Integration process in Norway

How do highly educated expatriates define and experience "integration" in international companies in Norway?

Olga Skute

Supervisor

Professor Joyce Falkenberg

University of Agder, 2012

Faculty of Economics and Social Science

Department of Economics and Business Administration

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ABSTRACT

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Author: Olga Skute

Supervisor: Professor Joyce Falkenberg

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Key words: Expatriate, expatriate integration, definition of integration, experience, expatriates in Norway, Norwegian culture, cultural difference, cultural distance, language.

Background: In the globalization era, the role of people who go overseas has become increasingly important. Norway is one of the attractive places to work – the economy remains strong in spite of the financial crisis and high unemployment in other countries. Statistics Norway indicates that 50.000 non-Nordic citizens moved to Norway in 2010 and the same number in previous five years.

Problem: It is necessary for expatriates to be satisfied in a professional life and in a private while staying in a host country. It is quite hard to leave one's familiar surroundings and settle down in a new, unknown environment with different norms and rules. Integration into a foreign culture is seen as an important factor and is based not only on knowledge of the language, customs, norms and values, but on a personal interest in understanding its values and attitudes, emotional close contact with its representatives.

Purpose: The main purpose of the thesis is to define the term "integration", and explore what integration means for expatriates, how they experience it and how to achieve it. In order to answer this question, it is important to understand how expatriates explain integration, and investigate whether and how they want to become part of the local society and how they experience the process of integration in international companies operating in Norway.

Research Methodology: This is an exploratory study, qualitative in nature, conducted in non-contrived setting with minimal researcher's interference, with the main data collected from eight face-to-face interviews. The respondents were grouped into two distinct groups – (1) organizational expatriates and (2) self-initiated expatriates. The interviews focused around integration and expatriates experience.

Findings: A framework derived from literature review suggested main influencing factors, thus areas to be researched, which consist of: (1) motif of relocating, (2) culture differences and distance, (3) socio-cultural adjustment, (4) language, (5) preparation, (6) work environment, (7) social network and (8) acculturation process.

Conclusion: It was found that expatriates experience integration rather easily, as Norway is seen as formidable as easy to adapt to. The meaning of integration however was found to have much deeper meaning. Exploration of all aspects of integration, based on interviews and theoretical research, allowed the author to compile a comprehensive definition of what expatriate integration is, thus reaching the purpose of the thesis.

ABBREVIATIONS

EU – European Union

EEA – European Economic Area

IDV – Individualism/Collectivism score

MAS – Masculinity/Femininity score

OE – Organizational Expatriates

PDI – Power Distance score

SIE – Self-Initiated Expatriates

UAI – Uncertainty Avoidance score

U.K. – United Kingdom

USA – United States of America

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1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background to the research; it states aims of the research and the tasks that need to be carried out in order to fulfil major and minor objectives of the study. It also gives a brief insight into the target group. Finally, the chapter provides the outline of the thesis giving a short description of the subsequent chapters

1.1. Background

In the globalization era, the role of people who go overseas has become increasingly important. International job assignments have been frequently used in the past twenty years for different purposes – to improve management talent, to overcome staffing shortages. What is it like to be an expatriate, is it an adventure or a hardship? The experiences of expatriates are both positive and negative and they depend on a job type and of course, on location. Norway is one of the attractive places to work – the economy remains strong in spite of the financial crisis and high unemployment in other countries. According to Statistics Norway (Statistisk Sentralbyrå), there were 50,000 immigrants with non-Nordic citizenship in 2010 that moved to Norway. Two thirds of all immigrants came from EU/EEA countries, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Labour immigration was the main reason for moving to Norway. The situation was the same in the previous five years (Norway, 2011).

It is necessary for expatriates to be satisfied in a professional life and in a private while staying in a host country. Motivation to go abroad varies differently – some expatriates go abroad to start a new work or enhance their career, while others are recruited by organizations because of the shortage of the local professionals or for personal reasons. *"When you go overseas your route changes and you will never be the same"* (Benton, 2008, p. 4) It is quite hard to leave one's familiar surroundings and settle down in a new, unknown environment with different norms and rules. The host country entails different political, economic and monetary systems, different language and norms compared to the home country.

In order to develop positive attitudes towards cross-cultural differences it is sensitive to overcome the cultural isolation and to generate negative reactions. It is assumed that integration into a foreign culture is based not only on knowledge of the language, customs,

norms and values, but on a personal interest in understanding its values and attitudes, emotional close contact with its representatives. This is possible if a person lives a long time in different from the native culture, has close friends and is actively involved in social life or brought up from childhood in a multicultural environment. Thus, there are different situations of intercultural contact; people have different perceptions of non-native culture and its representatives. The range of perception varies from complete denial of the existence of other cultures to integrate into a new culture when its norms and values begin to be perceived as their own.

The choice of the research area was developed by author's personal interest because of the studying in Norway with a high perspective of continuing own career, it was very interesting to know how do expatriates from diverse countries integrate in Norway, whether or not there are challenges that should be considered in the future life.

1.1. Research problem

The research problem is to define the concept of integration, understand how expatriates explain integration, and investigate whether and how they want to become part of the local society and how they experience the process of integration in Norwegian companies.

1.2. Purpose of the Thesis

The purpose of the thesis is to **define the term "integration"**, and **explore what integration means for expatriates, how do they experience it and how is it achieved**. Examining the process of expatriates' integration is important for several reasons. Firstly, if an expatriate fail in the overseas assignment it may be very costly for the companies (Coperland, Griggs, 1985). There are also non-financial costs such as damaged company's reputation, lost business opportunities and lost market or competitive share (Black, 1991). Secondly, the failure to access the full cycle of assignment is harmful for an expatriate because it lowers self-esteem, self-confidence and lowers a prestige among co-workers. That leads to decrease a willingness of qualified managers to go again abroad.

In order to achieve the main aim, this study was broken down into following objectives:

1	• Collect and review relevant and applicable academic literature
2	• Develop conceptual framework and define independent variables
3	• Develop interview questions
4	• Find adequate respondents and run the interviews
5	• Analyse the data collected and compare against theory
6	• Review the preliminary framework
7	• Compile the thesis and provide final results
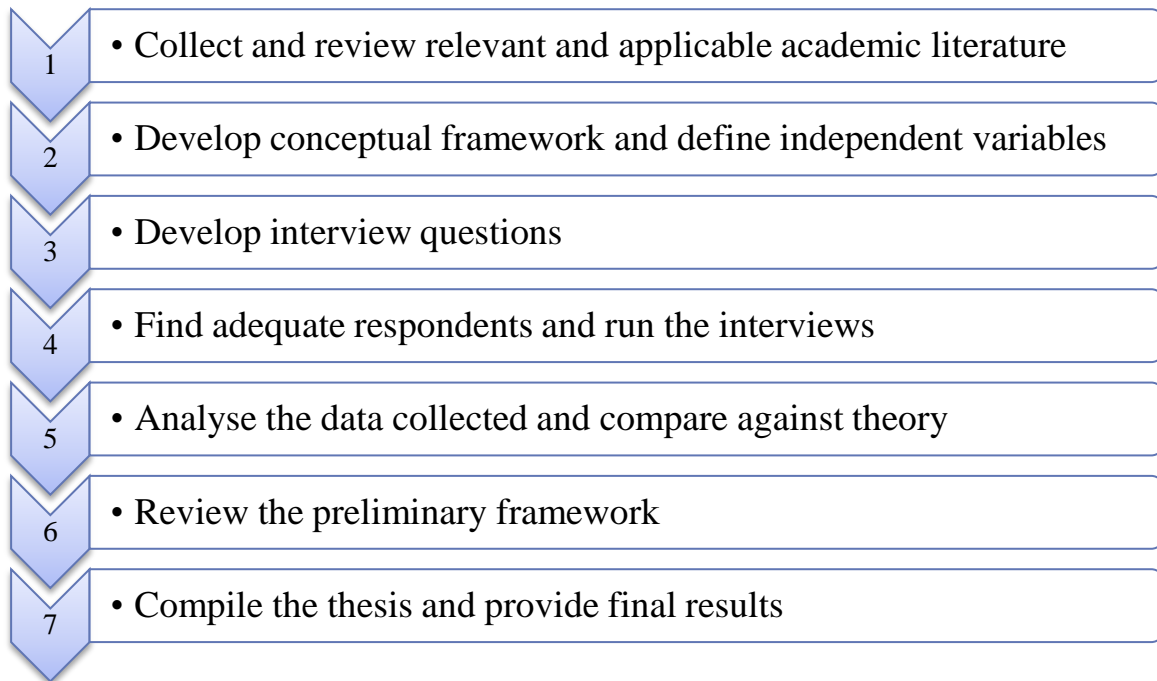
FIGURE 1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.3. Target Group

This research provides in-depth information of expatriates' integration process in Norway by showing cases of different expatriates who are coming from different cultural backgrounds. Thus, this research may be found useful for companies operating in Norway that are employing or are looking to employ foreign nationals. The study may benefit expatriates who are currently working or are planning to move to Norway, to better understand the process of integration, hence overcoming difficulties and obstacles that are most likely to occur during the integration process.

1.4. Limitations

Since the thesis is being a part of a Business Administration degree, the topic under study will be reviewed within programmes context, namely within business environment. The study therefore aims to highlight the business perspective of the integration of expats into international companies operating in Norway. The psychological and social perspectives of expat integration will not be in the main focus.

1.5. Thesis Outline

Introduction	• Introduction reveals the research problem and purpose of the thesis.
Literature Review	• This chapter presents theories relevant to integration of expatriates.
Theoretical Framework	• Framework based on the dependent variable under consideration and various independent variables that have been identified through literature review is revealed as essential for the research study.
Research Methodology	• Methodology used when obtaining the data needed to reach the thesis aim is presented. It consists of a set of decisions like: research design, research methods, sampling technique, and data analysis.
Findings and Discussion	• This section of the thesis delivers main findings, mainly derived from the interviews, interprets them according to the theories and presents them in comprehensive manner to the reader.
Conclusions	• Chapter six provides overall conclusions concerning research questions and answers the main question of the thesis. Future work that can be done to enhance the quality of the research is also covered in this chapter.

FIGURE 2. THESIS OUTLINE

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the reader will be introduced to the literature that is used to answer the purpose of the research. The goal is to carry out the understanding for the literature on expatriation, different concepts of term "integration", general description about culture and cultural distance, Norwegian culture.

2.1. Definition of Expatriate

The management of expatriates is of particular importance in the International Human Resource Management (IHRM). An expatriate is an employee who is working and residing in a foreign country. In literature they are called *„international assignees"* (Peter J. Dowling, 2008, p. 4), *"sojourners"*. There is a differentiation between different types of cross cultural travel- short term travelers, for example going on vacations or business trip; sojourners – the people who are going abroad with a plan to return back to their home country, for example international students or those who are on extended business assignments from one to three years; immigrants are those who plan to move to a new country for a long time or permanent. Richardson and McKenna define an expatriate as a managerial, technical and professional staff who live and work abroad for more than one year. There is a low proportion of women expatriates because of the perceived prejudice in many foreign countries. According to Hilltop and Janssen (1990) known arguments the expatriates demand is increasing, it is expensive for employees to hire them, expatriate managers often fail in the international assignments, personal characteristics connected to the successful expatriation are following: technical ability, stress tolerance, flexibility, communication skills and cultural understanding.(Hiltrop & Janssens, 1990)

This thesis focuses on the organizational expatriates (traditional) and also the expatriates who applied for a job in the foreign country by their own initiative, called self-initiated expatriates.

2.1.1.   Self-Initiated Expatriates (SIE) and Organizational Expatriates (OE)

There is a distinction between two groups of business expatriates- self-initiated expatriates and organizational expatriates. The main characteristic that distinguishes these two groups is a different initiation to work internationally. Most of the literature on international human

resource management is focused on company assigned expatriates. However, self-initiated expatriates are getting more attention nowadays, SIEs is a "*widespread phenomenon, they are, concomitantly, widely used by organizations*".(Jokinen, Brewster, & Suutari, 2008, p. 979).

Inkson et.al. (1997) noted the issue of self-initiated expatriates compared to traditional understanding of expatriates'. "*Whereas the research literature on expatriate assignments is large, the SFE literature is nonexistent. This dearth of data and analysis is important: individuals' traveling abroad to find their own work is a widespread phenomenon*".*(Suutari & Brewster, 2000, p. 417)* In the table 1 below there are described main differences between two categories of expatriates:

Characteristics	SIEs	OEs
The source of initiative	Self	Company
Pre-departure preparation, training, etc.	Self	Company
Time-perspective	No limit	Limited
Job secured prior to expatriation?	Yes or No	Yes
Compensation package	No	Yes
Support in non-work issues	No	Yes

TABLE 1. OVERVIEW OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SELF-INITIATED AND ORGANIZATIONAL EXPATRIATES. (HOWE-WALSH & SCHYNS, 2010, PP. 262-263)

Self-initiated expatriate (SIE) is „*any person who is hired on a contractual basis and not transferred overseas by the parent organization*" (Lee, 2005, p. 173). Initiation goals are different, for example, "*see the world; try something different; find myself*" (Inkson, Arthur, Pringle, & Barry, 1997, p. 352) This type of expatriates is an important part of a global work force but not many scholars have focused on them. (Peltokorpi & Jintae Froese, 2009, p. 1099)

There are five main reasons for migration: (1) economic factors; (2) political factors; (3) cultural factors (such as the choice of a similar culture but in a country with greater economic

possibilities); (4) family factors (e.g., family reunion); and (5) career factors (such as professional development) (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010) SIEs make a decision about moving abroad by themselves. They themselves fund their relocation and are hired as locals in a foreign country. They are not repatriated by their home organizations but decide themselves whether and when to return home. According to Inkson SIEs are linked to a boundaryless career concept. That means that they individually plan, evaluate their career, design their own goals, and do not rely on organizations as in case with organizational expatriates. SIEs are more ready for international assignments and are more willing to stay abroad for a long period of time (Mirvis and Hall, 1994). " *SIEs initiate and arrange expatriation themselves, represent a heterogeneous population with a broad spectrum of hierarchy and skill levels, usually have no financial allowance for expatriation from their employers, and have no definite plan for repatriation when leaving home, meaning that their career development is more indeterminate" (Lan Cao, Andreas Hirschi, & Deller, 2012, p. 160).* SIEs compared to OEs have strong intrinsic career motivations and personal goals to work abroad (Lan Cao et al., 2012). SIEs have more challenges compared to OEs because they should adjust not only in a new society but also to adjust at a new workplace. OEs are sent to the local subsidiaries to accomplish organizational goals and their workplaces are familiar for example company's policies and they know what to expect. That can lead to a lower adjustment for SIEs.

 In terms of HR practices, the question whether or not a SIE obtained a position before going abroad is important for several reasons. First, if an expatriate applied for a job while being home and then move to the host country, he/she will probably be more prepared for the job related aspects but not for intercultural aspects (Howe-Walsh & Schyns, 2010, p. 263). In case when an expatriate moves to a country because of the country itself, and after some time applies for a job, s/he can be more prepared for intercultural challenges because they are considered more equal to locals. Expatriates' adjustment is on his/her responsibility; however, organizations should smooth the transfer from one country to another in order to get an advantage from SIEs. "*Organizational assistance reduces the time the expatriate has to spend on these issues and facilitates adjustment to the new work setting*" (Aycan, 1997, p. 445). HR management cannot provide support prior to leaving but they can focus on supporting in the host country. SIEs are slightly younger, more often are female and one of their main motives is to gain an international experience (Suutari & Brewster, 2000).

Organizational expatriates are the ones who are sent abroad by their home companies. Usually they are oriented on companies' specific goals accomplishment for concrete period of time from 6 month to five years. OE usually receives generous relocation packages (Peltokorpi & Jintae Froese, 2009a). Primarily they are sent abroad because of their professional skills and thus they contain relatively well educated people and ones who are advanced in their career or personal interests in international experience. This type of expatriates is less dependent on social integration because of the temporary assignment and task roles. They are provided by home company's support in terms of relocation expenses, accommodation and etc. Thus, they are more prepared for working abroad because SIEs do not receive such benefits.

After being acquainted with the literature, the author concludes that the concept of "integration" is not widely used. Academics present different explanations to describe processes when individuals go overseas and interact with other cultures and environment. For instance, "adaptation" (Berry, 2001; Kim, 2001; Gudykunst and Kim,2003), "adjustment" described by Oberg (1960), Black (1990) and Aycan (1997), or "acculturation" (Redfield, Linton and Herskovits,1936; Berry, 2006, Hofstede,2005). For this reason, the above mentioned terms will be further investigated through the literature review.

Prior to going through acculturation, adjustment and adaptation stages, it is only logical to start with defining what culture is.

2.2. Culture

In order to prepare for integration abroad, it is necessary for expatriates to learn about the culture in the considering country. But what is the culture?

Hofstede (2001, p.9) defines culture as *"...the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others"*. Culture is a key figure that distinguishes one human group from another. In order to understand the culture it is important to define the definition of it.

