

MEDIA USE AND CHANGING IDENTITIES

The case of Cameroonians in Oslo

MASTERS THESIS

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**Department of Media and Communication
University of Oslo, Norway**

HENRY MAINSAH

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ABSTRACT

This empirical study explores the ways in which minority ethnic communities consume media and how they construct their different identities through their negotiation with media texts.

This work focuses on four main types of media; television, newspapers, radio, and Internet. It draws on research among Cameroonians living in Oslo, examining their attitudes evaluations and uses of the media available to them. It uses qualitative interviews with 14 people as its main source of empirical data.

This dissertation seeks to discuss the ways in which these individuals use the diverse media they have access to with particular reference to the process of diasporic, and ethnic minority identity construction.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to explore the complexities of the relationship between the media and immigrant minorities. Its subject of concern is not only of great interest to contemporary cultural and social studies, but is also at the heart of one of the most pressing challenges most European societies are facing today. It brings together two different fields; the cultures of migrant and diasporic communities and the cultures of media consumption.

The subjects of this study are people of Cameroonian background living in Oslo. It is based on qualitative in-depth interviews with fourteen people conducted over a period of three months, starting from September to November 2004. The people who participated in this study included university students, auxiliary nurses, cleaners, canteen assistants, and bio-engineers, among others; between the ages of 24 and 40. The overall purpose of this study is to explore the ways in which Cameroonians respond to, use and deploy the different media available to them in their everyday lives, and how they use media texts to negotiate their identities and sense of belonging. The interviews explored their attitudes towards the Norwegian society, their links to Cameroon, their patterns of media use, habits, and preferences in relation to the different media, which these Cameroonians consume in everyday life. This study focuses on four media; television, radio, print media, and the Internet. These four media were among those that my interviewees frequently used on an everyday basis. The choice of these four media also helped to better explore the variety, uses, and different forms of media consumption, which my interviewees engage in.

Cameroonians are among the increasing number of immigrants and refugees, relative newcomers that are arriving, staying on, and settling down in the Scandinavian societies. New forms of migration and cultural flows are rapidly breaking links between culture and place, citizenship and identity, and creating new models of identification (Gillespie, 2002). In Norway, as well as in other modern societies, established conceptions of national culture and national belonging – of what it means to be Norwegian and who belongs – are likely to be

challenged and transformed. The globalization of communication and information technologies has radically changed the media and cultural contexts that migrants in Scandinavian countries live in. The new and precipitated flow of imagery and narratives, ideologies and visual vocabularies, which members of modern societies and consumers of media are exposed to, are likely to have unforeseeable and unimaginable political, social and cultural consequences. The media provide thrilling experiences of time and space travel, new possibilities for the formation of individual and collective identities, and new global encounters (Gillespie, 2002)

The subjects of this study belong to one of the smallest immigrant communities in Norway, in terms of nationality. Cameroonians have a quite recent history in Norway. The majority of Cameroonians in Norway have lived in the country for less than ten years. So most of these people have only recently, and still are, facing the challenges of negotiating life in a new host society. For them, life in a new host society is a tale of survival in a land with significant differences- differences in climate, language and culture. Some of these migrants might adapt rather well to their new host environment while others could feel like outsiders even after a long stay.

1.1 RESEARCH FOCUS

Due to the rapid increase in migration flows in recent years, the experience of migrant or diasporic people has become a central issue to most western societies. Parallel to this is significant impact of, particularly as manifested in the transnationalisation of the media and the emergence of new technologies especially in the IT sector, related changes in cultures of consumption. Media consumption, as any other form of cultural consumption involves the reading, production, and use of representations. Cultural consumption plays a major role in constructing, defining, and contesting, national, ethnic, diasporic, and other individual and collective identities (Gillespie, 1995). This is the context in which I will place the media use of Cameroonians in Oslo. On the basis of this I will construct the following inter-related set of research concerns:

How do the Cameroonians in Oslo deploy the different media they use as a resource in constructing their identities?

The perception of the self as a relatively stable unity has been put into question by more postmodernist and constructivist versions of identity. According to such a constructivist view of identity, the subject is seen as a meeting point of contradictory discourses. As such, human beings have multiple selves or identities (Hall, 1992). In the context of this study, the main focus will be on two types of identity; diasporic identity, and ethnic minority identity. Although in this study I focus mainly on two types of identity, I bear in mind that these are just a few among the many forms of identification available to the subjects of this study.

Does the media use of Cameroonians indicate the presence of a Diaspora identity, and what kind of role do the media play in articulating a diasporic identity?

Modern communications technologies are leading to the strengthening of diasporic identifications and connections among many migrant communities in western countries (Gillespie, 2000). By making use of the different media opportunities, immigrant groups are providing themselves with possibilities of strengthening diasporic connections and identifications. How interesting are these media and communication opportunities (albeit limited) for these Cameroonians? Does the Cameroon Diaspora play any role for the people in this study? Are diasporic networks, and a diasporic consciousness enhanced by media consumption?

A diasporic perspective, which situates these subjects in relation to the very complex web of transnational cross-connections in their homeland and the wider Diaspora, could help to further our understanding of some of the consequences of media and migration in an age of globalisation (Gillespie, 2000). A diasporic perspective is also important because it could help illustrate the ways in which identities have been and continue to be transformed through relocation, cross-cultural exchange and interaction (Hall, 1990).

What role do the media play in incorporating Cameroonians into their new host society? How do Cameroonians identify themselves vis-à-vis the Norwegian society, and what role do the national media play in this?

It would be impossible to write about the identities of Cameroonians who live in Norway examining the social, cultural, and political context in which they live in, a context which determines their position as immigrant minorities. In a majority-minority context, the media

perform a crucial role in the public representation of unequal social relations and the play of cultural power. Through the media's representations, it invites its audience to construct a sense of who "we" are as opposed to who "we" are not, or as "us" and "them", "insider" and "outsider", "citizen" and "foreigner", "normal" and "deviant", "friend" and "foe" (Cottle, 2000:2). At the same time the media can also contribute to promote social and cultural diversity and even provide an arena through which imposed identities or interests of others can be opposed or resisted. Given the history of the media representation of ethnic minorities by the media in Scandinavian countries, one can expect a certain disparity between the way Cameroonians in Norway view themselves, and the way their identities are defined in majority discourse. One would also expect there to be some anxieties related to issues of representation, as well as a rejection of imposed identities.

Besides issues of representation, I also recognised, earlier, the potential role of the media in addressing the challenges of adaptation in a host society faced by immigrants. In public discourse it is called social integration. For the immigrant, it is a process of adjusting to a series of radical changes. To understand the ways in which the media can be employed to facilitate this process is also a goal of this study.

1.2 RELEVANCE OF RESEARCH

A number of phenomena indicate that in current years socio-cultural boundaries are being established and deepened between the majorities and minority groups in Scandinavian countries

Gillespie (2000) has pointed out how enduring a problem it is that, in our daily and in our academic lives, we use labels, categories, value judgements and classifications, which we explicitly or implicitly adopt in academic research, that often simplify human and cultural complexity and essentialize cultural difference. I cannot say with any degree of confidence that I do not fall prey to this, in my research. It is precisely for this reason that more and more studies of cultural and media boundaries are needed in order for us to constantly revisit assumptions, and question certainties on the subject of minorities and the media.

I earlier pointed out how central the two phenomena of migration and developments have become in western countries. I fully agree with Gillespie (1995) in her argument that in

focusing on these two phenomena of media and migration together, academic research contributes vital empirical evidence to help measure the nature, scale, and pace of cultural change, which our societies are undergoing today.

In addition, given the new media times of rapid technological developments, fragmented markets, increased competition and globalisation, minority audiences are increasingly being perceived as potential lucrative markets by both national and multinational corporations and this is prompting research into ethnic minority consumer tastes and media requirements (Cottle, 2000)

The recent research project carried out by Norsk Gallup on immigrant's media use, which published its findings in August 2004, is an example of the increasing recognition of the importance of ethnic minority media consumers as potential lucrative markets.

1.3 STRUCTURE

The introductory chapter consists of a presentation of the main themes of the thesis and the research questions, which the study would be investigating about. In this chapter will also discuss the relevance of this line of research, the main research questions

Chapter two consists of an outline of the different approaches, which would serve as guidelines, with the help of which I would analyse the research data. The study would examine the approaches broached here at a theoretical level – issues of identities, the diasporic, and the minority ethnic.

Chapter three explains the qualitative empirical methodology, which the study utilizes, and discusses the process of the research carried out. Here I argue for the unique advantages of the semi-structured interview approach. I outlined the strategies I used to recruit my informants, and reflect on the practical, ethical, and theoretical problems such work entailed.

The fourth chapter focuses on the findings obtained from the interviews. Here I explore the nature of media access my informants had, and the general media consumption. I outline the informants' general preferences, attitudes, and pattern of use of each the four different media

in focus in this study. I demonstrate how their media consumption extends from local and national, through their Diaspora and to the international spheres.

Chapter five is more or less a continuation of chapter four. While I analysed each of the media separately in chapter four, the analysis in chapter five brings together all the different media in focus in this study. This chapter explores in depth the media consumption in relation to the main research questions posed at the beginning of this study

The last chapter is final discussion that brings together the theoretical approaches, the methodology, the findings and the analysis. Here I try to finally address the main preoccupations of this study, and to suggest possible directions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

In this chapter, I would attempt to examine the different theoretical perspectives that would form the basis of an analysis of the role the media plays in the lives of Cameroonians in Oslo. The nucleus of my theoretical approach will be Hall's (1990) idea of identity as a continuous process of transformation. Drawing from that, I will examine two types of identity, which according to my opinion are particularly relevant to Cameroonians living in new host societies, Diaspora, and ethnic minority, or migrant identity. I will also show how these theoretical perspectives could help in the understanding of the media use of the subjects of this study

2.1 IDENTITIES

The word identity is derived from the Latin word "idem", meaning "the same", or "one and the same" (Hagen, 2003).

The question of identity/self formulates itself thus: "Who am I?" Central to the process of identity are reflections of *I* and *me*. *I* refers to how the individual experiences himself. *Me* refers to the self as an object, for personal reflection and talk, and to how others see and define *me*. Other's expectations and evaluations of *me*, greatly influence *my* identity (Hagen, 2003). Identity is a reflection of how individuals experience themselves and how others experience them.

One major issue in all discussion about identity has been the question of stability. To what extent is a person the same over time, even though s/he shows different sides of her/himself? (Hagen, 2003). A modernist philosophy of science favours an understanding of identity as something stable (Giddens, 1991). According to this understanding, identity consists of one's true and rather stable self. The view of the self as a stable unity has been disputed by postmodernist and constructivist understandings of identity. From a post modernistic viewpoint, the self is seen as a meeting point of contradictory discourses (Hall, 1992). Human beings have multiple selves or identities.

Focusing on stability or change should to a large extent depend on what aspects of identity that one finds most relevant in a particular knowledge context (Hagen, 2003). For this study on media use among Cameroonians, the perspective of change is most analytically valuable.

Essentialism and anti-essentialism

Hall (1990) has identified two positions from which we can understand the concept of identity, in a line of argument in which he contrasts essentialism with anti-essentialism. From the essentialist position, identity is defined through the existence of a collective “one true self” formed on the basis of a common history, ancestry and a set of symbolic resources. Based on that, it is possible to speak, for example, of a Norwegian identity, expressed through symbols like the national flag, the national anthem “Ja vi elsker”, the 17th of May, and other collective rituals.

“Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as “one people”, with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history” (Hall, 1990: p.223)

From this position, we make an underlying assumption that identity exists, that in both its individual and collective forms, it forms a whole, and that it is expressed through symbolic representation. This view of identity is essentialist because it assumes that social categories mirror an essential underlying identity (Barker, 1999)

Hall also describes a second position on identity which is anti-essentialist .He explains it thus:

This second position recognises that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant *difference* which constitute “what we really are”; or rather – since history has intervened –“what we have become”. We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about “one experience, one identity”, without acknowledging its other side – the raptures and discontinuities. ...Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of “becoming” as well as one of “being”. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialist past, they are

subject to the continuous “play” of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere “recovery” of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by and position ourselves within, the narrative past (1990:p.225)”

The meaning of Norwegianness, Cameroonians, blackness, masculinity, femininity etc. is subject to continual change, since meaning is never finished or completed. This anti-essentialist position does not necessarily suggest that we cannot speak of identity at all. It simply illustrates the political nature of identity as a discursive production, and stresses on the possibility of multiple and shifting identities where discourses of age, gender, nationality and race can be articulated together or separately (Barker, 1999).

Articulation

Drawing on Laclau (1977), Barker (1999) argues that there are no automatic links between discursive concepts, that the links between discursive concepts that exist are forged, are essentially temporary and connotative and that they are articulated together and bound by evocative links that customs and opinions have established between them. For example we consider the nation as “one people” when, not only will these people probably never meet each other, or know each other personally. We consider the nation as “one people” although fundamental differences exist among them, in terms of class, gender, race, age and lifestyles. There is no automatic connection between the different discourses of identity based on class, gender, race, or otherwise. Thus, for example, not all working-class Norwegian women in Oslo do share the same identity and identification. Likewise, not all middle-class Pakistani men in Trondheim share exactly the same identity. Rather, the different discourses that constitute identity can be articulated together in different ways. According to Barker (1999) identities are contradictory. They cross-cut or dislodge each other both at the collective and the individual level. No single identity can act as a dominant organizing entity. Rather, identities shift according to how subjects are represented, and how they represent themselves.

Shifting Identities

Besides shifting meanings, the multiple narratives of the self are also the result of the propagation and diversification of social relationships, contexts and spaces of interaction. Thus discourse, identities, and social practice can be seen as forming a mutually constituting

set (Barker, 1999). Compared to the past, people living in the contemporary world have a much wider scope of relationships and spaces in which to interact. These may include not only spaces and relationships of family, friends, and work, but also global resources of television, e-mail, online chat, mobile phones, and travel. The diversity of contexts and sites of interaction makes it difficult to pin particular people down to a given, fixed identity. One and the same person can be able to shift across subject positions according to circumstances.

2.2 DIASPORIC IDENTITY

Only disfavoured acquaintances tend to live too far away. – Yoruba Proverb

Diaspora is a term that is used today to describe populations that feel a sense of either being deterritorialised or transnational (Tuftte 2002). Diaspora has most often been applied in reference to the catastrophic experience of the Jewish population that was forced to spread all over the globe, after being victimised on a massive scale (Vertovec, 2000). For a long time, Diaspora embodied negative connotations and usually referred to forced displacement, victimisation, alienation and loss.

Cohen (1997) has tried to conceptualise Diaspora by developing a nine-point model. He outlines the features that Diasporas commonly exhibit as thus:

1. Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically.
2. Expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of a trade or to further colonial ambitions.
3. A collective memory, and myth about a homeland.
4. Idealisation of an ancestral home.
5. A return movement
6. A strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time.
7. A troubled relationship with host societies.
8. A sense of solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries.
9. The possibility of realising a creative and enriching life in tolerant host countries

Annabelle Sreberny (2000) criticises Cohen's nine-point model for implicitly suggesting that a strong sense of tradition, group consciousness, and rootedness, as the only driving forces behind the diasporic experience. The movement across space may risk serving to reify the

original culture that was located within territorial borders, and that was carried to new locations. She argues that it is precisely these aspects of Diaspora that need to be theoretical re-examined and empirically problematised.

In an overview of the usage of the term Diaspora in recent literature, Vertovec (2000, 141-164) proposes a three-fold distinction of the meanings of the concept: He distinguishes between *Diaspora as a type of consciousness* and *Diaspora as a social form* and *Diaspora as a mode of cultural production*.

Diaspora as a social form

Diaspora as a social form describes the social relationships that are paved and sustained by special ties to both history and geography. Those who belong to Diasporas are scattered all over the globe due to migration, be it forced or voluntary. Through harbouring an “ethnic myth” (common origin/history) and through geography (particular ties), they maintain a collective identity. Diasporas usually have institutionalised social networks and form new communal organisations in host countries. They maintain links to their homeland and often have divided loyalties between host country and homeland. Diaspora as a social form often exists along the lines of a “triadic relationship” that stretches from the global network, through the territory of residence to the homeland state. The result is a special way of life where it becomes possible and necessary to live in two societies simultaneously (Glick Schiller et al., 1992).

Diaspora as a social form is also characterised by the existence of conflicting political orientations in form of divided loyalties between homeland and host nation. Cameroonian diasporic communities are highly concentrated in the USA, France, the UK, Belgium, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Germany. In terms of social relationships, as mentioned above, diasporic communities are rapidly evolving in their political orientations and their economic strategies vis-à-vis their homeland. Arjun Appadurai (1990) suggests that process of deterritorialization among diasporic groups sometimes creates exaggerated and intensified criticism and attachment to politics of the home state. I will try to see the extent to which this is true in the case of the Cameroonian Diaspora.

Diaspora as a type of consciousness

Another approach to Diaspora outlined by Vertovec puts emphasis on the existence of a particular state of mind, or awareness that is dual and paradoxical, and which is usually generated among transnational communities. According to Clifford, “Diaspora consciousness lives loss and hope as a defining tension” (1997:p.312). Diaspora as a form of consciousness is characterised by various dual and paradoxical dimensions of consciousness. Diasporic consciousness is sometimes constituted negatively by experiences of discrimination and exclusion, and positively by identification with either a historic heritage, or a contemporary global cultural or political force. In relation to this, Gilroy (1993), talks about a duality of consciousness referring to diasporic individuals’, and of decentralised attachments. He describes the Diaspora consciousness as a sense of being simultaneously at “home and away from home” or, being “here and there” at the same time. This awareness of multi-locality stimulates the need to connect oneself to others who are both here and there and who share the same “routes” and “roots”. He draws du Bois’s notion of a “double consciousness”, which creates a sense of “both/and”, a feeling of having two identities, and ambiguities related to being both American and Black, which involve shifting between two sets of ideals, thoughts, and strivings.

For Cohen (1996), transnational links no longer need to be consolidated by migration or by exclusive territorial claims. In the age of ICTs, a Diaspora can to a certain extent be maintained and transformed through the mind, through cultural expression, and through a shared imagination. As such, diasporic identifications breach the gap between the global and the local.

In addition to multi-locality and links of imagination, diasporic consciousness can be articulated by other functions of the mind. Diasporas always reflect a collective memory about another place and time and create new patterns of desire and attachment. Diasporic consciousness produces a multiplicity of histories, communities, and identities. Instead of viewing it as a setback, diasporic individuals redefine this multiplicity as a source of adaptive strength.

I expect there to be a certain variation in diasporic consciousness among the members of the Cameroonian Diaspora. Some may be stuck in memories of the past even after living in the host country for a long time, while others would easily the psychological transition to their new realities.

Diaspora as a mode of cultural production

Diaspora can flourish as a mode of production through “the production and reproduction of transnational social and cultural phenomena” (Vertovec, 2000: 153). This perception is closely related to globalisation discourse, which in this case is perceived as a worldwide flow of cultural objects, images and meanings, resulting processes of creolisation, back and forth transferences, mutual influences, new contestations, negotiations and constant transformations (Vertovec, 2000: 153).

Diaspora has also been linked to new approaches to ethnicity that underlines its non-essentialist, constructivist and processual aspects. Here, the fluidity of constructed identities among diasporic populations is emphasised, drawing from evidence of the production and reproduction of different forms, which sometimes are termed syncretic, creolised, or hybrid. As Hall (1990: 235) puts it:

“The Diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity, which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference”

Vertovec points out one area where such hybrid cultural phenomena can be identified; among diasporic youth. These are groups who primarily socialise within several cultural environments at the same time. Given that these groups mostly live in modern multi-cultural societies, they are subjected to a wide range of influences, especially as media technologies have provided increased access to distant worlds. As a result, they are often able to select and syncretise the different facets of their identity from a multiple range of cultural repertoires. A large percentage of the Cameroonian Diaspora consists of people in their youth. As such one can expect that they would be more open to diverse cultural influences that might encourage the production and reproduction of creolised, translated, hybrid, or crossover forms. This, however, is not a major preoccupation of this study.

Diaspora and the media

Media use and communication opportunities can be analysed in relation to all the dimensions of the Diaspora concept I mentioned above (Tufté, 2000). The media and new technologies

have come to play a major role in the twin processes of seeking a home and a sense of belonging.

A major factor responsible for the increasing and precipitated flow of cultural phenomena is the global mass media. The recent developments in media technology, and the resulting accelerated flow of media content, are currently causing a transformation in diasporic identities. Satellite broadcasting and the Internet have made possible, on a much wider scope and accelerated pace, the distribution of all types of media content across the globe.

In the case of the Internet, for example, many first generation immigrants, and in particular exiled people, use this medium to follow news from their countries of origin, or to keep in touch with friends and relatives within their diasporic network (Tufte, 2002).

Gillespie (2000) demonstrates how diasporic identifications and connections are strengthened by modern communication technologies. In her study she explores the role transnational media play in the sustaining of South Asia Diaspora consciousness and formations. She illustrates her case with findings from a study of the reception of TV versions of the Mahabharata that are very popular in India and in the Diaspora. Hindu women in London and Delhi selectively appropriate these texts for their own needs, and in the process subvert patriarchal and nationalist discourses while constructing their own worldviews and identities.

Sreberny (2000) explores the different dimensions of the diasporic experience and consciousness, by examining the extent to which the contemporary media forms used by diasporic communities serve to bind these transnational communities together and maintain minority ethnic cultural identities, and attachments. She argues that we need more studies of the experience of Diaspora in everyday life and what roles different media play within the complex psychological, sociological and cultural facets of diasporic realities.

Research carried out by Aksoy and Robins (2000) on transnational television from Turkey reveals that one of the ways in which migrants think about their relation to Turkish culture is through the modality of fantasy. They consciously pick out those types of programmes that convey an ideal image of their homeland. Many of the Turkish participants in the study mentioned above complain about the fact that news sometimes brings demoralising stories and that watching the violence on Turkish television only brings stress. So for many of these migrants, becoming synchronized with homeland realities puts them in a disturbing position, where they could be removed and even alienated from the very thing they thought to be theirs.

