

Master's Thesis

Seeking Identity in Diasporic Film in Norway

A Textual Analysis of the TV Series

Norsk-ish (2020 NRK) Season One

Amir Bashti Monfared

Master in Media Practices

December 2023

Word Count: 35115



HØGSKULEN
I VOLDA

Abstract

The first and second-generation migrants in Norway now have more opportunities to tell their stories of diasporic experiences in the entertainment industry due to the recent film and television industry's inclusive policies. Fresh perspectives and voices diversify the industry's cultural landscape, and the filmmakers' bottom-up approach may lessen the stigmatizing portrayals of minorities in the media.

In addition to exploring contemporary literature on migrant and diasporic film, both globally and in Norway, this thesis investigates the discourses raised in the fictional series "*Norsk-ish*" (in English: Norwegian-ish) Season One, which aired on the Norwegian Public Broadcasting Network (NRK) in 2020. The series was co-written and created by two Norwegian artists, Bahareh Badavi and Melike Leblebjioglu, the second generation of migrants in Norway. Semi-structured interviews with them have benefited the exploration of thematic and contextual elements of this research.

Using the textual analysis approach within the realm of cultural studies, I have examined how socio-cultural elements in the TV series relate to challenges experienced by migrant communities. In this study, emphasis is placed more on analyzing these cultural aspects rather than film elements. To understand how communities are portrayed and notions of minority and majority identities are depicted through characters' struggles, I closely examine representations of three diasporas: Iranian, Turkish, and Punjabi Indian.

As second-generation migrants, *Norsk-ish*'s main characters struggle with traditional values from their parents' homelands and certain cultural aspects of Norwegian society. The diasporic home, however, appears to be significantly more troublesome for them than Norwegian society. The intensification of this approach has sometimes perpetuated previously seen stereotypes of first-generation migrants in the Norwegian media. I argue that due to the series' overemphasis on sympathy for second-generation characters' struggles, the represented diasporas are inadvertently depicted as less sympathetic. *Norsk-ish* writers disagreed with my argument regarding the negative representation of a particular migrant community, leading to a constructive analytical debate in this study. The series' main strengths include its skillful depiction of characters caught between two cultures and value systems, the diaspora and Norway. Furthermore, it suggests an alternative collective space for second-generation individuals. I propose *Norsk-ish* as an artistically worthwhile work whose narrative elements significantly contribute to its thematic depth and the portrayal of its discourses' complexities.

Keywords: *Diasporic Cinema, migrant Film, Identity, Norway, Norsk-ish Series*

*To Masud Gharakhani, for his
'authentic dual identity'—loving his
parents' homeland, Iran, as much as
Norway, his own country. I will never
forget him shedding tears when
discussing Narges Mohammadi's
Nobel Peace Prize.*

Preface

The motivation for conducting this research comes primarily from my interest in migrant studies and cinema. The fascinating works of Iranian-American film scholar Professor Hamid Naficy sparked my interest in the field. However, my motivation extends beyond just academia. In 2017, I made a documentary film about the lives of Iranian workers in Tokyo and Nagoya. As a filmmaker, I was able to witness and experience the semi-exilic lives of these workers who fled the country's financial crisis in the late 1980s, right after the Iran-Iraq war. This experience profoundly impacted me as a person and went beyond my role as a filmmaker. Even though it was late in the making of the film, I learned that it is easy to perpetuate stereotypes about migrants and that creating a work that empowers and empathizes with them is much more challenging.

As an Iranian living under the suffocating social restrictions of Iran and the increasing pressure of international sanctions on the country's economy, Japan seemed like the land of dreams for the workers. However, for the workers, it was not; it was indeed exile! They struggled to maintain their dignity and to find answers to why they were there when the Japanese asked them. Iran is not a country to return to, and Japan was not a home to live in forever. Not all the workers were aware of the situation, which is ironic. The whole experience of making that film made me more curious about the migrant identities, migrant representations, and dynamics of integration and assimilation. My interest heightened when, in 2020, I came to Volda to study for a second master's (for which I write this thesis) and experienced immigration personally.

First and foremost, I would like to express gratitude to my supervisor, Endre Eidså Larsen, for giving me invaluable feedback on this thesis. I would also like to thank Kjetil Vaage Øie, Paul Bjerke, Dag Svein Roland, and Kate Kartveit for being friendly and resourceful during the years of my master's education in Volda. I want to thank my friend and fellow student, Vedat Sevincer, for caring and inspiring me during my master's education in Volda. Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to my friend Farzad Boobani for his invaluable feedback and advice on the text.

Last, I would like to thank my wife Soma and my family in Iran, Sweden, and Norway for giving me the time and energy to write this thesis.

Volda, November 2023

Amir Bashti Monfared

Table of Contents

1 Chapter 1/ Introduction	8
1.1 Research Questions	8
1.2 The Thesis Outline	9
2 Chapter 2/Literature Review	11
2.1 The Literature on Accented Cinema.....	12
2.2 The Literature on Transnational Cinema	13
2.3 The Literature on Migrant Film in Norway.....	13
2.4 Semantic Issues Solved. Migrant versus Diasporic Film	15
3 Chapter 3/ Research Method and Theories	17
3.1 Why this research topic? Why Norway?	17
3.2 Theories and Concepts	19
3.3 Approaches to the film analysis.....	21
3.4 Textual Analysis: A Concept from Cultural Studies	22
3.5 Formatting & pragmatics of this research	24
3.6 Informed Consent of Interviews.....	25
4 Chapter 4/ Discussion.....	26
4.1 Global Transformations and the Media	26
4.2 The Rise of Cultural Pluralism.....	28
4.3 Ethnic Diasporas and Transnationalism	29
4.4 Diasporic Film: Foundations, Characteristics, and Practices	30
4.4.1 Migrant Film: An Emerging Production and Reception Culture?	32
4.4.2 Thematic, Stylistic, and Aesthetic Elements of Diasporic Film	34
4.4.3 Reception of Migrant and Diasporic Film	36
4.4.4 Industry Shifts and Opportunities.....	37
4.4.5 Migrant and Diasporic Film in Norway	38
5 Chapter 5/ Case Study; Norsk-ish.....	42
5.1 Episode One	42
5.1.1 The Issue of ' <i>Where Are You From?</i> '	43
5.1.2 The Politics of Citizenship and Recognition	45
5.1.3 The Narratives of Misunderstanding	47
5.2 Episode Two	48
5.2.1 He is more integrated than me.....	49
5.2.2 Transitions of Values in Diaspora	52

5.3 Episode Three	54
5.3.1 Diaspora: Its types and features	54
5.3.2 Turkish-ness and Turkish Diaspora in Norway.....	55
5.4 Episode Four	59
5.4.1 Iranianness After the Decades of Exile: Changes and Challenges	60
5.4.2 Diaspora of Iranians in Norway: In Pursuit of Integration	62
5.4.3 Iranian Household: The House Is Dark	63
5.4.4 Self-reflexive narrativity and subjective audiences.....	67
5.5 Episode Five	69
5.5.1 Punjabi Sikh Identity: Will the Pure Rule?	70
5.5.2 Indian Punjabi Diaspora: Marriage As Identity-Seeking Exercise.....	71
5.5.3 Assessing the Representation of Ethnic communities.....	73
5.6 Episode Six.....	74
5.6.1 Shifting Cultures	75
5.6.2 Secular Humanism from Within; Shifting Diasporas, Shifting Homelands	76
5.7 Episode Seven & Eight	78
5.7.1 Every End is a New Beginning: The Interplay of Theme and Structure	79
5.7.2 How the stories end for each character	81
5.7.3 Local Aliens: Overarching Themes of Norsk-ish	82
6 Chapter 6/ Conclusion	85
References.....	88

1 Chapter 1/ Introduction

Human mobility and intercultural interactions have historically been fertile sources of ideas and subjects for cultural and artistic practices. Narratives and images from the displacement process, the difficulties and pleasures of living in a new land, and sociocultural conflicts between the diaspora and the host societies are becoming pervasive themes in artistic practices. Compared to different forms and genres of creative expression, the film has a unique position, as its broadly comprehensible and universal language enables it to go beyond borders and reach individuals of other nations and cultures.

Narratives are essential to our societies; we identify and characterize ourselves with them. Not only do we need to tell our own stories, but our story-seeking brain is curious to know about others, their wishes, their beliefs, and, in a broader picture, their culture. When all the visual and aural attractions of the film are added to this equation, the narratives create a remarkable platform for knowing about *others*. On the other hand, the ever-growing phenomenon of globalization – understood beyond its economic definitions – has aroused an intense curiosity about learning the rest of the world. Therefore, one could argue that audiences, festival curators, and gatekeepers of the film industry have become increasingly interested in the stories about the dynamics of other societies and their social and cultural values.

1.1 Research Questions

With this broad background, I have narrowed this project's scope to the migrant and diasporic voices in Norwegian cinema and television, focusing on the fictional TV series *Norsk-ish* (NRK, 2020), season one. This thesis accounts for the discourses in the series and strives to make sense of their connections to their social context. These are the central questions of this research: *How do the series' main characters communicate their minority and majority identities? What are the characteristics of the three diasporas represented in the series? Moreover, how does the series portray them? What have been the challenges of representing the migrant communities? What are the creators' motivations, and how has the series reacted and responded to the stereotypical depiction of their communities in the Norwegian film and media? Have the creators unproblematically raised some contentious issues? And if so, how?* As far as the cinematic elements are concerned, I will answer *how the structure of the series*

serves its thematic elements. What are the narrative and audiovisual elements that go hand in hand with thematic dimensions?

Some secondary questions will mostly be answered through the literature review in the context of both ‘*Migrant Cinema*’ and ‘*Norwegian Migrant Film.*’ *What do we talk about when we talk about Migrant and Diasporic films in Norway? How has the Migrant Film in Norway evolved over the last decades?* Also, in dialogue with previous works on migrant films in Norway, I will try to answer the question: *Has the migrant film tuned into a diasporic film?* Although it seems complicated and out-of-reach to generalize such a multifaceted phenomenon, some scholars have defined and characterized this newly emerged sector in Norway’s film in a coherent and distinctive form. The developing concept of ‘*migrant cinema,*’ which covers different theories about the impacts of globalization on the cultural and economic aspects of the film, is critical in this thesis.

1.2 The Thesis Outline

Since this thesis is a rather long text with relatively separated topics – due to its interdisciplinary nature – to discuss and different questions to answer, knowing how this research is organized will help have a clearer image of its structure for the reader.

In the second chapter of this thesis, the literature review of existing writings on Norwegian Migrant Cinema is investigated in the larger context of transnational cinema. In that chapter, I will also discuss some key terminologies pertinent to the overriding topic of the research. However, the chapter mainly focuses on the history and positioning of migrant and diasporic cinema and television within Norway’s film landscape. This part consists of a close literature review and a thorough exploration of the academic texts on the topic. It should not be left unmentioned that the scientific and academic resources on migrant film in Norway are considerably limited. There have been only a few pieces of research on the topic of this thesis. This is not surprising as migrant communities have, only over the last two decades, scaled up and become more visible in the public sphere of Norway. Accordingly, migrant cinema and television in Norway are still developing. This study enjoys two valuable academic resources on the history and characteristics of Norwegian migrant and diasporic cinema. In this research, as defined in the literature review, the migrant film has a different definition than migrant filmmaking as well as a migrant filmmaker (and this is what is explained thoroughly in the subsequent chapter).

The third chapter of the thesis, in brief, justifies the methodology used in this research and why this is a suitable time for conducting it. I will also, in detail, discuss how I carried out this research and how and why the interviewees and the case study have been selected. It is imperative to clarify the method and theories used in the research as the migrant film is rooted in different areas of social and film theories.

In chapter four, after some more clarifications on transnationalism as a context of migrant film, by looking at filmmaking as a professional practice, the present study discusses possible constraints and affordances of the filmmakers (or creators) originating from diasporic and migrant communities globally and in Norway.

Focusing on understanding a specific case study and identifying the characteristics of Norwegian migrant cinema is an essential objective of this thesis. The main body of this research is the fifth chapter, where a close analysis of the case study is conducted. Apart from text analysis, I have carried out an in-depth interview with the creators (a term used in Norway for writers involved in the production phase) of the series. I will closely investigate the episodes' content separately in chapter five.

Since this research predominantly strives to characterize the issue of identity-seeking in migrant films, conducting the interview is essential as the creators must be able to approve or falsify the content analysis findings. I do not intend to see the series as an artifact independent of the authors; instead, I consider the work as narratives that reflect the authors' lived experiences and salient preoccupations. As we see in the interviews, they have lived some of the moments of the narratives, and there are some personal attachments to the stories (examples will be discussed in the text analysis chapter). I summarized the research findings in the last chapter of the thesis, the conclusion. This follows with my suggestions for further research on the topic.

2 Chapter 2/Literature Review

Apart from conducting a more general review of the existing research revolving around the multifaceted phenomenon of *identity-seeking in diasporic film*, this chapter will, on top of everything, strive to answer some of the fundamental questions: *When have the migrant film in Norway started and how has it evolved over its short presence? What are the differences between migrant film, diasporic film, and migrant filmmaking?* In this chapter, I will also mention and discuss a selected work concerning *transnationalism, globalization, the media, and migrant cinema* that can inform various components of the thesis.

Different dimensions of this study require looking into other disciplines and the literature related to them. Since the topic of this study inevitably considers film as a referential cultural object directly rooted in social and cultural contexts, it places itself at the intersection of film studies and migration studies (will be elaborated in the following chapter).

The migrant and diasporic film is a cinematic subsector informed by an ever-increasing social phenomenon influencing the notion of nations, nation-states, and borders: *Transnationalism*. The unparalleled interest in transnationalism as a subject of study in academia and beyond is evident in social studies over the last three decades. Vertovec (2009) argues how different disciplines in social studies, the arts and humanities, and interdisciplinary fields have shown interest in the developing concept of *transnationalism* and *migration* since the late 1990s. The writing of Steven Vertovec – the book *Transnationalism* (2009) and his leading paper in which he theorizes the concept of *super-diversity* (2007) – will inform the theoretical stance of this thesis, mainly when I argue that the second generation of migrants portrayed in the series shape and propose an alternative space. As a community, I suggest that the second generation offers diversity within diversity. Furthermore, the very illuminating introduction of Vertovec (2009) on the patterns of globalization explains how the two ideas of *globalization* and *transnationalism* conceptually interrelate. Vertovec (2009, p.2) considers transnationalism as a manifestation of globalization and that its integral processes and consequences can be manifold and chaotic.

More closely to our subject, what is imperative is accounting for how transnationalism and globalization are mediated and how they have influenced the concept and the practice of media. Diasporic films tend to be more transnational than typical domestic films in different aspects. Not only are they thematically transnational – in a sense *global* – but also the practice of making a migrant/diasporic film is naturally transnational. For instance, almost all migrant/diasporic films contain several cast or crew from other countries, many of whom are

from the originating countries of their makers or simply from different ethnic communities in the host country or a third one.

To understand the shift in the role and notion of media and media practices in light of globalization, I will mainly use Rantanen's writings. She explores exciting concepts such as *heterogenization*, *hybridization*, and *mediated cosmopolitanism*, which help advance a profound understanding of the characters' experience and their struggle with identity issues.

2.1 The Literature on Accented Cinema

Several prominent film scholars, namely Hamid Naficy (2001), have tried to theorize the migrant cinema and suggest generalized characteristics of migrant films worldwide. Naficy (2001) proposes that all migrant cinemas share common attributes and stylistic elements, and there are some recurrent factors shared between migrant films across the world, especially regarding the aesthetic, formal, and narrative aspects of the films. However, he acknowledges that each migrant film has distinct approaches based on the lived experiences of diasporic communities and what they have undergone in the mobility processes. Explaining the aims of his book, Naficy (2001; p.20) points out that 'one of the key purposes of this study is to identify and develop the most appropriate theory to account for the complexities, regularities, and inconsistencies of the films made in exile and diaspora.' Many researchers have applied the explanatory findings and generalizations of Naficy's well-known writing to several countries and diasporas.

While some of the concepts and themes Naficy has discussed can be useful for my research, I will need other texts that primarily concentrate on diasporic communities rather than that of newly arrived migrants. In this distinction, I want to emphasize that migrant experiences occur immediately following the process of displacement, and diasporic experiences are those in which a migrant community has formed and has, to some extent, grown in the host society. Naficy's emphasis (2001) on the '*accent*' as a signifying element of migrant individuals living in a host society, as well as the examples he uses in the book, highlights that he is more concerned with the so-called off-the-boat migrants than those of later years and generations. *Norsk-ish* series' main characters have long passed the stage of relocation. Nothing but their families' backgrounds differentiate their *Norwegianness* from their fellow ethnic Norwegians. This situation requires a multifaceted approach to understanding the context of the text, as apart from migrant films, diasporic films are constantly in dialogue with the host society.

2.2 The Literature on Transnational Cinema

Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden (2006) propose a considerable resource to explain how national cinemas of Europe and the West are becoming more multicultural and transnational. To define the meaning of National Cinema closely, they use Andrew Higson's assertion proposing that it is improper to assume that the limits of the nation-state can restrict cinema and film culture too (Ezra & Rowden, 2006, p.13). They consider film to be a transitional phenomenon with limited territorial influences. Ezra and Rowden (2006, p.4) also argue that transnational film intersects the regional and the universal. The film can connect people across ethnic and geographical borders due to its intrinsic qualities of closeness and closeness to us and our societies. The book essentially revolves around the critical concept of transnational cinema and how it is rooted in growing communities of the diaspora in migrant-receiving countries.

In another publication relevant to migrant cinema, Yosefa Loshitzki (2010) discusses overarching discourses around migration in European countries shaped over the last five decades. She suggests that the emerging ecologies in the arts and media are 'shaped and negotiated by the experience of displacement, diaspora, exile, migration, nomadism, homelessness, and border crossing, challenging the traditional notions of Europe and Europeanness' (Loshitzki, 2010, p.6). She also argues how the Migrant Film is a growing phenomenon in Europe, and the number of films addressing migrant and diasporic topics is dramatically increasing. A critical issue she emphasizes is 'multicultural struggles' as a predominant subject in European cinema, and this is literally what I am interested in studying *Norsk-ish*.

2.3 The Literature on Migrant Film in Norway

In the context of Norway, while there have been a few publications on how immigrants are portrayed in the media and cinema (Tuhus, 2003 & Slåke, 2018) or on the comic potentialities of immigration in the Scandinavian public spheres (Dahl, 2021), there are two critical academic papers on filmmaking endeavors of migrant and diasporic filmmakers.

In a paper on migrant and diasporic filmmaking in Norway, Eva Bakøy (2012) rigorously examined the history of migrant films in Norway and their generic and thematic characteristics. She highlights the limited attention to migrant filmmaking in Norway within Scandinavian film studies. This, however, simultaneously indicates how non-ethnic Norwegians' films and

narrative TV productions were limited in quantity until the early 2000s. Restricting her research to feature films for adult audiences, Bakøy (2012) investigates seven films made by migrant and diasporic filmmakers from the 1980s until 2006. She argues that the inconsiderable number of films is because the population of immigrants has been much lower in Norway compared to other European countries. Five films out of the seven were made by Middle Eastern and Asian filmmakers (predominantly from Pakistan and Iraq). Reacting to the concept of Accented Cinema by Hamid Naficy (2001), Bakøy (2012) argues how films vary in generic characteristics and cannot fall under the concept properly. However, she argues that the films share similar elements – ‘in terms of the social and emotional material’ – related to either the hardship or the contentment of being an immigrant and living in the diaspora. Although the quantity of films made by migrant filmmakers is not impressive, ‘in other ways, they have been ground-breaking. For some migrants, they have served as an admission ticket into Norwegian film production and a platform where they can express their artistic visions and explore their migrant identities’ (Bakøy, 2012).

Bakøy (2012) makes an argument about the evolution of diasporic films in her research that I want to emphasize here, as one of my research findings is in dialogue with her statement. Examining themes and elements of the films, she proposes that migrant films will become a more developed phase of addressing diasporic discourses in Norway. I have considered this argument in the conclusion of my research.

In a later paper on migrant cinema and television in Norway, Leif Ove Larsen (2015) situates Norwegian migrant cinema within the context of European migrant film and examines the contributions of the first and second generation of immigrants to the film and TV of Norway. Compared to Bakøy’s paper, the scope of the article is broader, including TV fiction productions made by non-ethnic Norwegians. As opposed to Bakøy’s article, and with more emphasis on the thematic and discourses raised in the films and shows, Larsen (2015) demonstrates how, despite variety, the works of migrant and diasporic filmmakers can ‘deconstruct stereotypes of cultural identity’ and ultimately enrich the national cinema of Norway. He investigates some thematic elements, including fleeing and seeking refuge, ‘...arranged marriage, the role of family, gender roles, the meaning of respect and honor, and the role of the law versus loyalty to the cultural group’ (Larsen, 2015).

2.4 Semantic Issues Solved. Migrant versus Diasporic Film

Some films fall under the scope of migrant films – films made by the first generation of immigrants – which mostly tell the stories in which their homeland is involved. For example, some of the productions in the history of Norwegian migrant films have not been made in Norway, but the creators were Norwegian citizens. On the other hand, the films made by the second generation of immigrants typically bring up the issue of identity and the conflicts of cultural hybridity. Before we go further and try to answer the central questions of this study in the analysis section, we should answer the critical question concerning the history of the migrant film, which I brought up in the introduction chapter: *What do we talk about when we discuss Migrant and Diasporic Film in the context of Norway?* This is a question that can be answered by exploring literature.

Defining and differentiating some frequently used terms in this study is crucial. To clarify the terminologies, we should explain the terms *migrant*, *diasporic*, and *native* filmmakers here. From the discursive perspectives of generation and memories, Berghahn and Sternberg (2012) differentiate ‘migrant’ as first-generation, ‘diasporic’ as second-generation (or later generations), and ‘non-migrant/non-diasporic’ as native filmmakers. However, other literature may not have differentiated these two terms and might have used migrant film instead of diasporic film.

