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Declaration

I, Daisuke Nakata, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for the award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Date.....

Acknowledgement

I have so much gratitude for all of you who have helped me here and there and everywhere. You all have been my inspiration, reason, and hope for brighter days. And a special thanks to Oslo for taking me in.

Abstract

With the ever-increasing inflow of immigrants, issues surrounding immigration and immigrants in Oslo/Norway continue to be a hot topic in Norwegian news media and public debate today. In the academia, immigration-related topics have been likewise an interest of many social science researchers. As an attempt to address familiar topics in the field of immigration studies from a fresh and different perspective, this paper is a social anthropological study which focuses on immigrant musicians in the multicultural Oslo as a target group. The main objectives of the paper are to look into 'empowerment' of immigrants and identity construction of immigrants in a highly developed multicultural society as well as to examine a number of immigration-related topics and concepts in the course of addressing the first two themes. Issues and concept of 'empowerment' of immigrants are explored primarily through music and in the context of their experience as an immigrant artist and their daily lives in Oslo. The identity construction of immigrants is similarly analyzed based on their perspectives as they shared thoughts in relation to a unique artistic environment of the multicultural Oslo, their basic ethnicity/nationality-based identity and the general population of their host society. A number of relevant topics and concepts in the field of immigration studies are addressed and analyzed according to voices of local immigrant artists as well as relevant literature in the subject area. Despite being considered as a highly developed multicultural society, Oslo may have potential for further development as evident in its art/music scene characterized by the infusion cultural diversity and hybridization.

Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1. Empowerment through music in a highly developed multicultural society.....	1
1.2. Introducing the target group and the location	4
1.3. Identity construction of immigrants and related topics.....	5
1.4. The research objectives and questions.....	6
2. Concepts.....	8
2.1. Empowerment.....	8
2.2. Assimilation and integration in relation to empowerment.....	10
2.3. Multiculturalism.....	12
2.4. Immigrants and immigrant backgrounds.....	13
2.5. Minority status.....	14
2.6. 'Native' and 'host society'.....	15
2.7. Concepts of identity construction.....	17
2.8. Conceptualizing the local scene.....	19
3. Study Area: Oslo, Norway	23
3.1. Music in the multicultural Oslo.....	23
3.2. Immigration in Oslo/Norway.....	25
3.3. Recent issues surrounding immigration.....	26
3.4. Social studies in Oslo through music and art.....	28
4. Research Methods.....	31
4.1. Qualitative interpretative research	31
4.2. Ethnography and participatory research.....	32
4.3. Participant Observation.....	34
4.4. Local Artists as Engaged Anthropologists.....	35
4.5. Reflections on data collection methods.....	36
4.6. Sampling the target group of the research.....	38
4.7. Reflections on ethnographic research process.....	39
4.8. Keeping records.....	41

4.9. Ontological and epistemological concerns.....	41
5. Findings/Analysis	45
5.1. Introductory remarks.....	45
5.2. Empowerment through music in a multicultural society.....	47
5.3. Identity-Identification in the context of a highly multicultural society.....	59
6. Concluding section.....	70
6.1. Perceptions of artists on migration.....	70
6.2. Concluding remarks.....	75
Reference List.....	78

1.Introduction

1.1. Empowerment through music in a highly developed multicultural society

“Norway needs more development”, said a New York City-bound filmmaker from the Caribbeans who has been struggling to establish himself in a totally new environment. While exploring issues on immigrant and integration in Oslo, it has become apparent, in spite of being considered as one of the richest and the most developed societies, Oslo/Norway is still in the development phase to something greater while dealing with the massive inflow of newcomers into the society. There are indeed countless different approaches one could take to address these issues and it is true that many things have been said and done already. Yet, having witnessed what seems to be a flourishing art scene in Oslo, which can be characterized by its diversity and hybridization of cultures, it seemed that the topics related to immigration studies can be freshly addressed from the viewpoints of local artists. As my interest has always lain in art and cultures, this seemed to be an excellent opportunity to conduct such a social research.

So as to begin a different type of immigration study in Oslo from a new perspective, art and artists, more specifically music and musicians, have been eventually decided as the primary subject of the research: empowerment of immigrants in the society of Oslo through music and involvement in such a scene. Envisaging music as an empowerment agent to people at an individual level and societal level may be an overly romanticized and idealistic notion. Merely a wishful thinking perhaps. However, it is a notion that is worth communicating. For instance, the positive uplifting or calming effects and mental/psychological well-being that music provides have been well-examined in the field of psychology or cognitive science.¹² It is simply because the power of music can be so influential and inspiring, however naïve it may sound. Millions of people who have overcome hardships in life empowered by music could testify it. Everyone at some point has gone through tough periods in life with help of their favorite songs. It seems to be a common notion universally and the history of mankind shows

¹.Greasley, A & Lamont, A (2011). “Exploring engagement with music in everyday life using experience sampling methodology,” *Musicae Scientiae*, vol. 15, no.1, (Mar. 2011):45-71

².Schäfer, T., Sedlmeier, P., Städtler, C., & Huron, D. (2013).The psychological functions of music listening. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 1, 0. 4:511

that music has been always an enigmatic force that is able to affect individuals psychologically, and to mobilize masses socially and politically, as seen in social and political movements all over the world (Eyerman & Jamison 1998, Schäfer, Sedlmeier, Städtler & Huron 2013). Therefore, the whole research project has begun and evolved from the simple question of how, and in what way, music could empower immigrant artists living in the contemporary multicultural society of Oslo and it has spawned a few other interesting topics that can be addressed at the same time as an immigration study; identity construction of immigrants in the multicultural society and how the local artists perceive and relate to issues surrounding immigration today.

First of all, as for discussing the empowerment potential of music in relation to topics discussed within immigration studies, the concept and definition of the term 'empowerment' needs to be explored. Oxford English dictionary³ defines the term 'to empower' as follows; "with *object*, make (someone) stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights: movements to empower the poor". This makes the term empowerment look more generic and free of political/ideological undertones, compared to other commonly employed terms such as 'integration' or 'assimilation' that are often politicized and inevitably carry ideological views of speakers towards immigration. However, this may not necessarily be the case when the term 'empowerment' is applied at societal level beyond individual feelings of empowerment that are mostly private and psychological matters. In the field of social science, the term empowerment can be conceptualized in different manners than the one which focuses on the individual's empowered state of being able to live their lives strongly and pursue their goals with improved ability and capability (Ashcroft 1987).

Concerning empowerment at larger societal level, empowerment is often linked with oppressed groups of society and processes of structural changes in society, which allows the oppressed to challenge the oppressive social structure with greater ability, capability and well-being. The Civil Rights movement can be cited as a great example to illustrate empowerment at a larger societal scale as the oppressed group of African Americans fought for equality (Sletter 1991). In the context of development studies, the term 'empowerment' likewise puts

³. "Empower". Oxford Dictionaries. Oxford University Press.
<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/empower>

an emphasis on the empowerment of the oppressed in a collective sense in relation to the social class structure, and subsequent change which gives them greater mobility, equality, or sense of belonging to community/society; empowerment has a lot to do with increased social justice, mobility and equality in society with certain power structure where certain groups are more dominant over others. Empowerment is one of the popularized slogans utilized in the field of development and the term comprehensively covers the promotion of positive societal, economic, political, cultural changes focusing on the oppressed vulnerable group of people in society at grass-roots level (Mayo & Craig 2004). Therefore, the focus of empowerment in development studies can be conceptualized as the promotion greater social, political, cultural and economic participation for subordinate groups of people in society.

This conceptualization, as well as the empowerment in a more straightforward dictionary sense which focuses on well-being of individuals, should be also applicable in the field of immigration studies. But this does not mean to assume that all the immigrants can be categorized as subordinate in the society of Oslo. Such assumption would be misleading and restrictive as the issue of empowerment should be addressed effectively by examining many different perspectives of every different individual who occupies various social positions. Taking this into consideration, the target group of this research is immigrant musicians in the most broad and inclusive sense regardless of their socio-economic position in society and background. The objective is therefore to examine how music can empower immigrants, and people in general, both at individual level and societal level through perspectives of immigrant artists. Empowerment here concerns not only personal/individual feelings of being empowered with greater ability and capability, but also a greater degree of participation in society and positive changes which enable people in a subordinate position to advance in society. The research assesses individual cases of both immigrant and non-immigrant musicians, and from that point, the general applicability of the empowerment proposition will be inductively addressed.

1.2. Introducing the target group and the location

The primary target group of my research is defined as immigrant musicians and musicians with immigrant background(s) in Oslo. The term 'immigrant musicians' here points to any active musicians in Oslo who do not originate from Norway and have moved to Norway/Oslo at one point of their lives, regardless of their length of residency. 'Musicians with immigrant background(s)' refers to any musicians who have any kind of non-Norwegian ethnic background. As long as they are active musicians, that is to say they actively perform or rehearse in Oslo, no one was excluded from the research on the basis of their style of music, experiences, or length of residency in Norway/Oslo and so on. This highly inclusive approach was employed so as to effectively address one of my research objectives; to look into identity construction of different immigrant artists in a highly multicultural environment. Some immigrants, for instance, may not even identify themselves as immigrants and even see themselves as part of the native population. Finding out how they identify themselves in the relevant contexts of the multicultural Oslo and in its music/artist scene would give valuable insights to examine identity construction of immigrant population. Also, it should be noted here that the terms 'musician' and 'artist' are used almost interchangeably; musicians are naturally a type of artists but the former may be used to emphasize the fact that they are a certain type of artists who specialize in music. In the following section of 'Concepts' and 'Research Methods', the method of selecting the target group will be further elaborated.

The multicultural city of Oslo is the physical location of the research and the music scene of Oslo is the object of this anthropological study. The Oslo music scene is conceptualized as a fluid and inclusive arena that is comprised of individuals that are directly or indirectly involved in creative processes and performances of music as well as key physical locations such as music venues and rehearsal spaces they frequent. This very inclusive approach of conceptualizing a music/art scene was borrowed from Howard Becker (1992) who elaborated the concept of 'Art Worlds'. This venture into the Oslo local music scene is essentially an investigation or exploration into one complex and expansive 'art world'. Together with the selection of my research target group, this point will be further expanded in the coming sections and they will address why such an inclusive approach was eventually opted.

In relation to the empowerment potential of music, the local music scene of Oslo is envisaged as a platform for expressing opinions, feelings and emotions of people; immigrant musicians and groups of people they may represent are concerned in this case. It should be meaningful to examine how musicians express themselves, or sometimes represent their respective group of self-identification, through their performance and production as well as how they are reflected in their day-to-day activities and conversations; as musicians may manifest their emotions and feeling, frustration, anger, desire, expectation, hope and happiness in various forms in their art. Furthermore, another notable function of the music scene to be explored is its functions as immigrant musicians' place for socializing and networking with like-minded artists of the 'native' population, and importantly, with their audience which is primarily comprised of the local residents of Oslo. There is an importance in examining the local music scene because it should be one of the first places where they could present and express themselves as artists. Involvement in the music scene should entail a number of positive outcomes for immigrant artists; a sense of confidence, (self)-respect, acceptance and empowerment that could facilitate them to feel strong in their host society where they may be perceived as outsiders to varying degrees. Furthermore, this kind of positive interactions through music should bridge gaps that may exist between immigrants and the local native population for better mutual understanding and flourishing of society enriched with diversity. Nonetheless, this is of course an open question that will be investigated further in the paper.

1.3. Identity construction of immigrants and related topics

Given that Oslo today is a very multicultural environment consisting of individuals that carry very diverse backgrounds, values, ideas and thoughts, it has been also in my interest to discover how the local musicians with immigrant backgrounds identify themselves in relation to the 'native' Norwegian population and Norwegian culture of host society. Thus, the examination of their process of identity construction in the highly multicultural setting of Oslo was eventually set as another one of my research objectives. Furthermore, while addressing the identity construction of immigrant artists, many other topics, terms and concepts frequently mentioned in the field of immigration studies can be explored at the same time.

So far in this paper, a few terms from the field of immigration studies ('native population', 'host society', 'multiculturalism' and 'empowerment') have been applied casually. They are in obvious need of a further clarification and it will be addressed in the next section. However, not only addressing these terms from my inputs based on relevant literature, it is also interesting to see how immigrant artists perceive these concepts and issues as they are themselves participants/members of such a diversified society and the music scene of Oslo. Musicians/artists are after all a certain ilk of people who normally have a lot to say on many things. So insights from the artists should give us a fresh perspective on these topics of immigration studies that have been extensively explored in the recent years and remain highly relevant in today's Oslo/Norway.

1.4. The research objectives and questions

Finally, so as to sum up what has been covered so far and is intended to be achieved in this research, hereby the main research objectives and questions are presented in the following three points.

1.) **Empowerment** - to examine how music has empowered, and can empower, local musicians with immigrant or non-immigrant backgrounds as well as others involved in the local music scene at personal/individual level. The concept of empowerment will be examined in the context of individuals' social status and relations to others in society. The research question of how music and involvement in the local scene could function as an empowerment agent for themselves and others will be addressed primarily focusing on individual's personal experiences of being involved in music.

2.) **Identity-identification** - to collect and analyze perceptions and voices of immigrant musicians concerning their self-identification in host society, their relations to their place of origin and Norwegian identity. The research question here concerns where they locate themselves in the mosaic of society and how their identity(ies) is constructed as an artist and an individual in society. Furthermore, their perceptions on other relevant issues such

integration/assimilation, nationalism, transnationalism, multiculturalism will be explored – their opinions and viewpoints will be collected and applied to examine the process of identity construction in the highly multicultural environment of Oslo today.

3.) **Artists' perceptions on immigration issues** – in course of addressing the two objectives raised above, the paper aims to examine how local artists in Oslo perceive and relate to issues and concepts frequently questioned in the area of immigration studies in the context of Oslo today; ultimately to inquire the big question of whether the music scene of Oslo facilitates mutual understanding between people with different backgrounds and contributes to flourishing of society enriched with diversity and vibrant art culture.

These are the three main points that the research is oriented around. Voices, perspectives and experiences from local musicians in Oslo will be the primary analytical tools to address these points. These research questions and objectives do not aim to discover anything new but rather aim to gain a deeper understanding of things people casually acknowledge and touch upon in their everyday life; it may be about how music can empower people, or it may be about how people identify themselves and others. Regarding this, a quote from Howard Becker conclude this introductory chapter; “I think it [is] generally true that sociology does not discover what no one ever knew before, in this differing from the natural sciences. Rather, good social science produces a deeper understanding of things that many people are pretty much aware of” (1982: X). Therefore, being true to the essence of this quote, the thesis hopes to deliver a deeper understanding of the points raised above.

2. Concepts

Some of the terms that have been used in the introductory section are often contested, conceptualized and interpreted differently from various perspectives. Thus, this chapter intends to provide further elaborations and discussions to those key terms and concepts that will be repeatedly used in this thesis writing.

2.1. Empowerment

First and foremost, the term 'empowerment' is the keyword in my research, and as previously mentioned, it can be a term as generic as the dictionary definition of empowerment, 'to empower/to be empowered', excluding any political or social implications. The empowerment can remain such a generic term as long as it is used in the context of individual's mental and psychological well-being at a personal level; the bottom line is that it is empowerment whenever a person feels strong and confident no matter what subject matters are concerned or circumstances may be.

However, in social studies, the term 'empowerment' concerns more than psychological well-being of individuals as Hill (2003:120) points out accordingly; "most social scientists, however, recognize power as a critical concept, one that incorporates social, psychological, cultural, and economic dimensions." The concept of empowerment and power is applied commonly to a certain subordinate/oppressed group of people in relations to social structure they are put in, and social changes which enable them to challenge such structure (Sleeter 1991). The term empowerment has increasingly begun to be employed often in social and economic development policies by policymakers, scholars, activists and alike in the contemporary time of neoliberalism, highlighting the term's bottom-up development implication in relations to a greater social, cultural and economic participation and recognition of subordinate groups in the mainstream society. Empowerment in this sense can be seen in Civil Rights movement in the pre-neoliberalism era as aforementioned. In the new millennium, it is widely employed by feminist and leftist groups favoring the bottom-up grass-roots level aspect concerning

mobilization and social, economic, and political participation and determination of the oppressed (Sharma 2008).