There are other meanings of culture as well. According to Davies and Kaufman (2002), culture "*is a cumulative result of experience, values, religion, beliefs, attitudes, meanings, knowledge, social organizations, procedures, timing, and roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe and material objects acquired or created by groups of people, in the course of generations, through individual and group effort and interactions. Culture manifests itself in*

patterns of language, behaviour and activities, and provides models and norms for acceptable day-to-day interactions and styles of communication. Culture enables people to live together in a society within a given geographic environment, at a given state of technical development and at a particular moment in time (John Davies, 2002, p. 150).

People from different cultures have different values and issues that lead to cultural differences. Starting to work across the cultures people make significant mistakes. The important mistake is that they assume that all people are basically the same- with common desires and needs. The culture is programmed in our minds and hearts. Therefore, each person should take into consideration what is the culture for him/her. Culture is like traffic rules or the boundaries for acceptable behaviour. Some of these traffic rules are written down in laws and regulations, and some of them are just norms and values. All these traffic rules make institutions which provide acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
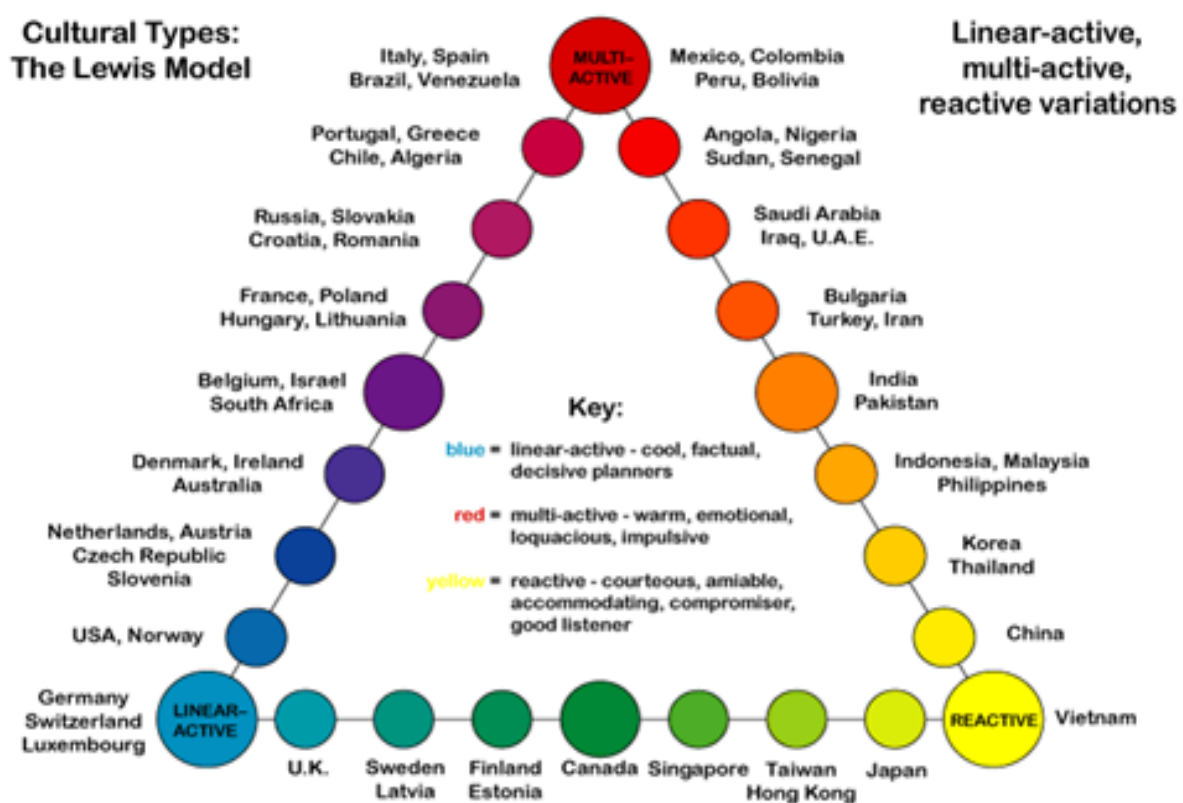
FIGURE 3. RICHARD LEWIS MODEL (R. LEWIS, 2006)

In order to better understand the culture we should look at three different categories of culture. The types of culture according to Richard Lewis are following: (Lewis, 2006)

2.2.1.   Cultural Characteristics

Linear active

Representatives of this group are task oriented. They are actively engaged in planning for life and do not several things at the same time (in each case there is given a certain period of time). This group includes Germany, USA, Norway, U.K. and etc.

Multi active

Representatives of this group are people orientated. They are outgoing, spontaneously active, doing several things at once, and not necessarily those that are planned. They can do what they like at the point that seems important. Countries which represent this group are Spain, Mexico, Latin America and etc.

Reactive

A feature characteristic of this type of culture –is the promotion of the politeness, the ability to listen. Typical representatives - Japanese, Chinese, Finns.

Each type of culture (Linear, Multi-Active and Reactive) as presented by Lewis (2012) is associated with certain characteristics. Some of those characteristics of each culture are presented in a table below.

Linear	Multi-active	Reactive
Accepts favours reluctantly	Seeks for favours	Protects face of other
Confronts with logic	Confronts emotionally	Never confronts
Dislikes losing face	Has good excuses	Must not lose face
Does one thing at a time	Does several things at once	Reacts to partner's action
Introvert	Extrovert	Introvert
Job-oriented	People-oriented	Very people-oriented
Partly conceals feelings	Display feelings	Conceals feelings
Plans ahead step by step	Plans grand outline only	looks at general principals
Polite but direct	Emotional	Polite and indirect
Rarely interrupts	Often interrupts	Doesn't interrupt
Sticks to plan	Change plans	Makes slights changes
Talks have the time	Talks most of the time	Listens most of the time
Truth before diplomacy	Flexible truth	Diplomacy over truth
Uses mainly facts	Feeling before facts	Statements are promises
Works fixed hours	Works many hours	Flexible hours

TABLE 2. THE MOST COMMON TRAITS OF LINEAR-ACTIVE, MULTI-ACTIVE AND REACTIVE CULTURES. (D. R. LEWIS, 2006, P. 41)

This table helps to identify how each culture reacts and will help to define cultural differences compared to Norway.

Since the culture is important characteristic of the society, it has a significant impact on people's behaviour.

Effective management and integration is at least partially dependent on the belief that behaviour will be appropriately adopted in the organization. It means that it is necessary for an expatriate to understand the culture. In the case of the existence of cultural differences, they need to adopt in order to achieve the desired behaviour and results. Unfortunately, it is much harder to do it in practice than it is described in theories. For each of us a native culture has an impact and people are a little susceptible to ethnocentrism, where the perception of their own culture is being higher in relation to a foreign.

2.3. Cultural Distance

Scholars agree that culture is a key feature distinguishing one human group from another. Cultural distance is explained as a degree to which the cultural norms from one country differ from the other country. It describes the differences between two countries in terms of the level of deployment, education, business and everyday language, cultural values, and also the extent of connections between these countries. Cultural distance measures socio-cultural differences (Froese & Peltokorpi, 2011).

As was mentioned before, cultures differ from each other and because of the complexity it cannot be assumed that two expatriates from one country will integrate in the same way, it is individually. Therefore, it is not easy to compare and summarize all the differences because each person will perceive them individually. Most writers assuming that adjustment will be more difficult for expatriates coming from home cultures that are very different from host cultures (Beck, 1963; David, 1971; Morris, 1960).

Cultural distance has impact on the micro and macro levels. At the micro level, cultural distance creates challenges for managers when they adopt in a new culture. Smaller cultural distance is explained by higher similarities between personal backgrounds which alleviates relationships of social support and friendship. In the same time, Johnson (2006) argues that cultural distance has a negative effect on an international adjustment. The greater is cultural distance the more misunderstandings and conflicts can be between expatriates (Johnson, Lenartowicz, & Apud, 2006).
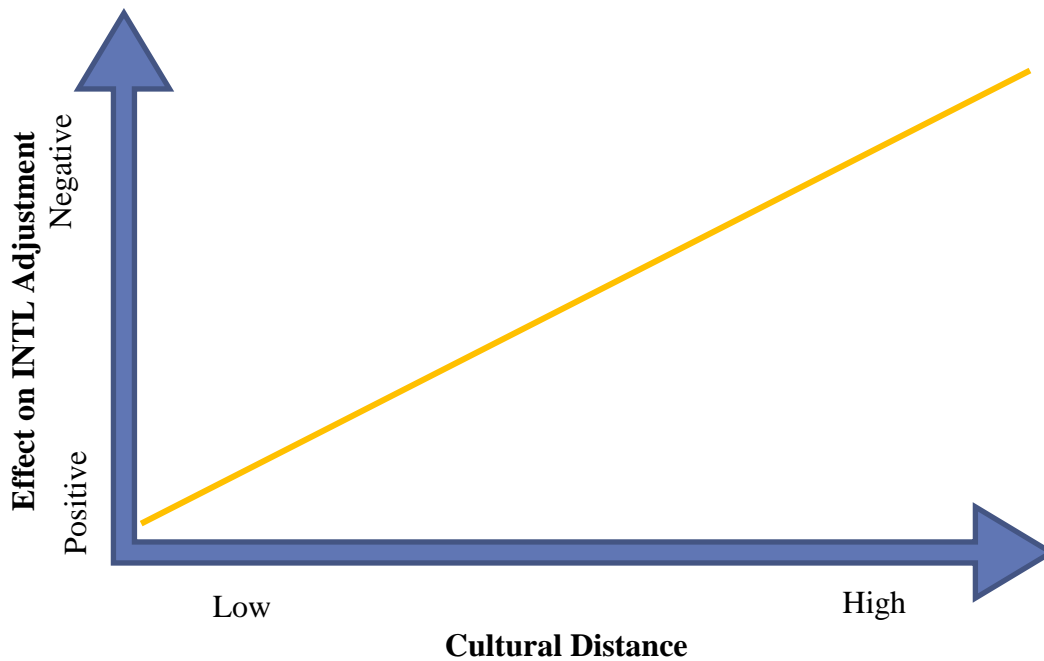
FIGURE 4. CULTURAL DISTANCE VS. EFFECT ON INTERNATIONAL ADJUSTMENT

The concept of cultural distance is based on Hofstede's (1980) four dimensions of national cultures. These dimensions are − (1) power distance, (2) individualism versus collectivism, (3) uncertainty avoidance and (4) masculinity versus femininity. Power distance is the level of acceptance by a society of the unequal distribution of power in institutions. Individualistic cultures focus on achieving individual goals vs. group goals than do collectivistic cultures. Uncertainty avoidance is a degree to which person feel uncomfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty. Finally, in masculine societies they value assertiveness, materialism, and a lack of concern for others-that prevail in a society. However, in feminine societies the focus is oriented to people's welfare, flourishing of life and relationship, there are fewer conflicts and job stresses, more women in high-level jobs, and a reduced need for assertiveness.

These four dimensions reflect "patterns of thinking, feeling and acting" (Hofstede, 1997) and therefore would seem to play an important role in intercultural interactions. For example, expatriates from high uncertainty avoidance countries perceive their relationships to be more personal than members from low uncertainty countries. Such differences from two countries would have an impact on the interpersonal interactions. Expatriates from a feminine culture who value relationship may have difficulties with ones from a masculine culture with its more assertive values. The greater is the difference, the more difficulties one can experience in working overseas.

In order to see key behavioural dimensions in the workplace it is necessary to look at each dimension separately.

2.3.1.   Power Distance in the Workplace

According to Geert Hofstede (2010) the organization in the most companies all over the world can contain characteristics from both large-power and low-power distance societies. Nevertheless, there are some key differences between them, and it is necessary to get to look at them before expatriates move to other countries.(Geert Hofstede, 2010)

In the large- power-distance societies, the hierarchical system exists, where superiors and subordinates experience inequality. Companies have very centralized organization. Subordinates are told what to do; there exist a large number of supervisory personnel and reports to each other. The relationship between superiors and subordinates are ruled and dependent on the superior's decision, and are loaded with emotions- positive emotions are expressed to superiors and negatives ones to subordinates. Employees are afraid to express disagreements with their autocratic bosses. The salary range is very wide; there are gaps between top and bottom. In large-power-distance countries there is more respect towards older superiors.(Geert Hofstede, 2010)

In contrast, in small-power-distance countries, subordinates and superiors see each other as equal; they work together and discuss the actual questions and problems. The hierarchical system is flexible and can change depending on circumstances, for example, a person who yesterday was an employee can become a superior tomorrow. In companies, there is a flat hierarchical pyramid. The salary is distributed with a small difference between bottom and down. Subordinates expect that the boss is the one who finally decides and are consulted before the decision is made. Younger bosses are more appreciated than older ones.

2.3.2.   Individualism and Collectivism in the Workplace

In an individualistic culture employees act according to their own interests with coincidence of workers' self-interest and the superior' interest. In a collectivistic culture, employers hire not an individual but a person who belongs to an in-group. It is usual that person's own interest do not always are the same as in-groups' interests. In the hiring process the preference is given to hiring relatives of the employers. It can reduce risks because the perspective employer will be known better. In the individualistic culture, it is not the case and is seen as

nepotism and can lead to conflicts of interest. The relationship between superiors and subordinates is as business transaction (Geert Hofstede, 2010).

An individualistic society there is a management of individuals while in collectivist- of groups. The degree to which people feel emotionally integrated into a work group depends on situation. "*Ethnic and other in-group differences within the work group play a role in the integration process, and managers within a collectivistic culture will be extremely attentive to such factors.*" (Geert Hofstede, 2010, p. 120). In individualist societies, the norm is that everybody should be treated alike, in the collectivist – opposite.

To summarize, in individualist society, "*the task is supposed to prevail over any personal relationships*"; in collectivist – "*the personal relationship prevails over the task and should be established first.*" (Geert Hofstede, 2010, p. 122).

2.3.3.   Masculinity Vs. Femininity in the Workplace

In masculine cultures, the resolution of conflicts is resolved by letting the strongest win. Management tries to avoid dealing with labour unions. Rewards are based on equity. People work in order to live.

In feminine cultures conflicts are solved by compromise and negotiation; rewards are based according to everyone's need. People live in order to work. Leisure time is more preferred over more money (Geert Hofstede, 2010).

2.3.4.   Uncertainty Avoidance in the Workplace

Uncertainty avoidance dimension has two components – stress and long-term career.

Uncertainty- avoiding cultures have formal laws, more internal regulations and norms for controlling working process. The need for rules is emotional when there is strong uncertainty avoidance. People appreciate to work hard and like to be always busy. They consider time as money, life is hurried. Tolerance toward foreigners does not exist – xenophobia.

Weak uncertainty avoidance countries are opposite. The need for rules and regulations are necessary only in rare cases because they think that problems can be solved without any formality. Workers work hard if there is such a need. They prefer to relax. People are positive or neutral toward foreigners (Geert Hofstede, 2010).

2.4. The Norwegian Culture

Norwegians are seen as cold, reserved and distant people because for a long time the country was historically isolated. They are not communicative. „*The perfect day for a Norwegian is one in which nobody is encountered*" (Tixier, 1996, p. 30). In the south part of the country Norwegians are described as being withdrawn, whereas in the northern part they are happier (Tixier, 1996). Norwegians are punctual. It provides confidence and trust in the country. If you are late for a meeting, it can upset a Norwegian because they are always on time. The same rule works with job tasks- what is not ready today, can be finished tomorrow because it is a time to go home. They are morning people, so it is not surprise that working days are finished the latest at five. Normal business hours in Norway are from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. Norwegians separate business and private relations. They prefer to spend time with their families and appreciate the environment where they live – lakes, forest, mountains and rustic chalets. They are quite different with their preferences – one likes to spend time in the nature, the other with a close contact with friends, commonly with the same tastes, for example, skiing, hiking, biking, jogging and etc. There is some mistrust of foreigners. The number of expatriate managers even in multinational companies is rare (Tixier, 1996).

In terms of managerial culture, there is a little hierarchy in Norway. There is easy access to the top management. "*Senior managers often delegate authority down the chain, trusting lower managers to make good decisions*".("Going Global Career & Employment Resource Guide for Norway," 2010) Norwegian leaders participate in their teams. They are very close to the employees – the discussion is important and everyone has own strong opinion. Norwegians are conservative and pragmatic, they are very careful with making decision, everything should be considerate before, it makes them more slow in a decision making process.

Communication modes in Norway are similar to the Nordic countries. Norwegian people are known as direct, going straight to a point. It is hard to get in touch with Norwegians because they are introverts and normally do not show their emotions. Norwegians are private people and do not like to talk about personal life. There are some safe topics which can be safe to talk about – Norwegian culture, politics, travelling, and sports. Initially, they are formal with each other but after some time it can lead to a good friendship. Compared to Sweden and Finland, there is less formal and conservative communication style in Norway. During the past 30 years, the use of polite conjugation is disappeared. Engineers or economists more often have

business cards, because Norwegians do not appreciate titles – first name are used in the most cases (Tixier, 1996).

Concerning language skills, most of the expatriates should have a good grasp of the Norwegian language-bokmål which is the business language in Norwegian companies. However English is suffiecient, especially in multinational companies. In most of the companies, expatriates are entitled in the Norwegian language course, which is paid by the employed company.

2.4.1. Overview of Norway

Official figures show that in 2011 foreign nationals made 15 percent or 387,103 of workforce in Norway. Since EU enlargement in 2004, there is higher flow of well-educated foreigners from Eastern Europe and Sweden. After 2004 there are many workers from European countries such as- Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Cyprus and Malta (Norway, 2011).