There is also a difference between *migrant film* and *migrant filmmaking*, as I think the former can have a broader meaning than the latter. That is, the migrant film can not only works produced by migrants themselves, but it can include works by native filmmakers on migrant and diasporic topics. This is logical as both categories address the same subjects and depict similar images of migrant communities. It is also more democratic, as we should not classify films according to the ethnicity of their makers. We can differentiate filmmakers based on their ethnic background, but not films. As the country is becoming more multicultural down the line, we might have more and more migrant films made by ethnic Norwegians. It does not make sense if we do not call them migrant films. This assertion can differ from what the literature has used so far, but I argue it is more sustainable and inclusive. If we are to categorize anything here, we can refer to filmmakers' experiences in the industry by using the term *migrant filmmaking*.

As for *migrant filmmaking*, the literature has formed a different definition over time. This term looks more into filmmaking processes for migrant practitioners instead of the subject of their films. That is, the emphasis in the term and the concept of migrant filmmaking is on the

‘the processes of making’ of it, which must be understood beyond the subjects of the films. The term encompasses the struggles of the makers to practice filmmaking in the receiving countries, for example, in the reception process and in the process of funding their films.

However, in connection to the subjects of their films, it also includes the personal interest of the filmmakers who come from minority communities and recount their stories based on direct or indirect migratory experiences. Simply put, the filmmaking processes and personal experiences are interwoven in some migrant and diasporic films.

What we agree on in this thesis, and what has been frequently accepted in the literature, is that we should only call a ‘migrant filmmaker,’ provided they originate from a migratory background. Therefore, migrant filmmaking refers to the filmmaking practice by migrant/diasporic individuals regardless of what they produce. For instance, a British filmmaker of Indian descent who makes films in the UK falls into the category of migrant filmmaking even if she makes films about entirely British subject matters without reference to migrants.

To clarify more:

- A *migrant film* is a film mainly about *recently settled migrants*, no matter what the ethnicity of its makers is.
- A *diasporic film* is a film that is primarily about *established diasporas*, no matter what the ethnicity of its makers is.
- *Migrant filmmaking* and *diasporic filmmaking* are related to the ethnicity of a filmmaker active in the industry of the host country, no matter what the film is about.

Previously, in this chapter, we differentiated the meaning of migrant and diasporic film, which has a purely epistemological foundation and a theme-related reason behind it. Works produced by migrant and diasporic filmmakers have characteristics and qualities of their lives, which this paper will briefly address in chapter five.

3 Chapter 3/ Research Method and Theories

This chapter is dedicated to discussing the research topic and the structure, the methodology used in this study, and the theories and concepts that inform it. In this chapter, I will explain why *the diasporic film* – as a reasonably distinctive form from the migrant film – has been chosen for this research and why I have chosen this specific case study. Furthermore, I will provide a brief justification as to why an in-depth semi-structured interview with the creators has been conducted for this study. It is also imperative to talk about the theories and concepts utilized in this paper.

3.1 Why this research topic? Why Norway?

I have chosen Norway as a context for this study because while the diasporic film phenomenon is recently emerging, it has not been a popular subject of scholarly exploration. That is, publications on diasporic film and how they negotiate the identities of non-ethnic Norwegians are limited, and the population of Norwegian-born citizens in migrant households is growing.

Most of the resources available on the diasporic film are from countries with characteristics different from Norway's. Migrant cinemas vary in other countries. This is simply because every country communicates its national identity differently, has its agenda on migration policies, and has its sociocultural dynamics. National cultures are different, and cross-cultural experiences differ from country to country. For instance, members of the Pakistani community in Oslo presumably approach their identities in another way than the Pakistani community in London because the dynamics of each country can influence the diasporas. Although they have come from the same country, it does not mean they have the same diasporic experiences. To an extent, they might tell different stories about the integration issue in their communities and challenges regarding their national and ethnic identities. In a similar case, in chapter five, we see how the second generation of Polish migrants have experienced Norway and the UK differently (Lewicki, 2016).

Diasporic filmmaking is a new and emerging phenomenon in the Norwegian film landscape. Not many examples of it are available today. While it has been explored in other European countries, diasporic cinema in Norway is in the very early stage of its development. Providing statistical data, Eva Bakøy (2012) proposes how migrant films are growing in quantity and how the filmmakers are introducing themselves to the country's film industry.

Given the diversity of the immigrant community in Norway, those from Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, who account for about half of the immigrant population, have more visibility in the cinema and television of Norway (Larsen, 2015). This stems from, among other reasons, the sociocultural, linguistic, and ethnic differences between these communities and the receiving country. These differences reflect more dramatic potential situations to be exploited in fiction and non-fiction productions. The majority of the works done by migrant and diasporic filmmakers in Norway are from filmmakers and creators originating from non-European, non-Western ethnic communities. Choosing the case study, *Norsk-ish* can illuminate how migrant communities are represented in Norwegian media. Also, the investigation of the *identity-seeking journey* is an attempt to explore Norwegian diasporic films distinct from migrant films in Norway and elsewhere. I explore how the series' creators, using the film medium, have negotiated and communicated the issue of migrant communities in Oslo.

This specific case study (the TV series *Norsk-ish*) has been chosen because of its unique qualities that can shed light on the varied dimensions of diasporic film and filmmaking in Norway. First, the characters of this series are from different genders and diverse backgrounds. The main characters of the series are two women originating from two Muslim migrant communities – the Iranian and the Turkish communities – and a man coming from the Indian diaspora.

However, a differentiating factor about *Norsk-ish* is its bottom-up perspective, as the creators have an '*inside out*' insight into their communities. That is, the story is told from within the community as the storytellers of the series are from the same communities. The series' creators are two women from backgrounds from two of the mentioned countries (Iran and Turkey). While the characters are both from migrant communities in Norway, what is interesting is that they -as discussed in the interview- each have different views and migratory experiences. They share a distinct sense of belonging to their family background and have experienced the integration process differently.

The imperative of having interviews with the creators of the series stems from the fact that the creators can explain their intentions and motivations for telling the stories, which, in some cases, are rooted in their own personal diasporic and exilic experiences. It can explain the artistic decisions made during the process of creation, where they decide to depict their communities in their desired way. Without the interviews, the analysis data can be approved harder, as I would have to interpret or assume the creators' purpose, agenda, and motivation. Moreover, consequently, this cannot lead to a valid and credible scientific finding. As this research aims to define and distinguish the diasporic film of Norway in the global context of

migrant cinema, the discussions regarding filmmaking practice by the series' creators can propose different contributions a more diversified landscape can provide to the Norwegian film industry.

3.2 Theories and Concepts

Some specific theories and concepts are employed not only because they are dominant in studying migrant and diasporic cinemas but also because they can contribute to the findings of this research, which include shedding light on the issue of identity in the diasporic film. What has happened in the film industry and film theory over the last decades is an ever-increasing trend influenced by transnationalism. This has occurred both in the production of films, a rise in the number of international coproductions between production companies and the emerging cross-national creative clusters- and the stories that films explore. While the context of this study is Norway, ignoring transnationalism's social and global phenomenon will seriously hinder acquiring a thorough understanding of the shift in the developing subgenre of diasporic film in Norway. Additionally, the cultural in-betweenness that the characters in the series struggle with and their plight to find a home (which will be discussed in the following chapter) can be better understood using the optics of some specific concepts.

Firstly, this research requires an illuminating optic to translate the social implications of growing globalization. On the grounds of this, I will use the cross-disciplinary concept of transnationalism to explain the elements of the subgenre diasporic film. Discussing transnational cinema, Ezra and Rowden (2006, p.1). argue that transnationalism can inform our understanding of how our lives and world are being perceived by those filmmakers who work and create global stories instead of our established territorial systems.

Diasporic filmmakers are arguably prime examples or manifestations of how transnationalism has affected film discourse-related ecologies. They have a double identity -or even more- making their stories transnational that speak to both originating and receiving societies and other migrants residing in other countries. A diasporic film produced by, say, an Afghan filmmaker living in Germany is potentially in close dialogue with the ethnic Germans, fellow immigrants living in Germany, and, more interestingly, with any migrant, displaced, exilic, and expatriated individual on the globe.

The commonalities of the films have, as previously referred to, driven the work of Hamid Naficy (2001), who theorizes this form of filmic expression. His book forms a valuable resource for understanding the phenomenon of migrant film and filmmaking. On this account,

Accented Film is another concept that will be employed to realize some recurring narrative and aesthetic elements of films made by migrants. As clarified earlier, Naficy does not differentiate the diasporic film from the migrant film, and in turn, the concept he formulates is not entirely in line with diasporic narratives. Nonetheless, some elements of the series *Norsk-ish* - especially those concerning the first generation, such as the main characters' families- can be explained with the employment of the Accented Film.

As the key issues this study will explore are the issues of identity and the practice of identity-seeking in the diasporic film, some known concepts in the scholarly field of migration and diaspora studies need to be employed. The concept of *Hybridity* -suggested by Homi Bhabha (1990)- and the concept of *Double Consciousness* -initially presented by W. E. B. Du Bois in the late 19th century- are two illuminating viewpoints that can help explain why and how migrants and diasporic individuals go through an identity crisis coming across the host society's dominant culture. In brief, hybridity theory broadly suggests a new hybrid, cross-national, cross-territorial, cross-cultural environment of today's post-colonial world. Double consciousness, originally associated with the experiences of Black Americans in the US, refers to a mental situation where minorities constantly see themselves through the eyes of the majority. This application of the latter concept in the context of diaspora studies is not common; it has only been used recently in some literature, for instance, in Dayal (1996).

While both theories have been initially developed within the studies of postcolonialism - in this case, the social and cultural influences that *the colonizer* has had on *the colonized*- which seems to be irrelevant in the context of Norway, this study, for three reasons, will use these theories. First, traditionally, migration and diaspora studies are heavily influenced by the academic discipline of postcolonial studies, likely because most migrants living in the West initially resided in previously colonizing countries- e.g., France, Belgium, the UK, etc. Second, I will apply *the hybridity theory* to the series *Norsk-ish* simply because they reflect the very same issue, the duality or the cultural in-betweenness of diasporic communities.

Third, although Norway has not been a colonizer country, it has some specific characteristics that make it a society where migrants undergo the same identity issue processes they do in the previously mentioned countries. That is, Norway is a largely culturally and ethnically homogenous country that creates a cultural sphere in which the country's ethos becomes completely dominant, and the subcultures of the migrant communities -especially those that do not share parallel cultural attributes and values- become automatically, while unintentionally, marginalized. This is an inevitable, unwanted situation not created or reinforced by the county's long-standing inclusive and sympathetic policies towards migrants

and refugees (Eriksen, 2013). The reasons and implications of this situation will be closely examined in chapter five, where we discuss the Norsk-ish stories.

3.3 Approaches to the film analysis

In this part, I briefly discuss my approach to film analysis, which will be applied to the case study Norsk-ish. Every literary or mediated text can be analyzed from different perspectives, guiding the research in various directions and leading to multiple findings. There are different methodologies and classifications regarding the styles of understanding films and writing about them. There are two most influential ones -one in film theory and the other more broadly in textual analysis.

It is safe to argue that many film scholars have shown a tendency to explore the film as a mainly *cinematic text* rather than a *cultural text*. In analyzing film, they seem to be more interested in exploring *how questions* -how a film addresses something- than *what questions* - what discourses films raise-. This tendency is also evident in the prescriptive texts regarding how to write about films. Aumont and Michel (1988) suggest that film analysis can be conducted in four main methods, which they claim are distinct from criticism or subjective interpretation. 1) The narratological approach is a structural method concerning the narrative elements of the film, such as the narrative trajectory and structure. 2) Iconic approach, a semiotics technique, centers on sound, camera, and editing rhetoric. 3) Psychoanalytical approach concerns psychological elements of characters, narrative, and even audience reception. 4) Historical analysis, which sees the film within the context of film history and explores connections, developments, or the intertextuality of films with other cinematic texts. Similarly, in *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, Corrigan (2012) suggests attitudes to film analysis that substantially accentuate the film's structural, technical, narrative, and historical elements. These approaches can barely contribute to the critical grasp of a film as a cultural construct. What is considerably overlooked in most film scholars' methodologies is looking at films from a cultural or social studies perspective.

However, film theorists briefly developed an approach that recognizes and emphasizes thematic aspects of films. The word *theme* has originated from literary criticism referring to 'text's substance, its principal idea, what it is about' (Elsaesser & Buckland, 2002; p.117). From this view, films vary based on the significance, intensification, and different layers of themes they contain. Some films have more clarified and visible themes, and some discuss

their themes obliquely and indirectly, making it difficult for their audience to identify their underlying themes. However, due to its diasporic nature, *Norsk-ish* is a highly thematically driven work that builds a solid thematic structure surrounding its narratives. The thematic emphasis of the series is even observable in the title of the series, which discusses the double-ness of their characters' identities caught between their ethnic and national identities. Elsaesser & Buckland (2002) argue that

There are three essential elements to a thematic analysis of the film: (1) the identification of a general theme in a particular film; (2) the rules that govern the relation between the general and the particular; and (3) the nature of the general categories (2002; p.118).

This approach is a methodology of understanding films' meanings without giving much attention to medium-specific elements of films. However, one might rightly argue that theme-related and medium-related aspects are not mutually exclusive. Identifying a film's general theme (the first element above) is often straightforward. However, the relationship between the film elements and the general theme can complicate obtaining precise results. In many cases, clarifying themes will create conflicting thematic analysis – some examples can be found in Elsaesser & Buckland (2002).

Also, thematic analysis has been widely criticized due to its tendency towards simplifying complex relationships of narrative and aesthetic elements and ignoring filmic components, leading to providing reductive abstract meanings of films. The answer from thematic critique is that they see films as a means of communication used by filmmakers to transfer human values. This is an essential element in the diasporic film, which typically wants to speak directly to its audience and occasionally intervene in the sensemaking process of the diasporic identity.

3.4 Textual Analysis: A Concept from Cultural Studies

A cross-cinematic method that takes an interdisciplinary approach to film analysis is the *textual approach* – as understood and defined in *post-structuralist cultural studies* – which sees texts as cultural objects. In this methodology, a given medium's features and characteristics are not at the center of attention. Instead, more importantly, texts are a cultural sense-making means of the world, which is always in constant dialogue with our cultural formations. McKee (2003; p.1) proposes that this method can be handy for scholars who

explore individuals of societies and sub-cultures and investigate how they live and make sense of their societal environments.

The textual analysis approach examines differences between cultures and subcultures at international and intra-national levels, trying to interpret how these cultures perform sense-making practices. This methodology is not supposed to analyze texts to evaluate them based on either cultural or cinematic elements. It simply aims to understand and explain how cultures are different and how they are depicted by a filmmaker -in the case of *Norsk-ish*, the writers-to communicate the identity of a hybrid subculture formed in Norway's diasporic communities.

The central theme of the series *Norsk-ish* is the cultural differences between the second generation of immigrants and the dominant Norwegian culture, as well as their home culture reinforced by their traditional families. This study sheds light on interpreting these social and cultural conflicts and explaining why and how the series' characters foster a specific subculture. Comparing the two cinematic and cultural approaches to film analysis, this research chooses the latter one as the cultural approach will contribute better to answering the central question of the thesis: *How and in what ways do the characters of the series originating from diasporic communities in Norway communicate their identity in their films? Moreover, how do the series' two creators interpret their characters and decisions?*

However, this is not an either-or situation in which one must take only one approach for the analysis. Indeed, an average film analysis uses a complex mixture of different approaches simultaneously, from psychological to technical and audiovisual. Also, an average film analysis typically explores some socio-cultural context of the film. This is a natural process of writing about films, as the film is not only comprised of a series of standalone audiovisuals but is a cultural object usually containing intertextual and cross-medium elements. Nonetheless, the text analysis in this thesis is thematically driven, concentrating on the issues of diasporas and migrant identities. While the series' aesthetic, stylistic, and narrative elements are secondary to this approach, they will be briefly discussed, as in some cases, they go hand in hand with the materials bearing cultural aspects.

Textual analysis is a method that proponents of thematic film criticism have also endorsed. A thematic approach formulated by Elsaesser & Buckland (2002) suggests that following the determination of what types of human values and human communications a film covers, 'one useful strategy is to analyze the film scene by scene, to determine what each scene contributes to the film's overall meaning. In particular, ask yourself: What themes are the characters manifesting through their actions?' (Elsaesser & Buckland, 2002; p.122). This pragmatic

methodology employed in this thesis best explains the series' underlying meanings and culture-bearing elements.

3.5 Formatting & pragmatics of this research

Norsk-ish season one is a fictional TV series comprising eight episodes. In the film analysis in chapter five, I will start with the first episode and proceed in order. Since the thesis reader may not have watched the series or not have watched it recently, a one-page synopsis – a summary of a film storyline – of every episode is provided before the analysis. I have included them to enhance the self-sufficiency of this research, and they are not assumed to interrelate with the analytical components of this research. The linguistic difference between the episodes' synopsis and the rest of this study is that I initially wrote the stories in my mother tongue, Persian, and then translated them to English using online tools. I have done this to save time and ensure clarity and simplicity, as required, based on conventions of writing synopsis. I suggest reading the stories to have a complete account of each episode.

The size of the episodes' analyses is not supposed to be proportionate. For instance, the analysis of episode four is twice as much as the size of episode five. This is simply because I have found more analytical elements to discuss in that episode. It is also because episode four is dedicated to the Iranian community, which I know more about. Last, the interview material used in that part of the research is significantly longer than others, as the series creators disagreed with my argument, and we had to clarify our viewpoints further.

The qualitative semi-structured interviews with the series' creators -Bahareh Badadvi and Melike Leblebicioglu- were conducted simultaneously and collectively. The interviewees were already aware of the overriding theme of the interview, and most of the questions were predetermined. However, the questions were simple and open, allowing the interviewees to express themselves and raise important and relevant topics. The follow-up questions have made the settings free-flowing, and responses are long and descriptive. In the text analysis, I will use the data obtained from the interviews to explain better and decode various elements of the series -ranging from practical matters regarding the film industry to analysis of the series' scenes- and validate my arguments.

The primary interview was conducted in June of 2021 when I interviewed both writers simultaneously. After about one year and a half, in November 2023, I contacted the interviewees again with two follow-up questions. Since I discussed a new issue in the research, I found it crucial to have an answer to this part of the research, too. The topic includes my

criticism of the representation of first-generation Iranians in the series, to which the writers have responded in the research. Due to our different views regarding this issue, I have delivered the questions and responses as it is, with no revision and summarization.

3.6 Informed Consent of Interviews

Interviewees are informed about the publication of this research and the interview material I have used here. They have checked the interview sections of this research and confirmed the text to be published. I want to thank the interviewees for participating and for patient cooperation in the research.

4 Chapter 4/ Discussion

This chapter briefly introduces the shift in the conventional notions of nations, nationalities, and nation-states in the wake of globalized media, or a similar sense, *mediated globalization*. It will consider the interconnected nature of the global shift and the change in the media landscape. Without this introduction, it would be hard to understand the transformations and diversity in Norway's film industry and the diasporic film as an artistic and communicative form.

After all, what has occurred in Norway's film scene is not separated from the trends and currencies of the global terrain. As we will discuss further in this chapter, many diasporic films, due to their inherent identity-seeking elements, convey various direct messages – at least more explicit than many other fictional genres – to their audiences. I will continue this chapter by defining and explaining the issue of identity due to the profound changes, drawing on influential theories that have contributed to our understanding of the newly emerged hybrid cultural trends. The chapter will go on exploring the concepts of migrant and diasporic films and will then, by closely analyzing the case study, narrow down to the migrant and diasporic ventures in Norway's film industry.

4.1 Global Transformations and the Media

What underpins the ever-growing shifts in territorial demographics, economics, and cultural practices, among other things, is the universal phenomenon of globalization. Giddens (1990) argues that due to globalization, far-reached regions and their lives are influenced and formed by what happens in very distant areas, and this has occurred due to increasing interactions of the world today (1990: p.64). Our conception of the world has changed, and it has become an interdependent space in which the previously accepted national boundaries are, to an extent, blurred. We have become more conscious of the world's wholeness, and the social and cultural arrangements we have accepted as norms have transformed.

However, these definitions go back to the heyday of positivity about globalization in the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s. At the time, there was hope for more democratized opportunities with the potential of offering socio-economic justice due to the interconnectedness of countries and economies. However, the processes of globalization have recently been hindered by the rise of right-of-the-center and populist political parties in democratic nations -the rise of ethnic nationalism under India's Modi, the United States under

the Trump administration, and the rising popularity of anti-globalization parties in Germany and France-. However, this shift mainly reflects institutional aspect of globalization, and other progressions are not necessarily influenced accordingly.

While the backlash to globalization is evident in the processes of the free market and the political landscape – for instance, the withdrawal of the UK from the EU in 2020 –, growing transnationality in the national media and cinemas suggests that cultural industries are minimally affected by the visible cracks in the idea of globalization. That is, the conception of the media and mediated communication and the media practices have changed. The role of the media in globalization is so central, and the interconnectedness of these two is so intense that some scholars have seen them as integral to one another. Rantanen suggests that ‘globalization is a process in which worldwide economic, political, cultural and social relations have become increasingly mediated across time and space (Rantanen, 2005, p.8). This statement suggests that the media has been essential in the transformative period of globalization.

However, we have not reached today’s position overnight, and some states have passed, leading to a relatively transcultural environment we are experiencing. Today’s rather multicultural societies and transnational media ecology result from two stages we have gone through. In an interesting formulation, Sreberny (1996) discusses that:

Since the 1960s, the field of International Communication has been dominated by three successive intellectual paradigms: that of “communications and development,” that of “cultural imperialism,” and currently by a revisionist “cultural pluralism” which is still searching for a coherent theoretical shape (p. 178).

According to this interpretation, the phase of communications and development emerged after World War Two when many nations were born, and independent national systems were developed in many formerly colonized countries. However, as developing countries lacked some structural requirements – accessible capital, entrepreneurial way of thinking based on the realities of modern markets, and some socio-cultural difficulties – to grow in a fashion similar to the Western world, they had to use mass media and mediated communication to fasten the process of development. This hasty, revolutionary, and linear way of communication forced developing countries to seek cultural products made in the Western world to respond to the needs of their media. Also, the dependency on the developed world was coupled with new technologies introduced by previously colonizing countries on which developing countries were dependent on being able to create infrastructures of their communication networks.

