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Master Thesis

Challenges of Authenticating Migrants' Academic Credentials as Part of Integrating in Norway: A Case study of Eritreans in Agder

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I confirm that I do not refer to others or in any other way use the work of others without stating it hence I confirm that all references are given in the bibliography.

Abstract

Due to the complex interplay among various push/pull factors that impact livelihoods and comfort zones in the Global South, an unprecedented number of persons are following unfamiliar emigration routes, heading from South to North. Political unrest, war situations, economic crisis, environmental degradations, high unemployment rates and grinding poverty, human rights violation, and the like are amongst the major factors that potentially lead to involuntary emigration. For two reasons, in particular, persons with better education and employable skills have a higher propensity to emigrate. In the first place, structural problems parented by the marginalizing setups within the countries in the South gave birth to situations that are not favourable for the skilled. For the relative consciousness they own, they experience tighter surveillance by and are encountered with complex challenges posed by authoritarian regimes. Constant state violence, under-employment or outright unemployment, and the like lead them to consider emigration as an alternative livelihood.

This research is based on reflections collected from the highly educated Eritreans living in Agder, Norway. According to the conclusions drawn from the study, from the time they ended up in their host countries in the North, culture shock amplified by factors such as poor social network, limited language proficiency, and psychological distress following their complex migration routes keeps them in a disadvantageous socioeconomic position. This specific research has found out that refugees who came from a higher educational background, regardless of the skill they might possess, continuously encounter particular integration challenges, amongst them discriminations of all forms and complications related to authenticating their academic credentials from home. An insensitive authentication process, that partially lacks concrete pieces of information concerning the situation in Eritrea has negatively impacted the livelihoods of Eritrean tertiary level graduates.

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List of Abbreviations

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

DA: Development Aid

EC: European Commission

ESU: European Student Union

GDP: Gross Domestic Production

NOKUT: Nasjonalt Organ for kvalitet i Udanningen (National body for quality education) GDP: Gross Domestic Product

HER: Highly educated refugees

HCT: Human Capital Theory

NAV: Norges Arbeids-og Velferdsforvaltning (Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration)

NSD: Norwegian Social Science Data Services

NNREC: Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development

TNC: Transnational Corporations

UOA: University of Asmara

UVD: uten verifiserbar dokumentasjon

UIA: Universitetet i Agder, (University of Agder)

Acknowledgement

I conducted this research in my current adoptive country – Norway. However, it has to be noted from the outset that I have gone through very daunting challenges to reach the stage where I am now. The whole research process was as demanding as any researcher could envisage. Imagine how hard it would be for an immigrant student researcher residing in distant lands in the absence of an established social network that can lighten the research workload through utilizing the social capital from back home. To reiterate, a student researcher in my situation is confronted with the challenges of finding friends who might extend a helping hand whenever and wherever the researcher needs them most. Under such circumstances, it should be clear for the reader how arduous a task it would be to do a research of this nature on a researchers' island that depends entirely on formal setups such as consultations with the authorized personnel from the university.

The challenges of conducting this research have felt severe due to my uprootedness from the very close social circles that could have immensely enriched it by generously reviewing it. Irrespective of the quality of the research content that I have laboured to place in the reader's hand, I have of course benefited from several friends and relatives who live in the Diaspora. I should thus extend my heartfelt thanks to all those who have helped me in terms of exchanging helpful ideas that sharpened my writing, those who spared their precious time to skim the thesis as well as those who stretched their technical assistance in producing this research. The encouragement and assistance have been a lot to me because certain of my former friends stretched an altruistic hand while they still had other immense life challenges in their respective settlement countries. Many thanks to all those who tangibly demonstrated to me that «a friend in need is a friend indeed! »

The other challenge I encountered in conducting this research arises from my circumstances. Indeed, it was hardly easy conducting such research while performing multiple roles. Conducting such research within a new socio-cultural milieu while at the same time trying to live up to expectations to be a responsible father, a student, and an employee has proved a formidable task. Moreover, I carried out the research process during two critical junctures in my life. Producing such research whilst I was publishing my book made the task slightly heavier. However, convincing myself that it would be a pearl of wisdom to turn the pandemic's lockdown into an opportunity, I spent several hours finishing the writing process amid the COVID-19 lockdown. I suppose the lockdown has furnished me and my family with a graceful

occasion to focus on balancing family time while developing this research that has been hovering in my mind for quite some time. Such a process has implicitly lessened the psychological burden that the lockdown could have created for all my family members. Discussing the themes that popped up amid the research with my wife paid back, as we both had some extra minutes to talk on the subject.

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Foreword

Several prominent African scholars such as Andrew Mwenda of Uganda (2007) and George Ayittey of Ghana (2016) have persistently addressed the peculiar political and socioeconomic aspects of the prevailing migration dynamics orchestrated in Africa. Even though factors such as unemployment, warfare, disrupted peace industry, together with personal factors had contributed to the recurrence of emigrations heading to the greener West, the scholars have expounded the main driving forces to be far bigger, asserting other important underlying push factors such as standstill in regard to the passion and capabilities of skilled African manpower. One of their major concerns, highlighted in several international forums, is related to international migration: the “deliberate marginalization of the educated from the economic and political apparatus of their own countries”. Financial assistance through International Aid practically paralyzed the private sector of the continent. Willingly or otherwise, African governments are pressured to align their development strategies to befit the demands of subsidizers operating from the North. Therefore, the emancipation of the private sector through formal state initiatives that could maximize creativities and lead to domestic production was not a priority. In contrary to the wave of neo-liberal development strategies that emerged in the 1980s, African governments were not willing to share the traditional state power with other market forces. In such a dilemma, the educated manpower has had to either relocate to lands of opportunities or remain exploited, to serve the ungrounded political narratives through which the authoritarian state survives of. Of the alternatives; although difficult to choose from, emigration is the better alternative for many of the skilled Africans. It is a pity when highly skilled and conscious Africans are denied an opportunity to show their expertise in their countries of origin.

The above statement is highlighted throughout the research process. The scenario described above is woven into the folds of the research elements to depict how immigrants fitting into the mentioned typology are handled in their host countries in the North, with a special on Norway. According to the findings of this research; culture shock, forms of institutionalized discriminations that limit employability, linguistic barriers, poor social network, chauvinistically constructed nationalist attitudes perceived by some of the hosting Norwegian communities, ageing, exposure of immigrants to traumatic journeys, and delayed or rejected authentication of academic credentials from Eritrea have profoundly impacted many of these immigrants who remain unemployed in Norway.

The focus of this specific research scheme is articulated in the parts to follow by highly educated refugees from Eritrea. All of the respondents who reflected their personal experiences in this research have absconded from Eritrea via outlawed routes that made it difficult to collect their academic credentials. As they are considered “traitors who defected their country” by the very regime they fled from, they are denied authorization and confirmation of their academic qualifications. As a result, some of them failed to submit papers that prove their claimed academic competencies achieved in Eritrea and ended up being devalued in the Norwegian labour market. A failure to utilize available land, labour and capital wisely, both in the micro and macrolevel, is then a failure that throughout the development trajectories any country strives for. According to the findings of this research, immigrants’ skill, in this case, is underutilized in host countries such as Norway.

The research is divided into six chapters. The first chapter discusses the general introduction of the thesis; stating the rationale behind initiating this specific research, its objectives, relevance, and applicability. Chapter two deals with the literature pertaining to the challenges encountered by highly educated immigrants in general and experience of Eritrean tertiary level graduates living in the Agder region of Norway in particular. It takes up the challenges of authenticating academic credentials from an alien training context; NOKUT’s authentication protocols versus international treaties and the like are investigated. Moreover, the parameters within which highly educated Eritrean immigrants are impacted in the process of failed or delayed authentication process are introduced. In the third chapter, theories that guided the line of argument and analysis are articulated. Human capital theory, migration theory and, Marxist theory together with other supporting approaches are presented. Chapter four deals with the research methodology applied while collecting data. A vast literature review was conducted before giving preference to a qualitative over a quantitative approach. Chapter five is the presentation of the data gathered. Raw data is presented in an organized way, preceding the chapter to follow. The last chapter deals with finding and data analysis. Although in some researches, data finding and analysis are put in separate chapters, in this research, they are merged into one for technical and practical reasons.

Chapter one: Introduction

1.1 Background and Rationale

Owing to complex and often overlapping push-/pull factors of varying typologies, people of all walks of life are invariably moving from the developing countries to the relatively developed world. There has been, and still is, flight for political, ethnic or religious reasons, destruction of the environment, and poverty (Heyden, 1991, p. 2). Some forms of push factors that could generate the exile and emigration of persons include the escape of life-threatening state violence. War situations, public strife, complications in the political landscape of certain migrant-producing countries often lead to insecurities of all kinds. Fear of abductions associated with the educated citizens' voicing of political views within authoritarian states, for example, could lead to unplanned flight and exile in search of safety and succour.

In the adventure to rescue one's own life, valuables of the soft and hard assets could be left behind. Official Academic credentials are amongst the many valuables which professionals of varying ranks leave behind while fleeing their own home countries. In the view of refugee-exporting regimes, professional refugees and irregular migrants are often perceived as 'traitors' who betrayed their respective countries. Consequently, policymaker and those who wield extraordinary state power in undemocratic countries assert that such "traitors" do not qualify to claim state services such as credentials from the very states they deserted at a time when their homelands need them most. In such a case, the protocols around the convention of academic autonomy that applies to the institutions around the world are often openly violated on grounds of politically motivated interpretations.

The Eritrean case is a vivid example that demonstrates such a scenario today. Refugees who fled their country for plain reasons of saving their own lives, could not claim their academic credentials from their homeland's institutions. Regardless of the academic qualifications they might have from their own country, they are denied access to claim their credentials proving their expertise. Regardless of the true cause behind Eritrean youths' exodus, the exiled can only be eligible to secure their educational credentials and other state documents under one peculiar pre-condition. In order for the exiled and refugees' requests for state services are to be fulfilled, they are manipulated and coerced to sign the infamous "apology letter" to the Eritrean state. That is, they have to confess falsely that they betrayed their own country for their own ends. Such bureaucratic forms, with far-reaching legal ramifications, are drafted by the Eritrean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and made available on the premises of all the Eritrean embassies around the world. Some Eritrean activists operating from outside the country describe Eritrean state's excessive control mechanism towards its Diaspora citizens entailing as "biopolitics" (O'Kane & Hepner, 2009) which correlate with the "Stockholm Syndrome". Upon being denied from academic credentials and other state services for the

political reasons mentioned above, the exiled gradually develop a sense of hopelessness in exile. Unable to be challenged such ill-motivated bad state practices in the migrant adoptive countries, some Eritreans living in exile end up in the callous ‘political trap’ crafted by the very regime which systematically induces migrants’ exit from their homeland. Such coerced submission is furthermore meant to secure that their hard-earned credentials are kept hostage by the refugee-exporting state authorities.

As part of the authentication process in Norway via NOKUT, there were desperate encounters that the researcher himself also experienced to bring credentials proving his academic background from Eritrea. Such a bureaucratic demand by my adoptive country was not only insensitive to my case alone, but it subtly obliges certain groups of qualified refugees and asylees to submit themselves to the very regime they escape from. In my humble opinion such state practices – both the sending- and settlement-countries – raises considerable moral and political questions.

The socio-economic, psycho-social and other related impacts incurred by asylees and refugees are enormous. Such a desperate situation is directly linked to the very intellectual identity of the migrant who associates him/herself with that professional background that he/she is claiming from afar. Such ruthless state bureaucratic practices gradually invoke a sense of powerlessness and a feeling of emptiness within the migrant groups with far-reaching integration challenges both in the short- and long-term. The research has efforts into discovering that dark lifeworld into which such a detached professional is dwelling by associating it to the life apparatus within the host country. Explanations are mainly grounded on the human capital theory and other supplementary perspectives.

1.2. Statement of the Research Problem

This research developed from the researcher’s intimate personal experience, which also resonates with a number of other qualified refugees and asylees settling in the West. The researcher being an exiled Eritrean himself was encountered by the daunting demand of submitting a proof of academic credentials to Norwegian educational authorities. Being a tertiary level graduate from Eritrea, who distanced himself from the regime that who is the very culprit in my predicament didn’t fit well with my political position and the demands made by my settlement- and origin-countries. The correspondences with the institution in charge of authenticating credentials from outside the country (NOKUT) onerously requested me to submit all the academic papers that prove of earning my bachelor’s degree from Eritrea. Norwegian authorities persistently urged me to provide all the needed credentials and their attendant documents, otherwise, it wouldn’t be possible to pursue further studies. Missing the academic documents that confirm the claimed academic level which is demanded by NOKUT, at the same time, the reluctance of the applicant for telling

a different story other than the real cause behind fleeing his own country in front of the representatives of the Eritrean regime from abroad caused unmanageability of the case.

Such circumstances are all self-evident routines encountered by Eritrean exiled professionals and academics, which makes this research still relevant at a larger scale. Lifelong accumulated skill, a sense of intellectual identity the researcher had been affiliated to for several years, makes the situation more unsettling in all imagined ways possible. Education is a long-term investment from which investing persons logically expect to take their productivity and wage rate higher, intending to help themselves and the community where they have diverse socio-economic affiliations (Tan, 2014). In light of such an explanation, the psycho-social and economic impacts that the target group for the research experiences is unbearable. Quantifying that feeling of hopelessness and the impacts associated with the matter through the research methodologies that are utilized here will be a way of reflecting around the case and filling in the data gaps.

The wastage of human resources that will be tapped toward integrating such personalities has also to be seen from the perspective of the hosting countries, the loss is both ways. In his efforts to dig out how the highly educated immigrants are marginalized and cornered from what they could contribute to the Swedish economy, (Faris, 2016, p.1) has identified two major challenges – *structural factors* and *individual factors*. In his research-based explanation, at a structural level, Faris (2016) identified challenges such as lack of foreign educational credentials together with a lack of foreign work experience as the major problems that impede immigrants from assuming over suitable job positions commensurate with their qualifications. Relatively poor social networks compared to their Swedish native counterparts and, poor command of the Swedish language was also mentioned as complimentary challenges that fall under the ambit of individual factors (ibid).

Had there been systematically erected strategies in place to embrace such immigrant's knowledge, Sweden and other high-income settlement countries would have benefited from the untapped soft skill immigrants possess. As a matter of fact, access to the Swedish labour market has been typified by several explicit and implicit factors with a potential of impeding immigrants from going into mainstream job positions (Lemaître, 2007, p. 5). Even the much-touted state-initiated programs such as the '*introduction programs*'/ "*Snabbspåret*" for the newly arrived immigrants did not prove to be a success story in integrating skilled and qualified refugees/immigrants. Closer scrutiny into the Swedish labour market versus the newly arrived accredited migrants shows that the absence of strong *informal networks* as an entry point to job market continues to limit even the skilled immigrants (ibid).

What Faris (2016) and Lemaître (2007) have found confirms that many of the immigrants, regardless of the skill and knowledge they might have from their respective countries, are persistently encountered with other socio-economic challenges in their host countries. According to Faris (2016) age, psychosocial distresses arising from terrifying migration routes, culture shock, and the like are also mentioned under the category ‘personal limitations.’

Sweden and Norway, being amongst the countries that host a huge number of displaced persons and immigrants of many other typologies, having almost similar political apparatus and geographical proximity, the integration strategies they utilize could reflect and replicate each other. What is experienced by immigrants in Sweden could be a living replica of what occurs in Norway.

Unfortunately, according to Sandnes (2017), immigrants from Eastern Europe have generally greater opportunities to get better-paying jobs than their counterparts from Africa and Asia. Even though job opportunities are near the same, African immigrants take over jobs with smaller wage rates than their counterparts in the Norwegian job market (ibid). The point that such an argument raises then is to investigate how the country of origin, together with individual migration processes happened to be factors for being easily accredited by the authentication bodies and then accepted by potential employers within the context of two nearly similar host countries. That angle will then be one of the substantial contents of the analysis revolving around the research.

The research intends to unpack the reasons behind the impediments that limit immigrants from penetrating the Norwegian labour market. It focuses on the situation of those highly educated Eritrean refugees currently residing in Agder county. Thus, the study’s target group will be those refugees and migrants within Agder’s labour market. Of course, the study ‘focus group’ will be those who hold a tertiary education level.

1.3 Research Questions and Relevance of the Study

Investigating the challenges between conventional and country-specific academic standards and authenticating exiled professionals in the absence of academic credentials in the host country will constitute the major research theme of this study. The Norwegian national curriculum, for example, has its specific features but with no substantial contradiction with the bigger OECD school evaluation norms (Nusche et al., 2011, pp. 17-21). The essence and aspiration of the Norwegian curriculum are clearly articulated as it is aimed at equipping students in primary and secondary school with result-oriented skills training that enable them for further learning and/or going to work that demands those previously acquired skills (ibid). Sources indicate that the school set up has to control the quality of education, with a special focus on the values and culture on to which the learning process and knowledge acquired is to be grounded (Nusche et al., 2011, pp. 19-20). The school owners together with the administration apparatus they erect, play a key

role in quality control, adjusting the knowledge and training process with potential blessings or challenges that might lie ahead after completion. Moreover, they are empowered by the policy-making bodies to accomplish that task by aligning it to the Norwegian context. However, they are also open to external quality control actors such as the OPED (Nusche et al., 2011, pp. 406-408).

Within such context, it becomes imperative discerning which methods do the Norwegian accreditation bodies apply when they authenticate and validate credentials that are not tuned with the specific Norwegian socio-economic setup? Considering other factors that could impact the quality of education and results acquired from it, combined with other integration challenges, highly educated immigrants seem to have a considerable problem for getting a suitable job. Then the research implies to at least reflect the psychosocial and economic disadvantage and paradoxes for both the subjects and the host country, in this case, Norway.

According to (Tan, 2014, pp. 17-28), for example, educational apparatus in some African countries is identified as relatively poor when it comes to quality control. Such poor quality is often manifested in the form of student absenteeism, malpractices such as major corruption incidents, lower performances by teachers and other school administration bodies. That observation toward the African schooling environment has persistently jeopardised the trust of the learners on the education process. Setting such a concern in a broad political and socio-economic context, Tan (2014) emphasized the relevance of cooperation between employers and higher education providers for a result-oriented training approach. In relative terms, the Norwegian national curriculum aspires to hit that dual purpose: aligning pieces of training with challenges that may lie ahead.

The question that arises is ‘if potential authentication applicants to NOKUT are to be rejected right away for failing to submit in their official academic papers asserting that they constitute exiled professionals but with missing papers, then how could all hosting countries, including Norway, strive to solve such a dilemma?’ It is unbearably heavy ‘brain and skills wastage’ for the exiled professionals of varying ranks for their expertise to either be untelevised or underutilised at best in Western settlement countries. Engineers, MDs, university lecturers, researchers, social scientists of the diversified breed could be thrown away as leakage in the corridors of authentication mechanisms of hosting countries such as Norway. Regulators and employers operating from a certain context are then confronted with dilemmas and uncertainties while trying to authenticate foreign academic credentials, those claimed credentials being unfamiliar to those institutions entitled to authenticate and then to recommend them for the available job positions (Loo, Ortiz, & Reviews, 2016, p. 3).

The dilemma for authenticating institutions such as NOKUT in Norway confronts two challenges. On the one hand, credentials brought from an alien training background, which is not as familiar as those acquired from the migrant hosting country’s mainstream learning institutions’ unique values and socio-

political milieu. Convincing employers that migrants' credentials are good enough for the Norwegian labour market constitutes the other layer of challenge. Since employers are hardly immune from subjective judgments, accredited professional migrants living in receiving countries such as Norway continue experience under-employment at best and joblessness at worst.

The researcher himself, like many other compatriots, experienced the convoluted and highly bureaucratic processes of getting his credentials authenticated. As I alluded earlier, due to quite numerous political concerns, he was unable to get in touch with the very academic institution that awarded him his first degree. Loo (2016, p.3) has come up with a finding that vividly accentuates a similar situation. Being from the critics of the regime back in Eritrea puts him in a position from which he could not claim academic documents through formal ways. Some refugees are even labelled 'traitors' by the institutions or governments for deserting illegally and standing against the regimes from abroad (Loo, 2016, p.3). That situation makes the process of authentication immensely tough, as potential accreditation applicants could face security threats for themselves and their family members still residing in the country of origin (ibid). So (Loo, 2016) demanding academic papers for verification from applicants' countries of origin is tough, first is for the security tentacles attached to the very applicants and their families, second is, in some cases, the awarding academic institution is non-existent for reasons associated to war situations; a situation where no trace to track what is claimed by potential applicants. Fortunately, the international community has gradually come up with a favour that exempts applicants of such a typology from the routine of the academic authentication process.

Consequently, the all-dimensional damage that could be inflicted in the psychosocial conditions of the exiled professionals would possibly have negative spiral impacts for both the minority communities, residing in exile, that might have been benefitted from the skilled fellow countrymen, that could be portrayed as role models for successful integration. At the same time, the underutilized skills hidden behind walls will remain as an underemployed resource within the apparatus of the labour market within the hosting countries. The knowledge that will be produced from this research, therefore, will answer: -

- How are educated and qualified refugees lacking credentials evaluated in Norway's labour market?
- To what extent does NOKUT's activities in line with the *Lisbon Convention* for being refugee-friendly in evaluating migrants' credentials?
- How can we explain the paradox between Norway's centralized authentication process and its reputation of being exemplary in its fair evaluation to its migrants' credentials?
- How does NOKUT evaluate exiled graduates? Which mechanism does it rely on to evaluate graduates from that non-existent university?

-What peculiar challenges do exiled Eritrean graduates encounter in their effort to validate their documents by NOKUT?

-How regulated professional associations and affiliated carries in Norway embrace higher education from other countries such as Eritrea?

-How do immigrants, arriving from an alien academic background are judged into suitable job positions in Norway?

-How could migrants' accreditation and validation process be managed in Norway?

Far deeper than what is said, the consequence of rejecting exiled professionals on grounds of failure to submit in official academic papers would probably have given birth to the problem of having fewer role models who could spearhead smooth integration in host countries. Considering that the Norwegian society is homogenous compared to those socially diversified destination countries such as the United States, NOKUT's accreditation of migrants' credentials would be a win-win situation in the integration scheme.

-What other underlining challenges are there to hinder successful integration within the host country? Poor social network? Culture shock? Ageing and discrimination?

The modesty knowledge that has been harvested from the research could fill the knowledge gap within the mentioned area or inspire further researches. Persons and institutions which are involved within the process of authenticating exiled professionals could also get a different lens to look at their clients from a virgin angle. The same is true with the entrepreneurs and integration workers.

The recommendations which will be driven from such a research finding could assist both the exiled professionals as well as the hosting countries. The mechanism through which exiled professionals ought to be authenticated might be complex and could be intermingled with numerous issues of academic standards. However, it is a timely issue that needs a glimpse of the host countries. If not, the consequence will be just a huge loss for both the exiled professionals and the host countries.

1.4. Feasibility of the Study

The scope of this study will only be confined towards examining and analysing the integration challenges hovering over Eritrean highly educated refugees residing in Agder Norway. At the same time, the Agder region, by itself is proved to be hosting enough cases that could shed light on the research problem at hand. Narrowing the limits within the geographical stretches of the Agder region made the research relatively

manageable and easier in terms of the available resources (logistics and time) at the disposal of the researcher.