These diasporic populations exist in a transnational space, where they seek to find a way to negotiate between their diasporic consciousness, and a need to find a place in their host countries. They can use the media to make sense of these questions of identity, or in other words, think across spaces. Being and thinking across spaces makes these diasporic groups more aware of the constructed nature of their identities. The mental geography of these groups is certainly more encompassing than those of their compatriots in their homeland and of their host country.

Do the Cameroonians who are my interview subjects exhibit a diasporic identity in any form? Does the way in which they use various media available to them reveal a diasporic identity, and is this identity nourished and worked on by the help of media use?

It is within this context of the tension between the national and the diasporic, the local and the global, that this study will be situated.

2.3 ETHNIC MINORITY IDENTITY

The presence of ethnic minorities in western societies is a product of historical and contemporary flows of people and operations of power. Western societies today accommodate different native, immigrant and refugee, indigenous, long settled, newly arrived, transnational and transcultural groups and communities (Cottle, 2000). According to Cottle, within ethnic minority groups and diasporic communities there exist different histories and experiences of exile and encounters with host societies, and with each other. These types of groupings are also marked by different demographics, languages, religions, traditions, customs and internal processes of cultural negotiation, adaptation and change. Ethnic minorities in western countries have experienced and still experience structural inequalities and racist discrimination in all areas of social, cultural, political, and economic activity. Their lived realities have been, and are still being affected by state actions and policies, prompting struggles for civil rights and political emancipation (ibid.).

At the beginning of 2005, there were 301 000 first-generation immigrants, and 64 000 persons born in Norway of two foreign parents. 265 000, or 72% of immigrants in Norway were of non-western origin, according to the Central Bureau for Statistics (in Norwegian abbreviated SSB) (SSB, 2005). The SSB defines an “immigrant” as “a person with two foreign born parents” (Bjertnes 2000: 10).

Such official designations, according to Cottle (2000) are at best crude designations of both ethnicity and identity and can be reproached, at worst, for harbouring on racial and cultural essentialism.

The identity of the immigrant is in essence, not determined by “who they are” or “where they came from”, but how they are represented and how that affects the way they represent themselves (Hagen, 2003).

According to Hussain (2003), the specific construction of discourse on ethnic minorities in the media is inherently a systemic reproduction of culture and meaning. Thus he argues that “the symbolic construction of ethnicity is an integral part of identity politics embedded in the dominant discourse, which is articulated by discursive practices of the national institutions in a dialectical interplay with media discourses” (Hussain 2003: 115). From this, one can assume that the cultural and systemic structuration is a simultaneous process.

In this work, I will argue that there exists, to a considerable extent, a certain link of discursivity between the media and other social systems that constitute the structures and processes of the cultural production of discourses on ethnic minorities in Norway.

In this section I will attempt to analyse both the institutional and the media discourse in relation to ethnic minorities, and what consequences these may have in the way Cameroonians as ethnic minorities in Norway negotiate questions of identity and belonging in their host society.

A context of rapid socio-cultural change

As a result of the dramatic increase in migration towards Scandinavian countries in recent years, these countries have all experienced to varying degrees, problems in catching up with the fast pace of social and cultural change. These problems are related to their progress towards multicultural societies, and equally to symbolic struggles over how to define national identity and upon what values, politics, and everyday practices national identity is based (Tufte, 2003).

There have been a series of recent developments that have directly or indirectly brought the condition of ethnic minorities of non-European origin living in Scandinavian societies in the limelight.

- The terrorist attacks on the twin towers and the Pentagon in the United States, the Madrid trains, and the London underground. Closely linked to these is the war against terrorism launched by George Bush and Tony Blair. Although all this is taking place outside the Scandinavian countries, it has immensely affected the way Muslims in particular, have been represented and perceived in Norway. The war against terror has led to the implementation of new and unparalleled forms of control on Muslim groups. Public hostility towards non-European followers of the Islamic faith has also been on the rise, reinforcing boundaries along religious lines.
- The Fadime case in Sweden in early 2002, where a woman of Kurdish origin was murdered, allegedly by her brother and father, the motive being that she violated the honour of her family, by having a relationship with an ethnic Swedish man.
- The case in the Norwegian capital, Oslo, of a young adopted boy, Benjamin, who was beaten to death by neo-Nazi gang members.
- The controversy surrounding the imminent ban on of the Hijab in school and at the work place.

Each of these issues has received high media coverage, and has been at the centre of public and political debate. They are among the many issues that have also to a large extent coloured the way non-European ethnic minorities in Norway, as well as other Scandinavian countries, have been represented in majority perception. These developments equally highlight the failure of the different policies that have been implemented in relation to the integration of immigrants into the society.

The multicultural puzzle

Stephen Castles has summarised the main components of the term multiculturalism as all that has to do with “abandoning the myth of homogenous and monocultural nation-states” and “recognising rights to cultural maintenance and community formation, and linking these to social equality and protection from discrimination” (2000: 5). As such, multiculturalism represents a sort of counterforce to assimilationist views and policies related to the incorporation of immigrants into host societies (Faist, 2000). In terms of policy,

multiculturalism applies to almost every part of public life. It is implicated in procedures, representations, materials and resources in education, health, welfare, law and order, and the different cultural expressions (Vertovec, 2001).

As a nation-building project, multiculturalism provides a framework where ethnic minorities are proposed cultural tolerance and multicultural rights and institutions, and in exchange, they have to accept and recognise some basic principles and the rule of law. Ethnic minorities are perceived as culturally laden social groups, who need to be integrated and individualised, offered a voice, and means of participation in the public sphere. Multiculturalism aims at transforming immigrants into full and free citizens and assimilated nationals, in a nation-state re-imagined to balance cultural diversity with a formal equality of status and membership (Favell, 1998).

However, multiculturalism has also been linked to divergent and sometimes overlapping discourses, institutional contexts, and policies that have evoked the term in different ways (Vertovec, 2001). Multiculturalism sometimes refers to a demographic description, a political ideology, policy, a form of cultural expression, or moral challenges.

Grillo (1998: 195) has identified six problems with multicultural theory and practice of multiculturalism: 1) multiculturalism's implicit essentialism; 2) the system of categorisation inherent in multiculturalism; 3) the form that policies and the practice of multiculturalism take 4) the ritualization of ethnicity related to it; 5) the elision of race and class that it seems to involve; and 6) the attack on the "common core" which it stands for.

According to Grillo (*ibid.*) most of these shortcomings associated with multiculturalism spring from a focus on culture. Essentialized views of culture have been registered, in the recent past, in multicultural programmes and policies in areas such as education, media representations, public funding mechanisms, organisational literature, and ethnic community leadership organs (Vertovec, 2001)

"In this set of understandings, "culture" is a kind of package (often talked as migrants' "cultural baggage") of collective behavioural-moral-aesthetic traits and "customs", rather mysteriously transmitted between generations, best suited to particular geographical locations yet largely unaffected by history of a change of context, which instills a discrete quality into

the feelings, values, practices, social relationships, predilections and intrinsic nature of all who “belong to (a particular” it”. (Vertovec 1996: 51)

Multiculturalism has also been criticized for creating a sense of white exclusion, for using models of representations that only deal with elites, for freezing change, entrenching inequalities, and for erecting group barriers (Alibhai-Brown, 2000).

It must be noted that the same essentialist understanding of minority cultures and communities are also adopted by ethnic minorities themselves. Baumann (1996) has demonstrated through his ethnographic study, how reified perceptions of culture and community are contained in both dominant (media, institutional), and demotic (people’s everyday) discourse.

Following the rapid influx of immigrants and refugees into Norway, the state declared itself a multi-cultural society in the early 1990s. In terms of policy, the means of achieving a coherent multicultural society proposed was that of integration.

Hamburger (1997) maintains that the goal of integration is to create and maintain a multi-cultural society where majority and minority groups live together on equal terms, and where different cultures all have the right to exist.

Achieving the goal of a well-integrated society requires a general consensus by all ethnic groups on a set of ground rules (Schmidt, 2002). An ideal integration should be based on a dynamic process of mutuality and equality, where the majority insists on active societal participation on the part of the minority, but recognises the cultural, ethnic, and religious differences, provided these do not violate society’s basic laws. The interactions between the majority and the minority are negotiated in such a way that creates conditions acceptable to the minority, but which fall within the ground rules laid down by the majority (Seeberg, 2002).

Traditionally, there have been two different strategies towards nation building, both working in favour of the one state-one nation principle. One bears a distinctly nationalist discourse, rejecting the possibility of ethnic diversity among members of the society. This discourse, in effect, argues for integration as assimilation. The other one bears a more liberalist discourse, one that accepts diversity, and gives each individual accepted within its borders the freedom

to pursue his/her own fortune, while hoping that everyone will finally accept “one loyalty and identity offered to them all” (Bauman, 2000: 92). The ordering of these two approaches is not random. In the case of Norway, it reflects, to a large extent the orientations of the dominant discourse on ethnic minorities, in an attempt to modernise a consensual polity, and reinstate a perception of cultural homogeneity in the minds of its citizens.

In Norway, the welfare state is a significant actor with regards to the challenges presented by the rapid increase in migration flows. Norway has always been regarded as a country with an egalitarian wage structure, and a tradition of extensive public insurance systems designed to take care of all residents regardless of social background. Equal treatment, responsible state management and welfare policy have been the key elements in the formation of immigration policy, and these are in a sense, the nerve centre of the welfare state’s integration project. Equality does not only have an economic and a political dimension. Cultural, social, and ideological aspects play a role as well. While the orientation towards equality has been preached in form of equal rights and privileges, it has also been present in form of requirements for *homogeneity* (Brochmann, 2002). As it is the case with other Western democracies, one of the major challenges faced by the Norwegian state is how to reconcile multiculturalism, with nationalism. While states are praising multiculturalism and the necessity for openness, they equally have to nurture nationalism and patriotism in other spheres (Brochmann, 2002).

If newcomers were to have a chance of becoming part of the Norwegian society, they were to be allowed little room for excessive deviation.

There exists a subtle, yet rather thick popular conception of Norwegian nationhood that is manifested in historical narratives (Brochmann, 2002). In essence, there is something, which is distinctly Norwegian, which is very difficult for outsiders to be a part of. This perception prevails to the extent that it is almost impossible for the outsider to be completely accepted as a Norwegian.

The Norwegian official discourse on multiculturalism and integration is sometimes somewhat vague because it does not specify its practical implications. The state usually points out the need for immigrants to abide to law and order, to learn the Norwegian language, and not to live in isolation from society. However, the Norwegian state has never clearly outlined the

implications of having multiculturalism as a policy, and of choosing integration as a means of implementing that policy (Brochmann, 2002: 16).

For how long is one expected to belong to an ethnic minority, and for how long is the minority status supposed to last? For how long is it legitimate to consider immigrants as outsiders? Is a multicultural society and its provision for group rights a final goal, or just a step towards a fusing majority and minority into one? Is integration just form of delayed assimilation?

Tufte (2003) sees both a symbolic power struggle unrolling in the Scandinavian countries and throughout Europe, between different understandings of how to interpret the cultural changes their societies are undergoing as a result of migration and an actual political struggle over the right response to these changes. These changes are defying the steadfastness of the religious, ethnic and national identities predominant in the Scandinavian countries. National politicians have not yet, and probably will not for a while, find coherent responses to deal with the issues stemming from these changes. According to Bauman, modern states are facing today a post-national phase of development that renders the two strategies of nation building redundant. With the acceleration of globalisation comes a relocation of power that severely challenges national politics (Bauman, 2000: 97).

In Scandinavian countries, after decades of different strategies of nation building, many immigrants and refugees have seen themselves marginalised, geographically through their concentration into specific ghetto-like neighbourhoods, politically through poor low levels of participation at all levels, and socially and culturally through very limited interaction between them and the majority society. They see defence mechanisms and legal measures being developed against them, perceiving them as threats. (Tufte, 2003). All these contribute to a general feeling of unease and bafflement, a situation in which the fundamental feeling of ontological security is at stake, where people feel their identities threatened. Feelings of fear increase not only when Islamic jihadists bomb the Twin Towers and the London underground, but also when the media dramatize the “war against terrorism”. Anxiety is also accentuated by the quotidian stereotype representation in which the national media plays a pivotal role, where ethnic minority people are portrayed exclusively as threats (criminal, violent) or as problems (economic, cultural or social, burden to society) (Eide, 2003). This situation of unease has

been used to explain the growth of right-wing parties like the FRP (Fremskrittspartiet) in Norway who preach simple solutions to complex problems.

The question that remains to be asked is how do people like the subjects of this study, immigrant minorities living in increasingly antagonistic contexts experience these changes? How do the above-mentioned social, cultural and political contexts in their host society affect their understanding of themselves, and thus their process of identity formation?

Belonging

The globalization phenomenon has in many ways, brought into the forefront issues of identity, and the politics of difference. Social, political, and cultural issues range from individual constructs to macro structures of national, international, and transnational levels. New identities, minority cultures, and diasporic communities have come face to face with host-cultures of nation states. The problems of defining the nature and boundaries of ethnic groups has resulted in a series of discourses that challenge the essentialist basis of community constructs to individual claims on identity. The problem is now posed in terms of the means of co-existence, the construction of multiple public spheres, redefinition of nationhood, and citizenship.

Hedetoft (2002) situates the notion of belonging in relation to four main parameters. They are in a systematic order, *sources of belonging*, *feelings of belonging*, *ascriptions and constructions of belonging*, and *fluidities of belonging*.

According to Hedetoft (ibid.) sources of belonging means belonging is built on a series of elements that include place, familiarity, sensual experience, human interaction, and local knowledge. Persons, landscapes, sensory experiences, and familiar mental mappings condition belonging. All these are the building blocks for feelings of belonging, homeness, and related identity formation processes, while on the other hand they may also produce feelings of uprootedness, non-belonging, and alienation, if conditioning elements are characterised by lack of human interaction, negative sensual impressions etc.

Feelings of belonging require a positive identification with all or some of the above mentioned elements, which function as determinants of homeness, self-identity, and socio-psychological security. Feelings of belonging do not necessary have to be a conscious aspect

of identification. Rather, feelings of belonging play out in terms of the satisfaction of needs, recognition by a specific community, participation in its cultural and social activities, and shared ideas, knowledge and networks.

Ascriptions of belonging refer to the dimensions of belonging, which is collectively transformed into the modern, nation-state dependent form of identity. This is the institutionalised form of belonging in form of passport, citizenship, socialisation agencies and official, ethno-national versions of historical memory. This dimension of belonging draws boundaries of sovereignty between “us” and “them” and results in the production of exclusivist forms of alterity. It interprets “place” as “territoriality”, “familiarity” as “nationality” and “strangers” as “aliens”. These forms of belonging are usually employed in racist rhetoric, evoking arguments on who authentically belongs and who does not.

Fluidities of belonging evoke forms of belonging where nation-state, homogeneity, and unitarism, are confronted by messy borders, migratory movements, ethnic minorities, dual citizenships and multicultural polities. Globalisation has led to the weakening of borders and the sovereignty of nation-states. Transnational processes have encouraged the building of multiple forms of identity and belonging (or non-belonging). Different global migratory patterns are encouraging the contestation of identities previously conceived of as homogenous. This has resulted in the creation of a new ideal of homogeneity; belonging to the globe, rather than to the nation, a cosmopolitan dream.

Today, ethnic minority groups are increasingly asserting their (dual/multiple) feelings of belonging, and making “ethnic claims” on that background. On the other hand, the political discourses of host societies are also finding the confidence to ideologically and rhetorically retrieve their own territorial and cultural framework of belonging and consequently to specify to newcomers which conditions the different conditions they must meet in order to belong (Hedetoft, 2002).

Hedetoft and Hjort (2002) have questioned the concepts of home and belonging and how and how they are constructed in discourse and understood either on the basis of ethnicity and culture, or as political and civic notions. Belonging is a contested field. During the national phase, the political levels coincided on the same community to accrue citizenship to members of a particular nation-state, while the post-national order, on the other hand, separates

ethnicity from identity. Liberal and civic nationalism and cosmopolitanism go hand in hand with subjective demands for individual freedom, community rights, and negotiated identities. According to them, belonging is negotiated at different levels, national, sub national, and cosmopolitan, simultaneously.

The media and discourse on ethnic minorities

In the process of cultural production, the media, seen as a dominant institution of society plays a key role in the reproduction of a shared perception of ethnicity, identity, and boundaries. Thus, one can say that ethnic reality is (re) produced, diffused, and disseminated by the dominant media discourses (Hussain, 2003).

Culture in our modern societies is to a very large extent stored, reproduced, customized, mediated and disseminated by the mass media. Besides reflecting new ideas originating from other societal institutions e.g. law, science, economy, and the arts, the media also participate in the production of cultural expression themselves, in the sense that they produce and put forward new ideas (Rosengreen, 1988). In producing and distributing cultural products or symbolic goods, the media are intrinsically taking part in a process of production of meaning and ideology in a specific sociohistorical context (Geertz, 1993).

The discourses that articulate ethnic exclusion from, or inclusion in mainstream culture, are produced through acts of classification and categorisation. The primary sites for these discursive modes of classification and categorisation are the dominant societal institutions. “The institutional practice of defining in-groups and out-groups is reflected and indeed reinforced, recreated and reformulated through new ideas in media discourses on ethnicity” (Hussain, 2003: 116). Thus, the media does not merely reflect ethnic discourse that is produced in the practices of other societal institutions; they also reshape it through their representations.

Processes of exclusion are upheld mainly through cognitive categories of difference in discourses on ethnic minorities produced by societal institutions. Since the national media are entrenched in all societal organisations and institutions, it is through the media’s practice of attributing categories of difference, that society forms a culturally shared understanding of issues of ethnicity, which it in turn articulates in public communication. The media

representation of ethnicity is a result of an inter-discursivity, which merges the sum total of communicative and social actions, interactions, and ideas in the process of the cultural reproduction of a national identity by the elite institutions of society. The elite discourse that is reflected in the media representation of ethnicity is more often than not, spiced with the media's discourse strategies of amplification, exaggeration, selections, and emphasis (Hussain, 2003).

A vast body of research has demonstrated that the cultural stereotyping and discrimination of ethnic minorities in the mass media, politics, academic discourse and practice is rampant in most advanced European countries. Although there might be some variations in the themes and frames in which the different national media in Nordic countries present issues and stories of ethnic minorities, particularly those of non-European origin, these minorities are portrayed in the media in ethnocentric and nationalistic terms where "us-them" categories are used, and also as binary opposites and negations of majority peoples (Eide, 2003).

In our complex societies of today, the media have become a major agent of socialisation. The public's cognitive repertoire on issues related to ethnicity is mostly drawn from media images of ethnic episode, events, or situations. It is through the media's images and discourses, that the individuals of the different ethnic groups that constitute today's modern multicultural societies are provided the basic cognitive schema that helps them build their own attitudes and identities.

It is in this context that this study will attempt to examine the role played by the media in the formation of identity and belonging among Cameroonians within the context of their host society, Norway. How do they relate to the way their identities are constructed for them by the national media? How do both media representations and media uses serve as articulators of their feelings of inclusion/exclusion?

2.4 CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

In my theoretical reflections on identity above, I drew upon the idea of identity proposed by Hall (1990), as one that involves some core as well as multiple differentiations and one that is a continuously revised "production". This view of identity is dynamic enough to explore individual identities, the sense of both fit and non-fit longing and belonging, and the multiple

identifications and new “third spaces” through which Diaspora is experienced and conducted. This view of identity can also encompass the dynamics of inclusion/exclusion, and belonging in a host society context, that characterises the ethnic minority experience. In this study I try to show that the kinds of identities that my informants construct and their varying conceptions of themselves are based on specific contexts. Sreberny (2002) has shown that various forms of group organisation and behaviour are not mutually exclusive and that certain terminology can best be affixed by focusing on the specific activity and energy of the group. She argues that the language of collectivities should be approached not through the identification of some core essence but by identifying its significant activity that channels its energy.

A focus on ethnicity in the context of minorities in Western societies tends to imply individuals and groups looking inward to their new host country context, in an attempt to find a place where one is welcome. A focus on Diaspora has often meant individuals or groups looking back nostalgically at the old homeland, and constructing cross-border networks that extend throughout the globe. In this study, I will suggest that these different orientations are not mutually exclusive, but are coexisting processes of group (re)formation. These different orientations are essentially not separable since they are all exhibited within migrant populations who sinuously shift between them.

All these gazes could well be supported by the diffusion of media technologies, both old and new. In negotiating identities and senses of belonging among immigrants and refugees, the media play a key role. The media can represent immigrants and refugees in stereotyped and misleading ways accentuating feelings of exclusion and alienation. On the other hand, the media can contribute to the creation of a public sphere that supports the diversity of citizenry, and the formation of links that transcend the boundaries between identities. The media can also play significant roles in the lives of immigrants and refugees by providing them access to symbolic worlds and contact with their countries of origin (Tufté, 2003). I basically want to show how media form a crucial part of the lived experiences of the subjects in this study, and how they reinforce these different gazes. I will be looking into the extent to which the interview subjects in my study use the mediated cultural discourses contained in the different media texts they consume, to navigate through local, national, diasporic and international spaces; how they articulate personal and collective identities; and the influence of different social categories and boundary markers on their media consumption practices.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The nature of a research project is always the decisive factor when it comes to the choice of method. In this study of media use among immigrants in Norway, I have chosen to focus on immigrants of Cameroonian origin as a case study. The research data I used in this thesis has been obtained from semi-structured interviews with 14 immigrants living around Oslo with origins in Cameroon.

The interview form which I used in my research falls under the qualitative research tradition which has as its main goal to develop an understanding of phenomena related to people and situations in their social context (Dalen, 2004).

In this chapter I will try to justify the use of the qualitative interview method and the case study focus. I will also look into the selection process of interviewees, the challenges faced in the interview process, and reliability and validity issues related to this study.

3.1 THE CHOICE OF THE CASE STUDY

Robert Yin (1994) argues that the case study is a suitable as a choice of focus in instances when the research question is in the form of *how* and *why*, and when the study does not require control over behavioural events (as in experiments), and in cases where the study focuses on contemporary events (Yin 1994:6). This study, through its analysis of the connection between media use and everyday life, generally aims at giving answers to the *hows* and *whys* of media use. The case study is a suitable approach for dealing with such research issues which are brought up in this volume. Part of my enquiry contains questions that centre on how my interviewees use the different media available to them, their preferences and the motives behind their media choices. The enquiry is thus both explanatory and exploratory.