These shifts seem to have led the developing world to a new phase called ‘cultural imperialism, or more specifically, ‘media imperialism’ through which the Third World became the consumer of media content from the developed world. ‘Like the earlier arguments for “communications and development,” the “cultural imperialism” model was based on a situation of comparative global media scarcity, limited global media players, and embryonic media systems in much of the Third World’ (Sreberny, 1996; p. 179). This was a hegemonic influence of the Western media on the media in developing countries, which has now changed.

4.2 The Rise of Cultural Pluralism

At present, it is salient that the model of cultural imperialism has been replaced by a new paradigm called *cultural pluralism* in which diverse emerging media players, as well as the proliferation of social media and digital platforms, have been very effective. Regardless of how they practice media and the extent of their professionalism, some non-Western media organizations have emerged over the last decades, and the ecology of media production has been diversified. For instance, Al Jazeera, a Qatar-owned media organization, is a new influential news source extensively used by people in the Middle East and Asia. According to Seib (2008), the influence of Al Jazeera has been beyond its audience, which is visible in global politics and policymaking, a phenomenon he calls the ‘Al Jazeera effect.’ Other examples of media organizations based in the Third World that have become more influential at the cross-national level are how Brazilian TV programs have been visible in the Portuguese media or how Latin TV productions are widely watched in the United States (Antola, 1984). The Indian film industry is another illuminating example of the reverse trend – which has started since the 1980s – of the established cultural flow from the formerly dominant cultures towards the Third World. ‘Third World producers have become not only national producers but international exporters of cultural products, a process which revisionists claim has altered any one-way flow of Western material and the “hegemonic” model of cultural imperialism (McNeely and Soysal 1989, as cited in Sreberny, 1996).

Apart from the shift at the organizational level and the development of media production capacities in the so-called Third World countries, the extensive patterns in human mobility must also be factored in. That is, the increasing population of immigrants in the Western world has contributed to the weakening of both the homogenization of the world by the Western media and the boundaries set by the conceptions of nations as ethnocentric formations.

Immigrants in many Western societies have entered the media industry, leading to a more diverse environment in which the media landscape is unprecedentedly heterogenized.

4.3 Ethnic Diasporas and Transnationalism

Because of the shifts shaped by transnationalism and cultural pluralism, we have witnessed how national cultures have become increasingly de-territorialized, and the conception of nation and ethnocentric nationalism have been questioned. Cultures are hardly linked with geographical territories, and the notion of local culture has changed. Diasporic communities emerge in previously homogenous societies, demonstrating diverse and hybrid cultures. As Kachig Tololyan (as cited in Vertovec 2009, p.4) calls, ethnic diasporas are ‘the exemplary communities of the transnational moment,’ and in academia, the diasporic communities have become a central subject to study the dynamics of transnationalism. Perlmutter (1991) argues that while our world has become vertically structured by nation-states and political zones, it has been horizontally shaped by systems of interactions, sociocultural tendencies, and interests that stretch beyond the local and regional restraints. He suggests that modern-day diasporas are prime examples of horizontal arrangements. Today's media and cultural industries play a crucial role in shaping and reinforcing these horizontal patterns due to their increasing multicultural and transnational characteristics.

In light of globalization and transnationalism, the perceived cultural autonomy of nation-states has declined, and national cultures are increasingly turning into cross-national entities. This has influenced both ethnic citizens and immigrants in seeking their identities. Pluralism in the new ecologies of the media, together with the deterritorialization of national/local cultures, has provided ‘sources and resources available for the construction of identity, allowing the production of hybrid identities in the context of a post-traditional global society’ (Rantanen, 2005, p.96). However, identity challenges in the globalized cultural spheres are considerably more significant for ethnic minorities such as immigrant communities around the world. This is because they do not share the principles of belonging expected by both originating and receiving countries. ‘Transnational migrants often live in a country in which they do not claim citizenship and claim citizenship in a country in which they do not live’ (Fitzgerald, 2000; p.10).

4.4 Diasporic Film: Foundations, Characteristics, and Practices

Before defining the characteristics and practices of diasporic cinema, we must understand it in the context of globalization. As a form of cultural expression and an industry, cinema is an organism in our sociocultural sphere's complex ecosystem. Because of the influences of transnationalism, cinema has changed in expressional, functional, and institutional facets of its existence. That is, national cinemas are becoming more cross-national, film festivals are becoming increasingly international, and stories, even if they are local, are being formulated with a more consciousness of the global audience.

The entirety of these fundamental shifts has driven the coinage of the term *transnational cinema*. It is a comprehensive concept encompassing changes in various facets of cinema, ranging from the shifting platforms and infrastructures caused by digital technologies to the production and circulation of films made by cross-national partners. More importantly, it involves the emergence of novel and diverse topics and themes explored by formerly marginalized filmmakers.

An essential component of transnational cinema is the filmic representation of 'people caught in the cracks of globalization' (Ezra & Rowden, 2006), and most of these films are made by migrant and diasporic individuals. The profound motivation for making films about migration experiences stems from the necessity for re-conceptualization of the sense of belonging to a new territory. Also, in light of the present multicultural milieu, migrant filmmakers have answered the long-standing demand for authentic narratives from insiders of other cultures. This is an inevitable result of the cultural transformations that have created spaces for the stories of hybrid cultures.

Insofar as the identity challenges hinder immigrants in their efforts to develop and flourish in receiving countries, the new paradigms of production – inclusive policies employed by most migrant-receiving countries – have expanded the opportunities for migrant filmmakers to attain and strengthen their social and career positions in their countries of residence. Taking the opportunity of the emerging phenomena of multiculturalism and cultural pluralism, migrant and diasporic filmmakers worldwide have tried to recount their own experiences of living in diaspora and exile and have addressed the multi-faceted issues revolving around identity in their films. 'The impossibility of assigning a fixed national identity to much cinema reflects the dissolution of any stable connection between a film's place of production and setting and the nationality of its makers and performers' (Ezra & Rowden, 2006; p.1). Because of this, national cinemas – referring to the cinemas sharing common and typical qualities of every

country and are understood as national cinemas around the world – are increasingly transforming into more multicultural institutions, both *demographically* – using cast and crew who have multicultural backgrounds – and *thematically* – in terms of raising discourses beyond the national public spheres of nation-states.

Although cinema has always been somewhat transnational -i.e., films have historically passed national borders freely and created intercultural dialogues- this trend has intensified over the last decades. Ezra and Rowden (2006; pp. 1-2) argue that there have been some key reasons why the idea of national cinemas is being challenged. First, the function and perception of the national border have shifted due to the contemporary political and geopolitical altering environment. The relative political de-escalation – between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective allies – experienced in the post-Cold War era and the creation of the European Union as a massive transnational entity have collectively contributed to the weakening trend of national borders. Additionally, the digitalization of technologies, platforms, and commodities has facilitated the spread of cultural products around the globe, resulting in a more transnational cultural environment. As previously discussed, this trend has recently become more reciprocal, going both ways from/to the developed and Third World countries. Parenthetically, some of these factors have recently changed due to the economic and political tensions globally, e.g., the invasion of Putin’s Russia into Ukraine, the rise of Ethnic Nationalism in India, the empowerment of China as a world’s key player, etc.

Another contributory factor, according to Ezra and Rowden (2006), has been the shifting manner of the American film industry. The long-standing dominance of Hollywood over other cinemas has been challenged as Hollywood itself has changed. Ezra & Rowden (2006; p.2) assert that new Hollywood must be considered a hybrid space where its filmmakers are heavily influenced by cinemas across Hollywood itself, namely the art cinema of Europe.

Apart from the reasons suggested by Ezra and Rowden, there have been other causes in the distribution and representation of films over the last decades. The abundance of film festivals, professional networks, guilds, and creative clusters has facilitated the emergence of transnational film. Although film festivals are typically established and sponsored by state bodies that encourage national and identitarian ideologies, they simultaneously help the accessibility and circuits of films worldwide. Emerging creative clusters with their cross-national networks with coproduction potentialities have contributed to the internationalization of national cinemas. For instance, Xin and Mossig (2021) argue how Chinese and German film clusters have co-produced films with their neighboring countries, fostering cross-national collaboration between national cinemas.

In line with the co-productions across nation-state borders, two other reasons have caused the emergence of a more international landscape in the film industry. First is the emergence of leading Video-on-demand (VOD) companies that work internationally and have expanded their production activities worldwide. Although they are primarily American -such as Netflix and HBO- their productions involve cast and crew from different countries and have many local branches across the continents. These companies do not adhere to the principles and characteristics of any national film.

From having acted as global physical and digital distributors of predominantly American-made audiovisual content, they then moved as financiers/commissioners/producers into other regions of the world, which traditionally not had been their area of focus. With the shift in geographical emphasis, the balance of power between European companies, European public film funding bodies, and American players also shifted (Eskilsson, 2022).

Additionally, the dramatic decline in the financial support for films from the national film institutes and state-owned TV channels has changed the financing paradigms of the film industry (Eskilsson, 2022). That is, previously, public funds substantially financed films. In contrast, due to decreased incentives, film producers must explore international funds, which automatically leads to transnational collaborations and co-productions.

4.4.1 Migrant Film: An Emerging Production and Reception Culture?

What is the disposition of diasporic film as a film genre in the global film production landscape? To understand the status of migrant and diasporic films in the current film production trends, one must place it in the globally recognized film cultures and consider the shifts following the influences of transnational cinema. Acknowledging the influence of migration and immigration in the development of the film industry throughout film history - for instance, the migration to North and South America in the early decades of the 20th century- , Bertellini (2013) argues that in the current era of transnational cinema, and as a consequence of mass mobilities in the past decades, migrant and diasporic films have emerged as an alternative to the previously-known film cultures.

There is, however, another, relatively more recent strain of film productions whose emergence and reception impinges upon an aesthetic map much broader than the traditional landscape of national film cultures or art cinema. The process that designed this global and thus transnational socio-

aesthetic cartography has two obvious constituents. It combines new migrations – from the Balkans, northern Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia to both Western and non-Western locations – with new modalities of media production and distribution – independent, nonhegemonic, para-institutional – that have greatly complicated traditional practices of cinematic narratives and reception. (Bertellini, 2013)

He further argues that migrant film can be seen as a third mode of production and reception in contemporary film cultures. Following the deterritorialization of production and consumption modes, three primary cinema cultures are increasingly evolving. Bertellini (2013) clarifies that the historically known film cultures, i.e., 1) Hollywood Cinema, 2) European art film, and 3) Third World Cinema (understood in Latin America), must be understood in distinctive manners when it comes to studying and categorizing migratory-focused films.

To comprehend how these cinemas interrelate with migrant film, I will briefly explain how Bertellini (2013) formulates these paradigmatic shifts. As Miller et al. (cited in Bertellini 2013) suggest, Hollywood cinema is becoming increasingly global and decentralized, described as ‘global Hollywood,’ and according to Galt & Schoonover (cited in Bertellini 2013), European art cinema is challenged by the emergence of a ‘global art cinema.’ Bertellini (2013) explains how migration-centered cinema, despite interacting and intersecting with two primary production and reception modes – Global Hollywood and Global art cinema – offers a third mode, which is also thematically and aesthetically different from Third World Cinema.

One might argue that Bertellini’s suggestion, classifying the migration-centered film as a new mode to the list of widely recognized film ecologies, is an exaggeration. Admittedly, Bertellini’s argument, in his explanatory article, is an attempt to glorify the significance of migrant film and, in turn, to suggest it as an alternative to the stance of national film cultures. What he fails to accomplish appropriately is to identify migrant film as an alternative to the current national film cultures instead of an addition to the present global film cultures. Because the market size and extent of professionalization in migrant films are not yet at the stage to be characterized as an established commercial mode of production, especially within the global context. However, if we consider Bertellini’s article a forward-looking piece of research, projecting the approaching importance of migratory stories, it can be more plausible and intriguing. Micro-level studies of the paradigm shift in the national film cultures – such as the present research on migrant film in Norway – can suggest the ever-increasing importance of migration-centered films in the formerly homogeneous national film cultures and, in turn, the

formation of a global film mode which share similar characteristics as well as production practices.

4.4.2 Thematic, Stylistic, and Aesthetic Elements of Diasporic Film

As previously discussed in short, selected scholars have tried to theorize migrant and diasporic film from an interdisciplinary perspective of film aesthetics and post-colonial studies. The former approach conceptualizes migrant film as a collection of stylistically similar artifacts, and the latter strives to make sense of the discourses and recurring themes that the films convey. While my research employs primarily the latter approach, we need to consider both approaches simultaneously to understand the generic and thematic elements of migrant films.

To grasp the requirement of applying inclusive approaches to investigating a migrant film, I can provide an example of how some elements can be best understood from an interdisciplinarity view. Migrant films typically project subjective voices and perspectives in their narratives, and self-reflexive forms of address are pervasively found in migratory-focused stories. These perspectives typical to migrant films contain elements that can be examined in both thematic and stylistic facets of films.

When a film employs a self-referential mode of expression, it appears inadequate to analyze it solely through the lens of post-colonialism and to overlook the applications and implications of the stylistic elements that may arise in conjunction with it. For instance, Naficy (2001) points out that accented films abound with various forms of epistolary address – the acts and events of sending and receiving, losing and finding, and writing and reading letters – and multifocal narratives that not only challenge the conventional expository objectivities but also are manifested in the use of complex voice-over narrations – addressing both diegetic and non-diegetic subjects –, editing styles, among others.

Similarly, Renov (2004) argues how contemporary subjectivities in documentary filmmaking are reactions to long-standing objective perspectives that dominated the documentary's expression for decades. Although his writing focuses on the turn to the subject in contemporary documentary narratives, what is interesting is that he considers the socio-cultural environment of the post-colonial era in developing the new aesthetics of documentary. That is to say, he proposes that contexts, discourses, and themes raised in films are interwoven with their stylistic elements, proving how these elements are vastly interconnected.

He specifically discusses how the politics of identity in its varied forms – exilic, diasporic, and gender identities – have fueled the new modalities in documentary filmmaking. To further clarify, I have provided both Naficy and Renov's arguments to illustrate how the sociocultural and historical contexts profoundly interrelate not only with the thematic aspects of filmic narratives but also with the aesthetics of these new modalities. Furthermore, Renov's argument suggests how identity and identity-seeking endeavors contribute to the shifting landscape of today's film cultures.

The fact that diasporic films are preoccupied with the issue of identity – or, in a broader definition, ‘the negotiation of identity’- indirectly proposes the argument that diasporic films are, in most cases, either autobiographical accounts of their creators or those of their communities. They are made with some personal interests, motivations, or struggles. Seeking identity is central to immigration, and the confusion arising from the sense of belonging and citizenship has been the source of many migrant and diasporic narratives. Various social and cultural factors influence migratory-related narratives and vary extensively in different countries and communities in each country. Naficy (2001) sees the process of negotiating migrant – either a maker or a film character – identity as a journey akin to a border-crossing journey. The concept of journey appears to be an iconic element that encapsulates the whole mobility, settlement, and integration process. It is not accidental that migrant films represent various forms of *journeying*. Some migrant film narratives revolve around the physical mobility process; for instance, a character is searching for refuge or for another character. ‘Whether documentary or fictional, accented filmmakers consistently feature journeys of some sort in their films, for their journeys set them off from their homes, profoundly shaping both their experiences and their identities henceforward’ (Naficy, 2001; p.223).

The inside stories diasporic filmmakers tell demonstrate high levels of authenticity for different reasons. First, as opposed to the typical representation of migrants, which -for both cultural reasons and overemphasis in the dramatization- creates a stereotyped and exotic image of migrant subcultures, diasporic films tend to shed these stereotypes, projecting a more personified portrayal of their communities’ individuals. Even with the critique they may provide, diasporic films demand a feeling of sympathy toward migrants from their audience. ‘As a form of self-representation, these films are free from xenophobia, as well as from the idealization or exoticization that often characterize films made by "outsiders" (Loshitzky, 2010; p.9). However, one can argue that this overemphasis on films being free from xenophobia is the romanticization of migrant films. Indeed, the fact that an insider makes a film does not guarantee a sympathetic approach toward migrants. Artistic decision-making and

creative processes can be influenced by elusive and malleable cultural discourses and migrants' sense of belonging to their minority and majority communities.

A form of self-reflexivity manifests in migrant films when migrant filmmakers voice criticism against their fellow migrants' cultural norms or traditions. Their connections to diasporic communities and the nature of their sympathetic criticism enable them to employ critical language in criticizing negative aspects of their background cultures. This move can be interpreted as admission, establishing empathy in their spectators. In the social and cultural sphere of liberal countries, criticizing traditional or conservative values exercised by some migrants can be considered unconstructive. At the same time, if insiders advance a similar critique, it can be less politically troublesome and more empathetic for their audience.

However, when an insider's loyalty and commitment to their community violates the taboo of criticizing migrants, it will potentially contribute constructively to their cultural development and create more inclusive sentiments in the receiving societies. This is because not being able to blame an unacceptable cultural element -for example, a fanatical religious belief- can lead to some xenophobic reaction in the receiving countries. This argument needs to be verified by more empirical evidence, but I can briefly exemplify *Norsk-ish* to clarify this argument here. What the creators of *Norsk-ish* have discussed -which will be provided in the case analysis- can shed light on how this issue can be experienced in Europe. They have argued that the stories they have told in the series would raise some ethnic or cultural concerns if the series were made in some other European countries. This demonstrates both the freedom they, as diasporic individuals, have exercised in raising controversial topics about cultural conflicts, and on top of that, it shows how Norway's media has created a space for discussing controversial topics. This point has been elaborated in episode six's analysis when the issue of Islamization is raised in the series.

4.4.3 Reception of Migrant and Diasporic Film

Diasporic films have particular potentialities when we explore them from the audience reception perspective. First, the authenticity or pseudo-authenticity of the narratives told by diasporic filmmakers raises the spectator's interest, who seeks factual elements in the media. Admittedly, our definition of a spectator is relative here, as every spectator has a unique critical taste and expectation driving their schemata processes. The intrinsic stylistic qualities of diasporic films also strengthen the reality the audience perceives. Diasporic films tend to use some organic elements of migrants' lives, such as ethnic languages, music, and clothing items

in ethnic festivities, unconsciously creating a basis for getting the audience to engage with the story effectively. In simple terms, the audience's engagement is established effectively because of some iconic elements that add to the entertaining and trust-building potentials of the stories.

Migrant and diasporic films are inherently deterritorialized, making them more understandable for broader audiences. When these iconic components of the films are grounded in a context familiar to the national audience, citizens of receiving countries' engagement becomes further robust and constructive. Compared to an ethnographical film that is typically made in an unfamiliar territorial context, migrant films use geographical contexts that are usually better known by their audiences; for instance, a story that happens in an Indian neighbourhood in London is more known to an English audience than a similar story in India.

Being familiar with the context demystifies the exoticism of the elements for the better, leading to a more solid trust and engagement in the story. This is simply because these films are not culturally homogenous artifacts and are not comparatively made solely for a given nation and national audience. They are, in fact, inherently and ultimately transnational. Diasporic elements contribute to the credibility and originality of the films, and simultaneously, the familiar non-ethnic settings of the stories make them typical and understandable. Another example can be a diasporic film about Turkish migrants living in Germany that is potentially interesting both because of its diasporic elements in its nonethnic setting. This is, in fact, a mixture of two settings, making a transnational hybrid setting and a combination of two -or more- cultures that develop a potential for spectator engagement. From a psychological perspective, several studies have confirmed that the level of perceived reality or truthfulness can lead to more engagement in the audience. While the ultimate impact of this engagement is barely measurable, it is evident that it can affect psychological processes and evoke an emotional response (Shapiro & Chock, 2003; Feshbach, 1972; Potter, 1988).

4.4.4 Industry Shifts and Opportunities

From an industry-looking viewpoint, migrant and diasporic films provide new opportunities for both the talents from diasporic communities and the national cinema of a given country of residence. Giving voice to migrant communities and marginalized minorities is in line with cultural policies employed by most migrant-receiving countries around the world. However, some countries exercise more open policies towards diversity and freedom of expression.

Nordic countries with their welfare state models in place are known for their inclusive and supportive strategies towards migrants (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2011). The countries' multicultural and liberal stance has encouraged their national film institutes and TV channels to support the constructive representation of migrant communities and the involvement of professionals with diasporic backgrounds. Ethnic filmmakers, with their stories, have diversified the Nordic national film landscape and contributed to cultural production and artistic expression dynamics in these countries. Continuing this chapter, we will explore these films' history, characteristics, and contributions to Norway's film industry.

4.4.5 Migrant and Diasporic Film in Norway

The increasing immigration flows starting from the 1970s have changed the Scandinavian countries' social and political environments, ranging from the cultural dynamics of the public sphere to the day-to-day political debates throughout the region (Eide & Nikunen, 2011). While the situation and cultural dynamics are different in each country, Norway seems to be experiencing a relative socio-cultural shift over the last decades. First, as in any other country, due to the proliferation of digital communication technologies, the emergence of social networks, and the increasing number of transnational economic systems, a general shifting pattern towards a more globalized social and cultural model is evident in every aspect of people's lives. Secondly, as an outcome of human mobility and immigration, a gradual change can be traced in the country's demographic status. That is, formerly culturally and ethnically homogenous Norway – except for a small population of indigenous minorities – is transforming into a diverse society. Statistics prove how the changes are happening and how the country has become multicultural regarding demography. One of the examples showing the rapid change in the demographic status of the country is that in the mid-1990s, immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents constituted about 6 percent of the country's population, while in 2023, over 19 percent of the population are either immigrant or of immigrant backgrounds (SSB: Statistics Norway).

