African students in Stavanger
Everyday life and migratory projects

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"[…] decision-making is a highly qualitative process, in which student migrants simultaneously consider a multitude of factors and evaluate the interconnections among cognitive and affective motivations and aspirations. And while aspirations and intentions are by no means a direct reflection of actual migratory behavior, they are, beyond a doubt, an important indication of the ways in which students assess their migration options. They weigh their aspirations, abilities, national and transnational connections, as well as the opportunity structures they perceive in their home countries […] and other potential countries of destination) (Szelényi, K. 2006:71).

Dedication

To Polycarpe Saha, who understood me and has been supporting me for so many years.

Thank you

Abstract

This thesis is a sociological account of students' experiences of living abroad. Using the case of African students in Stavanger it describes their daily life, in connection with their migratory projects. Based on the postulate that moving is an endless process, the research analyses the factors influencing decisions that lead to the adjustment of the mobility trajectory. This thesis also exposes the strategies adopted by African students in order to achieve their mobility schemes.

The research also deals with African students' daily activities, their night life and the adaptation challenges they experience. As daily activities include economic activities, the thesis focuses on the economic dimension of African students' migratory projects and critically examines the role of migrant networks in the process of job seeking.

The methodological approach adopted was essentially qualitative and information presented along the thesis was collected from a sample of twelve people through interviews. Methods of data collection also included informal conversations and direct observations. Content analysis has been used for the exploitation of field material.

List of acronyms and abbreviation

Uis: Universitetet *i* Stavanger (University of Stavanger)

Mhs: <u>*Misjonshøgskolen*</u> (School of Mission and Theology)

NOK: Norwegian Kroner (currency of Norway)

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Introduction

The migration of people from one country to another is influenced by a number of factors ranging from seeking refuge to pursuing economic and academic opportunities. This thesis discusses the concept of migratory projects, with a specific demographic category as the target group: African students in Stavanger. The choice of destination countries for African students has increasingly departed from the traditional schemes where it was largely influenced by historical ties and linguistic similarities. This shift from the traditionally targeted destination countries seems to be producing a form of global internationalization of higher education. According to UNESCO, "African students are champions in mobility"[1]. This is due to several factors which include political and cooperation agreements among countries. With the expanding of migratory routes, new borderlines are crossed and new horizons are permanently explored. As a matter of fact, Norway has over the years been a host to many students migrating from all over the world. In recent years, there has been a noted increase in the number of academic migrants coming to Norway from Africa and nowadays their presence constitutes a total social fact. For the year 2013 Norway has welcomed in its colleges and universities 1 542[2] people from Africa. Despite the growing character of the phenomenon, student mobility in Norway is an under-researched field that needs to be explored. This thesis is a contribution to understanding and explaining the dynamics surrounding the phenomenon. Two main notions are at the core of this research undertaking and these are; everyday life and the migratory project.

1- Relevance of the study

One of the questions I have often been asked since the start of my life as a foreign student in Europe has been "what is your plan after your studies?" In my early days the answer was quite obvious and clear: 'I will go back to my home country". This reply was probably highly shaped by the culture shock and the new life style I had to handle for the first time in my life. Overtime, as the adaptation process was proceeding, I realized that the answer to that the question was evolving. I found myself replying many times: 'I don't know'; 'I will see when I finish my program'; 'the future will tell'. As the question about the post-study plan was almost becoming systematic during socializing moments (with both Africans and non-

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[1]UNESCO (2006). Africans students as champions in mobility. Available on http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php

[2]http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/dbhvev/student/utenlandske_rapport

Africans), I ended up asking everyone to whom I had the chance to talk to. Surprisingly the answers were almost similar to mine. None of them seemed to have a clear idea regarding their future after their study programs. It appeared that going back after studies was not necessarily in the agenda. In Norway, I took part in several group conversations among African students. People were sharing their migratory experiences and they were also debating on many topics including the issue of going back or staying in Norway. At some point, these discussions were a sort of presentation on strategies and possibilities that foreign students can mobilize in order to either extend the duration of their official and initial study permit or change their legal status. The set of elements above led to start realizing the 'project' dimension of student mobility.

The contact with Gunhild Odden, who is an academic and professional sociologist, was significant in discovering the notion of migratory projects as a subject in discussion among migration scholars. The contact was made in two different levels. The first one was direct and academic (lectures in class, internship supervision). The second contact was indirect and scientific through the reading of her PhD thesis. That was the point of no-return in my interest to the issue of migratory projects. That is how the topic of the current thesis was coined.

2- Why African students as target group and why Stavanger?

The choice of working on African students is mostly based on practical reasons, of which one of the most important is the fact that I am a part of the group. I believed being an African student was a facilitating factor in dealing with that target group, especially establishing contact. Moreover I considered my status an asset in the process of data collection, because the informants could easily identify themselves with me and could therefore speak freely. By saying this, I am not ignoring the negative effect that can cause my closeness to the informants on the one hand and my situation as subject and observer at the same time on the other hand. But I strongly believe that by adopting "reflexivity" as prescribes by Boudieu and Wacquant (1992) or permanently trying to be as "impartial and impersonal as possible" as Durkheim (1964) recommends, these menaces have been prevented.

Considering the distribution of African students in Norway, Oslo hosts the highest number[3]. For this reason Oslo would have been the most suitable geographic frame for this

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[3] https://www.ssb.no/en/

study. However, based on a feasibility analysis, I decided to carry out the project in Stavanger. Several reasons justify this option. The first one is related to the accommodation (I live in Stavanger). The second reason is that, having been living in Stavanger for more than a year, I was somehow close to the students and also knew where to meet them.

3- Aims of the research

As already stated above, this research is designed around two main concepts of which I can consider one major and the other minor. The major concept in this research project is the notion of migratory projects and the minor is that of everyday life. These two notions are apparently independent but to some extent, have an influence relationship as shall be noticed as the thesis develops. Considering the above, the current research pursues three main objectives.

The first objective of this study is to understand and explain the dynamics of the migration projects of African students in Stavanger. It is about discovering their initial mobility plans (the choice of Norway, the study project) on the one hand and the changes or evolvements (modification of the initial plans) that occur throughout time on the other hand. Analyzing these changes will lead to questioning the strategies that the actors adopt in redefining their project.

The second aim of this research project is to give an account of African students' everyday life experiences of living and studying abroad. Under the broad expression of everyday life experiences, many issues are explored: social interactions, cultural adaptation (challenges), economic activities (the role of networks, gender issues), night life (the purposes), etc.

The last purpose of this undertaking is to look at the relationship between African students' everyday life experiences and their migratory projects. This seeks to discover the extent to which the decision to leave or stay after school is influenced by daily experiences.

4- Research questions

In order to meet the above stated objectives the current research process is guided by the following questions.

- What are the initial migratory projects of students from Africa and what are the main factors governing the changes or evolvement of these migratory projects on the one

hand and the strategies they put in place in fulfilling their mobility objectives on the other hand?

- What are African students' everyday life experiences in terms of social interactions, cultural adaptation, economic activities, etc.; and to what extent do these experiences influence decision-making in regard to the future mobility plan?

- Concerning the economic component of their migratory projects what is the role of networks (the nature of these networks – strong or weak ties)? How do their economic activities influence self-perception in terms of gender issues?

5- Research hypotheses

The research hypotheses of this thesis are:

- African students initially come to Norway for studies purposes; but this initial migratory project changes under the influence of a combination of factors including living conditions (safety, job opportunities, etc.) guaranteed by Norway and the economic and social situation of the students' home countries.

- In their daily life African students experiences many challenges. They are related to food, weather, social system, financial difficulties, language barriers, etc.. The influence of these experiences on their migration projects is insignificant. In order to adjust their legal status and prolong their stay, African students resort to innovative strategies and that some depart from the formal framework.

- In their economic activities African students resort to networks that go beyond the simplistic (yet dominant) community or ethnic-driven conception and include 'weak ties'. The types of jobs into which males are involved symbolize a sort of deconstruction of their masculinity.

6- Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The first one is theoretical and presents the two dominant concepts of the research project (migratory project and sociology of everyday life) and the explanatory theories mobilized in the understanding of the studied phenomenon.

The second chapter gives an account of the methodological procedures. It starts with a literature review and ends with a note on the techniques and methods of data collection as well as analysis.

The third chapter is devoted to the presentation of the geographical and sociological context of the research. The first section provides elements on Norwegian migration policies as well as factors likely to make the country a destination for international immigrants. The last section of the chapter focuses on the migration from Africa to Norway (historical background) with an emphasis on the case of African students' mobility in Stavanger.

The analysis of African students' migratory projects begins in the fourth chapter. It highlights the factors that influence the decision students from Africa to come to Norway, mainly emphasizing the push factors in their home countries. Furthermore, the chapter looks at the conditions offered by Norway and that are likely to attract these students (pull factors). The chapter lays the foundation to analysis of the dynamics of the migratory projects of the target group.

The last two chapters are connected. They are a sociological account of African students' everyday life experiences (the ways of doing, being, feeling, thinking etc.) on the one hand and the influence of these experiences on their migratory projects on the other hand. Specifically, daily activities, night life, and economic activities are presented in the fifth chapter. The analysis of the economic component of the migratory project emphasizes on the role of social networks. The last chapter looks into the process of (re)adaptation of the migratory projects. After a presentation of challenges faced by African students in their everyday lives, it offers an overview of the strategies these social actors resort to in order to fulfill their mobility plans.

CHAPTER 1: Theoretical considerations

This chapter presents the two dominant concepts of the research project and the explanatory theories mobilized in the understanding of the studied phenomenon.

I-   Conceptual precisions

This thesis is structured around two main notions. The first one is migratory project and the second sociology of everyday life.

1- The Migratory project

The migratory project is a key concept within the framework of migration studies as evidenced by the amount of discussions and works on the issue. Although the concept lies at the heart of my data analysis, providing a complete and exhaustive overview of its scientific evolution is almost impossible given the diversity of approaches from which various researchers tackled it. I will thus resort to the rich synthesis provided by Odden (2010). According to the author, the origin of the concept is credited to Taboada-Leonetti and Levi in 1978. They used the concept in their analysis of integration patterns of women migrants in Italy. They came to the conclusion that the degree of integration depends on the migration project of the actors that could be a short term economic project or a long stay project.

From the synthesis made by Odden, it somehow appears difficult to come out with a clear definition of what a migratory project is. It is rather easier to describe what it is. In this respect, there is unanimity on the fact that mobility is a project. It is however not a project in the ordinary sense of the word, that is to say, limited in space and time. Migratory projects differ from one individual to another and, as Nasri argues, are "*development is not linear, it does not necessarily meet a more or less determined logic. It is not a procedure, a predetermined strategy, with an intention to reach a goal that is necessarily to settle in Europe*" (cited by Odden, *op cit*.: 41 - my translation). Therefore migratory projects do not follow the bipolar and mechanical scheme constituted of two steps including designing and implementing. The main feature of a migratory project is that it is an essentially progressive initiative; that is to say, an endless undertaking. The migratory project is constantly redefined and modified according to the context. The initial plans evolve and change according to a combination of a set of factors. Some factors depend on the migrants while others are imposed on them. Ma Mung (2009) refers to the first set of factors as "inner dispositions", that is the ideas, the strategies and the know-how of each migrant. The second set is labeled "external conditions" and constituted of elements on which actors do not necessarily have any

influence, such as the conditions in the destination countries. They also include the conditions prevailing in the countries they emigrate from (cited by Odden, ibid).

Student migratory projects are designed on a similar process, as Szelényi argues:

[…]decision-making is a highly qualitative process, in which student migrants simultaneously consider a multitude of factors and evaluate the interconnections among cognitive and affective motivations and aspirations. And while aspirations and intentions are by no means a direct reflection of actual migratory behavior, they are, beyond a doubt, an important indication of the ways in which students assess their migration options. They weigh their aspirations, abilities, national and transnational connections, as well as the opportunity structures they perceive in their home countries, (…) and other potential countries of destination) (2006:71).

The explanation of what the concept of the migration project entails given in this section has clarified how this concept is relevant to the analysis of the migratory projects of students from Africa studying in Stavanger.

2- The Sociology of everyday life

Everyday life can be defined as what an individual does, feels, and thinks daily. Reflecting over everyday life is an old scientific issue. Many researchers have analyzed in various works on the daily practices of social actors. These include among others de Certeau (1984), Maffesoli (1989 and Goffman (1973). For these different authors, 'scenes of daily life are a social laboratory from which are observed the dynamics of the society in terms of interactions, individual and groups' attitudes toward social norms and rules. It is a sociological account of everyday experiences. Maffessoli considers it a distinct body of knowledge which he termed sociology of everyday life. In his opinion,

a sociology of everyday life (…) is a way of treating whatever goes beyond the pure mechanical in the various situation that we experience (work, leisure) in various forms of collectivity (from the family to associations and political parties) and in institutions of various kinds (schools, administrations, organization and so on) (1989: 4).

It is then about everything that happens on the ground, which is everywhere. This is the reason why my observation fields included a variety of places such as bars, night clubs, university library, and student dormitories among many other.

Beyond what appears as a mere description of banal or common practices of individuals, the sociology of everyday life has another dimension useful in analyzing the issue

of migratory projects mainly discussed in this thesis. This dimension is developed by de Certeau (1984) in his book "*The Practice of Everyday Life*". He argues that the practices produced by social actors should be interpreted in connection with their projects or objectives. What is more important in his thoughts is his conception of individuals who, are not "*passive and guided by established rules-operate*". Through their acts, they "*transform themselves in order to survive*". Relating these postulates to the African students in focus in this paper, it appears that in face of migration rules enforced in Norway, they always have a room for manoeuvre to fulfill their migratory projects. The following is one of the main conclusions de Certeau makes:

> *If it is true that the grid of [institutional] "discipline" is everywhere becoming clearer and more extensive, it is all the more urgent to discover how an entire society resists being reduced to it, what popular procedures (also "miniscule" and quotidian) manipulate the mechanisms of discipline and conform to them only in order to evade them, and finally, what "ways of operating" form the counterpart, on the consumer's (or "dominee's"?) side, of the mute processes that organize the establishment of socioeconomic order. These "ways of operating" constitute the innumerable practices by means of which users reappropriate the space organized by techniques of sociocultural production. (op cit.: xxxix-xl).*

The sociology of everyday life that is discussed in this work refers to arts and practices invented by African students in order to achieve their mobility projects.

II-Theoretical orientations

Three theoretical paradigms are employed in explaining the diverse issues discussed along this thesis.

1- Methodological individualism or a comprehensive approach

Scholars appear to be unanimous in the fact that the scientific origin of the theory of 'methodological individualism' is Economics. The concept is said to have been introduced and used for the first time in 1909 by Joseph Schumpeter (1909), a German leading economist. Progressively adopted by other scientific disciplines in the domain of human and social sciences, the notion was completely expanded in the early 50s. In Sociology, the appropriation and the adaptation of the "methodological individualism" as an explanatory paradigm of social phenomena has been the work of many scholars whom one of the well-known and influential is Raymond Boudon (1996).

According to Schumpeter the main guiding idea of methodological individualism was as simple as it '*just means that one starts from the individual in order to describe certain*

economic relationships.' This initial interpretation evolved over time and within different fields of knowledge. In the sociological perspective which this thesis is interested in, the methodological individualism relies on three postulates or assumptions, according to Raymond Boudon (1996).

The first one is the "postulate of individualism (P1)". It argues that all social phenomena are a final result of the combination of actions, beliefs and individual attitudes. Having said that, it follows that any essential moment of sociological analysis is to "understand" the actions, beliefs or individual attitudes responsible for the phenomenon the research project aims to explain. According to the second postulate, "understanding" the actions, beliefs and attitudes of the individual actors, is to reconstruct the sense they have for them, or the meaning they give to them: this is the "postulate of understanding (P2)", last but not the least is the "postulate of rationality (P3)". It posits that a social actor adheres to a belief, or undertakes an action because it makes sense for him, in other words that the main cause of actions, beliefs, etc., of any social subject lies in the sense that he gives them, more precisely the reasons he has to adopt them. Henceforth, all ways of doing, acting and thinking result from rational choices. Consequently, the assumption of rationality, as mentioned by Boudon, rejects or excludes any approach that would for example explain the magical beliefs by the so called "primitive mentality", the "savage mind" or "symbolic violence", these notions involving mechanisms operating unbeknownst to the subject, as chemical processes which he is the head (Boudon, 1996).

The comprehensive analytical scheme dominating in this explanatory approach refutes any form of scientific process that gives priority to the researchers' interpretations of the doing, feeling, and thinking of the social actors. Our analysis is then actor-centralized: understanding their motivation and the sense or signification, and significance they accord to their actions.

2- Strategic analysis : rationalities of social actors

Strategic analysis is considered a response to the theory of bureaucracy developed by Weber (1921) and Taylor (1911) who laid the foundations of the sociology of organizations. The principal theorists are Crozier and Friedberg (1977).

Initially devoted to the analysis of power relations within organizations, this explanatory approach became over time one of the majors in social sciences as a whole, as it was largely adopted by the other disciplines including sociology. It is suitable in analyzing every

organized-action including migration as a social phenomenon. Organized-action here refers to a setting where there is at least two parties linked by a dependence or power relations. According to the bureaucratic model's postulates, in such settings, authority and power have a vertical and hierarchical structure with policy or decision makers being at the top and the executants at the bottom. The assumption here is the strict application of the impersonal norms and rules taken by policy or norm makers.

In the domain of student mobility being analyzed here, this means that African students have to follow the Norwegian migration policies and rules in shaping their migratory projects. By strictly complying with the norms and standards set by the state, they are passive agents and therefore, migration processes are completely regulated and exclusively under state control. The strategic model challenges this mechanical view of passive social actors in the face of strict, impersonal, and transparent rules applicable to all.

Crozier and Friedberg introduced the concept of strategic actors (as opposed to passive agents) to describe the capacity of social actors to escape the *"rules of the game" or the formal system.* [Therefore] *the strategic approach stipulates that "(…) human behavior cannot be equated in any way to the product of mechanical pressure from structural realities. It is always the expression and implementation of a freedom, however small it is*". (1977: 39). Moreover, in order to establish a clear relationship between this theory and the subject of this thesis, it is important to underline its three main assumptions:

a) In a system of organized-action, each individual or actor has their own objectives that do not necessarily reflect those of the society, organization or system. b) Whatever the degree of coercion of laws and regulations of an organization or society, each individual still has a margin of freedom that is used in maximum in pursuing their own objectives. This degree of freedom leads to an informal dynamics within the organization or society.
c) Having their own objectives to be achieved, each actor develops strategies that allow him to do so. And these strategies are always rational.

Relying on these postulates, this research questions and explores the strategies used by African students in Stavanger in fulfilling their migratory plans which are constantly modified and readapted according the context. The argument here is that African students (likewise any other migrants) are ingenious in elaborating informal strategies" that easily enable them to escape the formal "rules of the game" and therefore "beat the formal system".

Strategic analyses is suitable in this study in that "it is an approach that uses the participants' real-life experiences" to show that there always exist "*zones of uncertainty that provide the actors [*African students in this case*] room to maneuver [*in deciding about their migratory project*]" and consequently, one can safely argue "there is no social system fully regulated or controlled*". Crozier and Friedberg, *op cit.*: 25).

3- Sociology of social networks: actors develop strategies and networks make them effective

The origin of the term "social network" is credited to Barnes (1954), who is believed to be the first scholar to use the expression in a scientific context. It was in 1954 in an article entitled "Class and Committees in a Norwegian Island Parish". He defines a social network as "*a social structure between actors, mostly individuals or organizations. It indicates the ways in which they are connected through various social familiarities ranging from casual acquaintance to close familial bonds*". Overtime, the concept has gained prominence thanks to the work of several researchers within the field of social sciences. Some of the well-known are Arango (2000), Castles (2000), and Massey et al (1998). They suggested various definitions to social networks. Given the central place that networks occupy in migration trends, an explanatory theory has been elaborated surrounding migration network, stretching the role of the networks in the migration processes. In whole it appears, networks make the migratory process safer and more manageable for migrants and their families.

In this research, orientations provided by Mercklé (2004) will be retained. He defines social networks

> *as all social units and relationships that these units (individuals, informal groups of individuals, formal organizations such as associations, companies, countries) have with each other: networks monetary transactions, transfers of goods, trade in services, transmission of information, perceptions or physical contacts and more generally "any kind of verbal or gestural interactions* (2004: 4 -my translation).

The most interesting argument in this definition is his conception of the individual or the social actor. As mentioned above, strategic analysis portrays social actors as absolutely and fundamentally rational. To Mercklé such conception is somehow exaggerated as it presents social actors as self-made men and he refers to it as "*over socialized conception*" of individual. He however argues that one should also avoid an "*under socialized*" conception of social actors that presents individuals' practices and actions as a product of the contribution of

the group or network of which they are part. In this respect, individuals do not exist, only the group or network exists. Finally the author suggests network analysis that "intends to keep the same distance from this over-socialized conception and this under-socialized conception" (Mercklé, op cit.:96 -my translation).