In order to get a good overview of Norwegian culture with comparison to other countries, it is useful to explore it through Hofstede's dimensions – power distance, individualism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance.
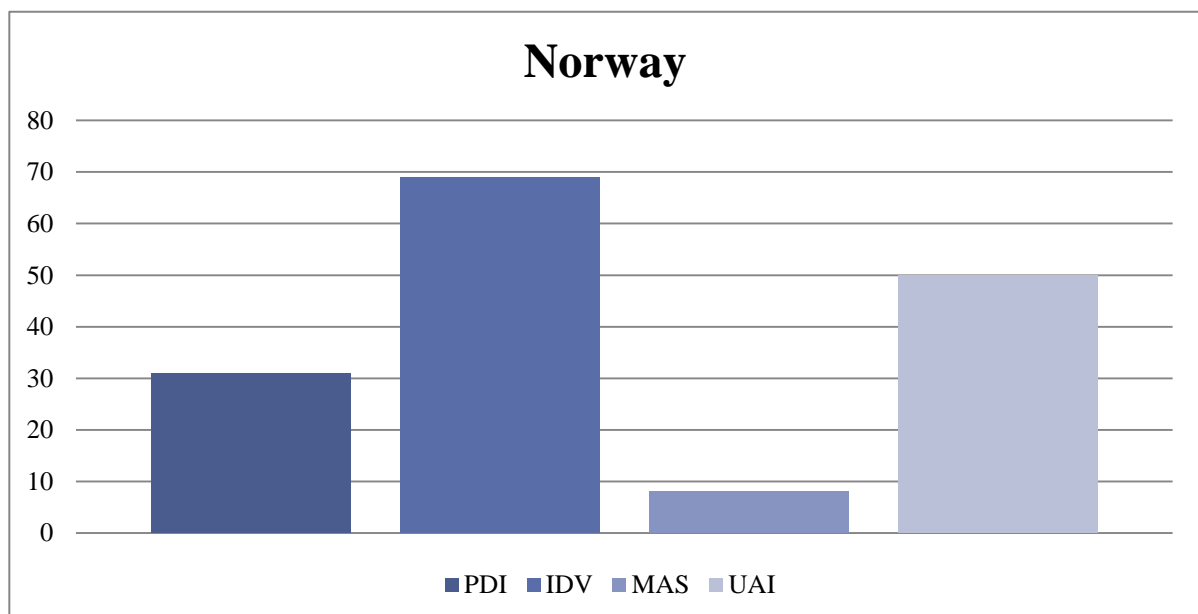
FIGURE 5. DESCRIPTION OF EACH OF HOFSTEDE'S DIMENSION (SOURCE: HTTP://GEERT-HOFSTEDE.COM/NORWAY.HTML)

In the table above there are described Hofstede' s dimensions concerning Norway.

1. Power distance (PDI) - Norway shows a low score on this dimension (31). That means that Norwegian style is independent, is non - hierarchical, everyone has equal rights and power is decentralized, managers share their experience with each other, prevail smaller wage differentials. Also employees can ask for help from their colleagues. They do not appreciate control and personal communication is direct and based on first name basis.

2. According to research, Norway is individualistic (IDV) country with a score 69. That means that Norwegians are "Self" oriented and an individual opinion has a high value. They respect the right to privacy and strongly distinguish private life and work. Working relationship is based on contract and management of individuals is a priority.

3. Norway with a low score of masculinity 8 is a second "*most feminine society*" after Sweden. There is a 40 percent quota which explains the highest proportion of female non-executive directors in the world. *Societal solidarity in life is important; work to live and DO your best.* Quality of life and people are important as well as taking care of environment.

4. As for uncertainty avoidance, research shows that Norway scores 50. People do not show much their emotions and are relaxed, avoid taking risks. There are focusing on planning things. Norway is a pragmatic culture.

2.5. Other cultures

One of the most extensive researches, culminating the development of groups of countries was the study performed by Ronen and Shenkar in 1985. It is useful for managers working in the international arena to see how countries are divided on the basis of similar values. Country clusters are based on four factors – 1) the importance of work goals; 2) need deficiency, fulfilment, and job satisfaction; 3) managerial and organization issues, and 4) work role and interpersonal orientation. The countries are grouped together by three dimensions- geography, language and religion.(Katz & Seifer, 1996) The approach was produced by synthesis of all previous studies and there were identified eight groups of countries. Countries which are not included in any group are considered as independent. Countries are grouped geographically. The names of the clusters are explaining geographic areas. These groups are listed below (Ronen & Shenkar, 1985).

Cluster Nr.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	x
Countries	Australia	Austria	Denmark	Belgium	Argentina	Greece	Hong Kong	Bahrain	Japan
	Canada	Germany	Finland	France	Chile	Iran	Malaysia	Kuwait	Brazil
	New Zealand	Switzerland	Sweden	Italy	Colombia	Turkey	Philippines	Saudi Arabia	Russia
	UK		Norway	Portugal	Mexico		Singapore	United Arab Emirates	China
	USA			Spain	Peru		S. Vietnam	Oman	India
					Venezuela		Taiwan		
							Pakistan		
							Indonesia		
Cluster Name	Anglo	Germanic	Nordic	Latin European	Latin American	Near East	Far East	Arabic	Independents

TABLE 3. CLUSTER COUNTRIES

Classification of country groups can be useful for managers and other professionals, who need to determine the degree of cultural adaptation necessary when moving to a country with a different culture. When communicating with colleagues from the countries belonging to own group, the manager can rely on the relative similarities of values and light adaptation. For example, the interaction of Australians with the Canadians will be in some way in familiar territory. Moving to a country that is not in someone's' group may be more difficult due to highly probable difference in the values of: Mexican, departing for Saudi Arabia is likely to face greater difficulties in adapting, rather than Australian, departing for Canada.

According to Katz & Seifer (1996) the model of country clusters may be described in terms of Hofstede model. The integration of two models can be useful for Human Resource department in the multinational companies which can provide better information about each cluster and help to improve management training, modification of managerial style. That can ensure the effectiveness in international experiences. The main advantage, of course, is that this model is useful for ""'voluntary expatriate'" managers who maintain their global focus by changing employers rather than choosing to repatriate when asked to return to their home country."(Katz & Seifer, 1996) The model is provided below:

Country cluster	Power distance	Uncertainty avoidance	Individualism	Masculinity
Anglo	Low to medium	Medium	High	High
Germanic	Low to medium	Low to medium	Medium to high	High
Nordic	Low to medium	Low to medium	Medium to high	Low
Latin European	Medium to high	High	Medium to high	Medium to high
Latin American	Medium to high	High	Low	Medium to high
Near Eastern	High	High	Low	Medium
Far Eastern	Low to medium	Low to medium	Low	Medium
Arab	High	Medium	Medium	Medium

TABLE 4. A UNIFIED MODEL OF NATIONAL CULTURE (KATZ & SEIFER, 1996)

Countries which are in Anglo cluster – UK, US, in general have a low to medium power distance index, a medium uncertainty avoidance index, high individualism index and high masculinity. Managers in these countries are risk and reward-oriented, giving directions to employees only when it is necessary.

Nordic cluster is the most close to Germanic cluster. Norway is a part of a Nordic cluster, having a low to medium power distance index, a low to medium uncertainty avoidance index, and a medium to high individualism index. The masculinity index score is low. Managers in these countries tend to be reward-oriented, encourage worker initiative, and rely less heavily on rules and regulations to achieve their objectives.

Near Eastern cluster includes Iran and other countries. There is high power distance index, low to medium uncertainty avoidance, low individualism and medium index of masculinity. Managers are group reward-oriented with a tendency to listen to subordinates opinions in the decision making. India and Russia are not included in any of the clusters. These countries are separated from the clusters because they are not similar to one another.

As was mentioned before, the term "integration" is not frequently used in the academic literature. Below are provided some of the widely used concepts in terms of integration.

2.6. Acculturation

The study of processes of acculturation became engaged at the beginning of the 20th century by American cultural anthropologists R. Redfield, R. Linton and M. Herskovits (1936): *"acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups". "Individuals generally act in ways that correspond to cultural influences and expectations" (Berry, 1997, p. 7).*

Acculturation can be related to enculturation that means the process of learning about owns culture as a person is brought up there, and deculturation - unlearning about original culture when moving to a new culture. Cultural factors have influence on the individual's behaviour. Berry defines acculturation as "*a dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members*" (Berry, 2005, p. 698).

ISSUE 1:

MAINTENANCE OF HERITAGE CULTURE AND IDENTITY

ISSUE 2:
RELATIONSHIPS
SOUGHT
AMONG
GROUPS

INTEGRATION   ASSIMILATION

SEPARATION   MARGINALIZATION

MULTICULTURALISM   MELTING POT

SEGREGATION   EXCLUSION

STRATEGIES OF
ETHNOCULTURAL
GROUPS

STRATEGIES OF
LARGER SOCIETY
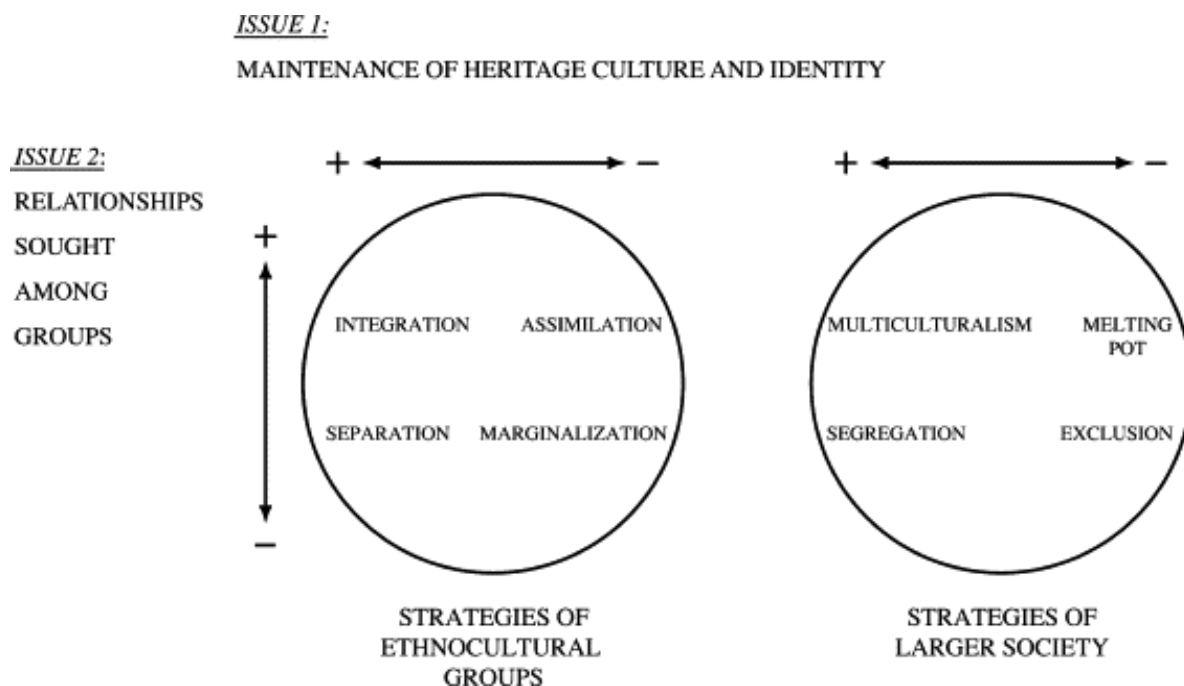
FIGURE 6. ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES IN ETHNOCULTURAL GROUPS AND THE LARGER SOCIETY (DAVID L. SAM, 2006, P. 35)

The author describes the different acculturation attitudes from the individuals' perspective and the dominant group in the host country. There are different acculturation strategies. In the process of acculturation an individual has to solve two problems – (1) the preservation of their cultural identity and (2) the inclusion of a foreign culture. According to Berry (2006) there are two dimensions. The first one is the degree to what people want to maintain their own cultural values, and second is the degree the people want to have a contact with members of other cultural groups. On the left side of the figure there are described four different strategies for groups or individuals when they are entering the environment of host culture. The choice of these strategies depends on the acculturation attitude – "integration", "assimilation", "separation" or "marginalization". On the right side, it shows the ways how dominant groups expect newcomers acculturate in a new society. These ways are called "multiculturalism", "melting pot", "segregation" and "exclusion". The understanding of four strategies of intercultural relations is highly important for the purpose of this thesis. Thus, it is necessary to look at each of them closer.

Integration (a stable biculturalism) (Thomas K. Nakayama, 2010, p. 274)

This acculturation strategy includes identification with both the home and the host culture. Individuals maintain their own values, beliefs but in the same time are open to interact with

people from other cultural backgrounds. From the dominant group perspective this strategy is called "multiculturalism".

Assimilation

The way of acculturation in which a person totally accepts norms and values of another culture and do not wish to keep his/her own cultural identity. When considering dominant groups this strategy is known as "melting pot". Assimilation involves a total immersion into a new culture and the abandonment of one's own culture (Berry, 1997). Assimilation means not becoming identical to someone but being similar. It is seen as a one-way process. According to Kim (2001) "*the term assimilation has often been employed to emphasize acceptance and internalization of the host culture by the individual*" (Kim, 2001, p. 31).

Separation

In contrast to assimilation strategy, separation provides a rejection of a foreign culture and holding on to the original culture. Individuals wish to avoid having a contact with other cultural groups. Dominant groups see this strategy as "segregation".

Marginalization

Marginalization strategy means on the one hand, the loss of identity with the own culture, on the other - the lack of identification with the culture of the majority. This situation arises because of the inability to maintain own identity (because of some external factors) and the lack of interest in obtaining a new identity (perhaps because of discrimination or segregation on the part of the culture). From the dominant group this strategy is seen as "exclusion".

From the four acculturation strategies the integration strategy is most preferred in most studies, and marginalization is the least. Acculturation process is a mutual, and is possible if the interacting groups of majority and minority choose this strategy: Integrating group is ready to take the attitudes and values of a new culture for themselves, and the dominant group has willingness to accept these people, respecting their rights and values.

2.7. Adjustment

Cross-cultural adjustment is the extent to which individuals are psychologically comfortable living abroad (Black, 1990), (Caligiuri, 2000). From organization's perspective the degree of adjustment predicts performance and completion of the assignment but from the manager's

perspective, adjustment is a factor of a job satisfaction and psychological well-being. Adjustment is categorized as a degree of fit between expatriate, and both the socio-cultural and work environment (Aycan, 1997). In turn, Searle and Ward (1990) note that "*intercultural adjustment is an internal and psychological state that can be assessed by the individual who is experiencing a new cultural environment*" (Waxin, 2004, p. 61). Adjustment is seen as internal, psychological and emotional concept, which is measured from the expatriates' experience living and working abroad. There is a distinguishing between three forms of adjustment – (1) psychological, (2) sociocultural and (3) work adjustment (Aycan, 1997).

Psychological Adjustment

Psychological or general adjustment is explained by a situation when expatriates maintain mental and physical well-being. It is marked by a feeling of satisfaction with different aspects of life. The degree of satisfaction depends on the individuals' attitude, personality and social support. Psychological adjustment is affected by personality, life changes, and social support whereas sociocultural is influenced by other factors, for example, amount of contact with host members, length of staying in the host country, cultural identity and cultural distance. (Ward & Kennedy, 1992)

Sociocultural Adjustment

Sociocultural or interaction adjustment means becoming effective in a new society and successfully maintains interpersonal relations with members from the host country both inside and outside work.

Work Adjustment

Work adjustment concerns affective accomplishment of required tasks and showing a positive attitude towards a new work environment. SIEs can experience lower work adjustment because they need to adjust to a new job at unknown organization, while OEs are more or less familiar with a position because they have job descriptions before the departure.

It is worth noting that socio-cultural adjustment (behavioural changes) is adopted involuntarily because of the different circumstances while psychological adjustment (attitudinal changes) is likely to be more voluntarily (Jun, Lee, & Gentry, 1997).

2.7.1.   Language as Adjustment Facilitator

Selmer and Lauring (2011) build up on Aycan and argue that language is an integral part of socio-cultural adjustment. According to them, not only does the knowledge of the host country's language facilitate the adjustment process, but it is also viewed as one of the foundations of expatriate's adjustment to the host country, which facilitates understanding of the new culture. They further explain that while language proficiency may have positive connotations to general and integration adjustments, it might not be the case with the job adjustment. That is however explained very simply; most of communication at work is being conducted in English which is particularly true to international organizations, thus making the ability to speak the host language of lesser importance when it comes to adjusting to work place.

The research by Selmer and Lauring (2011, p. 10) indicates that *"the longer the expatriates stay in the foreign location, the better they can learn the host language"*.

2.7.2.   Cross-Cultural Adjustment Process

Apart from the above mentioned, there are five components of cross-cultural adjustment process – 1) pre-departure training, 2) previous overseas experience, 3) organizational selection mechanisms, 4) individual skills, and 5) non-work factors. First three components describe the issues before expatriate leaves home country and remain two are relevant after expatriate is in the host country (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 1991).

FIGURE 7. CROSS-CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROCESS

This research is focused on describing the dimensions after expatriate moves the foreign country.