This extensive change in the demographic landscape of Norway has offered new multicultural dynamics in the film and television of the country. Although Norway's film and television industry has been predominantly national – a series of Norwegian productions made by Norwegian makers presenting images, characters, settings, and stories typical to Norway – a decisive factor is changing the industry's status. On the margins of the mainstream Norwegian broadcasting and film industry, the first and second generations of immigrants

gradually come into play to share their migrant and diasporic experiences in the host society. The newcomers are undoubtedly influenced by different facets of their sociocultural backgrounds, ranging from ideological and discursive to their artistic and filmic traditions and tastes. They are also influenced by their experiences of living in the diaspora in Norway, which are reflected in different manners in their works. What makes diasporic films appealing is how an artist's political and cultural background can influence their interpretations of both Norway and the discourses within the diaspora. In the next chapter, we will see how a Turkish-background Norwegian individual can communicate their identity differently than an Iranian-Norwegian, and we will closely explore the reasons behind it.

Growing diversity in contemporary Norwegian society appears to be a fertile source of ideas for artistic practices across ethnicities. Addressing migrants and their issues is not limited to diasporic filmmakers; instead, local and national filmmakers also dedicate their productions to subjects revolving around migration. Although, in the beginning, shaping the portrayal of immigrants in the cinema and TV of Norway was quite varied, two dominant approaches were dominantly taken: (1) a sympathetic approach towards the immigrants as victims and (2) an exotic portrayal of the immigrants with emphasizing on cultural differences, conflicts and sometimes crimes (Tuhus, 2003 & Slåke, 2018). What diasporic filmmakers convey, however, is far beyond over-represented stereotypes in national cinemas. Larsen (2015) argues that monocultural Norwegian Cinema and Television 'cultures have undergone a process of transnationalization and multiculturalization' during which the national cinema is being redefined. He sees the migrant cinema of Norway as a constructive phenomenon that can create a positive momentum in Norway's film industry.

Diasporic filmmakers, as we discussed previously, predominantly employ self-referential narratives, contributing to the films' thematic affordances. Complementing Larsen's argument on the contributions of migrant filmmakers to Norway cinema, I can suggest that there are two main reasons why diasporic filmmakers can potentially recount their own stories further authentically and can, in turn, contribute to the national film landscape. Diasporic filmmakers are privileged with two levels of access in the making process: 1) physical access to the realities of diasporic life and 2) discursive access that stems from their uniquely hybrid situation. First, the makers of these films have first-hand experiences of the community they are illustrating, and their connection with the community helps them perform this more authentically. This access appears somewhat insignificant compared to the second reason to come. More importantly, migrant filmmaking yields a critical freedom to tell the unspoken and talk about subject matters on the margins of controversies. That is, they can unproblematically

criticize both diasporic cultures – and sometimes Norwegian culture – from within without being labeled as either racist or ethnocentric. They can enter some discursive discussions that are too sensitive to discuss, especially in the national media. For instance, ethnic tensions, religious issues, and politically sensitive topics are more unproblematically discussed in these films, e.g., the issue of compulsory hijab and Islam in *Norsk-ish*.

Diasporic films – if we understand them as the works of second-generation migrants – revolve around the two-fold process of integration and acculturation. On the one hand, there is a dynamic process of ‘integration,’ On the other hand, acculturation, or assimilation to a different culture, encompasses a wide range of behaviors, attitudes, and values that change with contact between cultures. Hamid Naficy (2001) argues how diasporic films are in dialogue with home and host societies and how these films are prone to the tensions of marginality and difference. Diasporic narratives in the Norwegian media seem to mainly deal with the issues of ethnic and cultural belonging, that is, the dilemma of Norwegian-ness and Other-ness, and as Larsen (2015) defines, ‘the caught in-between cultures.’

However, the themes related to identity and belonging were not the critical themes of migrant films in their infancy in the 1980s. Initially, all migrant films were made by the first generation of immigrants, mainly from communities of guest workers in Norway. From a stylistic and thematic point of view, the films can be characterized as migrant films because they addressed the hardships of newcomers settling in a country far from their homeland. From the few films made before the 2000s, two specific cases from the 80s can best exemplify how migrant films started in Norway and how they understood their early years of living there. *An Eye for An Eye* (1985) and *Macaroni Blues* (1986) tell the stories of the plights of guest workers in the first stages of their settlement. These two films portray Norway as an exotic and dystopian society. As Bakøy (2012) argues, *Macaroni Blues* (1986) is a film that portrays Norway as a country where, as one of the film's characters says, ‘no Italian can survive.’ Both these films are infused with profound feelings of homelessness and de-territorialization typical for accented cinema (Bakøy, 2012). The few films made in the 1980s and 1990s in Norway can be classified as migrant films, as they exposed similarities with migrant films around the migrant-receiving world. The films were mainly about the exilic experiences of workers living in a somewhat strange culture. However, while early migrant films depicted Norway as a claustrophobic country and addressed guest workers’ problems, diasporic stories appeared as the second generation of migrants slowly entered the industry in the following decade, the 2000s -.

In the 2000s, some examples show how the migrant film gradually showed thematic characteristics of the films that explore diasporic challenges. 'Unlike the previous films, they are created by young migrants from non-western countries, indicating that although migrants from European countries still dominate the statistics, Norway is on its way to becoming a truly multicultural nation, with immigrants from 214 countries (Bakøy, 2012). The examples that Bakøy has mentioned in her article demonstrate a liminal period during which some qualities of diasporic films gradually evolved from migrant films. However, these films can hardly be considered diasporic as they are still preoccupied with discourses of the homeland. We can see that they begin discussing their new home discourses and bringing up the cultural disorientation facing second generations. What is more visible in the productions of migrant filmmakers of this period, who were almost all from Middle Eastern migratory backgrounds, is that they criticize their home culture more than Norway's sociocultural characteristics and values. Although they show some of the elements of the diasporic films, they do not still deal with the complex issue of identity; instead, they are trying to create a balance between their home and host culture; they are also trying to digest the values of the county they have settled in.

5 Chapter 5/ Case Study; Norsk-ish

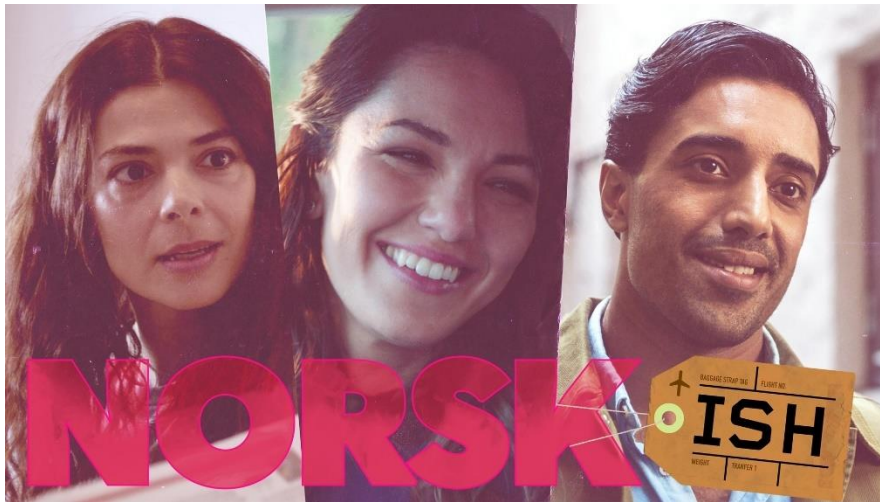


Figure 1: Poster of *Norsk-ish* (2020), Courtesy to NRK

Narrowing down this research to the issues that the second generation of immigrants deals with, especially highlighting the theme of identity, the thesis scrutinizes a Television series entitled *Norsk-ish*, aired in 2020 by the Norwegian Public Broadcasting Organization (NRK). The series was co-written and co-created by two Norwegian women - Bahareh Badadvi and Melike Leblebicioglu - originating from two ethnic communities, the Iranian and the Turkish, respectively. The case study contributes to understanding how diasporic production is understood in the cultural spheres of both home and host societies and how the sociocultural features of diasporic production are constructed socially and ideologically in the host society.

The TV series *Norsk-ish* tells the story of three 30-ish-year-old characters from three different communities in Oslo. Helin (a woman from a Turkish household), Amrit (from an Indian Sikh household), and Fariba (from an Iranian household) struggle with varied socio-cultural and identity issues both within the diasporic and national societies.

5.1 Episode One

Bobler og hijab (Bubbles and hijab)

Summary of Episode 1:

Fariba, a Norwegian girl with an Iranian migratory background, living in Norway since childhood, returns to Norway after her trip to the United States to attend a photography course. She wants to collect her son Gabriel from her ex-husband, an ethnic Norwegian man, and his new girlfriend, but Gabriel refuses. Feeling sad about the refusal and seemingly jealous of her ex-husband's new relationship, she joins her friends in the May 17th parade. Amrit is Fariba's friend, and he has an Indian Punjabi background

and has a Norwegian girlfriend called Tina. He owns a bar in Oslo, is concerned about Tina's pregnancy, and has hidden their relationship from his family. Helin, another friend of Fariba, is a medical doctor with a Turkish background. She is selective in choosing her partners, seeking successful and wealthy ones while having casual relationships. She lives with her family and has a younger sister. Fariba, working as a photographer, is facing financial difficulties, and her family is unhappy with her behavior, constantly cautioning her not to damage their reputation and bring shame due to her lifestyle and failed events. They worry about their social image within the Iranian community in Oslo. Late at night, Fariba shows the picture she took on May 17th to Helin. It depicts a Norwegian woman wearing Bunad, traditional Norwegian clothes, vomiting on a Muslim woman wearing a hijab; however, we are not given the details of the incident and are not sure what exactly happened. Helin playfully suggests that Fariba could make good money by posting this photo on Instagram. Under the influence of alcohol, Fariba shares the picture of the Muslim woman on her Instagram without being aware of the responses, as her phone dies due to lack of charge. The following day, Helin, who goes to work after spending the night with a Norwegian man, meets her younger sister, a college student, at the clinic. She is three months pregnant with her partner Peter and asks her sister's help to inform the family about it. Fariba and her son are playing in the courtyard, finally finding an opportunity to charge her phone, which turns on after hours of being off.

5.1.1 The Issue of 'Where Are You From?'

The series' first episode starts at the airport in Oslo with a scene in which Fariba is returning from the United States. To get her passport stamped for entering Norway, she pauses momentarily to choose whether she should take the queue for Norwegian citizens or non-Norwegian citizens, and she finally goes on the queue for Norwegian citizens. The thematic premise of this series is somewhat critically encapsulated in this scene -and the rest of the scene to come- where Fariba is shown as uncertain whether she is from Norway or not. We then know her more through the series, and we know she has been in Norway since childhood and is a Norwegian national like any other country citizen. However, the fact that she is still doubtful about her national identity is a very illuminating fact about her identity struggle. Regarding filmic and storytelling elements, this scene is an excellent example of utilizing visual affordances of cinema rather than providing expositional facts through dialogues, commonly known as 'showing, not telling.'

A woman with long blond hair - presumably ethnically Norwegian- before Fariba gets her passport stamped quickly and proceeds. Moreover, now it is Fariba's turn. When the immigration officer asks her, 'Where do you come from?/where are you coming from?' she apprehensively answers, 'I have a Norwegian passport.' When the officer repeats the question for the second time, she angrily tells her story of coming to Norway from Iran 30 years ago and living here since then. She continues, 'Do you think I would be accepted as Norwegian if I have blond hair, blue eyes, and a new -Norwegian- name?' (figure 2). Then the officer, who

seems confused and shocked, says, ‘What I am just wondering is with which plane you came today?’



Figure 2 - Norsk-ish Episode 1 - 01:05 Courtesy to NRK

This scene illustrates Fariba’s character when it comes to the issue of identity, the self-consciousness of a Norwegian national with a migratory background for not being accepted as a Norwegian sufficiently. Moreover, this scene denotes another essential complexity regarding how individuals perceive their ethnic identity. Even if the officer would have asked about her ethnic background, why would Fariba get uneasy about communicating it? What makes Fariba misunderstand the officer's questions appears to stem from her profound apprehension about still not being seen as a complete Norwegian. This is, however, a multifaceted issue influenced by different societal reasons -both national society and diasporic community- as well as familial and personal factors. It also varies depending on a given community's characteristics and migratory type.

I have discussed this scene with the series' creators in my interview. As communicated earlier, diasporic filmmakers tend to present their personal experiences, conveying their projects with significant self-reflexivity. In my interview with the series' creators, Bahareh Badavi mentioned that this scene was inspired by an incident where she underwent a similar experience at Oslo’s airport. Both creators have pointed out the complexity of the topic, and the unexpected end of the scene, triggered by Fariba's misinterpretation of the officer, has motivated them to start the series with the scene.

Interviewer: I find the opening scene of the series very interesting. How did you come up with the scene’s idea?

Melike: *I remember that as soon as Baharah shared this experience with me, we knew that we should begin the series with this scene. What we want to say in that scene is everyone has their perspective, and the series is about misunderstandings and the complexity of being multicultural. So, that scene captures everything about the series in one scene and sets the tone of it.*

Bahareh: *As you said [referring to the interviewer], the officer seems to be mean or rude initially, and this makes her angry. But the fact that we flipped it at the end, we set the tone and set an agreement with the audience that this is the type of show we are going to give you; this is the type of humor you are going to get engaged with. That was a very important aspect of the show and as Melike said, we instinctively decided to start the series this way.*

Interviewer: *I also see this scene from a different perspective. Let's imagine the girl was from Australia or had Australian origins. Perhaps, she would simply smile and answer 'I'm from Australia, but I am a Norwegian citizen too'. But in the scene, Fariba is trying to avoid talking about her ethnic background and gets angry when the Norwegian officer insists on the answer.*

Melike: *That's true! Also, it allowed us to set her as a character because she is easily offended, but there is a lot to say about her connection to being an Iranian or her struggle to be Norwegian and not wanting to be an Iranian.*

Bahareh: *Or her struggle to fit in and not being asked questions like that. Also, in a cultural context in Norway, this is a very loaded question to ask. People ask it in conversation when they meet new people, and historically it has been very well debated; is it okay to ask someone where they are coming from because we are all from here -Norway-? There is also a moment that you may have missed. When she approaches the passport lines, it says Norwegian citizens and other citizens, and she pauses and thinks about it and uses the Norwegian line. Again, she is used to hearing this sentence all through her life, where are you from? Where do you come from? And this is the time when we finally opened our mouths and brought it up (in the series).*

As Bahareh Badavi points out, the issue of *external gaze* -i.e., the first scene of the series- seems to evoke an unsatisfactory sensibility among the second-generation migrants in Norway. This is what some individuals have raised their voices for. In a similar case, this is a teenage Iranian female migrant born in Norway who has published an article in the Norwegian news agency Aftenposten about why she thinks being asked where she is *really* from is a form of everyday racism (Farzehsaeid, 2022).

5.1.2 The Politics of Citizenship and Recognition

Why this question might be inconvenient for some ethnicities and not for others? Let us work on an example. Would a Japanese teenager born in Thailand become annoyed at being

asked where she is from in her high school in Thailand? There is a much lower chance that the Japanese girl becomes that annoyed. This is simply because of the general perception of countries and ethnicities under the skin of our societies. In simple terms, being a Japanese is potentially more prestigious than being a Thai, and who determines this unspoken hierarchical system of citizens? It is arguably a complex image of each country distinguished by a given country's economic situation and citizens' income, the budget spent on public diplomacy, the media representations, ethnicity and race, geographical features, and whether historically core or peripheral, among other things. The hidden everyday interactions of citizens worldwide based on images and perceptions are informed by 'the politics of citizenship.'

It is sensible to suppose that those with access to two identities -or political citizenships- choose the one that is more advantageous and satisfactory to them in each social setting. I argue that the fundamental reason behind being annoyed by the question of where you are from is driven by the intensification of *double consciousness* in a migrant from the countries, which might lower public recognition in a given receiving country. That is, the diasporic individuals whose level of double consciousness is so high they are '...always in the waiting rooms of the nation-space' (Dayal, 1996; p. 50), whereas for some privileged citizens of 'first world' countries, there not much motivation to enter the room. If a migrant, like the Japanese teenager in Thailand that I have mentioned, has a strong sense of belonging to where her ethnicity is associated, she would not easily get annoyed by this question. The analysis of Episode Three in this research discusses how a diaspora member's sense of belonging is shaped.

While this is a common phenomenon among migrant-born nationals living in different countries, some reasons might contribute to the intensification of this issue in Norway. The first reason is characterized by the country's ethnic and cultural homogeneity, which influences ethnic Norwegians' behavior toward migrants in social settings. That is to say, as the country is -until now- minimally multicultural, an understandable sense of curiosity will arise for the citizens to know more about a person who is seemingly non-Norwegian or, in some cases, looks Norwegian but is from another country, for example from Iceland. Comparing Polish-born UK citizens and their Norwegian counterparts -Norwegian citizens from Polish parents and Erdal and Lewicki (2016) argue that young adults who were either born in or grown up in Norway feel apprehensive having experienced these examples of external gaze in the country, which has led to the creation of a relatively exclusionary society for Polish-background Norwegian citizens. 'Perceptions of collective identity seemed more exclusive in Norway than the UK, evident from the reflections of migrants living in Norway for most of their lives and the native-born second generation' (Erdal & Lewicki, 2016).

This issue is, however, experienced differently by migrants from third-world countries as they are the communities that are perceived as *more immigrants* in the public sphere of Norway. As opposed to migrants from Nordic countries, who are to a great extent perceived as ‘the Nordic brothers’ -for example, Guðjónsdóttir & Loftsdóttir (2017) explore the positivity in the treatment of Norwegian media and the public sphere towards the Icelandic migrant community-, migrants from eastern European countries and the Global South are treated differently. Olwig (2011) has pointed out that the public discourse of Norway perceives migrants and refugees as those who take advantage of the social welfare system. Some studies have similarly shown that some forms of socio-cultural and structural racialization may exist in the country, especially towards those from so-called non-white countries (Gullestad, 2004).

5.1.3 The Narratives of Misunderstanding

In this part, I examine how some narrative techniques can contribute to the proper filmic delivery of cultural dissonances and obliviousness, as the writers of the series point out misunderstanding characterize the underpinning narrative style and cultural complexities conveyed in the series. These elements are evident in the social behaviors of the characters, as well as the narrative structure of scenes and sequences. The first episode of the series bears incidents and scenes where characters do not understand each other or their initial interpretations unexpectedly flip throughout the scenes. This is a form of motif that perfectly fits the thematic elements of the story. This stylistic element in *Norsk-ish* storytelling is not only a narrative style; to understand it, we must not limit ourselves to applying the narratological approaches. This style has arguably been employed to manipulate the audience's expectations for narrative purposes. Using this narrative device can lead to a more robust engagement of the spectator and create dramatic irony in the scenes. The irony arising from misunderstanding can enrich the scenes' thematic depth. After all, irony is a compelling mode of intellectual engagement.

The most visible irony manifests in the scene of the 17th of May (Norway's national day). Helin and Amrit's approaches to Norway and the issue of Norwegian-ness are depicted in their relationship with other ethnic Norwegians. Amrit, wearing Bunad, has a Norwegian girlfriend and seems to be portrayed as a well-integrated migrant. Standing before a choir, he proudly and passionately sings a patriotic Norwegian song for a large crowd. Helin, however, is portrayed as a character struggling to maintain her national and ethnic identity equally. In a scene, Helin joins two Norwegian youngsters criticizing some elements of the festivity, such

as everyone wearing a Bunad. When asked why she is not wearing one, she answers, ‘What is the deal with foreigners and Bunad?’. Later, when the Norwegians presume she is a festival critic, as they are, Helin conversely says she is enjoying such a grand celebration and means it. This creates a form of irony as a migrant-background Norwegian (Helin) reminds two ethnic Norwegians that they should enjoy the day and stop the nagging. This misunderstanding and its flip seem to have been employed to negate the previously accumulated stereotypes that audiences are familiar with. The series intends to communicate that the characters are not against these festivities.

This episode introduces different forms of cultural dissonances both between diasporic characters and ethnic Norwegians and internally among the diasporic communities. For instance, there is a generational misunderstanding between Helin and her younger sister, who is pregnant with her Norwegian boyfriend. Helin does not understand why her sister will have a child while she and her boyfriend have no economic stability.

The Fariba household seems to have the most profound cultural and generational conflicts. Her family is portrayed as very traditional and conservative, especially Fariba’s father, who does not understand and accept their daughter’s lifestyle. Fariba’s father seems to worry about their family's reputation within their diasporic community, which is seen in some traditional diasporic communities. As we see in later episodes, despite years of living in Norway, he still does not speak Norwegian properly and cannot – or is not willing – to pronounce the name of Fariba’s son correctly – he calls Gabriel Jebrail, which is the Arabic/Persian variation of it. Since speaking the language of a host society is a crucial step in entering a country’s public sphere and getting integrated (Ager & Strang, 2008), Fariba’s father seems to represent the migrants who are not integrated in Norway. This episode is predominantly concerned with establishing Fariba’s character, a short-tempered, emotionally unstable, risk-taking, and rebellious girl struggling with financial issues due to her losses in life. While she has a very traditional household, she seems to be a very progressive person.

5.2 Episode Two

Like barn (Like children)

Summary of Episode 2:

Amrit goes to Tina's family's house and has lunch with them, and Tina's father makes racist jokes with him; Tina gets upset, but Amrit is okay with it. Amrit spends time with his family, and his mother insists

that he marry an Indian girl and start a family as soon as possible. The next day, Tina's pregnancy test is negative, and while Tina is happy, Amrit is upset. Fariba and her ex-husband have gone to their son's school for a parent-teacher conference, and from their conversations, his new girlfriend is trying to make Gabriel happy and has made a vegetable soup for him, and Fariba does not like this. While at the spa, Fariba and Helin discuss Fariba's Instagram post, which has received many racist likes and comments. Helin believes Fariba should delete this post, but Fariba disagrees. Helin and her sister inform their parents about the sister's pregnancy, and contrary to their expectations, their parents are very accepting of the situation. Helin, her parents, her sister, and Peter, her sister's boyfriend, are at a restaurant. Helin is upset about her parents' discriminatory behavior towards her and her sister, feeling they are trying too hard to be Norwegian and have forgotten their Turkish culture and traditions. To express her protest, she orders a bacon burger and whiskey. Fariba looks at the photos on her mobile phone and suddenly realizes that she took a photo of the scene after lifting the veiled woman; it seems this was an accident, and the Norwegian girl is ashamed and tries to help the veiled woman. Tina and her colleagues, all men, have come to Amrit's bar and ordered drinks. Tina is very close to them, and after some time, she introduces Amrit to them, and Amrit gets upset about this. Amrit, feeling upset, intends to throw the trash in the backyard when she sees a young girl in Indian clothes smiling at him, and Amrit smiles back.