From the perspective of Mercklé, though migratory projects are designed by rational individual actors their efficiency and effectiveness widely depends on network dynamics. This approach, as Boyd argues "*permits understanding [*student migratory projects*] as a social product - not as the sole result of individual decisions made by individual actors, not as the sole result of [...] political parameters, but rather as an outcome of all these factors in interaction*" (Boyd, 1989:642).

This chapter has laid the theoretical framework which informs the analysis of the African students' migratory projects. The next chapter presents the methodological approach of the research.

CHAPTER 2: Methodology

This chapter gives an account of the methodological procedures It starts with a literature review and ends with a note on the techniques and methods of data collection as well as analysis.

I- Literature review

1- Student mobility as a growing phenomenon

Besides the dominant economic pattern of migration, educationally-sponsored movements of young population are becoming increasingly significant. According to Byram, and Feng (2006) the phenomenon is influenced by several factors including, ease of travel, political changes and cooperation, economic facilities as well as cultural interactions. The ideology of capitalism also influences the growth of this pattern of migration as there seems to be in certain countries (especially in the UK and Ireland), a sort of "*HE [Higher Education] sector's increasing dependence on overseas students as a source of revenue*". However, although enrolling foreign students is economically profitable to the host institutions, the author insists on the fact that at the end there is a win-win situation between the sellers and buyers of education. Along this line the same authors argue, focusing on the case of students from third world countries:

> *There is also an economic rationale for study abroad, particularly where students from Asian and African countries study in Europe and North America. For those students, there is the hope of economic benefit in the future, with the status of a qualification from abroad rather than their own country. For the universities receiving them, there is the certainty of economic profit from fees."* (*op cit*.:1).

By presenting the role or the function of education in individuals' social mobility Szelényi (2006: 73) shares the economic rationale behind studying abroad. The author argues:

> *One of the primary functions of graduate education is that of conferring to students high levels of professional preparation. Undoubtedly, the successful completion of a masters, professional, or doctoral degree prepares students to assume key positions in society through the acquisition of both professional expertise and responsibility in specific fields of study.*

In this respect, travelling abroad for studies is a means for the candidates to increase their chances in the future, professionally speaking.

Murphy-Lejeune (2003) also has the same perception regarding the idea of moving for academic reasons. She analyzes European students' experiences of traveling for study

purposes. She comes to the conclusions that while student mobility is becoming a life style among European students, it also constitutes a sort of capital in the sense of Weber and Bourdieu. She used the term "mobility capital" which in her opinion is a part or component of what Becker labeled "human capital" which is a set of skills and knowledge possessed by an individual. Moving therefore leads to accumulation of wealth and, as a result, according to the author, those who have experienced mobility are ahead compared with their sedentary fellows.

Chow (2011) examines the criteria international students consider while deciding on the suitable destination countries for studies. The author looks at the decision-making process, especially the reasons behind studying abroad. From a push-pull perspective, she argues that "students take into account a variety of different factors when making the decision to study in another country. "*Push factors are those that encourage students to leave their home country to study internationally*". These include not being able to find the specific course or type of course they wish to pursue in their home country. This also includes not being able to find an appropriate course for the student's background and level of training at home and/or not being able to enroll in their preferred course at home due to capacity controls or competitive entry requirements. In addition, students may wish to study internationally in order to broaden their cultural and intellectual horizons and improve their job prospects, as well as to prepare for the next stage of their education or career (Chow, *op cit*.: 28).

On the other hand according to the author, "*pull factors' are the factors that cause students to choose a specific destination over others*". These include the quality of the education provided; special courses not offered in other countries; preferred language of instruction (English in particular); historical and political relations between countries and migration patterns; cost; internationally-recognized degrees; opportunities to work in the country of study; being able to finish the degree in a specified period of time; successful marketing campaigns organized by the destination country or institution(s); financial support and incentives; and less stringent student visa regulations, including the ability to work while studying (Chow, *ibid*).

Given the scale of student mobility in recent years, researches looking at experiences of living and studying abroad have gained prominence. Some of those studies are broad, in terms of target groups and the issues being analyzed.

For instance, in her research on migration dynamics in Salamanque, Odden (2010) devotes a section to student mobility. She offers a categorization of patterns of student mobility and emphasizes on students' experiences as foreigners. Based on a study sample that included students from various nationalities (including African countries), the author points out the difficulties they experiences in their everyday life: language barriers, the weather, academic systems. Another important issue discussed is that of students' migratory projects. Regarding this, she stresses that student migratory projects are permanently in the making. Initial plans evolve and change over time according to the context being experienced by each actor. Student migratory projects are also redefined according to changes in their legal status.

Bonsich-Brednich and Trundle (2006) focus on the interactions between international students. Looking into what happens when students from different races share the same environment, especially the student accommodation; they observe that there is a change in individuals' mentalities and attitudes. Specifically, "*traditional antipathies and practices are cast aside. Ethnic and racial differences become irrelevant in the struggle to restore a sense of community in […] a dormitory*".

In their work, Bochner et al (1977) identify and summarize the common challenges of international students; they have identified four main sources to the problems international students encounter. These are (a) Culture shock (i.e., the problems of dealing with life in a new cultural setting like negotiating daily social activities); (b) the ambassador role (i.e., being an informal cultural representative of one's country); (c) adolescent emancipation (i.e., having to establish oneself as an independent, self-supporting and a responsible member of the society); and (d) academic stresses (i.e., the stresses of higher education with its numerous exams and complex study materials). The first two problem sources are mainly experienced by international students, the third is common to all young adults student, and the fourth is shared by all students in the higher education system.

Furthermore, while explaining various problems faced by international students in their new environment, some scholars considered their geographical origin. In this respect and from a comparative approach, Furnham and Bochner (1982) in their works point out that students from non-western states in Europe are more inclined to adaptation difficulties. To their opinion, this is due to the cultural distance between students' home countries and the host society.

A limited number of researches on student migrations focus on specific target groups. The work of Ayano (2006) is one of those. The author is interested in Japanese students in Britain. He questions the adaptation challenges they face during their stay abroad on the one hand, and the impact of these challenges on academic results on the other hand. The conclusion of the study shows that Japanese "*international students experience different kind of psychological stress during their study abroad and such psychological states influence their performance in host countries*". The factors of stress are diverse and include language issues and other cultural differences.

2- Moving from Africa for studying: the specificities

The scale of student mobility differs from on continent to another. According to (Chow 2011:7),

> *Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest outbound student mobility rates in the world, with students from Sub-Saharan Africa comprising eight percent of globally mobile students worldwide. In many African countries, there is limited domestic capacity in tertiary education to accommodate all of the students who wish to pursue higher education. In some countries, including Botswana, Cape Verde and Swaziland, more than 50 percent of students pursue higher education abroad.*

To the opinion of Blake (2012), "*as the number of International students continue to rise, so do the challenges that the students have to deal with*". The author carried out a research project on Africans studying at universities in the United States especially at Delaware State University. He addressed the challenges faced by this category of migrants. Before digging into what appears as the main objective of the study, the book analyzes the contribution of African students to the United States society. In this respect it is mentioned that "*students from other countries are extremely vital to the U.S. colleges and universities because they contribute to the idea of 'melting pot', bring added cultural richness to the institutions, and contributes billions of dollars to the U.S. economy*" (2012:1-2). About the experiences and adjustments, the author argues that African students' major adjustment problems involve financial and health concerns. They also deal with general living adjustments (especially adapting to American food and language). They also experience cultural shock, racial discrimination, adapting to the climate and the educational system, lack of proficiency in the language, depression, isolation and loss of status and identity (Blake, *op cit*.: 3-4).

A decade ago before Blake, Okafor (cited by Blake, 2012) came to the same conclusion with a different academic institution as a case study. He analyzed adjustment problems of African students at Michigan State University and concluded that students from Africa "*have difficulties in getting used to American food and avoiding feeling homesickness […] have great difficulties in becoming acquainted with the US system of education*" (Blake, 2012: 6).

Tyson (2012) observed Africans studying nursing at George Mason University. The purpose of the study was to identify challenges faced by this group and that could justify their negatives academic performances. According to this study, "common challenges included the faster pace of the U.S. educational system, the fear of having questions judged as stupid". Also mentioned as a difficulty is the "*certain level of distrust of the professors based on experiences in Africa" and teaching approach* (*op cit*.: 165).

Considering the presentation above, it clearly appears that African student mobility is an old research topic. But concluding that African student migration is a completely elucidated problematic implies subscribing to the inductive approach which consists in a generalization basing on specific cases. In so doing, one undermines the scientific exigency arguing reasonably that a specific social context shapes differently social phenomena. In this respect, the social and sociological space gives to this research project its scientific interest and originality. In fact, as stated in the title, the geographical framework of this reflection is Stavanger which until now seems to be epistemologically ignored by migration study researchers.

Furthermore it is worth insisting on the point that studies focusing on African students' mobility inspire two major comments that could also be considered their limitations. The first one is that there is almost no research completely devoted to the analysis of their migratory projects, which means giving an account of how their initial mobility plans evolve as well as the changing factors and the strategies adopted by the actors in fulfilling their objectives.

The second limitation is that many aspects of student migration are overlooked such as the economic activities in which international students especially those from Africa are involved (specifically the strategies used in seeking jobs). Also the studies analyzing student adaptation problems do not mention in what way the latter influence the migratory project. The third limitation is that researches on African students are more interested in the host countries that have a historical heritage or relationship with the African continent (necessarily through the sorrowful phenomenon of colonization) on the one hand and linguistic affinities

on the other hand, as observed by Szelényi: "*flows of foreign students follow the same channels as do those of other migrants from their country of origin,*" particularly because of the importance the roles of "*geographic proximity, colonial ties, or cultural affinity, especially language*" (Szelényi: 66 (citing Kritz and Caces, 1992).

Consequently the most mentioned cases when analyzing African students' mobilities are France, Spain, United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, and United States; since they are, according to UNESCO[4], the first destinations for African students. Therefore, at the image of all the Scandinavian countries (which not only have been absent during the partitioning of Africa, but also do not have linguistic similarities), Norway as destination country for studying for African students is scientifically neglected even though the present research project is not the first in the area. Indeed, it is important to draw attention to the fact that, the problematic of African student mobility at the center of this research is not a scientific innovation, considering the geographic space concerned, Norway. African students as a study subject constituted a part of research carried out in Bergen by Lackland Sam and Eide (1991). The study was a survey on mental health of foreign students at the University of Bergen in 1991. Nevertheless, the ongoing project distinguishes itself from the former in at least four points: the object (themes being discussed), the social context (Stavanger), the approach (qualitative research), than the timeframe.

II-   The methodological approach

This section on methodology describes the approach that has been used to meet the above stated objectives of the research. It presents the tools and techniques of data collection and analysis. Before all, it is important to note that from an epistemological perspective, this research project subscribes to a qualitative research in the sense of Holloway (1997). The author defines it as follow:

> *A qualitative research is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live. A number of different approaches exist within the wider framework of this type of research, but most of these have the same aim: to understand the social reality of individuals, groups and cultures. Researchers use qualitative approaches to explore the behavior, perspectives and experiences of the people they study. The basis of qualitative research lies in the interpretive approach to social reality.*" (*op cit.*: 2).

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[4] http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php

1- Techniques of data collection

Given the variety of information to gather, diverse techniques were used in the field. They included interviews, informal conversations and observation.

- **Interviews**

Given the analytical orientation of this research project, interviewing (semi structured) was the main technique for collecting data. The choice of this particular technique lies on its methodological features. Indeed, being essentially interactive, the interview offers the possibility to the researcher to grasp in depth the meanings that the individuals and groups assign to their acting. The postulate here is that behaviors and attitudes of social agents always have a signification that is not accessible to the researcher unless he gives them a chance or possibility via verbal communication, to express themselves. Therefore it is safe to argue that the thickness and the complexity of individuals' experiences as well as their motivations can be explored better through interview rather than questionnaire. This is because the questionnaire method tends to limit the informants' responses.

Though an interview guide had been prepared in advance, it had not really been used in a systematic way (reading and following the order of the questions). The practice I usually used consisted in asking a question with many components at the beginning. In the course of the conversation I just (re)orientated the informants or insisted on certain points raised.

The interviews (12) were conducted either in my dormitory or the respondents' dormitories. Two of the interviews (with female respondents) were held in the party hall at my dormitory.

- **Informal conversations**

In addition to the formal interviews, information was gathered through informal conversations with not only the target group of the study (students), but every other African migrant I had the opportunity to meet. Cohen and Crabtree (2006) refer to this technique as informal interview. They are "*casual conversations one might have with the people a researcher is observing*". The advantage of such a technique is that the conversations are done "'on the fly' and, therefore, do not require scheduling time with respondents. In fact, respondents may just see this as 'conversation.' Moreover they foster 'low pressure'

interactions and allow respondents to speak more freely and openly,[5] as they usually happen in a more relaxing setting as bars, night clubs, kitchen, bus, parties etc (in the case of this research). In this process the approach consisted of introducing a topic in a way to have reactions from the informants.

I used jottings, writing of notes and recording according to situations and setting. My mobile phone was the principal tool utilized in recording informal conversations. There has been a limitation to this practice. Some environments were noisy and rendered difficult the following of the conversation afterward. Nevertheless, this limitation did not alter the quality of the information, since I usually noted the main points of the conversation at the end of the meetings.

- **Observation**

Everyday life of African students in focus in this work include their interactions with the others members of the academic, living, and nocturne environments. For this purpose, I tried to follow the target group in various milieus such as university library, student parties, night clubs and the dormitories. From a perspective of friendship and group life, the objective was to discover whether African students pair up with their fellows (Africans) or the others (including natives and other non-African).

2- Sampling techniques

The sample constituted for data collection includes 5 females and 7 males. However, it is worth mentioning that this number refers specifically to the respondents with whom I had formal interviews. The terms formal is in opposition with informal (conversations) and means that the informants were aware of the research objectives and the interviews were held in appropriate places according to an agreement. In addition to these formal interviews, I had informal conversations with a good number of African students. Data collected via this technique are really significant also capitalized and presented in this thesis. The table presenting the study sample includes the names of the informal informants whose words have been used in the thesis.

From a gender perspective, it clearly appears that females are underrepresented in the sample. But the gap should not been seen as sexism. It is simply due to the availability of the

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[5] Cohen D, Crabtree B. (2006) "Qualitative Research Guidelines Project." Available on http://www.qualres.org/HomeEval-3664.html

respondents during field work. This section presents and justifies the process of constituting the research sample.

- **Meeting the exigency of heterogeneity**

The information presented in this thesis has been collected among a sample of African students constituted following the exigency of heterogeneity. Indeed, instead of considering Africa as one and unique entity, as it has been and still is the case in many studies, I insist on the fact that the differences between African countries is significant. Africa is not one but a continent with diverse and diversified states experiencing different political, economic, social and cultural realities. These differences explain differently the motivations to migrate and influence also the remodeling or the modification of the migration project once in the destination countries. For instance, the decision to stay or to leave after a study program is made in regard with the conditions prevailing in migrants' different home countries. Although under development is a common feature of all African countries, the social and political contexts differ from one nation to another and therefore influence differently mobility decisions or migratory projects.

Considering the precisions below, the study sample was selected with regard to geographic elements: Northern, Southern, Eastern, Central and Western Africa. Within each sub group other selection criteria were applied, especially peace situation. The attended school program was also taken into consideration.

- **Selecting the participants**

Snow ball technique was used in selecting the participants for the research. According to Morgan "*snow-ball sampling uses a small pool of initial informants to nominate, through their social networks, other participants who meet the eligibility criteria and could potentially contribute to a specific study*" (2008: 816-817).   I also relied on networks known to me thanks to the fact that i am a part of the African community.

It is important to mention that being part of the observed community was an asset in data collecting in that it positively influenced the negotiation for interview opportunities. I believe the fact that the interviewees identified themselves with the researcher made them more free and open in expressing their opinions, feelings and thoughts.

- **Characteristics of respondents**

As the title of the research project shows, the main target group in focus is African students regularly registered as such. Nevertheless, one of the major objectives of the research is to analyze changes in students' initial migratory project. This aspect aimed at discovering the reasons behind the option to stay in Norway (or another European country) rather than going back home after completing their studies. For this purpose, it was worth including in the sample some African working in Norway after they graduated from the university. Considering that exigency, the term student includes: people regularly enrolled at an academic institution, individuals who have graduated within the last three years (two were found).

Table 1: Research sample

Name	Country of origin	Academic institution	Sex
Abran	Ghana	Uis	Female
Simson	Tanzania	Uis	Male
Chewa	Nigeria	Uis	Male
Almard	Morroco	Uis	Female
Jemsum	Cameroon	Uis	Male
Faison	Cameroon	Uis*	Male
Edison	Liberia	Uis	Male
Caloux	Cameroon	Uis*	Male
Calvin	DR Congo	Uis	Male
Silvy	Madagascar	Uis	Female
Zackeus	Somalia	Uis	Male
Rozia	Uganda	Mhs	Female
Sophia	Rwanda	Uis	Female
Kenneth	Cameroon	Uis	Male
Monah	Eritrea	Uis	Female
Emuaka	Nigeria	Uis	male
John	Ghana	Uis	Male
Justo	Cameroon	Mhs	Male
Michael	Sudan	Uis	Male

**Now working in Stavanger*

It is important to note that the names used here are pseudonyms, as most of the respondents did not accept to have their identities revealed. Some of the pseudonyms have been suggested by the interviewees themselves and I chose the others.

3- Data analysis

The process of data analysis started with the transcription of almost all the recorded interviews and informal conversations. However, I experienced some limitations transcribing some informal conversations. This was due to the environments in which they have been recorded: bars, parties, and buses. In short, the informal conversations happened in somehow noisy milieu and consequently, some sections, words and expressions were difficult to decode or follow.

The second step in analyzing data was interpretation of data. At this level, content analysis has been used. Conducting content analysis on a document, especially a text required that the text in question is coded or broken down into manageable categories on a variety of levels: words, word sentences, phrases, themes and visuals and then examined using one of the basic methods of content analysis, conceptual analysis or relational analysis (Bruns and Jacob, 2006). After several and in-depth reading of the field material (including field diary), information appearing significant and relevant have been selected following the objectives and hypotheses of the research on the one hand and the literature on the other hand. They are presented in various sections in the body of this thesis. However, it is worth mentioning that selecting relevant information according to the preexisting hypotheses and objectives does not mean the relationship between the initial research idea and the field work was static. The data gathered from the field affected and influenced the initial research questions and therefore the hypothesis, objectives and the structures of the research.

CHAPTER 3: Norway and migration: the complexity

This chapter aims to present some key elements that make Norway a destination for international immigrants, particularly when it comes to African migrants. The chapter is divided into two mains sections. The first one portrays the social environment, the economic context of the country, and also questions the dynamics of the migration policy prevailing in Norway. The second section of the chapter looks specifically at the migration of Africans to Norway. It offers an overview of the African population movements, with an emphasis on students as a distinct social category.

I would like to forestall likely critics by emphasizing that this section largely relies on the works of Brochmann and Kjeldstadli, specifically their book "*A history of immigration. The case of Norway 900-2000*", published in 2008. The book is quoted in length in this section of the thesis because it provides a comprehensive background to understanding Norway's migration history. The book sums up all the major migration policy changes made in Norway since the post-modern era.

I-   Norway as a new destination

The debate surrounding migration issues in the Western destination countries seems to ignore one important aspect that many developed countries have experienced: the phenomenon of emigrations in the past. Nevertheless, the difference between those states relies on the rate of the population that left. Norway is one the country where "the rate of emigration was very high". A total of 0.75 million Norwegians moved and settled in new geographic spaces before 1915 (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli (2008:115). This number appears insignificant until one considers that the total population in Norway at that period was estimated to be around 1.5 million, making it that emigration was a serious social issue. At the beginning of the emigration process, the main destination was the United States of America. Due to the massive migration, the US adopted restrictive policies, and it gradually closed its borders. Therefore, Canada became an alternative for Norwegian immigrants in the Northern America. Although 95 per cent of Norwegian as well as others Scandinavian emigrants settled in the US, some of them also moved to Argentina, Australia and South Africa (Gjerde, 1995).

The factors informing the enormously important phenomenon are diverse. According to Gjerde they were mainly theological and social in nature. "*The very first emigrants from Norway in 1825 […] consisted of religious dissidents, a group of Quakers and pietist Lutheran followers of Hans Nielson Hauge*" (1995:85). There was a sort of religious

dissatisfaction with the state church imposed to the citizens in Norway. There was also in Norway a social crisis that led to massive emigration, the stand point being the population growth, inherent to several causes. The first one could be the triptych "*peace, the potato and smallpox inoculation*" (Gjerde, *op, cit*.: 86) that systematically reduced the number of infant deaths in the turn of nineteenth century. Another reason for the population boom was the change in the marriage patterns for instance, the falling of the age at which people entered marriage. As a result of these demographic changes a general situation of landlessness prevailed in the rural areas in Norway, leading to a starvation in the 1960s. Therefore, the US represented a new opportunity for fertile and available land resources.