Individual skills

In order to be affective in cross-culture assignments there are necessary skills which should be assessed. According to Mendenhall and Oddou (1985) they are categorized into three dimensions: (Black et al., 1991, pp. 294-295)

1. *the self-dimension, which encompasses skills that enable the expatriate to maintain mental health, psychological well-being, self-efficacy, and effective stress management;*
2. *the relationship dimension, which constitutes the array of skills necessary for the fostering of relationships with host nationals;*
3. *the perception dimension, which entails the cognitive abilities that allow the expatriate to correctly perceive and evaluate the host environment and its actors.*

Non-work factors

The first important non-work factor which plays a crucial role in the international assignments is a cultural novelty or cultural distance. This factor will be described later on because this is the focus of the thesis.

The second factor concerns the adjustment of the expatriate's spouse and family. Researchers note that if spouse of family cannot adjust in a new country, the adjustment for an expatriate will be not successful in spite of the personal skills and professionalism (Black et al., 1991).

2.7.3. Culture Shock

Based on the literature, before assessing adjustment, expatriates might go through a process of culture shock. Marx considers that in the ways how foreigners manage culture shock depend their successes or failure in international business. In order to understand foreign counterparts, international managers should first understand themselves and develop as emotional, thinking and social beings. Culture shock is a "positive sign" and normal process of future international success (Marx, 2001). Entering a new culture there are many differences with a home culture such as norms, beliefs, attitudes, values and others. All these differences can lead to a culture shock.

Oberg (1960) is one of the first who described this phenomenon viewing it as "occupational disease" where people suffer because of entering a new country with a huge amount of differences. Oberg (1954, p. 1) sees culture shock as *"precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse"* for instance, customs, gestures, words. According to Oberg culture shock is described by four stages – (1) honeymoon, (2) irritation and hostility, (3) recovery and (4) adjustment (Marx, 2001, pp. 7-11):

Stage I. "Honeymoon"

Most people begin their lives abroad with a positive attitude, even euphoria. All seems new, exotic and attractive. In the honeymoon stage a person notices the most obvious differences: differences in language, climate, architecture, cuisine, geography, etc. This is - the specific differences and they are easy to evaluate. The fact that they are concrete and visible does not make them scary. This stage may last from a few days or weeks to 6 months depending on the circumstances. This state of mind is usually short-lived, if the "visitor" decides to stay and meet the actual conditions of life in the country. Honeymoon stage is precedes before the second stage which is characterized by hostility and aggression towards the "host" party.

Stage II "Irritation and hostility"

This is a crisis stage when cultural differences cause problems at work, at home and in daily life. Suddenly, all the differences are seen exaggerated. On the emotional level, it leads to loss, apathy, loneliness, confusion, isolation and lack of support from host country. Many expatriates never go through this stage. In any case, this period of culture shock is not only inevitable but also beneficial because it makes foreigners more resistant to stress.

Stage III "Recovery"

This stage expects an understanding and predicting patterns of behavior, ability to go around in the new culture, deal with daily activities, and use the language. It can occur in different ways, for some - slowly and quietly, for others - rapidly, with a dedication to the local culture and traditions. This stage has an obvious advantage - an understanding and acceptance of "code of conduct", the achievement of much comfort in communication. It is important to realize that all these different feelings - a natural component of adaptation to new environment.

Stage IV "Adjustment" or "Biculturalism"

The last phase is a person's ability to effectively operate in two cultures where new customs are accepted and enjoyed. Ability to get this stage makes assignments positive and growth oriented. Nevertheless, many expatriates do not experience the fourth stage continuing to operate at the third stage.

In addition, adjustment can be subjective or objective. Subjective adjustment shows how comfortable expatriates feel in their new roles; objective adjustment describes a command of role requirements and performance. Adjustment is easier for people who move to the countries where the cultures and business practices are similar. "*Those transitioning between Western Europe and the United States or Canada, for example, typically adapt easier that those going to China or Yemen*" (Deresky, 2011, p. 367).

Aycan (1997, p. 435) argues that "*adjustment is a multifaceted phenomenon which is influenced by both the expatriate manager's characteristics and the organizational approach to expatriation*". So, successful integration depends on both managerial competences and organizational support by host and home companies before and during the assignment.

2.8. Adaptation

The phenomenon of cross-cultural adaptation has been investigated since the beginning of the 20th century in the United States (Kim, 2001). Cross-cultural adaptation is defined as "*the dynamic process by which individuals, upon relocating to new, unfamiliar, or changed cultural environments, establish/re-establish and maintain relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationships with those environment*" (Kim, 2001, p. 31). According to Kim, immigrants who settle in a new country for a long period, is likely to be more committed to adapting than temporary sojourners. Adaptation to a new country need not be assimilation (Harorimana, 2010). That means that expatriates do not need to change their cultural practices or beliefs. There is seen also positive impact on expatriates work performance. According to Berry and Kim, cross-cultural adaptation can be analysed as a state or a process. If it is defined as a state, adaptation is a degree of fit between individual and environment, if as a process; it is an acculturation of a newcomer. Adaptation is described as a process of learning through communication (Berry, 1997; Kim, 2001).

Berry (2002, pp. 369-370) defines adaptation as "*the long-term ways in which people rearrange their lives and settle down into a more-or-less satisfactory existence*". This is a process that results in an outcome which can be both positive and negative.

2.9. Preliminary Summary

This chapter covered a broad aspect of what it means to be an expatriate, where different views and approaches were highlighted. Main parts of this chapter included defining and differentiating between the two distinct groups of expatriates – SIE and OE, as well as defining culture and highlighting various cultural aspects that should be taken into account when dealing with different cultures, such as masculinity vs. femininity of the country, avoidance of uncertainty, individualism vs. collectivism and power distance.

The literature also revealed cultural aspects of Norway and other countries, which is deemed to be an important part in further data analysis. It was found that presented theories represent the concept of integration to a lesser extent, whereas acculturation, adjustment and adaptation as processes of interaction with other cultures are more widely used.

In general, the theories describe components that were found relevant to expatriate life before and after relocation and the processes that an expatriate is most likely to go through. It was

found that the culture, cultural difference and distance, the perception of host culture, the language and language ability, expatriate education and previous expatriate experience, expatriate individual skills, the length of stay, organizational support, selection mechanisms, work environment, training before departing play an important part in how expatriates integrate. Other equally important factors are the non-work related factors, that are found to be the values, norms, beliefs and attitudes of an expatriate, as well as the degree of preservation of own values.

As mentioned previously, the literature is limited on concept of integration, but the above mentioned factors might have similarities with the factors that would influence the level of integration of an expat with the host environment. Those factors will therefore be taken into account in the development of framework that is presented in the next chapter.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will introduce the theoretical framework to the reader that was developed based on previously reviewed theory relevant to the study.

Theoretical framework is defined by Sekaran and Bougie (2010, p. 80) as a *"logically developed, described, and elaborated network of associations among the variables deemed relevant to the problem situation"*. The research seeks to (1) define integration and (2) investigate whether and how expatriates want to become part of the local society, as well as (3) how do expatriates experience the process of integration in international companies operating in Norway. The main goal of this section is to develop theoretical framework by identifying the dependent and independent variables. The framework is the basis of the entire research; therefore, this chapter will reveal the relationships between the independent variables that influence the dependent variable. This will finally bring to the research questions defined and further developed.

3.1. Dependent variable

The dependent variable is the variable of primary interest to the researcher (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). By understanding and describing the main variable, the researcher comes to answers and solutions to the problem.

In this particular research, the dependent variable is defined as:

How do highly educated expatriates define and experience "integration" in international companies in Norway?

The dependant variable may therefore be deemed as integration.

3.2. Independent variable

An independent variable influences dependent variable in either positive or negative (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The researcher is to group the independent variables and see do they and how do they influence the dependent variable, as any slight change in independent variable directly affects the dependent one. The independent variables were identified (see Figure 8)

and the ones deemed most important, with the highest significance and rate of influence were described and chosen to be studied.
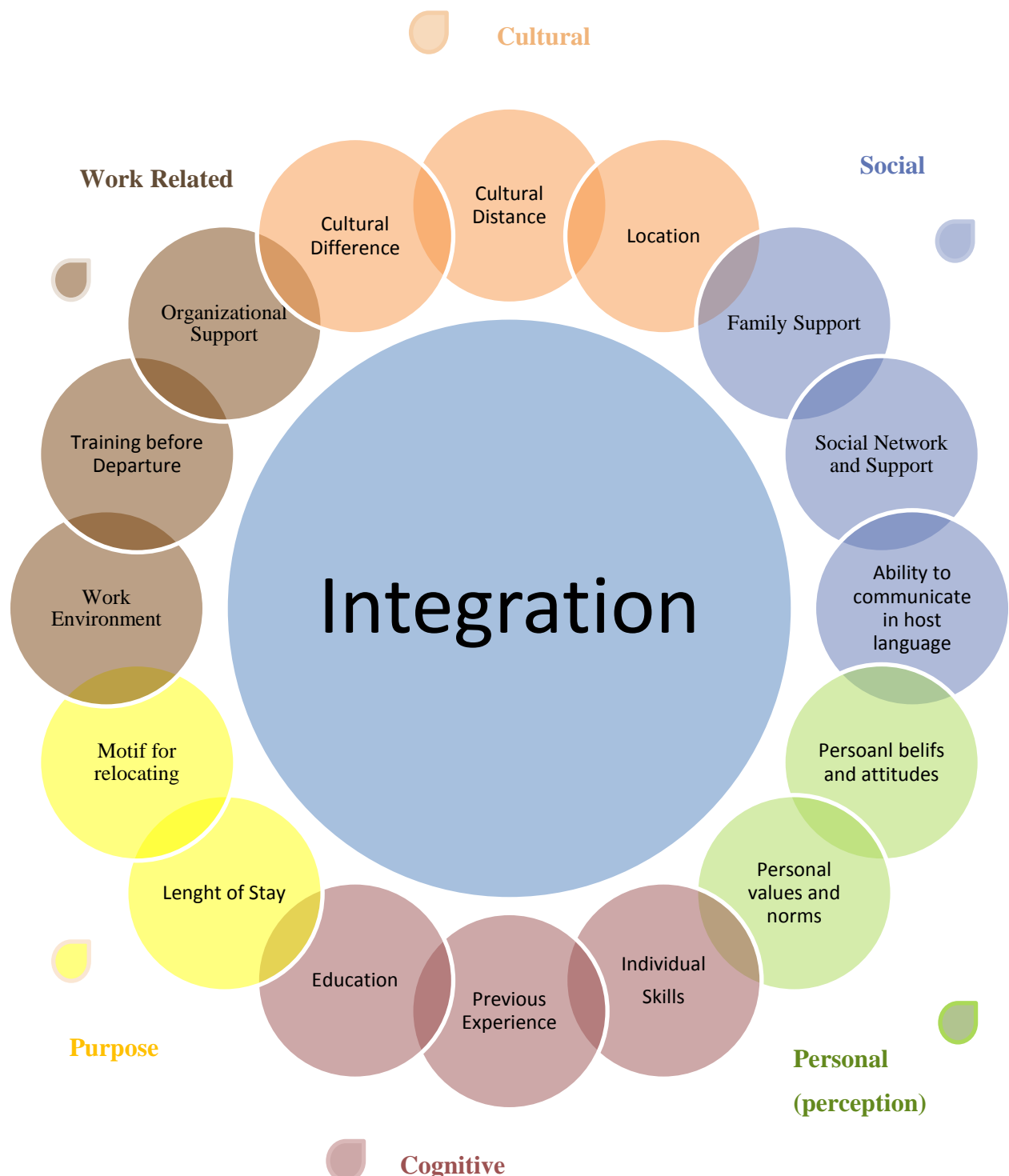
FIGURE 8. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The figure above shows that there are elementary independent variables influencing the dependent variable, which may as well be grouped into six dimensions: (1) Work-related, (2) Cultural, (3) Social, (4) Personal, (5) Cognitive and (6) Purpose. From the bigger picture those factors form two groups – individualistic and the outside environment. The individualistic influencers are those grouped in social, personal, cognitive and purpose dimension as those are considered to be individualistically driven and dependant on the individual itself. As to the other group of variables – the environmental factors, they do not depend on the individual itself, but rather on an outside world and can be hardly changed by the individual. Factors within environmental group are those named under work-related and cultural dimensions.

The main independent variables that are to be studied further are identified in the following figure.
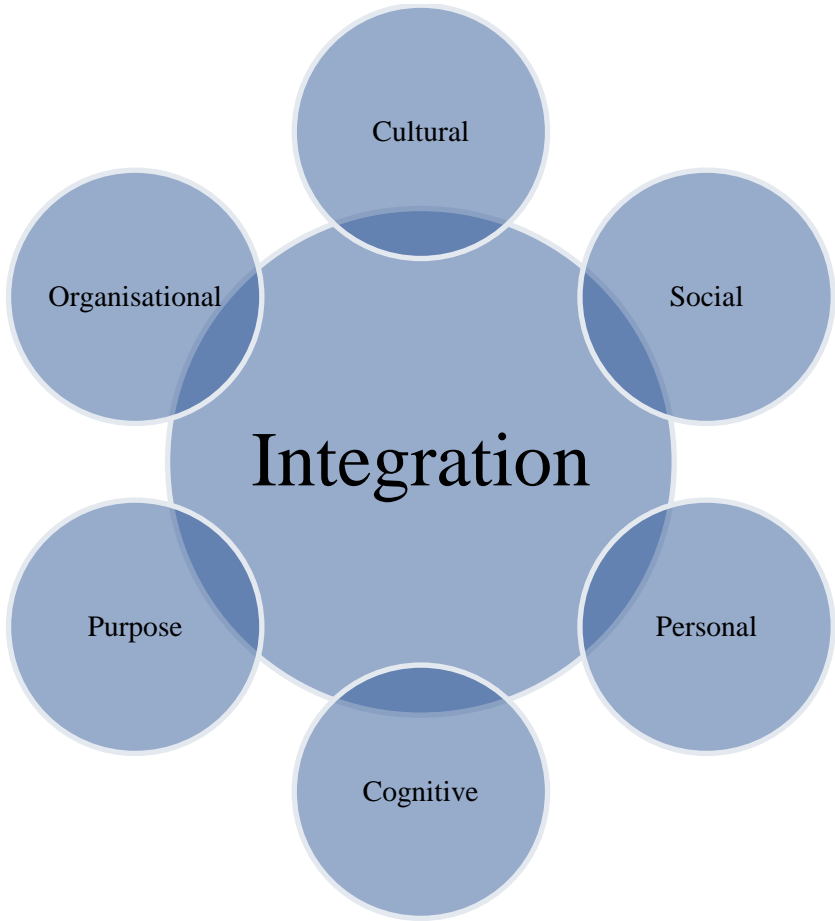
FIGURE 9. SHORT FRAMEWORK

After having identified dependent and independent variables, and established the relationships among them through logical reasoning, based on the theoretical framework it became evident what direction should further investigation go.

3.3. Preliminary Summary

This chapter identified independent variables, provided description and highlighted the ones of highest significance, namely: work-related, cultural, social, personal (perception), cognitive and purpose. Relation among the variables as well as their influence on dependant variable has been established through logical reasoning and presented in figure 9.

Having identified these variables, the interview questions were generated, results to which are presented in chapter five four of this study.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This part of the thesis explains the methods of research, namely how was the research conducted. First, the choice of qualitative research method is discussed, followed by explanation of how the information was collected and finally, how was the data analysed.

4.1. Research Method

Most common distinctions are between quantitative and qualitative research methods. The first method is used in the natural and social studies for studying natural phenomena. In this method numbers are more valued, commonly using statistical tools for analysing data.

Qualitative research methods help to better understand people and their opinion. They are developed to study social and cultural phenomena for example action research, case study research, and grounded theory. One of the advantages of qualitative research is that *"it allows a researcher to see and understand the context (or multiple contexts) within which decisions and actions take place…qualitative researches argues that if you want to understand people's motivations, their reasons, their actions, and the context for their beliefs and actions in an in-depth way, qualitative research is the best"* (Myers, 2009, p. 5).

The research design of this thesis is deemed exploratory as its main purpose is to discover ideas and insights. Zikmund (2003, p. 111) states that "*Exploratory research usually provides greater understanding of a concept or crystallizes a problem, rather than providing precise measurement or quantification*". Thus, the focus of this qualitative research is on words and observations.

There are many forms of qualitative data collection methods, for instance, observations (open/hidden), depth interviews (individual depth interview/ focus group interview), projective techniques and content analysis. For the purpose of this thesis, the most suitable form is considered individual depth interviews. The in-depth interview is "*a technique designed to elicit a vivid picture of the participant's perspective on the research topic*" (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005, p. 29). The interviews with expatriates will help to conduct follow up questions if some questions are needed to be emphasized.

Individual depth interviews are conducted on a one-to-one basis between an interviewer and a respondent. The purpose of in-depth interviewing is not to get the answers on the certain questions but to understand the lived experience of people.

There are three basic types of interviews - structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. The semi-structured interviews were chosen for the thesis because this type of interview takes the best approaches, whilst minimizing the risks. "*The use of some pre-formulated questions, but no strict adherence to them. New questions might emerge during the conversation*" (Myers, 2009, p. 125). It gives some structure with the improvisation possibility. This type is the one that is most commonly used in business and management.