On the other hand, the term empowerment has been likewise mobilized by top-level neoliberal politicians who often appear to be ideologically opposing to those leftist or feminist activists. This is because 'empowerment', when applied to emphasize social and economic participation of subordinate 'subaltern' group of people, points to their increased participation and integration in the neoliberal order (Cruikshank 1999). The term empowerment here is appropriated by the neoliberal politicians in order to preserve and expand such economic/social order and power relations which the political left would fight against as they advocate to increase ability and capacity of the oppressed for greater social and political mobility and determination which eventually should lead to political resistance against the dominant. The perception and application of 'empowerment' can be political, and thus contradictory at times, depending on which side of the political spectrum one locate themselves, or how they wish to conceptualize social, economic, political and cultural changes as outcomes of empowerment. However, drawing references to Amartya Sen's capability approach, what the term empowerment generically entails in the context of social studies could be summarized as a greater mobility and participation, ability and capability of self-determination in relation to their preferences in different spheres of people's lives such as economic, social, political and cultural (Hull 2003).

It is inevitable that the term empowerment becomes politicized and more than a generic term which only focuses on individual's well-being at personal level. Especially when applied in the field of development and immigration studies, it is about some social structure and inevitably points to power relations in which certain groups find themselves in need of empowerment for various consequences which may include a greater social/political/economic/cultural participation, recognition, mobilization and preservation of the existing order and system, or challenge and resistance to such order and system (Cruikshank 1999). So as to apply this point to this specific research, empowerment needs further elaboration and can be better understood in relation to other terms frequently used in immigration studies; 'assimilation' and 'integration'. They are a lot more well-defined and applied with a case-specific definition, often

at collective level. Moreover, they are not as value-free and usually come with political and ideological implications.

2.2. Assimilation and integration in relation to empowerment

The term 'assimilation' is applied in relation to a dominant group in society to which one has to assimilate themselves. Concerning immigration/immigrants, assimilation points to the process in which immigrants must change their way of living according to norms, behaviors, custom and culture of a dominant group, in order to be accepted as part of society (Maagerø & Simonsen 2008). This inevitably exposes a certain power structure in a given society and promoting 'assimilation' reassures and facilitates to maintain that power structure in which one group asserts dominance over others and strives to maintain mono-cultural society. Dating back to the days of colonialism, France is famous for strictly pushing the assimilation model, forcing the French language and culture and shaping 'others' into Frenchman. That is essentially the idea of assimilation and pushing assimilation would entail the oppression and negation of non-Norwegian cultures and identities. One could possibly see assimilation of immigrants into the mainstream Norwegian population as empowerment at societal level on the basis of potentially greater social/economic mobilization and participation; assimilation to the existing dominant cultural norms and belief/value system may produce a greater mobility in the existing social order.

However, the assimilation model points to preservation of the existing social structure and negation of other cultural beliefs, values and norms. Thus, it is worth remarking that this concept of assimilation hardly goes in accordance with the idea of multiculturalism that Arbeidpartiet⁴ advocates. As a policy, it may have become out of touch with the reality of multicultural Oslo over the decades. In the present day Norway, it is regarded that Norway has stepped away from the assimilation model to promotion of the integration model over 1960s and 1970s (Maagerø & Simonsen 2008).

⁴. Arbeidpartiet (The Labor Party) was the ruling party in Norway at the time of writing (Summer 2013). Though Arbeidpartiet remains the biggest single party in Norway, the political leadership has shifted to the Conservative and Progress parties in the election of autumn 2013. See: BBC News Europe. (2013). Norway Election: Conservative Erna Solberg Triumphs. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-24014551>

The term 'integration' emphasizes diversity and respects different cultures and backgrounds. This should be considered as a natural move in the time of the increasing flow of immigrants; the forced assimilation is no longer a viable option in the ideal of multiculturalism for policymakers. The ideal of integration model is to build a society where individuals with diverse backgrounds respect each other and coexist in harmony. Compared to assimilation, it points to a power structure that inherently exists in a given society in a lesser degree, and it does not necessarily force people to conform to the dominant in order to be accepted in society (Maagerø & Simonsen 2008). This is evidently true to the empowerment concept discussed above, which emphasizes those with a limited ability and capability to participate socially and culturally in society.

When it comes to immigration and immigrants in Norway, opinions and perceptions vary a lot depending on what political/ideological views one subscribes to as different political parties have different ideologies and agendas. Not everyone is necessarily in favor of integration and multiculturalism; therefore the term integration also carries certain political/ideological implications just as the term assimilation does. However, the time of forced assimilation is over today and integration is generally a norm in Norway. Thus, this research mainly concerns whether the empowerment through music could promote integration or help immigrants integrate in society, referring to the concept of empowerment which promotes a greater ability and capability to participate in society, socially, culturally, economically and possibly politically. Nonetheless, it is imperative to keep in mind the multifacetedness of the term empowerment, as the research concerns immigrant artists with diverse socio-economic backgrounds with different views and experiences in host society. Empowerment connotes different things and is nuanced differently depending on one's social, economic and political position and ideals. Therefore, the empowerment of immigrants can be addressed more effectively by being attentive to the multifacetedness of the term empowerment which contrasts the concepts of assimilation and integration and embodies a certain power structure that some immigrants may find themselves in a subordinate position.

2.3. Multiculturalism

Following this, the term 'multicultural/multiculturalism' needs elaboration as it likewise carries many different political/ideological implications. It conventionally points to diversity and tolerance in society but it is by no means a value-free term when applied in immigration studies. For instance, as a political idea, Modood (2007: 5) describes multiculturalism as follows: "I shall here mean by multiculturalism the political accommodation of minorities formed by immigration to western countries from outside the prosperous West." This may indeed capture the realities of many Western countries including Norway, where the promotion of diversity and tolerance is put on the political agenda. This, at the same time, embodies and points to a certain power structure and social/economic order of the contemporary world in which immigrants find themselves. In a more literal sense, the term 'multicultural' refers to the existence of diverse cultures, languages, ethnicities, religions and so on, within a given society. In this sense, it would be fair to say that today's Norway and Oslo are inarguably 'multicultural' and not 'mono-cultural' unlike some extreme nationalists may wish. When it is used as an adjective in a literal sense, it has little political/ideological implications as the term 'multicultural' merely points to a simple situation where you can find different groups of people with different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds in Oslo. It becomes problematic and an idea of political philosophy, only when followed by the suffix '-ism'. In this paper, the term 'multicultural' is applied primarily in the literal sense to conveniently describe the contemporary Oslo/Norway that is a diverse society and hardly mono-cultural. Yet, when applied in immigration studies, acknowledging complexities and political aspects of the term 'multiculturalism' helps us understand that the term 'multiculturalism' is a certain political doctrine that promotes diversities, tolerance and mutual respect among groups/individuals in society, in accordance with the integration model discussed above.

Although perceptions and interpretations of the term multiculturalism are up to every individual, Vasta (2009) employs social equality and participation, and cultural recognition, as key principles that constitute multiculturalism. Social participation and equality point to participation of immigrants in every sphere of society including labor market, education, politics and cultural activities, in order to maintain social equality. This calls for adequate

governmental policies to provide immigrants with equal opportunities, rights and services in education, employment, vocational training, social welfare so that they sufficiently acquire cultural and human capitals that ensure their participation in the host society. The principle of cultural recognition maintains that every migrant has their right to keep practicing their religions and customs, speaking their own languages and to establish their communities while calling for respect for differences and protection from social exclusion and discrimination. The second principle overlaps with the concept of integration, and therefore, it can be seen that multiculturalism encourages integration of immigrants and they support each other mutually in the contemporary context of Norway. Examining how this current model of multiculturalism plays a role in empowerment of immigrants has relevance in the theme of this paper. Moreover, it is also relevant to examine what kind of implications the multicultural state of society has for both immigrant and local artists along with hybridization of cultures in music/art scenes and identity construction.

2.4. Immigrants and immigrant backgrounds

In the introduction chapter, immigrant musicians and musicians with immigrant backgrounds in Oslo are noted as the target group of this research and the aim here is to make it as inclusive as possible. This decision has been taken partly because it suited one of the research objectives concerning identity construction; it is better to examine samples with diverse backgrounds to see how their identities in the shared physical space of Oslo are constructed. But it is also partly because of a practical issue of reaching as many as possible within the fairly tight research schedule. Therefore, taking this most inclusive approach possible was the most appropriate way to carry on the project. The target group includes any non-Norwegian musicians in Oslo that do not originate from Norway and have moved to Norway/Oslo at one point of their lives, regardless of their length of residency. It does not matter if they have just moved to Norway, moved when they were an infant, or come from the culturally proximate neighboring countries such as Sweden for that matter. By 'musicians with immigrant background(s)', it refers to second or third generation immigrant musicians who have a non-Norwegian ethnic background or nationality in their parentage. This did pose a problem of categorizing someone who is, for example, half-Swedish or quarter-Danish

Norwegian into the category of those with immigrant backgrounds, when they are presumably considered as the 'native' by the general public and they consider themselves so. This is a consequence of taking such an inclusive approach. Thus, when it comes to interacting with those with immigrant backgrounds, the categorization was done on a case-by-case basis, taking their individual stories into consideration; everyone had a clear understanding on their backgrounds and ancestry and presented themselves accordingly.

2.5. Minority status

As the research concerns empowerment, it was in my original intention to narrow down the target group of immigrants by applying terms such as 'minority' or 'underprivileged' that take one's socio-economic backgrounds into accounts, not only their nationalities or place of origin.

There is of course no single definition for 'immigrant' and 'minority' in Norway. But Statistisk Sentralbyrå (SSB), the Norwegian statistic bureau placed under the Ministry of Finance, offers us a number of ways we could employ to define these terms. For example, in one study, SSB⁵ (Henriksen 2006) defines the immigrant population of Norway as follows: “The immigrant population consists of persons with two foreign born parents: first-generation immigrants who have immigrated to Norway, and persons who are born in Norway with two parents that are born outside Norway (also referred to here as descendants)”. In another study⁶, SSB uses the same criteria to define 'minority' as well. This is rather very inclusive and close to my approach; however SSB adds a few 'markers' to this broad definition to further narrow down the term. By adding 'From Non-Western Countries' to the categorical definition of 'minority', for instance, it excludes those who originate from the EU/EEA countries, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand from being categorized as minority. It may have been possible to narrow down the target group of my research accordingly. Nevertheless, the definition of 'Non-Western Countries' here is rather arbitrary and highly contestable and SSB does not

⁵. Henriksen, K. (2006). Women in the Immigrant Population – Who Are They and How Are They Doing? Statistiks Sentralbyrå. <http://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/who-are-they-and-how-are-they-doing>

⁶. Statistiks Sentralbyrå 2013. Immigrant and Norwegian-born to Immigrant Parents. <http://www.ssb.no/en/innvbef>

seem to offer any rational explanation for it beyond suggesting it is meant to be common sense of sorts to the public. Furthermore, one of the main problems with defining minority simply based on their place(s) of origin is that it completely neglects individuals' socio-economic backgrounds and it would end up including a lot of those who would not fit in the minority category in a sociological sense.

Thus, one of the alternatives was to apply the sociological definition of minority referring to power relations and positions inherent in society where minority is defined as a subordinated/underprivileged group of people with less power and control compared to the rest, the majority. Being a part of minority group is not only about being mathematically outnumbered but it is also about being subordinated socially, economically and politically to the majority who can enjoy a greater opportunities for wealth, career, education, success and so on (Schaefer 2011). Concerning the aspect of empowerment, applying this definition seems to be appropriate and that is the reason why the research was initially set out to target immigrant musicians with 'underprivileged' background, pointing to the minority status in the sociological sense. However, doing so would have been extremely difficult in my preferred methods of open and informal observational research. It would have required me to be very selective and it would have eliminated great opportunities of interacting with all the other artists who may not fit in the minority category. Furthermore, making sure that my potential interviewees would fit in the criteria of minority would have been very challenging, or probably not possible at all. Therefore, the application of this sociological marker was not appropriate for this research. More importantly, for the purpose of addressing identity construction of immigrants, discovering whether or not immigrant artists consider themselves as minority in the Norwegian society and Oslo is significant, and therefore, it was better to be left open-ended.

2.6. 'Native' and 'host society'

In this research, immigrants are defined as anyone who does not originate from Norway while anyone who has non-ethnic or national Norwegian parentage within three generations are referred as ones with immigrant backgrounds in this research. In relation to this, the rest of

people in Norway are referred as the 'native population'. The term 'native' is employed to highlight the juxtaposition of those immigrant artists concerned in this research and the 'general' population of non-immigrant Norwegians in society. This juxtaposition is more of a literary device used to deliberately emphasize differences between immigrants and non-immigrants that may or may not exist at all. In a more conventional sense, in Norway, the 'native' population refers to the Sami population, the indigenous people who have been living in the northern part of Norway's geographical territory long before their region of settlement was politically divided among Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. The term 'native' in such context, referring to the Sami, is certainly used to differentiate between the Sami and the Norwegian, historically the latecomers in this context; therefore the term 'native' in this paper is likewise to highlight the fact immigrants are the latecomers in Norway in one way or another.

In a similar manner, the term 'host society' is applied to deliberately highlight an assumed social structure in which the immigrants in Norway are the latecomers in some ways and somewhat of outsiders in the Norwegian society where the 'native' population of the Norwegians are the host of immigrants and accommodate those latecomers with varying degrees. In the conventional sense of immigration studies, the term 'host society' has a connotation of the majority-minority relation; immigrants are subordinate to the dominant group of the native population and they normally seek for assimilation or integration in host society. Thus, the application of the term 'host society' points to a majority-minority relation or power relations of similar sorts as the term 'empowerment' does. Along with the term 'native population' as a literary device, the intention here is to communicate this kind of social relations that produce perceptions of immigrants and the 'native' Norwegian population held by the general public.

Whether the immigrants in Norway themselves acknowledge the notion of host society is naturally debatable and the notion itself can be contested from different perspectives. Especially as this research takes the most inclusive approach possible in defining immigrants, it is unlikely that everyone would acknowledge or approve of such notion. It is mostly up to every individual with different backgrounds who has every different take on their status in the

Norwegian society, and specifically in Oslo, a highly multicultural society where a number of micro-communities may coexist and the notion of host society may be less relevant and less applicable. Considering this, it is part of the research objectives to find out whether immigrant musicians share such notion of host society or not. Tackling this point is important as to address the issue of identity construction since perceptions of the term 'host society' would be susceptible to one's socio-economic backgrounds and position in the Norwegian society. It also reflects one's own understanding and ideological views on many other relevant issues such as majority/minority, assimilation/integration and multicultural/-ism.

2.7. Concepts of identity construction

Concerning identity construction, a few relevant concepts need exploring. Firstly, primordialist approach is an approach frequently discussed in studies of ethnic conflicts or nationalism. The view that an individual's identity is fixed to one certain ethnic origin is still widespread and relevant in studies of ethnic conflicts; thus it bears significance even in the contemporary society where individuals subscribe to multiple identities and they can be instrumentally emphasized, or de-emphasized, depending on time and place (Lake & Rothchild 1998). Together with the primordialist approach, the instrumentalist approach needs to be addressed, as it puts an emphasis on observing variations and development over time at individual level or societal level. While the primordialist approach focuses on inherent and essential characteristics and differences that categorize different cultures and groups of people, the instrumentalist approach focuses on how ethnic/national identities and their boundaries are constructed and articulated (or de-articulated) instrumentally to achieve certain political or social goals. This approach can be applied to see how their identities are instrumentally, contextually and situationally constructed, developed, or in a way manipulated, through their lives in the multicultural environment of Oslo and Norway (Ghorashi, Eriksen, Alghasi 2009). Instead of focusing on their primordialist instrumentalist ethnicity/nationality-based identity, the research primarily sets out to put an emphasis on their identity in Oslo as a musician/artist based on their mutual interests, shared space and activities, and loyalty to the scene, pointing to the concept of nationalism of the neighborhood as observed in studies of urban youth culture (Back 1995). However, when it comes to identity construction, one's basic

ethnic/national backgrounds continue playing a significant role in it and should not be treated lightly. Therefore, so as to effectively address identity construction of immigrants, it is imperative to keep these two approaches of primordialist and instrumentalist in mind.

In conjunction with these, two perspectives of constructivism and essentialism regarding identity construction are also worth mentioning. They are likewise applied mostly within studies of nationalism, ethnicity, and ethnic conflicts but they are still applicable to social/cultural anthropological research. Constructivism puts an emphasis on conscious choices and decision-makings that lead to the construction of ethnic/national community as opposed to essentialism, which assumes national and ethnic communities in the modern society originate from pre-existing static cultural communities. Essentialism maintains more or less a static view of culture and puts an emphasis on pre-existing cultural/ethnic communities that constitute one's identity in a primordialist manner. Nonetheless, as contemporary anthropology values cultural variations over time, reflexivity and conscious choices of individuals, both essentialism and the primordialism may seem to be out of line with anthropological research on identity (Eriksen 2001).

