

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INTREGATION OF SOMALI IMMIGRANTS INTO THE FINNISH SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

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This study is focused on the social and cultural integration of Somali immigrants in Finland and emphasizes on the dynamic, strengths and challenges faced by this group of immigrants in Finland. The research was conducted during spring and autumn 2013 in the period I did a field work at Somali league. During that period I received basic information about Somali culture and their life in Finland. The thesis was conducted using qualitative methods and the data was collected by interviews with five Somali immigrants from the age of 25 to 35 living in Finland for at least 10 years.

The research analysis is done by using the content analysis, thus finding themes from the interview data. Based on the results of the content analysis this research concludes that integration of Somalis is a positive process and Somali people feel that their problems are taken into consideration by the authorities. The research brought aspects of the Somali people's identity, family interaction, education and employment, housing and neighborhood, their wellbeing and the role played by media in the integration process.

Key words: Somali, immigrant, social and cultural integration, society, Finland

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1 INTRODUCTION

This research consists on the integration of Somali immigrants into the Finnish society, the immigrants' experiences, challenges and aspirations. With the influx of immigrants the Finnish government emphasis on integration programs that aim at providing services and facilities for the wellbeing of immigrants and the Finnish society in general. Accessing to already existing services might implicate the creation of new services for the announcement of the existent services.

The integration of migrants is a challenge to the established patterns of nation building and to welfare state policies. Finland as a European country is also struggling with the problem of how to include the immigrants in the public and social structures. (Heckmann & Schnapper 2003). The process of long term integration requires long term involvement of individuals, their families and communities in a demanding period of transition, adaptation and cultural metamorphosis. Personal and social resources must be developed in the first instance to deal with the tasks of settlement.

Somali league is a community development organization which is the umbrella for all Somali associations in Finland. The league was founded in 1996 and it has a facility in Herttoniemi with the vision of bringing together all association working in Finland. Somali league works with the Somali associations and single individuals as a bridge for cooperation with different members of the mainstream society, it helps with applications for association's fund raising and also fighting racism and developing health relations in the neighborhoods.

I have been working as an intern at Somali league while conducting this research. There I gathered information about my research topic and explored

the different services offered to Somali immigrants and their different associations.

Finland as many other western countries is becoming increasingly multicultural. Discussion about diversity can be heard in many forms of social communication. People in Finland are aware of discussions surrounding the immigration phenomena and integration. Clearly immigrants are more conscious about their role in the Finnish society and are increasingly participating in that discussion.

This thesis is focused on the integration of Somali immigrants into the Finnish society. The research was conducted in Helsinki area but includes Somalis residents in the all Finnish territory. Each section of the thesis presents different aspects which I considered as important in the discussion of immigrants integration in the Finnish society. The research questions are:

- 1) How do Somalis maintain their own cultural values in Finland?
- 2) What are the strengths of Somali immigrants' in Finnish society?

2. BACKGROUND

The growing number of immigrants moving to Finland brings the urgent need to create integration programs that can be applied for the rapid mobility of immigrants into the society. Some authorities have the responsibility to ensure that all individuals or groups are being provided with a sufficient social welfare system that would enable them to integrate into the Finnish society. But for immigrants to actively participate in building and maintenance of a healthy society, the civil society has to play its own role, which is to provide space for those immigrants to develop awareness about the importance of integration in their wellbeing.

Somali league organizes forums and seminars in accordance with Somali associations about discriminatory practices that Somali immigrants might suffer on a daily basis. For these events different institutions of the Finnish society are invited to speak about their work. Those representatives include police, schools, child welfare, social workers and child welfare; they clarify to the audience about their procedures.

All those events were fundamental for me to discover the situation of Somalis, their problems, daily life, and were a strong contributor for this study. Finland is a bureaucratic country with increasing multicultural diversity therefore it is crucial to develop awareness on the importance of representation in legal aspects.