4.2. Sampling technique

According to Zikmund et al (2010) in order to draw a sample there are following six practical sampling steps:

| Define the population | Identify the sampling frame | Select a sampling procedure | Determine the sample size | Select the sample elements | Collect the data |
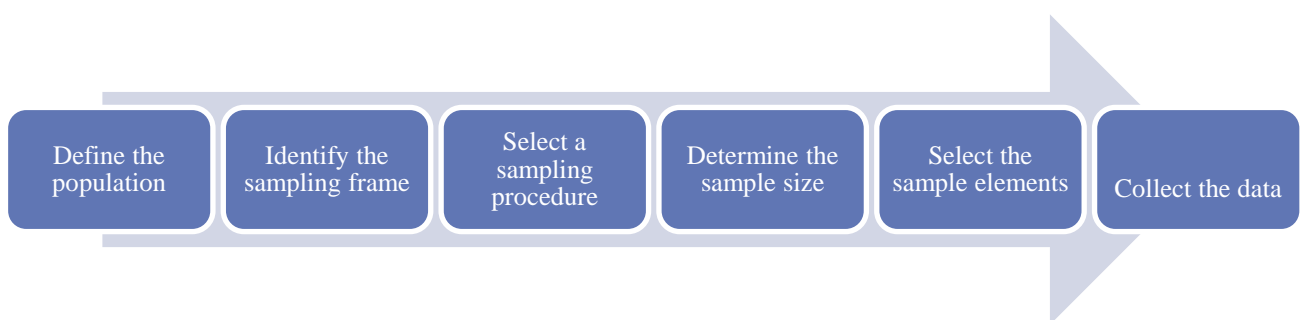
FIGURE 10. SAMPLING STEPS; SOURCE ZIKMUND ET AL (2010)

The type of respondents for this research was indicated by the research problem and was found purposely. Expatriates from different cultural backgrounds were chosen in order to understand the differences and similarities between their home culture and Norway in terms of the integration process. This respondent group was able to provide adequate and relevant information to the research under study as well as comment on their view on integration and integration process. The sampling techniques used was purposive - judgement sampling and snowball sampling (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

Sampling techniques provide a range of methods that enable researcher to reduce the amount of collectable data, by considering only data from subgroup rather than all possible cases or elements. Purposive sampling is a nonprobability sampling that does not involve random selection (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Respondents were approached through personal

network, one was recommended by other interviewee. The majority of respondents (five expatriates working within the same company) were found with the help of Human Recourse department and then contacted directly by researcher. It is found to be best suited to collect data from international organizations with higher number of expatriate employees as it allows the researcher to select respondents that seem to have most valuable experience or knowledge needed to answer the research questions.

Respondents represent three different international companies operating in Norway – ExxonMobil Corporation in Stavanger, National OilWell Varco, Vestas Wind Systems in Kristiansand. The researcher had the opportunity to go to Stavanger and meet personally five expatriates in ExxonMobil company. The choice of these companies was based on the actuality of those sectors in Norway and as well on personal interest because the author as a future self-initiated expatriate has an interest to live and work in these two cities- Kristiansand or Stavanger. The companies operate internationally and represent the most dynamic industries- oil and gas; and wind energy.

Oil and gas industry has become a centre of attention because it is the third biggest oil exporter in the world and rapidly growing industry. National Oilwell Varco is the major employer in Kristiansand with 1,500 staff members. The company is a worldwide leader in providing vital mechanical components for land and offshore drilling (Hilde, 2011).

Data was gathered involving face-to-face interviews with participants in which appointments were set before the meeting. Eight expatriates from the diverse backgrounds were chosen for interviews - United States, Russia, United Kingdom, Iran and India.

Based on the theory, expatriates were divided into two groups - five self-initiated and three organizational expatriates. Three of the expatriates are female and five are male. The length of stay in Norway among the respondents is from five months to three years. Concerning educational background – two respondents have Bachelor degree in Engineering; three respondents have a Master degree in Engineering, and one a PhD in Engineering, whereas others have a Master degree in Philology and PhD in Geology respectively. The majority of expatriates held Engineering positions, as well Geologist, Planning and Commercial technician, and one - analyst in Economical support for Drilling Department.

In collecting data there are two basic types of errors that arise in research – sampling errors and non-sampling errors. The sampling errors were avoided by interviewing expatriates from

different countries, though the majority of the respondents are engineers, none of them are managers because it is difficult to find non-Norwegian managers working in Norway. It can limit the findings.

4.3. Primary and Secondary Sources

There is an important distinction in the social sciences between primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are unpublished data which the researcher has gathered from people or different organizations. For this thesis, semi - structured individual one-on-one interviews are chosen as a primary data.

Secondary data included published sources such as books, journal articles, and newspaper articles.

4.4. Data Collection

Before the interviews, open ended questions are elaborated based on the research problem and theoretical background. The interview guide consists of 24 questions (see appendix 1) and is focused on understanding the differences and similarities between two categories of expatriates according the cultural distance between Norway and their home countries. Also, there was a goal to define to which "integration" definition respondents are closest and see on the factors which differentiate them from each other.

All the interviews were conducted in English; however, the researcher of this thesis could speak mother-tongue with one of the expatriate from Russia. Interviews took approximately 45 minutes. In order not to lose any of the comments, all respondents were asked a permission to tape the interviews. Prior each interview, all respondents were informed that the information will be kept confidentially. No names or personal information is presented in their answers. However, some of the direct quotations were used to analyse the data in order to compare the information with academic literature.

In addition, interviewed expatriates were briefly introduced about the purpose of the research and the main focus. The questions were not sent before the interviews and no theoretical information was provided in order not to confuse personal thoughts and ideas.

Five of the interviews took place in Stavanger at ExxonMobil office in Forus, one in the University of Agder, one in the public place in Kristiansand (cafe) and one at expatriate's home.

4.5. Data Analysis

There are different ways of analysing and interpreting qualitative data. As the goal of the most research is to provide information, there is a big difference between raw data and information.   The data analysis process involved coding and categorizing of the data collected, to establish patterns and draw the conclusions. "*A code can be a word that is used to describe or summarize a sentence, a paragraph, or even a whole piece of text such as an interview*" (Myers, 2009, p. 167). Coding was used to reduce the data and was found helpful for retrieving and organizing the data. For this research coding was approached by categorizing the text and using keywords. Content analysis was used to analyse articles, websites and company internal documents. These analysis techniques are most appropriate for analysing qualitative data (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010), as they are not numerical.

The author followed Ryan's and Bernard's (2000) six fundamental steps to code the data:

- ❖ Sampling – aims to identify the texts which should be analysed and the basic units of analysis within the texts;
- ❖ Identifying themes – can be derived from the text or from the literature;
- ❖ Building codebooks – organizing lists of codes;
- ❖ Marking texts – codes assigning to units of texts;
- ❖ Constructing models (relationships among codes) – to identify how the themes, concepts, beliefs are linked to each other;
- ❖ Testing relationships among codes against empirical data.

4.6. Reliability and Validity

The reliability and validity play a crucial role in the quantitative and qualitative approaches. It is argued that it is difficult to evaluate validity and reliability when using a qualitative research. However, there is a need for some extend of qualitative check and measure for the research. Taking into account the idea of testing, the most important test in qualitative research is its quality. The important questions which should be answered doing a research

are following: are the conclusions from the qualitative analysis correct? Are they valid and reliable in the sense that they are correctly measured and repeated in the study?

According to Zikmund (2003, p. 300) reliability is *"the degree to which measures are free from error and therefore yield consistent results"*. However, the other author stresses that measurement has no relevance in qualitative research. *"..The concept of reliability is even misleading in qualitative research. If a qualitative study is discussed with reliability as a criterion, the consequence is rather that the study is no good"* (Stenbacka, 2001, p. 552). Seale (1999) argues that in order to ensure reliability in a qualitative study it is crucial to examine trustworthiness. *"Trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability"* (Seale, 1999, p. 467). In order to build it, the theoretical framework has been developed related to past valid theory and the respondents are chosen according to the purpose of the research.

Stenbacka (2001) argues that to create a good validity in a qualitative approach is simple. Based on a specified problem area, a researcher is interested in understanding another person's reality. *"..The understanding of the phenomenon is valid if the informant is part of the problem area and if he/she is given the opportunity to speak freely according to his/her own knowledge structures"* (Stenbacka, 2001, p. 552). Using non-forcing interviews with the strategically chosen respondents can be considered that the validity is achieved.

To ensure that the data acquired was valid in this study, the following steps were taken:

- ❖ The literature was undertaken to understand how personal in-depth interviews should be conducted.
- ❖ Interview guidelines were generated, which ensured that interviews focused on the topic under investigation.
- ❖ The purpose of the study was clearly explained to respondents, and concerning issues were resolved.
- ❖ The interview procedure was explained to respondents. The respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality, which encouraged frankness during interviews.

These steps ensured that the interviews were conducted in environment and under conditions accepted to respondents, which confirms that the process was trustworthy.

To ensure the reliability of the data, the following steps were taken:

❖ The anonymity and confidentiality provided, enabled respondents to provide information strictly for the purpose of the study. A rapport with respondents was established, and a relationship of trust, which reinforced the credibility of the study.

❖ The knowledge of the researcher on the topic ensured that the discussion levels were high and relevant to the study.

For obtaining validity and reliability, it is important that a researcher has an open-minded and critical approach to the results. In order to increase validity and reliability of qualitative research the method of triangulation is appropriate. According to Patton (2002, p. 247) *"triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods. This can mean using several kinds of methods or data, including using both quantitative and qualitative approaches"*. There are different kinds of triangulation which can be used for improving – researcher triangulation. This method involves comparing different researchers 'analysis and interpretations on the same topic; data triangulation includes data collection and comparison from different sources; method triangulation when qualitative and quantitative methods on the same topic are combined and compared; and the last method is theory triangulation. This method is the most suitable for this thesis. It includes using different theories and perspectives in order to interpret the data. The main idea is to control that results obtained by one researcher using one theoretical perspective could be obtained by another researcher (Golafshani, 2003).

Possible sources of errors that were identified in this research are following:

❖ Providing in-depth interviews requires a skilled interviewer in order to get better results. The author of this research has little experience in conducting in-depth interviews that can lead to misinterpreted and leading questions.

❖ As the respondents share their own experience and thoughts, they might not disclose the information which could be useful for the research.

❖ Respondents are not completely familiar with the theoretical perspectives and therefore may have difficulties in interpretation of terms. Hence, there can be seen no correlation between "real" stories and theory.

4.7. Preliminary Summary

Chapter four explained the methodology that was used to conduct the research, as well as it presented the research design. This is an exploratory, qualitative in nature, conducted in non-contrived setting, with minimal researchers interference, and the data collection methods used were face-to-face depth interviews. The sampling techniques used were judgemental and snowball sampling aimed at both group of respondents, (SIE and OE). Validity and reliability of the research are also covered by this chapter.

PROBLEM STATEMENT	Purpose of the Study	Type of Investigation	Extent of Interferance	Study Setting	Measurement	DATA ANALYSIS
	•Explore	•Descriptive	•Minimal	•Non-contrived	•Coding •Categorizing	
	Unit of Analysis	Sampling Design	Time Horizon		Time Horizon	
	•Group	•Purposive-judgemental •Snowball	•Cross-sectional (one-shot)		•Face-to-face interviews •Documentaion	

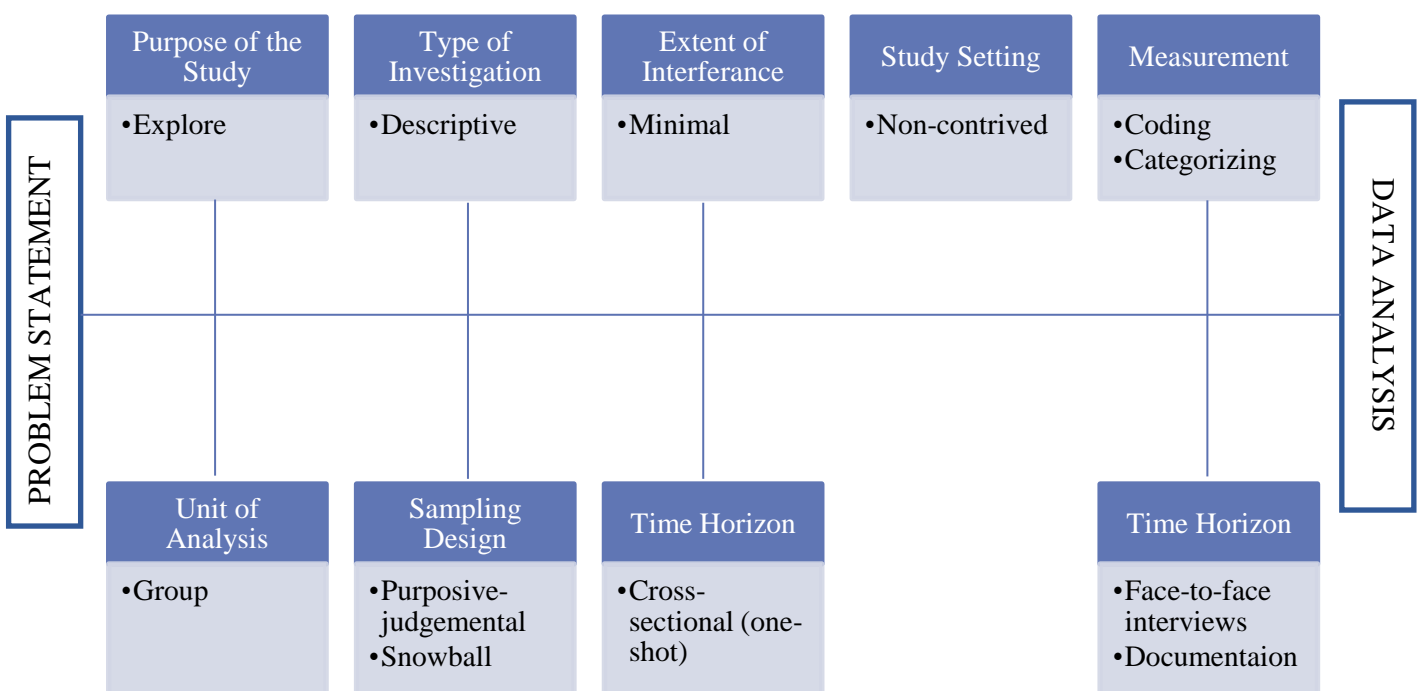FIGURE 11. RESEARCH DESIGN; SOURCE (SEKARAN & BOUGIE, 2010, P. 102)

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and discusses the findings obtained from the in-depth interviews. The data is presented accordingly to the conceptual framework presented in chapter three which consists of six main factors. The first part of the findings is aimed at categorizing the groups based on their reasons for coming to Norway (F. Purpose). After that an aspect of culture and culture difference is analysed (F. Culture), followed by findings and discussion on Social factors, such as social networks and language. Fourth part of the findings is focused around values and norms of expatriates (F. Personal). Next, findings on previous experience and knowledge (F. Cognitive) will be presented and discussed. Last but not the least, findings on organisational factors are presented and discussed through analysing the integration process in Norway. The findings also present expatriate definition of integration and compare it to the theory. Finally, all of the above findings and discussions, along with expatriates recommendations, are aimed at answering the main question, as seen by expatriates – how to achieve integration?

5.1. Reasons for coming to Norway – SIE and OE

The questions about the respondents' motivation to come and work in Norway are useful in categorizing expatriates into two groups – self-initiated or organizational expatriates. From the literature it was found that there are different types of expatriates. Therefore, in this research the focus is on the traditional expatriates who are sent abroad by their home companies and self-initiated expatriates who are employed as locals in Norway. The main purpose for this categorization is to see the differences between two groups and their experiences within integration process in Norway.

According to Howe-Wals& Schyns (2010) there are five main reasons for migration: economic factors; political factors; cultural factors, family factors (e.g., family reunion); and career factors (such as professional development).

From the five self-initiated expatriates, three moved to Norway because of the family factors. Two of the respondents started to work in Norway after graduation from the Norwegian and Swedish universities. It seems that the motivation for these two expatriates is career factors. The interviewed expatriate from Iran was studying before in Gothenburg, Sweden and after

that moved to Norway for working. The respondent from India, was studying in Ålesund, Norway and did not think about continuing his career in Norway.

"*My husband was sent back and I was working with him. He was sent back and I had to follow him.*" [SIE, Russia]

"*My wife is Norwegian, so we decided to go to live in Norway, we have 2 children, she wanted them to go to the Norwegian school*". [SIE, UK]

„*When I was studying, I was thinking I would go back to India, but I saw quite good opportunities here. Norway is Top5 in the world in ship design, ship technology*". [SIE, India]

EX. TYPE	REASONS FOR MOVING				
	Economic	Political	Cultural	Family	Career
SIE				3	2
OE					3
TOTAL				**3**	**5**

TABLE 5. REASONS FOR MOVING TO NORWAY

5.2. Expatriates definition of Integration

The concept "integration" is not widely used in the academic literature. The main purpose of the thesis is to explore how expatriates define the term integration, what does it mean to them.