People of Cameroon origin constitute an almost insignificant part of the immigrant population in Norway. Would studying their media consumption of this minority within a minority provide clear enough indications from which it is possible to make general statements on the media consumption of immigrant population in Norway?

Furthermore, is the media use of the 14 people I interviewed representative of the Cameroonian population in Norway? In other words can we generalise from a single case?

According to Robert Yin:

“The short answer is that case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. In this sense, the case study, like the experiment, does not represent a “sample”, and the investigator’s goal is to expand and generalize theories (analytical generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization)” (Yin 1994: 10)

However I do not totally rule out using generalizing statements like “most of the informants”, “most of the male/female informants” in the analysis chapters. This does not by any means indicate an intention on my part to make generalizations on the immigrant population in Norway and Cameroonians in particular, but rather an attempt to describe patterns and trends among the interviewees.

3.2 THE INTERVIEWS

The word interview simply means an exchange of views between two persons who talk together on a common subject. The aim of the interview is to obtain full descriptive information on how other people experience the different sides of their life situation. The qualitative interview is specially equipped to get an insight into informants’ own experiences, thoughts and feelings (Dalen, 2004:15).

The main methodological argument of this study is that qualitative interviews are a suitable means of understanding the relationship between media and identity construction in the case of Cameroonians in Oslo. The qualitative interview consists of personal narratives, which bring to light individual experience. In these kinds of interviews, the areas of focus are not formal structures, or mass media institutions and industries, but rather the everyday

experience of individuals formulated in their own words. Personal narratives are good indicators of how individuals perceive themselves and thus their identities.

In qualitative interviews the conversational features of the interview process are quite central. The qualitative interview aims at creating a situation where the informants produce valid measures of thoughts, which they had not necessarily formulated before. The interactive dimension of the interview is central in the sense that the informant and the interviewer have to interact in order to produce knowledge. In the interpersonal context of the interview, the interviewer and the interviewee participate in the process of meaning production. Meaning is thus co-authored and co-produced by the interviewer and the interviewee. The interviewer plays the role of catalyst. The interviewer contributes in the process of translation from practical consciousness to discursive consciousness, which at the end results in new awareness (Dalen, 2004)

The qualitative interview type in my thesis is the semi-structured interview. In this type of interview, the dialogue is focused on specified topics that the interviewer picks out beforehand. At the same time it provides for a high level of flexibility for the interviewer and the informant to be able to follow new leads; the informant is given the opportunity to articulate personal reflections and opinions even when these fall outside the interview's areas of focus. This gives the interviewer useful insights on the informant's person and creates an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality. Despite its flexibility, the semi structured interview form also gives the interviewer an air of preparedness and competence. The informal nature of the interview situation prevents the interviewer from being seen to be exercising excessive control (Bernard, 2002).

An essential tool in the successful conduct of semi-structured interviews of any sort is the interview guide. This is a written list of questions and topics prepared by the interviewer to be covered in a certain succession. The interview guide incorporated the main issues in the research questions and the theory.

Before each interview I explained to the informants the purpose of the interview and made them aware of the fact that they were not obliged to answer any question they felt uncomfortable with. In the first part of the interview I tried to construct the media use profile of the informant by asking questions relating to media access and media habits and media use

context. The second part of the interview contained questions about taste and preferences of media content for each of the four media I covered (print media, radio, television, and the Internet). The questions about media consumption patterns and preferences aimed at finding out if and how the media content consumed reflect on the informant's identities and how they work with their identities. I asked a group of questions dealing with media and belonging. This group of questions were aimed at looking into possible connections between media use of the informants and social integration in the host society. There were also questions about the informant's consumption of homeland media content and general communication with the homeland. These were geared towards covering the relationship between media use and the Diaspora problematic. Finally, I collected the personal data of the informants. The interview guide can be seen in the appendix of this thesis.

This interview guide helped me keep the focus in the conversations on the main themes of the thesis. I tried as much as possible to include open ended questions in the interview guide. Although I used the same interview guide for all the interviews I discovered that not all the questions had the same relevance to all the informants. Thus I tried to tailor the questions according to the person I was interviewing. For example, when an informant mentioned earlier in the interview that they did not use a particular media, I skipped the questions later on the interview guide that had to do with preferences and consumption patterns related to that particular media.

3.3 THE TEST INTERVIEWS

As is the norm in qualitative interview practice the researcher usually carries out one or several test interviews in order to put the interview guide to test and to test their ability as an interviewer. Through such test interviews the interviewer gets feedback on the whether the questions in the interview guide have been appropriately formulated and how the interviewer conducts himself in an interview situation.

The first two interviews I conducted were first meant to be test interviews but I later decided to include them as real interviews after a series of follow up interviews which I carried out later.

As a result of the test interviews I discovered that I needed to formulate some questions differently to make them more understandable and simplified for some informants.

After the test interviews I decided to extend the interview guide by including questions on one additional medium, the Internet. I wanted to limit the focus in the beginning to just three media, television, radio, and the press but during the test interviews I discovered that the Internet was quite relevant part of their everyday media use, especially with regards to links with home country and Diaspora.

The strength of my interview guide lies in the fact that the questions are quite open and non-leading. The interview guide also gives ample room for follow-up questions and thus helps focus the responses.

3.4 THE INFORMANTS

According to figures from the Norwegian SSB (Statistiske Sentralbyrå) there were a total of 234 Cameroonians in Norway. The population of Cameroonians living in Oslo was about 96; 54 male and 42 female. The majority of Cameroonians in Norway are between the ages of 20 to 40 (Statistiske Sentralbyrå, April 2004).

I conducted a total of 14 interviews with 8 men and 6 women. All of my informants had at least a high school education and were of the Christian faith. I know most of the informants personally, so all it took was a phone call to recruit them. I also contacted the president of the association of Cameroonians in Oslo (CAMASSON), who was incidentally one of the informants. He helped pass the word around, and also helped me get in touch with potentially interested Cameroonians. It was through CAMASSON that I got hold of the names and phone numbers of all the Cameroonians living in Oslo. These recruitment strategies were not altogether successful because many of the people I contacted were very suspicious, and for various reasons were at first sceptical to being interviewed. This kind of scepticism, in my experience, is customary among African migrants, especially those who are new in Norway. One of the reasons for such anxieties is the fact that many believe that the authorities actually use spies and secret informants to monitor their activities. As a result, many of my informants agreed to be interviewed only after I gave them assurances that their identities would be kept secret. Therefore, in this study, all the informants were identified to using fictional names.

The choice of interviewees is a very important problematic in research that employs the use of qualitative interviews. This involves questions on who should be interviewed, how many, and under what criteria they should be chosen. Although my intention in the beginning was to choose informants based on variables like age, occupation, education, and gender, I found it increasingly difficult to make sufficient variations in the choice of the informants based on the above criteria. This was hardly made easier by the relatively small number of Cameroonians living in Oslo. However in terms of gender representativity, the 8 male and 6 female informants I recruited represents an equitable enough partition. I would have liked to have informants aged below 20 and above 50 but they were quite difficult to find.

In qualitative studies like this, a strategic selection of interviewees is more important than the issue of representativity, in relation to the phenomena that are being studied. I believe that the informants I have chosen can form an adequate basis for the analysis of the main issues in this study . In my opinion the fourteen informants I chose all sufficiently address the different areas of my research focus.

3.5 ON THE FIELD

I conducted the interviews at two main venues; the home of the informants, and the lobby of a hotel. Three of the interviews were held at the lobby of Christiana Hotel, and one at Hotel Continental, all at the centre of Oslo. This was because, for undisclosed reasons, these informants preferred to be interviewed at a public venue. I held the rest of the interviews at the homes of the informants.

Because most of the interviews at the hotels were held during morning hours, the atmosphere was generally quiet, and I was able to make audio recordings that were quite clear.

During the home interviews, I got the opportunity to, in some cases; see the position of the media equipment in the home, and sometimes to actually observe them in use. As such, I was able to corroborate the answers of some of the informants, particularly in relation to access to media equipment.

However, there was a negative side to doing interviews at the informants' homes, in the sense that during interview sessions with some of the informants, we were often interrupted by their

children, and there was often a lot of background noise which made it difficult to make transcripts of the interviews.

Nonetheless, there was no significant difference in quality between the home and the outdoor interviews, in the sense that I had the same connection with the interviewees, and all the interviews had a pretty much similar fluidity, tone, and spontaneity.

The average length of the interview sessions ranged between one and two hours.

3.6 CHOICE OF MEDIA AND FOCUS

There are a couple of issues about my methodological approach which I feel the need to throw more light on. These include my choice of the four types of media (television, radio, newspapers, and the Internet), and the focus on everyday media.

In this study, I was faced with two main methodological choices: studying the reception of a particular media event, or focusing on everyday media use. I chose the latter.

Everyday life is an intricate term, often used in varying context, which adequately encompasses the real meaning of culture, that is what we all do, or what we all take part in (Mackay, 1997). Everyday life directs attention to “the ordinary”, on our everyday processes of meaning making, and making sense of the world around us. A focus on everyday life implies that one is more preoccupied with the routine activities of ordinary people as they go about their daily lives.

A main methodological argument put forward in this study is that focus on everyday media consumption is the most adequate way of revealing how my informants’ media consumption practices reflects different identities and sources of belonging. A focus on media use and everyday life, accords to my informants a more significant and creative role in the construction of their identities.

I chose to focus on four specific types of media because I was certain, based on prior knowledge, that these were the media which my informants most actively and habitually used on a daily basis.

Besides, each medium offered its own distinct possibilities and avenues for use. My basic assumption was that in this context, these different media did not have identical content, and that the nature of media content determined the level of use. For example, one knows from the onset that it is quite unlikely that the radio, newspapers, and TV can help strengthen diasporic consciousness since Cameroonians in Norway do not have access to these types of diasporic media.

In addition, the nature of each medium distinctly influences the manner in which it is used. Reading the newspaper is a different experience from watching TV, or listening to the radio. Consumption of each medium draws on different sets of motivations. .

3.7 RELIABILITY

Reliability brings in focus the issue of trustworthiness of research results. Reliability is usually determined by whether results can be replicated or reproduced (in data collection and analysis). In other words, if one repeats the same procedures as used in the study in another one, one should be able to arrive at the same findings and conclusions. This minimises errors and bias. By making it possible to for procedures to be replicated every step of the research process can be audited

Variations, in for instance, the use of interview guides or probing are usually considered as a source of error in quantitative research. In qualitative research, however, these variations are viewed in a positive light since these variations might provide new insights into the subject being studied. It could be difficult to reproduce exactly an entire qualitative interview since informants may not even remember what they said in the interview in the first place. It might also happen that they may have gained further insight into the subject of the interview, and therefore alter their responses in a subsequent interview.

I can safely assert the reliability of my data collection because my interview guide was drafted in such a way that the informants understood the questions clearly and could give comprehensible answers. Many of the questions in the interview guide had follow ups so that the informants not only were given the chance to express views but also the opportunity to further explain them in detail. The questions in the interview guide were structured in such a way that the questions in each section of the guide dealt with one of the research questions.

As concerns the reliability of the analysis of my collected data, all parts of my analysis have direct connections to the theoretical perspectives I chose. The analysis is also exclusively based on the data I collected from the fourteen interviews.

3.8 VALIDITY

The validity of a research project is usually judged by looking at the *role of the researcher*, *choice of interviewees* and *the methodological approach*, *data material* and the *analysis* (Dalen, 2004).

The role of the researcher

Ensuring the validity of the researcher's role requires that the researcher explicitly declare any special connection with the phenomena being studied. By so doing the reader has a possibility to critically assess the extent to which such a relationship could have affected the researcher's interpretation of the results.

In addition, the qualitative interview form itself is based on human interaction and the method requires a high level of intersubjectivity between the researcher and the informant.

Intersubjectivity means "between subjects", and in social sciences the concept is used to depict how experiences and the interpretation of situation become common between people. The researcher should make sure that the data collected is a precise representation of the informant's own experiences and their own understanding. The researcher's interpretation of the informant's statements will be affected by the relationship between the researcher and the informant.

Having said this, I would now go on to make some reflections on this subject. This mostly has to do with the fact that I the researcher have a special relationship with the informants given the fact that I myself am a Cameroonian living in Norway. Are there problems in general in carrying out research in situations where the researcher belongs to the same group he is investigating? The answer is, as far as I am concerned, that there are advantages and disadvantages.

The fact that I share the same background as the informants most certainly influenced my experiences and interpretations precisely because I share the same group sympathies as the informants. This kind of nearness to the study subject can constitute a methodological problem. It might put me as the researcher in a difficult situation in terms of maintaining objectivity and neutrality. On the other hand, this belonging provides for unique opportunities to access otherwise difficult accessible data.

Bourdieu (1993) claims that only those who themselves been unemployed can carry out a truthful interview study of the unemployed. According to him, the same applies to all other disadvantaged groups. He also stresses the fact that the researchers' abstract language, their expertise, and their acquired routines in analysing collected data can constitute an obstacle to getting to real knowledge.

On the other hand, to pursue the argument to its logical end is to say that all researchers and all subjects must be identically matched for every possible characteristic in order for any authentic analysable data to emerge. That is clearly unrealistic since it assumes that there is an authentic and singular truth out there to discover (Dalen, 2004).

During some of the interviews the informants had a tendency to give answers comprised of half sentences and then look up for me to complete the answers. At other instances they ended their answers with phrases like "you yourself, you know", because they expected me, as one of them to understand certain issues that affect them. Some of them confused the interviews for informal conversations and I found myself having to constantly remind them of the nature of the exercise.

In the end, the ideal for the researcher is to combine the perspective of the insider with that of the outsider to attain what in theatre is known as the "Picasso profile". This refers to a scenario where the actor is both inside and outside his role at the same time (Dalen, 2004).

Interview group size and number

Qualitative interview research usually involves relatively small numbers of interviewees who are closely linked to the focus of the study being carried out (Dalen, 2004).

Having said this, to what extent can the results of this study based on these fourteen interviews, apply to other immigrant groups?

The concept of generalizability or external validity is derived from the quantitative research tradition where there is a tendency to think in terms of bigger samples and where representativity primordial. Agnes Andenæs (2001) has pointed out the limitations of generalising or external validity in quantitative research. Generalisation in this research tradition favours averages over plurality and variation. This, according to Andenæs gives a static and one-sided picture of phenomena. Qualitative research, on the other hand favours the putting together of interview subjects based on individual variations that are relevant to the specific phenomenon being studied. According to Andenæs, it is up to the receiver of the research results to decide whether a research result is applicable in another context, so long as the researcher provides sufficient and relevant background information.

Data collection method

The basis for accessing the validity of the data collection method chosen is that it must be suitable to the goals of the research, the research questions and the theoretical approach. The areas of the research focus should feature in the interview guide and the interview guide should be attached to the research report (Dalen, 2004).

According to Dalen (ibid.), to put in place ideal conditions for future analysis and interpretation of the data, the interviews should be recorded on tape. The whole process from the interview sessions, through the recording and transcribing of the interviews right up to the final transcripts should be explained.

All the interviews I conducted were recorded on tape and transcribed. However during the process of transcribing I omitted some areas, like for example, where there were repetitions and things I judged to be irrelevant. I also corrected wrong grammar and completed some half sentences. All this I did bearing in mind that I had the recordings of the interviews on tape as backup in case there was need for future verifications.

Validity of the data material

In any study that uses interviews as a research method, the interviewee's own words and narratives should constitute the basis for interpretation and analysis (ibid.). There is therefore a need to ensure that the data is as complete and relevant as possible. The interviewer has to ask the right questions so as to give the interviewees the chance to give in-depth responses.

The questions contained in my interview guide are I believe, clear and detailed enough to extract the relevant answers from the interviewees. In addition, the flexibility which I employed during the interviews made it easy for me to pursue new leads, and gave room for clearer explanations, all of which helped to enhance the richness of the data to be analysed.

Validity of the analytical approach

When analysing qualitative interviews the researcher usually tries to find deeper meanings from the interviews and an understanding of the theme that is being studied. The interview data should always be interpreted within a certain context. This is where theory plays an important role. It is important here to see to what extent the concepts, models, or patterns used by the researcher contribute to providing a better understanding of the phenomena being studied. In order to achieve analytical validity, the phenomena that are being revealed or explained should be reflected in the interview data and the researcher's interpretation of it.

Having said this, it is also important to point out that I was not exclusively searching for evidence supporting my initial hypothesis, and although it is important to continually refer back to initial propositions, I was also open to the idea of exploring new and sometimes unexpected routes and alternative explanations. According to Yin (1994) it is essential to treat the evidence fairly, and to rule out alternative interpretations in order to produce compelling conclusions. Apart from analysing the evidence in corroboration with the theory, I have modestly attempted to justify my interpretations and pointed out weaknesses in alternative interpretations. In the end although I did not fully consider alternative interpretations, I tried as much as possible to be critical to my own interpretations.

In the analysis of my findings, I have consistently included the verbatim quotes of my informants in order to let their "voices speak as much as possible, to bear witness to their experiences and perceptions and also to open the text for further interpretation" (Gillespie,

1995: 74). The basis for selecting informants' quotes was their clearness, relevance and typicality. I tried as much as possible to distinguish between descriptions and my own interpretations.

3.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter I have argued in favour of the qualitative semi-structured interviews as an adequate method of collecting data on the media use of Cameroonians in Oslo. I have defended my choice of case study, as a means of exposing particular patterns or phenomena.

As I earlier elaborated in this chapter, I based the choice of the four media in focus in this study on the fact that they were the ones most frequently used in everyday life. Each of the four media has its own distinct characteristics and impact, and each in its own unique way illuminates the issues being studied.

This chapter described the specific contexts and conditions in which the field work was carried and the process in which the data was collected.

Finally, I showed how from the process of data collection to the way I conducted the analysis I strived to ensure conditions of reliability and validity.

CHAPTER FOUR

A DESCRIPTION OF MEDIA USE PATTERNS

. In this chapter I will try to map out the main features of the media consumption of the subjects in this study. Here, I will focus on issues related to media access, habits, use patterns, tastes and preferences, in relation to each of the four media selected for this study. To begin with, I will provide a brief description of the situation of these media in the specific context of Norway, focusing on the main players and what is on offer on the market. Drawing on the interview results, I will paint a picture of what kind of media technologies my informants have access to, the contexts and circumstances in which they engage in everyday media use, the type of media content they preferred and why, and their media consumption menus.

4.1 THE MEDIA ENVIRONMENT IN NORWAY

Before I begin the discussion of the results of my fieldwork, I will first provide a little description of the nature of the media in Norway. For Cameroonian, as well as most African migrants, there is a very limited supply of diasporic media. Therefore, for those living in Norway, they for the most part depend on the media sources available to the general Norwegian public, to satisfy their information and entertainment needs. My intention is not to write extensively about the Norwegian media environment. This has been more than adequately done elsewhere. However, it would be important for anyone reading this thesis that is not familiar with the Norwegian media to have a little idea of their main characteristics.

Broadcasting:

For a period of almost 50 years, broadcasting in Norway was the sole prerogative of the public service broadcaster, NRK. The NRK monopoly on television was broken in 1981, and since then other competitors have surfaced, first satellite channels and local TV, then TV3 in 1987 and TV Norge in 1988. TV2 has been, together with NRK, one of the two major broadcasters that have occupied a dominant position in the Norwegian television landscape. In 1996, NRK launched its second television channel (NRK 2) and TV2 bought half of the shares in TV Norge, which began transmitting its programs on terrestrial transmitters and cable in cooperation with several local television operators.

At present, there are two terrestrial television channels with national coverage: NRK 1 and TV2. NRK 2 and TV Norge combine terrestrial transmissions with satellite distribution. There are also two major pay-TV networks, Viasat and Canal Digital, which each have their own channels, as well as distribution rights for a wide range of international channels. Their packages include specialised niche channels (film, sports, news etc.), games, and different forms of Internet-based services. The Canal Digital pay-TV package includes NRK, TV2 and TV Norge, while Viasat has NRK and TV3.

In Norway, the two public service channels NRK 1 and NRK 2 command about 43% of the viewer ratings, while the commercial channels, TV2, TV Norge and TV3 each cover respectively 30% 10% and 6% of national television viewing. The various satellite channels have very limited impact (Norsk Gallup, 2004).

The television programmes that are regarded as key national products, like children's programmes, national films and fiction series, documentaries and news & current affairs, have a high profile among the Norwegian audience. Besides these programmes, programmes from the US dominate, especially in entertainment formats such as TV-fiction series, talk shows and reality-TV formats. On the public service channels NRK 1 and NRK 2, the national programmes together constitute about 50% of the TV menus, while American films and series, because of their ratings-friendly profiles, and thus take a larger part of the fiction output. The commercial channels, TV3 and TV Norge have an even lesser national programme output, with more than 60% of their menus consisting of American, and to a lesser extent, European programmes.

TV2 has traditionally been seen as targeted to a younger audience, while NRK 2 was more appealing to an elite audience, while the rest of the average audience watched the commercial channels TV Norge and TV3, international channels, and pay-TV channels. However, a look in today's TV guide tells a rather different story. In these times of increased competition in the Norwegian audiovisual sector, all channels are increasingly going for the programmes that bring high ratings.

A major turning point that marked the transformation of the Norwegian radio landscape came in 1993, when the private commercial radio station P4 was established and went on air. This marked the end of NRK radio's monopoly. P4 has a distinct commercial profile and features

mostly light music and entertainment. NRK responded to the competition from the new station by increasing its number of channels from two to three (P1, P2, and P3 (Petre)) and giving them distinct profiles. P1 is somewhat a general channel, while P2 has a cultural and in-depth profile. P3 is a youth channel. In addition, NRK also has eight niche radio channels that broadcast mostly in the big cities like Oslo. There are a number of other local commercial and community radios all over the country, mainly in urban areas.

Newspapers and magazines:

In Norway, there are about 220 newspapers, out of which about 80 of them publish four or more editions a week. Only three dailies enjoy a sizable nationwide circulation. The largest newspaper is the Oslo-based tabloid *Verdens Gang*. The other nation-wide popular newspaper is *Dagbladet*. These two tabloids do not identify themselves as part of the yellow press, since they also feature news, background comments, analysis and debate on politics and cultural affairs.