5.2.1 He is more integrated than me

The second episode starts with a scene where the ethnically Norwegian father of Tina cracks some inappropriate jokes on Amrit, negatively referring to his ethnic background. The jokes are complex and not explicitly offensive. For example, when it turns out that Amrit makes food at home, her father says Amrit seems to be more integrated than himself, to which Amrit reacts positively, which will be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs. An initial understanding of the joke implies that the extent to which a migrant is a good husband is positively interrelated with the level of integration – or assimilation – into Norwegian culture. In simple terms, the more Norwegian migrants are, the better husband they are. For a short analysis, this simple joke overlooks historical, economic, and social considerations regarding the distribution of housework in different societies and differences between migrants. It is purely based on stereotypes associated with some migrant communities. We should remember that the series *Norsk-ish* depicts characters from countries where their citizens are perceived as workers/refugees from the viewpoints of the Norwegian public and not the countries where their citizens are ethnically close to Ethnic Norwegians, Germans, Swedes, etc. While only about 35 percent of immigrants living in Norway are from the Muslim majority nations, these migrants are discussed more in contentious contexts (Eriksen, 2013).

The series' characters are from countries that can collectively create an image of the immigrant communities in Oslo and, in turn, best portray their migratory and diasporic experiences. Oslo is the most multicultural city in Norway, and about one-third of its population are either migrants or from migrant parents (SSB: Statistics Norway). In the

previous paragraphs, we discussed the influence of the socio-cultural characteristics of Norway’s public discourse on the creation of identity issues experienced by second-generation migrants from the global south. Due to the ethnic, cultural, and social differences of these migrants, the media, the education system, and the country's public sphere expect them to integrate quickly and indicate signs of integration in the settlement process.

In the public sphere of Norway, racialized jokes that include migrants’ integration seem to stem from the multi-layered and far-reaching perception of the concept of integration. That is to say, the complexities and controversies in defining the concept of *integration* have led to different forms of racialization for citizens with migrant backgrounds. What exactly does integration mean? What are the criteria that a migrant individual should meet to be assumed fully integrated by the majority? How do migratory background citizens understand and experience the process of integration? The most straightforward answer is that it significantly depends on a country’s sociocultural, political, and ethnic qualities. Also, as we see further in the case of migrants from Iranian, Turkish, and Indian backgrounds, it is interpreted and exercised differently for different migrant communities. According to Ager and Strang (2008), there is an operational definition of integration that emphasizes some indicators and criteria:



Figure 3: Ager and Strang (2008)

While markers of integration seem to be easy to clarify and grasp for the public, some elements of social connection and facilitators (figure 3) can be interpreted differently. Even though Amrit meets all the criteria mentioned earlier of integration, the series' creators seem to intend to communicate that the lack of cultural understanding puts Amrit in such an unsatisfactory situation. Amrit is in a position where he must overtly display signs of assimilation to meet the criteria of cultural integration expected by society.

While the series' main characters are carefully created to be appropriately integrated, Amrit seems marginally assimilated. That is not to say that doing housework is a sign of assimilation; instead, being silent against hearing inappropriate jokes and affirming them portrays him as a character hesitant to challenge and correct stereotypes in the public sphere.

In countries like Norway, where majority's ethnicity historically shapes the cultural understanding of nation and nationhood, migrants are under pressure to assimilate into the cultural values and norms of the host society. Eriksen (2013) explains how Norwegian nationalism was shaped in the last two centuries.

Norwegian nationalism has historically been based on ethnicity, while also being influenced by Enlightenment concepts of human rights (it should nonetheless be noted that rights were initially accorded only to men with property and that minority rights were not on the agenda) and the failed 1848 democratic revolutions in continental Europe. Because of its historical homogeneity, and because Norwegian society has always been relatively small (there were 0.9 million inhabitants in 1814, 3 million in 1945, and 5 million in 2012), the institutions of the modern state, from mass media to the educational system and the labor market, have been capable of building, and making credible, an image of the nation as a family (Erikse, 2013; p.3).

Even though some research has found that Norway is a country with an inconsequential level of racial discrimination, some elements of Norwegian nationality and cultural identity may unintentionally cause forms of exclusion, on the one hand, and acculturation, on the other hand. Becoming Norwegian is more complex when the national identity focuses on ethnicity and historical ties.

Migrants from the so-called Global South must constantly communicate their respect and bonds to the country to make the majority accept them in *the Norwegian Family*. Furthermore, this challenging situation underscores the psychological and behavioral processes that shape migrants' attitudes toward their diasporic communities. When a migrant distances themselves from their diasporic values, cultures, and background, they are more likely to be perceived as fitting into Norwegian society and being accepted as part of the Norwegian community. Not everyone is motivated enough to employ a new identity, and those who do, for instance, Amrit, are not necessarily accepted by all majority members, namely Tina's father.

Like the series's main characters, the Norwegian public is portrayed in a balanced manner; people are usually unaware of their racialized behaviors or, in some cases, respect a

person's ethnic background more than some migrants. This is more noticeable in a scene where Fariba refuses to actively participate in the International Day event in Gabriels's school. Her ex-husband and his new girlfriend seem to appreciate Gabriel's diverse ethnic background, as the girlfriend will make ethnic food for the event. Fariba seems to have the most minor identity issues compared to other main characters; she is preoccupied with career success and economic stability.

5.2.2 Transitions of Values in Diaspora

It appears that contrary to Amrit, Helin is portrayed as a character resisting complete assimilation into Norwegian culture. She has a stronger ethnic identity as a second generation of immigrants from Turkey. One can argue that she would react differently to the jokes of Tina's father as she demonstrates different signs of resisting acculturation. As discussed in the first episode, she told the young Norwegian couple there was no point in wearing a Bunad as a foreigner. As a Norwegian-born woman, she seems to identify as Turkish equally. However, the writers have tried not to exaggerate this element in her character. Even though she is unwilling to wear Bunad, she wears a chest badge of the country's flag on Norway's national day.

The ironic element of Helin's characterization is exhibited in her relationship with her family. Helin seems puzzled by her family's transition into applying Norwegian culture over the last few years. From Helin's dialogues, it appears that when she was younger, her family appreciated their ethnic culture, and they had different values. She has been under pressure to become a doctor while she was interested in studying music. Now, the family has changed so that Helin's mother does not want her daughter to speak Turkish. They have also become more progressive as they seem to be readily accepting their daughter's pregnancy before a formal marriage. Helin, however, objects to these transitions she witnesses in her family. She sees a form of inconsistency regarding the values the family used to cherish, and now they do not exist.



Figure 4 - Norsk-ish Episode 2 - 17:01 Courtesy to NRK

However, she is not portrayed as a character obsessed with her ethnic background; the writers have tried to craftfully portray this aspect of her character as a form of identity exploration, not affirmation. Helin's inclination towards her ethnic background is illustrated carefully by the writers, as in different scenes, she manipulates the audience's certainty about this interest. For instance, in the continuation of Helin's talks in the restaurant scene, she expresses that she could have become a Muslim girl if her parents had been consistent in their cultural values. This remark can signify that she might be currently sympathetic to the religion. However, she playfully orders a bacon sandwich and a glass of beer -both not permitted in Islam- to which their parents look confused, and the scene ends here.

Apart from the fact that handling the audience's expectations is a narrative tool employed by the writers in the closure of the scene, I can add that another cause seems to have contributed to this decision in the creative writing process. Helin's contradictory attitudes can help create a well-rounded character – unlike a flat character- which is more exciting and charming for the audience. McKee (1999) argues that contradictions can create dimensions for characters and give them complex personalities as real people in everyday life. He also suggests that characters must be dimensional so that the audience develops more empathy and engagement in the story (McKee, 1999; p.378).

Helin is a charming character, not only because of the excellent performance and the charm of the actor -Selda Ekiz- but also because of various dimensions of her personality that arouse curiosity and make her unpredictable. Helin is highly educated, but her close friends are from different walks of life. She treats her ethnic roots -religious and cultural characteristics- with respect and appreciation. However, at the same time, she is a liberal and progressive person in her everyday life and her relationships. While she is socially and

culturally bonded with Norwegians of the majority -ethnic Norwegians- she is connected with her parents' homeland -she speaks her ethnic language properly with other community members. She is in contact with her grandmother, presumably in Turkey.

5.3 Episode Three

Gullring (Gold ring)

Summary of Episode 3:

Fariba's photo and an article she wrote about misunderstandings and the issue of liking on social media and being called "like prostitutes" have become controversial in various media. Amrit plans to hang out with his friends at night, and while Tina likes to join them and be with them, he refuses her presence and believes it might be boring for Tina. Amrit, who is curious about the Indian girl in the nearby restaurant, goes there and orders food, and gets along with the girl who is the cashier. He finally leaves with a smile and goes to Tina's house. Fariba, his son Gabriel, his parents, and his uncle Reza eat together, and Reza excitedly shows them the newspaper that printed his photo and article. While she is pleased, they worry about the consequences and talk to her about their family's reputation. Amrit, Fariba, Helin Reza, and Tina – who finally received Amrit's confirmation to join them – gather at the bar to discuss cultural differences. On the way home, Tina and Amrit have a little discussion about this and the topics to which both seem annoyed. In her office, Helin is following her Turkish patient, a middle-aged woman, who sees her young son, Osman, and apparently, they like each other. Helin and Osman are talking and getting to know each other in a restaurant. At first, it seems that Osman, who has no exceptional social position and is a van driver, did not attract Helin's opinion very much. However, they have a good time together on the way home and look happy.

By watching the series, one can see that the diasporas depicted differ in different aspects. Both the way they understand their roots, their approach to adopting the host culture, and their conception of the country of residence. While, for instance, Helin curiously explores her ethnic background and appreciates her ethnic culture, Amrit and Fariba have their approaches to these issues. As this episode is predominantly concerned with Helin's meeting and dating a fellow Turkish migrant, I will closely study the background and features of the Turkish community in Norway.

5.3.1 Diaspora: Its types and features

Apart from the characteristics of the society of Norway and Norwegian identity that complicates the processes of citizenship and national identity for migrants from the Global South, we should take into consideration some internal variables influenced by the dynamics of diasporic communities. It is not hard to argue that every diasporic community has its dynamism that can influence how its members approach their ethnic and national identities.

Removing the potential influences of the countries of residence, I can argue that there are at least five internal variables concerning how migrant-born individuals explore, affirm, and exercise their identities differently.

- 1) the type of a diaspora based on Cohen's typology (see next page) as a broad factor.
- 2) the extent to which diaspora members have a sense of ethnic coherence, primarily informed by the level of nationalism sentiments in each country.
- 3) the current political and economic situations of a diaspora's homeland
- 4) the extent to which the household/family of an individual has a sense of belonging to the homeland.
- 5) personal motives and perspectives

These variables are interconnected, and all are contributory factors that influence an individual's minority identity in the diaspora. While people from a diaspora may come for different reasons, a predominant migration style, in most cases, contributes to forming a diaspora, especially for citizens of some migrant-sending countries with a larger diaspora population. As we know, the characters of *Norsk-ish* originate from three countries, all of which can be considered migrant-sending countries.

However, these three communities relocated for different reasons. Cohen (1997) suggests that there are five types of diasporas around the world:

1. Victim/Refugee
2. Imperial / Colonial
3. Labor / Service
4. Trade / Business / Professional
5. Cultural/Hybrid/Postmodern.

While most of the members of the Iranian diaspora – which will be discussed in the analysis of the following episode – have come to Norway to seek refuge, Turkish and Punjabi communities primarily came as guest workers. At the time of this study, 21892 people with Turkish backgrounds reside in Norway, some of whom are Norwegian born with Turkish parents (SSB: Statistics Norway).

5.3.2 Turkish-ness and Turkish Diaspora in Norway

Following the recruitment agreement signed between Germany and Turkey in 1961, Turkish people started migrating to Germany, which also influenced their subsequent mobilities to other European countries. On a side note, I purposefully refrain from calling the people of Turkey Turk, as this heavily ethnic term seems to have raised objections from the minority groups of the country -the Kurds, the Arabs, and the Armenians, among others (Korhan, 2014; p.7). A simple corrective move could be using the word *Turkish*, as it mainly links an individual to the country of Turkey rather than to the majority ethnic group. A similar approach holds for substituting *Iranian* for *Persian*. Admittedly, people might have different interpretations – with historically grounded arguments – concerning which word is suitable to use here. However, it is safe to argue that using these two words is more sensible and raises fewer complaints.

Returning to our topic, since the agreement with Federal Germany opened the doors to migrating from Turkey to the West, about 100,000 Turkish people have migrated to European countries annually since 1961 (TÜSGAD, 1999). Korhan (2014) suggests that from the late 1970s, Turkish migrants gradually came to Norway; some of them could not ‘make it’ in their first host country, for instance, Germany, and some came directly from Turkey. ‘Norway was one of the preferred secondary destinations because of its open society, low unemployment, and high wealth (Korhan, 2014; p.48). Turkish migrants gradually came through chain immigration – a form of migration where people facilitate and help their friends and family to immigrate – and family reunification – joining the first-degree family members. Korhan (2014; p.81) argues that while there have been different forms of migration from Turkey to Norway, chain immigration is the most common style of migration that Turkish people use to enter Norway.



Figure 5 - Norsk-ish Episode 3 – 19:04 Courtesy to NRK

Admittedly, there have been other types of migration to Norway – educational, recent political refugees, etc. – but the number of Turkish migrants who came to Norway for economic and through chain immigration substantially outweighed. The Turkish Diaspora is considered a Labor/Service diaspora based on the typology of Cohen (1997). Figure 5 shows the family of Osman with a worker background in Norway. Turkish workers soon ‘...came together to solve their practical problems and to establish a social network and solidarity’ (Korhan, 2014; p.83). A migrant-founded union called Norway Turkish Islamic Union – NORTİB became the community's leading organization, which both helped workers and promoted Turkish and Islamic culture in the community. Korhan (2014; p.87) argues that the foundations’ policies were in line with the emergence of a conservative turn in the politics of Turkey, and this led to more connections between the foundation and the homeland, to the point that the Turkish community in Norway, in some instances, used the Turkish government as a mediator for solving their issues in Norway.

Landau (2010, pp.232-235) suggests how nationalist sentiments and ideologies pervasive in the Turkish diaspora have contributed to developing Turkish-Islamic identity in Europe. This historical information exhibits how actively the Turkish community has exercised its identity and maintained its connections with the homeland. It also shows the atmosphere in which Turkish-born migrants have grown up in the 1980s and the 1990s.

While some diaspora Turks of the second and third generations tend to integration (and, less frequently, to assimilation) in the European countries, not a few are known to move back to the ethnic and cultural roots that they had left behind in Turkey, which may provide a key to their nationalist attitudes (Landau, 2010).

Based on this explanation, there are two reasons why the second generation of the Turkish diaspora is less likely to assimilate into the host country’s culture completely: first, because of the pervasiveness and strength of Turkish patriotic sentiments in the diasporic households, and second, with the reinforcement of the identity by the territorial and physical linkages of the diaspora with their homeland. This is visible in the characters of Osman and Helin, however, apparently in different ways.

However, Helin's younger sister appears to express her Turkish identity with less intensity. She neither speaks Turkish nor shares Helin's interest in exploring their ethnic heritage. This aspect of her character aligns with a broader transformation in Turkish society's socio-cultural and political dynamics, domestically and across Turkey’s borders. In later

episodes, the fate of Helin and Osman's relationship is another signification for a broader change in the diaspora of Turkish migrants.

***Interviewer:** There is an interesting side to Helin's character. While she is dating different Norwegian men in the series, it seems that she doesn't see the relationship as something serious. Conversely, as soon as she meets Osman, she behaves differently, and she sees him as her future husband. How do you interpret this as we see her caught between Turkishness and Norwegianness?*

***Bahareh:** I think part of it is the fact that a lot of immigrants, especially women when they date someone in their own culture, there must be sort of plan around it while if you date men from other cultures it doesn't need to be as serious. There is not much at stake, there is nothing to do with your family's situation or reputation and all those issues.*

***Melike:** I think in Helin's case, she is just experimenting with things. In the same way, she is experimenting with Norwegian guys, she is experimenting with the conservative Turkish guy. But she is bound by these rules that in the end are mostly her own. I think it was interesting to write that story because we were talking about how our parents change, and rules change. If you have younger siblings, you will feel that the same rule does not apply. That is a universal thing, and not only for immigrants, I think a lot of ethnic Norwegians can also say the same thing that our parents were stricter with me than my younger siblings.*

The most challenging aspect of the second generation of migrants manifests in their relationship with their diasporic home. *Norsk-ish* shows a noticeable cultural gap between the first-generation and the second-generation diaspora in Norway and seems to blame the diasporic culture for the cultural dissonance primarily. Helin's parents treat their children differently, and she accuses them of hypocritical behavior in applying their values and assimilation into the culture of Norway. However, the identity shift of the family is criticized as the series' writers have presented it in the superficiality of the mother's attitudes. The mother dislikes her daughters speaking Turkish publicly and prefers Helin getting married to a non-Turkish. In contrast, the mother is shown to exercise some dated Turkish traditions.

At the beginning of the next episode, the mother is shown in the tasseography scene where she talks to a fortune teller, showing her interest in superstitions traditionally pervasive in Turkish culture (Turkey: Society & Culture, 2010: pp. 21-26). Other critically represented personality traits she possesses can be overlooked as I consider them secondary to the main topic of my research; for instance, being nosy, etc. However, this criticism that targets the

mother is not exaggerated as the general approach toward the characters is, in the end, sympathetic. The balancing element that softens the critiques is the mother's warning to her daughter to marry a conservative man, which turns out right in later episodes.

The Turkish part of the series has arguably been portrayed constructively. As shown in Helin's dialogue in the series, she cherishes her Turkishness, which is the reality and average of the community. Further, Helin's portrayal of Turkish sweetness – the confident use of cultural icons explained in the next episode's analysis – is further strengthened because she is well-educated and likable and garners the audience's sympathy.

5.4 Episode Four

Foreldrene (Parents)

Summary of Episode 4:

Helin's mother has gone to a fortune teller, and Amrit's mother is alone at the shopping center. Fariba's father is sitting in a café with some Iranian men, teasing him about his Norwegian language skills. Helin's mother asks Helin about who brought her home in a van last night, and she mentions it was a casual encounter. Her mother reminds her of her social status as a doctor and questions her behavior. However, the mother has a friendly relationship with Helin's sister's boyfriend, who stayed over the previous night. Fariba plans to leave Gabriel with her parents for the weekend to focus on her work. However, her father is dissatisfied and emphasizes the importance of family, urging her to spend more time with her son. Before going to sleep, Fariba's father reads a book to Gabriel in weak Norwegian. Fariba's father, Mehdi, returns to the café to meet his friends. They jokingly discuss his daughter's situation and his grandchild's constant presence at their house, and he leaves the café feeling upset. Helin's mother informs the father that Helin has met a Turkish man and plans to marry him. Amrit's mother, whose work at the senior center is done, calls him to ensure he is coming over tonight, as she has seen Amrit and Tina together in the street. While Gabriel, Fariba, and her parents are having breakfast, Fariba's father becomes angry when he learns that Gabriel wants to stay with them again. Helin is upset that her mother liked Osman's photo on Instagram, but her mother believes Osman is unsuitable for them regarding social status and family background. Her mother believes that Helin will lose her freedom by marrying Osman, who seems to be from a religious family. Amrit's mother is preparing food for him and complains about not being accompanied by her at a Punjabi ceremony, to which Amrit promises to accompany her next time. Mehdi rejoins his friends at the café, and after some greetings, he realizes they are discussing the divorce of an Iranian woman. He reminds them that all children face problems in life, which is normal and nothing shameful; therefore, they should support them, considering they live in Norway. Helin tells her parents that she and Osman want to get engaged.

As the title of this episode indicates, it mainly concerns the parents of the main characters and, in general, the diasporic home. Amrit's mother has not communicated her motives clearly until this episode. However, from the explanations of Amrit in the previous episodes, the audience knows that she wants her son to marry co-ethnically. We will talk more about Amrit's diasporic home in future episodes. As this episode mainly concerns the Iranian

community, I will closely look at the characteristics and dynamics of the community and how it is communicated in the series.

5.4.1 Iranianness After the Decades of Exile: Changes and Challenges

In continuing to discuss the series's critical elements concerning ethnic and social identities, we must look closely at Iranian community that characterizes its dynamics differently from the Turkish and Punjabi communities. Another essential character of the series is Fariba, whose parents are from the Iranian community in Norway. About 25311 people with Iranian backgrounds live in Norway, of which approximately 5000 are Norwegian born from Iranian parents (SSB: Statistics Norway). To a great extent, like the Turkish community in Norway, Iranians have come for different reasons and through different means of mobility; however, as opposed to the Turkish community, whose members came predominantly for labor work, Iranians have mostly come as refugees. As for the types of diasporas theorized by Cohen (1997), the Iranian diaspora in Norway can be considered a *Victim/Refugee type of diaspora*.

This type of diaspora has arguably had profound implications on the understanding of Iranian-ness among the members and the community's approach towards integration in Norway. Discussing how the Iranian identity in the diaspora was shaped by their challenging relationship to the homeland, McAuliffe (in Mohabbat-kar, 2016) argues:

What was shared was the experience of exile. However, the conditions of exile were experienced differently by many. For some, maintaining connections with Iran was routine, whilst for others these connections were absent. The degree of connection to the homeland under the conditions of exile plays a role in the production and maintenance of diaspora identities (p. 37).