The interviewed expatriates were asked to give their own formulation. From expatriates' pure definitions it can be concluded that to them the term "integration" means to become a part of a host society. Expatriates seem define the concept of integration as "acculturation" and "adaptation". Expatriates definitions against theoretical definition are provided below.

Theory	Findings
"*Acculturation is a dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members*". (Berry, 2005, p. 698)	-"*I guess there are two things – I change my behavior to fit more comfortably with people around me and people more a little bit to fit me*". SIE, UK. - "*Integration I think it's when you become part of something, you are maybe different coming in and you become part of something*". OE, US
Adaptation is the dynamic process by	-"*I would say that integration for me is knowing/feeling*

which individuals, upon relocating to new, unfamiliar, or changed cultural environments, establish/reestablish and maintain relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationships with those environment" (Kim, 2001, p. 31)	*I have established a social network in the place I am living in so that I feel part of a community rather than an outsider*". SIE, Scotland/UK -*"In my opinion, it means adaption with new society"*. SIE, Iran -*"I think the main purpose of this word is to become the part of the society"*. SIE, Russia -*"It's like integrating with people in a society"*. SIE, India
Adjustment is a fit between expatriate and both socio-cultural and work environment. (Aycan, 1997) Adjustment is the extent to which individuals are psychologically comfortable living abroad (Black, 1990), (Caligiuri, 2000).	- *"I guess there are two things – I change my behavior to fit more comfortably with people around me and a people more a little bit to fit me"*. SIE, UK -*"I have to be integrated in a society as much as I can in order to feel comfortable"*. SIE, UK
Integration is a part of acculturation strategy, an attitude of individual where he/she maintains their own values and beliefs, but remains open to interact with people from other cultural backgrounds. (D.L. Sam, 2006)	-*"To me I guess it's just how you involve yourself within the society, how do you become part of it, how do you involve other people into something"*. OE, US

TABLE 6. COMPARISON OF TERM "INTEGRATION" BETWEEN THEORY AND EXPATRIATES STATEMENTS

One of the respondents mentioned that integration is a different thing for him versus his family (OE, US), which actually does not fit to any of the proposed theory, nor does this statement discuss what it actually is to him and what the differences may be.

The expatriate from UK is closer to term "adaptation". He states that integration is a common process of changing behaviour from both sides – an individual and members from host country. The majority of expatriates define the concept in the same way, with the exception when the last expatriate noted that integration for him is different from integration for the family. In the literature, spouse's and family's integration is a sufficient issue for expatriate's success. "*Spouses' inability to adjust to living in the host country is the most frequently cited*

reasons for assignments failing"(Caligiuri, 2000, p. 120). However, this issue is not discussed in this thesis. There are no distinguishes in definitions between SIE and OE.

5.3. Cultural factor

Based on the respondents' nationalities, it is necessary to compare the scores with Norway in order to understand how different they are between each other. According to theory, cultural distance has an impact on expatriates' integration into a new society. The more cultural distance, the more challenging is the integration process. However, the respondents statements regarding cultural differences, suggest the opposite. There is no positive relationship between cultural distance and integration. The concept of cultural distance is based on Hofstede dimensions. Therefore, cultural distance will be measured by taking each of the four dimensions of the host country - Norway, and compared to the scores of expatriates' home countries - Russia, US, UK, Iran and India to see the differences between them. There are five dimensions proposed by Hofstede. However, the focus will be limited to four because of limited information about Russia and Iran on the fifth dimension- term orientation.
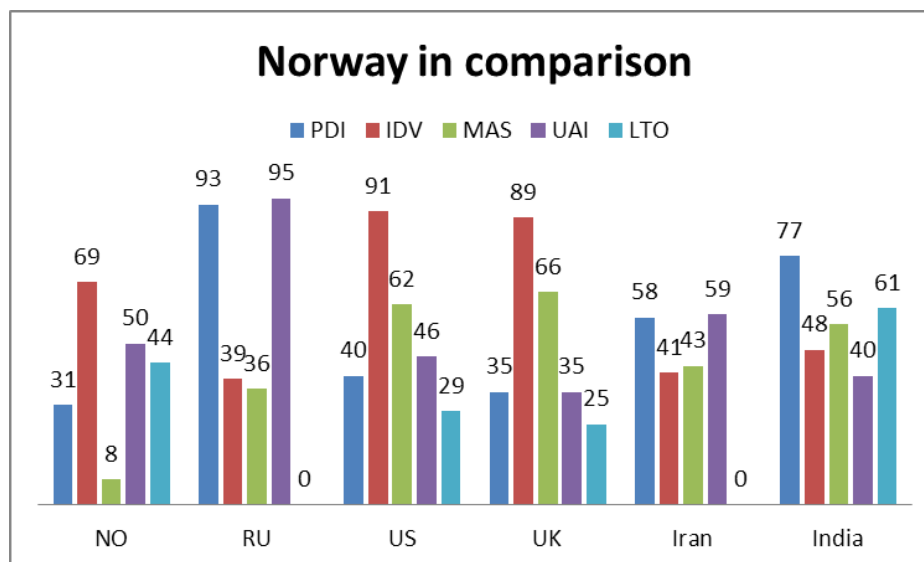

FIGURE 12. NORWAY IN COMPARISON WITH OTHER COUNTRIES BASED ON HOFSTEDE DIMENSIONS (HOFSTEDE, 2012)

The figure above provides the information about the scores of each Hofstede dimensions of Norway and the expatriates' home countries that can ease to see which countries have more

differences compared to Norway. For each country there is a scale from 0 to 100. The higher the score, the more that dimension is performed in society.

5.3.1.   Culture distance – Comparison of US, UK, IR, IN and RU to NO

5.3.1.1.   Power distance

Comparison of power distance between Norway, UK, US, Iran, India and Russia reveals that Norway is the most similar with UK (35) and the least with Russia (93).

PDI	Compare to:	Similar cultures		Different cultures		
	NO	UK	US	Iran	India	Russia
	31	35	40	58	77	93

TABLE 7. COMPARISON OF POWER DISTANCE

Similar cultures

The results from the table above shows that UK and US are the cultures with a low power distance. In addition, these two countries represent the same cluster – Anglo. Moreover, according to R. Lewis model (2006) UK, US and Norway are linear-active cultures. Two organizational expatriates from US noted that there are no differences in organizational hierarchy in ExxonMobil companies between Huston and Stavanger. However, the respondents' answers show some differences according to organizational hierarchy.

Theory	Findings	Level of Support
In small power-distance countries, subordinates and superiors see each other as equal. They work together and discuss the actual questions and problems. The hierarchical system is flexible. Subordinates expect that the boss is the one who finally	-*"Very flat organization, you do the tasks and you do not have to fit with these levels of hierarchy but at the same time they are not that strict on how successful you are on completing tasks"*. SIE, UK - *"Here people treat managers as normal human beings, whereas in the UK at times they would be treated like a sort of higher being. It's feels a much more laid back environment to work in and I truly feel there is a better open doors culture here where I*	**Minor.** Since all respondents come from small power distance countries, it would be assumed that the PDI is the same. However, statements of

decides. (G. Hofstede, 2010)	*can approach my manager if I have a problem rather than worry".* SIE, Scotland/UK - *"I have noticed is that the atmosphere in general seems sometimes a bit more informal than in Huston, maybe about how people dress or how they interact to each other, maybe it is a bit less formal",* OE, USA	respondents indicate that Norway is even 'flatter' than UK or USA.

TABLE 8. PDI - SIMILAR CULTURES

National cultural differences are not so significant and depend on individuals' own experience, the position in the company and the business type. The common difference that was noted is informal atmosphere in the companies in terms of dressing and communication styles.

Different Cultures

Compared to Norway, the most differences in power distance index are between Russia and India, below are provided the respondents' answers according to this dimension.

Theory	Findings	Level of Support
Cultural distance creates challenges for managers when they adopt in a new culture. Cultural distance has a negative effect on an international adjustment. The greater the cultural distance the more misunderstandings and conflicts can be between expatriates (Johnson, Lenartowicz, & Apud, 2006)	- *"Norwegian society, they are equal society; they value each and every person". People don't like to be called "boss". By calling professors or bosses by their name it doesn't mean disrespect for them, here I just call them by the name. I have experienced that they don't want to be called like "Sir" or "Boss".* SIE, India - *"It's almost same there is a top to down hierarchy from top managers to department managers.",* SIE, Iran	**Minor.** Statements of respondents indicate that they actually enjoy and appreciate the small scale of PDI and are not negatively affected by high power distance among the cultures.

The greater the difference, the more difficulties one can experience in working overseas. (G. Hofstede, 2010)	-*"The boss does not have such a dominated status like in Russia. Actually I like that".* SIE, Russia	

TABLE 9. PDI - DIFFERENT CULTURES

Expatriates from Russia and India coming from large - power distance countries and experience many differences. Nevertheless, expatriates do not see them as challenges and it does not impact on their integration process in Norway because they appreciate the absence of hierarchy, that people are treated equally. The expatriate from Iran noted that there is the same organizational hierarchy as in Iran. The reason of this experience can be explained by the position in the company (Engineer) and the type of business (oil and gas industry). As the expatriate from India was studying in Norway prior the job in National Oilwell Varco, first it was a shock to see the low - power distance between professors and students in the university but after starting to work, it seems he accepted that there is no large distance between a superior and a subordinate, and in general in the society.

5.3.1.2. Individualism and Collectivism

In the individualism – collectivism dimension, Norway, UK and US are in the individualism clusters, the most collectivist culture is Russia (39).

IDV.	Compare to:	Similar cultures		Different cultures		
	NO	UK	US	Russia	Iran	India
	69	89	91	39	41	48

TABLE 10. COMPARISON OF INDIVIDUALISM VS. COLLECTIVISM

Theory	Findings	Level of Support
In individualistic society *"the task is supposed to prevail over any personal relationships".* (G. Hofstede, 2010)	-*" Norwegians are closed and reserved, that is mainly because they just metalize, put things in boxes, they come into work, they work and when they finish work they go home and have no contact with anybody else outside work".* SIE,	**Minor.** According to Hofstede (2012) Norway is less individualistic than

Linear Cultural types (Norway, UK, US) are characterized by being job oriented introverts. (R. Lewis, 2012)	UK - *"It can be sometimes hard getting them to open up and to be included into activities outside of work."* OE, US - *"Norwegians are distant and formal",* OE, US	UK or US, yet as noted by respondents, seem to be less interested in developing personal relationships.

TABLE 11. IDV - SIMILAR CULTURES

In order to facilitate integration, expatriates need to develop interpersonal relationships with host nationals. However, in the R. Lewis model (2006) it is described that Norway is a linear country which means that people are introvert and it is hard to build friendship. Expatriates confirm this fact with following statement

"Americans are like a peach- soft outside and hard inside, but Norwegians are like an orange-hard on the outside but soft on the inside" (OE, USA).

Expatriate from USA noted that there are not so many differences at working place because oil business is an international business and it is quite similar.

Different Cultures

"Norwegians are closed" (SIE, Russia).

Concerning this dimension, the only characteristic which almost all expatriates admitted it is not very easy to build relationships with Norwegians because they distinguish private life and working life. Here, no differences between SIE and OE expatriates were found. National culture as well does not play an important role.

5.3.1.3.   Masculinity vs. Femininity

Norway is one of the feminine cultures; the most masculine is UK (66) and US (62). According to these scores, all of the expatriates may experience difficulties because of the differences in this dimension.

MAS.	Compare to:	Different cultures				
	NO	Russia	Iran	India	US	UK
	8	36	43	56	62	66

TABLE 12. COMPARISON OF MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY

Theory	Findings	Level of Support
In feminine cultures conflicts are solved by compromise and negotiation; rewards are based according to everyone's need. People live in order to work. Leisure time is more preferred over more money (Geert Hofstede, 2010).	-*"Norwegian working culture is more relaxed and is more family oriented.* SIE, Russia -*"Woman in a very high position because of the equal rights",* SIE, Russia -*"People go home earlier and they work at general fewer hours but spending more time with their families".* OE, US - *"They have a great working time balance. They do not put as much priority on work as the people in the States do. I enjoy it actually",* OE, US - *"Shorter work hours"*, SIE, UK	**Minor.** Respondents seem to be responding well to the cultural distance and femininity of Norway when it comes to working hours and work environment.

TABLE 13. MASCULINITY VS. FEMININITY - ALL CULTURES

Since all other countries that are compared to Norway are deemed masculine, that creates a higher cultural distance. The theoretical suggestion by Johnson et al (2006) that the higher the cultural distance the more misunderstandings and conflicts can be between expatriates seems to be having a lesser negative aspect in regards to masculinity vs. femininity, as respondents seem to react very positively to changes in their work environment, in particular the working hours, the balance between leisure and work time, as well as to the equal rights in the workplace. That leads to a conclusion that femininity is preferred to masculinity, thus making it easier to adapt to a less controlled and hierarchical work environment, where all employees are treated as equals, despite the differences in position, culture, language, religion or sex.

5.3.1.4. Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance – In Russia there is the highest uncertainty avoidance index compared to other countries, the lowest is in UK.

UAI.	Compare to:	Similar cultures	Different cultures			
	NO	US	UK	Russia	Iran	India
	50	46	35	95	59	40

TABLE 14. COMPARISON OF UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE

The expatriates from Russia, India and UK prefer the Norwegian attitude towards stress. They describe them as relaxed people and even now have changed to their behaviours and are more relaxed. This brings to the conclusion that the distance between the cultures when it comes to uncertainty avoidance does not have negative connotations in the case of Norway vs. other cultures.

That however might not be the case if situation is reversed, where weak uncertainty avoidance cultures, like UK would have to adapt to a strongly uncertainty avoidance countries like Russia.

5.3.2. Preliminary Conclusions

The findings state that despite high cultural distances between cultures of respondents and Norwegian culture, the differences are viewed positively, rather than negatively as proposed by theory. Theory states that the higher the cultural distance, the higher the probability of conflicts and misunderstandings. That might be true if the shift is made from less rigorous and controlled environment to a more hierarchical, masculine, controlled and regulatory environment. However, the latter shift is not under study, therefore will not be further discussed.

Findings also indicate that despite coming from similar cultures, with less cultural distance (to which the theory indicates that the lesser the distance and the more similar cultures are, the lesser the amount of difficulties that can be expected in working abroad) – the respondents experienced certain difficulties in establishing personal relations with Norwegians outside the workplace, thus regarding them as cold and reserved, similarly as do the respondents from the opposite cultures. That however might be regarded as a personal trait of Norwegians that directly conflicts the theoretical suggestions, moreover as Norway is categorized as feminine culture which values personal relationships, which has not proved to be supported by this findings, at least when we speak of relationship aspect.

5.4. Social factor

Moving further by the framework, the questions on what expatriates see as main aspects of integration revealed that one of the main factors are social in nature. That is supportive of the theory that explains that one of the main issues in a sociocultural adjustment is to become effective in a new society and successfully maintain interpersonal relations with members from the host country, where language plays a crucial role.

According to Aycan (1997) sociocultural adjustment deals with many aspects such as contact to the locals, ability to speak local language, ability to integrate both at and outside workplace and the ability to perceive cultural differences between home culture and Norwegian culture.

From the discussions in previous subchapter, expatriates are trying to seek contacts to Norwegians. Most of them admitted that there are some difficulties in building deep contacts because of the Norwegians' nature to be reserved and not so open.

Findings on the social aspect of integration as found by expatriates, are presented below and compared to theoretical suggestions.

Theory (social aspects of integration)	Findings
Interaction with other cultures. (Berry, 2006) Interaction with locals inside and outside of work. Ability to speak local language. (Aycan, 1997)	- *"…is to learn the language, without the language its difficult"*, *SIE, Russia* - *"I think language, learning about differences in culture and changing the way that you interact with people, also bringing your previous experiences and combing those with your new experiences, maybe to enhance understanding between two different people, two different cultures, being included in your new place and also means acceptance of different cultures"*, *OE, US* - *"I guess from the social side, meeting people or learning the language, learning about the history, customs, learning about holidays and celebrations and all those kind of things."*, *OE, USA* - *"I should say language…the language is more making contact with people outside, creating friendship, joining social groups,*

	and building up friendships with people.", SIE, UK
	-" its cultural aspects like language, traditions and etc.", SIE, Iran
	-" a social network in the place I am living…", SIE, Scotland/UK

TABLE 15. SOCIAL ASPECTS OF INTEGRATION

The findings state that expatriates see the language, learning about the culture, customs and norms as main aspects of integration overall, along with active socializing and interacting with the local population. In the interviews it was found, that the term "integration" includes different aspects. The majority of respondents indicated *language* as the most important, which is why further discussion will start from that particular aspect, followed by the social network and support.

5.4.1. Language

One of the main issues in a sociocultural adjustment is to become effective in a new society and successfully maintain interpersonal relations with members from the host country. Language plays a crucial role in a sociocultural adjustment. Almost all of the respondents noted that the most important aspect of integration is language.

Wide range of languages makes communication among different nationalities quite difficult. "*Being excluded from everyday communication with host country nationals (HCNs) may have serious consequences for expatriates*" (Selmer & Lauring, 2011, p. 4). According to Selmer (2006), language can be an essential instrument for expatriates in understanding the culture of host country and it can facilitate the adjustment both at and outside work. However, in the literature it is described that language training is very crucial for successful adjustment, it is being neglected. It can be explained that "*English has become the lingua franca of the world*"(Selmer & Lauring, 2011, p. 2) and there is less attention to other languages.