The research site is situated mainly around the Agder region, which is located in Southern Norway. In case, important data that could be relevant to develop and enrich the study was unavailable within the stretches of Vest Agder, the researcher was committed to travel far to other parts of the country but it did not happen for reasons related to logistics, COVID-pandemic, and time constraints. Whenever meeting and conversing with Eritrean informants in person was of utmost relevance, travelling farther was within the plan in the inception but it did not happen for the aforementioned reasons.

However, contacting, Eritrean professionals based in Norway, from the outset had a profound contribution to developing the story. Moreover, regional and communal institutions that are engaged in the process of integrating Eritreans were contacted informally for accessing the data that they are having concerning the issue under scrutiny, in certain situations where the researcher deemed it relevant. All the selected study group and other potential informants and concerned institutions were deliberately chosen from within the researcher's closest geographical vicinity.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Root Causes and Contributory Factors to Emigration

Ever since the late 1980s, neo-liberal economic ideologists have been addressing the issue of migration in light of a plain resource flow. In their views, the human labour movement across borders had been portrayed as such an inevitable scenario within the overall global context. Bevir (2008), being one of the thinkers who voiced the features of neo-liberal economic theories, strived to shed light on migration and resources' movement across the world, on grounds of public sector reform and the idea of 'governance' as part of the neo-liberal economic theories. He maintained that governance is a managerial phenomenon that describes the situation in which state power over its subjects is under persistent pressure from newly emerging transnational setups and actors aspiring to share the traditionally held state power apparatus (Bevir,2008, pp.1-37). Implied within Bevir's (2008) argument is that the traditional state is no more in a position to cage its very citizens or subjects in the name of sovereignty and interest of its citizens. In that context, national migration regulatory systems could be erected by respective states, albeit, transnationalism being a norm of the day, is having the propensity to make cross-/trans-national migration easier than before around the world. Moreover, after the war days, the Keynesian State was criticized for being too bulged to run the new elements of the modern market environment, taxation perceived as a negative trait, besides unmanageability of excessive inflation made the market dynamics favoured over the traditional state apparatus (ibid).

Rationale existence theory, which constitutes the basement of neo-liberal managerial approach, advocates for advancing individual freedom from the state bondage. Starting from the 1980s, the champions of rationale existence theory pushed for the migration of people with competitive skills to places and countries where they can harvest the largest share of net gains from their years' investment in building their human capital capacity.

Concurrently, Tsegay (2016) holds that neo-classical migration by itself addresses individuals with a certain level of employable skills that are prone to emigrational dynamics. Provided with the right to make their own decisions, individuals have all the imagined tendencies to emigrate toward the centres where they think they could get well-paying job positions based on their relative capacity of productivity (Tsegay, 2016 pp.28). Bracketing the other factors for emigration, the flow of human capital from place to place across the world is theoretically demonstrated as something natural concerning market dynamics. People tend to move to the 'greener side of the river' as a matter of innate motives.

However, the reasons behind immigration are quite diverse, economic dimension and labour demand, being amongst the major pull and push factors, ample of other socio-political factors also issue to consider. Grounding on that point of view, war, ethnic tensions, political strife, suffocating political arrangements at home are also of major relevance to look at immigration dynamics, as they indiscriminately dehumanize people of all walks of life including the skilled. As Bevir (2008) notes, the late 1980s were years that ideas affiliated to economic liberalism had persistently been preached, while that famous crisis in East Europe was also in the making. Both scenarios had their pressing issues to parent huge immigrant flocks in that very years, but it signals the dichotomy of migration i.e., that economic dimension of it and that of its socio-political aspect. The non-economic factors also have a big share in displacing people around the world, amongst them, the ultimate need for protection and a safe place to live. Noting how multi-faceted and often overlapping political and economic factors brought about what has come to be described in Europe as the “2015 refugee crisis”, Tsegay (2016) sums up the largest refugee-exporting countries as follows:

In 2015, more than one million refugees sought asylum in the European Union, a record number of an asylum application after the Second World-War. While the majority of the asylum seekers were Syrians, Eritreans were the largest group relative to the population size of the country, which roughly stands at 5.5 million (Tsegay, 2016).

Within the context of the current international political set up, it is becoming apparent to witness oppressive and violent regimes tend to be the core culprit to the 21st century’s unprecedented refugees’ flow who need all types of provisions within transit, hosting and settlement countries. Of course, owing to its relative security and economic advantage the West is often the first choice to look for safety. There has been, and still is, flight linked to either actual or perceived persecution along with political, ethnic or religious affiliations, destruction of the environment, and poverty (Heyden, 1991, pp. 280-281). Macromigration theorists have time and again underscored such line of enquiry (Boswell & Hamburg, 2002, p. 5). Boswell (2002) enlisted economic conditions in home countries as one of the major causes to emigration where factors like unemployment, low salaries, and low per capita income relative to the host countries compel aspiring people to leave their homelands in search of better opportunities and succour. But other socio-political elements within sending countries are also highlighted vividly. Civil war, state oppression, together with generalized tension are mentioned as the other causes for forced displacement and emigration (Boswell & Hamburg, 2002, p. 5).

Moreover, Heyden’s (1991) narrative towards the causes of emigration inspires us to look at immigrants from a different angle. Normally, refugees were being displayed as pushed or pulled by the aforementioned factors, according to the mainstream immigration narratives. Albeit, as per today, environmental degradation, for both man-made and other natural dynamics, has evolved to be amongst the pressing global issues with the potential of dislocating and ejecting people away from their habitat.

Environmental degradation, leading to lower agricultural production which is way smaller than what is demanded by its very producers, could have its impacts for looking toward other means of survival. This would mean that impoverished inhabitants might assume emigration as an alternative livelihood strategy to the perennial catastrophes people encounter in their habitual residential areas. Some factors for environmental degradation are man-made or mismanagement of the resources that are available around. As debatable as environment-migration nexus is among academics and policy-makers, citing a UN source a scholar familiar with the equation perceptively underlines:

In our time, man's capability to transform his surroundings, if used wisely, can bring to all peoples the benefits of development and the opportunity to enhance the quality of life. Wrongly or heedlessly applied, the same power can do incalculable harm to human beings and the human environment (Adams, 2008, p.59).

Misusing the resources that are deposited in the environment in the name of investment but without any single consideration to the locals, could undoubtedly trigger to mass displacement where displaced people deploy their human agency entailing the utilization of emigration a livelihood strategy. The famous case of the Niger Delta region, in Nigeria, is a place endowed with a huge oil resource. However, while the locals are dying of pollution-related illnesses, the Nigerian government has never considered how and when the very inhabitants of that oil-rich region could be compensated (Ayittey, 2016). In the words of the researcher:

The hardest hit in the Niger Delta is the Ogoni, who number 500,000 and sit on top of billions of dollars of oil reserves. But 'we get no benefit from it, absolutely none,' complained Chief Edward Kobani, a senior elder of the Ogoni. Their homeland is an environmental mess. Gas- a by-product of the oil industry for which there is no use- is burned 24 hours a day, producing acid rain and toxic pollution. Air and water quality have suffered, and crops have been damaged. The health toll is enormous: There are high levels of skin rashes, allergies, abscesses, and infections (Ayittey, 2016 p.40).

The case of the Niger Delta poses quite a big challenge for the various international development discourses of today in general. By the same token, man-made environmental catastrophes, especially those inflicted by the Western TNCs, fail to consider the human side of their investments. i.e. they are barely held accountable for their corporate social responsibility (CSR) in their business ventures in the Global South. The absence of that tradition in any typology of development endeavours that engages oppressive regimes in the global South often induces and perpetuates huge emigration from South to North. In such scenarios, the cause of emigration being the North and the TNCs that operate from there makes high income and democratic countries of the Global North morally responsible to either assist or host refugees originating from the Global South. Unfortunately, the burden-sharing responsibility still heavily tilts towards governments of the developing world.

Meyers (2000) pioneers the 'national identity' approach towards immigration has implied that there are perspectives that fail to grasp that very roots of immigration, perceiving refugees as intruders with the potential of destroying the social order and fabric of the host societies. Such perception and attitude started to take root into the mindset of Western settlement countries during the days that East Europeans started to flock to the rich West in the 1980s (Lemaître, 2017, p.10).

The other face of the root causes pushing certain immigrants, especially those with higher academic and professional calibre, is the way they are engaged within the political and administrative set up within their respective homelands. Andrew Muwenda (2007), a famous Ugandan academic, was hosted as a guest speaker by TED Global. In his presentation entitled '*Aid for Africa? No Thanks*' Muwenda, boldly downplayed the impact of the money that flows to Africa in the name of Development Aid (DA), blaming the Western World based financial institution such as the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), together with their cohorts. Today, African oppressive governments are persistently marginalizing the private sector, intentionally depriving the continent's internal entrepreneurship potential through discouraging domestic creativities and innovations that could lead to maximizing GDP together with undermining individual initiatives to make use of the knowledge skills they have, believing the development aid is there for them to fill the budgetary gaps (Mwenda, 2007). The educated, with applicable skills, are intentionally made to be left with one last resort i.e., to be recruited by the very regimes that are highly dependent on the DA that flows in from the North but with a big risk that could severely harm the possibility of accumulating wealth from domestic taxations and tariffs (ibid). Ideally, governments are there to maximize domestic production by motivating local market actors to get a bigger income tax from bigger local production. Albeit, according to Mwenda (2007), the governments in the South failed to embrace that school of thought in their efforts to erect functional public policies. The impact for the side-lined but skilled citizens is then systematically castigated into searching other options such as emigration. Here comes the rational existence theory as what is mentioned from Bevir (2008) in his neo-liberal narratives - the relatively liberal trade set up of today's world blended with several pushing factors from own countries' political arrangements, the experts would look for opportunities on the other side of a river.

Tsegay (2016, p. 39) also lines up with the argument advanced by Mwenda (2007) highlighting that immigration is not only poverty-driven. Rather factors such as exclusion, together with oppression and denying state subjects to participate in the political dynamics of their own countries could also lead to involuntary emigration. Furthermore, Tsegay (2016, p.31) criticizes lop-sided scholarship that attributes South-North emigration issues to economic factors for failing to acknowledge other underlying problems such as political instability for being reasons behind poor governance than to poverty situation from where people can only see emigration as a last resort to survive.

In some countries, such as Eritrea, on grounds of the long-standing political instability and socio-economic disruption, the general social order ended up being extraordinarily impacted. Diminishing marriage prospects, especially for young girls, is one of the concerns that compels many females to “vote on their foot” (Tsegay, 2016 p. 59-64). Indeed, knowing all too well that most Diaspora-based Eritrean males are denied official access to return home, several young girls often brave to clandestinely “vote on their feet” to neighbouring countries in the hope finding a prospective life partner. Noting how ‘paid or unpaid bogus-’ or ‘genuine-long distance marriage arrangements’ as in the form of “mail order bride” contributes and perpetuates irregular youth haemorrhage from Eritrea to neighbouring countries (Andom, 2017, p. 232-234), a researcher asserts:

The collected pieces of evidence, however, indicate that amid Eritrean household’s “multiple uncertainties” Erisporas are, tacitly or explicitly, expediting irregular migratory processes, among other things, by arranging and sponsoring the exit of close relatives or engaging in bogus marriages with them (ibid, 287).

It is within such migration practices comprising rights such as long-distance marriage arrangement, West-bound sponsorship schemes, family reunification and other forms of social rights claimed from host countries that Eritrea’s “population drain” continues to be aggravated (Tsegay, 2016; Andom, 2017).

Moreover, since remittance flows to countries impoverished countries such as Eritrea outweigh development aid some households would subtly goad sending one of their members to the relatively rich North as a form of investment and diversifying family’s sources of income (Tsegay, 2016 p.30-64). In the words a researcher familiar with context succinctly put it:

Faced with political uncertainties and environmental vagaries, it makes perfect sense for the Eritrean youths and their parents/guardians to goad or turn a blind eye to the hazardous irregular border-crossing(s) of at least some of its members as a risk diversification or risk aversion strategy (Andom, 2017 p.285).

Of course, the North does certainly reap some benefits from the immigrants' labour inflow though incorporating and tapping it into that kind of labour is increasingly proving controversial within homogenous host countries for fear of losing their identity fabric (Lamitäre, 2017 and Meyers, 200 p.1250). The issue of sending members of a household of a country in a bid to extract remittances begs us to question the wisdom behind the systematic refugee-exporting policy practices exercised by authoritarian regimes such as those apparent in Eritrea. Such lopsided and ill-motivated policy practices that have the propensity to treat Eritrean Diaspora as “toothless cash cow” (Koser mentioned in Andom, 2017 p., 242) does invoke controversial sustainable development discourses (Tsegay, 2016).

2.1.1 The challenges of Integrating Immigrants

Generally, people who migrate across borders are of varying typologies in terms of reasons for their emigration/ flight and the soft and hard skill they possess once they reach settlement countries

Although there are no ‘one-size-fits-all’ migrant integration models, owing to anti-immigrant populist political rhetoric settlement countries are constantly grappling with how to best integrate migrants into the hosting society. Notwithstanding best practice integration schemes tend to often be context-specific circumstances, the following factors are likely to play a decisive role: prevailing economic situation, political climate, socio-cultural set up (whether the host society is homogenous or heterogeneous), a host country’s accumulated integration experiences over time, type of skills possessed by individual immigrants at the time of arrival, curriculum and cultural similarity between the social order of the sending and receiving society, individual or country-specific reasons for immigration.

2.1.2. Host Countries’ Labour Market vs. Employability Challenges for Immigrants

Unequal access to recruitment opportunities, within a given labour market structures, are found out to be discriminating in some host countries. A case in point is, during Sweden’s economic recession during the 1990s, immigrants together with those born and brought up in that country were identified as less favoured than their ethnic Swedish counterparts by the mainstream employers, which was unmistakably associated with their background (Lemaître, 2007, p.4-6). Such empirical facts illustrate that during situations of economic crisis immigrants are more susceptible to be immensely impacted than their indigenous counterparts (ibid). Having weak social networks, blended with xenophobic and discriminatory encounters of whatsoever level and frequency, immigrants are left with far smaller employability margin than their native counterparts (Faris, 2016 p.9). Even though various Swedish sectors such as education, engineering, IT, and health are normally suffering from shortages of skilled manpower, for reasons linked to academic accreditation protocols and procedures, little knowledge of the social codes, poor Swedish language command, immigrants labour has failed to offset that very labour gap apparent in the country (ibid). The issue that needs serious attention here is the failure to meet the ends of the prevailing labour gap within the Swedish labour market and the failure to utilize that potential skill held by the immigrants in a closer reach- those already accepted immigrants. In the long term, investments of all kinds which are tapped toward empowering the potential labour pool carried by the already accepted immigrants would have been of great advantage to that specific country, considering those immigrants are on the way to be naturalized citizens sooner or later. Alluding to the ‘brain wastage’ of HEI IN Sweden, a researcher argues:

Despite the fact that Sweden faces serious labour shortages in many sectors such as education, healthcare, engineering, and IT, the recruitment of highly educated immigrants to those labour needs is significantly low either due to lack of recognition of immigrants’ educational credentials, academic

experience, and insufficient proficiency in the Swedish language, lack of social network or poor knowledge of social and cultural codes. Discrimination is one of the major factors that make a large number of HEI unable to occupy those areas of labour shortages (Faris, 2016).

The rationale behind importing skilled manpower from abroad while still having untapped skilled immigrants' potential within any migrant settlement country seems to fall short wise utilization and management of human resources. Integration programs targeting skilled immigrants need to come up with initiatives intending towards revitalization and readjustment of immigrant expertise within the context of the available labour market. Today, Germany's refugees' integration system is mentioned as a living proof through which even refugees who came across unbearable hardships are carrying employable skills with a higher probability to pay back to what is invested on them during the first days of their arrival to that specific country (Barshefsky, 2019 p.1). Even though Germany had received half a million refugees in the specific period between 2015-2018, having a relatively tough language to master and complicated authentication procedures, only 36,400 professional degrees were accredited out of that huge pool of immigrants (Bershidsky, 2019 p.1-3).

Before June 2019, (Bershidsky, 2019) German employers were required to prove that no German or European worker was available to fill a specific labour gap before they go to hiring a foreign national. However, as of today, that law is lifted and it added up to the employment opportunities for immigrants, to the extent that 81% of the college-educated immigrants who entered the country in 2015 are employed, while still having language limitations (Bershidsky, 2019 p.1-3). Between the lines, it looks that Germany is on the way to replace its traditional recruitment procedures by introducing a more liberalized method with the potential to absorb immigrants into the labour market with a speculated outcome that minimizes importing labour from abroad. The job positions held by non-natives are still way below the wage scale for native counterparts, and it has its setbacks in the momentum of social mobility within the German societal context (ibid).

The Swedish situation is also equally important looking at the refugee influx vs the dynamics of integration in light of academic accreditation and available ways and challenges toward entering the country's job market. Within the European continent, Sweden was second to none in accepting immigrants who fled war situations in 2015, for the record of hosting more than 160,000 refugees amongst that flock, 40% were highly educated with university degrees that embrace from bachelor degrees to PhD (Faris, 2016 p.8). Putting that huge skilled manpower within the Swedish recruitment apparatus and tradition then could have given an overview through which concerned bodies would look at how that labour pool was utilized within the Swedish labour market. Compared to their native Swedish counterparts, disregarding the type of jobs held by migrants was even way small in number.

In the OECD countries in general, immigrants are also left far behind their native counterparts when it comes to the wage they earn from the available jobs (Lemaître, 2007). Concurrently, the employment prospects of immigrants compared to natives in Sweden also show a similar pattern: native-Swedish earn 17% bigger than their immigrant counterparts. Furthermore, 90% of native and tertiary level Swedish within the age range of 26-45 are fully employed, while only 65% of their foreign-educated immigrants were employed in 2009 (Faris, 2016, p.8-10). Taken altogether, despite the availability of unexploited skilled immigrants' labour reserve in most high-income settlement countries, there is a gap within their labour market. Lemaître (2007) even highlighted that there is still a living labour gap within the education, engineering, IT, and health sectors in Sweden. However, immigrants destined to Sweden are yet not tapped towards offsetting that dilemma, for allegedly inefficient professional realignment of immigrant professionals.

According to Kolsrud (2017), Norway is also not immune to failures that demonstrate the inability to utilize skills held by highly educated immigrants residing in the country. Impenetrable challenges experienced by both first and second-generation of immigrants hinder productivity by preventing the skilled but displaced persons from acquiring jobs in the first place, and later on from a successful integration (Kolsrud, 2017, p. 984-990). As it is a common scenario all over the world, having a poor social network is amongst the major challenges that impede immigrants from finding jobs within the contexts of host countries. According to Kolsrud (2017) for the immigrants (even for the second generation) establishing a workable social network that could unlock the problems parented by the existing discrimination while applying for jobs is unachievable in Norway. In Norway, most job positions are found through social networks that follow informal recruitment mechanisms, putting the immigrants in a disadvantageous position. Only 20-40% of the available job vacancies are registered by NAV indicating that all other job positions are taken over through the informal channels (Kolsrud, 2017, p.984-989). Having a poor social network, immigrants are less likely to be recommended for unannounced job positions, as they lack that privilege in host countries such as Norway. The biggest part, especially those vacancies in the private sector are less likely to be announced for the public and through formal ways (ibid). In addition to this, Kolsrud (2017) confirmed that the same is true in the UK and Germany, where only one-third of available jobs vacancies are officially registered by the respective labour offices. In the aforementioned socioeconomic situations, immigrants are immensely impeded in their efforts to secure jobs in host countries by the lack of a working social network.

Moreover, Midtbøen (2014) through research conducted in Norway mentioned that not only the first-generation but also the second generation of immigrants with Norwegian education and language fluency, still face discrimination in the Norwegian labour market. A research project that sampled 900 announced job vacancies, was conducted in the greater Oslo area intending to uncover the discrimination

that might exist within the folds of this region confirmed that the native applicants were 25% more likely to get an offer for a job interview by local employers compared to second-generation immigrants from Pakistan (Midtbøen, 2014, p. 253-269). This finding showed that having Norwegian language fluency, a better understanding of the social codes, even having Norwegian school certificates would not exempt persons with an immigrant background from discrimination. According to that particular research, job applicants with Pakistani names in their CVs and job applications were less likely to be called for a job interview in comparing with native counterparts (ibid).

Another research had come up with reflections signalling the situation of highly educated immigrants within the American/Canadian job market. However, the scope of that research was not big enough, as it was only targeting trained librarians from other countries. According to (Dali, Dilevko, & Review, 2009, pp. 2-7), the Canadian and American experience was more or less addressed as similar and both situations were explained as a replica, following the same methods of recruitment and the same values that serve as a guideline during practising librarians' recruitment from other countries. The findings from that mentioned research proved that, generally, highly-trained librarians from other countries do not encounter peculiar challenges in their efforts to get a job, especially in libraries affiliated to academic institutions (Dali and Dilevko, 2009, p.2). Moreover, the same research implied that in Canada, there are no shared training methods in the specified specialization with many countries, other than the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand (ibid). Even though highly trained librarians from other countries are not discriminated against on basis of their nationality and training background, there is still an implied message showing some immigrants are privileged over their counterparts from an alien training background. But in the regulated professions, medicine, and the like, going into the labour market could have its hurdles lying in front of skilled immigrants from the different curricular background. Such specializations have to go through other approaches that need comparative analysis. Yet, why the case of the librarians worked out in Canada but not in other countries needs a curious observation.

2.2. Authenticating Refugees' Academic Credentials: Challenges and Paradoxes

As I already alluded to in the introductory part and the statement of the research problem, refugees with varying ranks of educational qualifications from their own home countries find it tough to convince the authentication boards/institutions in their host countries for various reasons. Loo (2016) through his research had addressed the issue vividly by situating the case of exiled professionals within the US/Canada accreditation process and experiences. Refugees applying for further education or striving to get a suitable job position commensurate with qualifications within their hosting countries' labour market encounter

challenges of varying breeds. Such challenges, inter alia, include the closure of former academic institutions from home and in some cases, the reluctance of institutions to send official academic papers on grounds of controversial political views held by the applicants as they are defined as deserters by the regimes (Loo, 2016 p.7). Inability to request documents from former academic institutions, for reasons related to security concerns of family members left back home was also another impediment hampering the process of the swift accreditation process (ibid).

Another challenge that qualified refugees and migrants originating from the Global South encounter in the high-income Global North settlement countries is a structural barrier to social mobility. Contrary to the international tenets through which recognizing academic credentials claimed by displaced persons is grounded, refugees of varying qualifications are implicitly downgraded in hosting countries. The European Student Union (ESU) (2017) has also recognized the hardships through which exiled academics are passing through. ESU laments about the unfair plight of exiled qualified migrants and academics in the European Union as follows:

...the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reads “Higher Education shall be equally accessible to all based on merit” (UDHR, 1948) yet access to higher education for refugees who come to Europe having obtained qualifications which ought to allow them to commence or continue their degrees is troublesome due to inefficient or non-existent recognition mechanisms (ESU,2017).

Even though refugees of such a typology i.e. forced to leave their home countries in unplanned way outs are not expected to have valid credentials in a close reach during the very moment of their departures, they are persistently encountered with quite apathetic bodies which are not authentication friendly. ESU (2017) discloses the challenges qualified immigrants experience in fair implementation of the legal codes that are already articulated to soften the process of authentication as follows:

There are significant barriers of time, lengthy procedures and lack of adequate support and guidance that successfully prevent refugees from pursuing their academic degrees, despite the existing legal basis that guarantees all displaced persons, refugees, asylum seekers or persons in a refugee-like situation the right to education, and adequate support mechanisms to complete it (ibid).