However, as my research has progressed in the contemporary society of Oslo, it turned out that this may not necessarily be the case. The academic trend may be in favor of the constructivist perspective that values cultural variations, conscious choices and reflexivity. But the essentialism's static view of culture cannot be rejected as identities of the immigrant artists in Oslo do not seem to be entirely constructed through subjective conscious choices. Identity construction, as a form of social categorization and a part of social organization, is a two-way ascription process that involves self-ascription and ascription by others, as Barth (1969) argues. It has become apparent in the course of this research that the categorical ascription based on immigrant's ethnic/national identity seems to occur commonly in Oslo and this is rather a primordialist/essentialist way of identification. Therefore, all of these approaches and perspectives need to be carefully taken into consideration as analytical tools to address immigrant musicians' identities in Oslo where different individuals with diverse

ethnic/national and socio-economic backgrounds perceive their being in relation to the native population in their host society and re-/construct their identities, situationally and instrumentally.

Nonetheless, according to the constructivism perspective that maintains ethnic or national communities are consciously constructed (Eriksen 2001), the thesis conceptualizes the local music scene of Oslo as a kind of network that constitutes of individuals who identify themselves as musicians/artists, and consequently, as a member of such network. This is to mean that the community or network of musicians/artists can be constructed in the same manner as ethnic/national communities. Taking this into consideration, the research concerning identity construction of immigrant artists primarily focuses on how local musicians in Oslo articulate their identity as musicians in Oslo and in their own music/artistic environment, with constructivism and the instrumentalist approach in mind.

2.8. Conceptualizing the local scene

Lastly, before proceeding to the section for the study area, the term 'music scene' of Oslo will be elaborated in conjunction with the aforementioned concept of 'art worlds', developed by Howard Becker (1982). Becker's concept of art worlds has been developed focusing mostly on art, or visual art to be more specific. Thus, Becker does not touch upon music in depth, or pop music for that matter. Yet, his detailed description and analysis on art worlds remain highly applicable to this research. Becker's way of conceptualization of art worlds is basically to include every single person/object that is involved in the physical and social process of presenting someone's artwork, even in the most remote sense, seeing art as creation produced in this social system/process. This is to say, if we were concerned about a contemporary art scene in Oslo, this art world of Oslo would include everyone from artists, art dealers, curators, critics, audiences, distributors, event organizers, schools, art supplies stores, officials from the city of Oslo who may facilitate/hinder artistic activities, and the list goes on.

Even if we were to focus only on 'artists' here, that would include professional artists, nonprofessional artists, active ones, inactive ones, students, teachers, hobbyists and so on. So it is fairly clear that this is a very inclusive way of conceptualizing an art scene. If we were to take a look at the social process of presenting one painting in an art gallery, that should entail interactions between the painter who painted it, personnel from the gallery who present it, art supplies store that sold supplies to the painters, someone who did the framing for the paint, or even someone who delivered the painting to the gallery; there are all members of this one art world, its social process and system. The list may go on as long as you could think of someone who might be involved in the process in the most remote sense (who made the frame? Where does the material for the frame come from?). Applying the concept of art worlds is therefore to shed light on social and economic processes and relations behind art.

According to this, the music scene of Oslo would consist of Oslo-based musicians/artists, audiences, managers, schools, rehearsal/recording studios, concert venues, music instrument stores and every personnel involved in the operation of these places, just to name the obvious ones. Although the focus of my research mainly stays on musicians, it is imperative to keep in mind how all the other agents and actors may interact and connect with one another, what kind of roles they play, how they each fit in such social process, structure and network. The inclusiveness and extensiveness of the art world concept can be intimidating and it may seem like it is impossible to reach out to every single agent involved in the Oslo music scene. Furthermore, it needs mentioning that Becker's 'Art Worlds' was originally published in 1982 and the way artists publish and distribute their works has changed drastically since then, thanks to the rise of new media.

Artists nowadays can publish and distribute their works easily, instantly and independently by uploading them on the Internet. They can have followers from all over the world beyond the physical boundaries which restricted activities of artists in the pre-Internet era. For musicians, it is now possible for anyone with an Internet connection to publish and distribute their music independently without being signed to a record label. It has become possible to collaborate with other musicians/artists on the other side of the world, or even perform live sets over the Internet. It is not uncommon that artists and bands based in Oslo get 'discovered' over the

Internet and get signed to a record label based in a faraway land (i.e. an Oslo-based band get signed to an independent label based in Texas even without physically meeting them). It is now hardly surprising to see relatively unknown independent Oslo-based artists have hundreds of followers from Europe, Americas, and Asia. In this sense, the emergence of new media, namely the communication via the Internet, has brought a drastic change to the social process/system of art worlds conceptualized in the 1980s.

Despite such increasing irrelevance of physical boundaries of given location, there is an importance in being attentive to the concept of art worlds. It is true that artists/musicians today can easily transcend locational boundaries regarding their artistic activities and work a lot more independently with fewer interactions with others within their area of residence. However, it continues to be the case that the most of their activities are indeed primarily oriented around their physical locations and places of their residence, involving others who are active within the shared locational boundary. Thus, even in the time of new media today, it is crucially important to examine a specific location where artists/musicians reside physically. In this regard, the concept of art worlds works as a good reminder of the nature of the Oslo music scene as a community or network where artists are located in the center and everyone/thing else involved can be interconnected with one another playing their own role under one common interest of music.

Music is the end product of this social process and system which constitute the local scene of Oslo and it can be observed. The application of the art worlds concept helps us conceive the togetherness and connectedness of the scene where people with common interest interact and connect with each other in shared locations. The term 'music scene of Oslo' implies this togetherness and connectedness that include an extensive list of people and places that are somehow all involved and necessary part of music performance and production. The rise of new media may have made the boundary of the Oslo music scene less defined and more ambiguous. However, it has been always common for Oslo-based musicians to perform or have collaborators abroad, especially in neighboring cities such as Gothenburg, Stockholm and Copenhagen. It has been also common to go on a trip to the UK, Denmark or Germany for shopping music gear at cheaper price. So the boundaries of the Oslo music scene, just

like any other art worlds, have been always inherently expansive anyways and subject to change anytime. Therefore, with respect to the concept of art worlds, focusing on the very core of it should be the most reasonable way to address issues; the city of Oslo and local musicians are at the very core in this case.

3. Study Area: Oslo, Norway

3.1. Music in the multicultural Oslo

The place of my research Oslo is the capital of Norway and regarded as the music capital of the North. Concerning its music scene, Oslo today is considered as one of the most exciting music cities in Europe. It is not only the official tourism board of Norway that has branded Oslo as the music capital of the Northern Europe. Despite its relatively small population, the vibrancy of its music scene is evident in the number of live concerts and live music venues that far exceeds that of its well-known neighbors such as Gothenburg, Stockholm and Copenhagen. There are indeed a number of music performances, events and festivals one can check out on a daily basis. Throughout the year, many events and performances with free entrance are organized backed by official state support from the city of Oslo, thus appealing for the broader public to indulge in such occasions. Moreover, independent artists are likely to perform/organize events for free or little money catering for like-minded young people with little income at disposal and passionate fans hoping to discover something new and fresh.

Oslo Music Day and Oslo Culture Night, for example, are annual free music/art events initiated officially by the state and many music/art venues in the city get open free for everyone, turning the whole city of Oslo into a music venue or art space open for everyone to explore. So walking from one venue to another in such an occasion gives you a good idea of what Oslo's music scene would look like when physically manifested. Concerning independent music, By:Larm, an annual independent music festival, was relocated to Oslo since 2008. It is the biggest showcase of independent artists based in the Nordic countries and draws a considerable amount of international attention. Oslo World Music festivals attract both local artists and international artists from all over the world and perform a diverse range of music as if it consciously represents the diversity and multicultural state of the city.

These state-supported music events indeed indicate the diverse range of music that the Oslo music scene has to offer. Metal has been namely strong as always in Norway/Oslo and

supported by dedicated followers (In fact, quite a few immigrant artists during the research named their passion for Nordic metal music as one of their reasons of relocation to Oslo/Norway). Inferno Music Festival, an annual music festival described as 'Norway's Black Metal Tourism' by one news website,⁷ signifies the strong popularity and presence of Metal in the Oslo music scene. Punk rock and rock 'n' roll are also popular as they always have been and the name of the anarchist community Blitz is internationally recognized by like-minded followers around the world. Not limited to Oslo, Norwegian indie pop/rock artists emerged in the noughties have drawn international support helped by independent music fans connected over the Internet. Nordic electronica is likewise popular in the Anglophone indie community and Norway/Oslo is known as a prominent exporter of artists in this genre. Jazz gets a massive public support in Norway and you can find a number of internationally recognized jazz clubs in Oslo⁸ while more experimental forms of jazz from the younger generation also attract international attention. Furthermore, the popularity of rap music has been growing beyond the street and some artists emerged from the underground scene of Oslo have come to achieve a mainstream success. Classic music has been classic for centuries for a reason and you can find many talented musicians in Oslo trained in the internationally renowned national academy. Just like the population of Oslo, the music scene of Oslo likewise consists of diverse artists who play a diverse range of music and draws significant attention to it from outside in spite of its relatively small population.

As the research progressed, the music scene of Oslo presented itself as something intimidatingly vast and complex. It actually seemed to have been expanding bigger and bigger while I was trying to orient myself around the scene. The city does live up to the reputation of being the music capital of the North and it is not just the official tourism board of Oslo promoting itself as such: this notion of Oslo music scene being vibrant and remarkable despite its relatively small population was indeed supported by the most of the immigrant musicians and the local music fans throughout the research. For those who did not have much foreknowledge in the local music scene or Oslo/Norway prior to their arrival, the vibrancy of its scene and the multicultural environment seem to have come as a pleasant

⁷. The Nordic Page. (2013). Inferno Music Festival: Norway's Black Metal Tourism. <http://www.tnp.no/norway/entertainment/2835-inferno-music-festival-starts-norways-black-metal-tourism>

⁸. Mercer, M (2013). How Norway Funds a Thriving Jazz Scene. NPR. Available at: <http://www.npr.org/blogs/ablogsupreme/2013/03/26/175415645/how-norway-funds-a-thriving-jazz-scene>

surprise. 'It is not just about black metal', said an immigrant musician who migrated to Oslo primarily following his partner without knowing little about its scene and the city itself.

3.2. Immigration in Oslo/Norway

Step aside from music, the increasingly diversified population of Oslo/Norway, with the constant flow of immigrants in the recent years, has made itself a hotspot for immigration studies in Europe. Some may believe that Norway, and the Scandinavian countries in general, have very homogeneous populations. However, in the reality, these countries have been diversified increasingly with the constant inflows of immigrants and refugees. A statistic from 2008 shows that 7.4 per cent of the total population of Norway are foreign-born, the first generation immigrants in other words, and it is only slightly below the EU/EEA average of 8.9 per cent (Linn & Aase 2008). The number of foreign-born immigrants has kept increasing and, as of now (2013), about 12 per cent of the total population are first-generation immigrants. About 220 different countries or independent regions are represented by immigrants in Norway today and it is estimated that people with immigrant backgrounds account roughly for 14 per cent of the whole population of Norway in 2013; it is a remarkable increase from 2.8 percent back in 1920 (Statistiks Sentralbyrå 2013).

Norway experienced the highest inflow of immigrants in 2007 with about 40000 and the number of refugees in the country is estimated about 125,000, roughly 2.8 percent of the total population at the time (Linn & Aase 2008); those from Somalia and Iraq are largely accountable for the number of refugees. To sum it up, the flow of immigrants to Norway and the immigrant population of the country have been consistently on the rise over the last decade and estimated to continue growing over the next few decades. This increasing inflow of the immigrant population can be most visibly observed in the capital city of Oslo, the most populous city in the country with the highest concentration of immigrants.

Oslo has the biggest immigrant population both in terms of number and ratio in the entire country. The immigrant population of Oslo amounts to roughly 190,000 in 2013; 30.4 per cent

of Oslo's total population of 624,000. This means that roughly one out of every three persons is in fact immigrant, or a person with some kind of immigrant background, to phrase it better. The locations within the greater Oslo area such as Lørenskog and Drammen have likewise the high percentage of immigrant population above the national average (Statistiks Sentralbyrå 2013). Stepping out the Oslo central station, you can easily see the diversity of the city. You can see it in the physical appearances of people; be it the way they dress, hair colors and skin colors, the visual diversity and individual differences are certainly there. You can also hear a countless number of different languages and accents in Norwegian, or English for that matter.

Given these impressions, it is practically impossible to claim that Oslo is a monocultural place occupied by a single group of people unlike some who imagine Scandinavian society in general as homogeneous. Oslo is undoubtedly a multicultural place, certainly in a literal sense that the shared physical boundary of Oslo contains a number of different groups of individuals, whether it may be culturally, ethnically, or linguistically. However, it would be utterly unreasonable to claim Oslo as a perfectly functioning multicultural place in harmony, where all kinds of different people coexist peacefully in harmony, only by looking at its surface. To make a fair judgement, things beneath its surface need to be scrutinized and that might be where possible internal problems and conflicts could be found. After all, if Oslo were actually such a flawless embodiment of a multicultural society with no issues regarding immigrants/immigration, there would not be any tension between different political parties or intense debates on news media.

3.3. Recent issues surrounding immigration

In the reality, issues on immigration/immigrant have been regularly brought up in the Norwegian public debates and it is rather difficult not to notice articles on immigration/immigrant reported daily on news media (Døving 2009, Alghasi 2009). Its diversity and multicultural environment of Oslo offer us a numerous possible research subjects and a number of articles have been written by academics, researchers, students, journalists and alike, covering a diverse range of topics including integration, assimilation,

labor market, labor mobility, economic growth, remittance, xenophobia, and so on. For instance, as of the time of writing (spring 2013), reports on the Roma people in Oslo⁹ have been discussed in the media on a daily basis and divide the public opinions and political parties. In the previous year of 2012, the appointment of Hadia Tajik as the minister of culture in the cabinet had brought some controversy in the public debates regarding the Norwegian culture and identity, as she is with minority background and the first Muslim person to serve the position and the cabinet.¹⁰ The appointment of Hadia Tajik has brought the Norwegian public to question what the Norwegian culture really is, the Norwegian cultural identity and the 'Norwegianness' in general. Inquiries on the Norwegian culture and identity seem to be brought up consistently in the public debates together with issues of immigration, immigrants, integration and so on. But the interesting thing here is that the appointment of the Muslim minority background person as the minister of culture has stirred the media and reignited the public debates on those issues; it seems to represent some kind of uncertainty, confusion, or ambiguity that the Norwegian public has regarding the Norwegian culture, identity and multiculturalism, in relation to the increasing number of the immigrant population in society.

The most significant incident in the recent years, regarding immigration issues, would be that of the Oslo bombing and Utøya massacre occurred on one summer day of 2011: The two terror attacks were conducted independently by a single person with a far-right ideology and the tragedy has claimed the lives of 77 people. Motivated by the far-right ideology against multiculturalism and the multicultural society of Norway, the perpetrator chose to target a government quarter in the center of Oslo and a political youth camp affiliated with Arbeidpartiet; the ruling political party at the time that favored multiculturalism and cultural diversity. The terror attacks have left such a significant and lasting impact in the Norwegian society and history (Eriksen 2011). It was an extreme manifestation of those who adhere to radical views on multiculturalism and immigration in Norway.

⁹. Hofoss, Esben. (2013). Gi Oss Et Sted Der Vi Kan Sove. Aftenposten.
<http://www.osloby.no/nyheter/---Gi-oss-et-sted-der-vi-kan-sove-7207690.html>

¹⁰. Færass, A. 2012. Dette er den nye kulturministeren – Hadia-Tajik. Aftenposten.
<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/politikk/Dette-er-den-nye-kulturministeren---Hadia-Tajik-6996928.html#.UcXHx85J63c>

It may hold true to say that xenophobia or hatred against outsiders could be found in any societies, but the impact is much bigger when it is manifested in such a violent extreme manner. Resentment against immigration/immigrants, xenophobia or Islamophobia are certainly existent among the native population of Norway to varying degrees.¹¹ It indicates that multiculturalism in today's Norway is still questionable and not necessarily favored by everyone. The whole incident may have embodied certain tension and disharmony that may exist between the immigrant population and the native population. Since the attacks in the summer 2011, the public debates on the immigration issues have been reignited and the news media continues to handle the relevant topics on a daily basis. Given such situation, Oslo today is a very interesting place for studying immigration-related topics.

