacted completely different to the same work environment. This finding indicates that there must be something else determining a person's reaction to the work environment, and this is what is implemented in the model as *degree of flexible personality*. Kim (2005) also discusses different personality traits and how they will influence the ability to adapt, and this finding also confirms Kim's theory, and it means here *the ability to be flexible in the manner of changing and incorporate new things the country of immigration has to offer*. The *degree of flexible personality* is demonstrated for example by Bogdan and Nadja, being willing and able to find ways to adapt to their new work environment and life in Norway. Vyacheslav, on the other hand, seems to feel that the distance between what is important for him, and what he finds in the culture of his surroundings and his company, is too far to be able to adapt to. The importance of (*trust in*) *skill level* is discussed above and the *marital status/gender/generation/age* subject also could be directly determining whether one of the interviewees would stay or not.

As mentioned above, *predispositions* seemed to play an important role in regards to staying or not, however, this might be more indirectly as a positive motivation to move is likely to spur on an adaptation process (Kim, 2005). In addition, better conditions at work (i.e. better salary, long term contract) counted toward staying with a job offering what they could not have at home. All of the interviewees left because the labour markets in their home countries could not offer them satisfactory jobs, and none of them expected this situation to change in the near future. That means that the option of going home is viewed negatively, and the motivation to establish a life for themselves outside of home viewed positively. However, by itself, *predispositions* do not directly contribute to the decision of staying in Norway or not, rather to staying abroad with an employer offering better conditions than at home.

Similar, the *ethnic proximity* variable is not strongly confirmed as contributing negatively or positively to staying long term in Norway. Moreover, none of the interviewees confirmed *extrinsic ethnic markers*¹¹ to be relevant for them. Only two of the interviewees confirmed that *intrinsic ethnic markers*; cultural traits in the general local population that they found difficult to accept and handle, was important for them. Even though both of them expressed frustration over these issues, they did not consider them to be determining for staying or leaving. Nevertheless, they were rather regarded as obstacles to integration into the local society.

Communication was mentioned by all the interviewees, except for Andrzej, as being of vital importance. As discussed above, both relations to Norwegians, co-nationals and internationals were parts of daily life for the interviewees. Relation to Norwegians seemed to cause the most frustration, however, since the interviewees had satisfying communication situation with other nationalities, this did not seem to be determining for their degree of wellbeing.

6.0.3.1 Relation between integration and settling.

This study confirms that there is a relation between degree of integration and plans about staying in the country. In particular, those who do not plan to stay, or are hesitant about staying, are less likely to integrate. However, in the decision-making process, this might not turn out so straight forward. Considering Vyacheslav again, he expressed that felt very different from Norwegians, and the work culture of less pressure to perform seemed to hold values which he could not accept. These difficulties resulted in not being able to adapt, because the distance felt was too significant.

6.0.3.2 Language.

Being able to communicate effectively with fellow workers and understand information related to work seemed to be what was felt to be the most important. Given the various work environments, both English and Norwegian could serve this purpose. For those who could use English at work, the motivation to learn Norwegian seemed to be lower. Since they more effectively could get their point across by using English, it was difficult to change to

¹¹ See p.73 ff. for explanation.

speaking Norwegian (even though they had attended Norwegian classes) and they felt incompetent in mastering the language. However, most felt motivated to learn Norwegian for personal reasons, being able to more effectively communicate with the surrounding society. For those who worked in a Norwegian speaking environment, the motivation to learn Norwegian was very strong. It was clear to several of the interviewees that since much of important information about living in Norway (i.e. healthcare, banking) is in Norwegian, it is a drawback not to master the language. Finally, this study also shows the disadvantage of working in Norway and not speaking Norwegian or English. Being fully dependent on an interpreter for all communication with employer or host society puts the migrant in a vulnerable position. He/she will not be able to find information on his own, and make sure that his rights are met (it is important to point out that there is nothing indicating that this should be the case for any of the interviewees). The negative consequences of being a labour migrant without being able to effectively communicate with the host society is documented in a number of research projects and documents (i.e. Integreringskart 2007 (2007) and Polonia in Oslo (2007)).