Finnish migration policies are considered as restrictive, thus the number of immigrants is relatively low compared to other European countries. People with immigrant background amount to approximately five percent of the Finnish population. Immigrants move for several reasons. Some move in order to improve their standard of living, others as refugees, asylum seekers and to

provide their children better opportunities. Nowadays, with modern technology in transportation and telecommunications, more people are motivated to move.

2.1 Research Perspective

The study aims to identify challenges and success of the integration of Somali individuals living in Finland; understand their challenges in daily basis dynamics, and how those affect their integration and wellbeing in Finland. The reason for my focus in the integration of immigrants in Finnish society is to develop policies that can function in long term, not only for the immigrants but for the benefit of the Finnish society as a whole. I consider this work fundamental for the development and application of new approach on the integration for immigrants.

As the population becomes more diverse it is fundamental to acknowledge the different ethnic groups living in Finland. It is important to know the different groups of immigrants residing in Finland, relying on the fact that immigrants are normal human beings with a dream of a brighter future for themselves and their family members as well. As integration plans have as a final aim to have citizens whom can interact positively with the environment in which they live. This research is a tool for the immigrants to understand that their position and opinions about positive measures for their integration are of extremely value for the authorities.

While attending formal and informal activities with different sets of people I conclude that we all as human beings want to live happy and in peace, although people search for these things in different ways. Somali immigrants mention

some aspects which might influence in the success or fail of their integration. These aspects include difficulties in entering the labor market and difficult in the family reunification process. This research aims also at understanding how Somali immigrants have strengthen of obtaining working places, education, and social life without having to lose their cultural identity.

In this thesis, contrary to many others done previously, Somalis are defined as immigrants rather than refugees. Since the arrival of the first Somalis in Finland in the 1990's their reason for migration has not being refugee as sometimes assumed. Somalis have come to Finland for other reasons as family ties or humanitarian reasons, is fundamental not to brand all of Somalis as refugees. In this sense it is also fundamental to mention that some Somalis even entering the Finnish territory are denied the refugee status. But they can stay in Finland in other grounds.

This research will focuses on the integration of Somali people not as a form of documenting stigma and promoting differences among people, but in a constructive perspective. The main aim of this study is to be used as a document for people who are interested in aspects relating to Somali people not as victims of any kind of discrimination, but as individuals who spend their days in the search of wellbeing similar to any other individual in the society.

2.2 Community Development Perspective

Community development is a structured intervention that provides communities greater control over the conditions that affect their lives. This does not solve all the problems faced by a local community, but it builds up confidence to tackle such problems effectively. Community development works at the level of local groups and organizations rather than with individuals or families. The range of

local groups and organizations representing communities at local level constitutes the community sector. (Community Development Foundation, UK.).

This research might help improving the life conditions of immigrants by identifying major of their concerning's, help develop effective actions and participatory practices which will lead to integration of individuals. It can be used also to develop mechanisms of addressing power inequalities between immigrants and established residents. Bauman (2001) states that if there is to be a community in the world of individuals, it can only be (and needs to be) a community woven together from sharing and mutual care: a community of concern and responsibility for the equal right to be human and the equal ability to act on that right. (O'neill 2010, 63).

Ethnicity, gender and other cultural identities may shape people's capacities to change their lives and societies. Power relations are viewed as significant in shaping these capacities as cultural systems may confer power and privilege on some by denying the rights and access to resources of others. These issues of culture and power cultural systems may confer power and privilege on some by denying the rights and access to resources of others (Williams 2004).

In the discussion of integration it is frequent to hear the term minorities groups. This term is misleading because it implies that minority groups are small. In reality, a minority group can be quite large and can even be a numerical majority of the population. Minority status has more to do with the distribution of resources and power than simple numbers. The pattern of disadvantage is the key characteristic of a minority group (Healey 2010, 8-9).