Several expatriates reported that language is not a big necessity at work because they work in the international companies. However, it plays an important role with interacting with locals, making friends and building social network. None of the respondents had language training before moving to Norway. Only one expatriate knows Norwegian fluently because of the previous work experience in the home country where the expatriate worked in the Norwegian company. All of the eight expatriates are working in multinational companies, thus they are

very comfortable with English. The expatriate from Iran, working in the National Oilwell Varco, noted that at his department the main languages are Swedish and Norwegian. Therefore, he argues that "*Different language sometimes leads to misunderstanding in our communications*" (SIE, Iran). It was noted that Norwegians are very good in English and there are no problems with communication. Two of the respondents have Norwegian spouses; it eases learning and practicing the language. Most of the expatriates are provided by Norwegian language courses which are paid by the companies. "*Most Norwegians speak English and that makes it very easy for people from English-speaking countries to come and work here*" (OE, USA). However, in the ExxonMobil company, Norwegian classes for OEs are provided by company, but it is not the case for SIEs. "*As it stands as I have not expated and I am not married to my partner I am not eligible to lessons through the company, however as my partner expated over here he is eligible*" (SIE, Scotland/UK).

It was noted that Norwegians change to English when they hear kind of accent from foreigners but they are really happy to hear that non-Norwegian speakers are trying to learn and speak the local language.

5.4.2. Social Network

According to the findings presented in table 14, the second aspect of Social factor was found to be social network and support. Both the literature and personal respondents' experiences, state that social network helps to better adjust in a new society. Entering a new society, expatriates automatically lose their social network that can negatively cause the psychological well-being in the host country (Wang & Kanungo, 2004). Therefore, it is important to establish social network in a local culture. Different expatriates will take different initiatives to establish a new social network and they will seek a social support from the new people around them. Social network is the structure of social interactions (Wang & Nayir, 2006).

Respondents	International	Locals	Mixed
SIE, Russia			X
SIE, UK			X
SIE, Iran			X
SIE, Scotland/UK			X
SIE, India	X		
OE, USA	X		
OE, USA	X		
OE, USA	X		

TABLE 16. EXPATS SOCIAL NETWORKS

The results of the findings show that there is equal part of respondents interacting with both locals and internationals, as there are those who predominantly interact with international part of Norway's population. Below are some of the answers connected to expatriates' social network.

"I have 60% Russian friends because I have a lot of friends outside work and there are 40% Norwegians and family….. I still don't know all my neighbours around. I understand that Norwegians they don't like when somebody intervening too much in their private life. They are not so open". [SIE, Russia]

As seen from above, ExxonMobil is the international company where work many internationals. Therefore an expatriate's social network in this case is 40% Norwegians, because of the Norwegian spouse and the family and 60% are foreigners from the original country- Russia. The same results are obtained with the second respondent with a Norwegian spouse.

At work is more with internationals, but home with my Norwegians- neighbours, my in-laws, my brothers-in low and their families, and their friends". [SIE,UK]

Another expatriate who moved to Norway because of family reunion states that she enjoys mixed communication, but predominantly interacts with local part of population, which is influenced by her work environment (SIE, Scotland/UK) instead of social circle influenced by the family factor.

"I would say mostly with other internationals". [OE, USA]

"At work its half and half, outside of the work it's mostly internationals". [OE, USA]

"At least right now I am interacting more with foreigners than Norwegians. In my department there are 22 people and just 5 or 6 Norwegians. This is a reason even in my social circle I know more foreigners and less Norwegians. I don't think if I know any Norwegian actually in my social life. I guess that they are very closed". [SIE, India]

In general, the findings indicate that the reason for having a mixed social circle is more frequent among SIE's than OE's and can be influenced by both family and work environment factors, whereas social circle of OE's is mostly influenced by their work environment, thus resulting in limited interaction with local population.

Expatriates have a desire to interact with Norwegians but in practice it is not so easy. The majority of interviewed respondents admitted that it is quite hard to build friendship with Norwegians. One of the expatriates provided a possible reason why Norwegians are so distant: "*I think we are so many expatriates here in Norway that they perceived as passing through and they are going to leave in a few years, so I think that many Norwegians are hesitant to make friendship that they know that a person is going to leave soon*". (OE, USA) Except two expatriates who have Norwegian family, noted that they have few Norwegian friends outside work. Interestingly, but the Norwegians with whom expatriates communicate are either their families or parents of their children's classmates.

According to the findings, expatriates contact both with locals and other internationals. The most problem in contacting with locals is as defined in the literature section - that Norwegians are seen as cold, reserved and distant people. Most of the respondents prove this existing theory as laid out above and in table 10.

5.4.3.   Preliminary Conclusions

When asked what respondents thought of what aspects form integration, the results of the findings frequently mentioned social factors – language and social network. Aycan's (1997) theoretical suggestions on sociocultural adjustment is the closest to aspects of integration laid out by expatriates, which deals with many aspects such as contact to the locals, ability to

speak local language, ability to integrate both at and outside workplace and the ability to perceive cultural differences between home culture and Norwegian culture.

Comparing the two views (the one of expats to the one of Aycan, 1997) it is clear that the respondents see integration as a **social** adjustment processes, however excluding the perceptional aspect of cultural differences which are discussed by Aycan (1997).

Finally, the findings obtained on the question whether respondents feel integrated into their work environment, the results came in different and mostly had to deal with the language factor within the work environment, which emphasizes the language factor as international aspect even further. The organizations where English is used as company language, expatriates seem to be better integrated at a workplace, whereas one of the SIE's feels not completely integrated at a workplace because of the lack of proficiency in Norwegian language. It may be therefore concluded that while expatriates see language as a major aspect of integration into social life, it is not seen as such when it comes to work environment.

The opposite of that is found to be true when it comes to social circles. The respondents who married into Norwegian society have mixed circles, which indicate a certain level of assimilation. According to Berry (1997), assimilation involves total immersion into new culture, which in this case is obtained through marriage. Opposite to that, a higher level of interaction with local population is also achieved via work environment, whereas those expatriates without Norwegian family and with lesser contact with Norwegians in workplace experience a limited exposure to socialization with local population, thus having a lesser level of integration.

5.5. Personal factor – values and norms

What happens to people when they move from the culture in which they have been born and raised to a new and unfamiliar culture? Arguably, when people of different cultural backgrounds come into contact with each other, they may (or may not) adopt each other's behaviours, beliefs, values, and norms. Earlier proposed theoretical framework groups those factors as Personal factor as behaviours, beliefs, values, norms and attitudes are considered to be of individual character.

Expatriates come into a new society with different behavioural norms and values; sometimes they find themselves separated from the host country. Regarding to the question whether or

not expatriates are willing to give up values, it was concluded that this question was one of the most difficult. It can be explained, that respondents see them differently. This issue is explained in the literature. Marx (2001) argues that differences in norms, beliefs, attitudes and values can lead to a culture shock which does not necessarily have negative connotations. On the contrary, culture shock is seen in positive light and a normal process of future international success. Oberg (1954, p. 1) on the other hand, sees culture shock as *"...anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse"*.

As previously described in literature review, acculturation is a dual process, where the person is included in the process of maintaining own cultural values, and second the degree the person wants to have a contact with members of other cultural groups. Berry outlines four acculturation strategies – integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization. According to the expatriate literature, from the four strategies- the integration is the more preferable because than a person is keeping his/her own values and in the same time is open and respectful for the new culture. Looking at Berry's acculturation strategies, firstly, it will be discussed which cultural habits expatriates are maintaining from their own culture, and secondly are they mixing two cultures and what are they taking over from Norwegian culture.

5.5.1.   Keeping Values and Norms

Most of the expatriates do not see any necessity to give up any values as the Norwegian culture is not perceived as intolerant. One American expatriate summarizes it in the best light:

"I don't think this Norwegian culture is so forceful and so intolerant that you would need to give up something", OE, US

In general, respondents seem to be are mixing the values from their own culture combining them with the ones they like about Norwegian culture. Some of the values, habits and beliefs the respondents would never give up in order to fit in:

Values, Attitudes, Habits	Statements	Comparison to Theory
Tolerance	*"It is a very difficult question. I think the people in the UK are more tolerant of*	UK being masculine country is deemed to hold high respect for

	different people and are more Christian, suspicious of the authorities, [people in UK] they like differences and like to crash to authority make fun of it; I wouldn't change to fit in", SIE, UK	authority, thus the respondents statement is viewed as personal attitude and cannot be related to relevant theory.
Friendliness	*"I think one thing I'm not really willing to give up is my friendly attitude, I feel like a lot of Norwegians, are maybe more closed after talking with strangers or when they passed you they don't really say "hi" and I think that's really something natural to me. So it's not something that I would change. I can't really think of any in particular though",* OE, US	According to Lewis (2006) USA is viewed as Linear culture, like Norway. Both are held introvert, which is why respondent's statement regarding friendliness is regarded as personal and cannot be related to relevant theory.
Etiquette	*"Etiquette is a value that I will not give up… however I will also adopt some of the politer things that are done here. I can't think of any values I will or feel I need to give up",* SIE, Scotland/UK	According to Lewis (2006) UK, like Norway belongs to Linear cultures, where "polite but direct" attitude is favoured, thus no need to give up that value.
Food preferences	*"It is very difficult question. I don't know if it comes with a value, I am a vegetarian and I haven't eaten meat till now, it is very difficult to be a vegetarian in Norway and I am still a vegetarian".* SIE, India	Food preferences are regarded as cultural habits as Indian society is predominantly vegetarian.

TABLE 17. EXPATRIATES CULTURAL VALUES, ATTITUDES AND HABITS

"Of course, you feel comfortable if you can meet sometimes friends-speak your language, eat your national food, invite your family. I think it is quite normal but it shouldn't be like I speak only Russian and I have only Russian friends and if I go to the party, it should be a Russian party. I think this is the worst way to be integrated". [SIE, Russia]

Since integration as a part of acculturation strategy is regarded as an attitude of individual where he/she maintains their own values and beliefs, but remains open to interact with people from other

cultural backgrounds (Sam & Berry, 2006), it is appropriate to mention that none of the values, habits or attitudes have to be given up in order to integrate.

5.5.2.   Taking Over Vs. Mixing Values and Norms

From the interviews, it was found that expatriates are willing to take over Norwegian habits and become a part of society. As was mentioned before, two expatriates have Norwegian spouses and children. It could be explained that they are more integrated than others; however their statements (see table 17) indicate they flirt with assimilation.

Some of the expatriates taking over the Norwegian cultural habits in practical aspects, one of the OE's from US is not keeping own cultural habits but is willing to integrate in Norway in spite of the fact, that the assignment is planned to be no more than three years and there is no intensions to stay in Norway for longer period of time. Detailed overview of findings is presented in a table below, which also highlights the direct association with the four Berry's (2006) acculturation strategies – integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization, that are dependent on the degree to which people want to maintain their own cultural values.

 The theory does not suggest the possibility of pursuing two or more different strategies at the same time, however, the below findings state that such occurrence is possible. The expatriate from Russia for example, seems to be experiencing three distinct strategies at the same time – marginalization, assimilation and a mixture of values and norms which may be regarded as similar to integration, where an expat keeps their own values while interacting with other cultures. According to previously reviewed theory, marginalization is regarded as least preferable, as it leads towards loss of identity with own culture and lack of identification with the culture of majority.

"I realize I will never be Norwegian. I don't feel myself Russian anymore but I don't feel Norwegian neither" SIE, RU

Similar situation occurs with another respondent with Norwegian spouse. At one point respondent states that she needs to change the behaviour in order to fit, which is a trait of

assimilation; whereas at the same time mentions the possibility or maintaining integrity of own values whilst being a member of society.

No relationship or difference among OE and SIE in relation to the state of integration were found.

SIE, RU	*"I realize I will never be Norwegian. I don't feel myself Russian anymore but I don't feel Norwegian either."*	Marginalization
SIE, RU	*"You have to assimilate habits, the culture, and maybe mentality of this nation".*	Assimilation
SIE, RU	*"So it's a mixture, you can be the same as at home but you do need to communicate with people from a new country in order to integrate. That's a key thing, I think"*	Mix
SIE, UK	*"I married to a Norwegian so we do Norwegian things, also doing English things but mainly things that normal Norwegians do. I have to change my behavior to fit in with cultural norms of Norway*	Assimilation
SIE, UK	*"You can be a member of a society and keep your own culture. It is not necessary to completely change. I mean the best thing is just pick the best things you like and if you enjoy them, they work for you, then take them if you don't like them just ignore them"*	Mix
SIE, SCTL/UK	*"I have cut my working hours down drastically to fit in with what is expected here. I will also adopt some of the politer things that are done here"*	Integration
OE, US	*"If you deny integrate, you don't know anything about a new society, you are giving this fantastic opportunity in a different country, where everything is different, to learn something and to make friends and enjoy"*	Integration
OE, US	*"So I think it's important that people integrate but also have a sense where do they came from and they don't need to give up either".* [OE, USA]	Mix
OE, US	*"It's definitely important for me to learn about the culture, be a part of festivals and things, like traditions here. I think it's a big part of my experience"."*	Integration
OE, US	*"They have a great working time balance. They do not put as much priority on work as the people in the States do. I enjoy it, actually"*	Integration
OE, US	*I can acquire some new values from local learning but your own values are your own values. You bring your own values in the ways you know how to do and then you learn, you don't have to sacrifice one for the other, you can have both*	Mix
SIE, IN	*"I am OK everywhere. I can adopt easily"*	Integration

TABLE 18. EXPATS VALUES AND NORMS

5.5.3. Preliminary Conclusions

In general, the findings according to Berry's acculturation strategies show that respondents follow the two dimensions. They accept and understand Norwegian culture, norms and values, but do not see the necessity to change towards it. As it was discussed, the best strategy is "integration". It seems that respondents are closer to that strategy. However, two of expatriates are between two strategies -"assimilation" and "integration". It can be explained by having Norwegian spouses and perspectives to live in Norway.

5.6. Cognitive factor

According to Black (Black et al., 1991, pp. 294-295) c*ognitive abilities allow the expatriate to correctly perceive and evaluate the host environment and its actors.* Therefore, the cognitive factor described in the framework is related to the knowledge, previous experience, individual skills and thus ability to perceive cultures.

5.6.1. Previous Experience

Having previous overseas assignments is deemed helpful to expatriates to withstand high levels of culture novelty. "*Previous experience may change how expatriates adjust, by allowing them to ignore what had not worked for them in the past and to concentrate on what did*" (Shaffer, Harrison, & Gilley, 1999, p. 562). Therefore the respondents were asked about their previous overseas experience and whether or not it has an impact on integration process in Norway. Seven of eight expatriates have previous experience and they strongly believe that it increases the degree of integration.

Theory	Findings	Level of Support
"*Previous experience may change how expatriates adjust, by allowing them to ignore what had not worked for them in the past and to concentrate on what did*" Shaffer, Harrison,	-"*Yes, because I stress less now. So the more you travel the less you stress with integration… The more you travel, the more experienced you get and you just take it naturally*". [SIE, Russia] - *If you travel a lot… you just become more flexible. The things that it might see as obstacles they are not really, you just have to*	**High.** Respondents seem to be in agreement with the theory that previous experience is related to easier

& Gilley, 1999, p. 562)	*work with them, and become more flexible if you want to be successful*". [SIE, UK] -"*Yes I had, and it was really useful to get adaption with new society like Norway*". [SIE, Iran] - "*...I know I can live in another location other than Aberdeen quite happily and it built up my confidence*" [SIE, Scotland/UK] - "*Yes, I think it really did. I felt much more comfortable with showing up into a new place and being open to what it is different.*" [OE, USA] -"*Certainly, once you have been through this before, you kind know what to look for, what are the issues*". [OE, USA]	integration with future assignments and easier adaptability to new cultures and cultural differences.

TABLE 19. COGNITIVE FACTORS

Respondents noted that previous experience reduces uncertainty. They stress less and overcome challenges easier. The experience makes a person more flexible and confident in order "to fit in" into a new society that makes an individual more comfortable overseas. Since experience can be regarded as a process of learning and obtaining the knowledge, a positive relationship between knowledge, previous experience and integration was established.

Having obtained findings on whether expatriates deem previous experience important to future expatriate assignments, it is interesting to see how they related that previous experience to expectations regarding Norway.

"*The accuracy of the expectations held by an individual is a determinant of effective anticipatory adjustment and actual adjustment*". It means that the better expectations an expatriate can form, the more uncertainty can be reduced. There will be not so many negative affective reactions and culture shock will be reduced that will lead to smoother integration process in the host country. (Selmer, 2002)

Theory	Findings	Level of Support
"The accuracy of the expectations held by an individual is a determinant of effective anticipatory adjustment and actual adjustment". (Selmer, 2002)	*"I think I got both positive and negative things. I didn't expect Norwegians to be so closed"* [SIE, Russia] *"It was almost similar with I had expected before moving to Norway is like moving to other city in Sweden for me".* [SIE, Iran] *"It wasn't too different from what I had expected as I had been here on business trips prior to moving. "* [SIE, Scotland/UK] *"I didn't really know what to expect, I have lived abroad before. I knew that Norwegians speak English very well but I expected to need more Norwegian language skills outside of the office,",* [OE, US] *"I guess I am not really sure of anything that was that different".* [OE, USA]	**Medium** Despite having previous expat experience, some of respondents did not know what exactly to expect upon arrival to Norway. Nevertheless, none of them speaks of negative reactions. This might be explained with expats increased flexibility to interaction with other cultures, as an learning outcome from previous experiences.