6.1 Conclusions

This study has been a qualitative study, interviewing 10 labour migrants from three different countries, all living in the Stavanger area. All should be on permanent contract, and none should have lived longer than three years in Norway. The reason for this is that those who do not desire to stay in Norway have probably already left after three- four years, and the purpose of this study is in particular to find reasons why people decide to stay or to leave. The aim of the study has been to find what factors contribute to the migrant's decision making process of staying or leaving the country, and to what extent they intent to integrate into the general host society or not. The findings show that these decisions are based on several factors that often are combined when considering what to do. This study found the following among the 10 interviewees:

Most likely to leave:

- Trust in skill level
- Not married or having family
- Not having a flexible personality

- Feeling value distance to Norwegians and the Norwegian society
- Feeling value distance to work culture
- Having family abroad
- Not finding the job personally satisfying

Most likely to stay:

- Married or planning to have a family (living in Norway)
- Having a flexible personality
- Enjoying outdoors activities
- Ability to accept work culture
- Ability to establish close relationships with Norwegians and/or other internationals
- Mastering English and learning Norwegian
- Finding work personally satisfying
- Good relations to co-workers
- Owning apartment or house in Norway
- Not finding acceptable jobs in home country

The study did not find a strong relation to the interviewees' reception in Norway and the decision to stay. This might be partly because none of the interviewees expressed that they had predominantly negative experiences when received in Norway, or expressed negative experiences when arriving as reasons for considering leaving the country. The research also found that there is a relation between staying and integrating, in particular a lack of integration when the interviewee did not intend to stay, or was hesitant about staying.

Moreover, the study also found that the international community most likely plays an important role in the adaptation process of newly arrived foreigners. It seems like this community has taken over the role of traditional ethnic communities, and labour migrants find practical support and develop relations with other internationals, as well as it serves as a cushion towards the local community. It is uncertain how it will influence a migrant in the decision to stay or leave, however it is possible that a migrant will feel less attached to the society at large when socializing within this community, and may therefore be more likely to

leave. On the other hand, the opposite may as well happen, given the social support the community provides to foreigners.

6.1.1 The importance of personality.

The study demonstrates that personality plays an important role in the making the decision of staying or leaving, in particular for those migrants who feels that the options are open for them. As seen above, work culture, communication and predispositions are of vital importance, however, it is the way the labour migrants reacts to these issues that is determining what the outcome will be. This is why this study has deployed the term a *flexible personality*. This is particularly important in situations where work culture and/or local culture may differ considerably from a labour migrant's country of origin.

6.1.2 Proposed actions.

As seen above, Norway's need for labour migrants will continue in the future (Rogstad, 2007, Integreringskart, 2007, White Paper no 18, 2008). Unless the intention is to employ labour migrants on contracts for a limited period, efforts may be made in order to facilitate for the migrants settling for a longer period. Already in the interview process, potential employees can be interviewed with the "Most likely to stay" points (pages 89-90) in mind.

The family dimension seems to be an important factor; having a family or starting up a family were incentives for long term settlement. Dual career programs for foreign employees may be an important policy issue in order to both attract qualified migrants, and to facilitate for long term employment. Furthermore, this study suggests to regularly following up labour migrants, particularly having the adaptation process in mind. In the case of the interviewees above, Vyacheslav's struggling with the work culture would most likely have been discovered, and efforts to reduce his discomfort could have been taken. The study shows that even if companies consist of an international work force, the cross-cultural challenges may still be powerful, and it is important to take action at an early stage.

6.1.3 Issues for further research.

Keeping this study in mind, it would be particularly interesting to follow up all the 10 interviewees, if possible, to see what choices they have made, and why. Are decisions based

on their experiences and their struggles in 2008, or have other elements, unknown in 2008, become decisive? Of major interest would also be a study of the international community in Stavanger. Who does it actually consist of? What impact does it have on the adaptation process? Is it strengthening a migrants' connection to the local environment, or does it serve the opposite purpose? Furthermore, the focus of this research has not been to clearly distinguish between migrants leaving the country but staying with the company, or leaving the country and the company. For further investigation, there is a need to make a clear distinction between these two decision making outcomes.