The first Norwegian emigrants were mainly farmers in search of cultural land, hence they largely settled in the rural zones in the US. Nevertheless, with the American industrialization more work opportunities came, which favored movements to urban milieu. Also, the industrialization in the US, coupled with the ease of transportation system, led to an "industrial migration" from Norway, with 1910 as the peak decade (Gjerde, 1995). Nevertheless it is worth mentioning that the migration patterns in many other European countries were also influenced and shaped by the industrialization in Northern American.

Talking of Norway as a new immigration destination does not mean the country had not welcomed foreign populations in the pre-modern era. There was a relative compensation between emigration mentioned earlier and immigration. A good number of people moved to Norway, mainly from the others Scandinavian countries. Nevertheless, immigration to Norway before 1960 appeared politically incorrect and therefore should be hidden, if not simply erased, as pointed out by Brochmann and Kjeldstadli:

> *The memory of immigration has been eradicated to such an extent that the prevalent understanding in the late 1960s, when modern immigration started, was: 'Norway has never been a country of immigration'. However, as stated, there was actually a fair number which moved into or between the Nordic or European countries. Among the Nordic countries, Norway received the most important immigrants, primarily Swedes and Finlanders. Denmark and Norway were a kind of 'reserve America' for Swedes (op cit.:115).*

Even though Norway has always been a country of immigration, it is clear that the immigration trend has changed over time. This is a result of a combination of several factors of a different nature: political, social, economic, etc.

1- Migration policy: the complexity

The Norwegian migration policy has a rather interesting and yet complex history. It evolved over the years as a result of both internal and external influences. These influences include for example: 1) the post-second world war era that introduced Norway to the cold war refugees (escaping communism in their home countries, especially in Eastern Europe), 2) the establishment of the OECD relying on a liberal political immigration regime – opening borders to immigrants from all over the world, including non-OECD states), 3) the complex social and cultural encounters between the natives and the diverse categories of new comers, 4) different agreements with neighboring countries on the field of border policies and economic cooperation and 5) the revision in 1956 of the Norwegian Foreign Law[6].

From a historical stand point, it appears that until the end of the 1960s, Norway was not much of an immigration destination (compared to others OECD countries like France, United Kingdom, Switzerland or Sweden which officially adopted a labor recruitment regime), with an unclear immigration policy located in between open borders and restrictive policies. Nevertheless, in the late 1960s and the early 1970s a free immigration approach was adopted, a policy that was not just a punctual option but a long term perspective. According the authorities at the time, it was meant to "*serve as a norm also for the future*" (Brochmann, and Kjeldstadli, *op cit*: 188). Therefore, for the following years, foreign labour and Norwegian labour received the same treatments in terms of working conditions and wages. This led to an increase in the number of immigrants, mainly in the labour categories, from more diversified countries, including increasingly the Third World ones. The immigration process was facilitated by the fact that foreigner were easily integrated, especially through marriage. Moreover, there were no evident xenophobia, racism or hostility attitudes within native populations. Globally, during what can be considered as the liberal immigration regime, the presence of newcomers was neither significant nor a concern to the politicians or to the majority of the local populations. Nevertheless, this seemingly welcoming social environment changed towards the beginning of the 1970s.

It is worth noting that the change was less a political desire than a result of continuing popular pressure. Indeed, as the number of immigrants increased, there were serious problems, exploitation practices towards the cheap and uneducated workers. This reality was

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[6] For more details on the effects of the listed events on the Norwegian immigration options, see Brochmann, G. and Kjeldstadli,K. (2008), *op cit*. pp 177-200.

considered as "*a shame for Norway*" by the population who believed that there was "*a modern slave trade*" taking place in Norway (Brochmann, and Kjeldstadli, *op cit*: 195). The protest was done mainly through the media, especially press coverage. At the same time, population movement from less developed countries to the economically advanced nations was a great cause for concern for receiving governments as ethnic clashes, high unemployment rate, slave trade were increasingly reported in England, Stockholm and Switzerland. This set of factors put the Norwegian government under pressure, which led to some restrictive measures by the political authorities. These measures however seemed minor as migrants at that time continued moving in. They mainly consisted of Pakistanis, Moroccans, Turks or Yugoslavs.

In 1970, a commission was appointed with a main the task to analyze the issue of immigration in the country in order to suggest new norms in the sector. Three different social categories participated in the commission: labor organizations, employers, and foreign immigrant representatives. In the report published two years later, it appeared that the three groups suggested two different measures. The first one was a sort of "more restrictive immigration norms". It was advocated by the majority of the participants dominated by the labour organizations and the employers. The second suggestion was a "temporary migration stop" supported foreign workers. In spite of the antagonism of the view points, there was a common element between the different stakeholders: the necessity to put an end to the liberal immigration regime. Towards the years 1974 the principle of "migration stop" had been officially declared by the Norwegian authorities and had to be applied from July 1974 to June 1974, in order to "let industry improve working conditions in the sites where immigrants predominated, in order to make them more attractive for Norwegians" (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli, *op cit*: 198).

2- Economic environment: the oil boom and it effects

One of the key elements that shape both the migration policy of nation states and the migratory projects of individuals is the economic development (of the sending and receiving countries of immigrants). In the Scandinavian countries for example, "*the presence of economic push and pull, shaped by uneven economic development, and differences in industrialisation and urbanisation processes, have resulted in varying demand for labour*" (Yousfi, 2010:199). In this context, in the years which followed, the immigration stop as a policy was somehow difficult to be fully implemented, especially in Norway, due to the important economic changes happening in the year following the end of the liberal

immigration regime. Indeed, "*Norway was on the threshold of the oil era, having discovered black gold in the sea and* [consequently] *there was no question of stopping supplies of necessity labour power for this unprecedented economic boom*" (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli, *op cit*: 199). Therefore the policy of "migration stop" was politically and ideologically correct but economically inappropriate, as they needed more foreign workers. In this context dominated by the economic rational, instead of completely closing the gate, Norway developed a selective migration stop. The selection was directed towards non-Nordic citizens. In brief, the "migration stop" approach was not really the end to open–borders, but rather a discriminatory immigration rule applied in recruiting immigrants. Foreign population movement to Norway continued, contradicting the spirit of the new policy. As Brochmann and Kjeldstadli note, "*the immigration stop inaugurated the judicial building process of the control structure which was to prevail in the 1980s and 90s. Ironically, the immigration stop actually marked the beginning of the modern immigration era*" (*op cit*: 212). Implementing such policy was therefore impossible, and the main causes could rely on demographic elements characterizing Norway at that time and nowadays.

3- Demography: Norway needed immigrants

The limitation of the migratory trend in Norway was a result of both external and internal and factors. As mentioned earlier on, internal factors included pressure from the population, the labor organization, and the foreign workers associations. From the external point of view, the end of the official liberal migration policy was a fruit of cooperation with the neighboring Nordic countries who initiated the process of gate closing.

Nevertheless, Norway as singular entity was in a very complex situation, given the demographic structure at the time (which was characterized by a sort of under population). Therefore, there still was a need for foreign labor. The need persisted for many years, as toward the end of the 1990s, there was a new public debate surrounding the role of foreign workers. The labour authorities pointed out the country was confronted with a shortage of labour force in the market. The shortage was observed mainly in the domain of construction, industries, and the health sector. The other Nordic countries to which the borders were still open could not satisfy the Norwegian needs.

Also, from a demographic perspective, given the composition of the population in Norway, it was difficult to imagine, neither in a short nor in a long term, local based solutions

to the lack of human resources. Along this line, Brochmann and Kjeldstadli (2008, *op cit*.: 277) argue:

> *Demographic forecasts indicated that without substantial immigration, the composition of the population would become unbalanced, with serious repercussion for the economy. Even though the fertility rate was higher in Norway, than in many other places in Europe, it has declined over the last decades and stabilized around 1.8-1.9 during the 1990s.* [Consequently] *Norway has to reconsider the consolidated 'stop' from the 1970s, as did more or less all the other EEA countries.*

It is also interesting to note that not only was the population ageing, but there were also what could be referred to as "dirty jobs", usually manual tasks that the natives refused to take. Since these jobs had to be done, the solution seemed to be recruiting foreign workers. Still, the origin of the people able to accept the dirty jobs remained a concern, as the ideal was to maintain the gates closed to the non-Europeans populations.

Until now, what has changed in regard to the demographic situation of the country? In other words, could Norway "continue" today without immigrants? It is perhaps obvious that there has been an increase in terms of number of population in Norway, but not to an extent that the need in foreign labour force can be canceled. In a recent article by Koranyi and Klesty[7], it appears that the economy in Norway, especially the oil sector is still forced to resort to foreign workers, and this is likely to be the situation for the years to come. For instance, to fulfill its numerous contracts relating to engineering hubs in Kuala Lumpur, London and Mumbai, "*Aker Solutions (AKSO.OL), the nation's top oil services firm, will hire 4000 engineers this year* [2013*] but only a third will be Norwegians.* In the same respect, the authors point reveal that "*a study commissioned by the government showed that by 2016, the country will have a shortage of 6000 engineers as oil investment hits new records and oils firms tap services in areas once thought closed to depleted* "[8]. Accordingly, immigration still has a great role to play in the Norwegian economy and, from system analysis perspective the politic is largely influenced or even completely guided by economic facts.

4- Social context: the welfare state

From a comparative perspective, Scandinavian countries have so far managed to conjugate sustainable economic growth and attractive social welfare system. Wessel argues

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[7] Koranyi, B. and Klesty, V. are journalists and working for the press agency Reuters.

[8] Koranyi, B. and Klesty, (2013) "Analysis: sitting on too much money, Norway risks going of course" available on www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/24/us-norway-oilwealth

that the four Nordic countries *"boast a combination of generous welfare entitlements and rapid economic growth. They appear to constitute a more or less stable model of welfare capitalism, the 'Nordic model', which occupies a special place in international welfare research, [...] typically described as an outlier, distinguished by greater equality than any other model"* (2010: 265). The particularity of this social welfare relies on four main principles (Wessel, ibid). The first one is universalism, making the welfare a civic right. The second principle is market-independency: the welfare is offered by the state through public engagement. It covers many aspects including social security, social services, health, and education and housing (probably).

The third principle of the Norwegian social welfare system is equality. Hence, there is no discrimination in principle between the immigrants and the natives. Solidarity is the last principle. It implies mutual attachment between individuals and groups, which plays a predominant role in risk-pooling and redistribution. Solidarity exigency consists in holding down the salary of highly skilled workers and raising the one of the low class worker. As a result of this setting, the level of poverty in these countries is below the OECD average. Taxes and transfers constitute the base of the redistribution.

5- The integration policy: the multicultural Norway

Whilst acknowledging that there is no nation state that could be strictly qualified as homogenous, there is no doubt that with the population movements, almost all the destination countries become more multiethnic. As from the mid-1970s, the cultural heterogeneity of these majors receiving countries gave rise to a long lasting political debate in which the question concerns the type of multiethnic society to be advocated: should immigrants be assimilated or integrated?

Assimilation is usually referred to as a process through which immigrant abandon their initial cultural values and adopt the ones of the receiving country. Therefore, any assimilationist approach expects an individual from a different cultural background and living in a given community, to *"gradually acquire this community's norms and values to the point where the individual's values cannot be distinguished from the one of the community"* (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli, *op cit:* 230). Assimilation aimed at establishing a social control over new comers. Contrary to assimilation, integration is softer, as it offers the individuals the choice to select on the new community's values to adopt. In this respect, various nations made clear options.

These options were sometimes officially hidden but were noticeable through the issues of political participation, human rights, educations etc. The end of the 2000s and the beginning of 2010 marked the officialization of the integration policy in many European countries, as the debate over multiculturalism became more significant and topical. France, England and Germany were leaders in advocating the failure or the death of multiculturalism. Therefore, assimilation was the common pattern in Europe, especially in the West, where the public authorities wanted to preserve mono cultural nations. In contrary, Norway and Sweden, "*took the first steps towards multiculturalism in the 1970s allowing immigrants to choose whether to be assimilated into the national population or to maintain and develop their own language, religion and cultural affiliation.*" (Soholt, 2010: 275). Nowadays, in regard with the reality, it is difficult to tell exactly, what integration policy Norway applies. Seemingly, there is no clear option, but rather a mixed approach including "*elements of civic integration, multiculturalism and ethnic assimilation*" (Soholt, *op cit.:* 275). Nevertheless, from a comparative perspective, Norway, contrarily to many immigration countries, supports diversity as it is recognized a special status to some specific groups like indigenous populations as well as national minorities groups.

The objective of this section was to analyze the different factors that favor immigration to Norway. As presented throughout the section, these factors are both internal and external. It appears that migration policies in Norway had been shaped by the economic situation characterized by an unprecedented growth due to the discovery of the oil and gaz. This economic development happened in an under populated territory, hence the need of foreign workers. The welfare state and the choice of multiculturalism as integration policies, as well as the educational system, made the country a famous destination to international migrants, including Africans.

II-   African migration to Norway

This section of the chapter is an African perspective of immigration to Norway. It aims to trace the history of the population from Africa. It starts with brief historical information on the presence of African in Norway. The last part is devoted to African students' mobility to the country, with a focus on Stavanger.

1- History of migratory movements from Africa

According to Alsaker Kjerland and Bang (2002)[9], the contacts between Africa and Norway are old as they are believed to have started right in the Viking age, that is, around 800 to ca.1100. The Vikings were known as travelers and conquerors. Nevertheless, the known or documented part of the history of the relationships between the two geographic entities started in 1700s. The first known contact of Norway with Africa was with the Northern part of the continent. Norwegians went to Africa mainly for adventure and trade. The first Africans in Norway were Touareg (ethnic group living in the Northern Africa. Called "blueman", they were brought to Norway by the rich to impress the rest of the society.

Though it is difficult to say if they were slaves or not at the beginning, it is believed that it was symbolically prestigious in Norway to have a black servant. The prestige was proportional to the high price one had to pay in order to own a servant of dark color. In other words, the presence of a black man within the household informed about the wealth situation of the family. With regard to the social representation surrounding the phenomenon, a sort of slave trade took place in Norway. However, the practice was abolished quite quickly as; it was publicly considered immoral for a human to own another human.

Free movements of population from Africa to Norway is said to have been noticed in the middle of the twentieth century especially during the post war growth which brought about borders opening in many European industrializing countries. The first African in Norway in that era was from Morocco and settled in Oslo (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli, *op cit.*). Migrations from Africa were not a "total social fact" in the sense of Marcel Mauss (1966), as the numbers of African was quite insignificant. This situation was probably due to the selective restrictive migration policy enforced in Norway.

It is in the late 80s that immigration from African countries to Norway increased slightly. The phenomenon grew markedly from 2000 onwards, mainly due to a rise in the number of immigrants from North and Northeast Africa, including Somalia (25,496), Morocco (8,058), Eritrea (5,789) and Ethiopia (5,156). Comparatively to North and Northeast Africans, the percentage of Africans from other regions of the continent as a proportion of recent immigrants to Norway from Africa is relatively low. They mostly come from West Africa, especially Ghana (2,034), Gambia (1,409) and Nigeria (1,247). The Central Africa

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[9] It is scientifically safe mentioning the book is written in Norwegian. The translation of the title is mine. Also, given the fact I can't read Norwegian, I resort to a Norwegian friend who had to read and explain to me. This may cause some biases in grasping the thoughts of the authors.

region is dominated by immigrants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2,050).[10] The table below presents an overview of African immigrants in Norway.

Table 2: Immigrants and Norwegians born to immigrant parents

Country	Period				
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Somalia	3	26	1,303	8,386	25,496
Morocco	401	1,130	2,380	5,409	8,058
Eritrea	0	3	18	733	5,789
Ethiopia	8	214	1,398	2,525	5,156
D.R. Congo	12	12	83	236	2,050
Ghana	8	29	730	1,341	2,034
Algeria	64	130	435	880	1,497
Gambia	19	143	568	984	1,409
Kenya	16	114	303	642	1,275
Sudan	6	25	57	371	1,318
Nigeria	11	108	284	504	1,247
Burundi	0	0	3	62	1,119
Tunisia	39	100	358	607	1,106
Liberia	3	8	23	26	1,075
Total	**1,179**	**3,188**	**10,069**	**26,521**	**88 764**

Source: Statistics Norway

2- African student mobility to Norway: a focus on Stavanger

It has been difficult to find scientific works in regard with the history of Africans migrating to Norway solely for academic purposes. The information presented here on the specific case of Stavanger results from a conversation I had with Dr. Torstein Jørgensen who is a historian at the School of Mission and Theology. Jørgensen has, besides, published in 2002 an article entitled "Zibokjan Ka Gudu Moses. Student from Zululand at the mission school (1866-69)". According to him, the first student from Africa arrived in Stavanger in the mid-1860s. His name was Moses, he was from South Africa and a student at the School of Mission and Theology.

He came within the framework of a religious-based partnership, as South Africa was the first country in Africa where Norwegian missionaries settled. He was supposed to go back afterwards and serve as a priest in the local church in the Zululand. Student mobility from

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[10]https://www.ssb.no/en/

Africa, argues the historian, was almost non-existent until the late 1960s when there had been noticed a contingent of students from Africa. They came to study theology at the School of Mission and Theology which was the first higher education institution in Stavanger. Those who were married came with their family members. Since 1990, the migration of African students to the Mission School has increased.

This tendency might be explained by many factors including the expanding of the Norwegian mission in African countries, the cooperation between Norway and African governments, the system of grant in the domain of higher education implemented in Norway and open to students from Africa as well as the general improved access and flow of information due to global technological developments.

The table below provides an overview on the number of students from Africa in Stavanger. It is elaborated based on statistics gathered at the two higher education institution existing.

Table 3: Number and origin of African students in Stavanger as per institution

Country of origin	Institution		Total
	UIS	MHS	
Algeria	1	0	**1**
Burundi	2	0	**2**
Egypt	1	0	**1**
Eritrea	21	0	**21**
Ethiopia	15	1	**16**
Gambia	1	0	**1**
Ghana	7	0	**7**
Cameroon	3	2	**5**
Congo	1	0	**1**
Libya	1	2	**3**
Madagascar	6	0	**6**
Mauritius	1	0	**1**
Nigeria	18	0	**18**
Rwanda	3	0	**3**
Somalia	2	0	**2**
Sudan	1	0	**1**
South Africa	1	1	**2**
Tanzania	1	3	**4**
Tunisia	1	0	**1**

Zambia	2	0	**2**
Uganda	0	2	**2**
Total	**89**	**11**	**100**

The figures related the University of Stavanger reflect the students registered for the spring term 2013. According to the university staff member I met at the international students' office, the number of African students always increases in summer terms. It is difficult to provide any objective explanation to this observation as the resource persons did not provide any. However, three hypotheses could be put forward. The first one is climatic related. In this case the choice of the applicants is made taking into consideration weather conditions. The second hypothesis is policy driven. From this perspective there could be an internal disposition at the University of Stavanger guaranteeing more places in summer term for student from Africa. The last postulate related to the applicants' countries of origin, particularly the education system. Assuming that all candidates come directly from Africa, one can imagine that there is a gap (in terms of duration) between their education systems and the Norwegian and that prevents them from applying before some time.

The figures impose an observation in connection with the representation of African countries at the University of Stavanger. One remarks the high presence of students from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Nigeria. In order to attempt an explanation it would be important to emphasize on the position that these countries occupy in the immigration data of Norway. To do so, I will consider the year 2010 and three variables will be taken into account: 1) asylum application; 2) refugee arrival; and 3) permanent resident permit granted as shows the table below.

Table 4: Top four African countries considering: Asylum application, Refugees' arrivals, Resident permit granted, Citizenship granted in Norway in 2010.

	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Nigeria	Somalia
Asylum application	1711	505	354	1397
Refugees' arrived	304	20	0	73
Resident permit granted	397	254	74	1176
Citizenship granted	241	215		1467

Source: Own elaboration based on Norwegian Directorate of Immigration statistics[11]

Apart from the variable "refugees' arrival" and "citizenship granted" where Nigeria is absent, these countries appear in the top four of *the* existing immigration statistics. Moreover, it is important to note that these top four positions have remained more or less unchanged since the year 2005. Considering the proportion one could easily conclude that there is link between the number of students and the total number of the immigrants from a given country. The validity of this hypothesis is however quickly challenged if one looks at the case of immigrants from Somalia. In terms of numbers, Somalis are the largest African ethnic group in Norway, yet they do not appear at all on the statistics showing study permits granted to African nationals in 2010.

This observation makes it imperative to explain otherwise the high presence of students from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Nigeria. In order to do this, there is need to add a new variable to the total number of immigrants from these three countries in Norway. This variable is the rate of literacy in these states: 67% in Eritrea, 45% in Ethiopia, and 22% in Somalia[12].