3.4. Social studies in Oslo through music and art

Addressing issues of immigration studies through music, or art, is rather unconventional and not many academic researches of the similar nature conducted in Norway can be found. However, in terms of examining an art/music scene, Viggo Vestel's research on (multicultural) youth culture is highly relevant to this research project of mine. He spent years studying youth culture in Oslo, orienting around a youth culture house located in the east side of Oslo where he even relocated himself for the immersion purpose. One of his articles on young musicians in a youth club of one neighborhood of Oslo provides stories of young musicians in a low-income multicultural neighborhood of the east side of Oslo. The article also aims at constructing and analyzing the character of the neighborhood through music and musicians he addresses.¹²

Another article of his focusing on identity construction process and hybridization of culture gives a highly relevant and valuable insight on this topic;¹³ in this article the spotlight is shed

¹¹. Eriksen, T. H. & Gaarder, J. (2011b). A Blogosphere of Bigots.

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/29/opinion/Gaarder-Eriksen.html?_r=3&ref=middleeast&

¹². Vestel, V. (1999). Breakdance, Red Eyed Penguins, Vikings, Grunge and Straight Rock'n`roll: The Construction of Place in Musical Discourse in Rudenga, East Side Oslo. *Young - The Nordic Journal of Youth Research*, 13(2):4-24

¹³. Vestel, V. (2009). Limits of Hybridity Versus Limits of Tradition?: A Semiotics of Cultural Reproduction, Creativity, and Ambivalence among Multicultural Youth in Rudenga, East Side Oslo. *Ethos*, 37: 466–488.

on one second-generation immigrant of Pakistani origin with whom Vestel interacts extensively in the same neighborhood of Oslo. The process of his identity construction is explored through dialogues and examination of his everyday life, peer groups and environments he spends his time in; social interactions and processes he goes through in the multicultural environment. The two points explored in the article regarding hybridization of cultures in a highly multicultural setting, and effects of different peer groups and day-to-day environments, will be likewise observed and important in this research.

In the field of musicology, Jan Sverre Knudsen has his expertise in the music scene and cultures in Oslo as displayed in his research on the local hip hop scene and doctoral dissertation on the Chilean musicians in Oslo which examines how their music plays a role in their identity construction process among other topics.¹⁴¹⁵ His dissertation work underlines otherness and differences emphasized by music played by the immigrant artists in host society, rather than simply pushing the idealistic notion that music bridges the gap exists between different groups of people and the native population, and it promotes mutual understandings and respect in a multicultural society. Although his particular research targets on a certain ethnic/national group and the primordialist/essentialist view of ethnicity-based identity seems to be emphasized in the case of the Chilean musicians, our research interests seem to overlap largely. Knudsen's research is highly relevant this research as it looks into the essentially the same topic of identity construction in a multicultural urban setting through music and related activities (Knudsen 2008).

His continuous work in cultural and social research in Oslo through music likewise shows the potential of further related research in this area concerning the multicultural state of contemporary Oslo where different cultures and people coexist, hybridize, or collide with others. One could easily imagine that every research focusing on every different ethnic community found in Oslo would yield equally interesting outcomes with one another; the Vietnamese, the Somalis, the Ethiopians, the Kurds, the Iraqis, the Polish, the Afghans, the Pakistanis, and even the Swedes. These are examples of notable ethnic communities found

¹⁴.Knudsen, J. S. (2010). Playing with Words as if It Was a Rap Game: Hip-hop Street Language in Oslo, in B.A. Svendsen & P. Quist (eds.). *Multilingual Urbana Scandinavia. New Linguistic Practices*. UK: Multilingual Matters.

¹⁵. Knudsen, J.S. (2006). *Those That Fly without Wings: Music and Dance in a Chilean Immigrant Community*. Oslo: Unipub AS, Oslo Academic Press.

in today's Oslo and each one of them has their own distinctive musical traditions, or similarities/commonalities among certain groups. Each of them may have different relations to music in the host society of Oslo and each of them indeed deserves studies of the similar nature as that of Knudsen concerning their identity construction process. They would definitely enrich the research community of social, cultural, and immigration studies in Oslo. To sum it up again, given its diversity and changing demography, Oslo can be an ideal study area not only for conventional immigration studies, but also for cultural/social studies that cover various relevant social issues through art and music as it is done in the field of ethnomusicology or social/cultural anthropology. In the next section of 'research method', the designing process of my field research in the local music scene of Oslo will be discussed as well as how the target group of this research was chosen, irrespective of one's ascribed national/ethnic status.

4. Research Methods

“If you want to understand a people, you should just listen to their music. Music can reveal you everything about a place”.

So opens up 'Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul'¹⁶, Fatih Akin's documentary film which explores the contemporary music scene of Istanbul. The quotation, possibly narrated by Akin himself, is said to originate from Confucius, so it certainly comes with the wisdom of years. The documentary shows you a lot about Istanbul beyond music; it is as much about its culture, people and the place, as it is about music. Well under two hours Fatih Akin accomplishes what is manifested in the opening quote; he reveals Istanbul and its people through music. The film is primarily led by Alexander Hacke, the bassist of a well-known industrial rock band Einstürzende Neubauten, who travels around Istanbul carrying his instruments and recording equipments. He interacts with different musicians through playing music together with them, effectively immersing himself in the environment of the local musicians as a participant. Though the film in no way markets itself as an anthropological or ethnographic research film, the method employed by Hacke is indeed that of participant observation and can be considered as work of ethnography. This kind of participant observation is the ethnographic research method that was ultimately employed for my project. Being faithful to the opening quote of Confucius, this research has a lot to do with understanding people and society through music; in this case the immigrants and the multicultural society of Oslo. Therefore, as the research begun, my intention was to reveal the people and the society in a similar manner as Akin did and the film was a good inspiration for the research. However, before proceeding to the section for the outcomes of the research, the process of research designing and methodology needs to be discussed in depth.

4.1. Qualitative interpretative research

First of all, this research is purely a qualitative study and conducted mostly according to methods of qualitative research. Qualitative research is preferred conventionally in the area of social/culture anthropology, and sociology in some cases, over quantitative research which

¹⁶. Akin, F. (Director). (2005.) Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul. Turkey/Germany: Bavaria Film.

literally emphasizes and values quantifiable data and information to be deductively used. Qualitative research, on the other hand, values unquantifiable information, which in this case can be obtained through observation of the local artists, their social interaction, what they express in their art and daily life, or conversely what they do not express, and so on. Being highly dependent on this kind of mostly unquantifiable information and data, the research cannot be classified as a quantitative research. The research objectives can be fulfilled more effectively as a qualitative research with an inductive approach, aiming to gain deeper insights of things examined. Every little thing concerning my study subjects' behaviors, environments and their symbolic meanings can be analyzed and scrutinized interpretatively according to contexts so as to find explanatory accounts to the research objectives.

Clifford Geertz, a highly influential anthropologist, enlightens us regarding this kind of interpretative approach and studies of symbolic meanings of human behaviors and cultures. Geertz (1973) maintains that analysis of culture is essentially about making conjectures of meanings and assessment of those conjectures, which eventually leads to explanatory conclusions on study subjects. This qualitative research, as Geertz may suggest, cannot be incontestable as its outcomes are the result of assessing conjectures I make based on information from my informants and interpretative observations on their environments and behaviors. Thus, the main outcome of this research is more or less to provide a set of interpretative explanatory accounts, which not necessarily seek for consensus regarding my research objectives; these accounts should remain likewise open for further interpretation and refined arguments in qualitative studies.

4.2. Ethnography and participatory research

As a qualitative study, this research project can be considered as ethnography as it is a study targeted on a certain group of people involved in particular environments or social settings. Providing accounts of people you study is exactly the objective of any ethnographic research. Data/information collection in ethnography is achieved through fieldwork, the firsthand examination of human behaviors and cultures by physically being present in the study location; the location of the fieldwork is again the city of Oslo. I, myself as a researcher,

function as the primary research instrument relying on others in the study location, the local artists, as a major source of data and information; this is a characteristic of ethnography and anthropological research which distinguishes itself from other disciplines (Nanda 1987). For ethnography, it has been a norm and recommended that a researcher spends an extensive amount of time, one year and longer, in their study location. However, this may not be imperative as the length of ethnographic research is dependent on researchers' access to funding and sponsors and the long-term research has become less common in the recent decades. It also depends on the scale of research project; doctoral research projects would be a much longer and larger scale of a project than that of master's degree level. Although spending a longer period of time for ethnography would have been preferable, the period of two months, apparently a minimum length for this kind of research at graduate level, was decided to allocate for the primary field research, after consulting with my supervisors.

Unfortunately, the severe lack of funding and the time constraint of my study program made it impossible to allocate any more than the bare minimum of two months for the 'formal' research period. However, the fact that I have already been residing in the study location meant that it was actually able to engage in ethnographic research even before and after the primary research period which was originally allocated. Thus, my interactions with the local scene and artists have informally continued beyond the allocated duration.

For data/information collection, a number of semi-structured interviews were originally intended with individual artists as my main strategy, as well as a few focus group interviews with related personnel to complement this. An interview guide mostly consists of qualitative questions was prepared to cover the research topics and objectives. Semi-structured interviews were chosen over structured ones because rigidly structured interviews would leave little room for expanding and elaborating interesting/remarkable points that interviewees would make (Bryman 2008). Flexibility that allows informal/open conversations was desired so that information and candid opinions which may not come out from the formal sequence of questions and answers can be obtained. At the same time, in the process of designing the research methods, one of my supervisors suggested that I engage in participant observation if feasible. Participant observation is a classic method of research in ethnography and

anthropology. It is a way of conducting fieldwork by directly being involved in activities and lives of research subjects. A researcher can totally immerse oneself in their environments and get firsthand accounts of their activities. It was suggested to get myself involved in environments of the study targets by showing up to their activities such as rehearsals and concerts, casually/informally interacting with artists and people around them, or playing together with them when possible.

It was obvious that participating in their activity would be obviously the best way of doing this project just like it is done so in 'Crossing the Bridge'. The problem was, at the time of research planning, that the feasibility of it seemed rather poor because of the aforementioned time constraint and a lack of social network in the environment at the time. However, as the research continued and I got more involved in the environment of the local scene, it turned out that conducting direct participant observations was indeed feasible and far more effective than doing semi-structured interviews which presented certain shortcomings at the initial research phase. 'It's really easy to meet musicians when you're a musician. Basically you share the same interests and hang out in the same places', said a Swedish guitarist I met during my research. There is a truth to the statement and they seem to be able to testify it personally.

4.3. Participant Observation

As for conducting participant observation, one of the challenges needed to be assessed was that of 'going native'. Good ethnographic research and participant observations require researchers to be able to remain objective and examine things from viewpoints of the 'others' they study. In ethnography, 'going native' points to a situation where a researcher gets too involved in their study environment and blends in as one of them, thus losing a relative objectivity as an outside observer required for good ethnography. Some argue that 'going native' is not possible at all in many cases so researchers should do their best to remain as objective as possible by playing up the role of a distant observer. However, being a totally distant and objective observer studying 'others' was not the case for this research, considering that this research is hardly a study of exotic others as the traditional concept of

ethnographic research entails (Nanda 1987). Moreover, although I was not actively involved in the scene at the time, my profile in Oslo as an immigrant artist could easily fit that of the target group of my research. In this sense, if a lot more substantial time had been spent in such environment, 'going native' could have been possible to the point of losing objectivity by being personally and emotionally involved too much.

However, my closeness to the profile of targeted study group has rather helped me get around in the environment as an invisible researcher. Being an invisible researcher points to an ability to orient oneself and fit in the research environment without distracting research targets and affecting their behaviors by the presence of researcher. An invisible researcher, as one who belongs to the group, can participate naturally in activities of his/her research targets and they tend to play down his/her role as a researcher (Berg & Lune 2012). It was also possible to act as a distant and native outsider to maintain the objectivity but I have opted to become 'invisible' to use it as an advantage to establish closer relationships with the environment and people in question. Therefore, ensuring a complete objectivity as a naïve outsider did pose a slight challenging due to the fact my profile fell among the research targets and the amount of foreknowledge and familiarity I already had in the environment. Nonetheless, in the end, I was able to conduct research as invisible as possible without sacrificing the relative objectivity. 'Becoming invisible' has certainly helped to establish certain trust with the target group and minimized the degree to which my presence as a researcher may influence their behaviors and expressions.

4.4. Local Artists as Engaged Anthropologists

When narrowing down the target group of my research, the one thing, which could not be emphasized enough, was that this research conceptualizes musicians as a special ilk of people and being a musician is one of identities that the research targets may subscribe to, voluntarily or involuntarily. As citizens of today's increasingly globalizing world where hybridization of cultures leads to the emergence of a number of new cultural forms and identities, every individual subscribes to a number of various identities and finds a sense of belonging in diverse micro-communities, which cannot be so easily categorized by simply

applying some nationality or ethnicity labels. Furthermore, since this research is in line with that of cultural/social anthropology, it values the potential of the local musicians of Oslo being engaged anthropologists, as Schneider and Wright (2006) touch upon. Maintaining the appropriate distance from their study subjects is valued in anthropology and ethnography so as not to lose a relative objectivity, which is conventionally required for good ethnography. Becoming an invisible researcher cannot be always easily achieved by anthropology researchers and they normally remain disengaged outside of groups, communities, or culture that they objectively study. On the other hand, artists are naturally highly engaged in their own environments, culture, and social contexts in which they operate and produce their works. Considering self-reflexivity of art and artist, it can be argued that their artistic efforts effectively reflect and embody their cultures and social contexts, which anthropologists wish to study, from an insider's point of view. Admittedly, the concept of artists as engaged anthropologists/ethnographers is normally applied to those artists who consciously and knowingly play their role as anthropologists. However, it is nonetheless an interesting concept to apply for the local artists of Oslo. Artists, just like anthropologists, have their own opinions, insights and critiques on environments in which they live. As discussed above, this research is dependent on getting their subjective voices like any other anthropological researches. So valuing their voices as insights from 'engaged anthropologists', even if they are unaware of it, makes this project as a collaborative work of anthropology with myself a researcher and the artists as engaged anthropologists. This approach was always kept in mind in order to gain deeper firsthand insights of the environment and the musicians.

4.5. Reflections on data collection methods

As discussed, this research was originally set out with semi-structured interviews as the main strategy while being ambiguous about the possibility of doing participant observation. Noting down every interesting bit of information, however formal or informal it may be, is a technique of anthropological research and I have been attentive to it from the very initial phase of the research. As for conducting interviews, the effectiveness of it presented uncertainty after having run a few interviews with different approaches. First of all, using an interview guide failed in practice. The questions set on my interview guide were overly

sociological/anthropological and my inability to translate them fluently into the informal natural language on the spot did not help it flow well. Though it was meant to be followed merely as a guide, with many questions that are open to interpretation, it was overwhelming. It did not contribute to establishing an informal conversation atmosphere I initially hoped for. Thus, the idea of using an interview guide was completely abandoned after a few attempts, and by then, the most of questions that needed asking were in my head anyhow.

Instead, I attempted to do more of an improvisation-based interview, aiming at having an informal conversation that covers the points originally raised in my interview guide. This way of conducting an interview felt more effective. However, not having a solid structure made conversations drag on longer than necessary, or go off-topic in length at times; effective yet inefficient at times. It was not necessarily a bad thing to go off-topic because, as in an anthropology research, every little thing and every little verbal, or nonverbal, reaction is a valuable piece of information. But it might have resulted in being unclear about the focal point of interviews and made it difficult to know where the interview/conversation should lead and end, to confusion for my interviewees. Picking up bits and pieces of relevant information was after all the primary objective of having this kind of informal interview. It has occurred to me that these kinds of informal 'interactions' and 'conversations' could happen anytime anywhere without having to officially arrange a date and time for interviews. As the research progressed, I was getting more and more opportunities to actually participate in something and observe at the same time. Therefore, in the end, the participatory research has taken over as my main strategy while having interviews as a supplementary resource to it.

One of the big differences that the participatory research presented was that, in the participatory research, I was put on more or less an equal level with the people I interacted with. It facilitated to communicate with them in a more natural manner than in interview settings. When conducting interviews, my role as interviewer is inevitably there to affect our interactions and it presented itself as an obstacle that keeps me from immersing myself invisibly in the environment. Prior to the start of the participatory research, I was advised to play a role of 'naïve' observer, a complete outsider with no foreknowledge or preconception. But in many cases, pretending not to know anything about the subject I was supposed to be

researching did not work out well. Playing ignorant and naïve did not present myself in a positive light and it even seems to have offended some who expected me to be more informed, opinionated and more or less 'one of them' after all. The participatory research was most effective when I was treated as one of them, as a 'native', not an outsider. In a way, it was possible to gain valuable firsthand experiences in the process of being accepted in a new environment, and feeling empowered with a sense of belonging and togetherness. This would not have come about by pushing through with the role of naïve observer throwing questions as an outsider.