According to some accounts affiliated to the Norwegian authentication organ NOKUT (2016), the processing time for accreditation screening is expressed to be fairly short. The Norwegian authority charged with such mandate even affirms that structured interview is applied as a tool to confirm what the exiled academics are claiming of their professional background after they arrive in Norway. It doesn't even take a couple of business days. The document is signed by both case officers who are present at the structured interview and is quality assured by the Head of Section.

The findings of the preliminary research which was conducted in May 2016 by NOKUT implied the processing time is not like what ESU (2017) is voicing out. But what the researcher has experienced,

confirms what ESU (2017) is asserting. In a nutshell, the general trend revolving around exiled professionals seems to be inclined toward what ESU (2017) has implied. In line with Loo's (2016) findings, the evaluation mechanism applied so far in Norway is also against the gist of international law. The current policy practice in place in Norway contradicts the Lisbon Convention of 1997 affirms that foreign-educated persons deserve and are guaranteed fair credential assessments (Loo, 2016). Forced to flee their own countries in pretty more adventurous routes, even risking their own lives makes them end up being void and leaves them with nothing to confirm their claims, including their academic credentials. It is not only being destined to a country where a qualified refugee fails to substantiate his claims for having knowledge and skills from his country of origin. Such challenges go spirally around the life of a qualified refugee who misses his credentials while striving to save his life in a time of unrest. Regardless of the endeavours exiled professionals exert to authenticate their respective academic credentials soon after they safely arrive at the hosting countries, concerned organizations are not as understanding and sensitive to refugees unique unplanned irregular exit trajectory. In the words of one researcher, "Skills and qualifications assessments, even when careful and comprehensive, cannot guarantee that foreign-qualified migrants will be granted access to the practice of a regulated profession or, in many cases, even to further education in their country of destination" (Desiderio, 2016).

Considering such scenarios revolving around the livelihoods of the displaced academics, the world community has come up with a helping solution adopted in the famous Lisbon Convention. Reflecting on that convention, Loo (2016) has exemplified the European region:

"The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, known as the Lisbon Convention of 1997, requires that even those without verifiable documents be given a fair credential assessment."

Moreover, according to Loo (2016), many countries, amongst them Canada, Norway, and the United States, being signatories of that famous convention, are relatively abided by the rules and regulations stipulated in that document. Canada, amongst the signatories, is mentioned as relatively, authentication friendly today. In Canada, even if some documents lack basic information concerning claimed academic qualification, such cases are seen from the legal point of view and are approved within the premises of that country (Loo, 2006). Norway is one of the signatories of the convention, yet it struggles to be abided by the content and the spirit of that internationally promoted document.

Eritrean tertiary level graduates being part of the exodus from the global South to North, where they have been flocking to Norway, especially since the early days of the war that broke out between Eritrea and Ethiopia in the year 1998 (Tsegay, 2016). As authenticating Eritrean tertiary level graduates (some missing all the claimed papers) was unprecedented and new in the Norwegian setup, NOKUT in collaboration with NUKAS arranged a data-gathering trip to Eritrea in the year 2012 (NOKUT, 2012). As part of the

preliminary report by the inquiry group from NOKUT and NUKAS, the rationale behind shutting down the only functioning university (The University of Asmara) was plainly explained as a manifestation of the efforts aimed at increasing the enrolment rate, assuming the University of Asmara was not admitting as many students as needed. The report uncritically echoed the very narratives of the government cadres in that country. The University of Asmara students' strikes which were held in the year 2002, calling for political reforms were not addressed, even not mentioned in the report. The opposite side of the story i.e. substituting the relatively well-founded university by unequipped colleges was taken as the basis of evaluation by the inquiry group. That could have an impact on the way Eritrean academics are adversely evaluated today in Norway. That inquiry group had only focused on the relative number of enrolments, disregarding the academic standards as what is put in its report. Bracketing the issue of post-2000s Eritrea's "brain drain" challenges and how exiled academics' credentials are illegally held by state authorities as part of their punitive measures towards what they regard as "traitors", the report simply depicted the exponential growth of college students' enrolment as follows: "The result is that Eritrea today has seven institutions offering higher education, and the number of students attending programs of higher education has risen from around 5000 students at the University of Asmara in 2004 to around 17,000 students attending programs at the new colleges of higher education today" (NOKUT, 2012).

If that inquiry group failed to grasp the concrete reason behind the shutdown of the University of Asmara, then it is not an exaggeration to state that the report is incomplete and lopsided with far-reaching impacts to exiled academics. After all such report has failed to acknowledge that Eritrea's only university was shut down on grounds of political motives of the ruling party's politico-military elites.

The academic standard and qualification which could be demanded by professional associations in Norway are not even raised as a point of concern. The standard and the reputation of the University of Asmara over the colleges born right after the shutting down of the only university is not mentioned either. Yet, the basis for the evaluation of academic credentials from Eritrea is grounded on that preliminary research.

Moreover, in countries such as Canada, unlike in Norway, it is witnessed that authentication is relatively loose and decentralized giving rooms for institutions to function independently. However, NOKUT still claims for being effective in its endeavours towards authenticating refugees who lack some basic academic credentials. The advantages and disadvantages of decentralization and centralization of the process could probably raise issues for consideration.

In a pilot research project conducted by NOKUT, Loo (2016) contends that authentication in Norway, including to those refugees who lack documents, is getting easier for verification. That finding then gave birth to a procedure that revolves around a framework called the UVD (uten verifiserbar dokumentasjon), a basis for evaluating exiled professionals in Norway today. UVD entails a relatively simplified version of

accreditation. Within this context, this research analyses how UVD was applied to Eritrean exiled professionals in the parts to follow.

2.2.1. Academic Standard vs. Authentication Across Contexts

The other face for such a challenge during authenticating academic papers is the academic standard and the specific institutional values and specific criteria applied for accepting papers from other training backgrounds. According to Jaumont (2016), the late Kofi Annan –Secretary-General of the United Nations – served as the primary source of inspiration for philanthropy acts to higher education in Africa. He advised several foundation leaders about the importance of addressing the talent gap at Africa’s universities (Jaumont, 2016). This statement was powerful and with an implication of a broader theme that might have correlations with an academic standard. If we divorce the case of exiled professionals and look at it separately from the academic standard point of view, academics who are trained into a different reality could encounter authentication and employability challenges in host countries. Such concern is widely underscored by several analysts. As one researcher emphasised, “.....exchange efficiency represents education’s ability to meet the needs of other institutions (business, civic and religious organizations), and concerns questions like whether the credentials are valued in the labour market or whether workers are overqualified...” (McMahon quoted in Rudloff, 2013, p. 3).

Similarly, some pieces of training are context-sensitive (Turner, 2012, p. 102). That knowledge which is acquired from a certain institution situated into a certain lifeworld might only be applicable in that particular area where the academic training is given. According to Turner (2012), the statement by Annan is negated by asserting that every training, wherever they originate, have their chances of utility. Between lines, Turner negates downplaying the situation of the African tertiary levels at face value might be lacking substantiation and misrepresentation. Forcefully refuting the unfair perception and validation process of exiled academics from the Global South in the high income democratic Global North, he advocates “... Since higher education is happening in the personal lives of individuals in lecture halls and seminar rooms, corridors, and coffee bars all around the world, the only way to ensure that the process embodies a commitment to quality is to encourage a commitment to quality enhancement among all individuals involved, whether they are students or librarians, janitors or professors, and to acknowledge that each person needs to be given the scope to make their contribution in their specific way” (Turner,2012 p.102).

In his efforts addressing the challenges encountered by journals that host academic articles and other research products, Gabriel (2010) implied how paradoxical it is to try to look at academic products produced from different settings. In some cases (in social sciences) it could be of a bigger challenge to judge at findings produced from other realities in reductionist interpretations. That challenge could be sensed across

the Norwegian authentication process. Gabriel (2010) suggested a solution that could meet the ends around the case. Journals entertaining knowledge originating from varying institutions following different training approaches and contextualized in different setups must be hosted in a more nuanced strategy, advocating for the diversified ideas coming from across varying schooling techniques (Gabriel, 2010, p.757).

2.2.2. The Case of Eritreans in Norway

To narrow the research study's main concern down to the situation of Eritrean tertiary level graduates destined to Norway implies two important points, namely, the academic standard that could be affected by the closure of the only conventional university in the country (UOA) and the criteria demanded by professional associations, employers and academic institutions in the host country/Norway. Secondly, the preliminary report by NOKUT (2012) failed to emphasize the open-ended national service as one of the push factors for Eritrean exiled professionals. According to the report, graduates are guaranteed that they get their official academic papers right after they are done with their national service (ibid). Certainly, hoodwinked by the Eritrean regime's cadre narratives, NOKUT (2012) has put the case of national service in Eritrea as simple and with clearly regulated patterns of administration. It is sad and unfortunate that such report with far-reaching impacts on the future career of exiled professionals and academics depicted a narrative that is unbalanced at best, and that is absent on the ground at worst. NOKUT's report failed to mention how Eritrean's opened-ended National Service leaves the university graduates without any guarantee or right to claim their diplomas even right after they have duly completed their legally imposed one-and-a-half-year national service obligation.

On the other side, the Eritrean Government is criticized for pressuring Eritreans living abroad to pay 2% income tax earned in the Diaspora and sign an apology letter. The latter coerced Eritrean state practice refers to a letter which confirms that an Eritrean asylee/ refugee has witnessed to the Eritrean Government he/she has exited the country and is legally responsible for his/her deeds. The infamous and intimidating apology letter is to be kept in the premises of the Eritrean Embassies as a personal file. Right after such a false confession, an Eritrean asylee/ refugee could be eligible to get services such as transferring official transcripts in a formal way between universities and authenticating organs (Gulliksen, 2013). The UN has confirmed that scenario through its monitoring group targeting both Eritrea and Somalia. In the words of the report:

The United Nations Monitoring Group on Eritrea and Somalia (SEMG) has verified that Eritrea operates an international system of revenue collection among Eritrean citizens and foreign nationals of Eritrean descent. As well as the collection of informal donations and contributions, Eritrea collects a 2% Tax from Eritreans living in the diaspora. According to the SEMG, one

key feature of this system has been its diverse and changing nature and ever-increasing informality (SEMG, 2017)

The question that Western hosting governments to Eritrean refugees have to seriously ponder are and sufficiently grapple with include: How about those who refuse to pay the 2% diaspora tax for a reason related to a diverging political view? How and on what grounds does NOKUT authenticate those who failed to surrender to such traps plotted by the foreign missions of the Eritrean regime?

Chapter Three: Theoretical Perspective

3.1. Theoretical Framework

The inspiration and analytical lens of my research has benefited several theoretical perspectives at the disposal of the social sciences. It is chiefly grounded on theories such as ‘the human capital theory’, ‘immigration theory’, and ‘melting pot theory’. Nonetheless ‘Melting Pot Theory’ will only be addressed as a supporting analytical alternative.

For varying ‘push-’ and ‘pull-factors’, people from all walks of life, amongst them the highly educated, are forced to leave or chose to leave their homelands. The potential challenges faced by the emigrants could be of varying typologies. Falling in the domain of ‘the highly educated’, for example, could have its peculiar features, generated from the very expertise they have on hand. Different theorists have strived to shed light on issues related to migration and the push/pull factors for the publics targeted as well. The research project then will look at the migration dynamics, but with a specific focus toward migration-accreditation-integration nexus.

3.1.1. Immigration dynamics

Ravenstein (1876) in what he named ‘Laws of migration’, established a perspective called ‘the Neo-Classical Equilibrium’. According to that theory, the push factors behind immigration are factors such as low wages, poor health care facilities, and high rates of unemployment (Ravenstein mentioned in Tsegay, 2016 p.28). On the other side, that same geographer has listed down what he called ‘the pulling factors’, namely, expected high wages and a speculated high employment rate in the destination harbours (ibid). According to Ravenstein, the major factor for migration is addressed as purely economic, echoing what the neoclassical economic theorists have portrayed the case along with their migration discourses. In the eyes of neo-classical theorists, migrants are seen as rationale and self-administering persons who are aware of why and how they migrate. Underscoring the human agency of migrants such theorists uphold:

At the micro-level, neo-classical migration theory considers migrants as individual rational actors, who decide to travel abroad based on a cost-benefit analysis. Provided they have a free choice and full access to information, individuals are anticipated to go where they can be the most productive, in this case, where they are able to earn the highest wages. This capacity obviously depends on the specific skills a person holds and on the specific structure of labour markets (Tsegay, 2016, p.28).

However, other theoretical perspectives signal that there lies an implicit hindrance for immigrant workers with the potential to curtail them from going into the hosting labour market. For example, according to research conducted by the National Bureau of Economic Research, in the United States, there is ever-mounting general public scepticism toward unregular labour migrants. Such an attitude implies that

natives are threatened for their jobs is perceived to be taken over by immigrants (Ménard & Shirley, 2005, p. 3). A similar emphasis is also asserted by another researcher who harbours anti-immigrant views:

Recent influential empirical work has emphasized the negative impact immigrants have on the wages of U.S-born workers, arguing that immigration harms less-educated American workers in particular and all U.S-born workers in general (Ottaviano & Peri, 2005).

Some pro-migration scholars, however, question the empirics and wisdom behind the aforementioned fear-mongering findings that polarise relations between natives and migrants. Such findings deliberately obscure the decisive role that immigrants played for the US economy to prosper (Ottaviano & Peri, 2005, p. 2). Moreover, immigrants have been a source of discomfort for natives regarding job scarcity across the world of today. Based on that concern some EU member countries even decided to block the entry of unregulated labour influx into their sovereign lands for a period of seven years (Bowen & Wu, 2013, p. 1). Even though there are varying schools of thought within the immigration theory i.e., addressing immigrants as substitutes or complementary goods within the host country's labour market and production trends, many are in favour of labour inflow from the peripheral countries (Bowen & Wu, 2013).

Furthermore, Bowen and Pedussel (2013) indicated that immigrants originating from sending countries that do have similar employment competence features are more likely to get employed right after they are placed within a hosting country's labour market than their equals from some other countries. The language barrier, however, remains one of the impeding factors. Based on that perspective, the research will strive to situate immigrants with a high educational background into the Norwegian labour market and see what is the real input from the experts who came with high educational or professional qualifications. The unsettled debate among researchers remains if immigrants are taking away scarce jobs from their native counterparts within their host country? Such rather impartial research findings certainly neglect or deliberately omit other push-pull factors that explicate the exodus of professionals and qualified people from authoritarian regimes such as those in Eritrea.

3.1.2. Human capital Theory

Human capital is "productive wealth embodied in labour, skills, and knowledge" (OECD, 2001) and it refers to any stock of knowledge or the innate/ acquired characteristics a person has that contributes to his or her economic productivity (Garibaldi mentioned in Tan, 2014, p.2). What is the reality lived by those highly educated immigrants in host countries then? Tan (2014) underscores a direct relationship between education and earnings. As he notes: "In essence, HCT suggests that education increases the productivity and earnings of individuals; therefore, education is an investment. This investment is not only crucial for individuals, but it is also the key to the economic growth of a country" (Emrullah Tan, 2014).

Even though, both HCT and immigration theory see the issue of exiled professionals solely from the economic dimension, its socio-political dimension deserves serious consideration too. What consequences are then in life, both for the hosting country and the targeted group, if the definition of HCT by Garibaldi (2006) logically failed to the targeted group? What are the real impacts that can be traced within the day to day life of the educated exiled personalities, namely, placement to job positions that are not matching to the training level and background or turning to be unemployed for reasons related to alien training background? The research will try to quantify the impacts in terms of absenteeism, job dissatisfaction, the amount earned, and other psycho-social elements.

Parallel to the theoretical arguments in the above, ‘poverty’ potentially stemmed from various factors preceded by political push factors is also a point to consider while dealing with immigration. As one UN document rightly discloses:

Fundamentally, poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means a lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one’s food or a job to earn one’s living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness, and exclusion of individuals, households, and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living in marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation (UN quoted in Tsegay 2016, p. 36).

In a nutshell, the implied message by Tsegay (2016) is, even though the final impact is to be seen and felt from the economic challenges, immigrants in general and those with high educational qualification specifically, have various reasons to choose or forced to leave their home countries. Based on that outlook, how they will react to either unemployment or underemployment status in their host countries is equally worthy of research focus.

3.1.3. Marxist outlooks toward immigration

Different theories and immigration policies grounded on varying typologies of perspectives have been addressing immigration episodes in ample of analytical approaches. Marxists and neo-Marxists theorists framed the arguments as immigration is undoubtedly a structural problem which originates from the capitalist mode of production, loaded with negative intentions of exploiting cheap labour of those who are incapable of defending their interests through proletariat unions in the new socio-economic environments where all resources are owned by the bourgeoisie (Meyers, 2000, pp. 1240-1250). At times of recessions, migrant workers are in close reach for being extradited on grounds of potential domestic crisis which could emerge from joblessness and the like (ibid). That theoretical argument is broadly presented based on Castel’s (1970) analysis:

According to Marxist theory, society is divided into two classes: the capitalists/bourgeoisie and the proletariat/working class. An individual's class position is determined by his relationship to the means of production. Immigration is the result of the "submission of the worker to the organization of the means of production dictated by capital," and of the "uneven development between sectors and regions and between countries" (Castells, 1975, p.34). Immigration is not simply produced by changing the manpower needs of advanced capitalist countries; rather, it is a structural tendency characteristic of the current phase of monopoly capitalism. As a result, while the short-term employment situation is immediately reflected in changes in the level of immigration, the long-term trend is continued growth in immigration (Meyers, 2000, p. 1248).

Marxist Theorists are also looking at migration features only through the eyes of economic approach which seems to downplay the other aspects of push-pull factors, manipulation emphasized as an ideological term advocating the rights of the workers, disregarding where and how emigrants originate from. Discovering the feeling of manipulation among exiled experts, if it exists within the labour apparatus, that is guided by the Norwegian social democracy then holds relevance of digging it out within the scope of the research.

However, as economic determinist as the Marxist theory to immigration its perspectives are not immune to critique from others. That theory affirms that immigration is likely to be a never-ending trend in the globalized capitalist world. Referring to immigration to the US has never outnumbered the natives as per today, the deliberate features of capitalist state immigration policies to select immigrants from the dissimilar ethnic and national background – to exploit and deprive them of basic rights and then leading to social stratification was not addressed as expected (Meyers, 2000 p.1249-50).

3.1.4. National Identity Theory

According to Meyers (2000), the national identity approach was also another perspective that sheds light on how immigration theories and policies are formulated. In that sense, Meyers argued that the 'nation-making' narrative, which could be country-specific, has its tentacles to influence the formulation and execution of immigration theories and policies. Following his analysis of immigration theory, the national identity approach deals with the nature of the societal sets ups related to social, ethnic, and identity affiliations that could impact policies of the hosting countries. Countries that are founded on ethnic and religious homogeneity are relatively hostile to erecting liberal immigration policies on grounds of fear of being dominated and losing their very unique national features (Meyers, 2000 p. 1250-1260). Not surprisingly, the United States and France have relatively receptive immigration policies than other EU members. The former states are typified by heterogeneous and super diverse communities, whereas ethnoreligious homogeneity tends to be the defining feature of some member states in the latter category. Even though that approach is criticized for failing to consider that almost all contemporary states invariably

formulated similar immigration policies, regardless of the ethnic compositions they might have, the theory still has its great impacts on understanding immigration policies in settlement countries (ibid).

Norway being one of the homogenous countries around the world then makes it ideal for research investigation through examining and analysing the lived realities and situation of exiled professionals. Encounters such as latent or manifest prejudice, racism, and marginalizing the skilled but exiled manpower on grounds of implicit threat for not losing Norwegians' national identity appears apparent. Reflections from encounters of the very target of this research will subsequently elucidate the reality.

3.1.5. Domestic Politics

Interest group and partisan politics is also another dimension to consider while striving to situate immigration policies and theories applicability in connection to the management and governance of exiled professionals. Interest groups, with varying interests, are in continuous competition to dominate the political apparatus of each country. That political feature dichotomizes domestic setups based on what the employers and other social actors are intending to make use of immigration laws (Meyers, 2000 p. 1250-1257). That part elaborates the public is organized across varying lines of interests, amongst them, political, economic, security, and ethnic affiliations. During national elections, the winning political parts grounded on the powerful interest groups could own the means to formulate policies that influence immigration policies. Soon after national election results are declared, depending on who managed to hold the key for making policies, it is not uncommon to witness either severe restrictive policies or outright xenophobic narrative (ibid). My study's target group would thus be requested to answer questions that reflect their political preferences from amongst the prism of the Norwegian political landscape-to investigate why some views are preferred over the others.

To sum it up, the analysis of the research will rely on mixed theoretical lenses as it will borrow certain conceptual and analytical frameworks from the aforementioned competing theoretical approaches.

Chapter Four: Methodological Approach

4.1. Research Methodologies

Curiously selected, properly designed as well as a rightly executed research methodology is likely to produce an objective, valid, reliable and ethically genuine/sensitive research findings which have the potential to influence policy-makers and practitioners. The means justifies the end, as what they call. If a researcher is aspiring to harvest a sounding, scientifically grounded analyses and objective findings from a research scheme, putting efforts to develop a methodology that shapes the structure, content, coherence of the procedure where he/she gathers data that lately will be used for defining concepts and ideas is of high relevance (Smith, 2013, p. 143). Amongst the prevailing research methods, today, qualitative research methods have evolved to be the most utilized tools for investigating peculiar traits embraced within the folds of varying social realities. According to Bryman (2012) qualitative approaches, unlike those quantitative approaches that only aspire to shed light on the other WH questions, provide answers for both the why and how aspects of a vividly articulated research question/show can a serious researcher who aspires to conduct impactful studies that benefits both migrants and their hosting societies tackle such research questions: -

1. How lower Norwegian language skills are limiting the employability of highly educated immigrants
2. In what ways do migrants' poor social networks within the new social environment in the host country impact their propensity to integrate within their new socio-economic milieu?
3. Do extreme nationalist rhetoric that immigrants' encounters jeopardize migrants' possibilities in trying suitable job positions?
4. What are the immediate and long-term socioeconomic and psychological impacts that unintegrated highly educated migrants endure in the host society?
5. Why are host countries such as Norway importing skilled manpower while they still have resourceful manpower within the pool of educated refugees who are readily available?
6. What are the impacts of migrants' age category in terms of their propensity to integration?

In my considerations, qualitative data gathering methodology is the best-suited approach to tackle such policy-relevant research questions. Digging deep into the quantitative data that capture the number of refugees and migrants in Norway, one would be better served to capture their lived realities within the

hosting state through depicting a “thick description” of their aspirations, hopes, opportunities, and challenges in their integration endeavours.

The aforementioned research questions can be tackled in a more rewarding way through qualitative approach. Even though the traditionally qualitative approach is presented as if it is relatively less structured and as if it only uses words, albeit that statement still downplays the indispensability of that approach in answering research puzzles that cannot be investigated through quantitative research, which only uses numbers instead of words (Blaikie, 2010, pp. 161-166).