Concerning the sole case of Nigerian one could add an economic-based variable. From my personal experience as well as the research findings, it appears students from Nigeria are dominant in oil-related programs at the University of Stavanger. Considering the fact that Nigeria is among the top ten countries in the world in terms of oil-production[13], it can be argued that they are acquiring competences for careers back home in the future.

The School of Mission and Theology, "*is a private, specialised university owned by the Norwegian Mission Society (NMS), committed to high-quality education and research*

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[11] http://www.udi.no/

[12] www.indexmundi.com

[13] http://www.statistiques-mondiales.com

related to global perspectives on the church's mission as well as religious and cultural encounters"[14]. It is the third oldest higher education institution (founded 1843) in Norway and the first to admit students from African countries "from 1860". Regarding the figures related to this institution and especially the background of the students, one main observation should be highlighted. The students are members of a network labeled "Network of Theology and Religious Studies**"** established in 2000 and linking six universities and university colleges in Africa. According to the information available on the webpage of the institution, the following African institutions participate in the network:

- Institut Luthérien de Théologie, Meiganga (Cameroon)
- Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary, (Addis Ababa Ethiopia)
- Lutheran Graduate School of Theology, Fianarantsoa (Madagascar)
- Lutheran Theological Institute / University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg (South Africa)
- Makumira University College of Tumaini University, Usa River,(Tanzania)
- Department of Religious Studies, Makerere University, (Uganda)

This chapter gave a background to Norway's historical as well as contemporary migration situation. The aim was to present elements that make the country a choice of destination for immigrants. The chapter also highlighted the various factors that influenced emigration and immigration to Norway. Although the migration policy became somehow 'restrictive' in the 1970s, Norway still required immigrants due to the economic growth and shortage of labor force it was experiencing. The welfare system prevailing in Norway was another pull factor for immigrants. Africans are part of the immigration to Norway and their number highly increased in the decade 2000-2010. Students are one component of African nationals in Norway. The next chapter analyses the migratory projects of this specific group, which is the heart of this study.

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[14] http://www.mhs.no

CHAPTER 4: Dynamics of migratory projects of African students in Stavanger

This chapter analyses the migratory trajectories of the African students participating in this research. The notion of migratory project is the central concept in this part of the reflection. Therefore, the main objective here is to discover, understand and explain why and how student migrants change or redefine their initial mobility ideas and plans.

I-   African students migratory projects: a permanent construction

1- Education as foundation of the migratory projects: limitations of the educational system in Africa?

Education is at the heart of development in its broader sense. It is an engine of economic growth in that it determines changes in social attitudes and modes of production, as well as source of productivity and competitiveness. Education makes people less vulnerable and promotes their participation in development, the exercise of citizenship and good governance. Finally, education has clear and irrefutable positive effects on the protection of the environment and the effective management natural resources, demography, hygiene and health. It is a condition for sustainable development in the world. It is on the basis of this important role that education has been raised to the status of fundamental right of the human person enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the Convention on the Rights of the Child[15].

Therefore, for every country in the world, offering education, especially at university level to the citizens, is not only a duty but also a means in the development process. Balsvick describes students as followed:

> *students are considered a resource which has to be developed for the betterment of society; a good educational system has been a major factor in the economic and political development of the western world; it has contributed to technological innovation, the establishment of a reasonable and fairly just administration, the organization of political opinion and of a loyal political opposition, the latter being a prerequisite for stable government* (1999: 339).

African nations are also aware of the importance of education for their society. That is the reason why the post independent era has been marked by the development of full education system including primary schools, high schools and universities. People were

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[15] See the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child

encouraged to pursue their education and facilities were offered: grants to students, free education, etc. Nevertheless, due to several factors, the willingness of the African states to promote an efficient education environment did not last long, as mentions Balsvick:

> *Since independence from colonial rule, African States have advocated the development of formal education as the most vital means to promote change. This was impressively followed in practice. However, since the late 1970s the backbone of the educational system has almost been broken in far too many African countries, and the continent has been seriously hampered in its attempt to develop the potentials of its human resources* (*op cit*.: 337).

Despite efforts made by African nations to promote their universities, the situation basically remains unchanged, yet the growing population is constantly in search of good leaning conditions. Given the failure of the leaders to find a solution to the need, Africans are more and more willing to cross their local borders to any environment attractive in terms of facilities of all kinds. As a result, African students constitute the largest part in the field of student mobility, as the UNESCO Institute for Statistics report (UIS) reveals: "*tertiary students from sub-Saharan Africa are the most mobile in the world, with one out of every 16 – or 5.6 percent - studying abroad*"[16].

At the start of the mobility process, African students' major choices in terms of destination countries were the nations having historical relations or linguistic similarities with their nations of origin. Nevertheless, due to several factors, especially restrictive policies in Europe, new destinations are being explored by African students. They are more and more numerous in Scandinavia and Asia (China particularly).

2- Categorizing the students

Although the initial migratory project is the same for all (that is pursuing their education), the students' trajectories are different in regard to their status or the conditions under which they came to Norway. Globally, African students can be grouped into two main categories: scholarships holder students and self-funding students. The first group includes students that came to Norway in the frameworks of nationally or internationally funded programs elaborated with the objectives to include African students.

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[16] http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php

In Norway, the programs are funded by the government, mainly through the ministry in charge of education. Nowadays the scholarship system is largely structured around the program referred to as « Quotas scheme » which aims at promoting the internationalization of higher education. In the framework of this project, each year universities and colleges in Norway are allocated a certain number of quota students. The scheme normally includes courses at the Master and Ph.D. level, in addition to certain professional degrees.[17]

The focus is particularly on students from developing countries in the South and countries of Central- and East-Europe and Central-Asia. In principle, the grant given under the « Quota scheme » system is considered a loan from the Norwegian government to selected students. If the loan approach aims to offer the students good living and learning conditions during their studies, it could, to a large extent, be considered a tool in the migration policy applied in the domain of education in Norway.

Indeed, the loan will only be considered one and therefore be paid back if and only if the beneficiary will decide to stay in Norway after he or she graduates. In other words, the loan is cancelled as the student makes the option to leave the host country at the end of the program. On the official webpage of Lanekassen, the institution in charge of students grants, on can read the following:

> *You may apply for cancellation of your debt when you have lived continuously for at least 12 months in your home country and are still resident there. […] If you remain resident in Norway or travel to a country other than your home country, you will receive a payment schedule and must expect to repay the loan on normal terms. The rules for deferred payment and interest exemption will then also apply to you. [Also] If your debt has been cancelled and you return to Norway within ten years, you must still repay the debt"[18].*

Consequently, the idea behind the loan approach is to promote return migration among graduate students.

Besides the Norwegian scholarships holders, there is what is usually referred to as « Erasmus students ». This group consists of students whose studies are funded by the European Union through Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus consortium. Statistically, this group usually has fewer students than the previous one. Two main reasons could explain this reality. The first one is that, generally, Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus usually offer a very limited

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[17]http://www.scholars4dev.com/1965/quota-scholarships-for-developing-countries/#ixzz2PsuBdUdC

[18]http://www.lanekassen.no/nb-NO/Toppmeny/Languages/The-Quota-Scheme/Cancellation-of-debt/

number of scholarships open to students from all over the world; and consequently the representation of African students is also limited. The second reason is that the University of Stavanger does not host that many Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus programs.

Another category among scholarship holders consists of students with a scholarship from the government of their countries. In this case, the students' local government takes charge of the financial needs of the students. It is worth mentioning that this pattern of migration for studies does not rely on any form of cooperation or partnership between the two governments. However, there is an agreement linking the students and their states, of which the main term concern the return at the end of the studies in Norway.

The second category of students from Africa in Norway can be referred to as self-funding or self-payers students. They come to Norway on personal initiative after fulfilling a number of conditions in regard with language, academic performance and financial facilities. According to the interviewees, every candidate to academic migration should prove a good command of English language. And once in Norway, according to the language (English or Norwegian), of the program enrolled in, a student should learn the Norwegian language before starting the study program itself.

Concerning the requirements regarding academic performances, there seems not to be any standardized criteria. However, from the conversations with different students, it appears that only those with good grades are given the opportunity to study in Norway. As to the financial conditions, the informants said the candidate should include in their application file a bank statement showing the availability of about 90.000 (Ninety thousand) in Norwegian currency. This amount represents yearly expenditures of the student. Hence, to have their resident permit renewed every year, the student needs to have the same amount[19].

II- Travelling for study: a one way journey?

Even though the push-pull theory has not been presented as a central explanatory tool in this research, it will be used in this section, and combining informants' point of views. As, already mentioned, continuity is the major characteristic of migratory projects. Therefore, migrating is generally an endless initiative in which the orientations and patterns are dictated by a set of factors located in both the migrants' homelands and the destination countries. Consequently, any migration project, at least for students, is a permanent built.

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[19] See http://www.udi.no/Norwegian-Directorate-of-Immigration/Central-topics/Studies/

This section of the thesis focuses on the dynamic of African students' migration projects, with an emphasis on what could be considered pushing factors on which relies the decision to pursue studies in Norway. The intention here is to present the causes of student mobility from Africa. This section also aims at questioning the pulling elements in the Norwegian context. It is about the attractiveness of Norway in the domain of economy, education and living conditions. The analysis of the push and pull factors will allow looking at their influence on the restructuration or redefinition of the initial migratory projects.

1- The pushing factors or the influence of the leaving countries

According to the World Bank, "*In most sub-Saharan African countries, enrolment in higher education has grown faster than financing capabilities, reaching a critical stage where the lack of resources has led to a severe decline in the quality of instruction and in the capacity to reorient focus and to innovate*" (2010:131). Therefore, the mobility of African students towards new destinations is a result of the failure of the tertiary education system in their home country where there is a mismatch between student population and investment in higher education. Understanding this failure requires questioning in whole economic realities dominating in African Nations.

From an economic perspective Africa is the world's poorest inhabited continent, as measured by GDP (Gross Domestic Product) which is the total amount of goods and services produced by a country per capita. The economy of African countries consists of agriculture, trades, and industries. Even if parts of the continent have made significant gains over the last few years, the reality is that the different sectors of production are weak. Consequently they can hardly succeed in a global capitalistic context, dominated by competitiveness and creativity.

The process of industrialization in Africa is limited as well as the manufacturing sector is almost traditional. Consequently, all the raw materials are exported, usually for really low prices. The agriculture, considered the engine of development in several countries is unfortunately poorly developed. New agricultural technologies have not yet been significantly adopted and applied by the farmers. In all case, Africa is experiencing a severe economic crisis that has been worsened in the 80s with the world economic crisis. Considering that a society is a system, these economic limitations affect the rest of the sectors of the society, of which education and employment are central.

In the domain of education, especially higher education, universities face problems of various natures. These problems are mainly related to the infrastructure and the human resources. From an infrastructural point of view, there is a real imbalance between the number of students and the number of class rooms. Lecture halls are over populated. Most of the informants emphasized on the lack of infrastructures. In that respect, Simson stressed the following:

> *During my bachelor program in Tanzania, having a seat in the amphitheatre was the main challenge. I remember that I had to get up very early every day to be able to have a seat in the classroom. Initially, the capacity of our lecture hall was 2000 persons but for that academic year 2002/2003, we were in total 3000 student enrolled. Many students used to attend classes standing up. One thing was to get up early in the morning in order to be in time and another one was the access into the classroom in the morning when the door was opened. It was a serious fight, as everyone was struggling to gain a seat inside* (Simson, from Tanzania, Uis).

The situation of the classrooms, according to most of the students participating in this research, is not different from the one of the libraries. It appears from the interviews that, most of African students in Stavanger described the libraries in their previous universities as small, disorganized, dirty, with chairs and tables of poor quality, and old books. Those of the students doing hard sciences were more critical about their training conditions back home. Their main concern was about the equipment in the laboratories where the practical and most important part of their study was supposed to happen. It was difficult to do experiments. The required material was either non-existent or insufficient. Most of the time, the existing equipment was outdated compared to the European standard and level.

> *I did geology in Nigeria before coming to Norway for a Masters in Petroleum Engineering. For practical issues we need a lot of specific and appropriate softwares. They are very expensive and it is not possible to download them on the internet. So the university is supposed to provide us with all that. But let me tell you that I finished my Bachelor without using some of them, just because they were not available in the computers in school. Studying abroad was therefore the only possibility to build a strong and competitive knowledge for a good career* (Chewa, from Nigeria, Uis).

The quality of the human resources is portrayed by African students as a discouraging factor. They especially talked about their teachers. To their opinion the teaching staff is not motivated enough to produce sustainable results. They are constantly fighting for a betterment of their working conditions. Salary increases, age of retirement, keeping politics out of the university, freedom of opinion, diverse subsidies are the concerns commonly expressed by

university teachers. As these dissatisfactions remain unchanged despite repetitive claims, the teaching staff usually downs their tools. In any case, teachers in the tertiary education (as well as the ones of the other levels of education) are psychologically discouraged, in regard to their working conditions. This state of mind has a significant impact on the quality of delivery.

Teachers are less present at the university. They try to diversify sources of income by teaching in private institutions. Some put in place private research institutions to tender for public contracts. In this specific case, the teachers concerned devote the major part of their time the activities of their personal institution at the expenses of lecturing. Their presence in school therefore appears a mere formality. Also, more and more lecturers are involved in extra teaching activities. For instance, many of them run shops and some are becoming, modern farmers, a new practice involving a good number of urban elites[20], specialized in importation crops such as cocoa and coffee.

One of the major conclusions of the World Bank report to which we referred earlier on states that:

> *Universities are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain a teaching staff, lecture halls are overcrowded, and buildings are falling into disrepair, teaching equipment is not replenished, investment in research and in training for new teachers is insufficient, and many teachers must supplement their incomes by providing services to the private sector*" (World Bank, *op cit.* : 133).

These set of element constitute real pushing factors for many student in quest of knowledge.

Another point that should be raised among the likely pushing factors is the local representation over diplomas from overseas especially the developed countries. The bad quality of the education offered in African universities led to a discredit over national degrees. It has been noticed in many countries and in both public and private sectors, that people with a diploma earned in Europe easily win job positions. They are believed to be more competent and consequently have more chance to get a job position[21]. Many interviewees mention it as one the reasons they decided to come to Norway. It is the case of Abran:

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[20] This aspect refers especially to Cameroon and Senegal. These two countries have been the cases studies in a research on the agricultural activities of the urban elites. For more details, see Elong J.G. (éd), (2011). *Elites Urbaines dans l'espace agricole Africain. Exemples Camerounais et Sénégalais*, Paris, l'Harmattan.

[21] See for example work of Becker and Kolsterfor the Netherlands Organization for international cooperation in higher education. Becker, R. and Kolster, R. (2012). International student recruitment. Policies and developements in selected countries. Available www.nuffic.nl

mainly, I came to Norway because I wanted to further my education. In Ghana if you get a certificate of higher education from outside, you get better job offers and better positions. Where I was working, I knew there was no way I was going to get a promotion without higher education; and to get it from Ghana, you will still be in the same position. It is not respected, your qualification in Ghana (Abran, from Ghana, Uis*).*

In Cameroon, for example where I come from, although it is not officially or openly admitted holding a foreign degree is an asset and even restores prestige to the holders. This can be noticed through the ways people introduce themselves in the public spaces. It consists of mentioning not only the degree they hold, but particularly insist on the place or the institution where it has been obtained in case they studied abroad. In all case, a foreign degree is an advantage in a social and economic context dominated by a worrying unemployment and underemployment rate among an increasing youth population.

In fact, in addition to the economic crisis African countries are presently facing, their demography also constitutes a great challenge to handle. Most of the countries are currently experiencing a population growth with a high proportion of youth. The Youth Division of African Union Commission reports that, "about 65% of the total population of Africa are below the age of 35 years, and over 35% are between the ages of 15 and 35 years - making Africa the most youth full continent"[22]. Unfortunately, about 60% are unemployed (Awogbene and Chijioke Iwuamadi, 2010) as the labour market in most of the countries remains unable to accommodate the expanding young population. As a last result, diverse informal activities emerge among educated and uneducated youth whose social and financial capitals are not consistent enough to allow them to win a job position or to enter competitive-entrance higher education establishments that automatically guarantee a work position at the end.

It is worth mentioning that with the job crisis in African societies, a common practice nowadays is resorting to ones' financial power or network, labeled capitals by Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988) when analyzing the issue of social mobility**.** According to Bourdieu, social capital is 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu, *op cit*.: 249). The network in this respect comprises influent persons who are likely to facilitate the social mobility of its members. The financial

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[22] Youth and the African Union Commission report (available on http://africa-youth.org)

capital is mobilized for "buying" positions, as corruption is almost becoming a norm in nearly all African countries[23].

Given all these facts related to labour market environment in Africa, going abroad appeared an alternative, for two mains reasons. The first one is earning a foreign degree, which, as mentioned earlier on, locally carries more weight compared to national diplomas. The second is that pursuing their studies abroad is also a possibility to have a job in the receiving country, especially Norway, where some sectors of the economy (particularly the oil sector) is believed to need more and more qualified human resources. That is why Simson believes: "In Norway, if you study petroleum engineering, you are hundred percent sure to find a job. Some people even receive a job offer before graduating. It is much easier because your Norwegian language skills do not really matter (Simson, from Tanzania, Uis).

2- What Norway offers: comparing two educational systems.

One of the questions usually asked to the interviewees in the framework of this research aimed to establish a comparison between educations in their home countries and in Norway. From the answers, it appeared that the majority of students interviewed notice significant differences in the educational system and environments between Africa and Norway. The gaps pointed out between the two systems are of various natures. The box below is a comparison made by Abran, a student at the University of Stavanger. She is from Ghana and the decision to cite her word at length is justified by the fact that her opinions encompass the ones of many others students participating in this study. The words emphasize on issues related to school infrastructure, the competence of the teachers, teaching approaches, relationship between student and lecturers, learning equipment, etc.

Since you started the Master program here, what can you say is the difference between the educational system in Norway and in Ghana?

It is totally different, north and south! As I said, studying outside will be the best opportunity for everybody, if they are serious for education. Because, where I'm coming from, Ghana, education is poor; if I'm allowed: it sucks. Because seriously, when you study outside, it is more practice. They want you to understand. It is not just about the grade. It is about you understanding what you are doing. It is not just about read, read and go and pass

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[23] Transparency International publishes every year what is called The Corruption Perception Index, which ranks countries based on how corrupt their public sector is perceived to be. According to these reports, African and South American nations consecutively occupy the first places in terms of corruption. For more details, see the reports on http://www.transparency.org

the exam. It is more practical.

Where I'm coming from, trust me, I did my first degree in Ghana and sometime I'm even ashamed to tell people that I'm doing computer sciences. Because there are certain things that, as a computer sciences student, you are supposed to know automatically, but you don't. In my university we had about less than 20 computers for about hundred students. You can imagine. And the lectures don't have time for you. They don't have time to mark your assignments. Some don't even mark. But here it is different. In my class I think we are a maximum of 20. You submit an assignment online, it is marked. He [the lecturer] *explains why you got this or that* [grade]. *Or, if you have anything, you just go to them and they will explain everything to you; they have the time.*

I remember when we came here the first year, that was in 2010, they were using one text book, the third edition. When we came they said there was a new edition. So we were to use the fourth edition. He [the lecturer] *recommended that you can use the third but he would advise you to use the fourth because that is what we are using for school and certain things have changed. Trust me, back in Ghana, some lecturers are still using first editions and we are somewhere in the sixth edition. Some lecturers don't change their note. Everything is word to word from when they started lecturing 20 years 30 years back and it is still the same thing. They are not studying; they themselves are not learning again to teach you. It is what they know from before.*

Here it is just fresh and young lecturers. You just see somebody from PhD and now lecturing. So are fresh in everything. They teach what they are supposed to teach. If you ask a question he doesn't know he will tell you truthfully that I'm not sure, I will go and find out and come and tell you. Either he sees you the next class or he calls you to meet me: "come to my office and I will explain it to you". *But in Ghana, how dare you challenge a lecturer? You can't even tell him he is wrong. If you ask him a question about something he doesn't know he will just try and tells you something about it and that is the end.*

So education in Ghana was more about read, read, and read. Trust me, I don't remember most of the things I learned back home. But here, I know I can't remember everything, because of the practical, you are supposed to do assignments, projects and stuffs. So at least you have a feel of what you are doing. You have an idea; not just fiction reading, reading, reading, and reading or if you do this, you put this together it can happen. But here the lecturers try it out to know that it does happen. So that is the difference. (Abran, from Ghana, Uis)

From a system analysis, the level of the quality and the quantity of education provided by African states and Norway is merely the mirror image of the state of their economies. A poor economic growth cannot favor a construction of adequate and sufficient school infrastructures. Likewise, public investments devoted to learning resources are insignificant. Moreover, it is complicated in a context of generalized economic crisis to ensure good salaries

to teachers and consequently, the motivation, which is at the beginning of every single human undertaking, disappears.