The second largest newspaper is *Aftenposten*. This paper was formally a broadsheet, but it changed into a tabloid format in January 2005. Its morning edition is distributed in many parts of the country, mostly to subscribers. *Aftenposten* also has an evening edition whose distribution is limited to the Oslo area.

There are a few smaller papers which have a nation-wide reach: *Dagsavisen* (formerly the organ of the Labour party, but now an independent Labour sympathiser), *Dagens Næringsliv* (finance and business), *Nationen* (agricultural), *Vårt Land* (Christian Democrat), and *Klassekampen* (leftist) .

The total circulation of weekly magazines is approximately 2.7 million, of which 18 magazines represent the bulk. The largest weekly magazine is by far *Se og Hør*, a publication that specialises in news about celebrities and entertainment (Norsk Gallup, 2004).

Internet

Norway is one of the countries in the world where the population has adopted information technology quicker and faster than most other countries. Norway is among the countries with the highest access and use of these technologies. The equally high rate of access to broadband

in Norway is said to have significant impact on the way Internet is used and appreciated in the future.

4.2 MEDIA ACCESS, HABITS, AND PREFERENCES

The findings from the interviews in this study show that each of the four media in focus provides the informants with its own particular opportunities for information, entertainment, socialisation, and negotiating personal identities. The informants use mainstream Norwegian and mainstream international media both for information and entertainment purposes, and the available channels for homeland media mainly for information purposes.

Television

Among all the traditional media, television stands out as being the most significant medium in the everyday lives of my informants. This is quite evident judging from the interviewees' pattern of use, frequency of use, and where they use this medium, compared to how they use the other media.

All the informants had a TV set in the living room at home. Four of the informants had an additional set in the bedroom. For all the informants, the principal place where they watched television was the home.

Of all the informants, only three did not have cable television. All the other informants had either the UPC and Canal Digital cable TV packages, or satellite dishes. Most of them seemed not to be very satisfied with the level of television access they had. They expressed the desire to have more television channels than they currently had. Here they mentioned mostly the mainstream Nordic channels like TV 1000, Canal Plus and Viasat, international channels like MTV, TV5, BBC World and CNN International, among those they would have liked to have access to.

Similar to, for example, Duala, many of the male informants said they wanted sports channels,

“Yes I want to have Canal Plus because I love football very much, and one sports channel like for basketball. Maybe I will fix that after Christmas.” (Duala)

Canal Plus Norway transmits live English Premier League football, NBA basketball, as well as other popular sporting events. Canal Plus has recently launched a subsidiary channel that covers exclusively sports, called Canal Plus Sport. Both Foncha and Kontchou also wished they had sports channels like Eurosport and Canal Plus. Ngwa, Edith, and Minouche wanted film channels, some of which are often costly to subscribe to

“I would like to have more entertainment channels like Cinema, film channels, which are not available on the package that I get from UPC unless I buy.” (Ngwa)

The film channels Ngwa referred to, like Cinema and TV1000 are normally accessed through a Canal Digital or a UPC subscription that requires one to buy a decoder and pay a monthly subscription fee. Most households in Oslo have preinstalled UPC cable connections that come with the rent package free of charge. However this usually has only a limited number of channels (about 14). Only five of the informants had decoders, with access to more channels. Three of the informants, Foncha, Eyong, and Minouche, had a relatively poor television access. They only had access to four channels; the Public Service channels NRK 1 and 2, TV2, and TVNorge. Eyong, for example, had to go to friends in order to watch the channels he liked because he did not have them at home

“... like BBC CNN...unfortunately I don't have all those channels now but I used to and from time to time if I go out to where I have access, to some of my friends, I usually use the opportunity to follow the news, different programs on BBC and CNN.....MTV ,Travel and so on.”

The nature of these informants' occupations (Eyong, Foncha and Minouche were students) suggests that the main reason for their poor TV access was economic.

For many immigrants in Norway, television from their countries of origin constitutes a significant part of their television consumption. With African immigrants, however, this is not the case. Most of my informants did not mention homeland television, or even any African channels among their channel wishes. Only two of them mentioned African channels among

those they would like to have. This is hardly surprising given the fact that it is common knowledge among the informants that access to African TV channels in Norway is more or less impossible.

All those interviewed said they spent an average of three to five hours watching television. Most of their television watching took place in the evenings after work or school.

One of the most watched Norwegian programmes in the fiction genre was the serial, *Hotel Cæsar* that aired on TV2. Most of the female informants said they watched it regularly. The informants also enjoyed watching Norwegian television comedy series, like *Hos Martin* on TV2, or talk shows like *Torsdagsklubben*. Quiz shows are also much preferred by the people I interviewed. Here they named among others *Vil Du Bli Millionær* aired on TV2, and *Ordjakten* on TV Norge. All these also happen to be the programmes that enjoy a popular following within the general Norwegian public.

All the informants watched the news on the Norwegian channels. However, those who had a strong preference for news-related programmes were mostly male. Although the female informants also watch the news sometimes, I got the impression (for the couples, that is) that watching the news for them was just something they did together as a family, rather than out of personal interest. The male informants said they watched the evening news daily on all the Norwegian channels that broadcast news. Some of them usually switched from channel to channel in order to catch all the Norwegian news bulletins, since TV2, NRK and TV Norge aired their news at different times. These channels together broadcast approximately five hours of news per day (unless there are exceptional circumstances, which warrant extra news casts). National news broadcasts address viewers as citizens, inform them about their rights and responsibilities, and promote a sense of national identity. Participating in the domestic ritual of news viewing could in fact serve as a kind of “rite de passage both to adult status and to effective citizenship (Gillespie, 1995).

News viewing helps to structure daily routines and is for most of my informants a domestic ritual. Kontchou described his daily pattern of news consumption thus:

Q: Apart from documentaries, are there any other programme genres you watch?

A: I watch mainly news. I am addicted to news. So I watch news at 6.30pm on TV2 and at 7pm on NRK1

Q: What about international news?

A: Yes, international news...when I watch it, I can watch it at 8.30pm on TV5, or I just get...or I read titles on CNN or BBC.

In addition to the news, the men also closely followed Norwegian television debate programmes like *Holmgang*, *Rikets Tilstand*, *Tabloid*, and *Redaksjon 1*. These debate programmes served for them as a means of keeping up to date with socio-cultural and political issues of the day. One of the reasons for their interest in these programmes was that they often hosted discussions on issues related to immigrants. Their profound interest in these issues could be seen in the way they expressed strong opinions regarding these issues. They were very vocal in their criticism of the way they perceived was the way in which immigrants, they included, were portrayed in the Norwegian media. They viewed the mainstream media discourse on immigrants as sensational, negative, hostile and generalising. I will elaborate on this point later.

Studies carried out on Danish immigrant families' news consumption have shown that the immigrants usually supplemented the Danish channels with international channels that broadcast in English and Arabic, to satisfy their news needs (Christensen, 2000). This pattern is highly reflected in the news viewing habits of my informants. Besides following the news on Norwegian channels, many of my informants regularly watched news on the major international news networks like the BBC, CNN, and sometimes the TV5

Overall, foreign mainstream media programmes account for a large portion of the television consumption of the interviewees. This clearly manifests itself in their preferences for European and American TV series, soaps, talk shows, reality TV, films, and news.

Minouche: Usually from 6pm when I am home. I usually have some programmes I have to see on TV.

Q: Which are those?

Minouche: You have one that I can't miss, 24 on TV2. In fact, I have to see....*Gilmore Girls* they talk a lot there....

Like Minouche, many of the informants were avid followers of the popular American TV aired on Norwegian channels. When asked about their favourite TV programmes, the informants (mostly the women) said they preferred talk shows like Oprah, Dr. Phil and Ricki Lake; soap operas like Days of our Lives, The Bold and the Beautiful, Glamour; series like Sex and the City and Gilmore Girls; reality shows like Big Brother, The Bachelor. They also liked the culinary programmes hosted by celebrity chefs like Jamie Oliver and Nigella Lawson. Those who had a Canal Digital cable subscription watched culinary shows on the BBC Food Channel on a regular basis.

All this including the fact that all the informants named American and British programmes in their lists of favourite programmes seems to indicate the extent to which my informants consumed mainstream international entertainment-related TV content.

Besides foreign entertainment programmes, the male informants mostly liked news-related programmes when it came to mainstream international content. Among their favourites, they mentioned 60 Minutes, David Letterman and the documentaries on the Discovery Channel, Animal Planet, National Geographic and the Reality Channel.

One of the most popular forms of television entertainment for the male informants was football. This comes as no surprise given the level of popularity of the sport in Cameroon.

There are not any available television channels from Cameroon, and indeed anywhere else in Africa, in the cable and satellite channel packages on offer in the Norwegian market. There are only a very few African countries which have television channels broadcasting on satellite. Contrary to other immigrant groups from Asia and the Middle East living in Norway who can receive television from their countries of origin, most immigrants from Africa cannot. Thus my interviewees' did not watch any homeland television of any sort.

Because Cameroon rarely features in the news from Africa in Western media, it almost never was mentioned on Norwegian television. There is very limited access to diasporic television content for Cameroonians living in Norway

Summary:

- Most of the television content they consume is accessed both from the Norwegian Public Service channels, NRK 1 and NRK 2, and the commercial channels, TV2, TV Norge, and TV3.
- There was a high proportion of international television content in their media menus, predominantly news, sports, and Anglo-American TV series and talk shows.
- They had practically no access to homeland television
- They consumed a high proportion of Norwegian television texts, in the form of news, actuality programmes, local TV series, comedy, and game shows.

Newspapers

“70 to 80% of the time I read...I can’t see a newspaper without looking inside...no matter where I am, if there is a newspaper, I would look into it...” (Dieudonné)

Newspapers and magazines constitute a quite significant part of the media consumption of the informants in this study. Besides television, newspapers are the most highly used medium, and an important resource of everyday meaning making.

All of them on a regular basis read, either newspapers or magazines. They got access to newspapers or magazines either by buying them, reading them when they were at work, or in the public libraries. Only two of the informants had newspaper subscriptions; the morning and evening editions of the Oslo-based daily, *Aftenposten*. This relatively small number of newspaper subscribers among my informants can probably be explained by the fact that many of them could ill afford the cost of these subscriptions. In addition, many of the informants got newspapers free at work, so they did not need to buy or subscribe to these newspapers.

“Sometimes when I go to work, I do read newspapers there and ...that is the way I always get newspapers. I do not subscribe to newspapers because where I am working; I have free access to read newspapers these newspapers.” (Max)

Although a few of the female informants occasionally read newspapers, they did not express as strong an interest for this medium as the men, and did not read newspapers nearly as often

as the male informants. When I tried to draw parallels with the Norwegian newspaper readers, I did not find any noticeable gender differences when I looked at the scale of their newspaper consumption. Figures from the Statistiske Sentralbyrå show that in 2002 and 2003, in average 78% of men, and 76% of women read a newspaper daily (Andenæs, 2002).

Apart from the news stories, all the male informants regularly read the sports pages, especially the pages containing news on football. The male informants had the habit of going straight to the sports pages after reading the main news stories. None of the female informants read the sports pages.

The informants also focused on the sections of the newspapers that carried advertisements to get general information about jobs, housing and finance. The informants also used newspapers to structure their television watching schedules with the help of the TV guides published in the newspapers.

However, as in the case of Ngwa for example, they were mostly interested in the front page and the sports pages:

“First when I get a newspaper the caption on the front page, I like to read that and then secondly I go to the sports section and then I look at TV programs.”(Ngwa)

The interviewees did not express any particular interest in international newspapers or news magazines. According to them, they got adequate access to foreign news through the internet and through TV.

“...I have been used to reading magazines like Jeune Afrique. I have been reading magazines like Jeune Afrique before, but here it is not easy to get them, but there was a time I discovered a place in Oslo where they sell foreign magazines and I was buying some magazines there... but I later on found it not so necessary to be buying these magazines if I can be able to get all this information and be updated with latest news back in Africa through the Internet.” (Max)

Only one of my informants (Eyong) read a foreign newspaper, the Herald Tribune. He managed to do so whenever he happened to go to the public library in Oslo, the Diechmanske Bibliotek.

Cameroonians in Norway did not have access to newspapers from Cameroon since they were not distributed in Norway. Cameroonian newspapers are sometimes available in countries with a relatively large population of Cameroonians, e.g. France, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. However, those newspapers were usually days or weeks old before they get to these countries. Thus, the best option left for most of them (Max for example) to get news from Cameroon was the Internet.

“Q: Do you have access to any newspapers from Cameroon?”

Max: No, I don’t have access to those

Q: Would you like to have Cameroonian newspapers here?

Max: Yes, I would have liked to have, but if I want to get news from Cameroon, I go to the Internet...

This problem of old news also applied to what was available on the Internet. Many of the informants complained about the fact that many of the websites of these Cameroonian newspapers did not regularly update their news, and as such, they had to look elsewhere on the Internet for the most recent news about Cameroon.

One general observation I made from the informant’s responses was that the female informants preferred magazines to newspapers; while on the other hand, the men favoured newspapers over magazines. This was another area of the interviewees’ media use, which revealed gender differences.

All the female informants said they read magazines on a regular basis. Only two of the male informants read any magazines at all, and only quite seldom.

The women read both magazines in Norwegian, and international mainstream magazines. Among the Norwegian magazines they read, the most mentioned were *Se og Hør*, *Hjemmet*, and *Norsk Ukeblad*. They also read international magazines like *Cosmopolitan*, *Elle*, *In Style*, *Woman*, and *Oprah Magazine*. All of them particularly missed reading an American magazine about Black culture and society called *Ebony* which was very popular among Anglophone female youth in Cameroon. This particular magazine was not distributed in Norway.

These are the distinctive characteristics their use of newspapers and magazines:

- The informants regularly read Norwegian newspapers. These include the major Norwegian newspapers, VG, Dagbladet and Aftenposten
- They seldom read foreign newspapers, except on the Internet.
- They had very limited access to newspapers from Cameroon.
- The female informants read both Norwegian and foreign mainstream magazines. They read foreign mainstream women's magazines like Cosmopolitan, Elle, O Magazine etc. They equally read Norwegian magazines like Se og Hør and Hjemmet. The male informants rarely read magazines

Radio

Judging from the information gotten from my interviews, there is every indication that radio is not a highly prioritised medium. The general trend among non-western immigrants in Norway is that they use lesser time on the radio, compared to ethnic Norwegians. In contrast, radio is normally a highly prioritised medium within the Norwegian audience. Seventy three per cent of the Norwegian population listens to the radio everyday (Norsk Gallup, 2004). The total national coverage has increased from 69% in 2001 to 73% in 2004. Norsk Gallup also recorded an increase in average daily listening time from 145 minutes in 2003 to 152 minutes, which signified a seven-minute increase.

Although the informants all had stereos with radios on them, they spent very little time listening to the radio at home. Although most of the informants sometimes listened to the radio, it was evident from some of their responses that it was not a preferred medium, at least as a source of information

Q: What channels do you have access to from your radio?

Duala: I do not really know because I always play the CD. I do not listen to the radio so much.

Most of the informants did not regard the radio as a preferred source of news. When it came to news, they mostly preferred watching TV

Q: Which radio stations do you usually listen to?

Dieudonné: I have to be honest...I don't...maybe in the car I use to listen...with MP3...sometimes RFI...but at home I don't really listen to the radio.

Only a few of the informants had radio sets with a shortwave band. Transistor radios with a shortwave band can capture foreign radio stations. Judging from their responses, it was not evident that some of the informants (Rose for example) ever tuned their stereo radios to the shortwave band, nor were they even aware that it existed in the radios they had

“Q: Where do you listen to the radio from?

Rose: In my room

Q: What kind of radio set do you have? Does it have a shortwave band where you can get BBC or foreign stations?

Rose: No. That I don't know”

Some of the informants listened to the radio mostly at work. Many of the informants had jobs where listening to the radio during work was a common practice.

“I listen to radio stations most of the time when I am at work. I work with the post office so when I am driving...I listen to FM 106, NRJ and Radio Oslo.” Foncha)

For Foncha whose job involved spending a lot of time alone, the sound of the radio probably provided some kind of comforting background noise. Similarly, for Edith, who also listened to the radio at work the sound of the radio helped to liven the work atmosphere and to keep her from getting bored

Q: How often do you listen to the radio?

Edith: My husband likes to listen to the radio so...at home I do that when I am with....not everyday, in the weekends, but at work, I listen to the radio all the time.

Q: Would you say you listen to the radio everyday?

Edith: When I was working in the Post, I did that. I had a small radio I always put on. It kept me busy.

As a rule, the informants' radio listening was a secondary activity, and thus did not require full concentration, because they usually mixed radio listening with other activities. Since they mostly listened to music, it was easy to have the radio as background noise integrated into the

private space. Kontchou and Max mostly listened to music and weather reports while driving the car. For Rose, radio listening served as a means of relaxation after a tiring day at work:

Q: What do you listen to on the radio?

Rose: I like listening to music because I love music

Q: How often do you listen to the radio?

Rose: I put on the radio at night to lure me to sleep, because I need that to console myself after stressing throughout the day.

Q: Do you listen to the radio everyday?

Rose: Not quite. At times, I am so tired that I can't even put it on

The significance of radio on everyday life is ought not to be measured only in terms the content and the effects. Radio also serves a whole range of social purposes, which are highlighted when one studies the contexts and activities that surround radio consumption.

A major portion of the informants radio use was focused on entertainment, which in most cases was in form of listening to music. Only a few of the informants (Ayissi, Ngwa, Kontchou) listened to any other form of radio content apart from music. The informants who were radio listeners mostly listened to local stations like Radio 1, P4 and NRJ, which played a lot of popular music.

In contrast with the normal trend among the Norwegian audience, the informants rarely listened to Norwegian news on the radio. None of them listened to the NRK channels P1, P2, and the other local and national channels. For some of the informants they did not listen to the news on the radio because they simply preferred watching television news.

Q: Don't you listen to any Norwegian radio stations?

Ayissi: Sometimes when I am at work but not at home. I prefer to watch TV because it is direct news.

Eyong particularly preferred watching the news on television because the medium combines speech and images

“I think the TV is very important to me because you not only get the news, you see pictures of it.” (Eyong)

Ayissi happened to listen to the radio at work probably because it simply was usually on as a sound in the background, and he probably did not necessarily listen focused. On the other hand he preferred to watch the news on TV at home because he could watch it attentively.

It was impossible to have access to Cameroonian radio or for that matter any other radio station that covers Cameroon from Norway. The only existing possibility of receiving news covering Cameroonian on radio in Norway is through Africa No.1, which is very difficult to capture on the shortwave band from Norway. Until recently, it used to be possible to access this station from their website, but this service has been facing technical problems recently. Africa No. 1 is an African radio network based in both Libreville, Gabon and in Paris. It broadcasts in French and focuses on news, current affairs, and features programmes on society and culture, mostly of the francophone African countries. Africa No.1 is one of the few radio stations outside Cameroon that covers Cameroon comprehensively. Some of the informants said they missed listening to Africa No.1.

Although it is possible, with a shortwave band, or Internet radio, to capture mainstream international news stations like the RFI (Radio France International), BBC, and Voice of America, most of the informants preferred to tune to TV to get international news.

Q: Do you listen to the radio?

Kontchou: No, I don't listen...scarcely

Q: Why not?

Kontchou: Because I watch news on TV

However, only a few of the informants tuned to these international radio channels. Kontchou and Ayissi listened to RFI (Radio France International). Ngwa also said he tuned to the NRK radio, which captures BBC radio signals from 10pm. This is hardly surprising since the informants had a more than adequate supply of international news from the BBC, CNN, and TV5 TV channels.

The radio consumption of the informants has the following general traits:

- The informants had little or no access to homeland radio. They had only very limited access to any African radio (i.e. Africa No.1)

- A majority of what the informants listened to on Norwegian radio channels was entertainment oriented, not news (although most consumption is of international popular music).
- The informants rarely listened to purely Norwegian content (news, cultural programmes etc.).
- Radio consumption was mostly secondary activity. They rarely listen to the radio attentively. It is usually combined with other activities

Internet

“Usually I go on the Internet to check my e-mail...I have installed breaking news from the BBC as my start-up page. I go on the Internet to pay bills...to look for locations, to shop. When I want information, I just go to the Internet. I don't call 1889.” (Max)

Because of the ability of the Internet to relate to symbolic worlds, independent of time and space, the technology has a whole range of wider-reaching uses.

I measured the level of Internet access of my informants in terms of the time, the space, the context of access, as well as the regularity with which they have access.

Immigrant families in Norway, as a group, have lower education and lesser economic resources than the majority population. As a result there is a common expectation that families with an immigrant background will have lesser access to computers and the Internet (Torgersen, 2004). This explanation also applies to the population as a whole, which means that social and/or educational background is decisive to some groups' access to and uses of IT and the Internet.

The results of the interviews show that the informants in this study had a relatively low access and used the Internet less, compared to the average use registered within the Norwegian population. Most of the informants only had Internet access at school, at work, Internet cafes the library. Only seven of them had Internet access at home. Two of them said they would be having a home Internet connection in the near future. All the six informants who were students all had free access at school. Since most of the informants had Internet access, either

at home, at school, or at work, they rarely visited Internet cafés or went online in public libraries. In all, up to six of the interviewees did not have daily access to the Internet. These were among the informants that used the Internet the least.

I could see a clear connection between the levels of Internet access of my informants and the rate at which they used the medium. The interview results revealed that those who had Internet access at home (Max, Ayissi, Dieudonné and Solange), or those who had daily access at the university (Minouche, Foncha, Dieudonné, Mabéa), used the Internet much more than those who did not. Duala, for example, did not have Internet access at home, and had to visit his friend every time he needed to use the Internet. Therefore, he usually went online only about once a month:

Q: Where do you have Internet access?

Duala: I go to my friend's house and sometimes check. Like with my friend Aluno

Q: How often do you go online?

Duala: Not often. Maybe once a month

Ngwa on the other hand, who happened to have Internet access both at home and at school, used it everyday:

Q: How often do you use the Internet?