Quantifying and coding human feelings, personal experiences, lifestyles, livelihoods, tastes, perspectives and other faces of human life is a pure misrepresentation of investigating cases and could fail of addressing the unmeasurable factors in life. Unlike feminist-oriented research approaches, most other epistemological research strategies try to keep researchers’ ideological stances and value judgments, subjectivity, reflections, and the like, away on grounds of neutrality and minimizing risks of taking sides (Smith, 1999, pp.136-139). However, such positivist approaches which had been in use in natural sciences, which deal mostly with non-living objects such as in the hard sciences can only be favoured by quantitative research strategies that deal with numbers and replicable physical characteristics. According to feminist-oriented research cases, undoubtedly, subjectivity and implications of a researcher as a research insider are obvious, since there lies an objective that intends to influence policies and other dominant societal narratives in the mainstream (ibid). Even though there is always a well-defined research design that includes a well theorized and scientifically substantiated in the outset of any research, undeniably there is room for researchers’ implications in qualitative research approaches. Yet, such a characteristic of the qualitative research approach should not sound as if no pattern guides the research process and the findings that are to be discovered from the data analyses. Smith (1999) as an advocate of qualitative research approaches has generally framed that concern as follows: “Methodology is important because it frames the questions being asked, determines the set of instruments and methods to be employed and shapes the analyses.” (ibid, 1999, p.143)

Faris (2016) in the research methodology that he utilizes to investigate the challenges faced by highly educated immigrants in host countries has also echoed similar views emphasized by Smith (1999). A commonly shared view held by both researchers revolves around the challenges of generalizing findings using qualitative data collection. The qualitative approach aspires to look at any social reality from the perspective of the researched (Faris, 2016, pp. 32-34). He implied that no lifeworld could be replicated across other various realities holding their contextual facts that depict that very specific socio-economic set

up on its own. Generalizing/prescribing findings drawn from a specific reality that has been investigated considering the specific traits that it holds is no other than misrepresentation (Smith, 1999).

Social realities own their own specific, contextual facts and characteristics that are also implied in research findings and analyses. Generalizing findings across realities does not hold water and is vividly imperialistic that depicts the very cultural superiority dichotomized across the “we” for those who carry out research and the “others” for those who are researched (ibid.). Moreover, former colonies as outposts of imperialism had/have their impacts on research procedures; empirical inquiries through which knowledge is defined/produced, ethnocentric eyeglasses through which knowledge is viewed/ defined the ‘others’ as ‘primitive’ or ‘civilized’ for the researcher (ibid.). Both ontological and epistemological viewpoints towards conceptualizing knowledge were/are inherited from those ethnocentrically and ideology laden Western socioeconomic realities of the pre-imperialism days. For example, some indigenous societies had been encountered by researchers who perceive and define knowledge only from the European point of view-- the ‘advantaged researchers’, the ‘others’ together with their thoughts, where been approached as uncivilized, dependent and need to be transformed for aligning them with the West (Smith, 1999, pp. 170-178). Such a research strategy and legacy belittle, judges, and compares the incomparable realities across varying lifeworlds.

The qualitative approach, being against generalizations, judgments, ethnocentrism among other good features is compatible for describing realities such as what I have implied in the research scheme at hand. Deviating away from positivism which commonly deals with non-living things, minimizes value judgments; monitored reflections and implications of the researcher within a well-grounded social research design will characterize this research--in line with Smith's (1999) arguments.

O'reilly (2012), between lines, has also shed light on what advantages are to pop up when someone opted ethnographic research, as part of the big package of qualitative research over the other strategies. Irreducibility of all the perspectives, meaning, tastes, understandings of what the community that is hosting the research process is a true manifestation of what they call the ethnographic research (O'reilly, 2012, p. 16). Researchers, after they are done with building the rapport within the folds of the agent to be researched, only need to document, write down their observations the way they sound, look and smell (ibid). That is the peculiar trait of qualitative research; conversing, observing, listening, recording, interviewing, while the agent is well situated in its natural social environment/daily life activities. Writing up all the encountered experiences over a fairly long time, yet without becoming ethnocentric and judgmental is then the knowledge that will be conveyed- i.e. seeing inside-out (O'reilly, 2012, pp.3). Implied is that generalizations, replications, and prescribing research findings across various social realities are nothing

but a misrepresentation of facts with misleading findings (Smith, 1999). Bryman (2012) has confirmed such a concern of replicability in a more detailed way: “Description and the emphasis on context; Qualitative researchers are much more inclined than quantitative researchers to provide a great deal of descriptive detail when reporting the fruits of their research. This is not to say that they are exclusively concerned with the description.” (Bryman 2012, p.400).

Even though it is quite complex to address all the evolutionary steps that explain how qualitative research methodologies ended up in the shape where they are now, generally some stages showed that research methodology was utilized in more of a pseudo-scientific manner some time in history. Until sometime around the second world war, that approach was dominated and utilized by researchers who only see at realities from that very judgmental and ideology laden Western binocular (Bryman, 2012). It was very comparative but with negativities and minimal professional sensitivities in the field of social research. However, as O’reilly’s (2012) has put it in one of her statements, the living status and applicability of today’s qualitative research methods are vividly explained.

According to O’Reilly (2012), ‘*inductive approach*’ is preferred over the deductive approach. A deductive approach is a strategy where a hypothesis, originating from already existing theories with roots other than what a researcher is planning to navigate from a close reach, is to be tested for conformity (O’reilly, 2012, pp.30-33). In such a case, that hypothesis and theory could influence the objectivity and preoccupation of the researcher. He/she could be blinded and fail to see and hear the facts on the ground, with the potential to divert the course of the research design and expectation. However, the inductive approach aspires to draw theories and conclusions from the very data that is gathered from the set up where the research is situated (O’reilly, 2012, pp.30-34). Even though the inductive approach also supports to have some guiding theories in place and ahead of a research kick-off, they only exist to keep the track of research frame and guidelines. However, the theory, even the literature review is not equally important as it is in testing an already formulated hypothesis, mostly used by quantitative research methods and by deductive approaches up here. So, I am convinced of applying the inductive approach in tackling the research questions I posed in section 1.3. In my research case, inductivity will be appropriate, believing theories harvested from other realities could be misleading for formulating hypotheses that will be tested in other realities. At the same time, I sense the reliance on deductive approach to research issues as mine has the danger of stealing that approach could steal the neutrality, unbiasedness, and flexibility of any researcher.

However, as I am to some extent depending on the literature review and theoretical framework for the general research guidance and analysis, deductive approach is also there but kept to a lowest possible impact for the sake of originality and irreplaceability.

Iterative-inductive, as a piece within the broader array of inductive approach narratives, will be used along with the research scheme. At the outset, articulating a relevant theoretical framework as a guide and as an academic norm will be in place while putting efforts to synthesize a new theory or observed conclusion from the data that will be harvested from the virgin social reality that the research will be situated in (O'reilly, 2012, pp.31). Going both ways from the field to the articulated theory and vice versa will inform my research endeavours, but with a serious curiosity to stay neutral by hearing what the data collection field will reveal to me.

However, there are still shortcomings that exist within the folds of utilizing qualitative research strategies, mainly mentioned concerning generalizing results and subjectivity of the very person conducting the research and the objectivity of the research mechanisms employed. As what some exponents of quantitative narratives put it, the unsystematic views stemmed from the personal understandings of the qualitative researcher and the relationships built over time with the subjects of the research (Bryman, 2012, pp. 400-4002). The researcher by him/her self-categorizes what is important and what is marginal in his/her endeavours while designing and operating the research. Such critics could be of great relevance to consider when it comes to objectivity and then to replicating findings and research design. Bryman (2012) has also articulated why generalization could lead to research errors; "It is often suggested that the scope of the findings of qualitative investigations is restricted. When participant observation is used or when qualitative interviews are conducted with a small number of individuals in a certain organization or locality, they argue that it is impossible to know how the findings can be generalized to other settings. How can just one or two cases be representative of all cases." (Bryman, 2012 p. 406).

Yet, the concerns about representativeness should not sound that all findings collected from qualitative research are biased and of minimum applicability. Nor should one be excessively concerned about qualitative research findings replicability as such research approaches also follow their own logic of inquiry but within a specific reality. The same data analysis mechanisms are employed both in quantitative and qualitative approaches, mostly focusing on the frequency of an observed variable of research (Bryman, 2012, pp.409). Data is analysed, interpreted even shared by hedging terms such as 'often' and 'most' to imply the degree of precision and objectivity. So, qualitative research is not about generalizations, but about signalling features shared by some specific publics. Albeit critics have never zipped lips from mentioning the shortcomings. Although none numerical data and the method through which they are gathered and

analysed is described as less precise and less reliable, it is still favoured over other strategies today (Blaikie,2010, pp.162).Having all the mentioned ontological and epistemological logic of inquiry in mind, I am convinced to use qualitative research strategies as they are relatively fitting to my research design.

4.2. Data types and methods of gathering

According to Blaikie (2010), three types of data can be found in three different forms and sources, namely, primary, secondary and tertiary data. Primary data is the data that is collected, organized, interpreted, and analysed by the very person who has designed the study at hand and is gathered through face-to-face interactions with the subjects (Blaikie, 2010, p.160). Such data is crucial as it is directly linked to the specific research scheme and the research questions that had been articulated by the researcher, as they are also virgins and not manipulated by other bodies (ibid). Whereas secondary data is accessible data that can be used as raw material for research but is not directly collected by a researcher who is striving to investigate a specific situation. It could be collected by other bodies such as a government organ, but not necessarily for a specific project (Blaikie, 2010, p.160). However, that data is not used or manipulated by other bodies, still virgin but it might not have a direct relationship with the research at hand (ibid). Whereas tertiary data is a typology of data that had been already analysed or used by other bodies but still original is available for researchers that need to make use of it (Blaikie, 2010, p.160). However, here comes the issue of distance between the researcher and the data. It is implied that the more the researcher distances him/herself from the data that is directly related to his/her articulated research question/s, the more is objectivity distanced from misrepresentation.

O'Reilly (2012, p.99) has described what advantages are accessed if a researcher immerses him/herself into the life-world of the researched, in terms of genuine ways of gathering data and then directly picking up the most valuable data for analysis. She described ethnography as a 'reflexive' practice where she notes; "Participant observation is an embodied activity; and a reflexive practice that must acknowledge our role in the practice and unfolding of daily life." (O'reilly, 2012 p.99).

My research employs two data sources. I have tried to triangulate data collected both from primary and secondary sources. At the outset, my research plan was to collect data through direct interviews with my 'study target group'. I was convinced that conducting personal interviews with exiled Eritrean professionals in the research sites are not only about gathering data in the form of words and wordings, as it will also provide me with an opportunity to witness other supportive details such as reading the body language and the routine of my subjects. Unfortunately, that opportunity of conducting personal interviews didn't occur due to the COVID-19 crisis. Yet, I have partially used secondary and tertiary data that might have the potential of enriching my overall research objective, amongst them are inquiries conducted by NOKUT, census data collected by Agder municipality for issues such as statistics that show educational qualifications

of immigrants that came from Eritrea and other relevant places. Of course, I have used certain items of secondary and tertiary data that I have collected from the research library in the University of Agder, but as supporting data for the primary data that I will collect through interviews.

4.3. Data Gathering Strategies

Mainly, the research scheme is founded on primary data that has been collected through personal interviews with representatives of the subjects that are mentioned as refugees with higher education, with a special focus on those who have earned at least a college certificate from the country where they have come from. Of course, interviews have been conducted in line with what is clearly articulated in the research questions, i.e. their encounters while striving to authenticate their respective academic credentials, challenges experienced while trying to find fitting job positions, the impacts parented as well.

Secondary and tertiary data is only used to support the personal reflections that have been drawn from first-hand interviews. According to Blaikie (2010), secondary data might not necessarily mean a real and direct manifestation of the research subjects that are centring the research theme on hand. The rationale and logic of inquiry applied to collect that secondary data might have been collected for other intents and ultimate purposes. The same is true with tertiary data, being interpreted by other bodies for their own specific and alien purpose, could also lead to a second-level research error (Blaikie, 2010). So, primarily this research has revolved around first-hand interviews.

According to O'reilly (2012) all researchers, depending on the type of investigation they are working on, can delve between three interview techniques – structured, unstructured, and semi-structured interviews. Structured interviews are mainly used by surveyors who expect a well-framed response from interviews (O'reilly, 2012, p.120). That feature makes it unfit for my research subjects and their respective situation. I am not up to unstructured interview also, as it could drag my research path off the track, without grasping the points that could answer my research questions at last. So, I will favour semi-structured interview for having the advantages of flexibility for both the interviewer and the interviewee, giving more space for elaboration and unfolding other previously reduced variables that popped up during interviews. The gist of semi-structured interview is vividly summarized by O'reilly (2012) as a fitting-to-all technique: “A semi-structured interview will contain elements of both styles, to explore ideas with the participants but also to get fixed responses for some criteria.” (O'reilly, 2012 p.120).

Moreover, it has been mentioned that the relevance of erecting an interview outline that guides the whole process of collecting data concerning the research questions, yet as a qualitative researcher leaving room for unexpected reflections, expressing contradiction laden thoughts from informants, motivating respondents to say their fears and hopes out constitute some of the advantages of not being so sticky for a

specific interview style (O'reilly,2012, pp.120-122). Pairing such an interview-style with curious observation, taking a fairly long time with respondents to confirm frequency and regularity of a particular research variable is of big advantage (ibid). However, a qualitative researcher has to be seriously sure that he/she is not reducing to what is being said by respondents, as he/she is expected to view the world from that perspective of the researched.

Qualitative research also motivates to put in personal reflections of the very researcher in the form of anecdotes and then weave it within the data analysis. So, between lines, I have reflected myself what encounters I had in my efforts of getting academically authenticated and then securing a job within the Norwegian media industry because I already have earned a BA degree in Journalism from Eritrea.

4.4. Sampling strategy

Respondents were not picked randomly, believing such a strategy might fail to be in line with the research goals and the questions that are expected to be answered through the findings that this research has come up with. So, the purposive sampling technique is applied in my efforts in selecting interviewees. Purposive sampling is up to selecting interviewees based on some peculiar characteristics that they possess (Bryman,2012). Those observed characteristics, normally, should have the potential of answering the articulated research questions. «Most sampling in qualitative research entails purposive sampling of some kind. What links the various kinds of purposive sampling approach is that the sampling is conducted with reference to the goals of the research, so that units of analysis are selected in terms of criteria that will allow the research questions to be answered” (Bryman, 2012, p. 418). Interviewees, in this case, must have the relevant educational background from their own countries have been solicited to shed light on the what, why, and how of their respective status within the context of their host country, Norway. Random sampling might lead to a misleading conclusion, as it might misrepresent the population of the research. Moreover, in purposive sampling, deliberate consideration of important demographic data such as ethnicity, gender, age, religion, social class, and educational background are seriously considered. However, it was not applicable in my research plan as it had been planned in the inception, because of the smaller size of the Eritrean community residing in Agder. Theoretically, once interviewees fulfilling such demographic criteria were identified, the snowballing technique has been used to approach/infiltrate the circle of potential informants, starting from those who were already in contact with the researcher (ibid). Right after an interviewee bearing the relevant characteristics was approached for an interview, he/she was used as a diving board to wander into the bigger pool of other informants. More explicitly, my sample group were selected using ‘snowballing approach’. Of course, a case study strategy should have been in place to

minimize potential challenges that might exist for reasons related to logistics and time factors. Fortunately, it did not happen. In this case, Kristiansand's vicinity is the place where the research was mainly situated. A case study strategy was also defined as fitting for explanatory research methodologies such as qualitative research and is recommended for student researchers and single person research designs, considering the budgetary issues they might encounter (Blaikie, 2010, pp.180-181).

4.5. Demography of Research Respondents

In this specific research scheme, using a purposive sampling strategy, 11 respondents were interviewed to share their individual integration experience. The age range falls from 32-69 years of age, encompassing respondents with different integration encounters depending on the age group they fall. To look at how the length of stay in Norway had impacted the integration process, years stayed in Norway was also erected as an important factor. Based on that concern, respondents were purposively picked targeting those who have been living in Agder for at least four years and for at most 13 years.

In addition to this, respondents' educational level awarded before coming to Norway and gender category was put into consideration. Most of the respondents were BA degree and advanced diploma holders followed by rich work experience before they arrive in Norway. Only one respondent was having a certificate, but from a well-established teacher training institute in Asmara. As to gender issues, I was able to interview only one woman. However, as the nature of her work allows her to shed light on the lives and hurdles attached to the Eritrean women residing in Agder, I found her information pretty rich concerning the lifeworld of the population that I had targeted.

Moreover, as some of my informants have/are pursued/pursuing higher education in Norway, I have considered 'if Norway-based training has saved them from discriminations of all forms'. Ten out of the eleven respondents are either in the local universities or have already got their Norwegian degrees. That specific point has also aspects that would uncover underlined integration challenges faced by the respondents.

Finally, I noticed that interviewing persons who fled dictatorships, regardless of the intention of any research, is not as easy as it might look. Eritreans immigrants were not easily accessible for any kind of conversation, as they may associate it with their personal experiences under the dictatorship they fled from. Self-censorship, feeling uncomfortable amidst an ongoing interview were what I have observed. The mentioned factor limited me to only interview 11 respondents. However, those who were willing were eloquent, bold and determined. The commitment they had was compensating and I believe their

input made my research as resourceful as it was intended to be. They felt as if they were helping their community in Agder.

Table 1. Respondents Profile

Age range	Years stayed in Norway	Current job status	Certificate level from Eritrea	Advanced Diploma from Eritrea	BA degree level from Eritrea	Male	Female	Religion
32-69	4-13	10 employed + 1 retirees	2	4	5	10	1	Orthodox Christians

4.6. Data organization and Analysis strategy

According to Bryman (2015, p. 570) even though qualitative research methodologies are known for the comparatively detailed data and research advantages they potentially endow, data gathered through such a research approach is not easily managed. Researchers that went through such a demanding research method increasingly encounter big challenges the very stage they start to organize and analyse the bulk of the information they gathered from the field and through other means. Data analysis strategies that researchers utilize in quantitative research methods, data analysis applied in qualitative methods are arguably vivid and need to be conducted through a nuanced pattern of analysis by founding arguments on previously tested academic arguments (Bryman, 2015 p.570-571). Inductive approach i.e. potential analysis of primary data should be used to generate a piece of new knowledge or give birth to a new social theory that is impacted by the data (ibid). Moreover, Blaikie (p.215) in his efforts clarifying the procedural differences that he thought are important during data analysis stages, noted that unlike in quantitative approach, researchers that reach the very stage where they strive to organize and analyse qualitative data need to consider the unmanipulated and raw informants' views over possible predetermined perspectives, be detailed as much as possible while describing any incident, interpretation of specific social contexts where the informants are situated, being flexible while gathering and interpretation data, then coming to a stage where they need to present the findings through an understandable conceptual framework or theory formation (Blaikie, 2010 p. 215-217).

In quantitative data analysis, there is no concrete correlation between the data gathering phases and the stage where data is analysed as is in qualitative methods. As to what Bryman (2015) discloses, in

quantitative methods data analysis is done right after data is gathered. In contrast to that O'Reilly (2012, p.183) vividly states that differences in as follows:

In ethnographic research, you can go back, ask people more questions, find the person you missed, or look for more information and collect more data, because you do not gather blindly, then bring it all home and see what you have got. (O'reilly, 2012, p.183)

The quotation from O'relly (2015) implies that in contrast to the quantitative approach, in qualitative research there is no clear articulation that states the difference between the data-gathering stage from that stage where data is analysed. Researchers begin to analyse the day they begin to collect data. Data analysis for qualitative research methods is then executed having the aforementioned considerations in mind. Of course, data analysis within the folds of the quantitative research process is more structured in its form, though that very approach has also its shortcomings where qualitative approaches have excelled in certain ways. Generalization and replications of studies together with their respective implications are always intended to be applicable in all lifeworlds, where there might be major underlying socioeconomic factors that differ across realities (Blaikie,2012 p.199-204). In contrast to this, proponents of a qualitative research approach such as Linda Smith (2013) argue from the interpretive perspective i.e. a critical approach that negates the generalizations and replicability of research findings across varying social realities. So, the findings that pop up here emerged from the specific empirical process that guided the gist of the specific themes raised all way the way and they are only applicable to the context where the research was situated.i.e. Agder in this case.

The research process for this specific study relied on qualitative research methods where there are numerous ways of data analysis within its premises. In this case, the thematic data analysis approach is applied for presentation, interpretation, and analysis as will be seen throughout the analysis process. Personal views and recommendations stemming from the empirical research process will accompany the findings and the very gist of the research objectives in a more descriptive nature. Bryman (2015, p.584-585) highlighted that normative data analysis is one of the commonly utilized methods today. unlike the other data analysis procedures, normative data analysis is, however, relatively disarrayed and lacks a well-articulated data analysis framework. According to Bryman (2015, p.585-585), the normative data analysis approach in certain situations borrows concepts such as 'data coding' to develop major research themes that the analysis will potentially revolve around. There are even researchers who fail to grasp the real meaning that differentiates 'codes' from 'themes. However, as themes are developed by first identifying codes and then developing themes that are founded on codified qualitative data, normative data analysis is not practically omitting the other techniques but adding upon them through clustering data under major

themes. That was the rationale behind picking up that data analysis technique actually- to some extent as standing alone and sometimes embracing the other techniques of data analysis.

‘Theme’ is the most important springboard before diving into the analysis pool, Bryman (2015) emphasized the need to link the themes to be developed rightly to the research questions together with the group of codes that will serve as the basement and ingredients of the major themes that will guide the analysis. In thematic analysis, there is no single procedure through which a researcher would be able to identify a theme/sub-theme that will impact the analysis process throughout the research journey (ibid). However, right after gathering the original data, generally, researchers are advised to develop themes through comparative methods that will enable them to identify codes that are repeatedly mentioned by informants but themes should be seriously related to the research questions (Blaikie, 2012).

Bryman (2015, p. 585-586) exemplified thematic analysis by a technique called ‘theme framework,’ where themes generated from codified ingredients are organized as follows: -

Table 2. The Framework to Thematic Approach, from Bryman (2012)

Theme: Ideological Critique

In	Class Critique	Ethnicity Critique	Gender Critique	Nationality Critique
In.1				
In.2				
In.3				
In.4			Saw many black Americans’ in BK ‘but few if any in ‘World Show Case’. Little mention of ‘Black History (Q14).’	‘World Show Case’, only really representative of the developed world’ (Q14)

Thematic analysis like in the above explanation and figure is what was selected to analyse the data. Major themes and subthemes are developed right after the saturation stage was reached during the data gathering phases. That approach has characterized the data analysis stage.

4.7. Interview Guide

Technically, a well-drafted interview guide is of great advantage for the researcher in his/her efforts to deeply understand the phenomenon under investigation holistically. In order for a researcher to reap the best out interview method, one needs to synthesize synthesizing the data into a sounding analysis. As a strategy, the interview questions that will be directed to the interviewees mainly will revolve around the major research question/s. In this case, issues such as challenges of authentication encountered language impediment, poor social network as ways of accessing a fitting job position, discrimination of all typologies, stolen self-esteem related to a sense of a loss of intellectual identity and others will hold the core of the interview questions together with informal observations during interview sessions.

Any qualitative researcher, however, needs to be alert when it comes to staying as objective as possible. Yet, the researcher has still a room to remain flexible during and after data collecting endeavours. Qualitative research is, after all, about positivism like in the hard sciences, rather it is about seeing any particular social reality in its particular context, both in terms of time and space (Bryman, 2012, pp.380-381). That is to imply that whenever researchers are striving to extract data, they should have a space for adopting new situations or unexpected responses from interviewees. The effort should be directed to nothing but seeing, hearing, and feeling through the senses of the very source of data (Faris, 2016, p.32).