The concrete benefits of community development, such as employment and infrastructure, come through local people changing attitudes, mobilizing existing skills, improving networks, thinking differently about problems, and using community assets in new ways. Community development improves the situation

of a community, not just economically, but also as a strong functioning community in itself. (Cavaye, no year)

Community development improves the ability of communities to collectively make better decisions about the use of resources such as infrastructure, labour and knowledge. This research will present information and provide guidelines on integration and possible alienation of immigrants in Finland, it will also serve as a tool for a person interested in multicultural work. It is a tool that accesses the needs and challenges of Somali immigrants.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework focuses on the main relevant aspect of social and cultural integration. Those definitions are relevant while describing the experiences of my target group and the position of the Finnish policy about integration. The following chapter will guide the readers to a deep understanding of the research topic.

3.1 Social and Cultural Integration

The notion of integration is broadly employed by sociologists and social anthropologists to indicate the process of immigrant adjustment in their destination country and the experiences that could be acquired and shared between the new settlers and the host societies at the various levels of social organization (UK Essays, no year).

According to different scholars integration is a long term and two way process of change that relates both to the conditions for and the actual participation in aspects of life in the given geographical area (Ager & Strang 2008, 12). While culture is the set of believes, values, behavior and material object that constitute a peoples way of life.

A successful integration can be measured by the level of language acquisition, access to and achievement in training programs and education, incorporation in the labor market and use of health care and other critical services (The Advocates for Human Rights 2006, 1.)

In this research, integration is defined as the inclusion of new population into existing social structures of the immigration country. Some of the most

discussed factors among the integration of immigrants are the acquisition of citizenship, family reunification and recognition of priory qualifications.

The Finnish Integration Act section 2, defines integration as the personal development of immigrants, aimed at participation in working life and society while preserving their own language and culture”, and as “the measures taken and resources and services provided by the authorities to promote and support such integration, and consideration for the needs of immigrants in planning and providing other public services and measures (Minister of Interior 2009).

The process of long-term integration requires the involvement of individuals, their families and communities in a demanding period of transition, adaptation and cultural metamorphosis. (Valtonen 2009, 1-2). Therefore a successful integration do not only depend on the individuals efforts to integrate but also depends on the structure and capacity of the hosting country to accommodate immigrants, Specific services and legislation.

In the Finnish Act on the promotion of immigrant integration, integration is defined as an interaction between society and the immigrants, and the intention of the Act is to provide immigrants with the necessary knowledge and skills in society and for employment, while enhancing the possibilities of maintaining their own culture and language (Somalis in Helsinki 2013, 30).

3.2 Integration Policy in Finland

The integration period is estimated at three years but can be extended to five years in special cases. (Municipality of Residence Act 201/1994.)

Section 7 of the integration Act states that in order to promote and support integration, employment offices and municipalities may:

- 1) Provides guidance, advisory services and information services;
- 2) Provide information about Finnish society and how it functions;
- 3) Provide Finnish or Swedish teaching;
- 4) Provide adult skills training and take appropriate labour market policy;
- 5) Provide instruction in reading and writing, and teaching to augment basic education;
- 6) Provide interpretation services;
- 7) Take measures and provide services to promote equality in all its forms
- 8) Take measures and provide services to meet the special needs of immigrant minors;
- 9) Take measures and provide services for special-needs groups;
- 10) Take other measures and provide services that encourage immigrants to acquire for themselves the skills and knowledge needed in society.

Immigrants can also benefit from the Finnish Act on Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers, chapter 1, section1. The purpose of the Act is to promote the integration, equality and freedom of choice of immigrants through measures which help them to acquire the essential knowledge and skills they need to function in society, and ensure support care for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of temporary protection in the context of a mass influx by arranging for their reception. (Finnish Ministry of Interior 2013.).

Despite official efforts to foster integration, immigrants are not always easily accepted in Finnish communities (Liebkind 1996 cited in & Schnapper 2003, 197). The high unemployment rate on one hand, and negative attitudes of Finns towards immigrants, on the other hand, could create a situation where all immigrants (except immigrants from the western countries) are under the threat of becoming stigmatized. (Kyntäjä cited in Heckman & Schnappe 2003).