The table below is an overview of the comparison made by the interviewees about their previous and current school system. It is based on words and expressions found in the interviews.

Table 5: Comparison between African and Norwegian education according to the respondents

Aspect of education system	Africa	Norway
Infrastructure		
Classrooms	Overcrowded, many students, attend lectures standing	Seats for everyone, halls are rarely full
Equipment in the library	Tiny, desks and chairs insufficient and of bad quality, disorganized and sometimes dirty	Good chairs and desks, clean environment, well organized, crowded and a bit nosy in rush period (pre-exams times)
Availability of books	Most of the books are outdated. Difficult to find the ones listed in the book catalogue.	New books are available. Possibility for the library to order books if the need is expressed by many students
Access to Internet	Internet is usually available neither at the university nor in the students' dorms. Only cybercafés offer internet services, against a cost. Nevertheless, certain universities have internet but only postgraduate students have access.	Internet is free of access everywhere on the campus, as well as it is in the students accommodations.
Training		
Costs	School fees	Almost free[24]
The lecturers	More involved in extra academics activities, have less time for the lectures, lack motivation for lectures and marking assignments	Respect the schedule, committed in teaching and marking assignment, motivated
Teaching methods	The teacher transfers knowledge to the students.	Debates between teachers and students,

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[24] 700 NOK per years according to some of the informants.

		Less discussion/debate in classes. The training is more theoretical than practical. Independent thinking less promoted. Student have very tight timetable.	discussion among students guided by the lecturers. Promote creativity and autonomy/critical thinking. Students are more independent in the learning the process. Emphasis on practical activities. The workload for students is little.
Students/lecturers relationships		Domination, avoidance	Friendly and social, proximity

<div align="right">Source: my own elaboration from field materials</div>

As one can deduce from the table, the education environment in Norway is the opposite of the reality in Africa. Nevertheless, the table does not totally reflect the opinions of all the interviewees, as some criticisms over the university system in Norway were made by two students. The limitations presented are along the same line and relate to the competences or the teachings skills of some lecturers. For instance, according to one of those two interviewees, some teachers are "incompetent":

> *"They* [the teachers] *lack teaching skills. Pedagogically, they cannot organize their ideas in a way to facilitate the comprehension of the topics being discussed. There is no logic in their discourses; they explore so many issues at the same time. I believe it is due to the fact that they don't prepare their lectures before every class. They just get into the classroom and start reading and explaining an article. It is not necessarily a bad approach, on condition that they have significant interpretative, analytical and critical skills coupled with a solid background in the subject taught; which is not always the case. In short, certain teachers are just students with a Master degree or a PhD".* (Almard, from Morocco, Uis).

It is important to emphasize that this table presents information characterizing the situation in the interviewees' universities back home. As all African countries were not represented in the sample used in this studied, it is therefore unsafe to make a generalization.

3- Staying or leaving? Redefining the initial migratory project

The theoretical concept of migratory project occupies a predominant place in this research project. That is why one of the main objectives of the thesis is to analyze the dynamics surrounding African students' migratory projects. Practically, it is about discovering the evolvement of the decisions and the likely changes that occur in the course of

the time in regard to the mobility plan. While many of the interviewees are still undecided about their future in Norway, some have already drawn a plan for the months to come. Also, in order to look deeper into the issue of changes in the migratory projects, the methodological measure taken has been including two former University of Stavanger students in the sample. They graduated two and three years ago respectively and are now working in Stavanger. How does the initial migratory project evolve? What are the factors and what are the strategies mobilized for readapting the original plans?

The table below shows a story told by one of the African students participating in this research. It illustrates the dynamic character of the migratory project. It is important to reiterate that it is an individual story. There exist as many stories as students from Africa in Stavanger. Even if there could be many similarities or common points in the migratory projects, the differences are significant as they are shaped by individual experiences which are influenced by both home and destination countries realities. The choice of the story below relies on the fact that it shows not only the permanently uncompleted character of the migratory projects of the students, but also presents the change factors, as well as the strategies or the means utilized by the actors in their undertakings.

I got a one year visa to Sweden for study. It was very difficult living there as part time jobs opportunities are seriously limited. I was not planning to leave the country after my studies knowing that it is hard to get a job in my home country. I also knew it was impossible for me to renew my visa. In short I was so stressed as the expiring date of my student visa was approaching. I discussed with some friends who have been staying in Sweden for or a couple of years. One of them advised me to subscribe to a dating website so that I could meet a girl and get married to her in order to settle in Europe. I could not even afford the 200 hundred [Swedish Krona] required to register to the most famous at the time. One friend of mine took charge of that.

I used to spend a lot of time on the website. Luckily, I meet a girl living in Oslo. Things went so fast! She invited me in Oslo. Being there, I explained to her that I'm about to leave Europe because my visa will expire in a month. As she did not want to lose me, we got married after three weeks. But that was not the end of my struggles. My wife was aware of the fact that it was thanks to her that I got the resident permit and consequently wanted to dominate or maintain a sort of control over me. For instance, she had to tell me how to spend to money I earned. It was out of the question for me to send money to my family in Africa. Also, I was not allowed to invite a fellow countryman or a friend to our house. Moreover, I was in charge of almost everything in the household like cooking, laundry and cleaning. I was not happy with that, but I tried to handle it without showing any discontent. But I knew that the marriage will not last long as, my living conditions was not acceptable at all.

> *Once I complained about the way she treated me. She said the only choice I had was to divorce her and then she will report to the authorities so that I will be repatriated. From that moment, I started planning for the future. I applied for some programs at the University of Oslo. As I knew the marriage could end any time, in all the application I sent, I indicated my address back home… After nine months, the marriage ended and my wife did what she promised. She went to the police. One day I received a letter from the police saying that I had to leave Norway. A few days after, I receive a mail from the University of Oslo. I was admitted for a bachelor. So, I had to go to Africa to collect the student visa. I then showed up at the police station. When I got there, I told them I have to leave the country but I do not have money for the flight ticket. They booked a flight for the next day. I managed to convince them to book the flight to Nigeria instead of my home country. The reason is that Norway does not have an embassy in my country, but in Nigeria. I left Norway to Nigeria where I collected my student visa before travelling to my homeland. After two months, I was back to Norway as student.*
>
> *In the course of the second year, I got married again, but to a girl from my country this time. She has a Norwegian citizenship. Now I have a son and the Norwegian citizenship. After the bachelors in Oslo, I registered for a master at the University of Stavanger. I will graduate this year and I have found a work position already. The plan now is to work hard and plan the future, that is, my return to my homeland. One thing is sure: sooner or later, I will leave this country.* (Jemsum, from Cameroon, Uis)

This table clearly demonstrates the dynamics of migratory projects. The story shows that readapting the initial project depends on factors rooted in both sending and receiving countries. Concerning the factors related to students' home countries, and considering the story in the table, the principal element of change in the mobility project of the respondent, is the situation of unemployment. Indeed, the interviewee mentioned the difficulty of accessing a job in his country as a main reason why he did not want to leave Sweden, which was his first country of immigration. In addition to this factor that could be linked to the economic situation of the leaving places, there exist many other reasons that influence the migratory choices of the students. As it appears from the interviews, one of the most important factors is the security or safety conditions offered by their initial social environment:

> *In the city I come from people are permanently assaulted. No matter where you are or live, you can be attacked anytime. It used to happen specifically in the night. But, for some reasons, mostly the economic situation of the youth I think, the phenomenon has increased and is also experienced in the day time. There is no place the populations are hundred percent safe. In the taxi, markets, night clubs, inside house etc, you can easily be a victim. That is one of the main reasons why I decided to settle here in Norway. I hope things will change* (Faison, from Cameroon, graduated from Uis and now working in Stavanger).

The situation of risk portrayed by this respondent confirms the story told by one of his fellow countrymen I met, even before the start of this research project. By that moment, he had just come back from his home country where he spent two weeks. As I was aware of the travel, I asked about the sojourn and he reported the following:

That country [reference to his country] *is completely spoilt. Let me tell you a story! One day I decided to visit my uncle who lives in a different area. I planned to give him some money. But, as I was going to use public transport, I avoided keeping money with me, since I knew it was risky, given the rate of assaults reported in the region. As my bank as a branch in the city where he lives, I stopped by to withdraw some cash...As I was walking from the city center to my uncle's place, I was stopped by a group of three men. They collected everything I had: money, phone and jewels. It was in the mid-day. There was just in front of a house where I could see a lady witnessing everything. When the assailants left, I approached her and asked if she realized what I was going through. She said she knew what was happening. When I asked why couldn't she called the police or the neighbors to my rescue, she replied that she was afraid because the bandits may attack her later, assuming that she is the one who alerted...Actually, one of the objectives of my travel home was to checking the possibility of having a job after my studies here in Norway. But right now, the idea of going back has disappeared, at least for now* (Edison, from Liberia, Uis).

Generally, regarding the home countries related factors influencing the changes in African students' migratory projects, unemployment is cited as the dominant reason. Most of the students decide to stay in Norway because of the high rates of unemployment in their countries of origin. Some students also mention security as key element in shaping their mobility schemes. Moreover, the informal conversation I had with other African immigrants (including non-students), from the home land influence perspective, the migratory project is also modified due to such factors as lack of democracy, bad quality of infrastructures, violation of human right etc.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the migratory project is also influenced by factors rooted in destination countries, Norway in the present case. One of the respondent mentioned love as the principal reason why his initial plan changed completely:

I was 14 years old when I came to Europe. Initially, I went to France where I spent several years studying. As it was difficult to find a job there, I moved to the UK and lived there for a couple of years. I experienced a lot of problems there and almost being imprisoned. I decided to go back to my home country. But, in order to increase my chance of getting a job back home, I thought of doing a master in a domain I believed was more likely to offer a work position. The plan was to do it in France. But I

discovered that education is free in Norway, with more student job opportunities. That is why I came here. At the end of the first year, I met a girl... we really loved each other and finally, we had a kid. We are now married. That does not really bound me to stay but for the love of my son and wife, I have to be here (Caloux, from Cameroon, graduated from Uis and now working in Stavanger).

Some of the respondents mentioned diverse factors such as the job opportunities, living conditions (child education and rights, health care) social welfare etc.

To conclude this chapter, it important to point out that the migratory project is a permanent construct, subject to modification in regard with influences of factors instigated by both the sending and the receiving countries. In whole, it appears that African students' mobility schemes or plans are largely shaped by the push and pull elements, as presented earlier on. From a theoretical perspective, the expression "push and pull" takes to the push and pull theory, one of the well-known and oldest in migration studies. Despite the controversies and the critics surrounding the theory[25], it is useful in understanding and explaining the dynamic of migratory projects of African students in Stavanger, at least, considering the postulate posed by Lee (1966), one of its advocates. In his paper "A Theory of Migration", he summarized factors which enter into the decision of migration and the process of migration under four headings: (1) factors associated with the area of origin, (2), factors associated with the area of destination, (3) intervening obstacles, and (4) personal factors (Lee, 1966).

It appears from this chapter that the learning environments in the respondents' countries seem to be unfavorable for a better training. This, coupled with a high rate of unemployment, is the reason why almost all of them decided to come to Norway where everything is guaranteed for a good quality education. The next chapter focuses on their experiences of living and studying in a new social context.

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[25] Many critics emerged in regard with the push and pull model. For instance, to, Castles and Miller (2009) present some limitations the economic oriented postulate of the theory. Furthermore, according to Hein de Hass "it is doubtful whether the push-pull is of much analytical use, and whether it can be called a theory at all. It rather a descriptive model in which the different factors playing a role in migration decisions are enumerated in a relative arbitrary manner" (2008:9).

CHAPTER 5: The daily life of African students in Stavanger

This chapter starts the sociological account of African students' everyday life experiences (the ways of doing, being, feeling, thinking etc.). It describes their daily activities, with a focus on the economic component of the migratory projects. In this respect, the chapter highlights the role of migrant networks in job searching. The issue of masculinity is also discussed at the end of the chapter.

I-   Daytime and night life of African students

1.   A day in the life of African students

Students spend their days in almost the same way, between university, dormitory and work places. In terms of time management, the activities vary between "working days" and weekends. From the discussions, it appears their social life is somehow very limited, especially within the week. Most of the students hardly mentioned meeting with friends or visiting in their schedule during the week. However, many students meet during weekends, especially on Saturday, which is presented as "the best day to go out".

A selection of descriptions of their days as made by the respondents is presented in the box below.

Abran (From Ghana, Uis)

It is really difficult to make a description of my day. Days are not spent in the same way. It all depends on school time table, job schedule, what I plan to cook or desire to eat. A full day in Stavanger. Basically I'm an indoor person. So, either I'm home doing my assignment, projects, most of the time watching movies, cooking, maybe go window shopping. I also have to shop. Besides that, nothing much. I started working at Burger King. So depending on my schedule, I go to work. If I don't have work, hardly would I go out".

John (from Nigeria, Uis)

As I told you earlier on, my days are really complicated. From Monday to Friday, I start working from 02:30 to 06:30 [am]. When I get home, I sleep for some hours, depending on my school program... Well, I usually go to the university every day and often for the whole day. I may go to my internship place. Late in the afternoon once I'm back, I have to go to the kitchen and cook for myself. Depending on how I feel, I mean how tired I'm, I may watch a movie. In the weekend, I go to church, watch movies. I also read and do my assignments. Once in a while, I may visit a friend. I am not used to bars and night clubs.

Simson (from Tanzania, Uis)

My life here is like a circle: University, home, work place... I go to the university almost

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every day, even when I don't have class I go to the library. I can't really concentrate being in my room. Also, it is depressing spending the whole day in a box. I do cleaning in the city center. So, after university I come home and look for something to eat before I go to work. I usually come back around 8 o'clock [pm] then I spend a couple of hours on the internet: Facebook, Skype or watching TV program from back home. I usually go to bed around midnight. I can't sleep earlier than that. Weekends are different. I sometime go to a night club with friends.

II- Economic activities of African students

This section of the thesis presents the types of economic activities in which African students are involved. The objective is not to come out with a typology of these economic activities but rather, a sociological analysis aimed at understanding on the one hand the role of migrant networks in students' economic rationalities and on the other hand (and from a gender perspective), the issue of masculinity.

1- Types of activities

Based on the interviews and personal experience, two categories of activities can be identified among African students in Stavanger: Self-employment job and salaried jobs.

The first group refers to economic activities where the actors work for themselves and therefore do not require a work contract. The first activity to be mentioned under this category is baby-sitting, which is essentially a female activity. From the interviews with three of the female participants of the research, it appeared this activity is highly appreciated as it is seen as less demanding in terms of physical resources. Another interesting point to highlight regarding the activity is its trans-ethnic feature. According to the respondents the services are offered to Norwegian and African families as well as other migrants' communities in Stavanger. The role of networks should also be emphasized especially church and friends.

The second activity under this category is 'bottle collecting'. It consists of furrowing the streets of the city in the night collecting empty bottles which are then deposited into special machines for a voucher. The voucher obtained bears the refundable amount from the price of the deposited bottles, and it can be used for purchasing grocery items. According to the informant who mentioned it, this activity only happens during the weekends. This is probably because the massive presence of people within this period increases the chance of having more bottles. From the students' perspective, this activity is quite marginal if one considers the number of students involved in it. Indeed, in addition to the fact that only one respondent

mentioned it, any attentive observant of the night scenes would have already noticed this activity recruits especially old people[26] and mostly Roman.

The second category of African students' economic activities is salaried jobs. This refers to jobs where one needs a contract. Compared with the first category mentioned above, this one includes various types of job. The following activities have been identified: Newspaper delivery, cleaning, catering job. According to the respondents, newspaper delivery (an exclusively men affair) in contrast to the others activities, has two pre requisites. The first one is to possess a driving license as they are supposed to use a car. The second pre requisite is to have a car. However, according to some informants, the employer may provide a car. This option has some impact over the wage. Students from Nigeria are more involved in this activity compared to the other African students.

Cleaning and catering jobs are the most popular in terms of the number of people involved. Considering gender dynamics, it appears this sector recruits both male and female.

How do the students access a job? This question takes to the analysis of the role of migrant networks in the economic component of their projects. That is the objective of the next section.

2- Migrant networks as the first capital

Given their role in migration processes, several theories have been developed around the concept of migrant networks. The works of Arango and Massey *et al* are of a great interest in understanding this issue. According to Arango migrant networks can be defined as "sets of interpersonal relations that link migrants or returned migrants with relatives, friends or fellow countrymen at home" (2000: 291). Several years earlier, Massey *et al* described migrant networks as "*sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship and shared community origin*" (1993:432).

It is worth mentioning that even though these definitions give an idea on what migrant networks are, to some extent, they appear narrow and quite reductive. Following their perceptions, the network seems to link only people with the same cultural or ethnic background. Empirical observations demonstrate the contrary. Migrant networks have a

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[26] This observation is valid only in Stavanger. In Oslo, I have noticed bottle collecting is a whole activity in which are involved almost all the demographic categories.

multiethnic character as they include people from different origins, as can be evidenced by the words of the respondents participating in this research.

Going beyond the brief conceptual precision, it is important to note the role of migrations networks. Once more, Arango can be cited as, he argues, in the sense of Bourdieu (*op cit.*) and Coleman (*op cit.*), that "*migrations networks can be seen as a form of social capital, insofar as they are social relations that permit access to goods of economic significance, such as employment or higher wages*" (*op cit.*:291). This capital is acquired or built in various environments of which Church, migrant associations, and school (through friendship).

- **The church**

The role of the churches in migration processes is quite well known. As institutions, they are involved in advocating migrants' rights and their integration. As a meeting point, church also presents job opportunities for some students. Abran is one of those:

> *My first job in Norway was babysitting. There was a couple in church and they needed someone to baby site for them. A friend from home who is in the church told them that they should contact me because I was new and need some money. Someone else also advertised that she needed a baby-sitter and the same friend recommended me. It was twice or three times a week till I go the job at Berger King* (Abran, from Ghana, Uis).

> Likewise Abran, John got his first job through the church he attends:

> *The first day I went to church, I was talking with a guy from India. He was also a student. He asked me if I already had a part time job. As I said no, he asked if I was interested in a cleaning job and accepted the offer. He took me to his boss, a person he also got to know through the church. That is how I got my first job here in Stavanger* (John, from Ghana, Uis).

- **Migrants associations**

Studies on migration development nexus analyze the role of migrants' associations. It appears that they play a significant role in the development process in migrants' home countries in emigration countries. In Africa for instance, their undertakings are mainly in the political and economic domain[27].

The role of migrants' associations is also noticeable in the destination countries.

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[27] See for example Claire Mercer et al (2008). Development and the African diaspora. Place and the politic of home. London and New York, Zed Book.

Focusing on the specific case of Norway, Nyhagen Preilli undertook a sociological analysis of the role of immigrant associations in political and cultural ethnic mobilization. From a survey on about 980 immigrant associations the author concludes that *"most associations do actually participate in one or more ways in various aspects of the political process. For example, more than one third of immigrants associations attempt to influence political issues, especially at the local level."* (2008:950). Beside this political role, the research reveals that migrant associations have an important role in migrants' life since they " take care of members' social needs" and "strengthen members' knowledge of Norwegian society". At the end, migrant associations constitute or rather, according to Tillie (2004), produce a social capital that is mobilized by the migrants, including students.

The case of Jemsum is an illustration:

When I arrived here, my plan was to find a part time job as soon as possible. First I went to the international students' office. There, I got some advices and websites where I could find jobs offers. I would say all that did not help me. I sent my CV but never accepted. One I decided to attend a bimonthly meeting of the people from my country. My objective was to meet people who have been here longtime ago so that they could guide me looking for a part time job. When I was given the floor to introduce myself as a new member, I mentioned my job need. At the end of the meeting I received a lot of advices. One of the members suggested introducing me to one of his formal employers. That is how I started working in a restaurant (Jemsum, from Cameroon, Uis).

- **Friends**

Friendship is commonly defined as a type of relationship between two people who care about each other. This kind of relationship constitutes an important capital in students' life, especially in job seeking and that is how Zakeus got his job :

I was in touch with a friend that was doing his masters here. We knew each other for several years from back home. So, he came to Stavanger before and stated doing this business [newspaper delivery]. When I was admitted at the university here, we were discussing almost every day about student jobs. He always insisted on the importance of having an international driving license. When I got the license, I told him. As it was his last year in Norway, I suggested I should just take over and continue the business. When I arrive, he had only one month left. He stated initiating me to the activity. When he left, I just continued. The car I am using is his. I will just give him some money for it. That was the deal (Zakeus, from Somalia, Uis).