Ngwa: Everyday. About an hour

All the informants who did not use the Internet on an average daily basis (Eyong, Duala, Rose, and Kontchou) happened to be those who neither had home access, nor were among the students, with available online access in school.

Another factor, which had an impact on the informants' level of Internet use, seemed to be that of computer fluency.

“I don't have much to do there because I am not very good with computers. I still have to learn more, because it is interesting. There are special areas that are interesting if you know how to manipulate. But if you don't know then you are lost” (Rose)

Rose gives the impression here that although she considered the Internet to be an interesting technology but could not use it properly because she lacked the necessary skills. Besides Rose, Eyong also recognised the importance of acquiring sufficient computer skills if one is to properly perform tasks on the Internet:

“Well I use the Internet mostly for e-mail, typewriting practice and I try to develop my horizon on the notion of Internet. There is much that you learn through the Internet.” (Eyong)

Norwegian websites were rarely among the websites the informants regularly visited. Although most of them had lived in Norway for over five years, it may be surprising that in their expressed needs, curiosities and interests in relation to the sites they visited on the Internet, the informants were less oriented towards Norway.

Cameroonians in Norway did not have access to homeland newspapers, radio or television broadcasts from their country of origin. Therefore, the only means of getting news from Cameroon was through the Internet, as Dieudonné pointed out:

Q: Do you have access to any Cameroonian newspapers?

Dieudonné: No, not in Norway, but okay, if I can say, via the Internet. You can get it through the Internet, for example, the Messenger; you can get the Messenger from the Internet.

Q: Any other one?

Dieudonné: JA, Cameroon Tribune too, I think

Many of the informants read Cameroon news from the websites of the two biggest newspapers, Cameroon Tribune, and Le Messenger. They also search for Cameroon news through the available search engines on the Internet.

“I just go to a website to get information....if I want newspapers from my country I can go to Cameroon Tribune...the website that I visit to get news...from Africa and other countries...it does not have a newspaper...www.bonaberi.com...I can get news there from Cameroon...if I want to get news from all over Africa I just click on Africa from there. “(Max)

Some of the informants expressed dissatisfaction over the quality and the sporadic nature in which news that feature on these sites. Their main complaint was that these websites, which

carry Cameroon news, do not carry the latest news. Although all the informants said they read news from Cameroon on the Internet, very few of them did so daily.

This suggests that the reason why they did not search for Cameroon news more often was because the sites carrying Cameroon news did not always have fresh news.

However, not all the informants expressed dissatisfaction with the level of access to Cameroon news. Some of them seemed to be satisfied with the amount of Cameroon news they got.

Q: How often do you follow news from Cameroon?

Ngwa: Once a week, I guess...cameroonnews.com usually gives me all the Cameroon news. I usually search for Cameroon newspapers.

Q: Do you feel you get enough news from Cameroon?

Ngwa: Well I can't complain. It is the only way I get to know. It doesn't tell me everything I know but at least it tells me some things.

Besides Cameroon news, the informants also went online to access mainstream international news content. Max had even gone further and installed the BBC news website as his start-up page, so that he could get breaking news alerts. For the informants, the Internet provided a much cheaper alternative to the international newspapers, when they wanted to read about international news.

Q: What about international newspapers?

Dieudonné: They are difficult to get...unless it is from the Internet. You can get them from the Internet. For me it is CNN.

The difficulty Dieudonné referred to above was most likely that of having to pay for international newspapers (which in Norway are relatively expensive), when one could read international news online for free.

Besides the cheapness of the medium, some of the informants considered the Internet to be better than other media in providing background information to news stories

“The TV is very handy because you just switch on watch the programs. They usually put the programme schedules in the papers so you get to know which programmes are running at what time. But for more in-depth analysis of the news you either read from the papers or from the Internet. When I see something on the TV and I want to know more I usually search on the net” (Ngwa)

Among the most popular locations my informants mentioned, as sources of online international news were the websites of CNN and BBC.

One major absence in the informant’s use menus of the Internet was Norwegian websites. The informants rarely visited Norwegian websites. Only two of the informants named Norwegian online newspaper websites among the websites they visited. This lies in clear contrast to the use patterns of the average Norwegian user, and even the use patterns of other immigrant groups. Apart from Norway’s biggest portal, SOL, the news site mostly used is the VG website with 1.8 million hits every month. This represents 80% of the monthly Internet use in Norway (Norsk Gallup, April 2002). A survey carried out by Norsk Gallup (2004) shows that 28% non-western, and 22% of the western immigrants in Norway visit the websites of the big Norwegian newspapers daily.

My informants used the Internet for academic and job-related purposes. There were three informants studying at Høyskolen I Oslo, and BI Handelshøyskolen, respectively. They all used the Internet for studying purposes. For Dieudonné, for example, who was an IT student at HIO, the Internet was an important studying tool

Q: What do you usually do on the Internet?

Dieudonné: I am going to school where I learn computer programming. Maybe I will be a programmer...where I have to work with those programmes and find solution to those failures in the computer system

All the informants who were University students were among the highest users of the Internet (Dieudonné, Minouche, Foncha, and Mabéa). This can be explained, first of all, by the fact that they had very easy access to the Internet on their University campuses. In addition, as most university students, a lot of their academic activities involved the use of the Internet.

“I use the Internet for studies. If I want to study something on my own I can search it on the net...to look for information. I use the Internet for special dictionaries, or things like that”
(Foncha)

For Ayissi, who freelanced as a computer engineer, Internet use was an important part of his job:

“I use e-mails more in connection with my job...Searching for information about things I want to have answers to, mostly technical issues in connection with my job. I use the MSN search engines a lot.” (Ayissi)

While a part of the informants' Internet use reflects the way they use other media for information seeking and entertainment; the majority of their Internet use is centered on communicative interaction. The findings from my interviews show that interpersonal communication, in form of e-mail, ranks among the top of the list of the informants' Internet uses. Besides searching for information, e-mailing was the most common form of online activity the informants engaged in. All the informants regularly communicated through e-mail, mostly with family, friends and peers, mostly in Cameroon and abroad. The majority of their e-mails were sent to family and friends in and outside Cameroon. Although they all had friends of different nationalities in Norway, they rarely communicated with them by e-mail.

The results of this study indicate that the informants have integrated the Internet into their social, cultural and aesthetic everyday practices as one among many media sources. In many ways, the informants' use of the Internet is comparable to their patterns of use of other media.

Chatting is one of the most popular Internet activities among Norwegian Internet users. Of all Internet users in Norway, one out of every five uses chat-groups (Andersen, 2002). They use this form of communication to discuss interests and to come in contact with new people. Contrary to the mainstream hype this is a rare or at best occasional usage of the net, by the interview subjects in this study. Only quite a few of the informants (Mabéa, Minouche, Foncha) made use this form of interaction, and quite rarely. However, it is difficult to tell whether the informants' lack of participation in online chat was due to lack of interest or due to lack of familiarity with this form of electronic interaction.

The results of the interviews indicate a low interest in making use of the wide range of entertainment opportunities provided by the Internet. Only two of the informants show an

orientation towards entertainment seeking on the Internet. Foncha, who was a computer-engineering student, regularly downloaded music from the Internet. Apart from him, Edith also usually visited lyrics.com in order to learn the songs of her favourite pop stars. Many websites offer services like dating, games, etc. The informants showed little interest for these services.

International surveys carried out by Taylor Nelson/Norsk Gallup have placed Norway among the top countries in terms of e-commerce. At present almost 60% of Norwegians use e-banking services (Medienorge, 2002). Based on the results of the interviews there was little registered use of all these different range of possibilities provided by the Internet.

As the results of this study have revealed, the informants in my study are relatively average Internet users.

- The informants had a relatively poor Internet access. Most of them did not have Internet access at home.
- The informants used the Internet averagely. The majority of the informants used the Internet daily. Only three of them did not use daily
- Low interest in the traditionally popular Norwegian websites
- The informants had a high consumption of online diasporic content in form of surfing for news on Cameroon, and e-mail correspondence with friends and family in Cameroon, and the Cameroon Diaspora.
- E-mailing and surfing were the two most common uses of the Internet, for the informants.

4.3 SUMMARY

The people in this study live in country where the average citizen has the economic means to afford items like cable television, telephones, newspapers, radio sets, and computers. There is free access to the Internet in schools and public libraries, and paid access at the numerous Internet cafés that are spread all over the big cities. It was thus expected that my informants would have at least a certain level of access to all the media mentioned above. The only area where they had problems with access was in relation to media content from their homeland, because there are no Cameroon-based newspapers, TV channels, or radio available in Norway.

My informants had a high preference for Anglo-American TV series, films, talk shows, and pop music aired primarily by the commercial networks, and that are generally popular among young audiences in Norway. They were equally interested in the international news coverage provided by networks like the BBC, CNN, and TV5.

The subjects of this study were big consumers of the Norwegian national media. Here, I found out that they were consumers of national, regional, and local news on TV and in newspapers, on an everyday basis. They were faithful followers of Norwegian TV series, comedy shows, televised debate programmes, and talk shows. One medium which they showed a low interest in, which is generally quite popular among Norwegian audiences, was the radio.

The people in this study used the Internet principally for information and communication. Here they showed scant interest in Norwegian websites, which as a rule are highly visited by Norwegian Internet users. Since, for my informants, the Internet is the main source of news and information about Cameroon, a major part of their Internet use was in one way or the other, was dedicated to surfing online for news about their homeland. My informants equally used the Internet as a means of communication, mostly with friends and relatives in Cameroon and abroad.

CHAPTER FIVE

In the previous chapter I have described my informants' preferences, habits and media use patterns in relation to each of the four media on focus in this study. In this chapter I will analyse some of the implications of their overall media use. Most importantly I will attempt to put the media use of the interviews into the framework of the theoretic and thematic issues which constitute this study's main focus. I will try to show the complexities involved in the interplay between media uses and the formation and articulation of identity, and belonging, among Cameroonians in Norway.

5.1 FORMS OF DIASPORIC EXPERIENCE

Ties to a community

As earlier discussed, Diaspora as a social form referred to social relationships that are solidified by special ties to both history and geography, and about living in several societies simultaneously. Also mentioned as a characteristic of social forms of Diaspora are the institutionalised networks in form of communal organisations formed in host societies. Although not directly addressed in the interviews, it is clear that this form of Diaspora was to a large extent in existence, and that my informants perceived themselves to be part of a putative community.

Because number of Cameroonians living in Oslo is relatively small, most of them know each other personally and have the same circle of friends.

“Cameroonians like to be together, and I would say I always have my best time when I am with other Cameroonians even though I am in a group in general, not necessarily made up of Cameroonians. I like to enjoy the company of people, and do not keep to myself, or refuse to join people.” (Ngwa)

The type of unity and solidarity among Cameroonians living in Norway overshadows the different dichotomies and conflicts that normally exist in Cameroon between the different ethnic, regional and linguistic groups.

Tufte (2002) has pointed out the importance of diasporic social networks in crucial moments of life, around key rituals in the transgression of life, such as marriage and death, and in situations of conflict. This proved to be true in the case of Cameroonians in Oslo. About two years ago, as I have earlier mentioned, the Cameroonians in Oslo formed an association called CAMASSON (Cameroon Association in Norway) (which I am a member of), with the aim of creating a forum where all the Cameroonians in Oslo could meet, socialize, and address their common problems not only in relation to their living situation in Norway, but also in connection to Cameroon. Cameroonians in Trondheim and Stavanger have also followed suit and formed their own similar associations. Although these associations have not started any form of formal cooperation yet, they often send representatives when each of them organises events. Among the common practices of these associations is in form of a sort of solidarity system where support, both material and moral, is provided to any member in a difficult situation. So if for example, a member had a death in their family in Cameroon, the other members of the association contributed money to help cover funeral expenses (funerals in Cameroon are a costly affair), and also paid the bereaved member a condolence visit.

In Oslo, as well as elsewhere, Cameroonians in the Diaspora all come together to celebrate or mourn the different fortunes of their national football team when they participate in international competitions. On the 20th of May each year Cameroonians in Oslo, as well as elsewhere in the Diaspora, organise festivities to mark their national day.

Connecting social networks

Transnational networks of media and communication contribute to the strengthening of Diaspora connections between Cameroonians in Norway, Cameroon, and in other parts of the world. As I have shown in the last chapter, interpersonal communication through electronic mail ranked among my informants' top uses of the Internet. This form of communication has an added significance for these Cameroonians living so far away from home because it is the most accessible means for them to keep contact with friends and family in Cameroon and abroad, and to maintain their "roots".

Diasporic groups are increasingly making use of online networks like the Internet and the World Wide Web, which allow for relatively easy connections with members of communities located in various continents. As opposed to cable and satellite television, the Internet provides an easier and cheaper form of communication between diasporic peoples all over the globe. The ability to provide qualitatively and quantitatively enhanced links and to facilitate the exchange of community information strengthens the dynamics of Diaspora.

For instance, I recently got an e-mail from a former secondary school classmate of mine, currently living in Germany, informing me of an online alumni community of our secondary school class, made up of members both in Cameroon and all over the globe. This was how I was able to regain contact with some former secondary school classmates now dispersed all over Europe and the US, whom I had not seen since secondary school days, and whom I had no knowledge their whereabouts. Through this “virtual community” familiar relationships that had been severed by the process of geographical movement were re-established in the virtual space of the Internet.

All my informants communicated regularly by telephone with their families in Cameroon. Some of the informants talked about regular conversations on the phone where they exchanged news, family matters and gossip:

Q: What kind of news from Cameroon are you interested in?

Minouche: What is going on...who is getting married, who has passed away...who is doing what, basically?

Q: How do you get this information?

Minouche: I get it through the phone; hours on the phone.

Q: Who do you talk to?

Minouche: My mother, my sisters...basically. They gossip a lot

Besides helping them staying connected with Cameroon, they are able, through the use of media, to maintain links with other Cameroonians living in different parts of the world

Q: How do you keep in touch with your family and friends in Cameroon?

Mabèa: I contact my family, some of them by e-mail and some of them by phone

Q: Do you do that regularly?

Mabèa: Yes. I would say once or twice a week... to my family at home and to friends around the world

Q: Who do you usually send e-mails to?

Edith: All over the world. America, Cameroon, London, Nigeria, Ghana...

Q: To whom do you send these e-mails?

Edith: My friends. A lot of mails I get from Nigeria because I have my friends there.

For Dieudonné, it was particularly important to be in contact with friends and kin still living in Cameroon. He also kept abreast with happenings in Cameroon because he knows these might directly or indirectly affect them.

“I live here but I still have my family there, my mother, my brothers... You know with us Africans; our family is usually big... Always...no matter what...when you are out of your country you will always try to know what is happening there because you still have family and relatives there. It is important to know what is going on there.” (Dieudonné)

The availability of on-line versions of newspapers from countries of origin, for example, further enhances inter-continental connections. In Cameroon, all the major actors in the newspaper sector are fast adapting themselves to the realities of the digital era. All the major newspapers now have on-line versions (*Cameroon Tribune, Le Messenger, Quotidien Mutations, The Herald, Nouvelle Expression, and The Post*). Many websites catering to transnational communities have chat rooms where users can carry out discussions by posting messages. Chat rooms now allow for ongoing discussions between Cameroonians on websites like Cameroon-info.net, bonaberi.com etc.

The dynamics of Diasporas produce a unique way of life where people often have to live in several places at the same time. My informants, use of media and communication technologies helps sustain social networks in form of a "triadic relationship" characteristic of Diaspora as a social form, linking the rest of the globe, the territory of residence and the homeland state. Their use of media thus contributed to the articulation of Diaspora as a social form, as the media is used to maintain and reinforce diasporic social connections, and at the same time, these transnational networks of media and communication help enhance a sense of Diaspora consciousness.

Communications technologies helped my informants maintain social networks that extended from Norway to Cameroon and the Diaspora scattered all over Europe and North America.

Dual consciousness

In the perception of Diaspora as a type of consciousness, great emphasis is put on describing varied experiences, mindsets, and a sense of identity. I have earlier referred to Gilroy's (1993) notion of double consciousness, with regard to diasporic individuals' awareness of being simultaneously "home and away from home" or "here and there" The discourse of the informants in this study reflects a type of consciousness alike that described above.

"...I don't have my family here. What I basically have here is friends...but there is nowhere like home, where you were brought up there are so many memories you can't replace until after...but I have only lived in Norway for 5 years." (Minouche)

Minouche felt a sense of nostalgia for the past but at the same time a sense of hope of eventually making the psychological transition from past to present. The meaning of living loss and hope as a defining tension (Vertovec, 2000) is reflected these feelings of hers. It is clear from this statement that the place she considered, as home was Cameroon. She felt a sense of loss over an irreplaceable past, but at the same time is implicitly hopeful that with the passage of time she will feel settled in her new place of residence.

For some of my informants, these feelings of loss and nostalgia were accentuated by the fact that they no longer had access to the different kinds of media, which they consumed in Cameroon.

I like all the journalists in Cameroon. I like their sense of humour. I understand what they say. When I was in Cameroon three years ago, I listened to the radio all the time. It was so sweet. They speak Pidgin, they give advice, the way they talk to the layman...it is so nice. It is so sweet. That I really miss. (Edith)

Edith, like other Cameroonians in Norway, is not able to listen to these Cameroonian radio stations, nor watch Cameroonian television. The most accessible form of diasporic mass media for these Cameroonians is the Internet, where they can read online newspapers and search for other information.

“I do love listening to music...I listen to music from Africa, because I grew up with this music...When I listen to this music, at least I feel closer to my past, to the time when I was in Cameroon...sometimes when I listen to music from the past from my home country I get flashback memories about how life was in those days when things were really fine... When I am lying down listening to Africa No.1 I feel as if I am in Africa” (Max)

The media facilitate the preservation of events and experiences across time and beyond the localities of place. In so doing, they might become catalysts for reminiscences of other times and places (Drotner, 1998). For many of my informants listening to Cameroonian music brought back memories of home and accentuated feelings of nostalgia and loss. In their recollections of past life in Cameroon, what they often remembered most were the good times. In their research undertaken in London, Aksoy & Robins (2000) have shown how Turks tend to seek out those kinds of television programmes and films that convey an ideal image of Turkey and of Turkishness. Turks in London wanted to see an image of a Turkey – whether it is in the natural landscapes or childhood memories or the old days- that would bring them joy. What especially appealed to them was the sense of purity and harmony of a world that existed before deterioration had set in. According to Aksoy & Robins, these idealizations are a significant feature of the migrant experience.

The voice, the tone, and the privacy of conversation can accentuate feelings of proximity between two persons speaking on the phone. This is what Mabéa referred to when she explained why she liked to use the phone to communicate with Cameroon:

Q: What medium do you prefer when it comes to keeping in touch with Cameroon?

Mabéa: The phone. Because it is easier. You hear the person’s voice. You talk to them directly. It does not waste time...for me I find it easy...and it is consoling for us who live so far away from home. When talking on the phone, at least you feel as if you have the person beside you.

Through talking on the phone, Mabéa was able to achieve symbolic intimacy and proximity with friends, family, and relatives far away. What remains to be known is whether hearing the voice of a loved one far away helps reduce, or rather accentuates feelings of nostalgia and loss.

Although the other communications media do not possess the same aesthetic value as the telephone, for my informants, communicating with friends and family in Cameroon and abroad produced similar effects, in the sense that it helped enhance feelings of longing and nostalgia.

Multi-locality

In Sreberny's study of Iranians in London (2000), her informants evocatively expressed a certain difficulty to make a psychological shift from thinking of themselves as exiles with the aim of returning to Iran, to immigrants trying to build a new life in Britain. Even after many years of living abroad, many of the informants' dreams were still located in Iran, and lived mentally with suitcases packed ready to leave.

The diasporic experiences of my informants were somewhat mixed. Some of them found it difficult to make the psychological shift

“...I have many other things to think of.... first of all I have to try to really settle down. For me I don't think I am really settled...” (Solange)

On the other hand, there was an increasing awareness among my other informants about their situation. Although they expressed a sense of nostalgia about Cameroon, and still stayed connected with family and friends over there, one felt a willingness and readiness amongst them to build a new life in Norway

Ayissi: When I am interested, I go to the Cameroon websites to see what is happening. I go to those sites when there is something important I want to know. I don't check the news everyday, though, maybe once a week.

Q: Don't you think it is important?

Ayissi: It is important. But at the same time we live in another world... Norwegian news is very important for me because it is also important to know what is happening locally so that I am aware of what is around me.

“I can say. I can say that I followed Cameroonian news more when I was in Cameroon because here I also have to follow Norwegian news. The Norwegian news is important to me because I live here. In Cameroon I used to follow the news there more because I have to know what is going on because, as I said, I have my family there. Especially, now when we recently had elections. It was important for us to know what was going on” (Dieudonné)

What Ayissi tried to stress in the last sentence was the fact that he did not focus too much on Cameroon when he searched for news because he now was “in another world”. My informants showed a readiness to build a new life their new host nation. They had all learned Norwegian. Some of them were taking a Norwegian education. Others have entered the labour market and were gainfully employed. They were all more or less oriented towards the Norwegian as well as international cultural and societal trends. Among other things, they were keen consumers of Norwegian and international media. My informants’ discourse seemed to convey a certain duality, an awareness of living in several societies at the same time, which is characteristic of a Diaspora consciousness. This was reflected in their media consumption patterns.

Identity and football

Apart from earlier successes enjoyed by the Cameroonian national team in the FIFA World Cup, the country has seen a mass exodus of its players to all the major professional football leagues in Europe, where some of them feature in highly televised competitions like the UEFA Champions League. For such a small country plagued by all the usual problems of a developing nation, football has become a national symbol and a source of national pride.

“When it comes to Cameroonians, they are not very well known in this society. It is very seldom you hear about Cameroon in the Norwegian media. The only time you hear about Cameroon is when it concerns football. Since Cameroon is a country that hardly has wars, so when they talk about Cameroon they think that Cameroon is a welfare country. They don’t even know Cameroon. A lot of them know Cameroon only through football, sports. Apart from that they don’t know anything else.” (Ayissi)

All Cameroonians, in Cameroon and abroad, view football as a source of national pride. Football almost has the status of a religion. Besides its immense popularity, It is one of the most powerful promoters of identification with the nation.