4.6. Sampling the target group of the research

The sampling method of the research target group is discussed in this section. In order to get in contact with the local musicians in Oslo, the method of the snowball sampling was primarily employed using referrals from one informant to another (Bryman 2008). This snowball sampling was complemented by the purposive sampling method as I was not just randomly going through the scene but approaching individuals who could enrich the research with relevant insights (Berg & Lune 2012). This turned out to be an effective method to go around mostly thanks to their kindness and willingness to help and their social networks within the local scene. Almost everyone encountered during the research was open, willing to talk and has helped me in some way get in touch with different people. Even before shifting the strategy of data collection from interviewing to informal observations, the list of potential interviewees had been big enough to meet my initial goal of having ten long interviews. Shifting the focus onto informal conversations and observations made things even easier in terms of talking casually and informally to people in the environment where every single person has practically become my informant. Not only limited to the immigrant musicians in Oslo, I have got to talk to Norwegian musicians, event organizers, artists in different fields, and importantly the audience; it turned out they all have valuable insights to share for the research. In the end, I have engaged in participatory observation with roughly 20 individuals to varying degrees and interacted with at least 50 individuals regarding my research, again to varying degrees. A number of concerts venues, music events, rehearsal places, music studios and culture houses in the area were visited in the course of the research. In most of the

cases, I briefly explained my role as a researcher and what the research is about to the people I got to talk to. Only oral consents were sought from the people I talked to, including those who participated in the interviews. Getting oral consents was hardly a challenge as they were either being helpful and understanding with the research, or some were simply indifferent and not concerned with being observed or researched.

4.7. Reflections on ethnographic research process

Interactions with my research target groups were unofficially started following my visit to a youth culture house¹⁷ where a friend of mine was involved as a staff member. This culture house situated in a hip alternative area of Oslo provides its members (up to 26 years of age) and others, who are older than the target age group, with an open space for various artistic activities including music, dance and film-making, with free of charge. They also organize performance events and are staffed with experienced mentors. Through interactions with local artists and related personnel at such establishments, I was informed that this kind of establishment is fairly common, well-equipped and well-developed in Scandinavian countries with the considerable state support, in comparison to other European states. Luckily, that meant there are more potential places to visit for the research purpose; just about every neighborhood of the Oslo area offers an establishment of the similar nature, though the size, the quality of facilities and the vibrancy of it may vary.

It can be an ideal place for participatory research as well as just for meeting and finding connections in the music and art scene. The aforementioned scholar Viggo Vestel's doctoral research was, for example, extensively conducted in one of these youth culture houses in Oslo¹⁸. So beyond my initial visit to the first culture house, I have visited a few other similar establishments, in one of which I ended up participating in an open international music project, which was started with the intention of bringing people with diverse backgrounds together through music. The participatory experience of it was priceless as it allowed me to become a participating and engaged observer. Staff members and personnel at culture houses generally seem to resonate with the idea of music bringing people together, put that

¹⁷. A literal translation of the Norwegian term 'kulturhus'.

¹⁸. Vestel, V. (2004). A community of differences. NOVA rapport, 15(04).

into practice and actually organize it. This kind of culture houses primarily cater for youths in the area but they often organize events and activities open for people of all ages, naturally regardless of their backgrounds. Sharing the space and music together with a random mix of people with diverse backgrounds, and even diverse looks, is fascinating and can be thought-provoking for those who are skeptical about immigrants, integration and such. It was assuring to know that there are such welcoming places immigrants could go socialize and engage in activities they enjoy; it is especially important for youths who are probably in need of such places the most. One staff member at a certain culture house privately told me concerning youths with rough, often minority backgrounds, “it is really good they have a place like this. If I have to be honest, I would think many of them could be doing something illegal, if they weren't here (instead of devoting their time to creative/cultural activities outside of schooling)”.

Finding a supportive environment is obviously important for fruitful research. Fortunately, even outside of the culture house environment, I was supported and encouraged by kindness and helpfulness of the local artists. Without their willingness to help, the snowball method of sampling obviously would not have worked out. Their willingness to help seemed to represent the openness and the welcoming attitude of its scene. Almost everyone seemed to be fond of the idealistic notion of music being something powerful and strong that could profoundly affect our lives, society and even politics in some ways. There was not one single person who scoffed at the premise of the research. It did not really matter how good or established they are as an artist, or what kind background they have. Introducing myself as a student/researcher and briefly describing the objectives seemed to be enough to get around and get the snowball rolling. Through references from one to another I was able to interact with a number of local artists with different backgrounds, skills or ambitions, while it was also possible to meet many others just by chance; it turned out that simply mentioning my research in a relevant social setting/location such as music venues, concerts, art events was in fact effective way of getting around. So the initial fear of not being able to talk to enough people in the pre-research phase was cleared and it seemed that the snowball sampling could sometimes take a researcher way too far with no point of stopping.

4.8. Keeping records

In the course of semi-structured interviews, a digital voice recorder was used to record our conversations under consent and I took down notes simultaneously when necessary. As for conducting interviews, it was recommended to conduct at interviewee's own 'natural' environments where they feel comfortable such as their rehearsal places or bars/cafes they frequent. Recording conversations inside of loud bars or concerts venues was utterly unfruitful with a low-end voice recorder. It would have required a high-end recording equipment with an external microphone to make it feasible. Thus, regarding observations and encounters in such settings, I noted them down retrospectively in my research journal, a field diary. A field diary conventionally consists of informal diary entries that account happenings during the research and I have kept mine during my formal research period and beyond. My entries were kept in a highly informal and casual fashion as it was only my own personal/subjective accounts of interviews, concerts, participant observations at rehearsals, or fortuitous encounters with people who happened to have enlightened the research. My field diary was kept both in the physical journal format as well as in the electronic format. Moreover, it was originally in my research proposal to use photography to capture the feel of the research environments and to complement the writing. However, it turned out in the end that captured images were not satisfactory and the decision was not to feature them at all.

4.9. Ontological and epistemological concerns

Lastly, issues of ontology and epistemology as well as reliability and validity involved in social qualitative research are addressed here. Studies of culture and society regarding this research has to do with observation and understanding the changing world and reality constructed through interpretative ideas and perceptions of individuals which may be shared by others who hold similar perceptions. This research relies on methods of interviewing, participatory observations and analysis of dialogues and behaviors, and therefore, it does not belong to the positivist paradigm of quantitative research but rather to the interpretative epistemology. As a qualitative research, this research does not employ quantification of data or statistical analysis that quantitative research employs to achieve reliable and replicable

aggregate of results and data according to the positivist epistemology (Berg & Lune 2012). Focusing on acquiring credible descriptions and deeper understanding of social phenomena, situations and observations in multiple constructed realities my research targets perceive in mind, this research orients around the constructivist ontology which holds the "the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (Crotty 1998, 42). Thus, orienting around the constructivist ontology, this research aims to provide sound descriptions and deeper understanding of social phenomena situations of empowerment, identity construction and so on.

The use of reliability and validity commonly belongs to the domain of quantitative research. Reliability points to "replicability or repeatability of results or observations (Golafshani 2003)" under another comparable conditions of research methodology while validity concerns whether or not results or observation from a given research accurately measure or represent what the research claims to measure and is intended for. However, due to differences in epistemological perspectives and research paradigms, it has been argued in the field of naturalistic social science research that the use of reliability and validity may not be directly applicable, if not applicable at all, as the objectives of research focus on understanding and illumination of phenomena or situations rather than generalizability or causal determination. Therefore, they need to be conceptualized differently according to different epistemological perspectives (Hoepfl: 1997).

Taking the naturalistic paradigm of qualitative research, according to Hammersley (1990: 57), validity points to "the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers". Given this definition, Bapir takes validity as sound correspondence between conclusion and data, and argues validity in qualitative research can be achieved by reducing "the gap between reality and representation and the more data and conclusion are correspondent the more a piece of qualitative research is valid" (Bapir 2012: 12). In regards to this gap between reality and representation, Bryman (2008) argues that validity can be

actually achieved stronger in qualitative research than quantitative research, pointing to the ecological proximity to subject matters, which an observer could take advantage of. Opinions and perceptions of research participants on subject matters are valuable in qualitative research and a qualitative researcher is able to locate him/herself closely to their reality due to the ecological proximity they share with their research participants, as evident in participant observation. Thus, a higher validity of research can be established in qualitative research in this manner, as the aim is to minimize the gap between realities that a researcher tackles and representation that the research shows.

As for reliability, Hammersley (1992: 67) conceptualizes it as “the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observers on different occasions”. Therefore, reliability in this sense can be achieved, as Bapir (2012) argues, by adequately employing varieties of research methods, which include interviews, participatory researches, ethnography, conversation analysis, for consistent records of observations; therefore reliability is regarded as a methodological concern in qualitative research and he emphasizes the importance of documenting research methodologies and procedures used in a given research. A higher degree of reliability can be pursued “with proper tabulated data of findings that are open to supplementary examination by both researchers and readers to enable them articulate their views about the position of the researched, in relation to the research and the researcher”, Bapir concludes (2012: 17). As detailed in the previous section, the methods and procedures employed in this research entail the combination of interviews, participatory observations and conversation analysis, in hope of achieving a higher validity.

It is true that some scholars entirely dismiss the applicability and the use of reliability and validity in this kind of naturalistic research based on interpretivist epistemology and constructivist ontology (Golafshani 2003). However, in order to ensure the quality and credibility of the research, validity and reliability in the qualitative research sense can be taken into consideration. The goal of the research again is to attain credible descriptions and deeper

understanding of social phenomena and provide represent them. Therefore, being attentive to these conceptualizations of reliability and validity, epistemological and ontological perspectives of qualitative research, we proceed to the section of findings and analysis.

5. Findings/Analysis

5.1. Introductory remarks

In the course of this research, I have been able to talk to artists from every major continent of the planet that somehow fortuitously ended up being in Oslo as well as a plenty of the natives who stem from the host society. Going through the music scene of Oslo felt like as if going on a trip all around the world. This impression can be complemented by the fact many music venues, studios and alternative bars/cafes frequented by artist types in Oslo are located in neighborhoods with a high immigrant population¹⁹ in-between ethnic restaurants and shops. Nationalities, ethnicities and languages represented in the city are indeed diverse and very different from one another. Yet, as the research progressed further, they, as artists/musicians, have strongly manifested themselves as one same ilk of people after all. No matter how cliched it might be, the universality of music, music as an universal language, was mentioned and emphasized by many, naturally to my satisfaction. They all speak the language of music and they communicate with one another in it. Concerning this particular research personally, it is important to mention that music was the most significant reference point that connected myself with those who helped me through; it was not at all my ascribed social status, nationality or ethnicity that got me through in the environment. Likewise, it has become very clear that music provides reference points with those in the local scene and binds them together. Having those shared reference points constitutes the sense of community, network, and understanding among artists regardless of whether they are immigrants or native; it brings them together to a common ground in spite of their superficial differences such as their nationality, ethnicity, languages, skin colors, age, social status and so on.

One remark that left me with a strong impression and a feeling of satisfaction was made by a Norwegian-born guitarist with Ethiopian parents; “if it's about music we like, I can even talk about it with some guy in a bar who's being so blatantly racist [...]yeah right, the same reference point”, he told me casually yet confidently while strumming his guitar in a tightly-occupied DIY studio where he occasionally pops in during his busy week of music and

¹⁹. Neighborhoods in central Oslo such as Grønland, Tøyen, and Grunerløkka but signs of ongoing gentrification are certainly visible.

professional job. It was not just a hypothetical scenario and he actually has been in a such situation. I had been keenly waiting and wanting to hear something like this throughout the research. I am not certain if the simple fact, that he is a visible minority in Norway, could be part of the reason why the remark from him left a particularly strong impression. It would be superficial to pin it down like that as it seems like such a shallow analysis. Beyond the 'visible' bit, he does not fit the minority status in a sociological sense at all and is not in need of empowerment concerning his social and economic needs, given his good educational and employment backgrounds. He was born and raised in Norway as a Norwegian and identifies himself solely as Norwegian; “yeah, I'm like Kinder Surprise you know? (as in being black only on the surface and having the white inside color)”, as he jokingly remarked. It was a playful remark yet this bears certain significance concerning first-generation immigrants who may be a visible minority here and do not feel strong in their new host society with a lack of social and economic means (thus being minority). Therefore, concerning those minority individuals, the fact that music can provide such bridge between them and the native population, even including those who may display hostile racist attitude to visible differences in appearance, is surely assuring and empowering. The similar point had been made repeatedly by many that I talked to. One hobbyist musician originally from China joked around pointing to his fellow Norwegian musician, “oh if it weren't for it (music), we wouldn't be even talking (in the first place)”. Reflecting on this, my whole research experience was partly a process of becoming part of the local music scene and environment through the universality of music, which ultimately connected me with all the individuals I have interacted in the highly multicultural environment of Oslo. I hereby proceed to go through and analyze the main research objectives raised in the introduction section.

5.2. Empowerment through music in a multicultural society

So as to address the empowerment through music, as mentioned in the introductory remarks, the universality of music and reference points it provides could not be emphasized enough. Music is an universal language; the phrase was repeated by virtually every musician I got to talk to and reference points it provides unite individuals with diverse backgrounds and characters that would otherwise not cross each other's path even if they may spend their lives within shared geographical boundaries. My own experience in the course of this research could give an insight to this: During the research I have ended up in a few rehearsal sessions with a punk band consisting of several immigrant musicians from Spanish-speaking countries. The singer of the band, who invited me to the session, was fluent both in English and Norwegian. The others seem to feel unnatural with communicating in English as they are used to communicating in Norwegian in their everyday life and naturally in Spanish with their bandmates, friends and family members from Spanish-speaking countries. One of the members, Xavier, was a newcomer to Norway from Columbia and was not yet to be confident in speaking either Norwegian or English. Therefore, our communication was mainly through music, and mostly about music. We talked about a few punk/hardcore bands and songs we both enjoyed as a youth; he would play some familiar riffs from their songs and I would try to respond to it. We are just two immigrants from different locations happen to have ended up in Oslo and we happen to share the same passion and nostalgia for American punk music. We would not have been able to connect with each other so well in languages but the shared interest and experience of having grown up on the same music have made it possible for us to click. Music provided us with the same reference point we both can relate to and it connected two completely random immigrants in the melting pot of Oslo. So here I found myself welcomed in an unexpected company of Spanish-speaking musicians in the center of Oslo in their rehearsal studio located in Tøyen, an area of the city with the highest concentration of immigrants. The rundown former residential apartment behind various ethnic restaurants and cafes has been converted to artistic space collectively occupied by musicians, filmmakers and painters. Covered by graffiti, the appearance of it gives an impression of abandoned building. It is a kind of place you would not get close to unless you

actually know what is in there; and empowerment of individual immigrants could happen in a place like this fumed with cigarettes smoke and what not.

Xavier did not know anyone at all before he has moved to Oslo from Columbia, together with his partner in search of better job opportunities. Given little familiarity with the local language and culture of host society, settling down in a new environment is a serious challenges to newly-arrived immigrants. However, against the challenge he managed to quickly establish himself and in Oslo; got an apartment, a job, a circle of friends and occasional performances in the city. He gathered all of this through networks of individuals who share their passion for music. Surely, being a Spanish-speaker in Oslo has helped him get connected with other Spanish-speaking immigrants, especially those from Latin America, who have already established themselves as part of the multicultural society. They must have helped him a lot initially to get started in a totally new environment. Yet, it was through his current bandmates he found his current and past jobs. Music venues and their rehearsal studio are where he socializes and spends the most of his free time. He has been settled in the host society with a good social network that provides him support, income he is satisfied with, and opportunities to perform and express himself in music. Now he is busy picking up the language to have an even better job offer as well as establishing himself in the music scene of Oslo. His educational background in mass communication does not make him entirely content with his current stint as cleaner; not exactly a dream career. Though he is satisfied with the increased income and living standard compared to his days back in the south, he is striving for more in the new environment.

I did not get to talk to him too much specifically regarding my research, the topic of empowerment and so on. But it was fairly obvious that music and being a musician helped and empowered him a lot in the course of establishing himself in Oslo. Even though he may find his day jobs tedious, he can find his own space and enjoyment, excitement and fulfillment of his new life as he plugs in his instruments in the studio together with his bandmates. Being content with his current situation, he smiled and said that he would 'just try and see' what the life in Oslo would offer him for the next few years. It is probably also worth mentioning that he actually only picked up playing musical instruments upon arriving to Oslo. After being a

dedicated listener and managing an independent label with like-minded friends back home, he decided to take on a new challenge of playing music as well as taking on a challenge of moving to a completely new place. His passion for music has got him through the challenge and keeps him going strong in the center of multicultural Oslo.