3.3 Immigrants in Finland

Immigrant is referred to a person who moves from one country to another with the objective of residing. Immigrants can have different reason for their allocation thus family ties, employment, refugee, asylum seeking, and studies). In this thesis Somali immigrants are referred as being in Finland for one of those reasons. The immigrant population was very small in until the beginning of 1990's with the arrival of the first larger groups, which included Ingrians from Russia and Somalis. In 2008 a total of 29,100 immigrants entered Finland, the highest number since the country's independence in 1917. (Carmel & Cerami & Papadopoulos 2011, 143).

According to the Migration Information Source there are approximately 300,000 people in Finland, or five percent claiming a foreign background (foreign born, speaking a foreign language, or having foreign citizenship). Finnish migration policies is considered as restrictive, thus the number of immigrants is relatively low compared to other European countries. Immigrants amount approximately three percent of the Finnish population (Migration Information Source 2011).

The major reasons for immigration were studying, temporary work projects and marriage to a Finn. Until the end of the 1980s, some 85 % of the immigrants coming to Finland were return migrants (mostly from Sweden). In the 1990s,

however, more than half of the immigrants have been persons of foreign origin. (Korkiasaari & Söderling 2003, 6-7).

In comparison with the other Nordic countries and the rest of Europe, Finland's immigration policy has been remarkably restrictive. (Kyntäjä cited in Heckman & Schnapper 2003). From World War II up to the early 1970s Finland was a rather closed society and did not attract immigrants. Therefore, the number of foreign citizens coming to Finland was insignificant and they tended to stay for a short period only.

3.4 Somali Diaspora

Any discussion about Somalis in Finland need to first have as introduction the Somali diaspora. The independent Somali Republic emerged in 1960, it was relatively homogenous in terms of ethnic, linguistic and religious adherence, but rivalries based on "clanism" were intense. There are six large clan families, which are divided into several clans and sub-clans. Estimation of the population of Somalia varies from six to nine million (Gundel, 2002 cited in Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004, 23).

Like transnationalism, diaspora is not a new phenomenon but as a result of modern technology and increasing globalization, the contacts between diaspora communities and their homeland have become more intensive and less expensive, and often take place in real-time. The new approach in immigration describes migrant communities as transnational and diaspora and points out, for example, that migrants often have vibrant networks across the political borders of nation-states and that their existence is not bound by national boundaries (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004, 35-36).

In this research, it is considered as a Somali any individual with Somali heritage. A Somali can have been born inside or outside Somalia. Somali refers to the

ethnicity of the individuals. Few Diasporas have as much economic and political importance to their homeland as does Somalia's. Somalis in Europe comprise at least 25 percent of Somalia's estimated 1.5 million worldwide diaspora population and more than eight percent of the major Sub-Saharan African Diasporas in the European Union. (Kurz, no year).

Vertovec (1999) defines diaspora as social form, a type of consciousness and a mode of cultural production that intersects with global and local contexts as well as the homeland: Diaspora is the term often used today to describe practically any population which is considered deterritorialized or transnational – that is, which has originated in a land other than in which it currently resides, and whose social economic and political networks cross the borders of nation-states or indeed span the globe. (O'Neill 2010, 67).

Wahlbeck (1999) argues that the risk with describing migrants as diaspora communities are that it may lead to an impression that diaspora is necessarily counterproductive to integration. (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004). In response to that last point, Povrzanovic-Fryckman (2001) points out that in a post-modern reality immigrants who are involved with transnational (including diaspora) activities do not choose between "either-or loyalties" toward a country of origin or country of reception, but may feel that they belong to both (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004, 44.)

An example of diaspora community can be the Somalis living in Finland; they are involved with the politics of homeland and are voluntary active members in organizations which aim to rebuild Somali. Somali communities count with the cooperation of individuals who work voluntarily for the wellbeing of the society. Those volunteers are doctors, substance abuse counselors and members of Somali community. Each of those individuals plays a vital role in communicating with of Somali background as well as with the authorities.

3.4.1 Somalis in Finland

Since the start of civil war in Somalia almost 1.5 million have migrated to different parts of the world. In Finland Somalis compose the largest group of immigrants with non-European background. Somalis were the largest group in Finland that came as spontaneous asylum seekers in the beginning of the 1990's. (Statistics Finland 2012).