Considering the case of this respondent, a friendship is a relationship that is built upon time. Also the relationship portrayed by this student could be referred to as ethnic

relationship, in that it links people from the same homeland. Many similar cases have been identified. Beside ethnic based relationship, exist what appears as "migrant solidarity" among international students. It consists of sharing information of various nature including job offers. Many students participating in this research pointed out they got a part time job thank to a friends from a different nationality than theirs. Abran for instance was helped by a friend from Iran. She said:

> *I got the information through a friend, a classmate from Iran. She asked me I was working and I said no. She said would I be ok if she introduces me to Burger king manager since she work there. I said no problem. (…) one afternoon she called me that I should go. I just picked my CV and when I got there I asked for the manager and he came. He saw my CV and I told him my friend told me to come and apply. He said she is one of the best, hard working. He just asked me few questions (…). The week after he called that I should to come for and interview and I signed the contract the following week* (Abran, from Ghana, Uis).

Moving one step back to the brief conception or theoretical precision that has been made in regard with the definition of migration network, I would like to insist on the fact that the network (at least as described by the students I met)includes peoples diverse cultural and social backgrounds and even native Norwegians. These ethnically-external people constitute what Granovetter (1973) refers to as "weak ties". The weakness of the ties relies on the fact that the meetings, connections between the people are somehow casual, sudden and spontaneous. However those ties apparently weak are essential in migration processes.

In the article « *The strength of weak ties* », the author draws attention to the strategic character of the so called weak ties. To his opinion they constitute important 'bridges' that facilitate access to information that are not necessarily available within migrants' ethnic communities or strong ties. The author shows that casual ties are sometimes more useful for job seeking. This observation is strongly in line with the point on the role of friends in African students' economic activities addressed below. Abran (from Ghana) for instance got a job thanks to a classmate from Iran. It is the case with John (from Nigeria) who accessed a job through somebody (from India) met at the church.

3- Gender and jobs: When masculinity is reconstructed.

This section is not an attempt to theorize African Masculinity in a broad sense. Basing on the words of the informants on the one hand and the empirical observations on the other

hand, I rather try to briefly examine the concept of masculinity among African students in regards with the economic activities they are involved in. The objective pursued here is to highlight the fact that the meaning or the content of manhood, or being a man evolves in the context of migration. The main argument in this part of the analysis is that in order to achieve their migratory projects, the border line between African manhood and womanhood tends to disappear, due to several factors, particularly economic exigencies.

Masculinity is a social construction that stands on cultural elements. Therefore discussing masculinity implies questioning specific cultures. Although the target group in this study is African students, it is essential to insist on the diversified and plural character of Africa, in contrast to what has been (and still is) portrayed in different scientific works. "*As Africa is not a singular or homogenous continent, there is considerable cultural and social diversity, in relation to language, religion, economy, culture, governance, climate and topography.*" (Ndungi wa Mungai and Pease 2009:105). Despite these structural differences, there seems to be a lot of similarities in terms of sex differences as the authors argue: "*however there seems to be an agreement that there is a gender order in African societies*" (*ibid).*

For a mere understanding of this gender order, one simply needs to observe the socialization process dominantly prevailing in African societies. Indeed, from their childhood within the family framework, males and females are socialized or raised differently. Female children usually spend more time with their mothers while young boys are often with the father. Through every day activities, each of the parents, more or less explicitly, prepare and initiate to the future role. Female children are trained to be good wives and mothers. This means taking care of the husbands and the kids. They are expected to obey the husband and submit to him. On the contrary, men are prepared to assume a dominant role. Although with the influence of modernity and education, some changes are noticeable in the gender order, the significance of religion and tradition in a patriarchy setting, maintains the differences in gender roles and gender perception. Women are still portrayed as the weaker sex in face of empowered men.

Even though manhood is highly symbolical, it influences the choices of economic activities. There is a sort of unwritten gender division of labor. The fact of being a man prevents some from being involved in certain economic activities. In other words, economic activity is on the fundamental of manhood. In this respect, activities such as cleaning, waiter jobs, etc. are labeled as women's job. Yet the majority of male students I met have these as

part their time jobs. Some acknowledge they cannot do the same job back home. Simson stressed:

[…] no one knows about the job [cleaning], I mean the kind of job I have. They only know I have a part time job. [Why didn't you tell them about the nature of job? I asked]. [laughting] How can I tell people that I'm watching floor here? That is not normal for a man, at least for me. Not only I'm a man but I am also educated. I never washed the floor back home, even in my personal house. That was girls' task (Simson, from Tanzania, Uis).

Almard confirmed this perception:

I will never accept a job like this in my country. I'm 31 years old. It is a really shameful job. But…so far as I am here, it is ok! You know we need money here. [What do you mean by 'you are here'? For a man, watching and cleaning is not honorable, it is degrading. Since none of my friend back home sees me, it is fine. Let me ask you one question; have you ever saw a guy from Africa writing on his facebook profile that he is a cleaner? Or when you were in African how many people coming from Europe have you ever met and who told you they do cleaning? Yet a lot of men are doing that kind of dirty activity. In my country it about men prides. Cleaning is usually considered women issue (Almard, Morocco, Uis).

Migration experiences lead to a "(re)representation of masculinity" (Farahani, 2012). Being a man or, the normative exigencies as well as social and cultural practices surrounding manhood is redefined. Therefore, identity formation is an endless process and "*to behave like man*" (Fanon, 1986) or the meaning and the signification of being man is (re)shaped and maintained differently according the cultural and social context into which any social actor is living. The ways of doing, being and thinking that migrant men (of which students) have learnt within their initial society is adjusted according the objective of their migratory project. For instance, as shown through the words of the respondents presented below, in order to earn money, there is no limit in the choice of activities. The differentiation between women and men's work and tasks is meaningless. What matters seems to be the end and not the means.

Before proceeding, I would like to make a precision which is that there is another important point that logically should have been discussed under this section devoted to daily life. The point is about adaptation challenges that African students in Stavanger face. These challenges will rather be presented in the next chapter. The decision of doing so is based on the link I intent to establish between these everyday life challenges and the modification of

migratory projects, which is the main focus of the last chapter. This important clarification being made, the section following section focuses on the night life of African students.

III- Night life: looking for what is difficult to find in the day?

This section of the thesis analyses the night life of the students from Africa in Stavanger. It aims at discovering the practices and the attitudes of the actors, with an emphasis on the reasons for going out, the choice of the places to visit and the steps or the process of going out. To do so, I will widely resort to the works of Magadalena Jarvin (2007) on the night life of young adults in Paris and Stockholm. I'm aware of the fact that her work does not concern students specifically on the one hand and that the social context of her observations is different on the other hand. However her analysis and conclusions are of a great interest in understanding the phenomenon for, even if the actors and the context differ, the practices and the objectives are much more similar.

The night is a specific moment or period of the daily life. The day and the night are different, in terms of code of behaviors, acting and practices, as the daylight or darkness imposed or favour the rise of specific ways of doing, being, and feeling. However, despite of the differences between the two ends of a day, it is difficult to draw a clear boundary between them. According to Jarvin , there seems to be, not an opposition or antagonism, but rather a complementary linking the two entities. She points out that there is continuity between daytime and night, as to her opinion, the codes constructed or elaborated in the night are used in the diurnal social life (*op cit.* :9).

1- The purposes of going out

The purposes of going out are diverse and differ from one actor or group of actors to another. Some of the informants acknowledged they go out to meet new people (especially of the opposite sex). From the interviews it appeared that the night is the appropriate time or period for achieving certain goals, especially meeting girls. In Calvin's opinion for instance, "*Norway is not like Africa where you can approach a girl everywhere (taxi, street, classroom, shops, bus…). Here in Norway, it seems like if you need a girlfriend, you should go out… you have to attend parties, frequent bars and night clubs*". (Calvin, from D R Congo, Uis). Based on this statement, the objective of going out is to approach girls, who are believed to be more open and accessible in such environments.

The contacts established in the bars, night clubs at night can be grouped into two main categories: casual contacts and long-lasting meeting. The first type refers to the situation

where the actors " *[…] go out for fun. In this case, when you approach a girl, it is just for the night. So, you should make it happen the same night or just forget about her*" (Calvin , from D R of Congo, Uis). The second category on contact is established by the actors in search of a girlfriend. Therefore going out in the night is a starting point of a more serious relationship, that is, which is meant to continue in the daytime life. The case of Caloux is illustrative:

> *I met my wife in the night. The first time we saw each other was in a bar at the city center. I remember that night I did not say a single words to her though physically, she fit into my criteria. The third time we met was in a night club. And that day, I managed to talk to her. My objective was to get her phone number, and I succeed. I invited her a few days after for a coffee. That was the beginning a long love story […]*" (Caloux, from Cameroon and now working after graduating from Uis).

Making one's mind go blank is another objective of going out in the night. This means that 'going out' is taken as a relaxation or sort of escape strategy. The moments spent out of the house are presented by the interviewees as free of psychological concern. "It is the only moment you stop thinking about school, life difficulties, family issues etc. In short, when you are out in a bar, a night club or a party, it seems like life is too good" (Calvin , from D R of Congo, Uis). The feeling of happiness experienced in the night is probably linked to the fact that going out usually happens during week-ends which, symbolically represents a short holiday, that is, in principle, "work" free time. It is not exaggerated to consider the weekend as a short holiday, given the configuration of the public spaces during these moments. Indeed, by observation, all the festive milieus are remarkably crowded in the weekends, compared with the rest of the week days. This specific setting could be the main reason why many people decide to go out during these periods.

2- The steps of going out

In her work, Jarvin provides a nomenclature for analyzing the steps of a young people party. She distinguishes three different moments, each with specific objectives: the "*pre-party*", the *party* itself and the "after-party".

The "pre-party" is a sort of getting together. It usually happens at one of the group members place. Most often, when the party includes a member living in an apartment (student or not), he will be host of the "pre-party". According to the interviewees, the option relies on two main reasons. The first one is the space available and the second is the possibility of creating an "*African environment…where it is possible to listen and dance to African music …*

making noise. This is not possible in the student kitchen where people may easily complain". It is worth mentioning that these parties sometimes includes non-African. Therefore, it is *"an opportunity for them to discover African life style, African way of doing and being*". The objective of the "pre-party" is *"getting ready for serious issues*", to '*start the engine*', "*getting eyes opened*", "*preparing for hunting*". This point of the night is characterized by a high consumption of alcohol, usually brought by each member of the group. Sometimes, depending on circumstances, food could be provided, cooked by the host. There could also be a jointly- cooked food.

Furthermore, the "pre-party" also relies on an economic rationale. Considering the fact that alcohol is "*extremely expensive in Norway and especially in bars and night clubs, it a good idea to buy from shops, as prices there are lower…Otherwise you will need a fortune to enjoy the evening when you go out*". (Emuaka, from Nigeria, Uis).

An observation of African students' "pre-parties" allows two analyses. The first one is culture-related. From the practices of the social actors appears what could be considered cultural dynamics. The first practice worth being highlighted is the fact of bringing one's drink or "*one's bag of alcohol*" (Jarvin, *op cit.:* 55) for a party. This way of doing, apparently banal is consistent in terms of cultural change. Indeed, in most of the African contexts where the students come from, it is unusual to carry drinks to a party. It is very common and normal that the host takes charge of everything.

From a sociological stand point, this practice could be portrayed as a step towards the individualistic life style believed predominant in the western countries. Moreover, the "pre-party" itself (at least the way it happens here) constitutes a cultural innovation, as one could notice from these words held in a comparative way by an informant: "*In Nigeria, we start the night in a bar […] according to our plan, we may go to a night club or a cabaret afterward*" (Emuaka, from Nigeria, Uis). After the preparatory phase where the actors "*get ready*" comes the party itself, that is, going to the "*Sentrum*".

The party itself happens downtown. The choice of the places to visit in the night depends on many factors including economic considerations and "individuals' interest". The economic point of view, the choice is made according to exigencies or requirements related to the entrance to a spot. For instance, to get into certain clubs, one should pay an entrance fee. The amount varies from one place to another and according events. The decision on where to go once in the city also depends on what I would refer to as individuals' interest. The interest

relies on the desire of meeting a girl, the plan "*of going home with someone*". In this case, an "experienced" person in the group plays a significant role, in the sense that he "*knows exactly where to get what*". According to the informants, "*the chances of meeting a girl in the night are not the same everywhere. At some places, you are not sure of anything at all, though you could be lucky. Meanwhile the possibility of 'getting something are slightly high in some clubs*" (Emuaka, from Nigeria, Uis). The places with high chances are those frequented by the so called "old ladies" described by the interviewees as "desperate", "in search of fresh blood", "in need of energetic young men" (These expressions are found in the interviews).During the same night the actors may visit many different places. It is seen as a way "of increasing one's chances".

Following the work of Jarvin (*op cit.)* mentioned at the beginning of this section, the last step in going out at night is the "after-party". It is the period starting when bars and club are closed. In case the actors are still willing to continue with the party, they may gather at one group member's home. This practice, common in Norway yet, has not been adopted by African students. From the interviews, it appears that for this specific, the night ends in the city as soon as bars and clubs close. Some of the informants acknowledged having experienced an "after-party". But it usually happens when the group is mix; that is, including non-Africans.

Mentioning the night life makes reference to alcohol which, in this case, plays a significant role. Under the effect of alcohol "*interactions are facilitated*", it becomes more "*likely to talk to whomever*". Alcohol breaks down barriers and puts people at the same level. Along this line, one of the informants revealed the following: "*in the night club, at certain point... when everyone has reached the right level* [of alcohol], *things are different and you can easily notice. For instance, almost everyone is nice and smiling...Girls are more accessible. In short, I think Norwegians are different when they drink. They are completely different from how they appear and behave in daytime*" (Emuaka, from Nigeria, Uis). Therefore, to borrow Jarvin's words, alcohol brings a "*magic*" that "*makes things go faster*", as people are "*more opened*" (*op cit*.: 143-144); probably not only in European societies.

3- Night life and gender

From a gender perspective, what is the difference between male and female sex concerning night life? To respond pertinently and objectively to this question, two main conditions are required. The first one is the availability of the statistics of each gender

category of African students in Stavanger. The second is to carry out a wider observation; that is, on a relatively long period of time and in a large sample of observation spots (bars, night clubs, and other party places). However, these methodological requirements have not been fulfilled, due in a greater part to time constrains. Therefore, the analysis to follow is nothing an attempt to a gender division of the nocturne scene.

As observer and actor, I came to the conclusion that the nocturne public space is unequally occupied by males and females. There is a high representation of men in spots like bars, night clubs and other festive places. This conclusion holds for Africans in general, as in the night scene, it is difficult to tell who is a student and who is not. The validity of such a conclusion relies on my capacity to physically identify people from Africa, which is not completely guaranteed.

To meet the gender requirement, the study sample includes six females. Three of them are students at the University of Stavanger and three in the School of Mission and Theology. Their opinions about night life are different. They are influenced or shaped by personal choices and cultural elements.

Silvy was one the rare female informant who openly showed her interest of going out in the night. She stated:

> *Personally, I like dancing […] I would rather say dancing is my favorite hobby. I use to dance alone in my room. I like going out. Last year I had a friend who usually took me out. She liked partying as me. Unfortunately, she left Norway for some reasons. Since then, I stopped partying just because I need a good company…You know party is about company. You only enjoy a party if you are in a good company. A company is good when you feel free, safe, understand and accept each other… and it is not easy to find someone like that* (Silvy, from Madagascar, Mhs).

For religious motivations, Rozia prefers spending her weekend "*doing something more profitable like reading, praying or just chilling. Bars, night clubs […] all these places where people drink, get drunk etc, are forbidden. They refer to sinning and nothing else. Night life is not for the children of God like me. They have to please the Creator in all what they do, exactly by avoiding those worldly places*" (Rozia, from Uganda, MHS).

Likewise Rozia, Sophia does not like going out in the night. But the reasons are different. Her decision results from family norms or principles, with a high cultural connotation:

In my community, bars, clubs...night life in general is men's affair. I would say that life style is degrading for girl and their families. Within the same household, boys are free, they decide on where and when to go whereas girls are under control, by the whole family members including the brothers. Sometimes my brothers will party till don. If I would do the same there will be a scandal. Since my early age, my father has always been too strict and protective toward his daughters [...]. So, I got used to staying indoors. It is not a problem and my family is proud of me. For me, that is essential (Sophia, from Rwanda, UIS).

Monah, one the interviewees, seemed not to be a night actor. Her reasons are based on issues of taste (of music) and representations:

For the two years spent in Norway, I have been to the city centre [in the night] two or three times only. The reason is that I did not really enjoy being out, as things are so different especially the type of music played in clubs. (...) Well, I strongly believe my attitude is more about my pride (...) in the city, the only prostitute on the street are Blacks and only Blacks. And somehow, I have this feeling of being identified as one of them. I kind of feel ashamed as a Black girl. It is a shock and really makes me feel bad. I prefer not to go out in the night at all" (Monah, from Eritrea, Uis).

This fear of being mistaken for a prostitute makes some sense, as there seems to be stereotype summarized in a spoken or unspoken formula: *Black girl-Non-Black country=hooker*. I found this formula on a website[28] which is a sort of a forum where "mistaken-for prostitutes" Black girls share their experiences, mainly in Europe. Based on the comments presented on the webpage, it appears there is a social representation of women of colour, shared by men in not only Europe but also in the United States of America. The case of the US has been the focus of Farley in her study on prostitution, trafficking, and cultural amnesia. She argues the following:

[...] *racist stereotypes in the mainstream media and in pornography portray black women as wild animals who are ready for any kind of sex, any time, with anybody. Strip joints and massage parlors are typically zoned in black neighborhoods, which give the message to white men that it is acceptable to solicit black women and girls for sex-that all black women are prostituted women* (2006:102).

If it is true any social representation should rise from "empirical facts", any generalization should therefore be criticized. Prostitution is rather an individual issue than a racial or ethnic phenomenon.

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[28]http://nicoleisthenewblack.com/2011/12/black-women-in-europe-fitting-the-hooker-mold-with-blackness.html

These negative feelings are part of African students' everyday life. This situation is not necessarily caused by racist practices. The feelings are rather a result of a combination of diverse factors. The next chapter digs further into their daily challenges, in order to analyze their impact on the migratory projects' of the actors.

CHAPTER 6: Assessing everyday life experiences: adaptation challenges and (re)adaptation of migratory projects.

This chapter looks into the process of (re)adaptation of the migratory projects. After a presentation of challenges faced by African students in their everyday life, it offers an overview of the strategies used by these social actors in order to fulfill their mobility plans.

Assessing everyday life is an account for African students' experiences of living and studying abroad. The focus is about adaptation or adjustment challenges they face in their everyday life as foreigners. Those challenges are related to several issues including food consumption, studies, social interactions, weather, self-perception etc. Moreover, it would be important to question the likely relationship between the living experiences and the mobility options, especially the decision to stay in Norway after studies or to move back to their home countries.

I- Adaptation challenges

1- Students and cultural adjustment: brief theoretical perspective

Several studies have been carried out on student migrations. From a psychological point of view, many of these researches had a particular focus on acculturation questions. They analyze the mechanisms through which this specific migrant group adapts to the new living milieu. Researchers interested in the issues came out with diverse psychological schemas that a student may go through in their experiences of staying abroad. The one suggested by Rhinesmith (1985) summarizes many of them. He presents an eight-stage "intercultural adjustment cycle that includes application anxiety, selection/arrival fascination, initial culture shock, surface adjustment, mental isolation, acceptance/integration, return anxiety, and reentry shock/reintegration".

Application anxiety is experienced when waiting for the result. One is thinking of their chance of selection and their capacity to live in a different environment with a different cultural reality. The stage of selection/arrival fascination is characterized by a rise of high expectations for the visit. The person at this stage also experiences a rush of elation and excitement about the potential of the new opportunity. The initial culture shock happens when the initial fascination disappears due to many factors. This stage is dominated by possible changes in sleeping patterns, excessive fatigue from speaking and listening to a foreign language, a lack of motivation to get up in the morning, and possible hostility towards some particular people or aspects of the society.

After this stage which normally takes only a few days, the student migrant moves to a new stage which is called surface adjustment. Here there is a sort of light accommodation to the environment as the person's language improves, allowing him to express basic thoughts, make friends, and associate. After the surface adjustment follows mental isolation where a subject desires a deeper experience, greater language proficiency as well a return to excellent performance he usually experienced back home. The stage of acceptation/integration happens when the newcomer makes an important turnaround out of his mental isolation and decides to changes things that can be changed and make the best of the rest. In so doing, he accepts the living situation and therefore becomes more and more integrated.

In principle (at least in the opinion of the author), travelling for studying means that the migrant should return at the end of the study program. He will then experience a return anxiety which is another stage of the intercultural adjustment process. At this level, when the settlement or the integration into the new milieu is almost achieved, the person starts thinking about leaving the new and familiar friends as well as all what is considered positive and exciting in the new environment. The sojourner at this stage has the sense of how he or she has changed. A new personality has been shaped within the new community and the idea of going back home and therefore to the old personality is a source of stress and anxiety. The last stage of the process is reentry shock/reintegration. It involves an integration of overseas experiences and culture with new reality of the back home situation. It is about a sort of transition phase to the new old life (Rhinesmith, Cited by Blake, 2012:9).