Though it may not be so direct, Xavier's case is one good example that shows how empowerment through music occurred to a newly arrived immigrant. Besides the obvious psychological and social well-being provided by his social network connected through music, in the context of the concept of empowerment discussed earlier, his case is in line with that of greater economic and social participation and the increased ability of self-determination due to the increased economic means (Sharma 2008). The state of being socially and economically established seems to drive him for further integration in host society as he hopes for better employment opportunities by attaining necessary language fluency. His satisfaction in terms of social and cultural participation through music was fairly visible though he strives for more in music, the cultural sphere of life. As a newly-arrived immigrant without necessary language competency and relevant work skills or experiences, he was definitely located in a subordinate position in need of empowering within the power structure of the society. Though this empowerment process was not directly through music, it was his interests in music and involvement in such environment that eventually provided him with the minimum needs of housing and jobs that allowed the greater economic participation and mobility as well as cultural participation through performances, which surely gives him sense of satisfaction and achievement.

Adrien, on the other hand, is an experienced musician from Romania who relocated to Oslo likewise in search of better employment opportunities. Yet, having been classically trained in piano and playing guitar since early age, his move to Oslo was not only motivated by financial reasons but also by music, especially black metal. Norway, having a mecca-like status for metal fans, Adrien described that his relocation to Norway 'made sense' in his life. So with an intention of becoming part of the music scene in Oslo, he left his family and friends for his new life in the north. However, unlike the case of Xavier, his venture in Oslo was not an easy ride. Using the networks of compatriots in Oslo, he initially found himself in a two-bed room

apartment rather chaotically shared by 'like 10 other guys who were in the same situation'. His employment was unstable, being dependent on mostly informal temporary jobs in catering, restaurants and moving industry. He explained the situation of the time was not an environment to do anything else but to earn living and something he would not wish to repeat again. After securing a somewhat more stable kitchen job in an upscale restaurant, he moved to a studio apartment in the city center which he again regrettably explained as sort of a 'big mistake'. Though he managed to have his own private space without anyone else constantly walking in and out, the high rent of Oslo again put him in the same situation of being able to do nothing else but work, so as to pay off the monthly expenses. Although he was content with the fact that he could manage to secure a job and his own place in the new country, he looked back his first year and a few months in Oslo as somewhat of a disappointment, being left with little time to pursue his own interests. But it has changed in one summer when he was recommended for a stint as a lounge pianist in a stylish cafe-restaurant by his employer.

Adrien recalled that the summer spent as a hired musician has given him much needed refreshment and encouragement to his life in Oslo that has been monotonous and mundane. The time spent in the kitchen was replaced by the time spent in front of the piano, given plenty of practice time before the opening hours. "It was typical lounge type of music I had to play [...] (as he was not used to playing that style) it was actually difficult to practice and learn...and I also played some classics too of course [...] but yes it (performing in front of the audience) was awesome", he remarked with a satisfied grin. Performing music paid him a lot better than his regular employment in the kitchen and getting paid for what he enjoys was simply a bliss. Besides the unexpected extra income, Adrien was particularly content with a certain feeling he got when performing for the audience; being part of the city, or a certain scene in the city in a hip area of Oslo. Watching people smiling and enjoying their time complemented with his music in a summer breeze gave him a sense of satisfaction and certain belonging as he felt like he was exactly where he wanted to be at the time. Although he also attributed it simply to the calm and easy temperament of summer that year which has brought him all the positive uplifting feelings, he does point his stint as a pianist as a certain turning point that made him determine to stick around in Oslo when he was wondering whether to go back home or stay. During that summer he was also admitted to a study

program in Oslo, which made it possible to stay at student housing at much lower subsidized rate. Therefore, he is still around in the city today after a few years have passed since his arrival, switching his days between school and work.

Though his pianist stint was unfortunately limited to the one summer only, he embraces his time in Oslo a lot more thanks to extended networks of friends and people he connected to through schooling and days spent in a number of music venues. Despite his lack of proficiency in the local language, he claims that he feels now at home in Oslo and sees himself as part of the multicultural landscape of the city. Adrien's group of friends are mostly English-speaking hailing from all over the world and he gets by completely fine communicating in English with his colleagues and friends. Though he concedes the importance of learning the local language of the host society for employment purposes, he feels that, for socializing and communicating on the everyday level, sharing the same interests and ideas counts a lot more. Speaking of his Norwegian friends who are mostly artists or dedicated music/art fans, he even feels that some of them even prefer speaking English to their native language. This point was echoed by many immigrants artists, pointing to their friends who are musicians, visual artists, actors and dancers; they feel the 'native' Norwegians within the so-called creative industry/field are different from the 'typical' Norwegian of mainstream population. The Norwegians within such industry/field and environment may be a lot more open to people with different backgrounds and ideas, comfortable or even prefer communicating in English with others over Norwegian; therefore they like to have their social network colored up with people from all over the world who share the same interest not limited to one's nationality or ethnicity. Many of them admit that this is something special to the artistic environment in Oslo and not necessarily applicable to the general population, as one Spanish singer remarked, "they (artists/musicians) after all just like to hang out with 'cool' people". This may make the artistic/music community of Oslo look like an exclusive club or some sort and it may be so in some sense. But then I have seen that many immigrants artists like Adrien, some of whom have little proficiency in the local language, could feel at home and well-integrated with a good circle of friends and colleagues in such environment, live contently and confidently pursuing their own interests, and see themselves as part of the multicultural city of Oslo. This goes in line with the model of

integration discussed previously as they feel they are treated fairly with respect, welcomed and supported by their peer groups in the host society.

The case of Adrien again primarily highlights the psychological and social well-being ensured by social networks based on the mutual interests in music. Furthermore, the sense of cultural participation he felt as a performer in public can be seen as part of empowerment as it gives him a greater sense of belonging and participation by being visible and recognized in the public space. Aside from these points, the economic aspect of empowerment was emphasized. Music does not play a direct role and the empowerment through music is rather secondary to the economic empowerment that seems more crucial. Having a secure and better (compared to his situation back home) employment has certainly given him the greater economic means and capability to make decisions in his life according to his interests and needs such as relocating to a new place, enrollment in education, or even frequenting concerts for that matter. Arriving as non-skilled immigrant, his starting position must have been at the lower end of social strata. Therefore, the economic empowerment that provides his bread and butter and security has the foremost importance over the secondary empowerment factor that music brings in the social and cultural sphere. Both of them showed a sense of satisfaction with their current economic well-being, as it is a big leap from their previous situations before migration.

Nonetheless, the sense of satisfaction and achievement that they get from social and cultural participation can be interpreted as an outcome of frustration and dissatisfaction of being located in lower end of social structure and the labor market in their daily lives. In the context of labor market or economic well-being and security, their positions may not be on par with their native counterparts; their existence and contribution could often go unnoticed and uncredited. This could easily be a source of discontent and cultural/social participation in the public sphere through music could be playing the role of filling this void. In this sense, the aspect of psychological empowerment and social well-being attained through music and involvement in the music scene should not be dismissed; as Taylor (1992) argues that social/cultural recognition, being recognized for who they are and what they do in society, can be a significant factor for human development.

Regarding the empowerment in the context of a greater psychological and social well-being achieved through cultural participation and recognition in society, music supplies immigrants or anyone with such opportunities; all it takes is after all genuine interest for music, art, whatever their interest may be. Many culture houses, youth centers and alike scattered in the city, cater for this purpose and they welcome just about everyone who is interested in cultural/creative/performance activities hosted at the premise, often regardless of skill levels. In the aforementioned open music sessions at one culture house, I shared sessions with a middle-aged Ethiopian bass player who arrived in Norway as a refugee only a couple of years prior, a middle-aged Norwegian woman who just recently picked up a guitar, and a few metal-clad youths striving for practice opportunities, all at the same time led by an experienced middle-aged musician from Norway who used to tour around the country back in the 80s. So the door is open for everyone and newly-arrived musicians can find a plenty of opportunities in open sessions or open-mic performances. They are literally open for anyone at any skill levels and many artists use them as a step stone of sorts to get into the scene of Oslo. Many newly-arrived immigrant musicians with formal training or experience from back home utilize this kind of open events for networking with fellow local musicians and it seems to work out effectively. For those who are just starting out, regardless whether they are 'native' or 'immigrant', the open events can be likewise great opportunities to show their presence to the public. Thus, considering cultural/social recognition attained through participation in music and other artistic activities and its importance for human development, the music and art scene of Oslo seems to have its own function for empowerment.

However, the most of (first-generation) immigrant artists and music fans that I have talked to did not move to Oslo specifically for its music scene, but primarily for economic/financial reasons in search of better employment opportunities while partnership, political reasons and education followed as other reasons of relocation to Oslo. Widely considered as the richest country in the world, Norway is an attractive destination for those who live in places where the economic development has stagnated around the global economic crisis in 2008 and after. Even for those who have relocated to Oslo primarily for other reasons, such as partnership or education, Norway's stable economy and higher salary and the living standard played a role in their decision. Music is rather a secondary reason for relocation to Norway/Oslo for the

most, and in terms of empowerment, securing a better employment and a greater economic certainly means a lot to the well-being of individuals as we have seen in the cases of Xavier and Adrien. I chatted with Nico, a Greek guitarist, who moved to Oslo after being dismayed by the economic stagnation back in his home country and he claimed the global economic crisis of the recent years has actually had a few positive outcomes for young prospective artists in some sense; 1.) it has made young artists rethink what really matters in their life and what they would like to devote themselves to if it were not for some social norms that restricting them from pursuing their interest 2.) it provided them with opportunities to forget about their day jobs which pay only a pitiful amount of money and they never really liked, or stop wasting time on trying to seize jobs they would not really want to do anyway. 3.) hence it pushed them young artists to try out things they have always desired to do and see where they lead them to.

Niko himself took the economic crisis as an opportunity to move out from his home and see where life would take him. Just like the previous two, he contently gets by in Oslo and switches his days between working in kitchen, studying entrepreneurship, and visiting various music venues and bars. Showing his genuine support for the proposition of music as empowering agent, he enthusiastically stated his future plan of opening up a music cafe-bar back home, just like his favorite punk-themed bar in Oslo. He may not have so much time to play music himself, but you could easily tell that he has been living strong in his new home while saving up for his future plan. To add to his point, I have met a Spanish bass player who has moved to Oslo for the exact same reason; being tired of the situation back home with little job prospect, he decided to take a gamble in the north. He managed to get a tedious but secure cleaning job and has been pushing his passion of playing rock music more than he ever did back home. Furthermore, a vocal group from Ireland has likewise moved to Oslo after the economic crisis has stagnated their music career, as they primarily did their performances for cooperate functions. Nonetheless, having an established record of performances and experiences, they successfully and quickly established themselves in Oslo where the economy stays strong and demand for cooperate events is sufficiently big. Being a full-time performer now, a member of the group has repeated Niko's argument on how the economic downturn actually pushed the young artists back home and empowered them in a

sense as it enabled them to follow and realize their passion. Yet, he did not forget to mention the importance of financial reward and security that being a full-time musician provides and that is subsequently what 'empowerment through music' actually means to some.

In regards to the point of how the economic downturns in their respective countries have ultimately pushed young people to commit themselves to what they burn for, it again indicates that empowerment from their perspectives has a lot to do with economic mobility and social relations that put them in a subordinate position. Those who have suffered from the economic downturns were located in a vulnerable position without employment, income, or prospect for them. In such situations, the sense of self-worth, recognition, belonging to such social, economic and political structure is hard to come by. Thus, they are in the obvious need of economic empowerment as well as psychological and social empowerment that makes them feel strong and worthwhile in society. Furthermore, in regards to their specific experiences as immigrants, labor mobility can be also added to the component of empowerment. The empowerment through music is again secondary as it is not directly connected to economic mobility that has the foremost importance. However, in accordance with the aforementioned point by Taylor (1992) on social and cultural recognition, music in this case can be said to have provided immigrant artists with much-needed psychological and social well-being given their stress and frustration of being put in a subordinate position in unjust power structure and labor market that could devalue their self-worth.

Considering that the economic aspect of empowerment, which music is not able to offer directly, has the foremost importance for immigrants, the only immigrant artists who could feel the empowerment through music in the most direct sense would be the professional full-time ones. Only a few of the immigrant musicians I have talked to in the course of research make their living solely out of music and they unisoned the significance of being able to make a living out of music; not only it allows them to devote to what they love to do, but importantly, it gives them financial security which a lot of other struggling artists lack. In comparison with the cases of immigrant musicians discussed earlier, the cases of full-time immigrant musicians differ significantly. First of all, the economic mobility was not their primary reason of relocation to Oslo and they were confident that they could make living out of their art backed by years of

experiences, training and education. Thus, the economic aspect of empowerment seems to have different implications for them. Furthermore, being a full-time immigrant artist, they are officially classified as a high-skilled labor immigrant by the state and this element would surely put them in a different position in social structure of the host society from those artist who have to engage in other forms of unskilled labor to make ends meets. In this sense, the empowerment through music for the professional immigrant musicians is not only limited to social and psychological well-being of being able to engage in what they love, but also is about economic empowerment in a very direct sense since their trade in music directly supports their living and provides them with economic and social mobility.

However, the full-time musicians are naturally a handful bunch in the music scene of Oslo compared to the mass of others, including countless hobbyists, who make their living by other means. Thus, concerning those who are not full-time artists, it can be concluded that the empowerment that music provides has mostly to do with psychological/mental well-being and social well-being, which often have a secondary importance to the economic well-being and mobility that music cannot directly provide. In the case of first-generation immigrants in Oslo, the aspect of psychological, social well-being, social and cultural participation in the host society that music grants them is the most significant as they migrate to a whole new environment without knowing anyone in many cases. Therefore, a kind of social network music provides is certainly empowering especially newly-arrived immigrants in the social context and in terms of cultural participation; it gets them in contact with like-minded people, both the native population and others, beyond their nationality or ethnicity. It provides an environment where they can feel strong, welcomed and can devote themselves to what they burn for: they could get away from the existent social and economic structure which puts them in a subordinate position in need of empowerment.

One remark by a drummer from Chile has humorously emphasized this point; “(recalling his days spent in menial labor before establishing himself as a full-time musician) one good thing about playing music is; if you play music, you'll get to meet cool people. But if you just work in a factory or something, you'll only get to meet assholes [...] So I guess that is pretty empowering, right?” This is of course his humorous take on his experience of having to

reluctantly engage in menial jobs in an unfriendly environment he did not particularly enjoy. Yet, as we were discussing about the topic of immigrants in Oslo and integration, he was also pointing to the situation of so-called labor immigrants who come to Norway specifically to earn money and do not (or cannot) do anything else besides working; such situations of feeling oppressed, exploited, and doing something they do not enjoy at all, would make them bitter in the host society and leave them little room to embrace themselves as part of the society. So apart from the obvious monetary/financial 'empowerment' for full-time artists, empowerment through music for immigrants has a lot to do with a sense of social and cultural inclusion and psychological well-being they get from performance and involvement in the scene as well as general positive and often uplifting emotional supports which music delivers.

Lastly, regarding empowering for others, it was in the research plan to examine whether or not immigrant musicians in Oslo consciously create and perform music in order to empower others through their expression. However, most of musicians I talked to this time were mostly instrumentalists and not as involved in composition of music as songwriters would be. So the general consensus among them was 'yes'; they could believe in the potential of music which inspire and mobilize individuals and masses transcending borders, no matter how idealistic it might sound. It is certainly in their interest to communicate something meaningful and strong in their art and performance even if some of them may play only instrumental music. Some reemphasized the universality of music regarding positive and uplifting feelings/emotions that music could deliver, referring to studies of cognitive science on music. However, as the most of them not being a songwriter or lyricist in their respective project, their input seemed to be fairly limited and I did not get to meet immigrant artists who strive specifically to communicate and empower distant others. Nonetheless, as one Norwegian singer from a hip hop group has put it, messages of love and peace are generally always there in music as well as relationships, success, hope among other typical lyrical themes for many artists.