In 1990, out of the total Finnish population, 0.7 percent was of foreign origin, out of which just 49 people were from Somalia. Most of Somalis in the 1990's came to Finland as asylum seekers and were placed in reception centers throughout the country. In December 2012, 14,672 out of the total population of Finland (5,426,674) listed Somalia as their background country. (Statistics Finland 2012). The table 2 shows that Somali immigrants occupy the 4th position in comparison to the number of other immigrants living in Finland and first the position in comparison with immigrants from Africa.

TABLE 2: Foreigners in Finland (Statistics Finland 2013)

Country of citizenship	2011	%	Annual change, %	2012	%	Annual change, %
Estonia	34 006	18,6	16,9	39 763	20,3	16,9
Russia	29 585	16,2	4,1	30 183	15,4	2
Sweden	8 481	4,6	-0,3	8 412	4,3	-0,8
Somalia	7 421	4,1	12,6	7 468	3,8	0,6
China	6 159	3,4	10,8	6 622	3,4	7,5
Thailand	5 545	3	10,4	6 031	3,1	8,8
Iraq	5 742	3,1	14,3	5 919	3	3,1
Turkey	4 159	2,3	4,7	4 272	2,2	2,7
India	3 793	2,1	9,4	4 030	2,1	6,2
Germany	3 806	2,1	2,4	3 906	2	2,6

Others	74 436	40,6	8,5	78 905	40,4	6
Total	183 133	100	9	195 511	100	6,8

While the estimative of Finnish population indicates an increase of elderly citizens the situation with foreign population in particular indicates a majority population in working and productive age. This is the main reason for my focus in Somali immigrants in the age of 25-35 years old, although the statistics bellow do not refer to Somali immigrants in special.

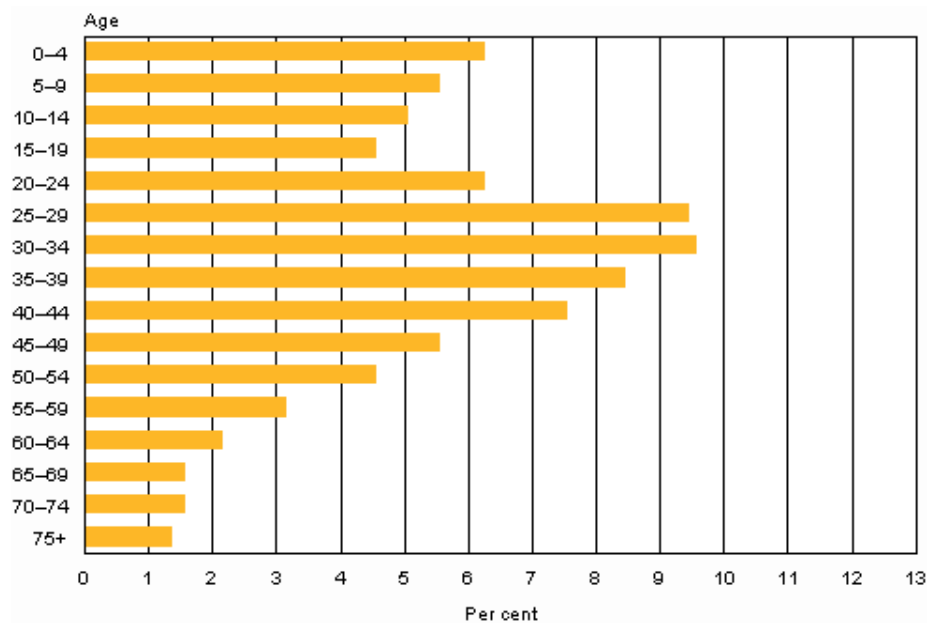


FIGURE 1: Share of people with foreign origin in Finnish population by age on 31 December 2012

According to Statistics Finland's statistics on population structure, nearly ever tenth of persons aged 25 to 34 living permanently in Finland at the end of 2012 were of foreign origin. In the greater Helsinki region, the corresponding proportion at the end of 2012 was nearly one-fifth (Statistics Finland 2012).