2- Stressful environment or dissatisfactory life style

Stress as a psychological dysfunction is not linked to the fact of moving or migration, since the causes are different and diverse. Consequently every human being is likely to experience it in their lifetime. Nevertheless, from a comparative perspective researches revealed that immigrants are more exposed to stress than the natives (Hildegunn , 2010). What are the probable sources of stress among African immigrants, especially students? From the informal conversations and interviews, the factors of stress feeling and dissatisfactions could be categorized into two groups: host community-produced causes and students' homeland-related factors.

The motives of stress related to host society seems to be more significant. They include social interactions, language problems, the weather, the food, financial difficulties, and sexual life.

- **Social interactions: individualism**

Social interactions refer to the fact or process of interacting. That is, for individuals, relating to or having the purpose of promoting companionship, communal activities or practices. Therefore, social interactions are the foundation of any group live

The nature and the patterns of social interactions vary according to the social settings which are individualism and collectivism. Socializing behavior and social skills are strongly related to the environment where any social actor has been (or is) socialized. Consequently, moving from one social setting to another may constitute a source of stress.

At the university library, I met an African. He introduced himself as Michael and was studying petroleum engineering at the university. We were sitting next to each other for the whole day. During the breaks, we discussed many aspects of migrant life. The following is an extract of our conversation.

> *Here in Norway people live differently. For example, you should not expect anyone to visit you in surprise, just like you cannot decide to go and visit someone without informing him or even negotiating with him in advance. I my country friends, neighbors, colleagues just appears. When somebody calls before coming it is just to make sure you are at home so that I will not waste his time. That is why in my country I always have people around me, I talk to people whenever I would like to. But here, sometime I spent a whole day without saying a single word to someone. That life style is not healthy at all! One could even die in their room, no one will know. It is just too stressing for me* (Michael, from Sudan, Uis).

Seemingly, the main concern of this migrant is the system of social interaction which is individualism. This contrary to the social setting that prevails in Africa which is collectivism. In such social contexts the individual does not exist but the group. It is a system within which social support from the other may prevent from stress (Hildegunn, op cit)

Almost all the respondents argued "*it is difficult to make true friends in Stavanger*" and, those to be blamed are the Norwegians who according to respondents, "*don't open up, are shy*" etc. However, there are exceptions as argued by Abran:

> *I would say I have only one Norwegian friend. He is in my class. But he is not the type that I will pick up a phone and to call and say how you doing or […]. No. Once in a while when I see him online I say hello. At least he makes the effort. I appreciate that a lot. If you say hello to him, he will walk to you. He is the only Norwegian in my class who mingles with the international students. When I had a*

party he came. He even backed a cake for me. So at least he makes the effort to come. The other Norwegian don't come at all (Abran, from Ghana, Uis).

As this complain became frequent, I started asking or suggesting to consider building the friendships among themselves, that is Africans exclusively, since they come from quite similar social context. From the reactions of the respondents appears the problem is not necessarily the Norwegians attitudes. Africans are also becoming "individualistic", under the effects of economic exigencies, as it implicitly appears from the following: *"[...] Even African...everyone is busy. Almost everyone has a part time job, some even have two jobs. When you have to combine job and studies, you realize there is not enough time for everything...but if you really have a friend you will always fine time to spend with him"* (Simson, from Tanzania, Uis).

- **Language barriers**

According to some of the respondents, language skills constitute a significant factor of stress. In their first days in Stavanger, African students do not have any understanding and speaking command over the Norwegian language which is the medium of communications in public spaces. For some respondents, these language barriers lead to frustration and reinforce the feeling of being a foreigner and the subject really consider staying away from the natives: To Almard opinion,

> *"it is very annoying and frustrating to always reply 'sorry I don't understand in a shop a restaurant or any other public space. Because everywhere you go people always talk to you in Norwegian. They may swift to English if you say you don't understand. The fact that I don't neither speak nor understand Norwegian really makes me feel different and strange. Every time I receive a letter from Norwegian authorities, I have to look for someone to help me reading. It is also a limitative and dangerous factor. I once went to hospital because I was sick. I was supposed to go back to the doctor after a month. The appointment was mentioned on a piece of paper written in Norwegian. The doctor explained to me and underlined the date of the appointment. But he did not tell me I will be charged in case I will not show up as it was also written. So, as I was feeling better, I did not attend the appointment. I receive another letter with a new date, which I ignored. After a month or two I received a bill from the hospital. I had to pay something like seven hundred NOK. I went to the hospital to complain and they explained everything to me. I was so angry but had no choice* (Almard, Morocco, Uis).

Many students acknowledged to have experienced language problems, especially in job seeking and social interactions in everyday life. Language barriers constitute a great cause of

frustrations and expose the subject to what Murphy-Lejeune refers to as "cultural fatigue" (*op cit.*:117).

- **The weather**

The climate is a significant challenge to African students in Stavanger. The first aspect is the temperature. From a geographical point of view, African countries are hot. There exist cold periods but they are far from the temperature experienced in Norway especially in winter time. This difference in the weather is difficult to handle for many students. "I have been living here for two years. But up to know I'm not yet used to the weather. The level of the cold is so high that I don't leave my room when it is not really necessary. Usually during winter when I go to the shops, I make sure I buy enough for the whole week. Then if there is no class, I will stay indoors" said a student from Nigeria. The snow is something uncommon for Africans and usually, as mentioned the respondents, at the beginning they are very excited by the idea of seeing the snow. But when they really see the snow, there is sort of mental shock, at least for some of them as may appear from this statement: "*actually I hate the snow. I strongly believe that the fact of seeing everything white does something wrong in my mind*".

- **Food and alcohol**

Adapting to a new environment implies adopting local ways of living. These ways of living include consumption habits, especially food. The quality of food available in Stavanger has been mentioned as a problem by the respondents.

One of my major difficulties here in Stavanger was food-related. I used to be seriously nervous when I had to cook...I was tired of eating the same food all the time. It was like a cycle: Rice, pasta, potato. That was the only items I'm familiarized with and which I could find in shops. It was quite stressing and at some point, I could spend an entire day without eating as i had enough with the monotony. I started adopting Norwegian food, especially pizza. But that did not really change anything. Finally, thanks to a friend, I discovered an Asian shop. There you find African food and you have more options...Discovering that shop was a great event in my life here...as I mentioned earlier on, I was not eating well and could feel I was losing weight. I'm not saying the food problem is solved. Solving the food problem means eating like in my home country and this is unfortunately almost impossible. Definitely, food remains a serious problem for me (Simson, from Tanzania, Uis).

Alcohol is also an issue for African students. However, unlike food, the concern with alcohol is not the diversity or variety of the items, but the price: "[…] *also, drinking in*

Stavanger is a challenge. Alcohol is just too expensive. I have to think and even plan before I decide to offer myself a bottle of beer or a glass of wine. For somebody like me who come from a country were alcohol is five times cheaper, it is a choc" (Chewa, from Nigeria, Uis).

- **The 'Blackness': stereotypes and prejudices** (?)

As I mentioned above, researches comparing the level of stress and depression among social groups point out that immigrant populations are more exposed than the native. The situation is explained by several factors, especially social and cultural. Based on the conversations I had, I intend to introduce a 'new' explanatory hypothesis. It relies on the idea that the color of the skin by itself is a stressing and depressive element. It seemed that historical facts (slavery, racism) on one hand, and the current economic situation of Africa (warfare, starvation, diseases) as shaped by the media and the literature on the other hand, structure and still dominate psychologically the Black race, at least some of the students participating in this research. One could argue the contact with the "Others" (the Whites) appears to be moments of internal questioning and turbulence for, every look, action and all attitudes from the "Others" is interpreted with reference to both the pass (less glorious) and the current situation (under development) in a large a part of Africa . I would call it here the "consciousness of the slave and the poor".

The "consciousness of the slave and the poor" as a way of thinking, feeling and doing is a psychological state which is constructed over time through the combination of several elements. The first one is movies and other documentaries on slavery, colonization, racism, etc. that present and portray the Black as inferior. The second element is the actions of the media which consist of showing Africa as an island of war, poverty, diseases, sufferings, and all other negative things. That dark image diffused by the media shapes the native's representation of Africa and thus influences negatively their perception of African immigrants including students. This perception and representation appears in the type of questions some natives ask the immigrants in their daily life about Africa. The following is a testimony:

I once went to a party where I met a Norwegian guy. As we were setting next to each other, we started socializing. As usual, the first questions were: 'where are you from?', 'for how long have you been here?', 'are you studying or working'? Everything was ok until he asked: 'do people still live on trees in Africa?' 'Do you have enough food there?', 'Have you ever suffered from malaria?' I managed to answer him though I was so hurt internally. I can't believe that up to now some Whites still thing that people in Africa live on trees. In their mind, coming here is an achievement and that is why they look upon us like whatever (…) to be honest

with you, from my experience here, I strongly argue that racism is not and will never be over. The discourse is one thing and the reality is another […] I have experienced a lot of things along that line" (Edison, from Liberia, Uis)

Although it is obvious these words are stereotyping and prejudicing, it remains difficult to tell with objectivity whether the intention of its author was to hurt or a sign of racism as interpreted the respondent. Words of this nature are numerous in the materials I collected from the field. For instance, another respondent mentioned the same feeling as a Black person and likewise the first situation, it is about interpreting the attitude of the 'Others':

Sometime, when you meet a group of Norwegians, especially young people on the street, the way they look they give to you is really interrogative. It is like they are surprised to see a dark person. Or it appears like 'what is she doing here?'... Well there are a lot of situations that really make me feel strange and realize that I don't belong here... even sometimes, I have the impression that I'm scaring some kids in the shops, bus...at least from the way they react. The feeling is not fundamentally a problem but I would acknowledge that it does affect me (Rozia, from Uganda, Mhs).

Here also, I would like to insist on the fact that it is very easy to be mistaken while trying to give any sense to the signs and gestures produced by the "Others". Furthermore and along the same line, another respondent stated:

I cannot believe it but racism is real in this country. Yesterday we were having poster presentation at the university [what is it about I asked?] It is poster summarizing our master thesis. So every student, in different days, presents the main points of their project on a single poster. There is a place in the corridor of our faculty were the presentation happens. The objective is to share our project with the others and also learn from them since their comments are highly expected. So, yesterday was our turn. I was so chocked. No one came to me; no one showed interest to my poster. They were interested in Norwegians students' posters. [Were you the only Black? [I asked] *No. There were also a Nigerian and Eritrean. We all were discriminated. Only few people came to us. I'm not saying that I'm smarter, but you I could see my poster was better than some of those having more attention. It is not fair; we all are here to learn* (Abran, from Ghana, Uis).

Whether the situation described by this respondent can be considered as racism or discrimination act or not is not a question to be addressed in this work. The point I would like to raise is rather the interpretation the students make about the fact that less people showed interest to their presentation. To his opinion, the lack of interest is due to the "Blackness" and nothing else.

There is another conversation interesting to mention in this section. It is about the feeling of slavery, as it appears from the following words:

When I was still a student, I used to have two to three different jobs. In addition to my cleaning jobs which were the majors, used to work some time in a cantina and a restaurant. The job I hated the most was the restaurant one. The thing, I was feeling more and more uncomfortable...I was as if I was being forced to work. But I could not understand what was happening to me. With, I really questioned myself and I discovered it was about pride. The truth is that I had the impression I was reproducing the slavery. I was a "Black" serving food the "White", just like it was the case during slavery. Slavery trade was longtime ago but I have it permanently in my mind, I still feel ashamed. (...) finally I quitted the job. Cleaning was ok because I knew exactly what to do. I had no contact whit whoever... I used to work with headphones in my ears listening to music. (...) Thank God! Now I have a job. Last year I bought and apartment. I just bought a new car for almost six hundred and fifty thousand Krones...The car is not common here in Stavanger. I'm looked upon differently! I can ensure you (Caloux, from Cameroon, graduate student from Uis and now working).

It is likely that the interpretation of codes, signs, and symbols is strongly influenced by a preexisting mindset that is shaped and structured by a self-representation. The self-representation in this case is a result of both what the Black subject knows about their historical pass and how he is being portrayed especially by the media. Many people to whom I talked in the framework of this research mention racism as an everyday reality. Without taking any position, it is worth mentioning the words of some interviewees that are thought-provoking. For instance, Calvin revealed the following:

When I arrived here? I when to the hospital for TB [tuberculosis] check-up? as provided for by law. I would say the measure is discriminatory; I would rather say racist [why is it racist? I asked]. The rule is racist because it is not for everyone who comes to Norway. Only people from poor countries are submitted to the exigency: Africans, Latino Americans, Western Europeans, under developed countries citizens in shot. So, I went for the x-ray. When the result came out, I have called for supplementary tests as they were doubts about my status. I went back to the hospital where I have been quarantined for four days. For me it was ok. I had a last and complex checkup to go and a nurse came to me to explain why and how. She was speaking about TB [tuberculosis], using posters on which sick persons were only Black and the nurse or the doctor taking care of them was White. At some point I stopped her and asked why only Black peoples were portrayed. Embarrassingly, she tried to provide justifications. She could not stay longer as she felt so uncomfortable with the question (Calvin, from D. R. Congo, Uis).

I had almost a similar experience, when I arrived in Stavanger[29].

In all cases, the debate surrounding the issue of racism is still going. Some people argue racism is over and considered a self-victimizing strategy used by certain ethnic group. As has been revealed in recent researches, the others emphasize that racism is still a reality in the modern world. In this respect, Vala argues the following:

> *Racism has not disappeared but rather, has changed its pattern. In much recent researches, a distinction has been made between old-fashioned and new (or modern) racism. This distinction is rooted in the finding that many individuals are now reluctant to openly express racist attitudes, and seek to express racism indirectly* (2009: 5).

- **Financial difficulties**

Although the common point between students is the studies, their statuses are different. While some are scholarship holders, a great number are self-payer student. In principle, by law whoever wants to study in Norway should have enough financial means to survive during the sojourn. This means a student must be free from need and consequently, should devote all their time to academic issues. From experience, almost every self-payer student has to combine studies and jobs to be able to survive (accommodation and food).

If combining studies and job is a common practice among all Africans students, the level implication in extra academic activities seemed to vary according to each category. For instance a scholarship-holder student can decide on when to work: " *I have a job in restaurant. Usually they send me work schedule in advance so date that I can choose suitable working days. I can decide not to work at all, depending on many things such as school time table, my mood etc*." (John, from Ghana, Uis). Unlike this informant, self-payer students have fewer choices. Some of the jobs they are involved in seem to be seriously demanding in terms of energy and time, as some said *"I hate my job…it is really difficult but I have to do it! I don't have any choice anyways. I need to buy food, pays rent and bills"*. This statement is common among some students. According to the respondents, an example of hard job in which African students are largely involved is newspaper delivering. One the informant described how he handles the activity:

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[29] Without taking any position with the opinions of this respondent in regard to racism and discrimination, I would simply confirm the truth of his word about the posters used at the hospital for sensitizing on tuberculosis. In fact, I had a similar experience when I arrived in Stavanger. I have been sectioned for the same reasons. One of the nurses came to me with the posters described by this informant, bearing Blacks as seeks persons. I also asked the question about the choice of the "colors" on the posters and the nurse apologized after arguing it was just a random choice

You have to get up every day (except weekends) around two, go and collect the stock of newspapers. The worst part is going from house to house to drop the newspapers. It is really hard, especially in winter time with very low temperature. You have to face the cold for about four hours.... I finish at 06:30. You need to be fast, as you have to go back home and rest a bit before going to the University where you may spend the hold day. Some days I also have to go the office where I do my internship. It is really challenging but I have to (Emuaka, from Nigeria, Uis).

Financial difficulties experienced by some students are in regards to the cost of their migratory projects. Likewise any type of project (at least from an economics perspective), every migratory project requires financials means, necessary for the preparation of the travel. Preparing a travel has different significations depending on the profiles of the candidates to migration. In the case of students, the preparation mainly includes applying for a visa, booking a flight ticket. These costs also vary according to many factors: countries of destination (the location), the geographic location of the diplomatic institution issuing the visa, etc. Most of the times, the required amount is not affordable by the candidate alone. In that case, lending money is usually an alternative. The loan is supposed to be paid during the stay abroad. Consequently, it is important to have a source of income as soon as possible and, in this respect, all means are good, as revealed this student:

[…] preparing the travel was really stressing. I had to apply for a visa and book a flight. For the visa I had to go to Nigeria where there is Norwegian embassy. The thing is that financially I was seriously limited. I had no choice than lending money. I'm indebted. Currently, I owe seven hundred thousand that I am supposed to pay in June; that is in three months. My scholarship is six thousand NOK and I pay a rent of four thousand. So, every month I have just two thousand to manage and everything here is expensive as you know, especially food. How am I going to pay the loan? Well...I try to minimize my expenditure while urgently looking for a job. I have not yet managed to get any. I have to acknowledge that my school schedule so far is very tight though. For now I go to the city every Saturday to collect bottle and sell them, you know the bottle machines... I can collect thirty to fifty bottles or even more, it depends. Every month, I can make three hundred to three hundred and fifty NOK out of it (Justo, from Cameroon, Mhs).

According to some of the respondents financial difficulties are much more pronounced when it comes to health care. To their opinion, it is very expensive to meet specialist doctors such as dentists. Many students acknowledged they hardly go to a doctor, unless the problem is too serious that need should be solved emergently. Otherwise, the practice is to wait until they travel to somewhere they could fine cheaper health offers. Even when the need of

meeting a medical doctor is urgent, the choice is still made on the basis of financial calculation in order to have a cheapest option. The case of John is a perfect illustration:

> *In January, I suffered from a serious tooth pain. When it started, I thought I was going to stop as I was taking pain killers. After two days, it got worsened. I could not sleep in the night. It was difficult to eat. I decided to go to a clinic. Only the consultation fee was about a thousand NOK. For the tooth to be removed I was asked a fee of around four thousand NOK. Finally I found a clinic in Poland and booked an appointment with a dentist. All the cost including the flight ticked, hotel and medical fee was less than three thousand NOK* (Chewa, from Nigeria, Uis).

- **"I need a girl"**

One the informants express a challenge related to his sexual life:

> *It is exactly nine months since I had sex! You know sex solves a lot of problems in man's live, at least when you are used to it. Seriously in need a girl; not only because of the sex issue but also because I need a companion, someone I can share my emotions...play and talk with. Having a girl friend is important when you live in a new environment without you family and friends...but then, having one is a great challenge as it seems the Black girls you meet here would like to have a White guy while White girls are not easily accessible. May be my approaches and strategies are not good enough* (Chewa, from Nigeria, Uis).

This "joke" could hides a serious problem since quite a few of the respondent (male especially) mentioned it as a concern in their everyday life.

- **Home land as source of stress**

From the interviews as well as the informal conversations, on can notice African perception or representation of migration to Europe is completely economic oriented as living abroad (in a broad sense of the concept) is perceived in Africa as a mean to ensure one's social mobility. This is due to the fact that Europe is represented as a paradise. Consequently, students from Africa are considered by the relatives and friends as economic migrants. Consequently they are perceived as a solution to financial problems. For almost every African family, migrating symbolizes a hope, no matter what is the motive of the spatial mobility, be it for studies purpose. At the end, according to my respondents and personal experience, these consideration put student under a sort of social pressure and an uncomfortable situation as, the expectations are not only too high but are also formulated very early; that is, after a few months after the travel.

This is due to several factors. The principal one is the representation of Europe in collective mentality back home. People still believe that Europe is a place where earning money is the easiest thing. Europe is a paradise where money grows on trees. This mentality is created and maintained the media which used to portray Europe as a place to be. The media work is supported by the attitudes of some migrants once back home, especially for holidays. Showing off is they favorite life style. It consists of spending money conspicuously. In so doing, they contribute in presenting migration as a mean for social mobility, yet the reality in the destination countries is quite different. In all cases, student are victims of these representations on the basis of which a lot of expectations are formulated vis-à-vis them. The expectations constitute a serious stress factor, as the following words show:

> *Right now I'm completely pissed off by my people in Africa. They really think that it is easy to make money here. They forget I'm just a student...no one cares. Family members and friends call or send message to asking for help. It is a complex situation because when you reply that you cannot help, they will ether think you are stingy or you are just being lazy to work and earn money. It is an uncomfortable situation. I decided not to answer calls from home...At the same time I feel very bad living like that. I'm really stressed by the way people behave* (Simson, from Tanzania, Uis).

It is on the basis of those expectations that some students decide to look for job.

Adaptation problems presented above show a sort of dissatisfaction and stress among African students. As mentions Lazarus, "*stress and coping are, above all, relational concepts*" (1940:40). This means questioning one requires considering the other. Hence coping strategies of African students means focusing on "*how they struggle day in day out to manage the adaptational tasks they face in their new place of residence*" (*ibid*).