So, questions were articulated as a guide but they did not steal the freedom of the informants to express what they feel and how they view the social environment surrounding them, concerning the research theme articulated up here. O'reilly (2012) has also shed light on how ethnographers (ethnographic research being qualitative) collect data through interviews. Questions should remain unstructured and giving room for flexibility but without a big divergence from the major theme of the research scheme (O'reilly, 2012, pp.118). That is the exact strategy that I employed during the interviews sessions that I had with my study group.

Questions targeting the major research question were written down in English as a means to communicate with the university personnel, but they have been translated into Tigrinya, to give room for a precise understanding of the potential informants. Most of the migrant study participants were Tigrinya speakers who can comfortably express themselves in that language. English being their second language, Tigrinya was favoured on grounds of giving them more space to be accurate and more expressive and reflexive as well. However, some commonly used administrative clichés will be used or clarified in Norwegian, the researcher being able to understand the Norwegian language counted as an advantage.

Right after the researcher secured the consent of the interviewees, due to the crisis related to COVID-19 all interviews were done over the phone. That is to say, interviewing a natural setup proved to be difficult. But,

safeguarding the privacy and confidentiality of the interviewees remained to be the responsibility of the researcher and was done according to the erected ethical rules and regulations.

4. 8. Legal and Ethical Considerations

The research is situated within the current Norwegian socioeconomic, political, cultural, and ethical set up. So, all rules and regulations, laws and bylaws, cultural sensitivities, values and norms, liabilities concerning privacy, confidentiality, and all typologies of harm that can be posed over the interviewees have been delicately handled to safeguard the participants involved. Little from the bulk of personal information collected is not presented up here, for reasons related to NSD rules and regulations. However, conducting qualitative research is turning to be extremely dilemmatic within the folds of both covert and overt research schemes nowadays. According to O'reilly (2012), qualitative research is about observing the private lifestyles of communities and individuals; besides conversing, interpreting their actions and understandings, building rapport as well. For some schools of thought, such a setup by itself is unethical (O'reilly,2012, pp.62-63). Albeit, stagnating researches that aspire to fill the knowledge gaps available for reasons related to fear of ethical considerations is also against the norms of science (ibid.). The implied solution is then up to the art of balancing the existing paradoxes and extremes responsibly, thoughtfully, and critically. Researchers must conduct their studies cautiously, but they must embrace skills and ethical guidelines that safeguard the dignity, interest, privacy, and personal integrity of those who are researched out, along with vividly articulated legal and ethical mechanisms through which researchers control their actions and responsibility in the field (O'reilly, 2012, pp.62-64). Academic freedom vs ethical and legal considerations are important points that must revolve around scientific inquiry of a researcher.

Having the above points in place, ethical boundaries are always with large spaces of elastic interpretations by various bodies involved within any research theme or discourses. Sometimes, conflict of interest, power structure, subjective definitions of soft concepts, and the like, might put ethical committees as gatekeepers who complicate the research process (O'reilly, 2012, p.63).

However, as there might not be a perfectly framed ethical consensus and pattern that could be used as a universal guide, considering the bylaws that are erected by the respective institutions where the research project is to be conducted is always safe and wise. In this case, the research process up here has been guided and conducted according to the bylaws of the Norwegian research ethics committee.

Bryman (2012) has also emphasized on what legal and ethical considerations ought researchers to consider while conducting any research because intentionally or unintentionally, harm can be inflicted on research subjects. Issues such as the importance of having clear consent while gathering data, erecting ways of identifying privacy issues, and avoidance of luring participants have to be in place (Bryman, 2012,

pp.133-135). All types of harm, amongst them, are physical, mental pressure with severe psychological stress to participants, general physical and psychosocial discomfort that can arise from the research process have to be avoided (ibid, p.135). Moreover, confidentiality is amongst the most important aspects of ethical codes that must be seriously considered; viewed from the magnitude of harm they can potentially pose toward the research participants. Bryman (2012) has made his point as follows: -

The issue of harm to participants is further addressed in ethical codes by advocating care over maintaining the confidentiality of records. This means that the identities and records of individuals should be maintained as confidential. This injunction also means that care needs to be taken when findings are being published to ensure that individuals are not identified or identifiable (Bryman, 2012 p.135-136).

It is then implied, anonymity, to some extent, could minimize the risks that can be originated from marginally handled ethical considerations of any research. In this case, at the stage where findings are wrapped up and are ready to be shared with others, any researcher needs to be curious about defending his research subjects, as they can be traced via their personal identification details, such as affiliated physical addresses, and the like. Anonymity, is a mechanism through which data is collected from certain groups or individuals, but with a serious consideration that no other external body can trace/identify who was/is the source of the raw data that fed the researcher with information to compile his findings (O'reilly, 2012, p.68). So, anonymity, remained to be a feature for my research process, believing it will help in keeping my informants safe from issues that can be raised from poor confidentiality management. On the contrary, other schools of thought emphasize more on the relevance and utility of the research findings over the confidentiality of the research process. But the justifications they strive to come up with are quite complicated and need a fine filter that balances between the security of the researched, the magnitude of the research relevance for the good of the many, and the ethical and legal considerations in which the research is situated. Bryman (2012) has mentioned such a concern as follows: "Whenever there is no access by any means to reach potential informants, while still there is a scientific purpose for the research, no choice, so researchers can hide some details about any research without harming the participants." (Bryman, 2012, pp. 133-135).

However, in this research, such a research strategy was not entertained; as there is no concrete reason to lure or exploit research participants in any possible means. Following Bryman's (2012) advice, all research participants were briefed about the research package on hand. Even pseudo names as what is mentioned by Bryman (2012) are applied to protect and safeguard the research participants way far from being identified. To make sure the participants were feeling secured and comfortable with the research

objectives, they have been assured the information will be collected and processed according to the national law. The researcher has used the collected data for specific scholarly objective and he assured his research participants that he is not going to share any details of personal identity of the participants with the external bodies (Bryman, 2012, pp.135-139). In addition to this, an overt data gathering strategy is going to be applied for adding up more security and comfort for the participants. That is in line with research ethics advice, which emphasizes "...overt research is conducted openly, with the researchers' identity being known to all participants." (O'reilly, 2012, p.64). As a manifestation of such a strategy, briefing on a personal level, together with providing a research consent that entails the research process has been clarified to all the research participants had featured this research. That strategy facilitated a good personal rapport with the participants imagined from the kick-off. Moreover, informed consent, as a principle must include both the invitation to participate and intelligibly orientate enlighten research participants about what the research project embraces, what its purpose is, and how its findings shall be presented (Bryman, 2012, p.138).

Funding and politics, together with the expectations of the bodies offering the capital for the execution of an articulated research design are also factors that need to be considered within the folds of research ethics. Situations, where funding bodies would try to tap findings in line with their objectives and framed values could trap researchers between professional obligations and funding organizations' identity. In this case, allowing funding bodies and their hidden political agendas to influence any research process from behind might stand still as gatekeeping, contrary to academic norms and ethics, is a point to consider. "... Much social research is funded by organizations such as firms and government departments." (Bryman,2012, p. 151). This is to imply that no researcher can operate from politically vacuum scenery where there are no socio-political factors that do not impinge, in one way another, on the research process. In some circumstances, findings could be sceptically judged and researchers' professional integrity remains jeopardizes. So, the research at hand was purely conducted for an academic exercise and is fully funded by the researcher. As to the research professional guidance, the University of Agder together with NSD were there for the researcher.

4.8.1. Norwegian laws and Research codes of ethics

The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH) is one of the major bodies that are concerned with tuning research projects to the Norwegian code of ethics and affiliated laws and proclamations, with a special focus on research schemes that embrace electronic correspondence while gathering data. According to NESH bylaws and values, ethical considerations while researching the internet are framed into five major themes- namely: a consideration to differentiate what is public and private, special care towards underage people and other groups with vulnerabilities, official ways

of drafting and presenting consents for interviews before going to collecting personal data, considering confidentiality and confirming the right for remaining anonymous throughout r the research stages, limitations and flexibility within the domain of sharing data gathered together with being curios while leaving the data accessible to other bodies and the size of data that is to be collected from personalities involved (NESH,2019, p.3).

Even though such delimitations are erected focusing on researches conducted via and through the internet, they still hold a major relevance to other typologies of researches also. So, the mentioned considerations have characterized my research. Among other things, defending minors and other vulnerable groups, stand as a solid principle of this research, starting from gathering data to wrapping the pieces up in the findings and their management resonates in a research exercise.

NESH (2019) has started articulating considerations towards internet-based research since the year 2003, but still putting efforts to update its directives parallel to the unstoppable IT advances in all areas. Developments in electronic communications such as social media, WIFI sophistication, smartphone appliances and the like are making ethical delimitations quite complex and sometimes even unmanageable, as users are getting confused and disoriented between what is public and what is private information (NESH, 2019, pp.7). It has also become quite a norm nowadays such as storing private health issues in certain apps that can be susceptible to cracking and surveillances from many sides (ibid). The implication is then conducting research has to be aligned with the aforementioned points affiliated with ethical considerations, but the rationality and responsibility of the researcher to safeguard respondents are always in place at the centre stage of any principled researcher.

4.8.2. The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees

The Norwegian National Research Committee provides guidance that is grounded on four major principles, i.e., integrity, respect, fairness as well as good consequences. In the outset, it is vividly articulated that conducting research is an indispensable means through which findings that fuel up international development are harvested, albeit research misconduct that downplays the aforementioned principles could equally be of bigger damage to human beings as well (NNREC,2019, p.1). So, researchers of all kinds are requested, even legally warned that all the personalities involved in any research project deserve respect- a failure to such a principle is a failure to the research as well (ibid). Moreover, researchers are advised to remain professionally integrated, fair, and honest to what they are investigating and their colleagues and the general public.

In addition to the above points, according to the Norwegian national research ethics committees, researchers are legally and ethically expected to have a genuine team spirit with their colleagues that are

supposed to do the peer group review, the research institution itself as it is also responsible to offer research guidance that taps the research process to be conducted in more of scientific and ethical protocols. Moreover, impartiality, confidentiality and consent, compliance with both national and international research laws and regulations, copyright issues while refereeing, sharing findings but with special consideration to privacy and the like, sharing results with economically disadvantaged corners of the world, and the academic freedom enjoyed while trying to find the truth but with considering ethical dilemmas are amongst the major points mentioned (NNREC,2019, p.1).

Such considerations are then to be embraced within this research. Furthermore, correspondences were done with NSD to tune the whole research process with what is already articulated within the principles, guidelines, and ethical codes of that important organization. Finally, the green light was given by NSD, and here is the researcher is today, equipped with guidance from NSD where the compilation of this research report is based.

4.9. Ethical Issues and Legal Permissions

All the information that was extracted and later synthesized, the findings was done by utilizing the aforementioned research approaches, legal and ethical considerations. The research was carried out according to the Norwegian law where the research is situated, in this case, Norway.

Privacy, individual freedoms, rights to remain reserved from giving information, keeping informants' identity anonymous, no attributions for all reflected informants, endangering the security of individuals, and the like were put into consideration. Moreover, if by any means the questions happened to be aggressive, unintentionally intimidating, or holding other possible negativities, they were discussed and refined by contacting the advisors in the department.

Bribing, manipulation of all forms, false promises towards potential informants were against the nature of this study. If by any means, scenarios of such issues happened, the researcher will remain accountable. Permission from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data has also proved that the research was designed according to the mainstream research mechanisms in Norway.

4.10. Scope of the Research, Limitations, and Constraints

In the inception, the language for the research interviews was planned to be English. However, as the research was carried out in a typical Norwegian socioeconomic lifeworld, the researcher quickly noticed the relevance of conducting the interviews in Tigrigna (mother tongue for all the respondents) but by mixing the local language (Norsk) in certain incidences where the relevance of using Norwegian concepts was necessary. As both the researcher and the informants were good enough to understand the Norwegian language, in certain situations, it was found out as an advantage of communicating with the study group

using the adoptive country's language. Albeit, translating certain academic clichés from Tigrigna to English and realigning concepts holding localized meanings to English had undoubtedly complicated the study process here and there.

Secondly, for reasons related to the prevailing divisions across divergent political attitudes toward the government back home, made some important informants denounce the invitation to deliver personal reflections that could have been helpful to enrich this very research. Exiled Eritreans are highly divided across different political lines today and all over the world. Getting green light and the trust for conducting all kinds of interviews was not as easy as it might seem. Consequently, I was only capable of interviewing 11 respondents from amongst the 19 potential respondents that I had considered in the inception. Fortunately, the respondents who were willing to reflect themselves throughout this research were fairly diverse when it comes to variables like age, academic level, duration of stay in Norway, job status and gender.

Moreover, for reasons that they experienced from back home, most Eritreans are not willing to be interviewed as a rule of thumb. Their individual experiences with being interviewed while they were under the dictatorship from back home had its legacy for denouncing interviews. Often, they turn out to be extremely sceptical and suspicion-ridden to openly discuss their exodus and their current lived reality in settlement countries. In any case, the 'flesh' of this research findings has mostly relied on personal reflections and experiences. So, the research was framed within the reflections of 11 respondents only. The geographical stretch of the research being small as mentioned in the previous parts, paired with the scepticisms observed by some research participants might have potentially limited this research exercise.

In addition to this, the interviews were conducted through the telephone. The COVID-19 crisis had limited the opportunity of talking to the respondents in person. I did the interviews at the time when *social distancing* was implemented among the measures that were taken to offset the pandemic. I was unable to read the body gestures of my very respondents.

Furthermore, for the sake of clarity, all interviews were conducted in Tigrinya, Eritrean language, of course mixing some Norwegian local concepts was there as it is aforementioned. As the duration of each interview session was approximately one hour, I found it demanding to transcribe and then translate the massive qualitative data gathered.

At last but not least, resource constraint (time and financial issues), as well as family commitments amid the COVID-19 lockdown, were also factored into the research process. Furthermore, I conducted this research while struggling with all the hurdles encountered by all refugees of my kind while trying to readjust themselves to a new social environment. Being a father of three underage children who came across very

traumatizing life experiences, working and studying were also other pressing factors that might have their impact on the production of this research project.

Recently, the war-situation that has broken out between Eritrea and Ethiopia has also impacted me in several ways. Synthesizing such delicate scientific research while family members are being taken to war fronts, villages being bombarded by war jets and the like would definitely impact me and family.

Chapter Five: Data Findings

5.1. Data organization and Analysis

As stated in the research methodology section, *thematic data analysis approach* is applied to interpret the data collected through telephone interviews. Major themes such as language limitations, poor social network, delayed or failed authentication of academic credentials and the impacts of challenges regarding integration, culture shock, ageing, discrimination of all forms, financial status and the like are amongst the major themes that popped up during the data collection process. As data revolving around the mentioned themes began to be repetitive, I sensed both that data saturation stage was reached and that important themes were in place.

So, for the above-mentioned reasons, I found a *thematic data analysis approach* fitting to my overall research journey and objectives. Right after I had gathered all the data through semi-structured telephone interviews, I identified codes that can be synthesized as major research themes. Data gathered-codes identified- larger categories and themes related to the research question developed by comparative methods that depended on the informants repeated utterances.

As stated in the research methodology, *purposive sampling* was utilized to select informants, because of the rationale it embraces. Purposive sampling invariably gives an equal probability for selection from amongst the research population, - in this case, highly educated Eritreans residing in Agder. Fortunately, as shown in the table, people of all ages and dimensions have reflected themselves as was speculated during the inception of the research articulation. While the informant's age range deviates from 32-69, and at the same time, years resided in Norway ranged from 4-13, this could give a certain picture of what is going on in Eritrea recently through the peculiar integration challenges and encounters faced by the highly educated immigrants in Norway. Possibilities and hindrances of finding jobs that match their training background from home were one of the major themes that this specific research has utilized to look at their encounters while they strive to integrate with the Norwegian society. As a sub-theme, language training offered by the Norwegian authorities and its effectiveness was amongst the themes created to look at how and why newcomers with a higher educational background from home get lesser opportunities of securing a matching job. Other complimentary themes are also to pop up along with the mentioned themes. Following are the reflections from respondents:

5.1.1. Informants' Reflections: Formal Language Training procedures

5.1.1.1. Inefficacy of Formal Language Training

In this research, the level of Norwegian language proficiency was amongst the major themes through which I tried to look at the peculiar integration challenges encountered by the community segment chosen, highly

educated Eritreans in this case. Considering the relevance of effective (classroom-based) language training as part of the integration process, the Norwegian government has a provision called '*introduction program*' through which newcomers are taught basic Norwegian language skills, culture, and history. Even though quite a few from amongst the interviewees pointed out that the language training was partially effective, the training program was increasingly described as ineffective and below the expectation of the majority of participants. One of my informants said that the in first days he arrived in Norway, he immediately noticed that language proficiency is very important to achieve successful integration. Since the first day he found himself in Norway, he tapped all his remaining energy towards mastering that indispensable skill- Norwegian language. His proficiency level in other languages i.e. English, Tigrigna, and Amharic helped him to catch the very essence of the language within the first three months that he had stayed in the reception centre around Oslo. However, from the time he was transferred to Kristiansand, things turned out to be different. In his own words:

I had no one to teach me at the reception centre. I was just reading newspapers, following the news on TV and social media. No other teaching aids, but Google Translate. At the end of those first three months of self-teaching, I ended up learning the basic skills for expressing myself. However, right after I was transferred to Agder, I had been told to participate in the formal language training programs and I found it frustrating as it was far below my level of understanding and the language skill that I had accumulated earlier from the reception centre singlehandedly.

The point that is stated by this respondent was increasingly echoed by all of the 11 respondents that were approached to share their experiences in the language training centres in Agder. Nine out 11 respondents said that they were randomly placed in language classes which were far below their level. Regardless of the educational background they had, they were simply placed with other immigrants who even could not read and write.

Another respondent described his experience as follows:

I felt as if I was undermined. I remember some people had never been to school and never heard even a single Norwegian word in their life. The sad scenario was people who came from a higher educational background, amongst the high school English language teachers from their respective countries, were left without any alternative but to remain in such classes. Frankly speaking, this was one of the feelings that made me lose the interest that I had before joining the formal language training. I felt I was better at the reception centre. i.e. the days that I was striving alone.

He said he felt frustrated and decided to quit that formal language training and begun to search for other way outs that would give him better opportunities to learn the language. Consequently, he took the exam that could prove his level of proficiency and went to an adult school that teaches the Norwegian language along with other examinable subjects such as mathematics and natural sciences to get better exposure to the technicalities of the language. It worked out for him. He even managed to get a Norwegian secondary school certificate in sales and general services through that option. Even though the formal introduction program extends for more than two years, right after one academic year, he scored grades that could qualify him for the program that he had planned to join and stopped participating in the initial language program.

Another respondent who had a BA degree from a well-known university around the world was also encountered with almost the same challenges that had hindered her from improving her on and learning the Norwegian language. Because of administrative issues, she stayed quite a long time in the refugee reception centre. However, she came up with a plan that would enable her to make use of her time from the reception centre. She joined a group of language students from Eastern Europe who were committed to mastering the language and they helped her to learn the basic skills quickly. As to her reflections, unlike refugees from some other parts of the world, such a group of students was feeding her with positive energy as they were determined to master the language and go into the Norwegian labour market within a short period of time. According to her observation of that group, she also emphasized that those who pay money to learn the language are more committed and successful compared to those who are provided with free language courses in the municipalities.

Comparing the informal language training procedure that she had experienced from her days in the reception centre with the formal language training provided by the respective municipalities in Agder, she put it as follows:

I found it downgrading. Some of the teachers look as if they are not trained to do the task. They don't even do the basic preparation before coming to their respective classes. Managing classes that are full of students that came from quite different educational backgrounds from home was challenging for the teachers. Moreover, the students were also not as helpful as my former classmates from the reception centres. Unlike my former classmates, most of them were not willing to practice the language, as they had the option of speaking to me in my mother tongue. Generally, I found the class atmosphere quite disorganized and not tidy. I felt as if I was playing around a KG.

Another respondent has also described the formal training as it was ineffective and far below his expectation. Being a BA holder and with a work experience of more than 15 years from Eritrea, besides fluency in English and some additional two languages from before made him feel undermined. He noted that sitting in a language class next to someone who even cannot write down the Latin Alphabets properly was downgrading. The aforementioned variable put into consideration, paired with other social problems that were encountering his children from home, turned him to be into a quite gloomy situation where he felt total meaninglessness.

He even summarized his experience more as follows:

The teachers never consider the feelings that I might have concerning my lost intellectual identity even. We, the refugees with higher educational background, were not the focus of the trainers. Those who do not have language skills were unfairly getting a lion's share when it comes to attention by the teachers. We used to feel as if we were brought to learn how to forget our intellectual identity. Consequently, right after I scored A2 level within the first 18 months, I decided to stop that course and went to vocational training which I found much better as it was not only language training but parallel to an additional course in office management.

Furthermore, the same respondent highlighted the major difference between the Norwegian teaching-learning procedure and that of Eritrea. As he observes, what we have in Eritrea is more of a teacher-centred style in contrast to what it is in Norway-student-centred. Students are highly dependent on teachers in Eritrea, as the Eritrean school atmosphere lacks the school aids and some other technological provisions which are accessible in Norway. That very contextual difference also impacted his attitude towards the school environment in Norway.

Almost all respondents invariably noted that the mechanism utilized to categorize newcomers according to the language skill they earned from the reception centres and their educational background from home was undermined. Consequently, they were placed in inappropriate unfitting groups that lack the very basic ABCD of education in all aspects. According to an increasingly reflected explanation by the respondents, the insensitive way of grouping mechanism put all newcomers in the same language level, disregarding the accumulated knowledge they might have and ended up being ineffective considering the investment tapped towards that program. Moreover, participants who came from a higher educational background were impacted by that procedure in a negative way. Except for two amongst the people interviewed here, the rest had left that program earlier and went their ways individually. Only three from amongst the sample group, stayed in that program for more than two years, though they were taking evening language classes in parallel and, thinking of joining higher educational institutions after completion. Only one respondent had a special

challenge. Being older (more than 55) made him ineligible to participate in the official language training program and hindered him from mastering that language. He had also health-related issues that popped up with ageing.

In addition to this, one of the respondents, now doing his BA in one of the local universities stated that the books used to guide the syllabus at the language training centres are almost the same when it comes to what they contain. He highlighted that what he learned in the first and the last years was more or less the same. This concern was repeated by three other respondents. The teachers were challenged by the different levels of the participants, books and other training materials were almost the same through the training process, inadequate preparation and poor class management by the trainers, differences emerging from two incommensurate curriculum differences of the two contexts—Norway and Eritrea in this case, psychosocial distress born of the migration process that the participants came through were among the major factors that impacted the language learning-teaching process. Nine out of the eleven respondents independently confirmed that the aforementioned factors were behind all the drawbacks of going to the formal language training centres in Agder. One from amongst the respondents put that in a nutshell as follows:

I have witnessed some former senior teachers from Eritrea sitting together with their students from back home and in the same language classes. Logically speaking, someone who has been to school longer and with some specific specialization from higher institutions has better skills to learn a new language faster. This issue has impacted the formal language training programs.

5.1.1.2. Individual Motives during Language training: Participant recommendations

Before the completion of the formal language training provided during the introduction program, all participants had more or less the same personal plans and motive. i.e. to secure a job that matches their previous education or pursue their studies to realign their skills into the Norwegian labour market context. All the eleven participants did their best to learn the language from the first day they found themselves in the reception centres. Google Translate is the first and the most accessible friend to do the translation task, then they began to struggle with the task of learning the language. Other learning opportunities through an informal medium such as the TV, watching Norwegian movies, going to informal language teaching centres such as clubs driven by volunteer organizations, amongst them the Red Cross were of great help according to what the 11 participants responded.