3.4.2 Refugee or Immigrant

Refugees around the world are a sensitive topic. At the beginning of 1990 when first Somalis arrived in Finland their situation was complex as any person of Somali background was seen as unproductive due to refugee status. Now with time is learnt that people have different reasons to flee their country and family reunification is one of the reasons. By the relative long interaction with Somali immigrants is time to see people as individuals who have their dreams and aspirations, rather than have low expectations on them.

I find problematic the distinction usually made of refugees and immigrants. While the term refugee (quota refugee and former asylum seekers) is perceived as a term to describe people who need more attention and having different needs from those of other immigrants. I must say that stereotyping and special attention given to some groups pose as a risk for integration of immigrants in Finland. At one hand it is extremely important to focus on the needs of refugee without generalization and also consider that immigrants who are not refugee can have more immediately needs. For that reason I categorize people in this research as immigrants rather than refugees.

To sustain my theory I bring the case of refugees who do not have major problems integrating in the society, for example Somali immigrants who were studying in the former Soviet Union when the war began in Somalia, compared with a Somali who came to Finland based on family ties. By that example hearing the term refugee it is suggested than the first needs more attention, but by analyzing the historical of the individual we can approach the case in a different way. That is why this research defines the subject as all immigrants rather than specific categorization.

Finnish resettlement policy is often based on rather unrealistic expectations of a fast integration or even assimilation of refugees. At the same time, refugees are

often seen as persons who have lost everything, in terms of material, social and cultural capital. Consequently, refugees are sometimes treated in the same way as small children, or as persons who must undergo a kind of socialization into Finnish society. (Kyntäjä cited in Heckman & Schnapper 2003, 198).

3.4.3 Citizenship versus Active Citizenship

Integration without citizenship might result in a lack of identification integration of immigrants. But in Finland even if an immigrant manages to become a Finnish citizen easily, it is extremely difficult to be considered and accepted as a “Finn” by the host population. It seems that immigrants living in Finland are still regarded as foreigners even after residing in the country for many years and having been naturalized. (Kyntäjä cited in Heckman & Schnapper 2003, 188).

Having a Finnish citizenship on its own is not a guarantee that an individual will be integrated in the society and Finnish language and culture are not enough for individuals to get employed. And unemployment can pose a barrier for people wishing to be active citizens. Although individuals know their rights as citizens, they lack the interpretation of their obligations. Obligations of a citizen might involve voting, participating in volunteer work and be active in developing their communities. If immigrants have Finnish citizenship, means a step has been done for their full participation in Finnish society.

TABLE 3: Finnish Citizenships Granted (Statistics Finland 2013)

Country of previous citizenship	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Russia	1 399	1 665	2 211	1 026	1 925	1 652	2 477
Somalia	445	464	595	290	131	96	609
Estonia	176	182	262	166	243	302	521
Afghanistan	101	102	279	186	108	100	510
Iraq	405	443	379	207	78	106	457

Iran	213	218	329	180	137	145	451
Former Serbia and Montenegro	248	232	324	154	109	106	297
Turkey	110	102	195	94	132	166	278
Former Sudan	2	4	11	49	17	24	228
Sweden	178	163	274	126	104	196	190
Others	1 156	1 249	1 823	935	1 350	1 665	3 069
Total	4 433	4 824	6 682	3 413	4 334	4 558	9 087
1) Persons permanently resident in Finland							

The table 3 shows the activeness of Somali people acquiring Finnish citizenship. In comparison with other groups of immigrants Somalis came at the second position in acquiring Finnish citizenship. Although the fact can be due to the large number of Somali immigrants in Finland, it is important to have in mind the requirements for the acquisition of Finnish citizenship, which among age and time of residence, also include sufficient language skills and meeting the integrity requirement, which means a person has not committed any punishable act and that no restraining order has been issued against him or her. (The Finnish Migration Service 2014).