In Norway, a country that has very links of any kind with Cameroon, the only images, which people have of Cameroon, are those of their football team’s exploits in the World Cup, particularly of one Roger Milla scoring a goal at the age of 42

Limitations of diasporic media: Poor access to Cameroonian media

Cameroonian newspapers are sometimes available in countries with a relatively large population of Cameroonians, e.g. France, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. However, those newspapers are usually days or weeks old before they get to these countries. Thus, the best option left for most of them (Max for example) to get news from Cameroon was the Internet.

“Q: Do you have access to any newspapers from Cameroon?”

Max: No, I don’t have access to those

Q: Would you like to have Cameroonian newspapers here?”

Max: Yes, I would have liked to have,...because even if I have newspapers from Cameroon, they are not going to be up to date newspapers...maybe newspapers which are one week old or so”

Apart from the fact that there only existed a limited number of online newspapers and list servers carrying Cameroon news, most of these sites did not update regularly. Some of the informants expressed dissatisfaction with the quality and the sporadic nature in which news that featured on these sites. Their main complaint was that these websites, which carry Cameroon news, did not carry the most recent news. They therefore did not find it necessary to check them daily.

Sometimes I go to the websites of newspapers but if you go to all Africa they would say you should choose a region and maybe a country and then you go to Cameroon. Then you can read some news like day-to-day news, but they are not updated often (Edith)

“I try several times...I search for Cameroon news and I always get this douala.com...they don’t update it that often, so you always get old news from February while we are in July, and things like that...if I could get more Cameroon news, a web page that could keep me up to date everyday about what is going on in Cameroon or anything concerning Cameroon, then I would have been checking it more often” (Foncha)

There are not any available television channels from Cameroon, and indeed anywhere else in Africa, in the cable and satellite channel packages on offer in the Norwegian market. There are only a very few African countries which have television channels broadcasting on satellite. Contrary to other immigrant groups from Asia and the Middle East living in Norway who can

receive television from their countries of origin, most immigrants from Africa cannot. Thus my interviewees' did not watch any homeland television of any sort.

Poor telecommunications infrastructure

Because Cameroonian in the Diaspora reside mostly in Western countries where access to ICTs is much easier, they have adopted technologies like the Internet faster. However, transnational linkages with their home country are still greatly limited because their counterparts at home do not enjoy the same access to such technologies. There are only 15 million telephone lines in the whole of Africa, which is lesser than the number of telephone lines in Manhattan or in Tokyo. Besides South Africa, which has about half of the whole continent's Internet users, only one out of every 250 people living in Africa has Internet access (Hylland Eriksen, 2005)

“We communicate through the phone and through letters because very few of them have access to the Internet. The communication with Africa is mostly one way. If they call you it is mostly for an important reason. They are not yet used to the idea of going online because they have to go and pay in order to go online. For them it is a problem to do that.” (Ayissi)

The Cameroonian Diaspora is located mostly in western countries where access to and appropriation of new technologies is much easier. While connections between Africans living in the west and those in Africa are difficult, interactions among the Diasporas in developed countries are much easier.

Problems of invisibility

Because Cameroon rarely features in the news from Africa in Western media, it was rarely covered on Norwegian as well as international television news. Some of the informants complained over the fact that there was low coverage of their country on these international news networks

“...I don't know but I would have kind of liked it if I had more information from Africa, especially Cameroon. They have the Inside Africa but I would say 95% of it is only about South Africa all the time.” (Foncha)

Foncha was referring here to the two major news networks, CNN and the BBC. Many of the informants pointed out the fact these networks focused only on certain countries whenever they happened to cover the African continent. They either covered the countries where Western countries had major interests, like South Africa, or countries where there was conflict, famine, or disease.

Since Cameroon did not fall into any of these categories of countries, it was basically ignored. The expressed frustration over the domination of the international news scene by certain countries, meanwhile African issues are given little priority.

“... Africans are a little bit angry when the just speak about Africa when something has happened there. When something happens in England or elsewhere in Europe they show that and make a big deal of it, but when it is about Africa it is like two-three minutes and that is it... Because when you are in Africa you watch so much about Europe. I want it to be 50-50 for all the countries, for me.” (Duala)

When the informants turned to the media of their host country, they still faced the same problem. They felt a sense of invisibility and lack of recognition in the Norwegian public space. They complained about the fact that there almost never was anything mentioned about Cameroon in their host country's media

“I would like to have access to news, political news for example, since I have been in Norway, I have never seen on Norwegian television. I would have liked to get some political news about Cameroon from time to time.” (Kontchou)

“They never ever show anything about Cameroon for five years since I have been in Norway. So I think if they could go to Cameroon I would appreciate that, just a documentary, whatever it is... about Cameroon.” (Minouche)

They all expressed a desire for more representation in the Norwegian media. I guess these frustrations are born out of the fact that they felt they deserved to be recognised as part of this society. Norwegian Public Service broadcasting makes some provision for ethnic minority programming. However, these provisions are reserved mostly for the larger immigrant groups. Unfortunately, Cameroonians form one of the smallest immigrant communities in Norway.

Difficulties of access

Many of my informants expressed dissatisfaction over the lack of access to news sources on Africa. In her study carried out in Denmark about the consumption of news among ethnic minorities, Connie Carøe Christiansen (2003) argues that there ethnic minorities feel an extra need for news because they are far away from home. According to her, the problem diasporic people in Denmark have is not necessarily that they do not have access to news media, but that they do not get news that is suited to their particular needs. This is similar to what my informants expressed with regards to access to news.

“Even if it concerns international channels, no channel which covers Africa is involved in this package. So it is very difficult to get the news from Africa when you stay in Norway because basically out of all the media sources which you can get for yourself, there is none that adequately will give you constant news from Africa, and cover several areas like other international channels cover. You get news in Europe, in America...but not much of what is happening in Africa unless there is some hunger or civil war or some strike.” (Ngwa)

“...the people who bring news most of the time about Africa is the BBC, but sometimes they don't elaborate things. French channels elaborate more...they even have TV5 Africa now but they don't have it in Norway. I look forward to seeing that. I want to buy a parabolic antenna. I had it before but I left...because you can get access to different type of channels. There are a lot of African countries which have now bought a line in the satellite.” (Kontchou)

Even if they could receive African television channels through satellite dishes, there still was the problem of the cost. It is highly unlikely that they would have been able to afford these satellite dishes.

“I hear people talking about African channels from different type of countries. I would like to have an African channel anyway. I don't care about which one it is...I mean... which can give more information about Africa the continent. But I hear about the South Africans or the Senegalese have some channels in the satellite. I don't have that.” (Ayissi)

“Actually there are more channels I would have loved to have but I don’t know if there is a possibility to have them when I am in Norway, for example, like channels from where I come from...lot of channels in Africa.” Max)

As the informants have pointed out above, it was not necessary a question of having specifically Cameroonian television. They would have been satisfied if they just had any African channel. Maybe they realised how impossible it is to expect the problem of specific news media provision for Cameroonians to be addressed.

We might have already noticed all along how in the discourse of my informants they tend to shift in the way they identify themselves. In discussions related to the issue of media provision, the constantly and unconsciously shift between identifying themselves as Cameroonians and as Africans. This illustrates Hall’s (1990) point that human beings have multiple selves or identities, and that identification is a construction and a never-ending process.

5.2 GENDER

This was not one of the areas I originally intended to focus on. However I came across some interesting aspects of my informants’ media talk and consumption patterns and preferences, which suggested that gender, had a part to play in their media use. The emergence of the gender equation only goes to support the idea of shifting identity positions according to the contexts.

As the results of the interviews indicated, while the female informants only expressed marginal interest in newspapers, they all said they read magazines on a regular basis. Only two of the male informants read any magazines at all, and only quite rarely.

Both magazines in Norwegian and international mainstream magazines were included in the type of magazines they read. Among the Norwegian magazines they read, the most mentioned were *Se og Hør*, *Hjemmet*, and *Norsk Ukeblad* while they also read international magazines like *Cosmopolitan*, *Elle*, *In Style*, *Woman*, and *Oprah Magazine*. Most of these are niche magazines that traditionally target female readers. The female informants read these magazines for content on things like celebrity gossip, fashion and interior, horoscope, relationship advice, and counselling. Rose described the topics that interest her in these magazines:

“In magazines I like to read about health, how to make yourself look good, and how to lose weight...when it is about stars, I like to read about their lives and what they have been up to, if they have married and divorced, and stuff like that”

Edith’s interests were somewhat similar:

Edith: As I said, in Cosmopolitan there is a little bit of everything. You can get a lot of advice on relationships, food, health, cosmetics, cosmetics in particular. Cosmopolitan is very good. I like O Magazine too. You can get a lot of advice....

Minouche was equally interested the same type of content

Q: What sections of the magazine do you usually read?

A: Sex...there is a lot of personal experiences, new positions...that kind of thing...that is not all I read but...those I find interesting. Real life stories, like rape, violence, how to deal with it and a lot of stories like that.

Q: What are your favourite magazines?

A: Cosmo and In Style.

These trends were reflected in Sigurd Høst’s study (1998) on everyday media use in Norway. He found out that women read more magazines than men, especially when it concerned the major family-oriented magazines like *Hjemmet*, *Norsk Ukeblad*, and *Allers*. A survey carried out by Norsk Gallup (2004) also revealed that women in Norway read magazines twice as much as men.

As I earlier pointed out, many of the female informants did not show great interest in reading newspapers.

Minouche: No. If I meet someone in the train reading one and they don’t want to read it anymore, I am like...can I borrow your paper?

Q: So you don’t really buy the newspapers yourself?

Minouche: Not really. I started buying VG actually because my ex-husband liked reading it a lot...

Q: What about newspapers?

Edith: I find it very boring to read *Aftenposten*. I take *Aftenposten*, I open like the first page and look at the headline and then I close it. Most of the time I find just one interesting story and I read it and I throw it away...just like

In the interviews there were a lot of indications that the use of television could be typified in terms of gender, at least with regards to programme preferences. My informants maintained a remarkable consistency in this area. While masculinity was primarily articulated with a strong preference for factual programmes (news, current affairs, and documentaries) and sports, femininity was identified with a preference for fictional programmes and the new wave of reality TV programmes.

Here are some examples of responses to questions about programme type preference given by male informants:

Q: What kind of TV programmes do you watch most of the time?

Max: Programmes that I watch most of the time are like documentary programmes...programmes which talk mostly about...like nature... like Animal Planet, National Geographic, Discovery...things which are real...Reality Channel. I don't like to watch fiction.

Q: Why?

Max: Because I know that it is just fiction. These are not real things. When I was younger, I used to like things like films. Now I am not so much interested in films because they are not real.

Q: Don't you get entertained by watching fiction?

Max: No.

Eyong: Like on Sundays I am so much interested in sports, football, I am so much interested in international politics....well I usually follow the national news on TV2...sometimes if I have access to BBC and other foreign international stations...news programs are very imperative for me.

Kontchou: Yes I watch them in one or the other channels. I watch many documentaries, documentaries about.....many documentaries that come.... Dokument 2, like in TV2, then I

watch documentaries in NRK1... I am addicted to news. So I watch news at 6.30pm on TV2 and at 7pm on NRK1...I watch news everyday, and if I don't watch news, I read TV text.

On the other hand, the female informants uttered different preferences than the men:

Mabéa: I think it is important but I am normally not that kind of a newsperson.

Q: What do you mean by I am not a newsperson?

Mabéa: Well, I follow the immediate news I see on TV on a daily basis but I don't spend a lot of my time searching for. I just do it when I think about it.

As Max's response shows, some men had particularly strong views about watching "not real things". Morley (1986) has shown how some men in traditional nuclear families view watching fiction in the way their wives do as an improper and almost irresponsible activity, an indulgence in fantasy, which is reproachable. These views are similar to nineteenth-century views of novel reading as a "feminizing" activity. As shown above, when the interview with Max moved to fictional programmes, he consistently maintained his preference for factual genres, over watching fiction, which he regarded as almost a childish indulgence.

Women relate to fiction in a different way than men. They essentially ascribe meaning to the fictional text by relating it to their situation in life. They identify with the fates of the fictional characters, and feel that they can apply knowledge from these fictional texts in real life situations. Similarly, Edith talked about learning valuable lessons from her interactions with reality series:

Q: What would you say is your favourite program?

A: The reality series. Which one of them? The Bachelor

Q: Why do you like it?

A: Because there they really manage to get out what people really feel.

Q: What do you mean by that?

A: People get so emotional they can't hide it and then you can see how bad people can be when they want something, how mean they can become to each other and how selfish people are. So I learn a lot from those kinds of reality programs.

Some would find it surprising that Cameroonian women would engage so passionately in American soaps usually featuring all-white casts. But as Gillespie (1995) points out, migrant minorities have compelling reasons for identifying with the protagonists in soaps, which

supersede racial differences. They use the soaps as a cultural resource in their everyday interactions with the host society

“The Bold and the Beautiful, I think to my understanding, is trying to teach us some common mistakes that we can make in life and how to correct them and it is like telling us what is love, because people make mistakes and they can correct them. Another thing is the series talks about secrets. There are so many secrets in it and they are showing how people cannot keep secrets for long and stuff like that “. (Rose)

Hobson (1989) argues that it is because the subject matter of soap operas is so familiar to the viewers, that there can be a free flow of information in talk as people work on collaborative readings of TV text which are informed by and inform their own social experiences. It is the interlacing of fiction and real experiences that best characterizes the nature of soap talk.

However it is important to note that not all the male informants uttered such low opinions of fiction, and that some of them in fact, admitted to watching fictional programmes. Apart from Duala, all the male informants named news as their favorite programme, though. In addition, even when they admitted to watching programmes other than news, they had a tendency to intellectualize their experience of watching these programmes, so as to provide some sort of justification for watching such programmes

“Well, it is not only something of fantasy, but you see, we learn from such programs. We learn from the questions, what they ask, not only learning, you see how somebody can spring up from nothing to something because of his knowledge and you see some of the opportunities, you see some of the advantages in wisdom....you could be elevated from nothing to something, and how happy one could be in such a situation whereby you are fortunate to be a millionaire”. (Eyong)

Most of the male informants found it difficult to admit that they watched television for purely entertainment purposes, and from them one got the impression that they needed to provide good reasons for watching entertainment from television.

Boyle and O’Connor (1993) have shown how gender differentiation between soap operas and sports coverage has had implications for the popular image of each. Soap opera has been perceived as inferior, as a mere fantasy and escapism for women while television sports have

been perceived as more legitimate, even enlightening for men. The authors argue that there are no radical differences between sports and soap opera, and that they are in fact, similar in a number of ways. According to them, both genres appeal to similar structures of feeling and sensibility in their respective audiences and that televised sport is in fact a “male soap opera”. A good game of football, like a good soap, is a drama, full of intrigue and suspense. You don’t know the end result until the last scene – the final minutes of the game. The way sports stars are celebrated in public, is the same as other popular movie or television stars, which adds the same flair to the drama. News also contains drama. No wonder they are called “news stories”. The commercially driven media sector urges television stations to try to make their stories more dramatic so as to achieve higher ratings. Thus, although men and women might prefer different types of television programmes that reflect gender identities and social roles in viewing patterns, they in the end may just be expressing preference for a type of story rather than a whole genre itself. (Lull,1982).

One of the most popular perceptions in the past was that boys use the Internet more frequently than girls and for more time periods. That perception is largely contested in more recent research (Torgesen, 2004).

However, although boys and girls might have similar Internet consumption rates, studies have shown that they have different preferences with regards to Internet functions. A study carried out in USA on Internet use among youth revealed similar results. Girls used e-mail more, while boys preferred online surfing (Jackson, Ervin, Gardner, and Schmitt, 1991).

Although my empirical data was collected from an older age group, there were some similarities in the results obtained. There was no clear evidence that the men used the Internet more than the women. Neither was there any clear indication that their Internet uses were radically different. The area of use where there existed some gender differences was in the area of news search. Similar to the female informants’ preferences in the other media, they rarely used online news content. Even with regards to diasporic content, while the male informants searched for news about Cameroon, the female informants were more interested in exchanging e-mails and talking on the phone with family and friends. Most of the male informants named online newspapers and other news links as their major source of information about Cameroon, while the female informants said they got most of their news from Cameroon through interpersonal communication through e-mail and the telephone.

It is important to point out here that the gender differences outlined in this section are based only on the personal narratives of my informants, and nothing else.

As Morley (1986) pointed out in his study of family television, informants tend to offer a more sharply differentiated picture of men's and women's viewing of television than is actually revealed in surveys, which show men watching fictional programmes and women watching factual programmes. This means in this case that the informants reflected classical masculine and feminine stereotypes in their responses about television programme type preferences, which might conceal the nuances of their actual media consumption patterns.

I have a strong suspicion that some of the informants in my study misrepresented their media use behaviour to me, probably in order to suit these gender stereotypes. My reason for saying this is that I have some of the informants as friends and regularly visit their homes (I chose not to say which). So I know for a fact that many of them consumed quite a diverse range of media content at home, they did not admit doing so, in the interviews. However even if the informants misrepresented their actual behaviour, it would still remain interesting that the informants felt constrained to offer these types of gender stereotypes. It would thus imply that these tendencies have an effect on the informants' lives.

As Morley (*ibid.*) points out, if one categorises informants' accounts as unreliable, one runs the risk of being perpetually stuck at the level of external measurements of behaviour (like surveys) which do not offer any insight into the significance of observed behaviour to the parties concerned. It is only through audiences' accounts of why they prefer certain media content over others that one can be able to get any sense of the criteria they use to make choices on what they consume.

Sex and gender, are only one of several modes of identity. They are social constructions that are inherently caught up in matters of representation. They are matters of culture rather than nature. However, this does not imply that sexual identities are so easily discardable. While gender is a social construction, it is something that constitutes us human beings, both through power relations and through identifications of the psyche (Barker, 1999).

5.3 STRATEGIES OF ADAPTATION

Social uses of the media

Although this was not a main preoccupation of this study at the onset, the findings revealed a dimension of the media use of my informants where there was no apparent conscious proactive motivation.

When I am at home, sitting in my sitting room, I always put on the TV...even if I am not watching the TV...the TV is always on. Either the TV is on and I put it low and I am concentrating on the Internet...or when I am lying down, I just put the TV on...and if I am like...if I feel that I am almost falling asleep that is when I just turn off the TV. (Max)

James Lull (1982) has for long provided the classical guidelines for many a research on the social uses of the media. In his article he systematised his observations by suggesting that the social uses of television can be classified in two dimensions: the structural dimension and the relational dimension. On the structural level he distinguishes two uses: the environmental use (provision of background noise, companionship, and entertainment) and the regulative (punctuation of time and activity, talk patterns). On the relational level, he identifies four different social uses. He calls the first one communication facilitation (experience illustration, provision of common ground and conversation topics, etc.). The second function is affiliation/avoidance (physical, verbal contact, family solidarity). The third is what he calls social learning (the use of television to provide role models, value transmissions, etc.). The fourth one he identifies is that of demonstration of competence or dominance (role re-enforcement, gate-keeping, etc.)

For some of the informants, media use is not geared towards any particularly defined objective. They referred to watching television, listening to the radio, and reading newspapers as recurrent media activities that they engaged in when they did not have anything else to do, or sometimes as practices that took place with no apparent motivation. For some of my informants, media consumption is a secondary activity that is interwoven in the complex patterns of their daily lives. Minouche revealed an apparent non-committal use of her household media:

“I always have my TV on...I just like the noise”. .. NRJ, I can have on all day long. I can go out of the house, come back, and NRJ has to be on...”

As Lull (1982) points out, the media, in this case television, is sometimes employed as an environmental resource in order to create a flow of constant background noise which moves to the foreground when individuals or groups desire. When I am at home, sitting in my sitting room, I always put on the TV...even if I am not watching the TV...the TV is always on.

“Either the TV is on and I put it low and I am concentrating on the Internet...or when I am lying down, I just put the TV on...and if I am like...if I feel that I am almost falling asleep that is when I just turn off the TV”. (Max)

The television is also a companion for accomplishing household chores and routines. This is revealed in Solange’s description of her daily pattern of television watching.

“If I am not working, throughout the day the television is always on ... when I am cooking I don’t watch but when I am sitting and I don’t have anything to do, I watch TV “(Solange)

. The media are integrated in the everyday lives of my informants.

“I am interested in watching TV especially when I get up in the morning maybe I want to go to work; I usually put on something like BBC or CNN to be updated with the latest news for the day “(Max)

Domestic media contribute to the overall social atmosphere by rendering a constant and predictable assortment of sounds and pictures, which helps create, a seemingly animated environment. Household radio and TV provides its users with a continuous backdrop of verbal and visual communication against which they can construct interpersonal chances.

Usually I do watch TV when I am alone or it doesn’t matter if there are people around....but if there are people around the TV is on but I don’t concentrate on the TV, but when I am alone and I am watching TV, I do concentrate on the TV. (Max)

Although not empirically explicit or grounded (I cannot make cause-effect connections between media use and ontological security) the informants’ accounts of their everyday media use support the idea that the media help in the maintenance of everyday routines, e.g. listening

to the radio in the morning or watching TV in the evenings. These rituals bring recognition, and through that ontological security into everyday life: same procedures as last year, and every year (Tufte, 1998).

As Morley (2001) puts it, for those troubled by the difficulties of “living with difference” in the contemporary multicultural city, the television set can sometimes serve as a source of comfort of symbolic immersion in a world of settled homogeneity.

Building a new life here

One of the aims of this study has been to examine whether the media has an impact for my informants, on their process of adaptation in the Norwegian society. This section will be dedicated to exploring this dimension of media use.

The Norwegian state authorities have never cease to emphasis the importance of active participation in the Norwegian society for immigrants. Every immigrant should strive towards; among other things, to have a job and be economically self-sufficient, to learn Norwegian and adopt an open attitude to society, to be familiar with the basic norms of the Norwegian society, to ensure their children’s participation in society, and to experience an acceptance of one’s identity.

Mass media can serve as a source of social and cultural information, and that migrants tend to use host-country-produced texts to get accustomed to their new surroundings.