However, I have never asked question in my numerous informal conversations that could allow me to objectively address this aspect. Nevertheless based on a superficial content analysis of the conversation and a non-systematic observation, it is possible to come out with what could be referred to as coping strategies observable among the target group. They include: isolation (staying in the room for the whole day, eating in the room, most often alone in the kitchen), relating with people from the same ethnic group.

This observation is in line with the result of the research carried out on adjustment problems experienced by African students in the United Stated by Leon and Chou (1996). They reveal that in face of the challenges imposed by the new environment, isolation is usually the attitude adopted by the student. Furthermore, the authors notice that isolation lead

to homesickness which associated to the culture shock contributes to anxiety, confusion, insomnia physical illness, and depression (Cited by Blake, *op cit*.:14).

To what extent can everyday experiences influence students' decisions? Are student's migratory projects shaped by the above mentioned adaptation difficulties?

II-   Daily life experiences and migratory projects: the dilemma of the students
1- "There is no place like home …"

If usually a project is defined as a planned set of interrelated tasks to be executed over a fixed period and within certain cost and other limitations, migratory present different features. A project in the framework of mobility is an open process as there not limitations in terms of duration, space etc. A migratory project is a permanent construct, designed, shaped and modified in the courses of the time under the influence of several factors related to both the sending and receiving countries as points out Berry:

> *The combination of political, economic and demographic conditions being faced by individuals in their society of origin also need to be studied as the basis for understanding the degree of voluntariness in the migration motivation. (…) Migrants can be ranged on a continuum between reactive and proactive, with the former being motivated by the factors that are constraining or exclusionary, and generally negative in character, while the later are motivated by factor that are facilitating or enabling, and generally positive in character; these contrasting factors have also been referred to as push/pull factor* […] (1997:16).

For the student as well, decisions in regard to their mobility are taken on the basis of a conjugation or association of the realities in not only the host country but also their homeland. The interviews with the respondents showed that decision-making in the framework of migratory option is a complex situation as it leads some of the students in a sort of dilemma when it comes to deciding on leaving or staying in Norway after their study program. The box below is an illustration. The words are from Abran, one of the female respondents participating in the study.

My aim was just to study even though I resigned from my work. My aim was to come and go back. Now it is fifty-fifty. If you check, the difference is big. I will say the value of the money compare to back home and the benefits is not the same. Second, comfort of living here and back home are not the same. And, since I have the taste of this luxury, I am tempted to stay. But you will get all this luxury, the money and everything but at the same goal there is no place as home.

So, even if you choose to stay her for hundred years, you will always come to that point of going back home. I would like to stay here but I keep on asking myself for how long do I

> *want to stay! May be just two years or less. Because if I tell myself five years I'm deceiving myself because within the five years I could be more than committed and more than established and, going back will be more difficult. Because in five years, if I would get a job I would have saved enough to buy a house, married, and have kid. In that context, when it is the time to move what happen? Are going with your family? Are you leaving your kids here?*
>
> *But personally, I used to say I was going to stay, I was going to stay here but now I don't know. Every day I wake up with that edge of going back home even though I want to stay for a year…Even this morning, I was asking myself, I am really going to stay for a year! When do I really want to go back! If I would have a job offer in my country, I will leave right now, I will not even think twice. I'm really interested in going back home but what I'm really wishing for is to have a job opportunity back home, because I know it is not easy there. That is why going back is difficult. I don't want to go back and be seating at home doing nothing. I wish when I go back today I start working tomorrow"* (Abran, from Ghana, Uis).

"There is no place like home". This expression appeared in many interviewees' words. It tells not only about their perception of home and abroad, but also about a sort of dilemma they are facing: leaving or staying in Norway (or another European country). This embarrassment is a result of several factors.

From the different interviews, the idea of leaving Norway is proportional to the deepness and the thickness of the attachment to the homeland. This is due to the fact that family members as well friends and all the relatives live there. Consequently, many of the students feel lonely. Also the Norwegian life style is cited as another reason contributing to the feeling of unhappiness. Indeed, despite the modernization associated with economic crisis and many others elements, African societies to a large extend are still characterized by collectivistic life style, in opposition to individualism predominating in the developed world of which Norway. While the first pattern emphasizes extended family, friends, relatives and group goals above individual needs or desires, the second emphasizes personal achievement at the expense of group goals, resulting in a strong sense of competition. The following is the opinion of Rozia:

> *Everything you see here in Norway, we have it in Africa: roads, houses, light, internet, water, hospitals ... in short all what you can imagine. But, the quality of the service differs. What I am trying to say is that Norway has the best quality of what we have back home. The quality and the standard are really high here, and hence, likely to guarantee a better live or good living conditions, if you want. But for me, life or happiness is about relationships, which Norway does not have. Life in my perspective is more about relationship than everything else. I mean my*

family and my friends. I miss them every single day and that makes me sad (Rozia, from Uganda, Mhs).

For this interviewee likewise many others, the ties with the homeland constitute a good motive for leaving Norway despite the high standard of life and other facilities one may enjoy living here. Hence, in their perspective, happiness is not guaranteed by material or economic satisfaction. Apparently, for these categories of interviewees, psychological content and life satisfaction is about the social environment. That is, the people in the immediate surroundings to whom they talk and with who they share their everyday life. In that condition, money is not the priority, at least for Calvin:

[…] honestly speaking, I have the feeling that my life somehow stopped as I got here. Every day I ask myself a lot of questions about the meaning of life…I have no life here…Definitely it is easier to earn money here, contrarily to my country, but I don't think I really enjoy the money in this society where you are almost alone in your own world. Happiness is not only about wealth (Calvin, from D. R. Congo, Uis).

2- …but"

All the interviewees showed strong bonds to their respective home countries. To their opinion, the ideal is to live close to one's family members and friends. However, some students in their relationship to their homeland could be considered extremists and others relativists. The first group includes students who consider going back as the only alternative. Their plan is to leave Norway as soon as they finish their study program. Only a few students belong to this group. The second category is constituted of students who would also like to fly back at the end of the sojourn, but on certain conditions, often related to the political, social and economic situation of their home countries. The migratory projects of this category of students are more dynamic and likely to change and evolve. Kenneth said:

Before I was born, the president of my country was already there. He doesn't care about the development of the country. No infrastructures, no job opportunity for young people. You will hardly get a position unless you have someone to help you or you have money to buy as corruption is a norm there. The living conditions of the population are terrible: no hospital, no water etc. What is the point of going back into that hell? Here you have everything to have a good life (Kenneth, from Cameroon, Uis).

The migratory project of this informant is conditioned by the level of development in their country of origin. The decision to stay longer in Norway is informed by the quality of living standard.

Security situation in their homeland has also been mentioned as influencing migratory options and choices. Zackeus, a student from Somalia is currently planning to extend the stay in Norway, due to the insecurity prevailing in his country of origin: "Let say I have my master degree and there is peace in my country. I will leave tomorrow. There is no doubt!". It is also the case with John from Nigeria. He is doing a bachelor degree in offshore technology. He presents his mobility scheme:

> *Initially, my plan was to acquire a good training and go back because the oil sector in Nigeria is expanding and with a certificated earned abroad the likeliness of having a job is a little bit high. But right now, I cannot really tell about my plan. (…) You probably heart about terrorism in Nigeria with the so called Boko Haram. My region is one of their targets. They kill people and also destroy oil infrastructures. I'm not sure it is good decision to go back and live in that context. Currently, I'm seriously considering staying longer. I may take a Master at the university or look for a job while waiting for the betterment of the situation in Nigeria* (John, from Nigeria, Uis).

One thing is to decide to stay longer in Norway and the extension of the residence permit is another. What are the strategies mobilized by the actors for modifying their migratory projects?

3- Redefining the migratory project: all means are good

After making the decision to stay longer in Norway or especially in Stavanger, the most complex issue is coming out with suitable means likely to circumvent the legal and institutional barriers. How to extend one's visas? This question, leads to the analysis of the strategies of the social actors. A strategy is a method or plan chosen to bring about a desired future, such as achievement of a goal or solution to a problem. Although some of the students' strategies appear already more or less explicit in the excerpts presented so far have, it is important to highlight them.

- **When failing becomes a means**

Studies constitute an easy motive for visa extension. Those willing to make use of this strategy to stay longer in Norway have two possibilities. The first one is retarding the end of one's ongoing study program by failing deliberately. The second one consists in registering for a new program, as reveals the following words:

> *I am planning to stay at least one more year. Next week I will probably apply for a visa extension. I have all the required documentations, of which the most important is the admission letter from the university…Well, as I knew I was not*

going back immediately after the program, I deliberately failed two courses. I will take them next year (Simson, from Tanzania, Uis).

In case a candidate to visa extension has fully completed their studies, enrolling in a new study program is a common practice: "My program in computer science is ending in June. I have already applied for a Master in Environmental Technology and I am admitted. I will also register for the Norwegian language and in the meantime, I will be looking for work positions in different companies (Abran, from Ghana, Uis).

- **Financial solidarity**

One of the requirements for visa extension for students is a bank statement proving the availability of financial means (around ninety thousand Norwegian Krones) likely to cover the living expenses during period of study. Usually, it is quite impossible to afford the amount. The strategy used is what can be called community solidarity. It consists of collecting money from friends. In this case, in the name of solidarity, everybody contributes. The process consists in transferring money into the bank account of the person in need. When the amount is gathered, the next step is to go to the bank and ask for a bank statement. As soon as the document is issued, the recipient transfers the money back to the different senders. Calvin resorted to this mean:

> *[…] money is the easiest thing to have when you are willing to renew your visas. You just need to talk to friends and everyone will give you what they have in their bank account…or they know someone who can help. And when you are done with the bank, you send back the money. I did that several times. That is African solidarity and it is really important* (Calvin, from D. R. Congo).

- **A "pro forma marriage" (?)[30]**

According to the law, Norwegian citizenship can be granted through marriage to a national citizen. On the website of Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI), one can notice that the Norwegian citizenship is granted "If you are married to, or are the registered partner or cohabitant of a Norwegian national, the time you have lived in Norway and the total time you have been married, registered partners or cohabitants must be at least seven years. You must have lived in Norway for a total of at least three years during the last ten

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[30] The expression is borrowed from the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration. It means a marriage just "for the sake of appearances". See http://www.udi.no/Norwegian-Directorate-of-Immigration/Central-topics/Family-immigration/Marriage-of-convenience.

years. It is a condition that you are still married, registered partners or cohabitants and live together at the time of the decision"[31].

In the spirit of the law, marriage probably means the process by which two people who love each other make their relationship public, official, and permanent. It is the joining of two people in a bond that putatively lasts until death (though in practice can be cut short by divorce). For many reasons, this practice is often denatured by the social actors who have made a means of survival. There exists what is referred to as pro forma marriage or marriage of convenience. It is about a marriage between two people for practical or financial reasons and not for love or intimacy. Although illegal in many countries of the world, more and more, couples decide to have a marriage of convenience for different purposes of which citizenship acquiring is one of them. Marriage of convenience is considered immigration fraud and consequently constitutes a great concern for governments in many immigration destinations[32].

Some students participating in this research mentioned marriage as a possibility that can be utilized in order to achieve the goal of staying longer in Norway. "*Foreigners married to Norwegian citizens can obtain citizenship after four years marriage if they have been residing in Norway for at least three of them. Personally, I would like to stay in Norway through a work contract. But if finally I cannot find any I think I will get married to a girl with Norwegian citizenship*" (Simson, from Tanzania, Uis). The student author of these words seemed sufficiently informed about the marriage issues. He argued that not only Norwegians are targeted for marriage but also citizen of some countries in Eastern Europe according to certain agreements between Norway and theses states. Whether such agreements exist or not is not a concern in this research.

- **Having a child with a Norwegian citizen**

According to the informants, having a child with a Norwegian offers advantages or facilities to foreigners in extending their resident permit in Norway. Jemsum seemed to know more about it as he said:

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[31] http://www.udi.no

[32] In Norway, immigration authorities have criteria on the basis of which the union could be qualified a marriage of convenience or a "pro forma marriage". A following link provides more detail about the process: http://www.udi.no/Norwegian-Directorate-of-Immigration/Central-topics/Family-immigration/Marriage-of-convenience/.

Also to have an idea about the issue in Canada and the attitude of the government, follow the link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2013/03/20/jason-kenney-marriage-fraud_n_2917029.html.

You will never be expelled from Norway if you have a kid with a Norwegian girl. All what you are supposed to do is spending some time with the kid and also contribute to his needs. But if the girl is wicked you may get into trouble (…) she can prevent you from seeing the child and even give report to the police... That hardly happens anyways. So it is a good strategy. (Jemsum, Cameroon, Uis).

Nevertheless, considering cases of deportation that had been reported by the media in Norway, one should doubt the effectiveness of this specific strategy.

- **Name changing**

Changing one's name has been presented as a strategy used for integration the Norwegian society. Considering itself as a part of group Norbert Elias[33] could refer to as outsiders (in opposition to the established, and therefore victim of exclusion), a student decided to resort to an uncommon ruse, which consists in playing with identification details. The following is a testimony:

After graduating from the university, I immediately started looking for a position. I cannot tell the number of applications I sent...but I can ensure you application sending was almost a full time job for me. None of the companies ever called me for an interview. They always replied my profile is interesting but they are sorry to inform me that currently, there is no need in human resources within the company. I was frustrated and finally, for some reasons, I decided to change my name into a western one. As soon as the process was over, I restarted applying. I sent three applications and got two interviews. The first company, as there was really in need in personnel's, I even got a job description before the interview. When I showed up for the interview, I could easily see that the employer, I mean the person who was supposed to do the interview was somehow surprised seeing me! It was clear she was not expecting somebody like me...Fortunately I had the job (Caloux, from Cameroon, graduated from Uis and now working).

According to this story, the respondent accessed a job because of the name changed. Whether it is true or not is less important in the framework of this reflection. What is rather significant here is the strategy, which is the idea of changing the name.

This chapter, which was the continuation of the previous showed the difficulties African students face in their new environment. It also presented the relationship between these adaptation challenges and the migratory projects of the actors. Moreover, the chapter revealed the strategies used by African students in order to redefine and (re)adapt their migratory projects.

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[33] Elias, N. and Scotson, J. L.(1965). The established and the outsiders. A sociological enquiry into community problems, London, Frank Cass & Co.

Conclusion

This research aimed at exploring African students' mobility experiences. The research was structured around the notions of migratory projects and everyday life.

By putting these concepts at the core of this undertaking, the objective was to grasp the dynamics of the migration projects of African students in Stavanger: their initial mobility plans, likely changes and evolvements (modification of the initial plans) that occur in the short or long term. Looking into these changes led to the analysis of the strategies put in place by these actors in order to adjust their initial migratory projects. The research also aimed to giving a sociological account of African students' everyday life experiences of living and studying abroad. Everyday life experiences include various issues such as social interactions, cultural adaptation (challenges), economic activities (the role of networks), night life (the purposes), etc. Finally, the research was equally concerned with the link between African students' everyday life experiences and their migratory projects. That is, the extent to which the decision to leave or stay in Norway at the end of studies is influenced by everyday life experiences.

In regard to the objectives stated above the research was guided by the following question: What are the initial migratory projects of students from Africa and what are the main factors influencing the changes or evolvement of these migratory projects on the one hand the strategies they put in place in fulfilling their mobility objectives on the other hand? The principal hypothesis argued that the initial migratory project changes under the influence of a combination of factors including living conditions (safety, job opportunities, etc.) guaranteed by Norway and the economic and social situation of the students' home countries.

This research subscribed for a qualitative approach and accordingly data were collected through interviews and informal conversations as well as field observations. The interviews were held with a heterogeneous sample of twelve persons (five female and seven male). Informal conversation has been a great means of data gathering. Opinions of many students have been collected via this technique. Those whose words have been used are mentioned in the section presenting the informants. Direct observation was useful in grasping social interactions and night life. The data collected from the field has been exploited using content analysis. In this respect, relevant words, word sentences, phrases and themes have been defined.

Several conclusions were drawn from the analysis of the empirical material. The first one is that the decision of coming to Norway is a rational choice built on the shortcomings and insufficiencies of the students' home country environments. Therefore, education appeared as the principal element the initial migratory plans. Coming to Norway was then perceived a way to access what their home land failed to provide, given the opportunities, facilities, and living condition the chosen country presents. Once in Norway the migratory objectives are (re) adjusted taking into consideration factors rooted in both the home countries (job opportunity, insecurity, infrastructure etc.) and the new environment (good labor market for instance).

Another finding is that once in their new environment, African students face many challenges in adapting to the new environment. The challenges are related to the weather, food, the social system, sexual life, financial difficulties (which are experienced differently according to the category of students- scholarship holders, free movers etc.) and language barriers. From the interviews, it was evident that the migratory projects of some of the students are highly influenced by these challenges. However a greater number of the informants seem to handle these difficulties well, as they intend to stay in Norway after their studies. Staying in Norway after studies requires a good reason for visa extension. The findings reveal rich and various strategies used by the actors in order to fulfill this objective. These strategies include: failing (on purpose), enrolling for a new study program, name changing and getting married to a native Norwegian.

Concerning the economic component of their migratory projects, it has been noticed that Africans are either self-employed or employed. Self-employing activities are very limited and include, babysitting and bottle collecting. The majority of African students are employed within the sectors of waiter and catering, cleaning, and newspaper delivery. Unsurprisingly, the findings revealed the role of networks in the process of accessing a job. Nevertheless, talking about networks, their nature deserves to be highlighted. Indeed, from the words of the informants, the networks on which they relied while seeking a job depart from the classical and reductionist conception which so far has limited migrant networks in an ethnic or community frame. The networks portrayed by the students include people from different and diversified nationalities, including native Norwegians. Economic activities allowed observing that masculinity is reconstructed in the course of the migration experience. Some jobs in which African male students are engaged contrast with their initial sense and meaning of being a man.

The finding also permitted the emergence of what has been referred to in this thesis as 'the dilemma of the students'. This observation arose from the paradoxes discovered in the students participating in this study. They demonstrated a strong attachment to their homeland, but its social context is not likely to provide the possibility to live the life they would love to. On the other hand, they are experiencing life in a country where everything is positively different, but with a low sense of belonging and various adaptation challenges, hence the apparent feeling of dissatisfaction with life. Given this paradox, African students in a great majority are torn between the idea of leaving or staying. However, very few decide to move back straight after their studies and consequently they devise various strategies to extend the stay as shown above. To return to the analysis of migratory projects, it is important to emphasize that those struggling to extend their stay in Norway are not ready or willing to stay there forever. All the respondents mentioned their intention of going back to their home land in the future. This also holds for those with permanent jobs. Therefore one could argue that at the end Stavanger is just a transition point for this category of migrants. This simply means that African students' migratory projects remain in the making throughout the duration of their stay in Stavanger.

This research does not claim to have exhausted all the issues surrounding the experiences African students in Stavanger, especially their migratory projects. It would be scientifically interesting to look into African students' informal economic activities (which exist). Moreover a qualitative research could be initiated in order to understand the low representation of Somalis in the official statistics of students in Norway. This specific ethnic group, though one of the largest immigrant groups in Norway, is surprisingly underrepresented in the student population.

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- **Useful links**

Youth Division of African Union Commission: "... a Youthful Continent! Africa's Position on Youth" (http://africa-youth.org/

http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php

http://www.transparency.org

http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/dbhvev/student/utenlandske_rapport

https://www.ssb.no/en/

http://www.udi.no/Norwegian-Directorate-of-Immigration/Central-topics/Family-immigration/Marriage-of-convenience.

http://www.udi.no/

www.indexmundi.com

http://www.statistiques-mondiales.com

http://www.mhs.no

http://www.lanekassen.no/nb-NO/Toppmeny/Languages/The-Quota-Scheme/Cancellation-of-debt/

http://www.scholars4dev.com/1965/quota-scholarships-for-developing-countries/#ixzz2PsuBdUdC

Annex

I-   Interview guide

1- Dynamic of migratory projects

- Decision to come to Norway

- Study program in Norway

- Previous academic background

- Family situation

- Economic and political situation in the home country

- Financing the study and stay in Norway

- Duration of the academic program

2- Daily life experiences.

- Time management

- Daily tasks

- Consumption habit

- Types of food

- Food supplying

- Social interactions

- Sexual life

- Adaptation challenges

- The feeling as a foreigner

- Norwegian academic system

3- Night life

- Why going out?

- The choice of places to go

- The companions

- Sexual life

4- Economic activities

- Different types of jobs they are involves in

- Decision to engaging oneself in financial activity

- Strategies used in getting a job (networks?)

- Manhood and jobs

5- Post studies mobility plan

- Leaving or staying in Norway?

- Why to leave or to stay?

- The strategies used to extend the sojourn

- Long term migratory project

II-   Observation guide

Where to observe?	What to observe?
Night club	Social interactions (with the fellow Africans and the others)
Campus	
Student parties	
Student accommodation kitchen	