In a similar vein, McAuliffe (2007) suggests:

The condition of exile for Iranian migrants and their families is important here. The separation of the second generation from Iran for most, if not all, of their lives, has reinforced the reliance on narratives played out through friends and relatives, as well as through the media. (p. 315)

Although Iran experienced immigration for educational purposes before the 1980s, the so-called Islamic Revolution of 1979 started the beginning of an era during which Iranians left the country to flee prosecution, oppression, and social pressures of the Islamic Republic's regime. Additionally, several historical happenings over the last four decades have derived

immigration from Iran to primarily Western countries. To name a few, eight years of full-scale war with the neighboring country Iraq – after Iraq initiated the war under Saddam Hossein's regime –, the economic pressures following the war, periodic intensification of social repressions by the theocratic regime, and more recently, the widespread disappointment of the mostly educated citizens at the reformist movements and unrests over the last decades left Iranians with no option but leaving the country (Fallahi & Monavaryan, 2008). We do not know accurately, but it is anecdotally estimated that between 4 to 6 million Iranians live in different forms of enforced exile, self-imposed exile, and other forms of exile. Compared to Turkish, Punjabi, and many other nationals who easily travel to their homelands, not many Iranians travel to Iran, and those who do will not experience it tension-freely, which subsequently becomes a deterrent for them to travel to Iran.

We will see empirical data in the following pages suggesting that the Iranian migrants are inclined to integrate and assimilate into the host countries' cultures. I argue that Iranians' underlying motivations for settling down, adopting, and occasionally acculturating fast stems from different historical, social, political, and cultural factors, which I will discuss in future paragraphs.

First, as we discussed in the case of the Turkish diaspora, national identity and the level of nationalism are decisive factors determining the perception of identity among migrants in countries of settlement. In Iran, while the awareness of the national identity goes back centuries and even millennia, Iranian nationalist sentiments did not thrive in the nation-state-building decades of the early 20th century. Like Turkey, Iran is an ethnically diverse country where, while there is a shared consciousness of cultural and historical greatness among the citizens, nationalist sentiments are not significant at the grassroots. Cottam (1979) argues that Iranian nationalism, even in its thriving years in the mid-decades of the 20th century, was mainly limited to the elites in the country. Because, as he suggests, the country comprises people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (1979, pp. 30-31). Iranian nationalism predominantly paints a picture of a glorious historical nation formed by several ethnic groups living together for millennia and, therefore, is not racially-centered (Cottam, 1979, p. 32). Parenthetically, within the context of Iranian nationalism, one can find different interpretations and dynamics of nationalist ideologies among some ethnic minorities in Iran. Since accounting for these factors might distract the focus of this research, the literature considers the dynamics of nationalism among the average Iranians.

Secondly, the Iranians who immigrate are well-educated (Mohamadi Alamuti, 2005; Etemadifard & Khazaei, 2021), and the society of Iran is enthusiastically in pursuit of

progressive and liberal values (Khosravi, 2011) – because of the foundations of the five-decade ruling of a Western-minded and modernist Pahlavi monarchy in Iran which ended in 1979-. Arguably, these characteristics can collectively deter the intensification of nationalist sentiments as the primary sources of national identity. At the political level, in the 80s and 90s, although many Iranians of the diaspora had some hope for the regime's collapse in the first two decades of its existence, they gradually abandoned their hope. They tuned into their countries of residence to settle down. Also, the Iranians in the diaspora are different in terms of diverse political beliefs and interests, which impedes forming a united community (Mohabbat-kar, 2016: p 7).

Lastly, due to its historical diversity and social heterogeneity, Iranian culture is naturally hybridized, and Iranians are accustomed to living and interacting with people of other cultures. This cultural facilitation has contributed to the creation of bonding with the host countries. The other side of the coin is that the previously mentioned reasons have caused a somewhat fragmented community that may not share a sense of ethnic consciousness and sympathy with co-ethnics in the diaspora (Khosravi, 2018; Etemadifard & Khazaei, 2021).

5.4.2 Diaspora of Iranians in Norway: In Pursuit of Integration

Not having physical interaction with their homeland, having a relatively dispersed diasporic community, and the day-to-day unsatisfactory news about the homeland in the media, collectively shaping the unenthusiastic perception of the homeland, have left the Iranian community with no choice but quick integration and sometimes border assimilation.

Iranians in Norway are one of the most integrated migrants among all other non-Western migrant communities. All the factors mentioned earlier have arguably contributed to the community being a perfectly integrated community of migrants in Norway. Empirical data from comprehensive research that has studied 18 migrant communities in Norway – probably the most comprehensive research comparing migrant communities – shows that Iranian migrants to Norway are properly integrated compared to non-Western and Asian communities (Henriksen, 2007: p. 95-105).

Using state statistics and empirical data from other research, Henriksen (2007) provides these facts about the Iranian community in Norway:

- Iranians have received the most minor financial support from NAV (Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration) among all other non-Western migrants, and the level of

support they have received is equal to the average of the country. (Henriksen, 2007: p. 95)

- The number of marriages between Iranians and ethnic Norwegians is the highest among all other refugee-majority groups. (Henriksen, 2007: p. 98)
- The number of children in Iranian households is more similar to the ethnic Norwegians compared to other Asian communities. (Henriksen, 2007: p. 99)
- Iranians live less concentrated in the capital of Norway than all other non-Western groups. They are scattered all over the country (Henriksen, 2007: p. 99)
- The level of education is well above the average of other non-Western migrant communities, similar to the population of the country in general. (Henriksen, 2007: p. 100)
- Participation in secondary education is higher among second-generation immigrants from Iran than non-Western second-generation immigrants in general. (Henriksen, 2007: p. 102)

5.4.3 Iranian Household: The House Is Dark

Despite the facts above indicating the willingness of the Iranian community to integrate into Norwegian society, the Iranian household depicted in *Norsk-ish* does not reflect the typical Iranian household in the country. The family in the series struggles with profound cultural dissonance among generations, with parents -mainly the father, who has a vital role in the family- uneducated and excessively traditional. The home itself is exhibited as dark and claustrophobic. The father is overly concerned about the family's honor and reputation within the co-ethnic community and needs a positive relationship with his wife. His temper is consistently short with everyone in the family. This is a typical representation of someone who needs to be integrated.

He likely has lived in Norway for decades and cannot speak Norwegian properly. In contrast, which is unreasonable, his daughter Fariba can hardly speak Persian competently. Unlike Helin, who willingly engages in Turkish conversations when given the opportunity, Fariba's Persian dialogues are limited to basic greetings and trivial expressions. Such a gap in their language proficiency raises questions about how the daughter of a father with such basic Norwegian language skills would have such limited proficiency in Persian. One might ask, what language do these families have in common then? Something does not align here, and the issue lies with the family's representation, not Fariba's character. Admittedly, in diasporic

households, using a mixed language or using two languages in a parallel manner is usual. However, the father's low level of Norwegian language proficiency appears to be an exaggeration.

As unconventional as this Iranian family of *Norsk-ish* is, Fariba represents a typical second-generation Iranian girl who is border assimilated. Her basic Persian language skills, among other characteristics of second generations – such as anti-religious – that we will discuss in the next episode, are typical features of the second-generation Iranians. While there is no rigorous scholarly work on how the second generation of Iranians living in Norway tends to assimilate, research on Iranian families raising children in Norway (Mahsa Rashidnejad, 2020) shows no signs that Iranian parents deliberately expose their children to educational, cultural, and social elements of their homeland. It is safe to argue that, given the domination and homogeneity of Norwegian culture, a second generation with little or no sense of belonging will inevitably be directed toward assimilation.

The attributes shown in the Iranian household of *Norsk-ish* depict a traditional and conservative family, particularly the father, who is preoccupied with outdated values and struggles with integration. The father appears unemployed, and his main occupation involves sitting with other Iranian men in a cafe, where they gossip about other people's lives. In one scene, seven Iranian men gather at the cafe, and two crudely and exotically inquire about the father's daughter, Fariba, regarding her job and private life. These men appear highly nosy, creating awkward moments with blunt and harsh questions. The father becomes unhappy with their prying and angrily leaves the cafe. Later in the episode, he returns to the same cafe and overhears the same individuals gossiping about someone else's daughter. This time, the father seems to confront them about their immoral and superficial attitudes toward people's lives. This scene serves as a balancing point in the story, where the negativity of the father's character is balanced and moderated once again, ultimately aimed at eliciting sympathy from the audience.

The general image of the Iranian community is stigmatizing by showing some familiar stereotypes of the Middle Eastern communities. While there may be traditional or conservative individuals within every community, I would argue that the portrayal of the Iranian community lacks empathy and consideration. While the overall image of the other two communities – by 'image,' I refer to the combination of their outlook, attitudes, preoccupations, jobs, and other indicators of their social integration, among other factors – is either in alignment with or exceeds the reality of the average members of those communities, the Iranian community's representation significantly lags behind its actual situation. The assertion that 'the Iranians are

more similar to the general population than the non-Western immigrant group' (Henriksen, 2007: p. 105) supports my reading.

The criticism from within, dictated at the diasporic home, is primarily accumulated in the Iranian household and the broader representation of the Iranian community in Norsk-ish. In this context, it seems that the critique on certain problematic aspects of ethnic cultures – struggles with integration, stereotypical scenes showing tensions arising from prying and meddling in co-ethnic lives – have been populated in the portrayal of the Iranian community. I have discussed my criticism with the creators of the series. In this interview section, I have mentioned the concept of *ethnic sweetness* within the context of ethnic communities' representation, which will be elaborated on later in this research. It can be found in the subchapter 5.5.3 *Assessing the Representation of Ethnic Communities* in the next episode.

Interviewer: *To portray the struggles of second-generation characters with their home culture, a writer inevitably needs to illustrate the cultural dissonance that exists between second-generation migrants and their families. I believe that the most intense dissonances are in the Norsk-ish's Iranian community. They are constantly shouting, fighting, and crying, it is hard to find any positive thing there. And these elements do not conclude with some sense of sympathy. Furthermore, there is not much ethnic sweetness (cultural icons) in that part too. Do you agree that the representation of the Iranian home in Norsk-ish lacks empathy by the overpopulation of some stereotypes of the Mid-Eastern and North African communities?*

Bahareh (on behalf of both of the writers): *No. I do not agree with that. I especially don't agree with it being restricted to the Iranian home. I think, as with all stories we see in media, humans tend to connect deeper to the stories they most identify with, that being a connection because of ethnicity, geography, or social class. I think it's sad if certain Iranians do not connect as deeply to this story, but our goal was never to tell one story for everyone, it was to tell stories that someone would connect to, and judging by the overall feedback we have received, I feel like we succeeded in this.*

Per your explanations above regarding ethnic sweetness, I'd like to point out the meals they share in the Iranian household, the jokes the men tell at the café, and the connection the grandparents have to their grandson. Fariba is a character who has grown up just trying to find belonging in Norwegian society. To her that has meant to denounce her Iranian roots. She is extremely critical of immigrants and portrays herself as Norwegian – until opportunities arise where her ethnic background can be a tool to achieve success. This is deliberate and based on research we did with actual subjects in the real world. Fariba's father might be strict and seem angry, but it also turns out he is right – when she sticks out, she gets attacked and tries to be taken advantage of by the right wings. Fariba hasn't been to Iran since childhood and somewhat romanticizes her birthland,

considering going back to make beautiful travel articles from there, but her father is concerned for her safety and warns her. Or when her family calls the day after the attack on her family home and are concerned for her well-being, or when she calls her dad to tell him she is applying to medical school, and he tells her they will help her any way they can.

I must note here that it might be helpful for your thesis to also watch season 2, to see how this story in particular develops as well as explained further.

And as I believe I've said before, I refuse to take on the responsibility to represent the entire Iranian community in Norway, as I am sure Melike refuses to do for the Turkish community. We have told stories that are authentic to us, our friends, families, and communities and we hope that it paves the road for even more diverse perspectives and stories to be told.

Interviewer: *I agree that there might be families like this among the Iranians; some people like those in the café exist, or an Iranian father might be unable to speak or read Norwegian after decades. However, my point is that the overall picture you paint is lower than the community's average. I believe how we perceive a community, shapes what we see within it. In essence, the level of ethnic identity is closely linked to the concern for representation in the media. Do you have different experiences regarding the feedback you received from your co-ethnic audiences?*

Bahareh (on behalf of both writers): *The feedback we have received has been overwhelmingly positive. Even when some of the Iranians I have talked to have not been able to identify or connect to the entire story, they have all found certain parts, in both the Iranian household and the other ethnic families, that they have connected deeply with. This is something that we worked to achieve and was in no way an accidental surprise, so it has been very nice to see our work pay off. I do not think we portrayed any of the ethnic groups negatively, but rather very nuanced, and the feedback we have received is that it broadened the general public's views of the ethnic groups represented and united them in the universal overall themes of the show.*

One last argument that can be made here is that the extent to which an audience has a sense of belonging to their homeland influences how they consider a cultural text about their community. Suppose one asks an Iranian audience who is border assimilated or shows no interest in Iranian-ness -such as Fariba in the series-. In that case, they will hardly find any issue in the series. Even more, they may confirm and reinforce them with more critical examples. Conversely, an individual with a stronger attachment to their homeland finds this representation problematic. Indeed, let us agree that a migrant TV production should be empowering and sympathetic -as the premise of the series' production has been-. Therefore, regardless of the extent of the sense of belonging, it must not raise complaints among community members. I should add that, as the interviewees have mentioned, one should

consider the series' second season, which aired in Autumn 2023. Unfortunately, a scholarly exploration of the second season is beyond this project. I have mentioned this study as a suggestion in the conclusion of this research.

5.4.4 Self-reflexive narrativity and subjective audiences

My critical reading of the Norsk-ish's representation in this part of the research may seem unreasonable for those who perceive it as a purely imaginary fictional story. Although one might argue that a work of fiction must not be understood as the representation of facts, I argue that the politics of fiction occasionally outweigh its poetics. Migrant films are a double-edged sword. When a migrant film is broadcast on public television, it can give migrants a sense of inclusion (Larsen, 2015). However, this fact reinforces the supposition that they may also perceive it as representing their community; they may read it more subjectively. In essence, they see it as the portrayal of their community for a national audience and an opportunity to challenge essentializing stereotypes. I would argue that a migrant film, when seen from the viewpoint of a migrant audience from the represented community, is never merely a work of pure fiction or entertainment. It is often perceived as either a factual representation or a form of corrective representation for the public, especially in a country like Norway, where small minorities rarely have the chance to tell their subjective stories on the country's most prominent and widely watched screens.

I want to touch on a dimension of the profoundly inspiring speech – called Politics of Fiction – made by the prominent Turkish-British novelist Elif Shafak (2010), in which she raises the issue of how fiction, especially created by diasporic women living in the West, is perceived to have actual events and stories. She proposes how migratory and multicultural writers are asked to write actual narratives related to their own communities and experiences. She considers this a force on storytellers from peripheral countries and the Global South to recount unhappy stories of their own communities (Shafak, 2010).

While, in a part of her 20-min speech, Shafak sheds light on the impact of identity politics, which puts pressure on fiction storytellers to produce works with more robust references to their communities or homelands, I argue that this is a reciprocal arrangement, continually reinforced by the storytellers' deliberate choices and the demands of the fiction market. In contrast to Shafak's perspective, it is not a one-way process where migrants are forced to create specific types of texts. Instead, it is a more complex interplay of supply and demand where migrant storytellers provide their self-reflexive narratives of migratory

experiences, and the Western audience or business sector demands these stories. For migrants, the main driving force can be the search for identity, which motivates them to share their narratives, either to make sense of themselves or to portray a particular image of their community. In the following questions and answers, it becomes evident that the series is not merely a self-contained work of fiction but is crafted with clear social motivations.

Interviewer: *I have read some of your interviews with Norwegian media about the series, and I know you first had the idea of this series and struggled to find potential producers to get it made. This is the pre-story of this production. Where did the motivation come from? How did you come up with the idea of writing about this subject?*

Melike: *I think our first motivation was that there was not anything like this story in Norwegian television and we felt we had a lot of stories to tell but being in the situation of in-between two cultures was a short version of it. Seeing ourselves (our communities) on TV was our main motivation.*

Bahareh: *First, the Norwegian TV industry is structured a little different than, say the United States, or the standards that you learn about - at schools -. Here in Norway, a lot of times writers do go to producers with ideas they have and ask them to develop their projects before taking them to any networks. Also, I think there was a demand for this type of content in Norway. The fact that we had been in the industry for so long, we knew this was a theme that was under-presented in Norway.*

Melike: *You can see that in the United States, there were some similar series that came about at the same time. Now that we have made this in Norway, we have been talking with two filmmakers in Sweden and Denmark and some actors in Germany and they say that this is a unique story (there's no similar series in those countries). I also think there was a demand because the producer we ended up working with said she was looking for something like this and she had even asked some production companies to come up with stories like this and they didn't.*

Interviewer: *That is a good point to talk about. Why do you think there is a demand for stories like this in the Norwegian media? And why did not this happen 20 years ago?*

Melike: *I think at that time we [immigrant communities] were new in Norway. When you are new as an immigrant, you try to survive and you do not think that much about identity, identity is like a little bit of a luxury issue, and it comes*

after you are settled in the host country. This -identity issue- does not come up with the first generation, it usually comes up for the second generation.

Bahareh: *And I think the reason why it is happening now is that first, it is in the same cycle as it is in other countries, however, (compared to other countries) immigration is a newer phenomenon in Norway, so we are just catching up. Additionally, the world is opening so much more, we can see what happens in other countries and other places in real-time. So, something that used to be one country's struggle, or one people's struggle, now we see it as a unified force. It comes from all different angles, and it has become a global topic. At the same time, it is just a development with history how far it has gone, and how people accept a certain type of behavior. It skips a generation because their struggles were survival while our generation is more focused on identity.*

While *Norsk-ish*, as creators suggest in the previously-mentioned answers, has also found acceptance among audiences in other countries, its primary audience and the main reason for its creation remain in Norway. As opposed to Shafak (2010)'s emphasis on the fictionality of fiction, the territorial focus of *Norsk-ish* makes it a form of fiction reflecting the realities of migrants' lives. Indeed, it is designed to make social references and is inherently a self-reflexive work.

5.5 Episode Five

Kjøttmarked (Meat Market)

Summary of Episode 5:

As Fariba, Helin, and Gabriel grill and talk about their romantic lives, Fariba brings up a man she recently started seeing named Jonas, with whom she thinks things are going well. However, in a sudden turn of events, Jonas sends her a message saying he is not interested in pursuing the relationship further. Fariba nags about how Norwegian men are preoccupied with activities she finds boring, such as traveling and skiing. Amrit has promised her mother that he will go to an Indian wedding. There, he meets the Indian girl Deepi, who works at the nearby restaurant, and they have some pleasant moments getting to know each other more. Fariba visits a newspaper office, but they have already hired a Syrian girl who is seemingly a recently arrived migrant, ironically more migrant than Fariba. When Fariba, Reza, Tina, and Amrit discuss her problems at a bar, they suggest she might be better off dating an Iranian. Amrit agrees and says it is better to be with someone who understands your culture, to which Tina appears offended. Helin's mother tells her they want to get to know Osman as soon as possible, but according to Turkish-Islamic traditions, they must wait for Osman's family to contact them first. Helin is at Osman's family's house and finds out they are very traditional and want to follow all Turkish customs for the engagement, to which she looks shocked. Osman and Helin discuss engagement traditions, and Helin is upset with Osman's family's traditional ways, but Osman promises to keep things simple. Once again, Amrit and Deepi run into each other

again by the trash cans and decide to go out together. When Fariba gets an idea after seeing a painting by Edward Munch, she uses software to rearrange three figures in the painting, making them look down from the top of a bridge while wearing Arabic clothing. Tina is getting ready to go out with her friends, but Amrit is lounging on the couch. He messages Deepi that she will be late. Suddenly, Tina changes her mind and stays at home with Amrit.

5.5.1 Punjabi Sikh Identity: Will the Pure Rule?

Although not explicitly communicated within the series, Amrit belongs to the Punjabi Sikh community. The Punjabi people are primarily from modern-day eastern Pakistan and northwestern India. In Pakistan, the majority of Punjabi people are Muslims, while in India, the majority are Sikhs. Based on the clothing and the cultural festivities portrayed, it is likely that Amrit is from the Punjabi Sikh/Hindu community of India.

Similar to the Turkish and Iranian cases, we need to familiarize ourselves with the characteristics of the Sikh community and the main elements of their identity to make sense of the stories related to the community in Norsk-ish.

The Sikh and Hindu communities of Punjab have a long history of immigration. The relocations mainly began after the annexation of Punjab by the British Empire in the mid-19th century (Ballantyne, 2006; p.25). The second wave of immigration occurred after World War Two when the Sikh community established diasporas in North America. In Norway, the Punjabi Sikh community is relatively small, and there is no statistical data available due to their close integration within the broader Indian diaspora in the country. This integration is primarily based on citizenship and not necessarily national identity, as the Sikh identity has evolved somewhat independently from other ethnic identities in the Indian subcontinent.

Some Sikhs in the diaspora dream of an independent homeland, primarily based on the historical glory of Sikhism in the centuries before British colonialism in the subcontinent. Interestingly, Sikh identity has primarily taken shape within Punjabi diasporas. Some other studies suggest that Sikh nationalism is a phenomenon that developed within the diaspora of Sikhs in the Western world (Shani, 2002; Tatla, 2001; p. 185). For example, an internet discussion forum called "Sikh Diaspora" engages people from Sikh communities worldwide to discuss their history and ethnic identity. Ballantyne (2006; p.3) argues that on this forum, the discussed topics are advocating for the language of Punjabi and various topics discussing legal cases regarding the unique clothings of Sikh people. He suggests that all of this leads to exploring the main question of Punjabi Sikh identity for the people of Diaspora.

Without exploring the political details of why these identity-seeking features have emerged in the Sikh community over the past decades, the previously provided research illustrates how this community is deeply committed to preserving its values and crafting an ethnic identity distinct from Hindu, Muslim, and other Indian ethnic identities.