Stating his experience, one respondent said that as there were many other fellow refugees from other countries who never had any clue about the language, they were only left with one option, trying to communicate in Norwegian. Unlike the formal language training centres from the municipalities in Vest

Agder, finding someone who speaks their language from Eritrea was not on the menu. That shows how much the participants were forced to learn the language during their first encounters in Norway. After all, they had the motive to master the language quickly and, authenticate their academic documents from Eritrea gain access to the local labour market or looking forward to furthering education. That was the common mind orientation that they all had at first. He even elaborated it further as follows:

As I was determined to do my MA from the beginning, I made use of the waiting days wisely in the reception centre in teaching myself the basics of the language. Before the days that I had been placed in the formal language training centres in Kristiansand, I could confidently say that I had a good mastery of the language compared to the newcomers who were with me in the then training courses. I remember most of my classmates had never been to school or had a quite low educational background before they came to Norway. Moreover, unlike me, very few from amongst them had motives for quick employability. That negative energy from my classmates had impacted me. Later on, I took the exam which proves the level which the school figures out as very basic and I passed within the first few months. Then I decided to pursue that training differently. i.e. going to an advanced training program called *studiekompetanse* where students who aspire to go to the tertiary level and take preparatory courses before their enrolment. And I found it more effective, as it had opened a door for me to do my BA at the university.

The same was true for another respondent who had a BA degree from Eritrea. He was determined to pursue his education with the intention of Norwegianizing his papers from home. However, as he was frustrated with the level and content of the training package provided by the schools, he stayed in the introduction program for more than two years but had some specific economic hurdles related to his parents back home.

He mentioned some points that revolved around the motives that he had during his language training days and how he divorced himself from the program.

The language training program was not for professional guidance or realigning knowledge that any refugee came with from home. It was just to inspire newcomers to practice their basic skills. Not more than a few common expressions and words are taught there. I was already good enough and sensed it early that it was below my calibre. But stayed there for about three years. Not for training purposes but for other personal reasons. Later on, I went to a preparatory course for my university education and made it to the university. Now I am doing my BA.

Ten out of the eleven respondents similarly emphasized that the motive that they had for finding fitting job positions or pursuing higher education in Norway was behind all the hard work for learning the language

right from the reception centres across the country. It even paid back when it comes to mastering the basic language skills. When they were placed in the formal language training provided by the respective municipalities after going through the immigrational process, all the respondents noticed they were one or more level ahead of the students who were sitting with them in the language classes. According to almost all of them, the training was as such far below the level they had already achieved during their short stay at the temporary reception centres. The motive to work and pursue their studies was indispensably important for them to grasp the basics of the language right from the beginning.

Another respondent who had a BA and a professional work experience of 9 years from home, put it as follows:

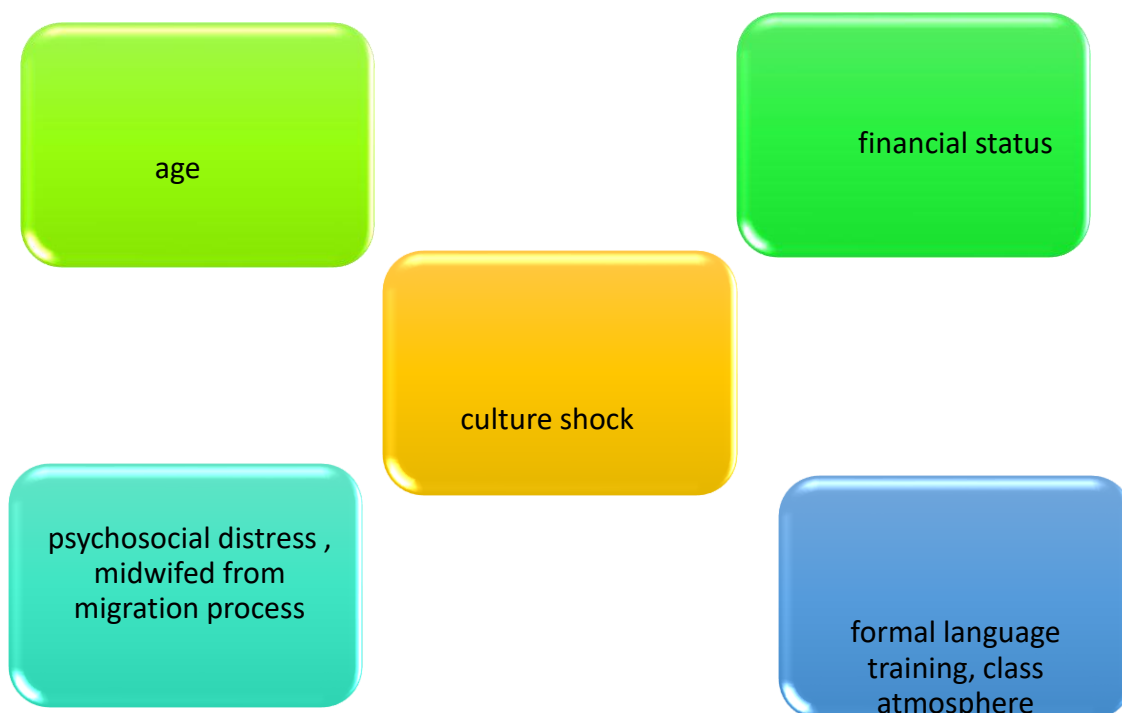
In the beginning, the work experience, the educational background as well helped me to dream of getting a job position that fits my education and the accumulated knowledge that I had. That dream came from the sense of intellect that I had. It even worked out. Unlike many others who came with me, but had relatively a lower educational level from home, I was able to teach myself at least the basics of the language from the reception centre. However, when I was placed in formal language classes in the municipality where I was transferred, the training was nothing but repeating the phases that I had already accomplished back in the reception centre. Then I sensed that the motive that I had was not compatible with the reality that I was immersed in. The day I realized that I proceeded with teaching myself as before and joined a preparatory program that paved me away to the university and stopped dreaming of getting a fitting job right away.

In addition to this, two out of the 11 respondents had encountered a mildly different experience during the placement for language pieces of training in the municipality where they were transferred. As they had waited unfairly long for the immigration procedures in the reception centre, they decided to make use of the relatively free time they had in the reception centre. They learned the basics of the Norwegian language there. However, right after they were placed in the municipality where they were told to live permanently, the respective training centre tested them for the Norwegian language proficiency they might have from before. Fortunately, they scored far above the level expected by the centre without even going to a formal language school. As there was no other existing training package that could handle such a breed of participants, they were told to join the relatively better language class available in that specific training centre—a graduating class for that specific academic year.

However, right after that group left the training centre, these two respondents were left without any matching classmates for the academic year to come. The reaction of these two respondents to the mentioned concern was self-revealing. One of them responded the following way:

The school administration informed me that there was no other group that fits my level. So, the last resort was to join a group of newcomers to the school but without any clue of the language at all. Even though I requested other alternatives that might fit my level and personal plans, I was told that the specific municipality had no backup plans for people of my kind. Then I courageously decided to detach myself from that training centre and took a preparatory language course that opened for me another door to the university. Now I am a BA holder from a Norwegian university and have secured a job. Even though I lost my intellectual identity from back home, I didn't regret the decision that I had made leave out the formal language training provision as it was not functional for me. Of course, the knowledge that I had from home together with the motive that I held in my innermost. working hard to get a fitting job through learning the language helped me a lot.

Pic. 1.0 Factors for Failed Integration



5.1.1.3. The effects of Poor social network VS learning the language

The last two sub-themes were fairly reflected by almost all of the respondents. In a nutshell, all respondents destined to Norway generally came across situations where their individual lives were risked on dangerous and unsafe migration routes from Eritrea to a current host country, Norway. As nine of the respondents have witnessed, there were encounters when they had stopped hoping for survival. Psychological problems, be it residual or permanent, were what most of them experienced in their ways to Norway. Even after they were granted protection in Norway, they still endure some unbearable psychosocial distress born of such hurdles experienced while trying to make it to Norway. Some even lost their family members while crossing the scorching sun in the Sahara or the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. Paired with the culture shock and struggling to resituate themselves with a completely new socio-geographical environment, what seven of the respondents noted had to do with the major reasons for delayed or successful language mastery.

However, other important reasons popped up during the interview. All of the interviewees and without any differences, stated that approaching ordinary Norwegians in the day to day life is vividly impossible. Let alone practising the language with natives informally, as what is a norm in the tropics, saying ‘hi’ to an average Norwegian is not within the menu of the Norwegian acceptable Social codes. One respondent, with a social science background, mentioned that in relative terms Norwegians were the most unapproachable people he had ever encountered. Describing his daily encounters in Norway, he put it as follows:

I have been here for about seven years and more. Frankly speaking, the authorities put incomparable effort and investment towards paving smooth integration ways for refugees of my kind. Albeit, the average Norwegians have nothing to do with what the government is struggling to do to help refugees. The system and the average citizens seem as if they are not in line with each other when it comes to what their government is trying to achieve through its efforts for effective integration. I can courageously say that I have been here for more than seven years, yet I know very little about the Norwegian social codes, major social values, and cultural orientation. I still feel that I am now and living in a society that I know very little about.

In his efforts relating that feeling of a culture shock to his delayed language mastery, he said that language training is more than learning plain words at face value, as words need to be situated in specific social contexts where they are applied practically. He also elaborated that the Norwegian way of life which is known for issues related to privacy and, social distance even among its members, denied him the opportunity to learn and practice the language in its natural setting.

Another respondent also echoed the above comment as follows:

I have been to Sudan for around three months only. But I learned the basics of the Arabic language only within the first two months and managed to work as a waiter the month to follow. It was not because I was a fast learner or the Sudanese authorities provided me with language training packages like what we are provided within Norway. The sole reason was the culture of ordinary Sudanese. Sudanese people are very open and would like to talk to refugees of my kind. In contrary, in Norway, the government is persistently working hard to help refugees to go into society. However, Norwegians are not accessible as such and unapproachable. I did not encounter average Norwegians who are willing to converse with immigrants and was a real challenge.

Putting the above experience in mind, another three respondents put it in similar words but they mentioned the variable of cultural similarity that Eritreans have with the Sudanese. They also mentioned that Tigrigna (a mother tongue to all the respondents) share some words and expressions besides noting the similarity of socio-cultural and geographic features between the two societies. The Norwegian language is alien to Eritreans unlike Arabic and Amharic (Ethiopian official language). Considering such dimensions of the two cultures under comparison, comparing these two lifeworlds i.e. the Sudanese and Norwegian might lead to a wrong conclusion, said the respondents.

In her efforts elaborating on the above concern, another respondent said that coming from a society that has a completely different social code, socioeconomic orientation, standard of living, geographic environment and, lifestyle lay behind all the drawbacks for delayed language excellence. As a host society, Norwegians do not behave in the way mentioned to marginalize the newcomers, she mentioned. That is how it is in Norway, she added and noted that Norwegians are not unapproachable to immigrants only, but it is how they act amongst themselves also. It has nothing to do with rejecting refugees, but relates to the challenge of the lifestyle in the busy West was part of her analysis toward such tough encounters in Norway.

Except for one respondent who criticized the Norwegian way of life for not being inclusive at all, the other ten respondents understood it the other way round. The lifestyle in Norway gives space for social distance and privacy, which is not a mainstream lifestyle in Eritrea. The one respondent described Norwegians as sceptical and not trusting strangers.

As a consequence of such a lifestyle in Norway, all respondents witnessed that they were deprived of opportunities to practice the language and learn the social codes accordingly. What so ever the reason was, it was mentioned as one of the major factors that held them back from learning the language and the culture in Norway. Of course, they detected that type of cultural orientation in Norway early and then refrained from going into the society naively.

One respondent put it as follows: “I did not even dare to say ‘hi’ to my language trainers from the school where I was attending. There were days that I tried to do it the very Eritrean way downtown, but one of my trainers failed to greet me back. So, I learned what they call ‘professional and social distance’ later on. I was shocked, but I learned that type of thinking lately. It was not out of negative thoughts, but part of the life elements in Norway.”

5.1.1.4. Participants Reaction towards Culture Shock

As is presented in the previous parts, almost all of the research respondents suffered culture shock in many different ways. The depiction of that challenge was even manifested through reactions such as self-isolation and being sceptical in their efforts approaching Norwegians out of the official premises, amongst them, schoolyard and public service giving institutions. Consequently, the challenge that hinders a smooth integration process as a whole and learning the language as an effective tool for that matter was aggravated, according to what 11 of the research participants have witnessed. There was only one respondent, from amongst the participants, who fought that shock through other mechanisms. i.e. going to language cafes (språk cafe) that are driven by the local library and taught by Norwegian pensioners who have a better understanding of what refugees of his kind are going through. For him, that offer was not only a training opportunity but a doorway to share what he was feeling in Norway. There was also another respondent who admitted that going out to the local clubs every night, thinking of socializing with those who are out to have a good time through abusing alcohol. Describing his experience, he summarized his nights out as follows:

I found it helpful. Norwegians are relatively good when they are in the clubs for drinks. They are open and approachable right after they are drunk. Even though I sometimes encounter social deviants that are already out of the mainstream societal codes, credit goes to them for being sociable and understanding at times. Now, I am a BA holder from a well-known university in Norway, and my nights out in the kick-off days paid back. At least, I was not depressed like what happened to many of my fellow countrymen.

In addition to this, ten out of the eleven respondents were living alone during the first couple of years in Norway. However, one amongst the eleven respondents had one child who was attending a KG at the time. According to that respondent's experience, there was no any opportunity to meet Norwegian families through his child, unlike the school environment, there are no many activities that could make parents sit together in the KG to discuss shared guardian issues and responsibilities. Albeit, even that respondent with one child, realized early that not all imagined socialization opportunities were accessible in Norway for the aforementioned reasons. Then, watching TV, reading books assisted by Google Translate were the last

resort for that respondent to learn the language and understand social codes between lines. Put in the exact words of the respondent:

We had no one to say 'hi' to, except the fellow countrymen at school and the workers who had professional relationships with us. We had neighbours, but we were afraid and not sure how to approach them. It was not comfortable really. We were culturally shocked. Now, I am an MA holder from Norway and I learned why they were not approachable, and it was not about being xenophobic. Many other reasons to take into account before pointing fingers. Of course, there are xenophobic and racist incidents that we increasingly encounter, but it is half baked to see all Norwegians through those binoculars. Most Norwegians are Great! But I can't forget how and why I shifted from the real Norwegians that live around me to the Norwegians that I see on TV and movies.

As reflected through the words of the above respondent, all respondents said that regardless of the reason behind that social character, approaching Norwegians was not as easy as such. It impacted the overall wellbeing and first impression of the host society. Invariably, all respondents noted that right after they experienced incidents that made them stay unsure about how to approach the ordinary Norwegians out of official public premises, heading to the media was the only remaining option to understand the society. All of the respondents went on watching the national TV, following debates that revolve around socio-cultural, political, and other issues of relevance, while learning the way idioms and contextual metaphors are used in daily life in Norway. There was a respondent who was able to enlist and articulate all the mechanisms of individual reaction to what they call the culture shock. All respondents mentioned them invariably, but that of the respondent to follow embraced all ways mentioned by all the 11 respondents:

Before I dive into half-baked personal judgments that see the life-world around me from the cultural orientation that I had come with from my home country Eritrea, I committed myself to learn more about the Norwegian way of life. To investigate more on what is in the Norwegian menu of social codes i.e. to give time to observe what are the deeply rooted codes of ethics, the moral codes, body gestures, symbols, mainstream social interaction unwritten guidelines. At times, I felt as if assimilation is an implicitly erected strategy for going into Norwegian society. I was tempted to realign myself with that underlining strategy. Some other days, I found myself in dilemmas after following the formal integration package from the public authorities. I finally concluded that language excellence is second to none when it comes to understanding the host country. It was the indispensable key to open the door for the core Norwegian societal orientation. And I did it. I changed the language setting for my smartphone from English to

Norwegian, avoided communicating in English with strangers, began to listen to the news on the radio while driving, shut off all English-speaking channels from my TV menu at home, began to rent books that have the audio version and the like. And I was assisted to understand where I was. The shocks were minimized that way and it worked out.

Between lines and occasionally at face value, all the respondents admitted that they had suffered culture shock in the first years in Norway for reasons associated with the way of life in Norway. Later on, they found out ways to solve that integration challenges through the intellect and accumulated knowledge they had and it worked out. Except for one respondent who had health issues related to his age, almost all the others had gone back to normal life- whether they are employed or had pursued their education. But it was not without a price that was related to culture shock.

5.2. Work Experience from Eritrea; Encounters in Norway

5.2.1. Success and Failure towards Securing Suitable Jobs

Table 3.0: Work experience from Eritrea vs in Norway

Work experience from Eritrea; in years	Permanent job position in Norway	Temporary Job positions in Norway	Retired
2-11	6 respondents	4 respondents	1 respondent

As seen in the above table, as of today almost all of the respondents, except one retiree, are in certain job positions, of different kinds. From amongst the eleven respondents within this research, only one respondent was recruited to a job based on the qualification he had come with from Eritrea. That single respondent was not even fully licensed. Amidst the language training years, he was offered a volunteer job position where he got an opportunity to prove his knowledge from Eritrea. He worked very hard to show that he was as capable as his Norwegian counterparts in that certain profession in which he claimed he had competence. After a tough year of practice and another form of an internship, he was confirmed as professionally fit for that job and was recommended by his supervisors to be offered a permanent job position. According to his reflections related to his experience from going to volunteer job position until recruitment, he noted that he was working harder than the Norwegian co-workers to nullify for some existing concerns and biases toward refugees of his kind. Being ‘‘good enough’’ was not even enough for newcomers, approaching the axis of ‘‘perfection’’ is a demand, is how he put it. Punctuality, flexibility,

availability, patience, and the like were what he read between lines in that place where he was working as a volunteer. And it paid back and was rewarded with a permanent job. However, he was told that his academic credentials from Eritrea, for some technical reasons, even if they were authenticated by NOKUT, cannot be weighed as equal as those which are awarded in Norway. He was then professionally demoted one step down across his previous profession and he is working in a job position where he is considered equal to a Norwegian secondary school certificate. However, he is still struggling to go all the way to the Norwegian universities by participating in preparatory courses related to his previous profession. He accepted that reality but described his feeling as follows:

I am a graduate of a well-known college from Eritrea in the profession that I have. That college is even known for its academic standard, as it was established by the Americans back in the 1960s. I am one of the handfuls of Eritreans who made it to that college. Right after my graduation, I even got a chance to practice for about 3 years. It happened to be my intellectual identity. Unfortunately, I ended up being a refugee for reasons that were beyond my control.

Two of those who have a permanent job position have also a different story to tell, regarding the job status they have managed to secure today. The first respondent was working for 7 years or more in a certain profession that is related to his college education from Eritrea. However, when he ended up in Norway, he immediately noticed that his profession from Eritrea would not be marketable in the local labour market. He felt from the beginning that his very training was context-specific and that remaining attached to it across different lifeworlds would take him nowhere but to failure. So, he immediately let it go and decided himself start from scratch. The only advantage he took from his previous training from Eritrea was to learn the language by relating it to his English mastery. He Stopped going to the formal language training centre provided by the municipality where he had been accepted as a permanent resident. He then joined a preparatory class that he later found it relevant to what he was aspiring to study in the University. After studying the language from that preparatory course, he managed to pass the basics that were demanded by that respective university and he got his Norwegian degree which later opened a door for him to be accepted by the employers.

The same was true for another respondent. He dropped all the training background that he had before his exile and started anew and it worked out. Now he has a degree from a Norwegian university and it helped him to secure a permanent job. Putting that scenario in his own words:

I had informally discussed the very issue of getting a fitting job in Norway, but depending on the Eritrean academic credentials that might need to pass all the bureaucratic routes of authentication. I never heard any single success story from amongst the Eritreans who have

been living in Norway for dozens of years. Then I realized that beginning from scratch to educate myself according to what is demanded by the mainstream Norwegian employers was the last resort. And it paid back. Even though I lost my skills and intellectual identity from back home, I made into the Norwegian labour market through utilizing my Norwegian university training.

Another respondent with a three-year professional work experience from Eritrea echoed the same as that of the two respondents reflected from the above experience. He immediately sensed that securing a job through revoking that training from home would take him nowhere but demise. Right after participating in the formal language training provided by the municipality, he went to an adult secondary school for a secondary school certificate in sales and general services. He committed himself to throwing away his training from Eritrea. He did not even attempt to waste a single minute contacting the institutions that authenticate academic papers from Eritrea, thinking that those papers wouldn't be applicable here. In his own words, that situation was summarized as follows:

I didn't hesitate about that decision. It was mature and far from emotional thinking. Of course, losing a profession earned over years was not easy. I never thought of letting it go. But that was how I tried to realign myself practically with the setbacks attached to migration, starting anew in a new context that had its features. Just demoted professionally for a reason that doesn't lie within the range of absurdity. Unlike many of my countrymen residing in Norway who came from the same professional training and level, I am employed but not in a permanent job. But I feel the temporary employment has given birth to certain psychosocial distresses. At least I do have them now.

5.2.2. Effects of Failed or Succeeded Authentication Attempts

Another two respondents had also experienced partially a different experience while trying to find a fitting job position in Norway. Unlike the previously mentioned two respondents, who decided to divorce themselves from their claimed professional pieces of training for reasons they sensed personally, they contacted NOKUT for authenticating the papers they had from Eritrea. One of these two respondents was working as a professional for nine years and more back home. However, in his attempts to contact NOKUT for authentication, his papers were not accepted as they lacked some supplementary academic documents that could substantiate his claims. At last, he was told that as long as those requested documents were not submitted to NOKUT via the existing official communication protocol between international academic organizations, no other means could be used to affirm his claimed documents in Norway. He was left

without any other alternative to back up his claims while hunting for any job position matching his work experience and educational background. Aggravated by his Norwegian language proficiency and other challenges that came up in exile, he decided to participate in vocational training for adults which is taught in the Norwegian language. That course was for about three years but was an opportunity to learn the language while earning a Norwegian secondary school certificate which later helped him find a volunteer job that had some affiliation to his previous training background. He has described his situation as follows:

The positive aspect of my current situation is that I am employed and not dependent on the apparatus of the welfare state. At least, I feel I am not the worst role model for my children. They see me going to work. The bad aspect of my situation is I lost everything of mine from before. Now, I work as a waiter in the city centre. The status that I had for years just vanished. I have a feeling of quick demotion in all aspects. That is how it is.

The second person that had come across the same process had also put his situation in very similar wording.

I worked for three years and more as a professional in Eritrea. Sadly, I could not flee the situation back home with all the papers that show my work experience and academic background. I did it without any plan, to flee the political incident that posed a death threat to me. It is unrealistic to expect someone of my type to run away keeping all his documents at hand. In my case, it was impossible. Fortunately, I managed to get some of the papers that prove my claimed academic background. Thinking of making use of them in Norway, I had contacted NOKUT for authentication. However, as I failed to get my official documents from the college and through the official university-to-university protocol, NOKUT rejected my claim, on grounds of lacking documents.

The same respondent, describing his job status and education in Norway, said that he is employed as a temporary employee in one organization, at a level that doesn't match his training and work experience from Eritrea. Right after his papers were rejected by NOKUT and after a two-year language training program provided by the municipality where he is residing, he went to an adult secondary school that awards refugees with a Norwegian secondary school certificate. As he was practising that new education from Norway, he, fortunately, was offered a part-time job where he was doing his internship while still studying.