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APPENDIX I

Interview Guide

- 1 Name
- 2 Age
- 3 Family situation; Norway and Portugal
- 4 Education
- 5 Job in Norway, and job in Portugal
- 6 How long lived in Norway
- 7 Why did you decide to move to Norway?
 - a. Did you know much about Norway before you came, i.e. know someone who had been here before?
 - b. How was your job situation in Portugal?
 - c. How were your career possibilities in Portugal?
- 8 How did your company assist you with moving to Norway and introducing you to living here?
 - a. What did you like about this, and what did you not like?
 - b. Have you experienced differences in work culture Norway/Portugal?
 - c. Were you prepared for differences in work culture compared to Portugal? In case, what?
 - d. Who do you communicate with at work? How would you describe the quality of communication with your co-workers, socially and language wise?
 - e. Do you miss something at work/wish something could have been different?
- 9 Any specific situations you have experienced at work that you found uncomfortable? How did you handle this, and what do you think about it in aftermath?
- 10 Do you learn Norwegian?
 - a. If so, how do you like learning the language, and do you regard it as useful?
 - b. If not, why do you not take language classes?
- 11 Do you associate with other Portuguese here in Stavanger?
 - a. What does it mean to you to meet others from you home country?

- b. How close/distant do you feel culturally to Norwegians?
 - i. What importance does this have for your experience of living in Norway?
 - ii. Do you have Norwegian friends?
- 12 How long do you think you will be staying in Norway?
 - a. If you should decide to stay, why would you do so/what factors would count as positive?
 - b. If you should decide not to stay, what would count as negative?
 - i. Would you go back to Portugal, or to another country?
- 13 While you are in Norway, what would you participate in in order to become an integrated part of the Norwegian society?
 - a. Or is it enough to work and socialize with co-workers, the international community and other Portuguese?
- 14 If you should imagine the optimal situation in Norway, that would leave you with no doubt concerning your continued staying here. How would that situation be?

APPENDIX II

Interview Guide II

- 1 Name
- 2 Age
- 3 Family situation; Norway and home country
- 4 Education
- 5 Job in Norway, and job in home country
- 6 How long lived in Norway
- 7 Why did you decide to come to Norway to work?
 - a. Did you know much about Norway before you came, i.e. know someone who had been here before?
 - b. How was your job situation in your home country?
 - c. How were your career possibilities in your home country?
- 8 Did your company assist you with moving to Norway and introducing you to living here?
 - a. Have you experienced differences in work culture Norway/your home country?
 - b. Were you prepared for differences in work cultures? In case, what?
 - c. Who do you communicate with at work? How would you describe the quality of communication with your co-workers, socially and language wise?
 - d. Do you miss something at work/wish something could have been different?
- 9 Any specific situations you have experienced at work that you found uncomfortable? How did you handle this, and what do you think about it in aftermath?
- 10 Do you learn Norwegian?
 - a. If so, how do you like learning the language, and do you regard it as useful?
 - b. If not, why do you not take language classes?
- 11 Do you associate with other from your home country?
 - a. What does it mean to you to meet others from your home country?
 - b. How close/distant do you feel culturally to Norwegians?

- i. What importance does this have for your experience of living in Norway?
 - ii. Do you have Norwegian friends?
- 12 How long do you think you will be staying/working in Norway?
 - a. If you should decide to stay, why would you do so/what factors would count as positive?
 - b. If you should decide not to stay, what would count as negative?
 - i. Would you go back to your home country, or to another country?
- 13 While you are in Norway, what would you participate in in order to become an integrated part of the Norwegian society?
 - a. Or is it enough to work and socialize with co-workers, the international community and others from your home country?
- 14 If you should imagine the optimal situation in Norway, that would leave you with no doubt concerning your continued staying here. How would that situation be?
- 15 Would you recommend others from your country to find work in Norway?
 - a. What would you, in case, explain as the major benefits by living and working here?
 - b. (What would you warn them about?)
- 16 If the labour market changed in your home country in such a way that you would expect to find a job with satisfying conditions, would you move back then?