5.5.2 Indian Punjabi Diaspora: Marriage As Identity-Seeking Exercise

Marriage can serve as a means for exercising a Sikh's identity. In a perfectly designed wedding scene, Amrit is shown to be popular among Punjabi girls. Attractive girls of the community in Oslo eagerly engage in conversations with him, and he proudly boasts about himself. Amrit is far from a traditional man; instead, he is depicted as a well-integrated character, not assimilated. His central conflict revolves around choosing between staying with a Norwegian girl or following the path his family expects him to take, which involves marrying an Indian girl. Amrit's dilemma and his family's pressure appear to be shared experiences for members of the Sikh community in the diaspora, where intra-ethnic marriages are a prevalent practice. For the Punjabi parents living outside of India, marrying a co-ethnic or an Indian migrant ensure their link to their motherland and staying in their cultural space, with the use of ethnic languages and practicing ethnic traditions (Thandi, 2016; p. 135).

Therefore, the wedding ceremony is seemingly more than what Amrit calls a “meat market” (Figure 6) – an informal term meaning a place where one goes to find a casual sex partner. Amrit suddenly stops his conversation with one of the girls when he sees Deepi -the girl he had some flirting scenes with in prior episodes- from afar.



Figure 6 - Norsk-ish Episode 5 – 04:43 – Courtesy to NRK

Interviewer: Amrit has a Norwegian girlfriend (Tina), but when he meets the Indian girl in the series, he sees her differently, perhaps more seriously. After some hesitation, he ultimately chooses Tina.

Bahareh: *Yes. Also, that is a kind of prejudice that has been around for decades in Norway that foreign men come to Norway and date Norwegian women and once they are ready to settle down and start a family, they do that with someone from their own culture or maybe fly someone in from their own country. Some parts of it might be true, but there has been a shift in this aspect too. These days when I walk around, there are so many Amrits and Tinas on the streets. Again, with Amrit's story, we show this shift because in the end, even though Amrit's family prefers the Indian girl, Amrit decides to be with Tina. Because we see that Amrit and Tina share the same values.*

Melike: *In this case, it has to do a lot with Amrit's mother because Amrit tries to impress his mother and when he sees the Indian girl, he thinks this girl can make his mother happy. We wrote a scene where his mother meets Tina and we had his mother giving him her blessing, but then we changed our mind. We ended up writing a scene that is not an either-or situation, her mother is still talking about the Indian girl after meeting Tina, but she doesn't say you cannot be with Tina, so it is kind of 'we will see what happens'. I think this is more realistic. There is also a lot of humor in that relationship.*

The choice of the wedding scene in this episode is clever for three reasons: thematically and functionally interconnected. First, it serves as a visually pleasing component for the audience, with its bright colors, ethnic clothing, and dance scenes. More importantly, it provides a thematically relevant environment that adds depth to Amrit's inner conflict; he is pressured to find an Indian girl, but his relationship with Tina complicates matters. The community depicted in this scene is portrayed as a place where Amrit can feel confident and appreciated among other happy Indian couples. Working with variations of the main story and playing with its central theme adds layers of irony to the work. The thematic relevance of the scene where Amrit meets Deepi is mainly symbolic and ironic, especially when, in subsequent episodes, he chooses Tina. In these moments, Amrit's sweet interactions with fellow Sikhs have been intentionally added to complicate his inner journey and transition. This scene's dramatic function forms a 'symbolic ascension' in Amrit's narrative. Robert McKee (1999) argues that '[...] the added power of subliminal symbolism lifts the telling to the next level of expressivity [...] Like images in our dreams, [...] if they are slipped quietly, gradually, and unassumingly into the telling, they move us profoundly [...]' (p. 296). Finally, the scene contributes to the cultural representation of the Sikh community. 'The ceremony remains a vital identity marker for Sikhs and confirms Sikhism as a distinct and separate religion from that of the Muslims and Hindus' (Thandi, 2016; p. 134).

5.5.3 Assessing the Representation of Ethnic communities

So far, we have analyzed the main characteristics of each community portrayed in *Norsk-ish*. But how can we find a way to objectively assess the representation of an ethnic community in the series? In some parts of this research, I have argued that the common strategy in the *Norsk-ish* is that when criticism is directed toward a character, idea, or community, the intensification of the criticism is typically reduced by some balancing elements. I can suggest some criteria to account for how these criticisms are balanced:

- 1- Making balance within the narrative trajectory
- 2- Making balance by showing sympathy from the main characters
- 3- Making balance with the audiovisual presentation of '*ethnic sweetness*.'

To explain how a story's trajectory can make a balance, I can exemplify Helin's mother. Even though she is nosy and superficial and does not get along well with Helin, she turns out right when she argues against Osman. The finale of Osma and Helin's relationship is a balance in the mother's unsatisfactory attributes. Making balance with showing sympathy is another element when a migratory feature is challenged in *Norsk-ish*. For instance, Amrit's mother insists that he marry an Indian girl. This is a cultural element that seems irrational in the world today, while a tradition practiced by some societies. To show sympathy for the mother, the presence of an Indian girl raises doubts in Amrit about the future of her relationship with Tina. The audience learns that Amrit values her mother's wishes. This indirectly shows consideration for the mother's seemingly unreasonable desire.

By ethnic sweetness, I mean cultural icons, including cultural traditions or celebrations, ethnic dance or singing scenes, some memories of the past or history, some culinary, some literary elements like poetry, etc. More importantly, what matters more than just presenting them is how they are depicted with confidence and respect. There are a lot of sweet ethnic icons both in the Turkish and Punjabi scenes. An ethnic audience of that community can enjoy the wedding scene and all its colorful setup and the sweet dramatization of meeting a co-ethnic like Deepi, accompanied by ethnic music, clothing, etc., which show the sweet cultural icons of their ethnicity as well.

However, the Iranian part rarely has these three balancing elements. One of the pleasant elements I see in the Iranian part is using the music tracks. If the people in the café are shown as crude, superficial, and exotically gossipy, no balancing elements follow to negate the

negativity of their attitude. There is little sympathy with the parents, too, because Fariba is in constant struggle with them, and not before the last phone call in the previous episode -where Fariba decides to study, and the father says he will take care of Gabriel, something that he never happily did- any mutual understanding is presented. Also, Fariba's dismissive-ness for her Iranian-ness doubles the issue of sympathy. As for the ethnic sweetness, there are only two music tracks from two prominent Iranian artists -Googoosh and Dariush- in the series. They are used as non-diegetic music on the rolling credits of the series at the end of one episode. This usage is undoubtedly a positive element in the series and verifies my argument about ethnic sweetness (ethnic cultural icons); this news on NRK's website shows how this sweet music has been interesting for an Iranian woman in Norway (Eliassen, 2020). These two tracks are arguably used for the same reason; however, they work very decoratively and make minimal balance in the series' critical representation elements. Indeed, without these little elements, Norsk-ish season one would have been a severely stigmatized representation of a given community.

5.6 Episode Six

Søster (Sister)

Summary of Episode 6:

Helin and Osman get engaged in the presence of their families. While Helin and Osman are kissing each other in the car, Osman stops, as he seems to believe that they can have complete sexual intimacy only after their marriage. Helin talks briefly about her fiancé with her friends, and they are curious to see Osman. On her Instagram page, Fariba has published pictures that she has assembled and which she considers to be works of art, which have a critical view of Muslims and have been seen in the media. Helin and her sister are talking in bed. Helin's sister doubts that Helin is in love with Osman and thinks this marriage is not logical. However, Helin says that she had two terrible relationships with Norwegians and that maybe she would be better off with a Turk. Amrit dates Deepi and asks her to give him another chance. Fariba has participated in a round table debate on a broadcast show, and they discuss her work with a Muslim girl and an art critic. She is heavily criticized and angrily insults Muslims and says they are brainwashed. Osman has found out that Helin's sister is pregnant and calls Helin angrily. Helin goes to Osman's mother and shamefully explains the story to her. Fariba's employer calls her and says they do not want to continue working with her because of some issues. Amrit, who realizes that Tina has been helping his sick father all day, feels guilty and tells her that he wants to introduce her to his mother. Helin talks to her father about Osman while seeming hesitant about the relationship. Her father says he is likable, but he is not a good choice for Helin. In a park, Helin and Osman are talking, and Helin tells Osman that she supports her sister and that she did nothing wrong. She says that she has had sex with several men before, and she likes eating pork and sausages while Osman is shocked.

5.6.1 Shifting Cultures

The main sub-stories of this episode revolve around the diasporas' entanglements with religious and traditional values. The subjects discussed in this episode are politically and ideologically problematic for the communities grappling with them and arguably for today's world. Fariba, deliberately or unknowingly, initiates a critical debate about Islam and religious values. On the other hand, Helin is uncertain about her future with Osman and his family, as they gradually display signs of religious and traditional values. These are controversial and sensitive topics that the creators of *Norsk-ish* have successfully addressed without eliciting any public objections, at least when this research is written. In this episode's analysis, I will focus on these discourses and explore how they relate to the transformations of homelands and diasporas.

As in other episodes of the series, the Turkish diaspora in this episode is portrayed as a community with uncertainty about its cultural attributes, but only some of them. Although the community's space is not free of sweet moments of Turkishness, a sense of insecurity is evident about the traditional values, which are the values the main characters challenge. Accompanied by a piece of Turkish traditional music, the episode unfolds with a scene showing Helin and Osman getting engaged. Helin, a well-educated and strong woman raised in Norway, is shown to willingly show interest in exercising traditions such as kissing Osman's parents' hands. These attitudes of Helin as a convincing, well-educated, and well-integrated character who bears the audience's sympathy with herself suggest to the audience that these are not the things that she might challenge. In essence, these are the features that Helin cherishes about her ethnic identity. The plausibility of Helin's character can indirectly validate the significance and sweetness of these traditions, too. This confirmation is mainly due to the function of diasporic homes in the series. Indeed, the unwritten agreement of the series with its audiences is that the diasporic home is a setting for the complex cultural challenges the main characters face. However, an exception is suggested to the audience when a protagonist finds something interesting there. In this case, when the characters uphold their ethnic cultures, the audience will likely perceive it positively, too.

However, Helin's interest in her ethnic culture is not free from insecurities. She is uncertain about her relationship with Osman, as she believes they do not share the same cultural values. These uncertainties are introduced to the audience in a scene where Fariba and Helin remove their facial hair. Parenthetically, the choice of hair removal in the salon is likely related

to an inside joke prevalent in Middle Eastern communities about the challenges women face with their body hair. Fariba's concerns indicate the troubles Helin will experience later in her relationship with Osman. Beyond serving a dramatic function by setting up future scenes – famously called planting and pay-off – Fariba's character is portrayed as someone who does not care about ethnic identities and dilemmas. This attribute of Fariba's character was previously mentioned by one of the writers in one of the episode four interviews. She asks questions and makes remarks about Helin's relationship that we would expect to hear from a person from a different culture. This sense of ignorance aligns perfectly with Fariba's role in the story as a relatively skin-deep but risk-taking character, but it can also appear contradictory. In the end, she is from a more traditional family than Helin.

5.6.2 Secular Humanism from Within; Shifting Diasporas, Shifting Homelands

Another important theme explored in this series is the contentious role of religion in communities with Muslim backgrounds. In the previously mentioned scene, one of the cosmetologists interrupts Fariba and Helin's conversation by expressing her appreciation for Fariba's Instagram posts and artwork, which touch upon the perceived threat of Islamism in Europe. The cosmetologist – who is likely an ethnic Norwegian – further remarks that she finds it attractive how one of them depicts what it might be like if Muslims were to gain influence in Europe. This topic is related to the conspiracy-like threat of Europe becoming Islamized, a concern that occasionally surfaces in the rhetoric of right-wing political parties in the continent. As expected from her personality, Fariba appreciates the attention and recognition for her work, ignoring the controversies surrounding them, while Helin appears surprised. This is a sensitive topic that I will continue exploring in the next episode. The reactions of the two main characters are not only for the sake of characterization, but they also interrelate with their relationships with their ethnic backgrounds. Fariba seems to oppose Islam, while Helin is either indifferent to it or potentially has some level of respect for it. Despite not practicing Islam, Helin respects some of Islam's traditions, such as celebrating Eid, as mentioned in an earlier episode. Fariba's stance concerning religion is more salient than that of Helin, as Helin's ethnic-centered and religious curiosities have been portrayed in a controlled manner.

Although the series unproblematically raises sensitive debates surrounding Islamic values, it does so at the expense of portraying Fariba as a disoriented person seeking recognition. The scene of the broadcast debate is the peak of the Islamization topic in the series, where other participants significantly question Fariba's stance. A hijab-wearing Muslim

woman is Fariba's primary opponent, accompanied by an ethnic-Norwegian woman as an art expert. It does not take long until Fariba is hardly challenged for her position on the matter, as she says she has a deep personal stance against it. While it is not immediately evident to the audience that she means she is not fond of Islam/Islamization, it can be understood from her later remarks. When Fariba is further challenged by the Muslim woman and the art expert, she becomes furious. She accuses the Muslim woman of being 'brainwashed' by the Quran, the central religious text of Islam.

Fariba's anger, the Muslim woman's reaction, the threatening phone messages that Fariba later receives, and the Norwegian newspaper cutting the working relationship with her collectively leave her in a position of defeat. Apart from the deliberate dramatization of the scene for the audience, this crushing defeat is mainly employed by the creators to paralyze Fariba's criticizing comments on Muslims and Islamic icons, e.g., the hijab and the Quran. That is to say, the sensitiveness of what Fariba says in the debate is incapacitated by showing her defeat, and this is what the writers have done to control the public implications of her remarks.

While Fariba's antipathetic approach towards Islamic values can be understood as an attempt to create debate or dramatic attraction by its cross-textual references, her ethnic background can also shed light on why a migrant from a community originating from a Muslim-majority country would show such strong opposition against Islam.

Why would a girl from the Iranian diaspora have such a sharp criticism against Islam? I am not confident that this is an accidental decision made by the creators. We should not forget that the main reason the Iranians fled to the Western countries was the 1979 Islamic revolution, which established a theocracy in a country that was previously going fast towards modernization. 'Many of those from a Muslim background who fled Iran following the revolution did so because they were opposed to the dominant expression of a normative orthodox Islam at the core of Iranian society' (Mcauliffe, 2007; p. 313). While one can argue that political authoritarianism existed in the pre-1979 era, Islamic rules such as mandatory hijab, among various forms of social, cultural and religious oppression, did not exist in the country.

Two years after the series was shown, an Iranian girl called Mahsa Jina Amini died -in September 2022- in the custody of the so-called morality police, arrested for not wearing the Islamic veil properly in the streets of Tehran. In response to the death, massive protests sparked all over the country, as well as in the diaspora, as a reaction to decades of theocracy and the imposition of Islamic values in Iran. Furthermore, the strength of the pre-Islamic Iranian

identity and culture has seen Iran's society distance from Islamic beliefs and practices. Because of the risks involved for researchers, there is a lack of empirical data about how the de-Islamization shift has prevailed in the country over the last four to five decades. In comprehensive research, but not a very recent one, Kazemipur and Rezaei (2003) provide empirical data on how 'the massive institutional de-secularization that has been occurring' over the past decades has not stopped the processes of secularization at the individual level and religiosity has decreased in the society (p. 351).

On the other hand, Helin rebels against Islamic values that have become traditional in Muslim communities. The series indirectly suggests that these traditions are fading away. This is evident in the conversations between Helin and her sister. The gap in their value systems, cultural understandings of marriage, and their notion of a diasporic community highlights how the new generations are less likely to accept these traditions. While Helin and her sister have a close relationship, they often struggle to understand each other's approaches. In the last scene of the episode, Eda, her sister, adds to Helin's uncertainty by inquiring about her deep feelings for Osman. After a conversation with her always-rational father, Helin confronts Osman with the realities about herself and her family. Furthermore, Osman's mother's reaction to Eda's pregnancy, a mother who is a highly traditional figure, motivates Helin to be honest with Osman about her past, including her previous sexual relationships and eating non-halal food like pork. Osman initially reacts calmly to this information and Helin's anger, but the situation becomes more complicated in the next episode.

5.7 Episode Seven & Eight

Steining (Stoning)

Summary of Episode 7:

Fariba sees debates about her TV program in the newspaper, upsetting her family. Tina visits Amrit's family, causing discomfort. A media executive approaches Fariba with an appealing offer. She plans a report on the struggles of Iranian women but faces opposition from her brother. Gabriel, who takes her mother's phone to play with, suddenly sees a message with a graphic image of her mother bleeding and injured. The main characters and their partners clink glasses in the cafe, but Osman appears dissatisfied and upset. Osman, angry at Fariba's comments, leaves the bar and misbehaves in the street, saying he cannot be friends with Fariba. Helin gets angry and leaves him. Fariba buys a ticket to travel to Iran. In the car, Helin sits with Osman and gives him her engagement ring. Amrit's mother insists that he marry a Punjabi girl, but Amrit says he will marry Tina. Fariba's mother is not at home and does not answer the phone. Her father does not talk to her. She asks for her uncle's number, who lives in Iran. Her father realizes she wants to go to Iran and tells her it is dangerous. He reminds her

that when she was a child, they killed a public figure right in front of their family's eyes in the street. Fariba is shocked because she does not know of this. Suddenly, a stone with Fariba's image is thrown into their house.

Unnskyld-ish (Sorry-ish)

Summary of Episode 8:

Helin meets a Norwegian man on Tinder, and they go to a bar and spend the night together. Fariba does not answer her phone, and in the morning, she realizes that her parents are worried about her and are looking for her. They call Fariba from Gabriel's kindergarten and say that they cannot find Gabriel, who was hit by his hand after falling from the swing, and they also call the police. Fariba gets worried and is sure that somebody has kidnapped him. She goes outside in a panic and finds Gabriel sitting on the steps of the house. He has spent this week with his father and seems to miss his mother. Helin's sister's mother-in-law came to their house and asked about Helin's engagement, and her mother replied that they were from a traditional family and were very different from us. Helin suddenly tells her mother that she was not at Fariba's house last night and that she met a man on Tinder and slept with him, and her mother is embarrassed. Helin and Fariba are together at Amrit's bar and hug and apologize to each other. Amrit says he introduced Tina to his family and to another girl – Deepi – to make sure. Fariba and Helin are shocked and say how would you feel if Tina did this to you? At the bar, Fariba suddenly sees the passport control officer we saw in the series' first scene. He seems to like Fariba. Amrit goes home and confesses to Tina about the meeting up with the Indian girl. Tina also confesses that she sometimes hesitates because of their differences, and she has also talked to a male colleague. Helin talks to her sister and says she must go on a trip to improve her spirits. Fariba has gone to university and registered to study pharmacy. She gives the news to his father on the phone, is very happy, and says they will take care of Gabriel. Helin, who has traveled to Turkey, seems happy.

5.7.1 Every End is a New Beginning: The Interplay of Theme and Structure

I have combined the analysis of the last two episodes of the series into one subchapter, as the closure of the sub-stories of all characters starts to be revealed in episode 7. Also, some parts of episode 8 are dedicated to planting new elements for Season 2. In episode 7, Amrit decides to stay with Tina, and Helin and Osman's relationship is over. Also, Fariba's plan to travel to Iran to prepare a report is unrealistic. Stories from the next season can be found in roughly half of the last episode. Fariba has decided to start a medicine course, and her father is happy. Helin is in Turkey with an excellent spirit. Amrit's conscience is clear seeing Deepi flirting with another Indian man from the restaurant window. The series' style suggests that some radically criticized elements are corrected by showing sympathy. In the scene that shows them being separated, Osman, a traditional and conservative man, respectfully hugs Helin. Both common sense and stereotypes propose that their separation might be bitter and conflicting. However, the pattern of correction in the series has shown this type of closure to

Osman's story. The same applies to Fariba's father when he finally says they can help Fariba care for Gabriel, something he previously refused to do.

The subplots in the series showcase a skillfully crafted circular format that goes beyond serving structural purposes and complements the main themes explored throughout the stories. The series ends with Helin sitting in a taxi in Turkey, experiencing the same identity-related misunderstanding as we saw in the first scene of the first episode. The driver asks where she is from, and she replies that she was born in Norway, although she is originally Turk. The driver's response is intriguing; he says, 'Turk, Bosnian, Kurd, or polar bear, all the same.' What he meant was to inquire about her hometown in Turkey. This scene implies that the driver is not interested in people's ethnic backgrounds or does not consider them significant. This response can be interpreted as a response to the significant awareness of ethnicity and prevailing socio-political attitudes towards ethnic identity in Turkey (Saatci, 2002), with the driver indirectly criticizing them. In contrast to the first scene's misunderstanding, this one is not directly related to the series' central theme; instead, it may address issues in Turkey's politics and public sphere.

In this series, the characters return to their initial positions despite their palpable transformations. Nevertheless, their situations remain unchanged. This narrative structure is one of the standout features of *Norsk-ish*. It gives the narrative a more robust formal structure and is intricately interwoven with the series' thematic elements. In simple terms, the characters have examined what they were compelled to experiment with, and now that their attempts have failed, they find themselves back where they started. This is particularly evident in the subplots of Helin and Amrit.

Before discussing each character's sub-plot resolution, let us see closely how the series' circular structure interacts with its overarching theme, proposed by me: the in-betweenness of the second generation of migrants. As we know, every classical story ends in a new equilibrium or a state of steadiness similar to the balance at the beginning of the narrative. Turby (2008; p.50-51) argues that when a story ends, or in a new steadiness at the end of the story, the protagonist's self-revalidation is either positive or negative, bringing the hero to a higher level or lower level. This assertion appears correct, particularly in the classical structures of the story, where a story shows more certainty in the narrative's close. What if a narrative brings the hero back into the same situation without a positive or negative transformation?

In the case of *Norsk-ish*, the characters' changes are neither distinctly positive nor negative. These changes are not even external transformations; instead, they are predominantly emotional transitions. Despite the characters navigating complex situations, they ultimately

return to their original state, displaying the same disorientation and indecision they had at the story's beginning. While they tussled with dilemmas during the complication phase of their subplots, their decisions have essentially led them back to where they started. The series employs a circular pattern, supported by the portrayal of similar scenes at the beginning and end, contributing to the central theme of the series. If we agree that the most significant theme of the series is '*we, the collective second generation of migrants in Norway, are caught in between two cultures,*' the circular structure of the series serves as confirmation that all the main characters' efforts to escape this cultural in-betweenness were, indeed, in vain. In other words, the series' creators convey to the audience that, despite their strenuous attempts to choose one cultural path or another to alleviate their cultural disorientation, they ultimately find themselves right back where they started.