However, the other four respondents had a different experience while trying to authenticate their academic papers from Eritrea and Ethiopia. One respondent had a BA degree from Ethiopia and her interaction with NOKUT was a success. As she had original academic papers in close reach, she managed to submit them and get her official student transcripts via the university that she did her BA easily. After

several correspondences with NOKUT, not longer than a couple of months, her claim was attested and she managed to be authenticated. She made use of that authentication and pursued her higher education in Norway. Now, she is employed permanently and is relatively better settled than the others who previously studied in Eritrea.

Another three respondents were asked to contact their former universities and the secondary schools that awarded them with secondary school certificates and bachelor degrees respectively, while still had their original diplomas at hand. After several correspondences with NOKUT officials, they managed to convince them that claiming any type of support, including sending transcripts via official mechanisms from the very regime they fled from was paradoxical and illogical, even not in line with how the Norwegian immigration department (UDI) works. After assessing the claimants individually, all of the three respondents were authenticated on grounds of the original documents that they managed to show. Now, one of them is employed permanently by an organization where he was working as a volunteer besides doing his language training. Even though he is working in a job position which is far below his professional level and work experience from Eritrea i.e., demoted one step down, he is still hopeful and taking a preparatory course that will take him to the university sooner or later. Another respondent who falls in this domain also said that his BA degree from Eritrea is authenticated by NOKUT but he failed to find a job position that matches his training, as his professional training was more of the Eritrean context. But after participating in a preparatory course that allowed him to learn more about the Norwegian labour market, he shifted to a different training that he thinks is fitting to the Norwegian context. He completely dropped his training from Eritrea and is pursuing his studies while working as a part-timer in an organization where he was going for an internship.

The last respondent from this domain was authenticated on the same ground as the other four respondents i.e. he had original documents at hand but unable to get his official transcripts via the university where he got his degree from. Right after his academic papers were authenticated, he attended the formal language training program from his Norwegian municipality for about two years and then went to a preparatory course while working as an interpreter. He sensed that finding a job position that matches his training from Eritrea was near to impossible. He then went to the university thinking of finding a job would be easier having a degree from a Norwegian university. However, it did not work out for him again. He is still working as a part-timer and in a job position that doesn't have any relation to his training from both Eritrea and Norway. He described his situation as follows: "Even if someone in my position managed to authenticate his academic papers from home, it doesn't mean he is guaranteed with a paying and professionally suitable job. Not even if he is certified from a Norwegian university. I was in both positions but got nothing out of what I worked hard. There are other underlining challenges."

The last respondent had a slightly different situation. He was physically unfit to overcome the challenges that were encountered by all the other respondents. He was sick since his arrival in Norway and was unable to think of authenticating his papers. Even though he had a degree from a well-known university together with rich work experience from around the world, his situation was odd and unfitting to the research process even. He struggled to get a less demanding job but with some basic affiliation to his profession from Eritrea, unfortunately, it did not work out. He finally gave up and ended up being a retiree.

5.2.3. Was Authentication Enough for Finding Suitable Jobs?

Only two amongst the eleven respondents made use of their educational background from home at least to find a job or used it as a diving board for further education in Norway. As what is mentioned in the above table, one of these two respondents was given a Norwegian license to exercise his education from Eritrea, but with a precondition. Even though his diploma was authenticated, he was told he can only be offered a job if he was willing to demote himself one professional rank. i.e. from an advanced diploma level down to a Norwegian secondary school certificate. He embraced that offer and secured that job position but with a feeling of incomparable loss. The second respondent in that same situation was accepted by a Norwegian university to pursue her Norwegian higher education based on her authenticated documents from an Ethiopian university. Later on, she managed to get a job position that values her previous training from Ethiopia and Norway.

As to the rest of the respondents, the situation was of a completely different typology. Three were rejected by NOKUT for authentication on grounds of certain lacking documents. Or they were told to add up certain Norwegian courses that might help them for a complete authentication. Another three respondents were not interested in contacting NOKUT for authentication, believing they cannot make any use of their previous academic papers from Eritrea, as they did not see other Eritreans revoking their documents from Eritrea and securing job positions that match their training. Moreover, another two respondents were authenticated by NOKUT, yet the authentication process that they passed did not guarantee them to find matching jobs. Consequently, one of these two respondents let his Eritrean education down and shifted to different training in Norway, believing that it would give him a better job opportunity where he is living. Currently, he is doing his Norwegian Bachelor's degree while working as a part-timer in an organization that will employ him permanently after completion. The last respondent that falls within this category was a person with an authenticated BA degree from Eritrea but still looking for a job position that either fits his Eritrean education or that BA degree that he has been awarded by a university in Norway. Neither his degree from Eritrea nor that he received from Norway has guaranteed a job. Neither authentication nor Norwegianization of his education was a practical way out of the loop of joblessness up to the present.

5.2.4. Poor Social Network and Discrimination vs. Finding Jobs

According to what the research interview has revealed, not even a single person amongst the eleven respondents who reflected on their individual integration experience in Norway has managed to develop intimate social relationships with ordinary Norwegians. Let alone personal friendships that can lead to assisting highly educated refugees with finding jobs, social interaction at all levels was not easily achievable. One respondent put that scenario as follows:

As to my personal experience, approaching Norwegians was/is not easy as it may seem from distant. I have been to many countries while trying to get into Norway, amongst them Sudan, Ethiopia, Libya, and Italy. For me, finding friends was nowhere as challenging as it is in Norway. I perfectly understand that it was not because they are xenophobic or having any other negative attitudes towards me or towards others who are in the same situation. It is just because it takes them a much longer time to get to know strangers of my kind. They are sceptical to some extent though.

He further noted that he still, after seven years in Norway, feels like a stranger for reasons related to poor social connections from where he is residing.

Another respondent said that the social workers that we officially get in touch with while going to formal language training courses or persons from whom we receive official social services such as the municipality or health centres are quite friendly, but it is confined to them. He further unfolded it to say that those who came from Eritrea, do not draw borders between what they call here ‘professional relationship’ and relations of other kinds. In his own words:

For any Eritrean, bypassing him/her without saying ‘hi’, thinking of the difference that might exist between professional and personal relationships is psychologically detrimental. He/she will interpret it from the context where he/she came from. Most probably he/she might think that something was wrong with that person bypassing him/her without waving.

Such incidents were increasingly popping up throughout the interview process. Eleven respondents had felt bad at least once for reasons associated with failure to understand typologies of relations that are operational in Norway. For almost all the respondents, such incidents finally led to losing the courage to strive to get in touch with ordinary Norwegians in the day to day life. Finding out that no one from amongst the respondents has managed to have an intimate Norwegian friend that could potentially assist with finding jobs and the like is a depiction of that empirical data.

In addition to this, none of the respondents said that they have a well-established relationship with their neighbours either. One respondent put it as follows:

The first days that I rented an apartment somewhere else in the municipality where I live, I thought that unprecedented opportunities to practice the language and learn some other social codes were next door. However, that was not how it was. The neighbourhood concept that I had come with from Eritrea was no more functional. Not because I was a stranger, even among the Norwegians themselves, the interaction is quite limited compared to what I know from Eritrea. Of course, the Norwegian living style and standard blended with other variables to consider, I remade my perspectives and expectations. I admit I was culturally shocked.

That poor social network, regardless of what so ever rationale it was, all respondents mentioned it as one of the major reasons for the delayed or unsuccessful integration process. No one from amongst the respondents has been assisted to find a job that might lead to successful integration in the process through establishing intimacy of all forms. The existing difficulty of approaching Norwegians led to one form of self-isolation and remaining attached to the people from the home country who were experiencing the same integration challenges.

5.2.5. Discrimination

Except for one respondent, the rest mentioned encounters of discrimination based on ethnicity. One respondent said that there are certain Norwegians who doubt her qualification for taking over her current position. Based on certain encounters with some colleagues, the same respondent, between the lines, implied that there is existing discrimination together with some racist attitudes at the working places. Another respondent also mentioned that being 'good enough' is not enough for people with refugee backgrounds regardless of the qualification they might have. He even put as follows:

What we do in the places where we work is not weighed against what the ordinary Norwegians do. We need to be more productive, putting efforts towards perfection even. We need to excel in everything that we do for at least the first working days. Imperfections or mistakes that we might do at the working places might be interpreted or associated with stereotypes and other ethnocentric orientations that are born from extreme absurdity. I can say Norwegian co-workers have bigger spaces to make tolerable mistakes than people of our kind. Being average is not enough in our case. That is the only back up that we might have around. No other social capital that could absorb the shocks that might come from stereotypes of all kinds, racism, and discrimination.

Furthermore, all the respondents who shed light on this specific research had shared their individual experiences while trying to find a job via the usual/ordinary ways in Norway. Let alone get a job through formal applications submitted via the net or sending postal packages directly to the organizations that announce any job vacancy, none was even called for an interview. It never worked out for anyone amongst the eleven respondents. Let alone for those who tried to find jobs based on the Eritrean certification, it did not even work out for those who managed to Norwegianize their education at the local universities. One respondent who had a BA degree before her arrival to Norway and who later upgraded her education to a Norwegian MA degree was amongst the respondents who failed to find a job through the official application ways. She witnessed that even though she had applied to dozens of job announcements that she believed were fitting, being called for a job interview had never happened. She then concluded that no applicant of her kind could get a job through the official application mechanisms. Eleven of the respondents had a replicable experience while trying to find a job via the aforementioned official lines. It was not functional to everyone from the sample selected up here. Authenticating academic documents from home, recontextualization, and upgrading education through going to local universities were found to be lead nowhere in their efforts to find a fitting job, according to every respondent.

Furthermore, all of the respondents have noted that having foreign names in the CVs they deliver during job applications might have been one of the factors that hindered them from being shortlisted for job interviews. They suspect that those who do the assessments and selection might have unfounded stereotypes that can influence the recruitment process. But never felt or suspect any form of discrimination on grounds of religion in Norway.

5.3. Personal Factors

5.3.1 Age

Age during arrival to Norway and financial status during all forms of the integration pieces of training were also identified as parts of the major challenges that might have certain impacts on the process. Concerning the previous theme framework table, the age range stretched from 32 to 69 years. Even though the age margin and deviation are quite big, invariably all respondents admitted that their age during their very arrival to Norway was one of the major factors that impacted them while struggling to go into the host society as it ought to be. They believe that, had they been far younger, at least it would have been easier for them to learn the language quickly. One respondent put it as follows:

I was around 40 years old. I admit that I used to look at incidents from that very Eritrean attitude. I used to judge, feel strange towards how ordinary Norwegians live. And I feel the culture shock everywhere anywhere. That is how it is with people who came with their luggage which is full

of varying socio-cultural orientations from home. Of course, it is aggravated by age. It was tough to divorce myself from my Eritrean socialization and get into the mainstream culture at once. I suffered a lot. Age matters. Little room for readjustment.

In support of the mentioned story angle, another respondent described his experience by comparing his situation with those who were far younger than him:

The young were more receptive than me. They dared to try new things from here. They were also relatively lucky. The young from the host society are less sceptical than those who were my age counterparts. It was easier for the younger to assimilate. For people my age, throwing everything from home and at once is naturally tough. And I suffered the consequence, delayed integration that was parented by a shallow understanding of the major social codes.

5.3.2 Financial Status during Integration Training

Nine of the respondents described how their financial status impacted the teaching-learning process while participating in the language and other forms of training. As they all fall within the range of those who were eligible to be offered special political protection from the Norwegian authorities, they received ca 15000 Norwegian Kroners per month. The nine respondents that were within this category said that the money together with other subsidized services from the state was enough to cover their daily expenses that might include house rent, food, hygiene, clothing, transport, and the like. However, those who still had their own families in Eritrea were challenged financially sometimes, as the Norwegian government only considers the expenses for that specific person who receives the official protection from the state. Unfortunately, most of the respondents who had their own families but still left behind in Eritrea, said that they were the breadwinners with all the responsibilities to look after those left behind and was an impacting factor while participating in all forms of integration training, including language classes. Unlike the young and those who were in a different civil status, those who were married before their arrival to Norway were challenged. However, two respondents did not fall within that same range. They ended up staying in Norway for non-political reasons. One was accepted on grounds of humanitarian considerations and the other one had come for other social reasons. The respondent who was accepted on the ground of family reunification was not entitled to state support during the teaching-learning process. He had to work or depend on the financial status of the family members who were already residing in Norway. He admitted that he was being challenged as he had to fill that gap though going to dirty jobs here and there. The other respondent who came for humanitarian reasons was physically unfit for the Norwegian environment as he was unhealthy. In addition to that situation, he had family members who were financially dependent on him and he had to remit a certain amount of money to those who were back home.

In a nutshell and according to the participants, the major challenges that hindered from smooth integration process emerged from dysfunctional language training modules provided by respective municipalities, the poor social network that is parented from differences in cultural orientation between the host society and the refugees, hopelessness emerging from the inability to find a job through the official ways, accumulated psychological distress minted during the complex migration process, age and financial status during the training of all forms and psychological restlessness attached with family members left from behind were from amongst the major factors that contributed to a failed integration. Moreover, they led to an incomparable frustration and culture shock experienced by all of the respondents.

5.4. Respondents' and Municipalities' Reactions to Integration Hindrances

Let alone for the respondents who did not manage to authenticate their certificates from Eritrea, even those who were finally licensed by NOKUT failed to find job positions that matched their previous training background. Even though four respondents were authenticated by NOKUT, only one was lucky to find a job position that has some basic affiliations to his training from Eritrea. That respondent was even granted that job position when he accepted to take over a job position that was far below his training level from Eritrea. He currently feels the underutilization of his skills, but unlike the other respondents, he is at least employed and self-reliant. The other three are licensed based on NOKUT's authentication protocol, but none from amongst them was able to find a matching job that makes use of their skills from Eritrea for the aforementioned hindering factors. When they realized that being authenticated doesn't make anyone employable right away, three of them decided to pursue their studies in the local universities. One authenticated respondent is still in the university studying a different field while at the same time working as a part-timer. Another respondent has upgraded the degree from home to an MA level and has secured a matching job accordingly. The third respondent has shifted to a different field, thinking of increasing his employability but it did not go as he had planned. Again, his Norwegian BA degree could not save him from taking over jobs that do not have any affiliation with his previous training from Eritrea and Norway as well. He is now working as an interpreter, taxi driver, and other posts of similar typology while still struggling to find a job position that suits his professional training.

However, except one respondent who failed to find a job that fits his Norway based higher education, the other four respondents who were able to graduate from a Norwegian university or those who are still going to the university managed to get jobs based on their new training from Norway. Three respondents from the latter category are offered a permanent job position, while the fourth person is already granted a part-time job that fits his new training from Norway, looking forward to securing a suitable job after graduation at the same time.

5.4.1 How are Jobs Found Then? Official Doors Closed; Social Network Disabled

One respondent with a BA degree from Eritrea said that right after his documents were authenticated and while still going to the language training, the municipality placed him to an organization where he can get some impressions about the Norwegian working environment. After a couple of months, he added up nothing from that environment and he stopped going there. In this case, the municipality was trying to fill the gap that emerges from the aforementioned factors of hindrance such as the poor social network. The respondent was also willing to be placed where the municipality has recommended him to be. However, as that very placement did not work out, that specific respondent made it to the university in his ways. Now, he is employed while doing his BA at a local university. The municipality again helped him with getting a place where he can practice his new training and it worked out. He has secured his financial status while still going to school.

The other ten respondents had also more or less the same experience in their efforts to find a suitable job. The municipality through its social workers was guiding all the respondents on how to find a job position that might practically help for a smooth integration process. One respondent was offered a job at the cherry-picking fields around the municipality where he was living in his first days. Even though it doesn't have any affiliation with his training background from Eritrea, he accepted the offer and made use of it in all aspects. i.e. he used that opportunity to show his personality such as the ability to work together with others. Later on, the municipality rewarded him with another job where he can again show how competitive he is, but without any payment. As that respondent, later on, did it to the university in his way, the organization where he had worked as a volunteer hired him as a professional right after he graduated from a local university. Now, he has secured a permanent job position and never hesitated for volunteering in that later organization that was recommended by the municipality.

The same was true for the other respondents. One respondent was placed in a local store as an assistant and he was later offered a part-time job. He put it this way:

In the kick-off, I was unable to express myself in the place where I was assigned by the municipality to practice my new Norwegian job position. Fortunately, the person who was following me from language training to where I was practising my new work plan, quickly realized that I was good enough for that job position and he offered me a job later. Had the municipality failed me at those starting days, I would have been jobless now. So, the municipality was there for me as a friend and host but no other supporting bodies.

According to all the respondents, not a single job was even found without the indispensable assistance of the respective municipalities. The social workers were following all the respondents where they were

placed for practice and played an indispensable role said the respondents. The challenges that emerged from the weak social network, impacts of complex migration routes, culture shock, delayed language mastery, discriminations of varying forms, and the like were bypassed in most cases, but without that assistance rendered by the authorities nothing would have been achieved so far, said all the respondents. One respondent articulated that observation as follows:

Not even a single job position could be found without the official integration assistance provided by the municipalities. Unlike in countries such as Italy, no one from amongst us can learn the language from the streets informally. I learned the basics of the Italian language within one year and without attending formal language classes. I was provided with an opportunity to practice my profession from Eritrea in one of the industries in Rome. I was good enough to communicate and work along with the Italians. In Norway, the scenario is different. The authorities are working hard to assist us, yet the socioeconomic environment is not as penetrable as that of Italy.

5.4.2 Recommendations from Respondents

Invariably, eleven respondents mentioned some basic integration challenges that standstill in front of them while persistently exerting all their efforts to resituate themselves within the host society, Norwegian society in this case:

- ineffective language training arrangements parented to delayed language mastery
- culture shock generated from poor social networks impacted the overall wellbeing of refugees of all kinds.
- the inability to make use of education from home gave birth to low self-esteem
- joblessness of what so ever reasoning possible hindered smooth integration
- the family situation during arrival to Norway
- age
- psychosocial distress emerging from complex migration routes

Based on the aforementioned points to consider, the respondents recommended the following measures to be taken by the authorities working with refugees who came from a higher educational background:

- instead of placing such a category of refugees in ordinary language training centres existing in the municipalities, it would have been effective sending them to special training programs that would enable them to make use of their knowledge from their respective countries. Intensive language training that lasts less than one year, targeting to revoke and realign their training with the features

that prevail in the new context would have been effective. In collaboration with professional associations that operate from the premises where they live, special training would make refugees with higher education more productive.

- Social networking is not achievable as it might seem from far. As there is not any practical mechanism through which anyone can change the lifestyle of the host society, social workers who do have a refugee background or employing social workers with fields related to cultural sensitivities might do a great job absorbing refugees into the new social environment.
- helping with rendering educational opportunities that would enable refugees who came from a higher educational background to make use of their intellect from before might assist in recontextualizing knowledge.

Emancipating refugees that fall within the domain mentioned by placing them in environments where they can practice their knowledge would have been more effective. All the respondents said that the only mechanism through which they were able to secure any job was via the organizations where they were placed to practice their claimed professions. No, any other arrangement was as functional as sending participants to places where they could show their competence. So, that tradition should be uplifted a bit higher, as all other assumed mechanisms of integration were not functional as they are supposed to be.

-Instead of importing skilled labour from abroad, they all notified that revoking the skills that might be found in close reach, highly educated refugees, in this case, would have been wise. All refugees of today will turn to be naturalized Norwegian citizens in the future. The socioeconomic advantage that might be harvested from investing in them today, would enable the host society with enormous advantages later. Families shepherded by individuals who were emancipated through helping integration mechanisms would make them produce children who have positive self-esteem later. Role modelling matters!

Chapter six: Data Analysis and Discussions

6.1. Authentication Process

In a nutshell, the major factors that hindered successful integration through securing suitable jobs by the highly educated refugees from Eritrea were identified through this specific research. Hurdles encountered while attempting to authenticate academic credentials from Eritrea was not as easy as was speculated. The impact of that kind of delayed or failed authentication process had negatively influenced certain respondents during their endeavours toward a successful integration process within Norwegian society. Only four respondents managed to authenticate their credentials from home but it was pragmatized after a long correspondence with NOKUT and other concerned bodies.

One of the major impediments that resulted in a failed or delayed authentication effort by the respondents was that they were officially requested to submit their academic credentials, amongst them, secondary school completion transcripts and official grade reports from the university that awarded them their respective diplomas from back home. As all the respondents who attempted to authenticate their credentials from Eritrea were politically at odds with the regime back home, such a request from NOKUT was not applicable in their respective cases. Demanding official transcripts from a system that made someone flee his/her own country for political reasons is found to be controversial and in conflict with the reasons why someone is granted political protection by the Norwegian government. Even though the four mentioned respondents managed to authenticate their respective documents through NOKUT, it was not without passing through complex processing apparatus. They managed to do it in practice after a long correspondence loaded with sensitive communication with NOKUT. At least they had to have original documents within close reach to back up their claim and make it visible to NOKUT. Even though they were exempted from handing in documents and could send them by official post, getting authenticated based on hard copies that they had at the time of authentication was not easy. Unfortunately, the other seven respondents failed to authenticate their diplomas but each one had his/her specific reasons for the failed acceptance. Three respondents were disappointed and gave up amid the authentication process, for failing to go through the requests demanded by NOKUT. The three respondents had been asked to deliver their credentials through the official academic documents delivery protocol and failed to fulfil that demand by NOKUT, and consequently ended up adrift. The rest of those who were unable to authenticate their documents had sensed the complications attached to the mainstream authentication process in advance and made no attempt from the inception. They never saw a single Eritrean refugee who made use of his/her documents or work experience while trying to integrate in Norway and decided to detach themselves from their previous professions and start anew-joining universities and beginning a different training that targets

the Norwegian context. There was one respondent who never thought of authenticating his training from Eritrea on grounds of other personal reasons.

Generally, the authentication process was not empathetic to refugees who came with a certain qualification from Eritrea. That scenario looks as if it conflicts with some international protocols. According to Hyden (1991, p.2), not all refugees are driven from their respective countries on similar grounds. In his analysis, he implied that the crisis that precedes any form of migration might be different. Certain refugees might have been forced to flee home without any preparations. Valuables of all kinds, including family members, might be left behind, let alone academic papers. So, what NOKUT is demanding of Eritrean exiles with higher education is downplaying that point of Hyden's argument. These exiles should not be viewed as economic migrants. Tan (2014) has also raised some important points concerning how to authenticate refugees who are displaced for different reasons- one reason might be related to intellectual identity. Knowledge of professional experiences is accumulated over years and, naturally, anyone who had done an immense investment to excel in any kind of specialization develops an emotional attachment to what he had built over time. At least, anyone expects to help him/herself through making use of what he had been investing previously, education in this case. In the absence of that consideration by authenticating bodies in host countries, a feeling of apathy might impact the well being of exiles. Of course, ending up being a misfit might be visible.

Moreover, some refugees are even labelled 'traitors' by the institutions or governments of their countries of origin deserting illegally and standing against the regimes (Loo, 2016, p.3). Following formal ways to authenticate academics who fled their own countries informally/illegally is paradoxical in many cases. That was what had certain Eritrean exiles in Norway met i.e. being requested to prove their academic qualification through the official way but from the regime that named them 'traitors'. Loo (2016) also mentioned in some cases the very universities that awarded the applicants are already destroyed for reasons related to war situations or reasons of other kinds. In that case, the University of Asmara (the only internationally recognized university) is shut down for politically motivated reasons linked to student strikes that had happened in the year 2001. The only means left for getting documents from Eritrea through the official ways is to align yourself with the very regime that made you leave home, which is not applicable for many Eritrean academics.