In 2011, 96 people of Somali background acquired Finnish citizenship, bringing the total to 5,278 who acquired citizenship between 1990 and 2011. The population of Helsinki in 2012 was 595,384, out of which 6,843 people spoke Somali as their mother tongue, indicating that approximately half of the Somali population in Finland lives in Helsinki. (Somalis in Helsinki 2013).

3.5 Literature Review

Previous academic disciplines focusing on Somali people are from anthropology, psychology, education and religious studies. Some of the

research is written in Finnish and some in strictly academic perspective, thus sometimes making the study not accessible to people who are not from the field.

In the last 10 years academics, politics and non-governmental organizations have developed an interest in aspects concerning Somali immigrants in Finland. However I consider Somalis in Helsinki as a rich source of information about Somalis. Somalis in Helsinki is a research book which was sponsored by the European foundation and is a part of a study of Somalis in 7 different European cities. Being recent done and with the inclusion of a Somali academic and studying Somalis from different social aspects, it has played a fundamental role in my research.

Somalis in Helsinki explores the experiences of Somalis in employment, education, health, political participation, and policing as well as their sense of identity and belonging in Helsinki. Apart from reading the research I also had the opportunity to attend the publication seminar where I heard what the Somalis and public in general had to say about the research.

However I do not agree with a form of Somali's protraction in the case saying no single Somali speaker is reported in University education in the Helsinki area (Somalis in Helsinki 2013, 51). But in the references which are in minuscular letters mentions a different information. Also the study has a graphic in page 52 clearer mentioning that the total number of Somali university student is equal to zero. If there is different information from the University of Helsinki it should be prevalent.

Other previous relevant study for my research is The Ice Breakers written by Alitolppa-Niitamo (2004), it has as target group young Somalis (Somalis in school age) I used the research as an instrument for my further understanding

of different aspects of Somali family dynamics, aspirations and expectations in Finnish society.

4 RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter brings the methods and approaches used in the research. To gain knowledge and understand the dynamics of Somali immigrants and their associations I attended different events aiming at discussing the concerning's of those immigrants. This approach was done in a period when I was an intern at the Somali league. Because I used a qualitative method I will define the method and also explain how I did the data analyses, in this case content analyses. And final as a researcher an individual has the responsibility of maintain and follow an ethical conduct, I will explain how I used ethical in my study and in the working field while collecting material for the research.

4.1 Qualitative Research

As the main method of this research I use qualitative methods, like Interviews. According to Silverman (2005) if resources allow, many research question can be thoroughly addressed by combining different methods, using qualitative research to document the detail of say, how people interact in one situation and using quantitative methods to identify variance. (Silverman 2005.)

The qualitative research interview seeks to describe the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects. The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say. A qualitative research seeks to cover both a factual and a meaning level, though it is usually more difficult to interview on a meaning level. (Kvale 1996,).

As a method of research I have conducted interviews with people from different background, but same ethnic background, Somali. In these interviews I will analyze the way people answer my question, if their fill comfortable answering them, in special cases I will analyze more if those answers were genuine or

were biased. So these interviews will be conducted also as a method of analyzing interaction. (Ten Have 2004).

All my respondents were cooperative in the research, sometimes strong emotions could come to superficies as the discussion of integration and immigration are not easy, special for refugees since they come because they had no alternative.

4.2 Target Group and Data Collection

The target group in this study is Somali immigrants from the age of 25-35 living in Finland for not less than 10 years with the status of permanent residence. I have chosen Somalis as a target group for my study because they represent one of the first group of immigrants (refugees, asylum seekers) arriving in Finland. Somalis in Finland are one of the largest groups of people of non-European origin. In the beginning of 1990 Finland faced the arrival of the first Somalis. Although the research was conducted in Helsinki, it is fundamental to mention that the theme covers Somalis in Finland. The mobilization of people is a fact in the Finnish territory so I took in consideration that respondents could be currently living in Finland but in the past have resided in different parts of Finland.