“I think the breakthrough came when I was able to read and understand what was going on. Then I began to understand how the Norwegians live their lives and how they look at people and that has made me be prepared for what to expect whenever I meet a Norwegian...I live where I live because I have been able to understand the language and I have tried to find out things, because it is not easy for a foreigner to settle in the Norwegian society without help, first by understanding what is going on around you, and by being able to read what is going on in the media...” (Ngwa)

The findings of this study indicate that not only do Cameroonians in Oslo (at least those I interviewed) extensively use Norwegian-produced media content, they equally perceive the

consumption of Norwegian media as an important factor in helping them adjust to the Norwegian society.

In contrast with other immigrant from Lebanon who can watch *Al-Jazeera* or Turk who can read *Hurriyet* newspaper in Norway, Africans in Norway like my interview subjects have very limited access to homeland television, radio, or newspapers. Thus the majority of the media they are exposed to is mainstream Norwegian media. For Dieudonné this means one is forced to consume the Norwegian media, and this he considers as a positive thing:

“We can say we are forced to do it because every channel here, I think we can say 70% of the channels are Norwegian, so we are forced to do it. I think for me it is a good thing because it is better to know their culture and everything, than just to use time to watch some other channels from other countries, because you learn about the country. It is better that when you are living in Norway, you have to know these things “.

Many of the informants watch Norwegian news daily. As they findings on their Norwegian media consumption have revealed, they also express a high level of interest in media content, which deals with all major political, social, cultural, and economic issues of the day. If this is indicative of anything, then it is that the informants express a certain willingness to participate and a genuine interest in involvement in their host society.

The host country language

Language proficiency is also an important factor in determining what kind of media content one has access to. The issue of language is particularly relevant in any analysis of immigrants' consumption of the Norwegian language media since they need to have a certain level of proficiency in Norwegian to be able to consume media content in Norwegian.

Earlier research carried out on ethnic minority families in Denmark has shown that not only are there big differences from one ethnic group to the other when it comes to proficiency in the host country language, but that there also big gender and generation differences highlighted in their linguistic abilities (Just Jeppesen and Nielsen 1994).

One factor that could determine the proficiency level of the host country's language for those belonging to other cultural and linguistic groups is the length of time they have lived there.

In addition, the proximity of the immigrants' mother-tongue to that of the host country's, the number of other languages they know from before, generally are among the factors that determine how quickly they appropriate the language of their host country. Almost all the people I interviewed had at least a high school education, which probably made it easier for them to learn the Norwegian language.

A majority of the interviewees in this study had a good knowledge of Norwegian, and thus did not have any problems understanding media content in Norwegian. The only informant who could not follow programs in Norwegian had lived in Norway for just a little over a year. All the other informants had lived in Norway for more than five years.

Another issue of significance is the fact that Cameroon is a bilingual country with French and English as its two official languages. Most of the programs from the major international networks, found in the Norwegian cable packages, are broadcast in English. Research carried out on ethnic minorities' media use in Denmark has shown how language could be a decisive factor with regards to their level of appropriation of media. The research showed that those who had limited knowledge of Danish generally had limited access to news. Those who knew both English and Danish, like the Pakistanis, had a relatively better exposure to news, since they could supplement the news they received from the Danish channels with international news channels, most of which broadcast in English (Christiansen 2000).

However, although language was hardly the only factor that determined media consumption, one can at least say that because the interviewees knew the main languages in which most of the media content in Norway is aired, language did not constitute a limitation to media access. Some of the informants confessed particular media preferences based on the level of complexity of the language used. When asked about her preference of one of the Norwegian gossip magazines, *Se og Hør*, Edith said:

“Because of the way they write. It is more simplified Norwegian to me. I have tried other magazines... I have tried one magazine called KK. I didn't like...so I like *se og hør*...I have been around and I always come back to *se og hør* because the way they write is like a typical gossip magazine, and maybe I am so interested in reading about other people...so I read it all the time”.

Another language-related issue raised by the informants (Edith, Minouche) was the problem of understanding the different nuances in the Norwegian dialects. Edith explained that when a presenter spoke one of the difficult dialects, she generally was less inclined to watch. This, she said was because:

“If there is anybody from Stavanger or Bergen in a TV program I don’t understand them. In this Hos Martin there is this old man they call Karl. I don’t understand him very well because I think he speaks in between his tongue or something”

She concluded that getting around the problem of dialects was simply a matter of getting used to:

“Sometimes, when I can’t understand...before...I didn’t understand the people on Hotel Cæsar but I kept on watching and I think sometimes it is just to try to understand how the people speak and then it is okay. The way they talk is different”

One of the things the informants expressed a liking for was the fact that in Norway, television programmes were not dubbed. Many of the informants said that the Norwegian sub-texts that always accompanied TV programmes in other languages served as a means of learning the Norwegian language. When asked about what she found positive about Norwegian media in general, Edith replied:

“I think the positive thing is...they have text under the TV. It has made me to learn a lot of Norwegian, and Norwegians have learned a lot of English from them because they listen and they read. I think that is the number one positive thing”

The Norwegian authorities have never ceased to emphasise the primordial role of learning Norwegian in the successful integration of immigrants. What the analysis in this section demonstrates is the potential role that the consumption of Norwegian language media could play for immigrants in the process of language acquisition, and thus the process of integration, at least as the authorities perceive it.

5.5 CONTESTED IDENTITIES

Negative portrayals: problem focus

One of the areas I explored in this study was the informants' view about the way they were represented in the Norwegian media. The informants' responses on this issue make for depressing reading. Over recent decades, a considerable volume of research has been carried out in Europe and the US on the media's representation of ethnic minorities (Cottle 2000). Recurrent research results reveal under-representation, stereotypical characterisation, and negative problem-oriented portrayal of ethnic minorities within factuality and entertainment genres.

The informants decried the media's non-portrayal of their diversity, and an incessant focus only on deviant behaviour.

According to Edith, in stories on crime the Norwegian media is always keen on pointing out the perpetrator's origins only when they happen to be a foreigner/black.

“If there is a crime, they are very good at describing if it is a Somalian, but when it is a Norwegian they almost forget to mention it...They always do that. On TV I have noticed that. Like there was a crime...was it in Stavanger or Bergen?...a girl who was a nurse, somebody killed her, and they just talked about it, and they didn't say anything, but if that person was black or foreigner I know for sure they would not forget to mention it. It would be the first thing and it would be very important that everybody knows that the person is black, and quote...quote African”

“I am a little bit angry because they just write about bad things in Africa, AIDS, crime, drug trafficking and things like that.... that is not nice because like for AIDS, if you go to Africa be careful, but some countries here in Europe are the same as some African countries but they don't talk about that so much.” (Duala)

Marianne Gullestad, the Norwegian anthropologist (2001), suggests that the *ethnification* of discourses has intensified whereby there is a one-sided focus on the Other as ethnic, on how “they” differ from “us”. This presupposed *us* versus *them* opposition perpetuates conflict rather than breaks up cultural boundaries.

On the subject of problem-focus, Ayissi mentioned a particular incident, which featured in the media, which demonstrated how the media stigmatised Africans:

There was an incident, for example, in 2002. The media people through the minister of health wrote an article and even said on television that Africans from the Sub-Sahara are the highest risk population in Norway when it comes to AIDS. That specification in itself made a lot of Africans to be very much upset. The newspapers focused on it. In the media, on television...this type of pinpointing is very dangerous game. I don't think it is a good thing for the media to focus on one group of people and say that they are a high risk. A risk is a risk. No need to specify who is a high risk or a low risk.

In a study of the coverage of ethnic minorities in news stories in the Danish media, Hussain (1997) refers to a TV news story, which stated that “foreigners” (*utlending*) accounted for fifty per cent of new cases of HIV infection among heterosexuals. Hussain points out that Africans were particularly singled out in this news story, as a main cause of the spread of HIV.

“...Africans represent by far the largest part of the HIV infected foreigners in Denmark. The question is whether one can allow oneself to warn Danes against unprotected sex with Africans” (TV-avisen 13/10 1996, 9pm, in Hussain 1997: 59)

According to Hussain, the guidelines of Danish Public Broadcasting require the channels Public Service media channels to address the interests of entire Danish population, the interest of the majority as well as that of the minority. Media coverage like this is evidence of their failure to do so. By the use of the common denominator “Africans”, all people of black colour are constructed as potential carriers of HIV, while the ethnic Danish implicitly were not. What everyone needed to do to protect themselves from the viruses was hardly a preoccupation.

Similarly, I recalled watching a recent news report on TV2, on the issue of the rapid increase of prostitution in Oslo, the news headline has that the public was warned against soliciting sexual encounters with African prostitutes because they posed a high risk for sexually transmitted diseases. Ayissi's view is shared among many Africans who feel that this further reinforces the stereotypes against them. Many wonder why the involved parties, instead of

condemning all forms of sexual vagrancy, give the impression that it is okay as long as it is not with an African.

The ethnification of a continent

Another issue, which the informants expressed frustration over, was that of generalisations. My informants were particularly concerned by the way in which the media has a tendency to place all black people under the umbrella of a certain homogenous “Africanness” that ignores ethnic difference.

...for example I read an article where they talk about how Africans are, when it comes to lies telling, how immigrants are. It happens that one police officer was doing research on Africans. You cannot go to one country to do research and come and make a generalised statement that Africans are like that. That particular issue was something which really pricked me. That shows that sometimes because of the something happens people always tend to generalise that people are like this...being short-sighted. If you want to make an assessment, a generalised statement you must have gone in deep, gone around to make research, not only going to one country and generalise it. (Eyong)

“I think that to an extent the Africans are stigmatised in the media in general. First Africans are just referred to as Africans meanwhile it is very difficult to understand that Africa is a continent. It is not a country. So when you just hear “an African”, instead of following up to know where an individual is from, which might give you an idea about the culture of the individual, you group a whole group of people from different cultures together and you stamp them as Africans... if for example, you are able to distinguish between somebody from Asia and somebody who comes from Europe then you should be able to distinguish between somebody who comes from Cameroon from somebody who comes from Morocco, rather than grouping them together because they hardly share anything in common...” (Ngwa)

Many popular images of Africa reflect stereotypes that present fragmented, inaccurate, and mythical images or representations of realities of the continent. These images and representations have accumulated over the years and have created a body of knowledge, of sorts, on Africa. These stereotypes present Africa as an uncivilized, tribal, history less, culturally monolithic “Dark Continent”, plagued with endemic violence, hunger/starvation, and disease. In this context, one of the major contributions to these representations of the continent is undoubtedly the news media, although it could be argued that the news media

merely use pre-existing cultural material provided by an entire system of narrative sources on Africa produced by explorers, missionaries, colonial officers, etc.

My informants were particularly keen to define their cultural identities in their own terms. They expressed criticism at the way in which the boundaries between different cultures in the African continent were made fuzzy, or even worse, completely invisible.

Negative discourse and its consequences

Van Dijk (2000) has examined the role the media play in the reproduction of ethnic inequalities. He states that because of the subtle and often symbolic nature of discourse on ethnic minorities, they are expressed, enacted and confirmed in hundreds of different genres, like everyday conversations, political debates. Textbooks, TV programmes etc. They may serve as effective means of marginalising and excluding minorities.

“The media has the ability to show every part of the society. I think the media in Norway have contributed in one way or the other, in the image the Norwegians have of us foreigners. I am not necessarily referring to me personally but to all foreigners. There are a lot of things which the media go out and say which has created bad feelings towards us. The media can also, if they want, give a good image, but most of the time they come out with negative images”
(Ayissi)

The informants’ critique was not limited to the Norwegian media. They criticised the Western media in general for perpetuating stereotypes about Africa as being the continent of wars, famine, and disease.

“...a lot of them have a wrong view about Africa, like for example...my wife, according to the image she has in her head about Africa, it is really like the whole of Africa is deserted and poor and you could hardly find people that are wealthy, because that is what they have been showing them on their TV. “ (Foncha).

The informants also experienced that media generalisation made them constantly feel the need to distance themselves from stereotypes

“...my mother-in-law works in the social system and she has this big thing in her head and they have said it over on television and radio how people from Somalia don’t work, they just make children. So it is difficult for me...my mother-in-law was just thinking that maybe I just want to make a lot of kids and never want to work because it is the image she has about Africans...it is a little difficult to deal with because sometimes you have to prove to people that you are not who they think you are. You are not yourself when you try to prove things to people...” (Edith)

Lack of diversity

Criticism of the media’s representation of ethnic minorities was not only centred on the fact that they focused on negative issues, but also that there is little diversity in these representations. This means that the media puts very little focus on positive images in the coverage of ethnic minorities. This point largely featured in my informants’ criticisms of the way the Norwegian media represents them:

“I don’t really know but I think they just focus on the negative side of what foreigners are doing. The foreigners are doing a lot of good things but they don’t bring it up often in the media. (Ayissi)

“...we would like, maybe, that when it comes to foreigners, they can be a little bit positive...by telling the truth, by presenting the problems as they are. If they try to show people real images I think it will be better than what they do now.” (Dieudonné)

“When they are talking about immigrants that are living here the programmes that I have seen, it is still like the negative things. I have not seen anything positive like praising or that kind of thing.” (Mbango)

This issue forms part of a larger debate about the nature of the media itself. There is a common call for more accuracy and realism in relation to the representation of ethnic minorities. Here the media is called upon to reflect the real world and to illuminate our understanding of the world. However as Barker (1999) has argued, there are great difficulties with this realist epistemology, since media discourse is not an objective or universal representation of the world, but a specific cultural construction.

Resignation

Some of the informants expressed a certain resigned understanding when reflecting on the reasons why they were portrayed in such a manner in public discourse in their host country.

“First of all, we are in their country. They are free to do what they want. You cannot force them to change their mentality or they way they present things” (Dieudonné)

While they felt aggrieved about their marginalisation, they at the same time understood the attitudes of the majority as reactions of those that feel threatened. While Ayissi, for example, harboured criticism for the way in which immigrants were represented in the Norwegian media, he expresses understanding for the position of the majority. These tendencies, according to him, were universal.

It is the way human beings are. Human beings are like that. When the foreigners come to their country they feel themselves invaded. They feel that these foreigners are coming to take away what they have, or something like that. It is not only here, but it happens like that all over Europe. It even happens in Africa. We saw it when the Nigerians were chasing the Ghanaians out of Nigeria” (Ayissi)

He has a point. Immigrants are defined as such by those living in a particular place for whom the existence of the Other constitutes a menace to their own sense of security within their territory. In a similar context, Marc Auge makes the point that “perhaps the reason why immigrants worry settled people is because they expose the relative nature of certainties inscribed in the soil” (1995: 119)

Some of the informants attribute these problems of media portrayal to the fact that they are seldom called upon to represent themselves.

“But if they had given us the chance to.... like us foreigners living in Norway to...instead of sending Norwegians to go down there to make those programs, we can also go there and show the other side of Africa. “ (Foncha)

Eide (2003) has shown that in Norwegian journalism, the minority Other is seldom given the chance to represent herself, but is often represented by experts or professionals of majority origin. According to her, a probable explanation for this phenomenon might be that the

minorities are viewed as partisan, while the majority experts, researchers, or professionals, are considered neutral.

5.5. POLITICS OF BELONGING

Welcoming “us” in “their house”: problems of integration

My informants’ discourse carries criticism of the way integration is practised in their host country context.

“...if Norway is talking more about integrating foreigners into the society I think that they should focus more on how these people live their lives rather than forcing them to be Norwegians as such. It is better that when you talk about integrating people you be prepared to open up the society so that everybody gets the same chance of being heard...” (Ngwa)

“In order to adapt you have to make your individual effort. But normally the effort is supposed to be made by both sides. If you come to somebody’s house and they don’t welcome you, you don’t feel comfortable being in that house. It is the type of situation we are in. But they are asking us to integrate ourselves when we do not feel welcomed by those people asking us to. Adaptation has to be by both sides. They first have to accept to give you the possibility to adapt yourself and then you can be able to make that effort to adapt yourself. So if it is one sided it is like you are forcing or begging them...” (Ayissi)

Ngwa and Ayissi both perceived the majority discourse directed towards them in effect as reflecting a tendency towards assimilation, rather than a genuine integration. They felt pressures being placed on them to adapt to the Norwegian way of life. What they wanted was a collective recognition of the fact that Norway is a multicultural society where all groups are entitled to recognition.

Ascriptions of belonging

We have already seen how the discourse of Norwegian media contributes to the drawing of identity boundaries between minority groups and the majority. I have also catalogued my informants’ opposition to the way in which they are defined and represented in media discourse. The question that needs to be asked here is whether there exists a direct link

between discourses of inclusion/exclusion articulated by the media, and how my informants position themselves vis-à-vis the Norwegian imagined community. My informants were aware of the fact that obtaining Norwegian citizenship did not guarantee one's belonging to the imagined community of Norwegians.

“...this is a democratic country and there is freedom of speech...I respect them for that...I don't think it is relevant for me because I would never have a political position in this country and I believe that the Norwegians would never look at me as Norwegian...I don't blame them for that...because you can have the nationality of a country but you know you are not from there.” (Max)

They all perceived the existence of a rigid barrier surrounding the notion of “Norwegianness” that was quite difficult to overcome. As earlier pointed out, Brochmann (2002) states that there seems to exist a perception in large parts of the Norwegian population, that there is something distinctly Norwegian which for outsiders is very difficult to attain. Thus, is there a point for the state to pressure newcomers to integrate if the majority population regards it as practically impossible?

“Yes you will always be an outsider so long as you are not a Norwegian. It doesn't matter where you come from. Whether you come from the US or from Africa, wherever you will always be an outsider.” (Minouche)

“I don't think there is very much you can do to become a Norwegian. If you are in America or in Britain for five years, maybe you feel after five years that you can become an American or an Englishman but I don't think you can get that kind of feeling, that you can become a Norwegian. Because I have not met anybody from Africa or any other country, continent that has that feeling that I have become a Norwegian or you can say that they have become Norwegian.” (Edith)

What is expressed above is the perception of a rigid boundary between the “outsider” and the “insider”. Interestingly, Minouche and Edith placed in the category of outsider all immigrants, Western and non-Western included. This however can be subject to dispute if one chooses to use media representation as an indicator. Studies have shown that when it comes to the representation of western and non-western immigrants, there is a significant difference. In a broad based study of Norwegian news carried out by two Norwegian journalists, Øyvind

Fjelstad and Merete Linstad found out that these two groups were represented in significantly different ways in the Norwegian media. The representations of non-western immigrants were manifestly more negative, with a high focus on crime. (Fjelstad & Linstad 1999). Although the complicity of the media can be easily recognised, it is difficult to measure, the extent of the role it plays in these dynamics of exclusion.

Perceptions of the Other

However it is important to note that only the majority uses boundaries in their identity discourse. Minority groups harbour a lot of prejudices and stereotypes *vis a vis* the majority group. Some of the informants, like Edith, for example, expressed certain views about Norwegian which can best be described as stereotyped, which they said they got from the media

“I can’t just call a Norwegian friend and say I am coming over...we have to make an appointment. You have to follow their societal norms. You have to make an appointment. You have to be given an invitation. In my culture if you do that it would seem as if you don’t like the presence of that person...I don’t blame them. That is the way they grew up...it is difficult to change.” Max)

“They are not quite open. Those that have not traveled, most of those that have not traveled out of Norway are not really friendly, they are afraid of people, to make friends... Norwegians don’t really trust people. Cameroonians are not like that. They need to find a reason for not trusting you”(Mbango)

“Like those magazines I read...I learned one thing about Norwegians, that when it comes to sex, they just go for it and it does not matter. Like these magazines *C* and *Hjemmet* use to have... There are a lot of strange stories of how Norwegian people are very stone hearted and don’t care so much about their family and about other people, how cruel they can be and a mother can fall in love with the boyfriend of the daughter. Those are the type of things happening in those magazines about Norwegians. Unfaithfulness is so much. That is a very big part of their culture and if you don’t know it, like where we come from, you can think they are very sincere people and very faithful but when I read these magazines, I know Norwegians are very unfaithful people”. (Edith)

The views of my informants reflect the same essentialist understanding of other cultures and their co-defined communities showed by minority groups themselves, similar to those Baumann (1996) registered in his ethnographic study of minority cultures in Southall, London. Thus, this shows that reified views of culture are reflected in both dominant and minority discourse

5.6. SUMMARY

The aim of this chapter was to analyse the media consumption of Cameroonians in Oslo in light of the theoretical perspectives I chose to focus on in this study.

I showed how the reading of online news and the use of electronic mail, by my informants for transnational communication can be understood as a social form of Diaspora. The rampant use of electronic mail was fuelled by the need to connect with friends and kin in Cameroon, and across the Cameroonian Diaspora. I also pointed to the attempts by Cameroonians in Oslo to form an institutionalised community and the different ways in which show solidarity with co-ethnic members, all of which characterise Diaspora as a social form. The discourse of my informants reflects a dual consciousness. Although all of them were willing to go on with the business of life in Norway, they expressed feelings of loss, nostalgia, and of not feeling quite at home.

A part of my analysis was aimed at examining the connection between media consumption and ethnic minority identity. I analysed the role played by the host media in helping my informants adjust to their new society. My informants were routine consumers of news, and locally produced televised debate programmes, drama series, comedy programmes etc. This demonstrated a certain willingness and interest in the politics, society, and culture of their host nation. They all acknowledged how their consumption of the Norwegian media has helped in their learning of the Norwegian language.

In the interviews, my informants all expressed frustration over the way they were portrayed in the host media. These frustrations over media representations had to do with the fact that they were either ignored, or portrayed in essentially negative terms. During discussions over these issues, one noticed how my informants were constantly changing the ways in which they identified themselves. They felt themselves targeted by media discourse, at times as

Cameroonians, as Africans, or generally as foreigners. In the interview conversations related to this particular subject, they constantly, unconsciously, shifted between these different modes of identification, something that illustrated the notion of identity as a dynamic process of construction.

One interesting aspect of the media use of my informants that further illustrated changing identity positions in relation to media use is that of gender. Through an analysis of the informants' media content preferences, I showed how one could see clear differences between what the men and the women in this study preferred to watch on TV, which fitted into stereotypical gender roles.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This study has explored the processes involved in the construction and articulation of identity among Cameroonians in Oslo, against the backdrop of intercultural adaptation and the globalisation of communication. It has also brought together the study of everyday media use and the study of Diaspora. Semi-structured interviews have delivered insights into the media habits of Cameroonians in Oslo, and attempted to find links between media experiences and the different discourses on identity.