Furthermore, in the efforts of situating the case of Eritrean highly educated exiles in Norway, the *neo-classical theory* was utilized as a means of analysing the findings. Within the folds of that famous theory, individuals are merely seen from the perspective of rationale existence thoughts. Persons with highly employable skills are prone to migration and in a continuous search for job positions which can

render them with bigger income in contrast to those positions that can be found from home. So, that theory was off the line of argument through which someone can observe the situation of Eritrean highly educated exiles, considering the very rationale behind the migration of Eritreans is unfitting to that mentioned theory. Reasons that preceded Eritrean migration doesn't fall within that kind of pushing factors. From the eleven respondents that shed light on the themes revolving around the research only two were refugees who ended up in Norway for reasons other than political protection.

In addition to what is explained from the perspective of neoclassical migration theory, Tan (2014) has also added up some supporting verses that emerge from the human capital theory. In his insights that are grounded on that mentioned theory, skills that are accumulated through investing tangible and intangible resources some time somewhere are expected to be visible in the potential of securing bigger income for both the individual and the host society. However, no respondent in this case is attributing any achievement coming from his/her education from home. Either they dropped their former professions or shifted to other professions that have little or no affiliation to their training background. As that knowledge claimed to have been leaked in the process of the authentication process, they neither make use of it nor the host country. Sadly, certain respondents mentioned that Norway imports skilled manpower from abroad while revoking the potential withheld within the pool of such refugees is in close reach.

6.1.1. Consequences of Failed or Delayed Licensing to Employability

None from the respondents was able to find a job position that matches their previous training from Eritrea. There was one single respondent who secured a job based on his training from Eritrea, but that same respondent has been demoted two steps down his qualification. Had he rejected that offer he would have missed that job. The findings revolving around authentication and finding jobs within the Norwegian labour market confirmed that even getting a license on grounds of the training background from Eritrea, doesn't secure a matching job. Not a single individual from amongst the eleven respondents managed to find a job through applications delivered via the official ways i.e. submitting in CVs confirming that a certain applicant with a training background from Eritrea seeking a specific job position that is announced in the newspapers or on the net. Let alone finding a job none from amongst the eleven respondents was called even for a job interview.

Faris (2016, p.1) has made certain points that depict how immigrants with higher education from home or before their arrival to Sweden are unable to get absorbed by the labour market of that specific country. He identified them as 'structural and personal' barriers. Under the category structural, he firstly assessed the introduction program (a program intended to emancipate newcomers with Swedish skills that can help them go into the host society) as ineffective and far less than what the highly educated refugees

could expect from the training embraced by that program. Secondly, he noted that many from amongst the highly educated immigrants lacked work experience from outside their respective countries and foreign education. These two points were from the major reasons that are implicitly hindering immigrants with higher education from finding jobs mentioned faris. The findings from this research also supported that consideration from Faris (2016) except for two respondents the other nine had no work experience or foreign education outside Eritrea. The other dimension of what Faris (2016) has found out within the Swedish labor market apparatus was that informal methods outweigh the formal methods of finding jobs. Social networking as social capital is what highly educated immigrants can't get in a close reach in contrast to their native counterparts. None of the eleven respondents reflected in this research had a native friend during the first days that they used to hunt for a job in Norway. They invariably said that the official job application methods did not work out. At the same time the poor social connections that they had added up to their challenges as well.

Moreover, as is noted in empirical studies (Sandnes, 2017, p. 135), for several reasons immigrants from East Europe are relatively favoured over their African and Asian counterparts within the prevailing Scandinavian labour market. Provided that the labour market is equal to all immigrants, African immigrants are prone to bigger challenges of finding a qualified job and are forced to take over jobs of lower status. Lemaître, (2007, p.4-6) based on the recession that had occurred during the early 1990s, it was mentioned that workers coming from other countries suffered relatively bigger consequences comparing to their native counterparts. Faris (2016, p.9) also backed up that argument by the previous researches by adding up points such as encounters of xenophobia and discrimination together with culture shock and other personal hindrances.

Seeing from the human capital theory, what had happened to the highly educated refugees from Eritrea while attempting to hunt suitable jobs in Norway was off the folds that make up the elements and gist of that very theory. Popovic (2012) quoted by Faris (2016,26) highlighted that human capital theory considers skills and knowledge parented by lifetime accumulated competence, equip all persons with better employability opportunities everywhere anywhere. Albeit, in the case of highly educated refugees, that generalizing statement is not visible all the time. The reality is not in line with the core content of that specific theory when it comes to making use of the skills that were brought from back home. Natives with the same qualifications as their immigrant counterparts are favoured by employers for other complex factors (ibid). At last, refugees' skills of all forms are remained underutilized as the circumstances will throw them off to unqualified jobs. In this case, the host country together with the carriers of the mentioned skills fail to help each other.

At last but not least, the three respondents mentioned that they had a feeling of incompetency that emerged from training differences across contexts. They felt as if they were trained to fit the specific socio-economic and cultural features that are taken into consideration in Eritrea. They even mentioned the technological incompetence they had together with a certain pedagogical difference that might exist across the two contexts, Norway and Eritrea, complicated the route to successful integration. Successful or failed authentication process alone was not enough, as a standing alone rationale for remaining refrained from boldly seeking suitable jobs in Norway.

Even though civic organizations such as the European Student Union (ESU,2017) advocate for an unconditional academic recognition but through downplaying other underlining challenges, displaced persons also might have their rationale in this regard. Training apparatus and the specific context that hosted a certain teaching-learning outcome also needs to be nuanced. Some countries have a different protocol through which they recognize education and work experience harvested from a different socioeconomic environment. For example, Canada is an immigrant, and securing a job as a librarian was investigated. Dali and Dilevko (2009, p.2). found out that trained librarians from the UK, Australia, and New Zealand were favoured over their counterparts from other training backgrounds on grounds of curriculum similarity between the host society and the immigrants.

6.1.2. Poor Social Networking

This research has found out no single respondent had a native friend during the days when the respondents were attending the language courses rendered by the municipalities as well as in their first attempts to find a job within the Norwegian labour market. All respondents mentioned that it was as such uneasy to get into the Norwegian society for reasons related to differences of cultural orientation. All the respondents noted that let alone get any assistance that might have been important while attempting to find a job, ordinary social interaction with the natives was not like in the other countries which they had come across while trying to do it to Norway. Nine from amongst the respondents have been in Italy for a while before ending up being in Norway, Italy being an existing country in the migration route. Comparing the two societies (Norway vs Italy) concerning easy access to go into society, Italy was far better. One respondent was even granted a permanent job in Italy, based on his training from Eritrea. As to what was experienced by the nine respondents, putting the other integration hurdles standing still in Italy, opportunities for building social intimacy of all forms was easier than in Norway. They mentioned the Italian language proficiency among Eritreans residing in Italy as a manifestation of the level of sociability that is visible in that country. That point was noted as one of the major challenges from amongst the factors that hindered easy integration dynamics within Norwegian society.

Faris (2016, p.9) in his efforts identifying the factors that impede highly educated refugees from being absorbed by their respective host countries' labour market, the *social network* was from amongst the many points that he mentioned. Confirming to what Faris (2016) has found out, at times, job recommendations originating from natives overweigh the academic credentials and job experiences that are withheld by the highly educated refugees said, five respondents. However, for reasons generated from the inaccessibility of the Norwegian society, strangers such as the Eritrean highly educated refugees were left without finding intimate native friends that might have guided them to find suitable jobs.

Xenophobia and *discrimination* were also amongst the hindering factors that Faris (2016) has mentioned in his research findings. When it comes to xenophobia and discrimination, except one from amongst my respondents, the remaining 10, at least have certain suspicion that there are discrimination and xenophobia in Norway. But they all have witnessed that there was no discrimination related to their religious background. They were all moderate Christians and never encountered discrimination or hate that pops up from that perspective. But they all had experienced some racist gestures from the natives somewhere sometimes. Even though there is no specified element that the respondents can attribute to, but making friends or any other personal relationships with the natives in Norway was difficult. And it resulted in having poor social networks that later impacted their efforts to find suitable job positions and then to a complicated integration process.

Consequently, all the respondents realized that finding jobs through informal social networking was not within the menu that was left for them in the local community. They dropped all the expectations that might come from the informal social relationships and went to the formal assistance that would be rendered from the public authorities such as NAV and the municipalities through an official integration module called 'practice'. Procedurally, candidates for certain job positions are identified by the authorities then are assigned to certain working places where they could show their competence. They are followed up and guided by social workers from NAV for a short period of time and was found out that the program was effective according to participants of that program.

6.1.3. The Interplay of Poor Social Network, Ineffective Language Training, Culture Shock

Eleven respondents emphasized that good Norwegian language command was second to none when it comes to successful integration. But none of the respondents was satisfied with the formal language training modules provided by the municipalities during the introduction program. Consequently, only one respondent had the patience to complete that mentioned training on personal grounds. The other respondents went their ways amid the language training, as they found it far less than their competence and ineffective in all aspects.

The major shortcomings that gave birth to the pieces of training inefficiency were:

- putting all trainees in the same language classes, in disregard of the educational background they might have. The failure to consider educational background from home led to a failed or far less satisfying result. Placing those who had never been to school in their life together with those who had tertiary level education affected the teaching-learning process. Amidst the training, the highly educated were frustrated and impacted negatively.
- Some of the trainers were not qualified enough to take such job positions that would impact the integration process of the highly educated later on.
- poor social network that is generated from the difference in cultural orientation and lifestyle between the host society and the immigrants. That very situation prohibited immigrants from practising the language out of the school premises.
- culture shock preceded by strange encounters with the natives impacted the teaching-learning process. The inability to actively interact with the host society impacted the psychosocial well-being of the immigrants.

According to what Faris (2016, p.23) has attributed to Osman (2002) and Rogova (2014) regardless of the reasons behind, level of language proficiency is one of the major barriers that might impact the trajectory of the successful or failed integration process that is experienced by highly educated refugees. He mentioned that securing jobs while still suffering the limitations of poor language command is behind the very reasons impeding anyone from finding suitable jobs.

Lemaitre, (2007) also backed up that argument by Osman (2002) and Rogova (2014) based on what he found out while conducting a similar research i.e. dealing with language command and finding suitable jobs within an alien job market. Fifty-eight per cent of his research participants (highly educated immigrants seeking jobs in new socioeconomic context) had said that finding a job while having a lower command of the local language makes unemployability bigger than that experienced by native counterparts.

Culture shock is also another concern that can depict what is experienced by highly educated refugees while trying to find jobs within the premises of a new social environment. All the respondents mentioned that after certain trials of interaction with the natives from the place where they live, they got culturally shocked as they failed to understand what is 'ordinary communication' within the Norwegian mainstream social coding. They realized that what is good communication in Norway was not defined the same way as what it is in Eritrea. Strange reaction from certain locals made them sceptical while communicating. They learned that privacy, friendship, respect, patience, and the like are defined in different ways across varying

cultural contexts. Right after they realized such reflections of cultural sensitivity, culture shock began to pop up right away. All of the respondents admitted that their psychosocial wellbeing was impacted due to such reactions from ordinary Norwegians and with negative consequences

6.1.4. Conceptualizing Culture Shock

Culture shock, parented by a failed social interaction attempts with the Norwegian natives, as was highlighted in the previous parts of the research, had a negative impact on the general well-being of the research participants. It was noted that building relationships of various forms with the natives were nothing but a failed attempt. However, the reaction of all the respondents, except three, was not negatively constructed. They were good enough to detect the rationale behind that failed social interaction i.e. the educational background that they had before their arrival to Norway assisted them to quickly understand the difference in lifestyle, the standard of living, and other socioeconomic variables was behind all the failures. They did not go into giving names such as xenophobia, racism, and ethnocentrism towards their host society. However, the other three respondents said that they doubted if the Norwegian public institutions such as NAV were a real reflection of the attitudes withheld by the natives who live in their localities. “Functional and helping state institutions but impenetrable ordinary citizens and social set up” as what it is put by one of the participants.

The point that can be concluded from the above discussion is that most of the respondents have felt the turbulence of culture shock since their first days as their host society was not easily accessible. That was depicted through delayed language mastery, securing suitable jobs and psychological distress felt together with a general feeling of restlessness. That consequence makes the relevance of associating that phenomena with the famous *culture shock theory*. eBook Academic Collection-worldwide (2014) has refined the definition of culture shock theory as follows:

.... culture shock is a sense of loss and disorientation that occurs when our deeper values are challenged by a new culture where adaptation is required. This conflict in values frequently generates feelings of tension and anxiety due to the loss of familiar cultural cues, and a sense of inefficacy when we cannot succeed at tasks we once mastered. Symptoms of culture shock may be both physical and psychological, resembling typical stress responses we may have had before, in our own culture.... (eBook Academic Collection-worldwide,2014)

The responses from all the interviews confirmed that the very gist of the definition through their individual experiences encountered while they were trying to make use of their previous knowledge by building social relationships with ordinary Norwegians. Having a poor understanding of the Norwegian unwritten social codes was a disadvantage that made them remain isolated for fear of being rejected or

misunderstood by the locals. The consequences were nothing but a general discomfort that was manifested through psychological distress and lower-income.

Certain respondents looked at that unsuccessful social interaction attempts from the lenses of National *Identity Theory*. Four respondents said that Norwegians, unlike the other Europeans, are more of a uniformed mind tune and relatively homogenous. Especially those from the older generation are afraid that their national identity can be threatened if immigration is not regulated through integrations setups that favour assimilation over integration, they said. That response was in line with what Meyers (2000) has said about the National identity theory. In his efforts relating immigration theory to National Identity theory, consideration of variables such as social, ethnic and identity affiliations could impact policies of the hosting countries. And that was amongst the encounters that were experienced by some of the participants.

The conclusion is drawn from around that discussion, culture shock parented from the above incidents and perspectives that prevail in the host society had impacted the integration journey of the participants. Presbitero (2016,) based on certain research that was conducted by targeting international students and the efforts they exert to readjust themselves with a new social environment also has found out points that are related to the mentioned concern. Culture shock is the feeling of the inability of carrying out or making use of someone's knowledge but accumulated before his/her arrival to a new environment is devastating as it might impact both his physical and mental health with a severe consequence of unemployability (Prebitero, 2016, p.28-40).

6.1.5. Age and Financial Status during Training

All the respondents mentioned that the age group where they were in while participating in the integration courses such as the language courses was both an advantage and disadvantage. They mentioned that as they were relatively mature than their younger (under 30 years old) fellow countrymen who were in the same program, they tried to make use of that offer from the municipalities. However, they also noted the age group where they were during the pieces of training made them relatively feel at an ease to go into the local community. The socialization from Eritrea was deeply ingrained into their innermost and they admitted that they used to be sceptic while trying to approach the locals the same way as those who were younger at that time. They mentioned that unlike the young, they were relatively conservative and tempted to withhold the mind tune from back home. At the same, the natives being unapproachable on daily basis impacted the trajectory of mastering the integration skills, inability to practise the language through normal social interaction from around. In a nutshell, being an adolescent and with a certain cultural orientation that has its different features influenced the integration process as is noted by the respondents

Even though bilingual grown-ups and with a certain academic qualification are expected to be good learners of a second language (Huber and Roberson, 2018), due to several underlying socio-cultural factors, it failed to assist the respondents. According to Huber and Roberson (2018, p.95-105), bilingual adolescents withhold relative advantage that is nearly absent in their monolingual counterparts. They ended up to that conclusion based on a certain literary experiment that let adolescent bilinguals translate poetries written down in a certain language which is written by other artists from a different language. The result was revealing as it showed that adolescent bilinguals are better learners of a second language (ibid). However, for some pedagogical discrepancies and insensitivities that were absent in the orientation of some trainers, the respondents' experience was opposite to what is stated in the points raised by Huber and Roberson. The age group where the respondents were into during the training, the failure to utilize the multilingualism of the training participants during the training and lack of transcultural understanding of certain trainers ended up in inefficacy of the courses. Huber and Roberson (2018) have even expanded that specific concern related to transcultural education while trainers of all forms are into official contact with participants from other cultural contexts as follows:

A pedagogy of transcultural literacy would mean, according to Kos-togriz (2004), a “literacy pedagogy that would enable students to understand and negotiate differences, their connectedness and meaning dynamics in a dialogue of different consciousness and discourses”

The concluding remarks that revolved around the above verse were that in the world of today, meanings across cultures have to be mediated for the successful inclusion of outsiders into local society. Internationalization of pedagogy and expanding the scope of trainers according to that mind orientation would help integration endeavours to be successful as well as diversifying the source and mechanisms of knowledge harvesting that can alter the existing centralized definitions of social concepts.

Being a grown-up immigrant had also another negative impact during the integration training. As most of the respondents, unlike the young, had family or any other social responsibility during the training, they felt the distress that emerges from such situations. Four respondents were married and had children before they arrived in Norway. Parallel to the restlessness of midwife from the situation of leaving loved ones behind and in circumstances which are not safe, the money they used to get from the state was not enough. They said the money which they used to receive from the state while attending the training was balanced against the expenses of that particular person participating in the course. However, the situation of those left behind (own children or parents) and in a dire situation is not put into account by the state authorities in Norway. They had to share the money they used to receive with their families from back home and wherever. In a nutshell, it was found out that the money was enough for the person participating in the

integration courses but not when he/she shares it with his family members from far. Different researches conducted from contexts of varying features invariably confirmed that familial situation impacts the lives of immigrants while they struggle to adjust themselves to a new social environment. According to Grzywacz, et, al. (2013, p.1198), it was confirmed that men separated from their own families, disregarding the cause of separation, are most likely to suffer from psychological problems. The same research mentioned that remittance as bifactor is amongst the major stressors in that aspect. So, the respondents here reflected the same points. i.e. they were consistently being challenged as they failed to secure the safety and financial needs of those who were left behind.

6.2. Conclusion

According to the encounters experienced by the exiled Eritrean tertiary level graduates who are destined to Vest Agder, Norway, as a host country, the integration process they are/were going through is/was unbearably tough and with numerous hurdles. Among the major factors that impeded the smooth/successful integration process were complications attached to authentication academic documents that are awarded from the academic institutions operating from Eritrea. Even though certain applicants managed to authenticate their credentials from Eritrea, many others also failed in the process. As part of the authentication process, applicants were being requested to submit official transcripts through the official university to university postal systems, which was not applicable in the case of many Eritreans. Asking for academic papers to be authenticated in their host country from the very government that was the cause of their exile was paradoxical. For many applicants, that Norwegian authentication tradition was impossible in their situations, as they were in a position that denies them such claims from home. Consequently, several exiled applicants ended up having tried in vain. That authentication process, paired with some other stressing integration factors, limited their successful readjustment in their host society. Finding suitable jobs that corresponded to their previous training background was out of reach, with negative impacts such as frustration, joblessness, or taking over job positions that are not fitting to the skills they might have. Lost intellectual identity, together with knowing that their underutilized knowledge was fading away over time. Frustration, psychosocial distress, lower income, lower self-esteem, and dissatisfaction born of lower job positions were the manifestations.

In addition to this, poor social network gave birth to delayed language mastery and a feeling of culture shock. The mainstream cultural orientation in Norway was immensely different from that of the informants and led to a culture shock that later impeded them from participating in the host society as intended. Social codes that emerged from the Norwegian value system were not easily understood by the respondents and impacted the communication attempts with the natives. Social features such as privacy, social distance and the like had relative definitions across societies all over the world. As that consideration was realized very

late, the psychosocial harm that it inflicted on the well-being of the exiles great. It was revealed in different forms, amongst it, self-isolation, homesick, developing negative impressions are reflected feeling like 'misfits. As a consequence, no single respondent had a native friend that could assist him/her with learning the language, social codes, or finding jobs. That resulted in a delayed or failed integration.

Moreover, the age group, where the respondents were into during their arrival in Norway, is identified as a factor for a delayed integration. Especially, those who were married and left their loved ones from behind were affected for reasons related to responsibility. Unlike their younger counterparts, they have been challenged to go into the host society, as they were having certain value judgments that originate from their previous Eritrean socialization. The issue of financial status was even one of the factors that affected their integration endeavours. Even though the money they used to get from the state was good enough to cover their expenses, remittance to those who were left back home together with unrest lessness parented from the dire-situation lived by their families was as impacting as such.

As a consequence of the above-mentioned factors, learning the language remained an obstacle standing still in the integration process. Language proficiency being a key factor that can open doors to learning both the language and social codes together with securing suitable jobs that are recommended by native friends were no in place for the exiles.

At last but not least, utilizing the knowledge harvested from a different socioeconomic environment, Eritrea in this case, was also another factor that steals the confidence of some immigrants. They felt incompetent and avoided searching for jobs in the available labour market available. As their attempts to find jobs via the official ways of applying for announced job positions failed persistently, they believed that applicants of their kind are either discriminated against or less favoured by local employers. Applying through the official ways did not work out even for a single respondent. The language courses provided by the municipalities were also not as effective as they are supposed to be.

Finally, the integration assistance provided by the official public authorities such as NAV and the municipalities were indispensable. All jobs secured by the immigrants of whatsoever form are only sought and found through the official public service giving institutions.

6.3. Recommendations

The state authorities in Norway are working hard to emancipate immigrants of various kinds and categories. The persons who have reflected themselves within this research have witnessed that the state institutions together with certain humanitarian organizations are putting indispensable efforts tapped towards realigning the lives of immigrants with the mainstream lifestyle in Norway. However, for several reasons related to existing differences in cultural orientation between the immigrants and the hosting communities, the

mentioned efforts rendered by the authorities are not supported as to the expectation of certain immigrants, at least at the personal level. Building ordinary friendships and other social relationships were not as easy. That scenario led to poor social interaction between the immigrants and their host community and then to a general discomfort that can be depicted in the form of social isolation, negative attitudes toward the host society. Based on the mentioned findings, equipping humanitarian organizations, functioning from the districts, with both tangible and intangible assets that would enable them to run certain integration projects is wise and a strategy for restoring social capital that might have been lost because of factors generated by displacement and migration. Such organizations could take over and replace social roles such as friendship and familial networks.

In addition to this, language training courses provided by the municipalities need to be revised. Putting all participants in the same language classes by disregarding the differences they might have in their education level to the inefficacy of the courses delivered. Class unmanageability parented by prevailing irregularities amongst the course participants impacted the teaching-learning process. In the meantime, those with higher education level before arrival to Norway are in a position that would not enable to develop according to the soft resources they might have.

Simplifying the course of authenticating academic documents needs to be as quick as possible. Considering the political situation back in Eritrea concerning requesting official documents submission through official postal by NOKUT should be rationalized and realigned with the overall situation of applicants.

At last but not least, public authorities need to investigate why and how highly educated refugees from Eritrea failed to secure job positions that correspond to their competencies. Why not even a single applicant failed to be called for a job interview, let alone find a job via the official ways such as sending CVs to announced employments from the local employers? Such initiatives might reveal underline facts, probably related to discrimination. The consequences of joblessness are detrimental, as its impacts are far beyond economic impacts. Role models who managed to secure professional jobs within the Norwegian context are important in spearheading successful integration and naturalization of the pool of Eritrean refugees. In the absence of such role modelling, the children of the educated but unemployed/underemployed might develop a different and negative interpretation. Consequently, class stratification born from delayed class mobility might be visible over time. So, instead of importing skilled manpower from abroad, emancipating the skill withheld by educated refugees is managerially wise.

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