The one exception was a Chilean punk singer who mixed his native Spanish with English, and occasionally with Norwegian, in his songwriting. Although it is not his main objective to write songs that appeal to people back in Chile and Latin America, he said that some of his songs are criticism for social/political problems and situations in his country of origin and Latin

America. Given the considerable size of Chilean and Spanish-speaking community in Oslo, his music seems to have appeal for those in Oslo as well. He likewise believes in the idea of empowering and mobilizing people socially and politically, saying empowering others is definitely his motivation in his artistic works. Unfortunately, I was not able to talk personally to any other local artists who consciously write music to inspire distant others back home socially and politically. Nonetheless, it was mentioned that many immigrant artists in Oslo like him, especially in the genre of punk rock or hip hop, do take up on social/political issues and strive to appeal people beyond the borders as well as the local audience in Oslo, often incorporating their native languages in their music. The universality of music and how it makes it possible to inspire and communicate with others beyond physical boundaries of countries, national/ethnic boundaries, have been emphasized countless times. Concerning the greater psychological and social well-being that music could provide through social networks based on the mutual interest, it is ultimately the universality of music that puts people in that social networks. Therefore, it can be concluded its universality is the most empowering aspect of music as far as social/cultural participation, recognition and integration of immigrants in host society are concerned. Nonetheless, from the majority of first-generation immigrant artists I encountered, the term empowerment has mostly to do with a greater economic and social well-being and mobility to which music or art do not contribute directly.

5.3. Identity-Identification in the context of a highly multicultural society

Just as much as the universality of music is repeatedly emphasized, it has become apparent that the identity of musician/artist entails the same sort of universality and it has been likewise emphasized regarding the identity construction of immigrant artists in a multicultural society. As playfully yet insightfully signified in the 'cool people' remark in the previous section, the local artists recognize one another as one certain ilk of people who like to be together with others with similar interests, ideas, visions and so on. Regarding social networks of musicians, visual artists, performing artists and filmmakers, ascribed statuses of nationality or ethnicity seem to come in to play to a lesser extent; limiting their social network by such ascribed status would be only limiting possibility and potential in their life and work. Being open to different and new ideas is very important in an artistic environment or community, as a professional session drummer from New Zealand implied while reflecting his experience in collaborations with artists from Africa and Latin America based in a neighborhood with a high concentration of immigrants in Oslo. He maintained that he is always open to playing different styles of music though he may have a preferred style of music at times. As a musician, limiting oneself to playing one certain genre of music is only limiting your potential and possibility to do something new, different, and possibly better. This open-mindedness is what seems to characterize the nature of both the immigrant and native artists in Oslo.

As mentioned in the previous section in regards to social networks of local musicians and artists, many immigrants artists pointed out, referring to their 'native' Norwegian artist friends and colleagues, that they are a pretty different bunch from the mainstream of the population, an 'average' Norwegian person to put it frankly. Thus, in regards to the identity construction of immigrant artists, and even the native artists in Oslo, what matters to a greater extent is their identity as being a musician or being an artist of some other forms. The attitude of 'musician first' was simply very prominent when they discuss their own universal identity, especially when it comes to being active in an artistic environment; they are a musician, before being a Spanish, Norwegian, Ethiopian, Latino, immigrant or refugee. There are so many labels and adjectives one can apply to describe and identify an individual person, especially when it

comes to those with immigrant backgrounds. Yet, within their own environment of music, the label of 'musician', or labels associated with instruments and roles they specialize in such as drummer, pianist or singer, matter the most; that is how others identify them as well as how they identify themselves, regardless of where they physically reside or come from. Mutual two-way ascription, self-ascription and ascription by others (Barth 1969), of such identity as an artist/musician seems well-respected within the artistic community and environment in Oslo among its members. Though a group of musicians or artists will not constitute a nation, this is in a sense a constructivist identification as it emphasizes individual's conscious choices and decision-making. There is also a certain sense of nationalism of the neighborhood among the local artists, as Back (1996) would put it. Nonetheless, this sense of neighborhood may not be as strong as the kind found in some urban communities whose members meet and hang out regularly at fixed time and place with the strong sense of loyalty to the locality. The music scene or art scene of Oslo seems to be more of open and flexible, yet elusive at times, network of individuals with less strong sense of loyalty.

Once they step out of the music scene and the context of such a social network, their identities seem to become highly subject to how others perceive them in society and that is when their ascribed status comes to play a role. Others may label them in a primordial/essentialist way solely based on their nationality regardless of personal backgrounds and stories of every individual; therefore it makes identities of immigrants in Oslo highly situational and contextual.

For second-generation or third generation immigrant artists in Oslo I interacted with, their identity as a Norwegian seems to be the most prominent and that is how they identify themselves. Being born and raised in Norway, they answered that they feel fully Norwegian and that is how others generally perceive them too. Some of them are second-generation immigrants with minority backgrounds, meaning that they have parent(s) from non-Western countries, and they may be visibly distinguishable from that of the stereotype Nordic look. Nonetheless, as symbolized in the previous 'Kinder Surprise' remark, it does not seem to have much significance when it comes to how they identify themselves in Norway, or in the

multicultural environment of Oslo. They have been born and raised in Norway, they have grown up together with other 'native' population, their first language is Norwegian, and they have gone through the Norwegian system of education. So beyond only sporadic nuisances that may occur in their daily lives, or occasionally inconsiderate snap judgements on their physical appearances, they identify themselves fully as Norwegian and their identity as a Norwegian cannot be questioned by others either. Therefore, their Norwegian identity is well-established based on both self-ascription and ascription by the 'natives'. Regarding the minority status that can be labeled by the state institution like SSB, the aforementioned Norwegian-born artist with Ethiopian parentage playfully reacted with a surprise as if it has not occurred to him to consider himself as a minority. Similar reactions were followed by a few others I talked to. However, this has likely to do with their socio-economic status being not subordinate to that of the majority 'native' population and they could enjoy social, economic, cultural opportunities as much as the majority would do, concerning Schaefer's (2011) majority-minority definition. It must be emphasized here that these are my interpretative accounts based on voices of the specific second generation immigrant artists I have interacted with during the research. Had I talked to many other immigrants with minority backgrounds, it is certain that I would have gotten more diverse responses and different reactions to their technical 'minority' label and how their identities are constructed in Oslo/Norway.

As for those second and third generation immigrants with parentage from Western countries I talked to, mostly the neighboring countries such as Denmark, Sweden, England and Germany, the two-way ascription of Norwegian identity is likewise well-established. Their physical appearances do not give away preconceptions or any minority backgrounds about them. In response to my questions on their identity and status as ones with immigrant backgrounds, the most of them reacted as if it has never occurred to them that they should inquire their technical immigrant status and classification in Norway. All of the second and third generation immigrant artists, with whom I interacted, maintained that they do not identify themselves as immigrants, albeit they value and acknowledge their respective parentage. They see themselves as part of the native population in Norway or Oslo. They ascribe their

Norwegian identify fully or to a very high extent. The question here then is what makes them Norwegian and what the Norwegian identity, which seems to create boundaries from others in the society, really is.

This kind of question obviously does not bear any clear-cut answer and can be addressed from many different viewpoints. Some immigrants and native artists jokingly associated Norwegian identity/Norwegianness with cultural stereotypes such as indulging oneself in nature, camping and hiking, winter sports like cross-country skiing and so on. But these are of course their playful take on popular cultural or past-time activities in the country. More on a serious note, the Norwegian language competency was emphasized by both the immigrants and the natives; many adult first-generation immigrants do pick up the language to some extent but mastering it to the native competence seems extremely challenging even for those whose first languages are linguistically close to Norwegian (i.e. immigrants from Denmark, Germany, and Iceland). It was pointed out that some first-generation immigrants who arrive in the country at early age can develop the native-like language skill but it is almost never the case for those come to the country or start learning the language as an adult. Therefore, the language competency in Norwegian could be one of the most decisive markers which distinguishes the Norwegians from others in the country, and hence, constitutes the core of Norwegian identity which creates a certain social boundary from the immigrants. This dichotomy of the Norwegians and the rest based on the language seems plausible, given the highly multicultural *Gesellschaft* of Oslo where diverse individuals are getting increasingly tied together based on a diverse range of changing interests, values, ideas or languages as well as traditional kinship: In such society where individuals have a greater freedom to subscribe to every different social/cultural value, norm, interest, it is very challenging to establish what constitutes the Norwegianness in a crucial sense. It is not as simple as just subscribing to the essentialist view and applying basic attributes such as nationality, ethnicity, or common cultural/social values and interests. Therefore, the language competency in Norwegian, which is often acquired inherently, might be one of the few markers that could distinguishingly establish the Norwegianness and create a social boundary from others. This goes in accordance with Barth's (1969) argument on ethnic/social boundaries which are maintained by certain marked differences or signals and signs which can be naturally found in their ways

and patterns of speech. Hence, as far as the voices collected throughout this research are concerned, it can be hypothesized that the aspect of language is largely accountable for Norwegian identity in the domain of today's multicultural Oslo where individuals with every different cultural/social value, interest and character, coexist and come in contact with the native population.

Apart from the language factor, egalitarian cultural values, namely underpinned by the Law of Jante, that are unique to Norway and Scandinavia, have been brought up as part of what constitutes Norwegian identity and Norwegianness as Eriksen (2009) likewise mentions it as one of the prominent characteristics/values found in Norway. The Law of Jante value of 'no one is better than others' promotes egalitarianism and treats everyone on equal terms as every individual is as good as everyone else: it values a group/communal well-being far higher than individual success and achievements. One professional violinist from Belgium pointed out that this Law of Jante mentality is in fact very much present in Oslo's art/music scene and this is one of the characteristics that differentiate the native Norwegian artists from the immigrants. She implied that, while the Law of Jante mentality contributes to a warm and encouraging artistic environment where anyone at any skill levels is welcomed without being subjected to competition and criticism from others, it can hinder the development of thriving and competitive environment where individuals with exceptional talents can distinguish themselves and stand out easily without being frowned upon. Subscription to the idea, that everyone is (should be) always equally as good as each other and no one is (should not be) better than anyone, inevitably leads to a lack of competition and constructive criticism that could help development of talents. Giving out complements with no substance to each other can be seen as a mental consolation of sorts that may encourage mediocrity as she felt so, being a highly experienced session musician in Oslo with years of vigorous training in the conservatory. With a certain tone of frustration, she implicated that an absence of a thriving environment that demands vigorous training/practice and greater artistic ambitions may risk an art scene filled with opportunistic artists who are content with mediocrity and resort to snobbery. Therefore, for a few highly trained and experienced musicians, this sometimes overly egalitarian aspect of Norwegianness, underpinned by the Law of Jante, is something they cannot fully identify themselves with. Again, according to Barth (1969), practicing shared

basic value orientation such as this is also one of the features that constitute an ethnic identity and boundaries that differentiate one group from others. But it should be also noted that the most of immigrant artists are at the same time certainly appreciative of the general openness and supportive of the environment of Oslo's music scene which embodies this egalitarian aspect of Norwegian identity.

That being said, many first-generation immigrant artists in Oslo seem to find it uneasy to identify themselves as Norwegian, regardless of the length of their residency in Norway, or to identify themselves within the same boundary together with the Norwegians outside of music/artistic environment. Their reasons vary and could be pinned down to the language, cultural/social values and interests that may be foreign to them as discussed above. In many cases, the majority of immigrants artists seem to construct their identities, besides the artist/musician one, mostly based on their ascribed status such as their nationality and ethnicity in a primordial sense. For instance, an immigrant from Chile may identify themselves closer to their fellow Chileans or other immigrants from Latin America than the native Norwegians as they attempt to maintain their identity as Chilean and instrumentally articulate their Latino identity at the same time. As we have seen, many immigrants who move to Oslo often utilize social networks which consist of individuals who share the same nationality, ethnicity or languages in order to facilitate the initial phase of their relocation.

They are a virtual diaspora of sorts in the multicultural pot of Oslo as they are often not represented physically in certain geographical locations of the city like a diaspora in a conventional sense. But they are networks of scattered individuals connected through the Internet, or more importantly through mutual friends and acquaintances. It is not that everyone is dependent on such networks but the immigrant artists from various places (Brazil, Spain, Chile, Columbia, Estonia, Romania and even Sweden among others) informed me that they have utilized such connections based on their nationality, ethnicity and languages groups to a varying degree. Some were reluctant in being confided in such networks as they feel like it re-articulates their nationality/ethnicity-based identities even in a place that is far away from home and where they could re-invent themselves. Some found more pride in their nationality/ethnicity-based identity after relocating to Oslo as the situation of being subjected

as an outsider in the host society made them more aware of where they originate from. Thus, it made them aware of where their home really is and identity lies. Some simply seemed to use their nationality/ethnicity identities in an instrumental manner to effectively get what they want or need, namely work and housing. In such situations, their nationality/ethnicity-based identities in Oslo/Norway get re-articulated in essentially the same manner where one's ethnic/national identity can be articulated and instrumentally played up in ethnic conflict situations (cf. Lake & Rothchild 1998). Regarding this, it is interestingly not the case that they feel either grateful or resentful about it; they are simply indifferent to such instrumental articulations of their ethnic/national identity.

It has become apparent that many immigrant artists were rather dismissive about their identities and identity construction in Oslo. Discussing the premise of Oslo being an open multicultural society where individuals can enjoy greater freedom to be whoever they wish, one Brazilian musician pointed that one could reinvent themselves no matter how they please in Oslo but it is ultimately 'others' that decide and identify who they are (cf. Barth 1969): "They will say like if you are Brazilian, then you are a Brazilian, no matter what. You will never become Norwegian, or anyone else, and you will always be Brazilian". It is a case of simple and blatant labeling; ascription of identity by others. But this is how he feels and his point seemed to be shared by many; 'the identity construction has little to do with your input but it is mostly about how others think of you, see you and label you.' In the artistic environment of musicians and creative environments in general, as discussed, their constructivist identity as artists and musicians may be collectively articulated, recognized and respected by themselves and others mutually. Yet, in everyday life, immigrants themselves have no control on identity ascriptions by others anyway. This blatant labeling and categorization, therefore, seem to lead to the general dismissive attitude among immigrants towards discussions on identity construction; it is inevitably an unfruitful discussion for them.

However, it is important to note that I met many immigrant artists who were proud of their original nationality/ethnicity-based identities in many ways. They are rather dismissive about how others see them, label them and categorize them; they indeed see pride in who they are, or where they have been and where they come from. However, since there is nothing they

can do about how others see and label them; therefore they do not see much point in thinking and even getting stressed about it. In this sense, a few were entirely indifferent about issues on identity and identity construction in Oslo and dismissed it by going, 'well I'm just another foreigner/immigrant in Oslo, so?' This, what seems to be a cynical/dismissive take on the identity construction, is actually another trait of immigrants in Oslo which seems to be shared by the most to a varying degree. In other words, this is the identity of being an immigrant/foreigner in the multicultural society of Oslo. As many first-generation immigrants feel somewhat outside of the group boundary of the native population and find it uneasy to identify themselves as Norwegian, they seem to construct their identity in Oslo based on the fact that their identity as immigrant/foreigner is ascribed by 'others' who locate them outside of the ethnic boundary of the native Norwegian population. This is a result of the immigrants reflecting themselves upon the eyes of the native population. Besides the aforementioned nationality-ethnicity based identity, this immigrant identity can be strongly emphasized, and identity-wise, it produces the dichotomy of us and them - the immigrants and the natives. The dichotomization of others as strangers, thus, seems to occur both from the immigrant side and the native Norwegian side. This dichotomization does not necessarily mean there is such an unbridgeable divide and conflict situation in society; however as far as the identity construction is concerned; there is certainly a group boundary that divides the native Norwegian population and the others consisting of first-generation immigrants.

Among the first-generation immigrants I talked to, only a few seemed to willingly and happily re-articulate both their nationality/ethnicity-based identity and their identity of being a foreigner/immigrant, and reflect it in their artistic expression. This can be recognized in contents/themes of their work, lyrics, choice of languages in their expression. This is apparently also fairly common among the immigrant artists in Oslo, although it was not very apparent from the ones I encountered during the research. Nonetheless, they informed me that immigrant artists that moved to Norway escaping hardships tend to take a comparatively bigger sense of pride in their nationality/ethnicity-based identity and wish to reflect and express it in their art. Various events and performances arranged in Oslo, which focus on a specific country, nation or culture, demonstrate this and many immigrant artists see them as excellent opportunities to showcase their identity and ethnic/national pride. The Ethiopian

bass player, briefly mentioned previously, might be a good example to show this: While playing pop music with any kind of musicians, he occasionally picks up various traditional instruments from home, dresses up in his clan costume and perform music of his tradition in those cultural events. In some countries, belonging to a certain ethnic group, clan or class could restrict their freedom of expression. Being openly proud of a member of such groups can be extremely difficult and could even threaten their lives, as a singer from South Africa mentioned based on his own experience under the Apartheid rules and beyond. Considering such situations outside of Norway, it is no wonder why some immigrant artists in Oslo would wish to embrace a greater sense of freedom and happily, and liberally, re-articulate their ethnic identity both in the creative environment and outside of it; this can be seen as a form of apolitical cultural nationalism in which immigrants may proudly practice, present and preserve their own culture and heritages in host society (cf. Gans 2003).