TABLE 20. EXPECTANCIES VS. EXPERIENCE

Organizational expatriates seem to be using their previous knowledge obtained through previous experience pretty well, and state that did not experience major expectancies that had to be dealt with. Findings on SIEs show similar results, where their previous aboard experience is mentioned as facilitator is forming expectations.

5.6.2.   Preliminary Conclusions

According to Selmer (2002) if an expatriate is informed and prepared for unfamiliar new international experience, anticipatory adjustment can take place. By this, the actual in-country adjustment can go easier and quicker. Contrary to the theoretical suggestion, previous subchapter provides findings that despite some of the respondents did not know what exactly to expect, they adjusted rather fast and easily, predominantly because of their previous experience.

The respondents' answers show that most of them had some expectations that expatriates faced in Norway. Oberg (1960) proposed that before adjustment process expatriates are going through culture shock. In the case of interviewed expatriates, it was seen that they did not experience it in a very strong way. The integration in Norway was quite easy and there were not so many difficulties. Norway was proposed as very easy country to integrate. There were described some characteristics of culture shock in Norway for instance: difficulties in communication because Norwegians are reserved, documentation process – visa, work permits and others, high living costs.

5.7. Organizational factor

As noted before, integration is a difficult process which depends on many factors, one of them being an organizational factor. This factor groups a number of smaller work-related factors laid out in theoretical framework. The literature reviewed suggested the preparation as one of big factors influencing expatriates adjustment to the new culture, along with the company's support. This section of the thesis presents findings and discusses the importance of the two on integration, as well as seeks to provide answer to who is actually responsible for expatriate's integration.

5.7.1.   Preparation

Thanks to Howe-Walsh & Schyns (2010) differences between SIE and OE, it was found that the home companies provide preparations for organizational expatriates, thus facilitating the adjustment process. The recognition of the importance of international preparatory training is high but is often neglected or poorly used in practice. According to this finding, it seems interesting to see whether or not interviewed OE had preparations provided by their home companies, as well as to see how SIE prepared them for moving to Norway. First, the preparation in terms of OE will be described. The answers are provided below:

No, I just spoke to friends who either lived here or I have a Norwegian friend in the States and she worked here in this office before, I just asked friends question about what Stavanger was like and specific things. I didn't have any language course before coming here. I also bought some books about history of Norway and language books, travel book before I came". [OE,USA]

"We have a software where you can go online called Globsmare, I went on that, learned a little bit about Norway where was talked about cultural differences and similarities, of course, and what to expect". [OE,USA]

"We have done quite a bit of research obviously about the country, the system, the medical system, whatever, and everything because I brought my family here. [OE,USA]

From the answers provided by OE the issue of neglecting preparatory training is proved. None of the expatriates had a formal training. Mostly, the preparation was done according to their own interests and motivation. It was found that the ExxonMobil company has own program which is available on the company intranet that they can access in their own time.

In terms of SIE, the preparation was easier for them because two expatriates have Norwegian spouses, two were studying prior being employed and one of the expatriates had an experience working in Norway:

"..I was working in a Norwegian company in Russia. I have already started to learn the culture a long time ago and I got married to Norwegian. Definitely, I knew quite a lot when I came here". [SIE, Russia]

"Nothing official, because I travelled here 2-3 times a year for the last more than 10 years. My wife's family they are Norwegians". [SIE, UK]

"I studied MSc in Sweden…I got familiar with Scandinavian culture by living 3years in Sweden". [SIE, Iran]

"I was previously in a joint UK/Norway group. It meant each of us often got the chance to work in the other office. So in some ways I knew what to expect in the office. I was probably not as prepared for living in Stavanger as I had only stayed in hotels and had company expenses covering costs so never really took much notice on how expensive the cost of living here is". [SIE, Scotland/UK]

"I don't think I prepared anything but I just communicated with some people here by emails, I didn't know anybody here before coming so it was quite difficult in the beginning".[SIE, India]

Looking at preparation of both categories of expatriates, it was found that there are not many significant differences. Expatriates were preparing for cross-cultural assignments themselves and organizational expatriates did not receive any accurate cultural training before going overseas. Respondents prepared themselves in topics such as cultural awareness, country-specific information.

The low level of official preparation provided by the companies in OE's case may explain the limited interaction with Norwegian society (table 15, chapter 5.3.2.).

5.7.2.   Organizational Support

As was discussed previously, organizational expatriates are provided by support from their home companies. According to responses, three organizational expatriates did not have formal preparatory training. Most noted that it was self-learning about the culture and general information about Norway. However, they are satisfied with the help they received in the beginning of their assignments and noted that there is no support they would like to have in addition. They stated that participation in local activities depends on the individual.

"When I was in Huston I received permission about what to expect in my Norwegian assignment, so discussion about specific things about banking and more general things, about culture, and history of Norway. Here I perceived language courses and when you first arrived you are invited to a certain introduction festival in a Stavanger area. So that was also provided by the company". [OE, USA]

"They helped me when I was in Huston to prepare my entire visa package and I worked with HR here in Norway, to get the whole information before I moved. They made a hotel accommodation for my first time and then the company gave me a temporary apartment for a while, company paid all of my furniture (in Huston). So it was much easier since I didn't have to do all of that work on my own. I think they do a really good job of giving you all the information and getting you set up, I can't really think of anything that could be done but be done differently".[OE, USA]

All of the organizational expatriates and two self-initiated expatriates are working in the ExxonMobil company. From their responses it was found that the company has a lot of social activities for employees that give great opportunities to get to know their colleagues and find friends. There are different kinds of activities to choose, for instance Christmas Party, Mystery Tour-the idea of this tour is that co-workers do not know where they are going, everything is organized by company; theatre, bowling, trips to the mountains, different kind of interest clubs – fishing club, hunting club, digital photo club, scrapping, art. These activities help expatriates to integrate better. However, one of the self-initiated expatriates working in ExxonMobil did not receive any help and does not have much time to participate in all social activities provided by company because of the small children.

"I was employed as a local Norwegian here on a different matures. I am not even supposed to get this help, in a way, I don't need that actually but the expats get it officially". [SIE, Russia]

They also provided us with booklets and maps to help us understand what we needed to do to register ourselves here. The only thing I would have liked made available to me is Norwegian lessons". [SIE, USA]

The self-initiated expatriate from USA is not enrolled in the Norwegian classes as organizational expatriates. However, it was found that for the self- initiated expatriates in National Oilwell Varco and Vestas Wind Systems there are available Norwegian classes which are paid by the company. Two expatriates noted that the company is encouraging them to learn the local language. Also, there are social activities such as team building.

"Company provides special program called "team building", we go to play football or other sport activities together, last Friday every month we go to the pubs, it helps to get familiar with each other and find some friends". [SIE, Iran]

The expatriate from UK who is working in the Vestas Wind Systems noted that did not have any kind of support. It seems like it was not so necessary because the expatriate was in Kristiansand for many times and was familiar with the place quite well. Vestas Wind Systems also provides employees with different kind of social activities such as running and skiing groups, hiking trips over to the mountains with opportunity to stay in the company's cabin, free membership of a gym.

5.7.3.   Preliminary Conclusions

The respondents' comments concerning additional support from the company show that expatriates do not express the need for accurate, up-to-date cultural training. Organizational expatriates are quite satisfied with what has been done by ExxonMobil in Huston and Stavanger. Organizational expatriates have the familiarity of the work situation. However, one self-initiated expatriate indicated the need for language training and one expatriate would like to have a supportive help dealing with officials, e.g. taxation system.

5.8. How is integration achieved?

The outcome of all of the above findings (chapters 5.2-5.7) proposes to define the expatriate integration as a complex process of learning about and interacting with the host culture, society, traditions, language, values, norms and habits both within social and organisational context, whilst preserving own cultural traits to the extent that makes the expatriate comfortable within the host environment.

Based on the abovementioned, the integration can be achieved when all of those factors are considered prior to relocation, by both individual and the organisation within which the expatriate is going to work at.

As findings and theory suggested, certain number of so called facilitators of expatriate integration exists. According to both theoretical and exploratory findings, those can be classified as:

- Expatriate preparation prior to relocation
- Support of the company
- Previous experience
- Work environment
- Social environment
- Language skills
- Own Initiative

Respondents propose a number of steps to be taken in order to achieve integration within the host environment and most of them cover the above said, but in a slightly different language.

"I would say do some research before you come and try to get an idea whatever it will be like, have a strong support system of people who can talk to you about challenges they may have because I think no matter where you live it doesn't really matter you still go through that. Time and culture shock, and the difficulty, that's a big thing of having the people, can talk to you, maybe who live in the same places as you, and you have some common ideas, people who are at home, I think this is a big thing. Not too much specific to Norway, for an American it is one of the easiest place to adjust compare to other places in the world"
[OE,US]

Other expatriates recommendations on how to achieve integration are presented below in a summarized form:

Expatriate	Recommendations
SIE, UK	1.Find a social life if expatriates are younger; 2.Work hard on building friendships; 3.Do not be overly sensitive.
SIE, RU	1. Stay positive; 2.Do not be afraid of challenges; 3.Learn about the culture; 4. Enjoy the good things the country has and the culture offers.
SIE, Iran	1. Educate yourself on culture, 2. Learn the language.
OE, US	1. Be prepared for the higher costs of living; 2. Be patient and do not take it personally when doors are not held open for you; 3. Throw yourself into it and enjoy your time here
SIE, India	1. Be prepared for cold weather; 2. Do not do shopping on Sundays – all are closed; 3. Learn some Norwegian words at least over the Internet; 4. Be aware that you will need contacts to find a job in Norway.
OE, US	1. Take advantage of the activities that are given to you; 2. Take advantage of language courses, as well any chance you have to go out and meet people.
OE, US	1. Do some research before you come; 2.Sourround yourself with people can talk to you.
OE, US	1. Have an open mind; 2. Enjoy, it's a great place!

TABLE 21. EXPATRIATES' RECOMMENDATIONS ON ACHIEVING INTEGRATION IN NORWAY

5.9. Suggested Comprehensive Framework

A suggested comprehensive framework is visualisation of the findings and theory described in analysis section (findings and discussion). Subchapter 5.8 suggests a following definition of an expatriate integration:

A complex process of learning about and interacting with the host culture, society, traditions, language, values, norms and habits both within social and organisational context, whilst preserving own cultural traits to the extent that makes the expatriate comfortable within the host environment.

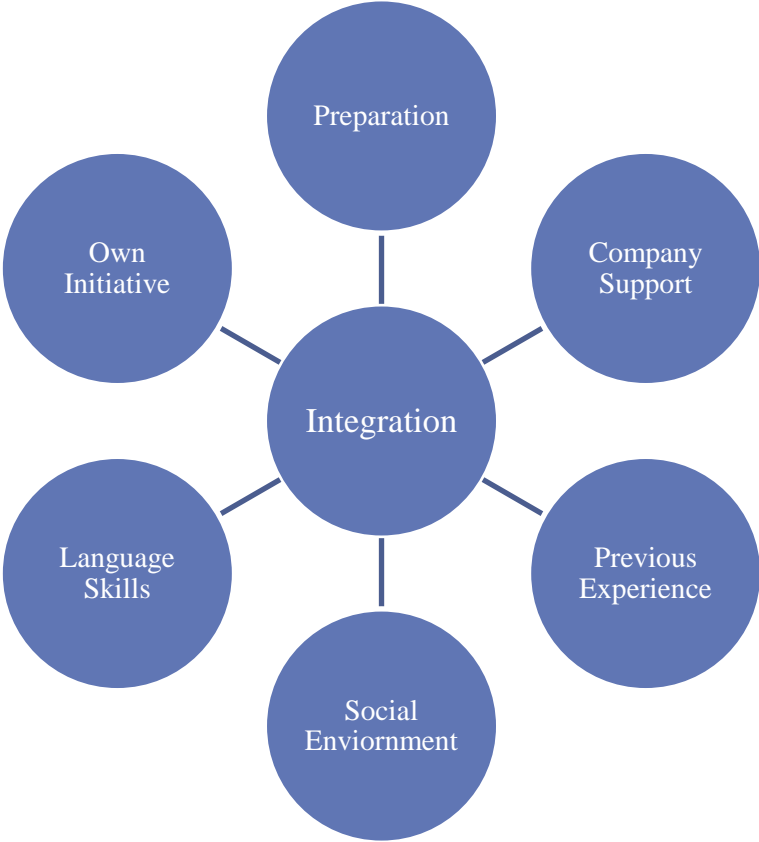As mentioned previously, findings and theory suggest that a number of factors facilitate better integration:

FIGURE 13. SUGGESTED INTEGRATIONAL FACILITATORS

6. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter states a summary of the problem background and the purpose of this thesis and argues if the purpose was met. Last, the limitations of the research are discussed.

6.1. Conclusion

In the globalization era, the role of people who go overseas has become increasingly important. Norway is one of the attractive places to work, which is supported by statistical data of continuous yearly increase of non-Nordic citizens. The high number of expatriates in Norway signifies that they are valued by international companies in Norway, which is why it is necessary for expatriates to be satisfied in a professional life and in a private while staying in a host country.

The main purpose of the thesis was to define the term "integration", and explore what integration means for expatriates, how they experience it and how to achieve it. In order to answer this question, it was important to understand how expatriates explain integration, and investigate whether and how they want to become part of the local society and how they experience the process of integration in international companies in Norway.

It was found that expatriates experience integration rather easily, as Norway is seen as formidable as easy to adapt to. The meaning of integration however was found to have much deeper meaning. Exploration of all aspects of integration, based on interviews and theoretical research, allowed the author to compile a comprehensive definition of what expatriate integration is, thus reaching the purpose of the thesis.

Expatriate integration is a complex process of learning about and interacting with the host culture, society, traditions, language, values, norms and habits both within social and organisational context, whilst preserving own cultural traits to the extent that makes the expatriate comfortable within the host environment.

Final aim of the thesis was achieved in chapter 5.8 and 5.9 by answering the question to how the integration can be achieved.

6.2. Limitations

Resources available

❖ Limited resources related to the integration of expatriates were found. The term integration is not present in literature as frequently as concepts of adjustment, adaptation and acculturation.

Experience of the researcher

❖ Limited experience in conducting interviews may have had an impact of formulation of the question;
❖ The researcher has no experience in researching topics with such standards.

Sample of respondents

❖ A sample of eight respondents coming from five diverse countries cannot be considered representative for the whole group (expatriates – 50.000).

6.3. Future work

Possible future directions to enhance quality of the research or extend it are to:

❖ Run the same type of study but with larger sample. This may enhance the quality of research extensively.
❖ Run a correlational study to identify the relationships among the variables suggested by the framework.
❖ Run a quantitative type of study measuring the impact of the variables suggested by theoretical framework.

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8. APPENDIX

Appendix 1 – Interview Questions

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. If it is okay with you, I will be taping our conversation because I do not want to miss any of your comments. Your interview responses will be kept confidential.

The goal of this interview is to get expatriates personal thoughts and opinions. There are no right or wrong answers, the main focus is on own experience. The interviewees have rights to decide what information they want to share.

The purpose of my research is to understand how expatriates explain integration, whether and how they want to become part of the local society and how they experience the process of integration in a Norwegian company.

The interviews will be taped and some notes can be taken during the interviews. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes.

1. Tell me please where do you originally come from?
2. What is your education?
3. Tell me please about your position in the firm? What are your main responsibilities?
4. What is the total length of your stay in Norway?/How long have you been working in Norway?
5. Was it your own initiation to work in Norway?
6. Tell me about your decision to come to Norway?
7. What preparation did you have – in terms of education, cultural information, language courses, etc.
8. Tell me a about your experience when you started living in Norway /
   -what was different from what you expected?

   In academic literature the word integration is not widely used.

9. What do you think about term "integration"? In your opinion which aspects is part of integration?
10. From your opinion what would it mean to be integrated? Is it possible, is it desirable?
11. Do you have previous international experience? Does it have impact on your integration to Norwegian society?
12. Did you receive any support from the company that helped you to better integrate? What would you like to get in addition?
13. Compared to your home country what cultural differences do you face working in Norway? What cultural similarities?

14. What (cultural) differences you found more challenging?
15. What kind of factors did help you to overcome challenges related to cultural differences?
16. Do you think it is important for expatriates to integrate into a local society?
    - Are you willing to integrate?
17. Are there some values you are willing to give up – some that you would not give up? Can you provide an example?
18. Do you think a foreigner can keep own cultural habits and values and still become integrated (in Norway)?
19. Are you interacting more with local people or to other internationals?
20. Do you speak Norwegian? Is it necessary to learn it?
21. Do you feel integrated at your workplace?
22. In what ways have you changed?
23. Compared to your home country do you experience differences in organizational hierarchy?
24. What kind of recommendations would you give to future expatriates who are willing to come to Norway?

Thank you very much for your time and participation! If you are interested I will be happy to send you a copy of the thesis.