This story structure differs from the entirely classical narrative model known as *archplot*, as described by McKee (1999, pp. 43-50). Indeed, *Norsk-ish* narratives fall somewhere between *archplot* and *miniplot*. The first model refers to a form of narrative with active characters who strive to change or oppose some forces, and the causal chain of the events ends with a strong sense of closure for the audience. However, the *miniplot* structure intentionally reduces all the strengths and boldness of these elements to evoke an indeterminate feeling for the audience. While the series' plots have a solid structure and the trajectory of the narratives is visibly designed with dramatization, two specific reasons drive me to argue that the series' narrative is not entirely classical. My suggestion is primarily due to the characters' transformations throughout the story, which are predominantly internal and emotional, and the closure of each subplot, which is often left open and circular. I should add that the open closure may be due to the series format, where there is a second season, and some level of suspension might be sustained in the narratives for audience engagement.

5.7.2 How the stories end for each character

Helin returns to her one-night-stand dates with ethnic Norwegian men, with whom she appears not to imagine any potential future, exactly as she did at the story's beginning. Amrit remains with Tina, as he did at the narrative's outset. Osman's experience has demonstrated to Helin that a co-ethnic husband is not guaranteed to turn out well. As the audience knows about Helin's interest in Turkish identity, she will likely need to find another way to balance her two-ness. While she has recently had a bad experience during her ethnicity explorations, the final

scene of her trip to Turkey shows that she is still on the same journey to make sense of her ethnic background.

Amrit's story has a more determinate sense of closure. He is now confident about his desire to continue with Tina, and his exploration of his ethnic identity appears to have ended. However, in the scene where Amrit confesses to an insignificant affair with an Indian girl, Tina mentions one of her male colleagues, an ethnic Norwegian man, with whom she has discussed her uncertainties. Amrit's reaction makes the audience assume that Tina might have had a similar affair. Not only does this information avoid portraying Tina as a gullible victim of Amrit's escapades, but it also adds to the thematic depth of Amrit's subplot by showing both equally uncertain about their relationship.

In a different type of closure, Fariba's story ends with no ethnic element, as we know she is not entangled in the dilemma of minority-majority identity. Arguably, Fariba's story's closure lacks causal consistency and narrative logic. It is not entirely clear why she chooses to pursue a medical career, and her transformation may not align with the audience's expectations of her personality. The implications of the Islam debate on her life and future paths remain vague in the story. Nevertheless, these inconsistencies in Fariba's story do not necessarily reduce the overall structure of the narrative. As she is always portrayed as an unexpected and rebellious character, the audience often will find her choices and directions reasonable. Also, the parallel trajectory of the narratives and the high tempo of the series help the audience overlook potential inconsistencies.

5.7.3 Local Aliens: Overarching Themes of Norsk-ish

At the end of the series, the characters rebel against traditional cultural norms they encounter in their communities, while there is no alternative home for them elsewhere. The series raises the question of 'what happens when the Norwegian society is not an alternative for them as well?' They are caught between two societies, two cultures, none of which is their main home. They will continue, as Papastergiadis (1998) notes, 'living in a permanent state of homelessness.' The open ending of the series, with the unresolved predicament of the hybrid life of the characters, provides a cosmopolitan image of the lives of the second-generation margins of Norwegian society.

It seems that the rooted-less characters of the series have no friends but fellow second-generation individuals. They gather together in Amrit's bar and share their experiences of living in not only social isolation - in terms of interaction with ethnic Norwegians - but also a

form of homely exile when their communities do not fully appreciate their progressive values. Regardless of their ethnic, racial, and cultural identity, they form a small hybrid community of second-generation immigrants. This emerging phenomenon in the society of Norway, which is artfully articulated as the central theme in the series, is similar to what Bhabha (1990) coins *hybridity*, as understood within post colonialism theories. As one of the hybridity theorists, he argues that migrants, minorities, and diasporas come to emerge on the margins of nations to redefine the meaning of nation 'marking the liminality of cultural identity and producing the double-edged discourse of social territories and temporalities (Bhabha, 1990).

The hybrid diasporic moment in *Norsk-ish* is best noticeable when, in a space of heteroglossia, characters speak multiple languages and sometimes mixed languages in one sentence. Also, the characters who challenge acculturation processes by exploring their ethnic identities suggest a hybrid identity without entirely belonging to the home or host society. The notion of hybrid identity '...delinks location and identity and disrupts bounded notions of culture and racialized bodily attribution' (Kalra et al., 2005; p. 87).

Furthermore, the portrayal of hybrid identities, suggesting a third identity distinct from migrant and Norwegian culture, inevitably requires the rejection of Norwegian-ness. The criticism of Norwegian society can be divided into two factors: 1- Naivety and ignorance of some members of the society about immigrants. 2- Xenophobic viewpoints and comments. Ignorance becomes evident when certain insignificant ethnic-Norwegian characters ask nonsensical questions or make inappropriate comments. For instance, in the last episode, someone asks Helin, a Norwegian born in the Turkish community- questions like, 'How do you like Norway so far?' or, as displayed in the comments made by Tina's father. Xenophobia within society becomes apparent when a conservative far-right news agency *-Reset-* expresses an interest in hiring Fariba after the debate, seeing her as a valuable asset to further their agenda.

In *Norsk-ish*, home is also an inevitably problematic space and the realm of closed tradition for the series' main characters. The families are traditional, forcing the characters to accept the conventional roles and values of the communities. The series' creators intentionally represent their characters -not their communities- as being well-educated and progressive to create an autonomous image of the second generation from their communities. There are only some limited signs of showing respect for and interest in their home culture and homeland, which is more visible in the part about the Turkish and the Indian family. However, the part about the Iranian family is very dark and claustrophobic. This is what Larsen (2015) calls criticism from within. However, too much criticism can lead to the reinforcement of the

previously seen essentializing pictures. The depiction of the characters as *local aliens* should also be seen as a reactive move by the creators to break down the stereotypes of the mainstream. As the creators have argued, having grown up in Norway, they occasionally encountered stigmatizing images of their communities in the media. Their primary motivation for embarking on this project was to challenge these stereotypes.

6 Chapter 6/ Conclusion

Norsk-ish is an outstanding work due to the depth of its thematic features and the skillful portrayal of dilemmas faced by the second-generation characters. The series artfully portrays the cultural puzzlement of this generation in Norway, where they do not identify entirely with diasporic communities or Norwegian society. The circular form of the narratives of the series contributes to the thematic dimension of the series by showing the unfruitful attempts of the characters to settle their identities. In the new equilibrium of the narrative, characters are shown principally in the same situation they were portrayed at the outset, and this pattern reinforces the longstanding situation of in-betweenness for the characters. Despite the risks involved in broaching some sensitive topics, e.g., Islamic values and Islamization, the series has successfully balanced to incapacitate the controversies that can arise from them.

Conducting an in-depth interview with the creators of *Norsk-ish*, Baharah Badavi and Melike Leblebicioglu, has enabled me to verify some of my interpretations of the text analysis and explain the motivation and themes in the series. Knowing about the creators' motivation to make a balance, respond to, and change the stereotypical representations of migrant communities helps us contextualize the thematic elements raised in the series.

The series gives secondary importance to the representation of the first generations and consciously advocates for the first-generation character's dignity and a better understanding of them in the country. Generally, while slight differences exist in the characters' attitudes toward their ethnic identity, none are radically concerned with their minority or majority identities. Fariba is the least concerned with identity issues. Conversely, Helin occasionally seeks her ethnic identity and balances her dual identity by appreciating her Norwegianness. She is well-integrated with no signs of acculturation and assimilation. Amrit can be situated between them concerning dealing with identity issues. His respect for his family makes him uncertain about marrying the ethnic Norwegian girl, Tina. However, he finally chooses to proceed against his family's wishes.

I have closely analyzed how the three communities, the Iranian, the Turkish, and the Indian Sikh communities, are portrayed in the series. Also, I have provided some empirical data accounting for the background and characterizations of these diasporas. As the main objective of the series has been exploring migrants' identities, I have accounted for how diasporic identity is influenced by the type of each diaspora and the level of nationalism in each country of origin. I have argued why the Turkish and the Indian Sikh communities have arguably more sense of belonging to their homelands, as represented correctly in the series. In

contrast, I have suggested why the Iranian community tends to acculturate into the host country.

The overemphasis on demonstrating the characters' challenges with the diasporic households has delivered some relatively stigmatizing pictures of migrant communities. This is particularly salient in the Iranian home, which is portrayed as highly regressive, and some Iranian individuals are exotically shallow. My critical approach can be better understood when we consider the series structure. In *Norsk-ish*, three communities are represented in parallel, and the picture painted can also be viewed as a comparison. However, it is essential to mention that the series' writers have rejected my critical argument about the representation of the Iranians in the series. I find these contradicting views a constructive debate in this research, as it suggests how migrant individuals can interpret elements of migrant films differently. I have suggested that my argument can be best understood from the viewpoint of a migrant audience, as a migrant film can never be an entirely fictional film. That is, migrant audiences see them as factual or at least representing their communities.

However, this is the sole aspect of the series that I have found unconstructive. Indeed, despite being challenged, other communities and Norwegian society are usually accompanied by some elements that, to some extent, nullify them. To clarify how *Norsk-ish* makes balances in portraying some critical dimensions of each community, I have suggested that the balancing elements can be found in three levels: narrative trajectory, sympathetic approach, and cultural icons, or what I have called *ethnic sweetness* elements.

Stories told by migrant and diasporic filmmakers, the comic and tragic situations of living between two cultures, will continue to enrich and widen the horizons of Norway's film and TV industry. As the population of the second and third generations of the migrant communities has grown and the filmmakers of these generations have entered the industry, the migrant film in Norway has increasingly turned into the phase of diasporic film. This study validates and reinforces Eva Bakøy's (2012) argument proposing the same trend. Indeed, *Norsk-ish* is an iconic example of a diasporic film. The themes and subjects discussed in the series are the prevailing topics that second-generation immigrants communicate worldwide. However, as more diasporic films and programs are produced in the future, researchers will have a better opportunity to distinguish the characteristics of Norwegian diasporic productions compared to other productions. The diasporic film in Norway is in its early stages. There are only a few productions showing the elements of the cinema and discussing themes such as identity-seeking and cultural dilemmas.

Conducting more research on future diasporic productions in Norway will enable researchers to characterize and find generalizations about this phenomenon's thematic, narrative and stylistic elements. More rigorous scholarly research is necessary to account for the issues concerning migrant and diasporic communities.

I should emphasize that various dimensions of migrant and diasporic films in Norway require rigorous scholarly exploration. For future research within the context of migrant and diasporic films in Norway, I want to suggest some topics and approaches: a similar analysis of the second season of *Norsk-ish* (released in the autumn of 2023), the difference between the representation of the first and second generations of migrants in the Norwegian media; how diversity policies in Norway have enabled migrant-background filmmakers to emerge in the industry over the last two decades; the portrayal of the migrant's integration versus assimilation in the country's media; the representation of specific diasporas in the country's media and film; an audience-centered study examining whether and how migrant audiences perceive migrant films differently than ethnic Norwegian audiences.

References

- Ager, A., & Strang, A. (2008). Understanding Integration: a Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21(2), 166–191. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fen016>
- Antola, L. and E. M. Rogers, (1984): “Television Flows in Latin America”, *Communication Research*, 11, 2, pp. 183–202.
- Aumont, J. & Michel, M. (1988). *L'analyse des Films*. Nathan.
- Bakøy E. (2012), *'From Lonely Guest Workers to Conflict-ridden Diasporas: A Historical Survey of Norwegian Migrant Cinema'* in Eide E. and Nikunen K. (2011): *Media in Motion: Cultural Complexity and Migration in the Nordic Region*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Group.
- Ballantyne, T. (2006). *Between colonialism and diaspora: Sikh cultural formations in an imperial world*. Duke University Press.
- Berghahn D. & Sternberg C. (2010), *European Cinema in Motion: Migrant and Diasporic Film in Contemporary Europe*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bertellini, G. (2013). Film, national cinema, and migration. 10.1002/9781444351071.wbeghm235.
- Bhabha, H. (1990) *Nation and Narration*. New York: Routledge.
- Brochmann, G., & Hagelund, A. (2011). Migrants in the Scandinavian Welfare State. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 1(1), 13-n/a. <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10202-011-0003-3>
- Cohen, R. (1997). *Global diasporas: An introduction*. Taylor & Francis Group.
- Corrigan, T. (2012). *A short guide to writing about film*. 8th ed. Boston, Pearson.
- Cottam, R. W. (1979). *Nationalism in Iran* (pp. viii, 376). University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Dayal, S. (1996). Diaspora and Double Consciousness. *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 29(1), 46–62. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1315257>
- Denscombe, M. (2010). *The Good Research Guide for Small Scale Research Projects* (4th ed.). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Eliassen, H. Ø. (2020, September 23). Seriesuksessen “Norsk-ish” hylles for musikkbruken. NRK. https://www.nrk.no/kultur/seriesuksessen-_norsk-ish_-hylles-for-musikkbruken-1.15171875
- Elsaesser, T., & Buckland, W. (2002). *Studying Contemporary American Film: A Guide to Movie Analysis*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Erdal, M. B., & Lewicki, A. (2016). Moving citizens: citizenship practices among Polish migrants in Norway and the United Kingdom. *Social Identities*, 22(1), 112–128.
- Eriksen, T. H. (2013). *Immigration and National Identity in Norway*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.
- Eskilsson, T. (2022) PUBLIC FILM FUNDING AT A CROSSROADS. The film I Väst Analysis, Sweden <https://analysis.filmivast.se/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Public-Film-Financing-at-a-Crossroads-download.pdf>
- Etemadifard, S. M., & Khazaei, T. (2021). Divergent Heterogeneities in Iranian Migration in France: Semantic and Theoretical Limitations of Diaspora. *International Migration*, 59(4), 207–220. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12779>
- Ezra, E. & Rowden, T. (2006) *Transnational Cinema, The Film Reader*. Routledge
- Fallahi, K., & Monavaryan, A. (2008). A Study on the factors of elite (human capital) immigration and suggesting appropriate strategies to prevent this phenomenon. *Knowledge and Development*, 15(24), 103-132.
- Farzesaeid, O. (2022, January 4). Ikke spør meg hvor jeg kommer fra. Spør meg hva etnisiteten min er! <https://www.aftenposten.no/>. Retrieved November 11, 2023, from <https://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/sid/i/V9eWdp/ikke-spoer-meg-hvor-jeg-kommer-fra-spoer-meg-hva-etnisiteten-min-er>
- Feshbach, S. (1972). Reality and fantasy in filmed violence. In J. D. Murray, E. A. Rubinstein, & G. A. Comstock (Eds.), *Television and social behavior: Vol. 2. Television and social learning* (pp. 318–345). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Fitzgerald, D. (2000) *Negotiating Extra-Territorial Citizenship: Mexican Migration and the Transnational Politics of Community*, La Jolla, CA: Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, Monograph Series No. 2
- Giddens, A. (1990) *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Guðjónsdóttir, G., & Loftsdóttir, K. (2017). Being a desirable migrant: perception and racialization of Icelandic migrants in Norway. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(5), 791–808. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2016.1199268>

- Gullestad, M. (2004). Blind slaves of our prejudices: Debating 'culture' and 'race' in Norway. *Ethnos*, 69(2), 177–203.
- Henriksen, K. (2007). Fakta om 18 innvandregrupper i Norge. In *Rapporter*. Statistisk sentralbyrå
- Kalra, V. S., Kaur, R., & Hutnyk, J. (2005). *Diaspora & hybridity*. SAGE.
- Kazemipur, A., & Rezaei, A. (2003). Religious Life Under Theocracy: The Case of Iran. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 42(3), 347–361.
- Khosravi, S. (2011). *Young and Defiant in Tehran*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Inc.
<https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812206814>
- Khosravi, S. (2018). A FRAGMENTED DIASPORA. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 8(2), 73–81. <https://doi.org/10.1515/njmr-2018-0013>
- Korhan, U. (2014). Turkish Diaspora in Norway or Has the Norwegian Politics ever tasted Turkish delight? Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Ås.
- LaMarre, H. L., & Landreville, K. D. (2009). When is fiction as good as fact? Comparing the influence of documentary and historical reenactment films on engagement, affect, issue interest, and learning. *Mass Communication and Society*, 12(4), 537–555.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/15205430903237915>
- Landau, J. M. (2010). Diaspora Nationalism: The Turkish Case. In *The Call of the Homeland* (Vol. 9, pp. 219–240). <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004182103.i-402.64>
- Larsen L.O. (2015) *New Voices, New Stories: Migrant Cinema and Television in Norway*. In: Bondebjerg I., Redvall E.N., Higson A. (eds) *European Cinema and Television*. Palgrave *European Film and Media Studies*. Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Loshitzky, Y. (2010). *Screening Strangers Migration and Diaspora in Contemporary European Cinema* (-1st ed.). Indiana University Press.
- Mahsa Rashidnejad. (2020). *Iranian Families' Experiences of Migration and Social Life in Norwegian Context*. NTNU.
- Mcauliffe, C. (2007). A home far away? Religious identity and transnational relations in the Iranian diaspora. *Global Networks* (Oxford), 7(3), 307–327.
- McKee, A. (2003). *Textual analysis: A beginners guide*. SAGE Publications, Limited.
- McKee, R. (1999). *Story : substance, structure, style, and the principles of screenwriting* (p. 466). Methuen.
- McNeely, Connie and Yasemin Muhoglu Soysal, Fall (1989): “International Flows of Television Programming: A Revisionist Research Orientation”, *Public Culture*, 2, 1, 136–145.
- Mohabbat-Kar, R. 2016. “Introduction.” In *Identity and Exile: The Iranian Diaspora Between Solidarity and Difference*, edited by R. Mohabbat-Kar, 9–21. Berlin: Heinrich Böll Foundation.
- Mohamamdi Alamuti, M. (2005). Globalization and Brain Drain: Review of Iran's Experiences. *Social Welfare Quarterly*, 4(15), 209–232.
- Myrvold, K. (2004). Wedding Ceremonies in Punjab. *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 11(2), 155.
- Naficy, H. (2001) *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Olwig, K. F. (2011). 'Integration': Migrants and Refugees between Scandinavian Welfare Societies and Family Relations. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37(2), 179–196.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2010.521327>
- Papastergiadis N. (1998) *Dialogues in the Diasporas*, London, Rivers Oram Press.
- Perlmutter, H. V. (1991). On the rocky road to the first global civilization. *Human Relations* 44(9), 897– 1010.
- Ponzanesi, S. (2011) “Europe in Motion: Migrant Cinema and the Politics of Encounter.” *Social Identities* 17 (1): 73–92.
- Potter, W. J. (1988). The perceived reality in television affects research. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 32, 23–41
- Rantanen, T. (2005). *The media and globalization*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Robertson, R. (1992). Globalization, Knowledge and Society: Readings from "International Sociology," [Review of *Globalization, Knowledge and Society: Readings from "International Sociology,"*]. *Contemporary Sociology*, 21(1), 45–47. American Sociological Association. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2074721>
- Saatci, M. (2002). Nation-states and ethnic boundaries: modern Turkish identity and Turkish-Kurdish conflict. *Nations and Nationalism*, 8(4), 549–564. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8219.00065>
- Seib, P. M. (2008). *The Al Jazeera effect : how the new global media are reshaping world politics* (1st ed.). Potomac Books.

- Shafak, E. (2010). The Politics of Fiction. Genius.com. Retrieved November 11, 2023, from <https://genius.com/Elif-shafak-the-politics-of-fiction-annotated>
- Shani, G. (2002). The Territorialization of Identity: Sikh Nationalism in the Diaspora 1. *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 2(1), 11-19.
- Shapiro, M. A., & Chock, T. M. (2003). Psychological processes in perceiving reality. *Media Psychology*, 5, 163–198.
- Slåke, A. L. (2018) ‘*Portraying a Major Minority in Televised Public Service Broadcasting; Portrayal of Polish Immigrants in the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation*’. MA diss. Media Studies: University of Bergen.
- Sreberny, A. (1996) The global and the local in international communications' Pp. 177-203 in J. Curran and M. Gurevitch (eds) *Mass Media and Society*, 2nd ed. London: Arnold.
- SSB: Statistics Norway (n.d.). Statistics Norway. Statistisk Sentralbyrå. Retrieved November 10, 2023, from <https://www.ssb.no/en>
- Tatla, D. S. (2013). Imagining Punjab: Narratives of nationhood and homeland among the Sikh diaspora. In Sikh religion, culture and ethnicity (pp. 161-185). Routledge.
- Thandi, S. S. (2016). What is Sikh in a 'Sikh Wedding'? Text, Ritual, and Performance in Diaspora Marriage Practices. *Journal of Punjab Studies*, 23.
- Truby J. (2008). *The anatomy of story : 22 steps to becoming a master storyteller* (First paperback). Farrar Straus and Giroux.
- Tuhus, J. B. (2003) ‘*Den gode, den onde og den integrerte: En analyse av representasjon av ‘den ikke-vestlige’’ i norsk film fra 1965 til 2000.*’ (The Good, the bad and the integrated: An Analysis of the Representation of Non-Westerners in Norwegian Film 1965-2000) MA diss. Media Studies: University of Oslo.
- Turkey : society & culture (2nd ed.). (2010). World Trade Press.
- TÜSGAD (1999). Turkey’s Window of Opportunity. İstanbul, TUSIAD (Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği).
- Vertovec, S. (2009). *Transnationalism* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30(6), 1024–1054. doi:10.1080/01419870701599465
- Xin, X. and Mossig, I. (2021), Governments and Formal Institutions Shaping the Networks of Co-Production in the Chinese and German Film Industries. *Tijds. voor econ. en Soc. Geog.*, 112: 220-238. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tesg.12467->