However, it also needs to be added that a few immigrant and native artists displayed a cynical look on immigrant artists who over-emphasize their ethnic and immigrant identity, cunningly for attention, as they perceived. They pointed that the music scene of Oslo offers many different styles of music to the audience and there is a niche for everyone. To find such a niche in the scene, one easy way is to play up the factor of being exotic and foreign and to articulate 'otherness' in the host society; 'a culture that sells'. Here it seemed they were cynically pointing to commodification of culture and how one could exploit their exoticness and otherness of foreign cultures, in the same way some artist resort to playing a kind of world music which can be conveniently catered and marketed for the world music listeners in the West, as Steven Feld (2005) mentions. This articulation of otherness and exoticness in artistic expression could be considered as articulation of their foreign identity and group boundaries that differentiate them from the native population (Knudsen 2008). It is not easy to determine whether this articulation is a reflection of their identity construction, or simply it is a cunning way of grabbing attention as some might see. Nonetheless, it is interesting to see how some immigrant artists consciously choose to articulate their essential ethnicity/nationality-based identity in their expression to the host society.

Lastly, I would like to discuss the possible emergence of a 'new Norwegian' identity in the multicultural environment of Oslo, as I initially hoped to see in the pre-research phase. I have asked the immigrant and native musicians in Oslo about what they think the Norwegian identity really is, whether they think it is something static or constantly changing, and whether they find a potential for certain new Norwegian identity of sorts to develop in such a multicultural environment where a number of different cultures, values and ideas meet together. Almost all of them have acknowledged that Oslo is a special place in Norway that differs a lot from the rest of the country, in terms of its character, multiculturalness, diversity and so on. Likewise, they can see inhabitants in Oslo, especially artists, have certainly different characteristics and identities from those of the 'typical' Norwegian one.

However, as discussed above regarding the traditional Norwegian identity, many of stereotyped traditional cultural/societal values remain very much applicable so as to construct the Norwegian identity. Surely, especially in the art/music scene, the local artists in Oslo see the hybridization of different cultures with the Norwegian one occurring frequently and it could potentially lead to development of something new and original in their respective art form, just as Knudsen (2010) observed through his research in the hip hop scene of Oslo. The immigrant and native artists in Oslo do share the non-essentialist view of culture and identity as something not static and constantly changing its shape. They can see Oslo and its art/music scene is comprised of many diverse individuals with many different identities. However, regarding the potential construction of new Norwegian identity in Oslo at the collective level, they are not convinced so much and see it as a wishful thinking for the time being; cultures and identity change slowly with time just like people change the music they listen to, food they eat, clothes they wear and languages they speak as time passes; thus you never know the situation in decades to come, the local artists reckoned.

As of now, as far as the topic of identities in the music/art scene goes, the constructivist identity of being an artist/musician, which surpasses the conventional national/ethnic/linguistic boundaries, stands out and distinguishes itself from that of the mainstream population. Outside of the creative/artistic environment or activities, the collective identity of being an immigrant/foreigner in Oslo is widely shared among first-generation immigrants. Self-

ascription to their original nationality/ethnicity-based identities can be either re-articulated or played down situationally at occasions. The dichotomy between the native population and the immigrants is certainly there, underpinned by the cultural/societal values and traits, and most significantly by the linguistic gap which is difficult to fill within one generation. The immigrant artists in Oslo see the construction of identity is mostly processed through ascription by others and many can be dismissive on how others identify them and try to label them. Therefore, the basic nationality/ethnicity-based identities of immigrants remain strong in Oslo and some take pride in it as if to articulate their group boundaries. So the new Norwegian identity or some kind of collective identity, which could inclusively apply to both the natives and the immigrants as a whole, can only be considered to be in the development phase at the best. This may, to conclude, explain why Oslo can be best described as multicultural society as of today where different cultures, identities and values, coexist rather than being described as a place of one single inclusive, universalistic, culture or identity.

6. Concluding section

6.1. Perceptions of artists on migration

In the previous sections, many relevant issues have been already touched upon, and therefore, this section will be primarily used to wrap up and add to the things that have been discussed previously, before proceeding to the final remarks. The very first thing needs to be emphasized is that, in spite of the persistent media coverage with the ever increasing amount of immigration in Oslo/Norway, both the immigrants and the native artists in Oslo consider immigration as a highly positive thing that brings new stimulating ideas and characters to the place, especially in regards to the creative environment they are in. Hybridization of diverse cultures in the creative environment is highly welcomed by the local artists. Nationalities, ethnicities, languages, or residence status in the country, do not play so much of a role for the native artists in such environment, as Knudsen (Hawkins & Knudsen 2011) observed through his research in hip hop music scene in Oslo. For the immigrant artists, their basic ethnic identities are something that can even be situationally played up or down for their advantage. From the viewpoints of the immigrant artists in Oslo, they are naturally part of the whole immigration-related topics and would like to support the greater mobility and more open society. Most immigrant artists acknowledge that the multicultural being of Oslo is something special in Norway and they seem to appreciate the relative openness and diversity of the liberal society, though this notion may not be necessarily shared by other immigrants who must go through hardships without social and cultural recognition and respect artists could receive.

This whole thing is the consensus which has been constructed mostly based on the voices of the musicians and related personnel whom personally encountered during the research, and thus, it cannot possibly represent everyone's perceptions and opinions in the scene. For instance, as Vestel (1999) mentions in his study of youth culture, the Norwegian black metal scene could be potentially associated with negative attitude and hostility towards the inflow of immigrants in the country, especially back in the 90s. Those who have opposing views to the ones discussed here can likewise express their thoughts and ideas in a provoking way in

music or other forms of expression. Artists who express anti-immigration views can be certainly found in Norway just like artists with extremist views can be found in many other European countries. Had I spoken exclusively to those artists instead, the outcome would have been entirely different. I did not confine myself to get in contact only with a certain genre of musicians. Nonetheless, the ones I have ended up being in contact with showed certainly the liberal and culturally left-leaning attitude which goes in accordance with the integration/multicultural model supported by Arbeidspartiet²⁰ concerning immigration. Yet, it should be added here that I did meet and talk with some musicians and fans of black metal genre and they were in fact all in favor of the views presented here. One of them, serving as a staff member of a culture house where he interacts with people with diverse ethnic/cultural backgrounds, has also informed me that certain negative media coverage on black metal made in the 90s is not very relevant today, saying that it is just another negative stereotype imposed by others. He hinted many young fans and artists indeed share the liberal views as the others presented here regarding culture, politics and immigration.

In accordance with such liberal views, it has been mentioned and repeatedly implied that the local artists in Oslo are mostly in favor of the integration model which ultimately underpins the current multiculturalism in Norway. In regards to the integration, the local artists seemed to agree on the economic empowerment, social and cultural participation in society, and the local language as the keys to successful integration. Professional and skilled musicians could easily get by without knowing the local language in their own environment and circles of their friends and colleagues, for instance. However, once outside of their field, the proficiency in the local language is desirable to be able to feel that they are part of the society in a greater degree. Those first-generation immigrant artists who are not able to commit full-time have to engage in different types of labor to keep it going. Plus, music may not be their first priority as they first and foremost wish for a greater economic mobility and means. In such case, the proficiency in the local language, which allows them to get closer to the group boundary of the native population, can be the key to integration.

²⁰. Arbeidspartiet (The Labor Party): the ruling party in Norway at the time of writing (Spring 2013). See footnote 4.

The native and second-third generation immigrant artists likewise agreed on the proficiency in the language as the most important factor for long-term integration of immigrants in general. While the first-generation immigrant artists likewise acknowledge the language factor, they could not emphasize enough the economic factor of having some financial means to maintain the essential needs such as housing and food regarding successful integration of immigrants in general. It was the case this time that many of the immigrant musicians I met secured some kind of jobs, whether professional or menial stints as they see, to get by reasonably without knowing the local language. Beyond that point, they all pointed to the importance of being actively involved and participating in various activities and happenings in order to feel empowered as part of society; music is obviously one of such activities and does good deal in improving one's social and psychological well-being as we have seen. A kind of life where one lives for working week-in and week-out with jobs they do not enjoy may provide a financial security, though it does not necessarily provide a sense of belonging, recognition and self-worth in society as they are unlikely to meet other individuals who they share interests with and can identify themselves with closely; as the Chilean drummer put it in the previous section. Beyond securing the minimal financial means, in the domain of cultural and social participation, music seems to empower immigrant artists a lot and helps them feel integrated well, in a sense that they can find a sense of belonging, even without knowing the local languages in many cases. This greater psychological and social well-being attained through music, and involvement in the scene, is what empowerment through music essentially is. However, it must be concluded, for the majority of immigrant artists it has only a secondary importance to the economic/financial well-being which gives them a greater economic/social mobility in the host society, and that is something music cannot provide in a direct sense.

Many first-generation immigrant musicians, just like any immigrants that moved to Oslo for other purposes, often utilize social networks based on their nationality, ethnicity and language. But they did not show any tendency of being overly nationalistic in an excessive, extreme, or political way. Second-generation immigrants and beyond are more likely to identify themselves as Norwegian and the two-way ascription is well-established, even though they are certainly proud of their ancestral heritages to varying degrees. As for the first-generation immigrant musicians/artists, one's nationality and ethnicity do seem to matter to a

considerable extent in constructing their identities in the host society. Being identified as a foreigner/immigrant does seem to make them more aware of their ascribed status of nationality and ethnicity, which they often come to take pride in. Ethnicity/nationality-based identities labeled by others on first-generation immigrants lead to construction of the widely shared identity of being immigrants/foreigners/others in Oslo. This foreign/immigrant identity of theirs and its otherness effectively distinguish them from the native Norwegian population; this also ensures the applicability of the term host society which points to a situation where those who are identified as immigrants seem to be accommodated by the native population who draws certain social boundaries from the immigrants, 'the others'.

Even in such situation, no one, with whom I have spoken, reacted in any aggressive or provoking nationalistic manner so as to inspire or mobilize others in society. Only a handful claimed they consciously make political/social critiques or messages targeted for their own national/ethnic groups in Norway or back in their place of origin. Transnationalism is thus not so visible in the music/art scene of Oslo; definitely not in the political context of inspiring or provoking others. While few native artists seem to express such pride in their work or performances, some immigrant artists do take on opportunities to express their nationalistic pride in various cultural events. But then again, this comes across certainly as more of an innocuous showcase of their ethnic/national identity in a non-aggressive apolitical context. In other words, it is a showcase of their cultural nationalism and it does not seem to bear any outward political connotations that are often associated with the theme of nationalism (Gans 2003).

Both the immigrant and the native artists are in favor of the multicultural state of Oslo in a literal sense regardless of implications of multiculturalism as a political doctrine and see Oslo as a unique environment with a considerable potential to flourish even further. "I mean Norway needs more development, right?"; this quote by the New York-bound filmmaker from the Caribbeans featured in the beginning of the thesis was directed to this point, as he was giving his impression on its art/music scene and the general public of Norway/Oslo; 'Norway/Oslo could flourish even more if they decide to open up even more to new ideas and people and become not afraid to take risk of trying something new.' He was one of those

artists who were somewhat frustrated with the lack of thriving and competitive artistic environment while giving the credit to the diversity and the multicultural state of Oslo, which came as a surprise to him. Nevertheless, with Norway being widely considered as the richest country in the world, he expects even more from it as he compares it to the scene in New York City to which he is accustomed to. It sounded that he was pinning down more openness to new and different ideas and people as the key to further development of society; and if that were to occur in the society, that would first start from the art scene. As for what is hindering 'the more openness' in the society, he shied away and pointed it vaguely to some 'Norwegianness', certain values and norms enrooted in the mainstream society; it was again left open to interpretation.

While the multiculturalism in Norway/Oslo appears to be widely supported by the local artists/musicians regardless of their backgrounds, it does not mean that it is in its full maturity by any means. As discussed above, some immigrant artists do expect it to be even more open without contention and see room of further improvement and development. Outside of the artistic environment, the integration model has been discussed in the media and public debate and challenged by those who have opposing ideas and opinions at the societal and national level; many positive notions and outlooks presented here may not be shared by other immigrants who may be socially and economically subordinate to the majority and have to struggle with prejudices and preconceptions exist in society. In order to develop the current integration model and multiculturalism in Oslo/Norway, more agreement, trust and support from the mainstream population to the immigrant population are necessary. Concerning this point, when that NYC-bound filmmaker mentioned that Norway needs more development in relations to the artistic scene, he was hinting that the artistic communities of society could be the catalyst for such further development of flourishing multicultural society. It was repeatedly emphasized by their immigrant counterparts that the native Norwegian artists are quite different characters from that of the mainstream population in terms of the way they look at the multicultural society and immigration/immigrants. In regards to the flourishing of multicultural society through music and other art forms, both the native and immigrant artists showed excitement and affirmative reactions on being part of the dynamic cultural transformation that occurs in Oslo through hybridization, which could potentially drive the

transformation of the society as a whole and the cultural identity of the native population. The artists in Oslo are indeed appreciative of the fact how music and other art forms have such a potential to bring together diverse individuals, solely based on mutual interests and understanding on ideas and values they share, regardless of their ascribed status and superficial differences. This should not ideally be only limited to the music and other art environments as the artists and other personnel of the art world of Oslo hoped so. Therefore, I conclude the section by noting that the voices from the Oslo artists seem to agree on the following; if this kind of liberal and respectful attitude could be shared and appreciated by everyone in every arena of the society, the multicultural state of Oslo could develop further, and the society and culture could flourish and transform into something entirely new.

6.2. Concluding remarks

The whole research process was continuously helped by countless individuals who shared the same idealistic view of how music and other art forms can empower people and have a potential to connect a diverse range of individuals as well as to transform ideas, values and opinions in society. The anthropological approach of conducting an ethnographic study was definitely effective so as to get around in the environment, though it showed some clear limitations due to the time and budgetary constraints in relations to the scale of the research objectives. The conventional way of selecting the target group specifically based on their nationality/ethnicity could have worked out better in terms of having a strong focus on one specific group of people as a cultural study of sorts and surely it could have limited the scale of research drastically. But then, that would have been not so effective in terms of introducing the incredible diversity of society and music/art scene of Oslo; therefore that would have undermined the common identity of being an artist or immigrant, which was shared widely transcending the borders of their essentialist nationality/ethnicity-based identities.

The multicultural society of Oslo offers indeed countless opportunities for researchers and students to address topics of identity, immigration, social and cultural studies; there are countless of accounts and outcomes one could expect from their research given the highly

diverse and complex state of the society. As it was brought up previously, the one proposed outcome of the research is to provide totally contestable accounts of people, cultures and environments as expected from an anthropological study. The highly inclusive approach focusing on musicians and music/art scene taken in this particular research project was just one way to address and examine these topics and it allowed me to get in touch with a whole lot of interesting characters who all had good life stories to share. These encounters have made it clear that each of their individual life stories deserves their own spotlight and is all worth analyzing in relation to the field of immigration studies, cultural/social anthropology and so on. They emphatically confirmed that Oslo is such a unique society in transition considering its diversity, the changing character of the native population and the multicultural state, and therefore, it distinguishes itself as an ideal environment for anthropological or sociological research regarding topics related to immigration, identities and cultures. Being widely considered as one of the richest and the most developed society, research outcomes and accounts of Oslo/Norway should be applied, contested, compared and contrasted, in the context of many other countries and cities in development. Yet, it is also important to acknowledge that even Oslo/Norway itself is also a society in development as of today. Thus, as the increasing coverage in media and public debate indicates, it will surely keep providing new and different topics to be studied in the fields of immigration studies, sociology and anthropology.

In such situations, a number of immigrant and native artists have kindly shared their personal stories and showed how they have been empowered through/by music personally and how they think music or other art forms could empower others at personal level and at collective level too. The openness, inclusiveness and curiosity they showed to a social research like this certainly embody the welcoming and respectful environment of Oslo's art and music scene. With the reported increasing inflow of immigrants in the years to come, it would be intriguing to see the further development of the ever-flourishing scene and society. As the wide media coverage of today on immigration already indicates, it would not be completely free of tensions and conflicts in society. Yet, as the artists see cultures and identities as non-static and fluid beings, changes in the future are inevitable both at personal level and collective societal level; with the arrival of a greater number of diverse individuals to the city, changes

are bound to happen no matter what. I hope to see how music and art keep empowering the people and would like to examine how the society and communities of artists would evolve in such changing times like these. In the long-term future, it would be truly fascinating to see how the society develops and transforms into something entirely new, mixed together with diverse ideas and values, and to observe how identities and the way people identify themselves and others would change over years in such situation; all that would be surely a lot different from what has been observed today. So there will be countless life stories from individuals living through such changing times. And music, together with many other art forms, will be always there to carry their voices.

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