The main methodological argument of this study is that qualitative semi-structured interviews can help understand how media use is implicated in the maintaining or remaking of identities and feelings of belonging. While I got some valuable data that provided insights into the main questions of this study, I felt the limitations of using a singular method in such a comprehensive study, all through the way. In most other studies on everyday media use, the interview method is usually combined with ethnography. Interview accounts provide valuable insight on my informant's views, attitudes, and media preferences. Ethnographic fieldwork would have provided a better documentation and analysis of the forms, content, and context of the informants media use at home and elsewhere, and the ways in which media and everyday life are interlocked. It would also have made it possible to match interviewees' accounts with observation, to find discrepancies, and to analyse the implications of these. Choosing all the informants from the same "ethnic community" implied that I highly prioritised a certain aspect of their identities. "Ethnic communities" are neither static aggregates of people having the same ethnic origin or culture, nor are they homogenous or monolithic entities. Ethnic audiences are highly heterogeneous and diversified and their cultural consumption quite complex. Their ethnic character is not a property of essence but a process, which is subject to continuous interaction with other experiences and identifications (Tsagarousianou, 2001). As the findings of this study have revealed, the ethnic dimension is merely one in a multitude of factors that may relate to my informants' media preferences, attitudes, and practices.

However, I would argue that I was informed by the above-mentioned concerns all along the way, and tried to avoid reifying or reducing the complexity of the phenomena, which I was studying. Besides, this form of categorising also served to test the fundamental assumptions on which my research questions were based. Qualitative research has the capacity to be self-reflective, and thus, the researcher is capable of determining whether, and the extent to which, the “Cameroonian” factor plays a role in media use practices (ibid.).

In this study, I argued theoretically in favour of a constructivist view of identity as an articulation of the relationship between acting subjects and discursive practices. It was on the basis of this understanding that I examined two particular types of identities, the identities of diasporic peoples, and those of ethnic minorities, or immigrants, and how they influence or were influenced by media use.

6.1 THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN A DIASPORA

One of the research preoccupations was to find out if in the cultures of media consumption among Cameroonians in Oslo one could find evidence of a diasporic identity being articulated. My analysis of Diaspora was guided by Vertovec’s three-fold distinction of Diaspora; Diaspora as a social form, Diaspora as a type of consciousness, and Diaspora as a mode of cultural production.

Diaspora as a social form – i.e. living in several societies simultaneously, creating new communal organisations in place of settlement, maintaining explicit and implicit ties with a homeland – were all characteristics of Diaspora as a social form that were confirmed in my study. Many of my informants maintained contact with family, relatives, and friends, not only in Cameroon, but all those who had become members of diasporic communities of Cameroonians in different western countries. In Norway, the Cameroonians had formed a sort of communal organisation called CAMASSON, and a system of solidarity among community members that functioned to provide collective support in crucial times like during births and deaths. This has also to do with Diaspora as a form of consciousness. The subjects of this study betrayed a sense of living imaginatively both “here” and “there”. They referred to Cameroon in quite nostalgic terms. At the same time, they showed willingness to effect the psychological shift from thinking of themselves in Cameroon to focusing on building a new

life in Norway. Although to a certain extent their dreams were still located in the Cameroonian landscape, they were willing to be part of a new society.

Of all the four media on focus in this study, only one could be seen to sustain diasporic networks and consciousness. Cameroonians in Oslo did not have access to TV, radio, and newspapers from and about Cameroon, or Cameroonians. Although Cameroonians do not enjoy the type of rich access to diasporic media as other migrant communities in Norway, especially with regards to television and newspaper availability, my informants have through the Internet, a relatively easy means of connecting with other members of their Diaspora residing in different continents. The findings of this study indicated that the destination of most of my informants' e-mail correspondence was Cameroon and the other Cameroonian communities in western countries. As such, the Internet medium was an important means of maintaining Diaspora as a social form.

The availability of online versions of Cameroonian newspapers, and other links to information about Cameroon on search engines further enhances inter-continental connections. By being able to stay in touch with happenings in Cameroon through online news, then can be able to maintain an imaginary connection with Cameroon. One could thus say that in this way, they are able to access a global Cameroonian consciousness.

One type of Diaspora, which was not confirmed in my analysis, is Diaspora as a mode of cultural production. There was little evidence of the production and reproduction of transnational social and cultural phenomena in this case.

We need to bear in mind that although the use of online media is increasing steadily around the world, there are wide differences in access and use of these technologies. We see a sharp fall in the ownership of computer hardware and subscription to Internet services when we move beyond Europe, North America and Australia. The poor state of telecommunications infrastructure, and the relatively high cost involved in using Internet services in countries like Cameroon implies that the ability to maintain diasporic connections is not as easy as some would claim.

Besides, the results of this study show that Cameroonians in Norway, despite the relatively easy access to online media, are not making use of all the range of opportunities provided by the Internet. Most of their online activities in this regard are centred on the use of electronic

mail and reading homeland news online. Other Diaspora communities are using the Internet to foster a concern with human and cultural rights, environmental issues and new forms of cosmopolitan democracy, among other things (Gillespie, 2000). Because of the limited scope of this study (I was also dealing with three other types of media) I was not able to explore why my informants did not, through their use of online media, articulate their diasporic identities as strongly as one would expect.

Studies of Diaspora and the fast evolving new media around the world have not yet produced definitive statements or indicated the directions that future developments would take. There is perhaps need for better qualitative and quantitative data on access and use of online media especially by African diasporic communities who are entirely dependent on the Internet for transnational diasporic connections. Content analysis of materials produced by these diasporic communities as well as ethnographic research of uses will go a long way in painting a clearer picture.

6.2 MEDIA AND ETHNIC MINORITY IDENTITY

A very useful concept, which helped in the analysis of my informants' use of local media, was that of social integration. It was expected from the beginning that it would be very difficult to show a direct correlation between media use and integration. We saw from this study, that the informants' use of local media was in many ways identical to that of the average Norwegian population. Not only did they have access to the same TV, newspapers, and radio; they also had similar patterns of use. They all acknowledged the usefulness of Norwegian media as a source of knowledge about the Norwegian society. Most of my informants saw themselves as having good Norwegian language skills, and affirmed that their consumption of local media was major contributing factor. The ritual enjoyment of *Hotel Cæsar* as a national TV series, for example, or the national news bulletins, could affirm, even momentarily, a sense of belonging to a shared Norwegian culture.

However the issue of belonging clearly extends beyond mere participation. The problem should be posed in terms of the extent to which the different groups feel a sense of the symbolic home, or *Heimat*, here.

One of the objectives of this study was to examine to what extent, or if at all, media, in this case Norwegian media, helps articulate a sense of belonging to the host society. Morley and Robins (1995) have examined how the system of public service broadcasting in Britain and all over Europe created a system where there was provision of mixed programming and strict controls on the amount of foreign material shown on national channels. The principle that governed the regulation of broadcasting was public interest, and broadcasting had the role of contributing to the public and political life of the nation. Broadcasting was also supposed to construct a sense of national unity. In the BBC's early days radio broadcasting was consciously used to create a link between the dispersed listeners and to act as the symbolic heartland of national life. In post-war Britain it was television that became the central mechanism for constructing collective life and national culture. Historically broadcasting has assumed both the role of serving as the political public sphere of the nation-state, and that of the focal point for national cultural identification.

In the UK, Paddy Scannell (1996), and in Sweden, Orvar Lofgren (1995), both have extensively analysed the role of broadcasting in the construction of a sense of national unity. Their main point of focus was in what Lofgren referred to as the "educative" role of broadcast media in the "cultural thickening" of the nation state. Lofgren argues that broadcasting's national rhetoric often takes ritual forms, whereby national symbols come to be inscribed in domestic practices. This is what he terms the "micro-physics" of learning to belong to the "nation-as-home" (Lofgren, 1995: 12-15). From a Latin American perspective, Martin-Barbero (1988) has emphasised the key role of the communications media in "converting the masses into a people and the people into a nation". He points out that in many Latin American countries, it was first and foremost the development of national broadcasting systems, which offered the people of different regions and provinces with a first daily experience of the nation. These technologies allowed people a space of identification and the experience of encounter and solidarity. According to him, the nation should be understood not simply as an abstraction, but as a lived experience brought to life by broadcasting technologies, which had transmitted the political idea of the nation into lived experience, into sentiment and into the quotidian (ibid.).

Andersen (1983) has referred to the newspaper as a mechanism for providing imaginary links between the members of a national community. In support of this Hartley that newspapers are at one and the same time the ultimate fiction, since they construct the imagined community,

and form the basis of a mass ritual that millions engage in on a daily basis (1978: 124). Morley and Robins (1995) made a similar point in relation to watching evening news broadcasts for many viewers. They argued that the fact of watching and engaging in a joint ritual with millions of others can be as significant as any informational content gained from the broadcast.

There is still a common perception that there is a link between the geographical question of the distribution of people or groups that inhabit a nation, and the question of which types of persons that are allowed to inhabit the virtual spaces of the media. In a deregulated and technologically evolved media landscape where the presence of cable and satellite broadcasting is bringing about significant changes in the extent and the nature of the supply of programming, it is fast becoming redundant to see the media as being the focal point of national identity.

In Norway, the two public service channels NRK 1 and NRK 2 have a viewer rating of 43%, and the commercial channels, TV2, TV Norge and TV3 each cover respectively 30% 10% and 6% of national television viewing. The various satellite channels have very limited impact (Norsk Gallup, 2004). On the public service channels the national programmes together are above 50%.

Given the fact that national media in Norway still enjoys a position of prominence, and given the fact that the media has the ability to promote a national sense of belonging, the question to be asked is what role the national media in Norway play in promoting a common sense of belonging in today's multicultural Norway? Is this sentiment of "nation-as-home" which national media help promote; felt the same by all those who inhabit this national space, irrespective of origins, race and religion? How do my informants perceive the role of the national media with regards to promoting a sense of belonging for them?

National media have been traditionally viewed as being instrumental in the building of a sense of national unity, coherence, and belonging. However, the results of this study show that everyday media representation of immigrants is a strong articulator in the process of social partition and boundary marking, at least in the eyes of my informants. They were generally dissatisfied with the media provision for their community. They expressed frustration over the

difficulty of getting access to news from and about Cameroon, and Africa in general. They disputed the stereotypical images in the media, which portrays the African continent as a single homogenous unity, and its peoples as uncivilised and savage. The constant association of the non-western immigrants in general, and Africans in particular, with, crime, conflict, and disease angered them. The informants feel that stereotypical representations and generalised characterisations in the Norwegian media contribute to reducing their identities to a set of exaggerated, and most often negative character traits. This contributes to an experienced feeling of being the “other” in the society they live in. They feel that the Norwegian media principally issues an invitation to participate in an “imagined community” that by designation excludes them.

I had pointed out earlier that in relation to immigrants, identities are determined by how they are represented and how that bears on how they may represent themselves. This study clearly demonstrates how my informants dispute the identities being imposed on them by majority discourse. There is a common belief within media research circles, that the relationship between media messages, audiences and meaning is a complex one, and that we cannot view the media as some simple tool for brainwashing people. Many studies have shown that some audiences interpret media texts in an “oppositional” way or engage in a type of interpretative “resistance” (Croteau&Hoynes, 1997). My informants’ reinterpretation of majority discourse is an illustration of such a resistance.

However although my informants expressed resistance to media categorisations, they in many instances during the interview sessions used the same categorisations to identify themselves. While they contest the designation of all Africans as a single homogenous group, they still used the stereotypical identifications when referring to themselves. In many instances they identified themselves as “we Africans” or referred to home as “back in Africa...” when they in essence meant Cameroon. Although they would refuse to admit it, the way they have been represented, has affected the way they represent themselves. The media thus sets constraints on my informants’ ability to construct their own identities, and on their freedom of self-invention.

In order to achieve the dream of a truly multi-cultural society that is pluralistic and all including, what is needed is the articulation of a politics capable of constituting a “we” which is not exclusive. This requires a rejection of any conception of “imagined community” which

is based on the exclusion of alterity, or any self-confirming ideas of homogeneity. This would mean to move towards a “community-in-difference, which acknowledges the importance of dialogue about our differences, and focuses on neighborliness, and the need to construct a more open and porous form of “publicness” as the basis of “living together with strangers in the present” (Morley, 2001).

6.3 GLOBAL CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Although in this study I have focused mainly on diasporic identity and ethnic minority identity, I wish to point out these are not the only forms of identity articulated through the media consumption of the subjects of this study.

The globalisation of the media and the consequent increase in flows of internationalised media content through broadcasting and interactive media like the Internet are playing an important role in the development of a technologically integrated media culture that operates to a large degree beyond the nation-state. The results of this study show that Cameroonians in Norway are heavy consumers of Anglo-American popular culture. Cameroonians in Norway, as well as Norwegian are increasingly having globally shared cultural references which are found in the different Anglo-American talk shows, TV Reality series, films, televised sporting events, MTV etc. As such, they have a shared media experience with others not only in Norway, but all over the world. I argue that through the intermediary of these different mediated cultural discourses, they navigate between different levels and spaces of identity, and cultivate different tastes, interests, and emotional experiences. They navigate between cultural universes and cultivate their identities on several levels, in relation to the nation in which they live; in relation to the Diaspora they belong to, and in relation to the world.

As Gillespie argues (1995), the coexistence of culturally diverse media is a cultural resource in itself. It produces a heightened consciousness of difference and a cosmopolitan stance. It encourages people to compare, contrast, and question the social forms represented to them in their daily lives and on screen. The contemporary development of global communications helps bring together cultures, inviting forth a range of ambivalent responses, sometimes hardening and sometimes breaking down boundaries.

I have also briefly discussed the issue of gender, which originally was not one of the main areas of focus in this work. The point I tried to make was that the fact that my informants' discourse reflected gender differences is further proof of the fact that identities are not fixed. Diaspora, and minority ethnicity were not the only forms of identification available to my informants. While the female informants talked enthusiastically about TV soap operas, drama series, and women's magazines, the male informants stressed the importance of news and actuality programmes, and sports. Although I raised the possibility that the informants could be misrepresenting their actual media habits and preferences, my informants' this apparent gender essentialism in my informants' media talk reveals an awareness of the way subject positions are constructed (at least in the Cameroonian society, which they recently left, which is largely patriarchal).

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Background information

How old are you?

Which country do you come from?

Where do you live in Oslo?

What is your occupation?

How long have you lived in Norway?

Are you a Norwegian citizen?

Are you married?

-which country is your wife/husband from?

Do you have any children?

Do you have any other family in Norway?

What educational background do you have?

Where did you take the education?

How many languages do you speak?

How good is your Norwegian?

Do you use Norwegian at home/work/schools/social gatherings?

What religion do you belong to?

Media access

Do you have television at home? Where at home?

Do you have a cable or satellite connection?

Which Norwegian channels do you have available?

Do you have any TV channel from your country of origin?

Do you have any African channels?

Do you have radio? Does it have a shortwave band?

Do you have digital radio?

Do you use the Internet?

Do you have Internet connection at home? If not, where do you use the Internet?

Do you read newspapers?

Do you read any Norwegian newspapers? Which?

Do you get any newspapers from your country of origin? How do you get hold of that?

Do you read any international newspapers?

Do you use the Internet?

Do you have a home Internet connection?

Media use patterns

How much television do you watch daily (hours)?

Who do you usually watch TV with?

When do usually watch (morning/evening/late night)?

Where do you usually watch?

Do you watch any Norwegian channels?

Do you watch any Norwegian programmes (news, talk shows, drama series, soaps, reality shows, music, films)? Which? How often (for each genre)?

Do you watch American/European/Australian TV programmes (news, talk shows, soaps, reality shows, music, films)? Which? How often (for each genre)?

Which radio stations do you usually listen to?

-Norwegian?

-Country of origin?

-International?

How often do you listen to the radio?

Which radio programmes do you usually listen to?

-news

-talk shows

-music,etc.

Which Norwegian stations do you listen to, if any?

Which programmes do you listen to in the Norwegian radio stations, if any?

Do you listen to any foreign stations? Which? Which type of programmes (genre)?

How often do you read newspapers?

-Norwegian?

-International?

-Cameroonian?

Which paper do you read the most?

How often do you use the Internet?

How much time do you usually spend online?

Preferences and Evaluations

Which type of TV programmes do you watch most?

What are your favourite TV programmes?

What do you like about the programmes?

Which Norwegian TV programmes do you watch most?

Why do you watch these programmes?

What is your favourite Norwegian TV programmes (if any)?

What do you like about these programmes?

Whom do you watch these programs with?

When?

What, based on your viewer ship experience, do you like about programmes on Norwegian TV?

What don't you like about programmes on Norwegian TV?

Do you think you have learnt something about Norwegians and Norwegian culture and the society from watching television?

Do you think Norwegians can learn something about people of Cameroonian origin - immigrants in general, from watching Norwegian television?

What do you think about the way immigrants (Africans in particular) are covered on Norwegian television?

Do you think there is much in Norwegian TV that caters for the tastes of people like you (Cameroonian background)?

Do you use the Internet?

How often?

What do you usually do on the Internet?

What do you mostly use the Internet for?

Name some of the websites you visit regularly

What is your favourite Internet activity?

Why?

Of all the media which have mentioned in this interview, which do you the most important to you?

Media use, identities, belongings, positioning.

Do you have Norwegian friends? How did you become friends?

How, according to you, is a typical Norwegian?

Do you think there are major differences between ethnic Norwegians and people of your ethnic background?

How well do you think you know about Norwegian culture, society, and politics?

How do you learn about these things?

Have you been part of any organisations, political parties, trade unions etc? Which?

Do you feel a part of this Norwegian society you live in?

Do you think you could live here forever? Why?

Do you think one can learn a lot about Norwegian culture and society from watching or listening to Norwegian TV or radio?

Do you think you have learnt much about the Norwegian culture and society through TV, radio, the Internet etc.?

Do you think ethnic Norwegians know a lot about people from Cameroon?

Do you think they get to learn about them through what is in the media?

What do you think about the way immigrants are presented in the Norwegian media?

Can you give examples?

Do you think this affects their views about immigrants like you?

How do you feel these different media have affected your life here in Norway?

Are you interested in happenings in Cameroon?

What are you most interested in?

Do you follow the news from Cameroon?

How do you access this news? (Newspapers, magazines, TV Internet, telephone etc.)

Do you feel you have enough news from Cameroon?

Are you in contact with people in Cameroon? Who? How often?

Are you in contact with Cameroonians abroad? Who? How often?

Through what means do you keep in touch?

Which type of media do you find most useful as regards keeping in touch with happenings in Cameroon.

APPENDIX 2

PROFILE OF THE INFORMANTS

Eyong

Age: 29

Sex: male

Occupation: student, construction worker

Level of education: unfinished university studies in Law. Currently studying Norwegian and social studies

Length of stay in Norway: 4 years

Marital status: single

Number of children: 1

Religion: Christian

Citizenship: Cameroonian

Mabéa

Age: 28

Sex: female

Occupation: student

Level of education: currently taking a degree in Marketing at BI Handelshøgskolen

Length of stay in Norway: 6 years

Marital status: married

Number of children: 0

Religion: Christian

Citizenship: Cameroonian

Citizenship of spouse: Sudanese

Foncha

Age: 28

Sex: male

Occupation: student

Level of education: Degree in Computer Engineering

Length of stay in Norway: 6 years

Marital status: separated

Number of children: 2

Religion: Christian

Citizenship: Norwegian

Citizenship of (ex) spouse: Norwegian

Duala

Age: 31

Sex: male
Occupation: amateur footballer, construction worker
Education: unfinished degree in Architecture
Length of stay: 5 years
Marital status: single
Children: 0
Religion: Christian
Citizenship: Cameroonian

Max

Age: 31
Sex: male
Occupation: nurse
Education: unfinished degree in Literature
Length of stay: 7 years
Marital status: married
Children: 0
Religion: Christian
Citizenship: Cameroonian
Citizenship of spouse: Cameroonian

Rose

Age: 27
Sex: female
Occupation: cleaning lady
Education: high school diploma
Length of stay: 2 years
Marital status: single
Children: 1
Religion: Christian
Citizenship: Cameroonian

Dieudonné

Age: 35
Sex: male
Occupation: student
Level of education: ongoing degree in Computer Engineering
Length of stay: 6 years
Marital status: married
Children: 2
Religion: Christian
Citizenship: Cameroonian
Citizenship of spouse: Cameroonian

Mbango

Age: 30

Sex: female
Occupation: Canteen Assistant
Education: unfinished degree in Education
Length of stay: 7 years
Marital status: married
Children: 1
Religion: Christian
Citizenship: Cameroonian
Citizenship of spouse: Congolese

Minouche

Age: 25
Sex: female
Occupation: student
Level of education: degree in Business Administration
Length of stay: 5 years
Marital status: separated
Children: 1
Religion: Christian
Citizenship: Cameroonian
Citizenship of (ex) spouse: Norwegian

Ayissi

Age: 40
Sex: male
Occupation: bus driver, freelance computer engineer
Level of education: diploma in Computer Science
Length of stay: 16 years
Marital status: married
Children: 3
Religion: atheist
Citizenship: Norwegian
Citizenship of spouse: South African

Edith

Age: 28
Sex: Female
Occupation: student
Education: currently studying bookkeeping
Length of stay: 5 years
Marital status: married
Children: 0
Religion: Christian
Citizenship: Cameroonian
Citizenship of spouse: Norwegian

Solange

Age: 34

Sex: female

Occupation: health worker

Education: degree in Geography

Length of stay: 6 years

Marital status: married

Children: 2

Religion: Christian

Citizenship: Cameroonian

Citizenship of spouse: Cameroonian

Ngwa

Age: 31

Sex: male

Occupation: student

Education: master's student in Agricultural Economics

Length of stay: 5 years

Marital status: married

Children: 0

Religion: Christian

Citizenship: Cameroonian

Citizenship of spouse: Cameroonian

Kontchou

Age: 33

Sex: Male

Occupation: Bio-Engineer

Education: degree in Medical Laboratory Science

Length of stay: 5 years

Marital status: single

Children: 1

Religion: Christian

Citizenship: Cameroonian