Also because Somali community is larger compared to other African community, I found important to have Somali immigrants as a focus in this study because I consider them a rich source for my research, for being one of the largest ethnic groups in Finland, and special because Somali people have different cultural values, religion, and background society different from that of the Finnish society. And have been living in Finland without losing their cultural values, thus keeping own identity.

The research material was collected during autumn 2013. For this research I used qualitative methods focused on interviews, in this process 5 persons were selected to be subject of the study, 3 males and 2 females. I used participatory and non-discriminatory method.

Those interviews were done face-to-face in order for me to be sure that the respondents understood the questions and also as a way of explaining well if something was misunderstood. I had a sketch of the question but that did not prevent me to make a more open conversation as people not always seem comfortable with interview style of communication.

The interviews were conducted individually in order to keep the confidentiality of respondents to avoid answers being influenced by one another. The environment for my interviews was in place where the respondents felt familiar. I maintained always a neutral side when asked about questions because I did not want to influence the respondents.

The interviews were conducted in Finnish and English, there were not recorded as participants did not agree with recording. The respondents live in different parts of Helsinki and are not aware of whom the other interviewees are as each interview was conducted individually. That was in order to avoid the expression of same feelings due to sympathetic reasons. The table below describes the gender and age research interviewees and the length of their residence in Finland.

TABLE 1: Target group of the research

Case	Gender/Age	Length of residence
A	Female 34	15 years
B	Female 33	17 years
C	Male 35	11 years
D	Male 30	10 years

E	Male 27	11 years
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4.3 Interviews

Asking questions and getting answers is a much harder task than it may seem at first. The spoken or written word always has a residue of ambiguity, no matter how carefully we word the questions (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, 697). I had the list of questions, which were in Finnish and English. The list of questions (see appendix) provide me the direction in which to focus but did not prevent me to make some other question during our interview, something that were not in the schedule but seem to be relevant for the interviewee. I maintained always a neutral side when asked about questions because I did not want to influence the respondents.

Interviewing is one of the most common powerful ways in which we try to understand fellow humans. Interviewing includes a wide variety of forms and a multiplicity of uses. The most common form of interviewing involves individual, face-to-face verbal interchange, but interviewing can also take the form of face-to-face group interchange and telephone surveys (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, 697-698).

4.4 Data Analysis

In this research each respondent was taken as an individual. Each person has his or her own views of the world and own perspective. In this research aspects of the Finnish society and culture which might be a factor for a slowly or rapid integration of immigrants will be discussed, how the integration program is designed by the Finnish authorities to incorporate different needs of immigrants. I discuss together with the target group and find possible solutions and

recommendation for the successful integration of all immigrants living in Finland.

For instances in using interview material, the researcher is only marginally interested in the interview as a meaningful interaction or in the features of language use (Ten Have 2004, 8.) While doing interviews I took into consideration the behavior of the interviewees, how they respond to the question and if they were tense when responding some of the questions. I have during my placement paid attention to the verbal and oral and body language of Somali people, how they interact and how they express feelings that in order to have an understanding of the meanings by thematic analysis.

Before starting to conduct the interviews I have made a list of questions which seemed to be relevant for the Somalis and for the development of my thesis, but while at the field work I begin to see a different picture of what represents a case of successful integration for the Somalis. In that process I changed my research questions and later used the content analyses.

4.5 Content Analysis

Content analysis is a method for describing the meaning of qualitative material in a systematic way. I did the analysis by assigning successive parts of my research material to the categories of my coding frame. (Schreier 2012).

Content analysis is an accepted method of textual investigation, particularly in the field of communication. In content analysis, researchers establish a set of categories and then count the number of instances that fall into each category. The crucial requirement is that the categories are sufficiently precise to enable different coder to arrive at the same results when the body of material is examined (Silverman 2011, 64-65).

Content analysis is a social science methodology that is based on the understanding of human communication including writing, painting and context. This includes understanding the meaning of text, the phrases used, the key terms, the authenticity and the authorship. It is a qualitative scientific method that can look at the objectivity, inter-subjectivity, the validity, the replicability and more of a specific document (contentanalyses.org 2013).

I did content analyses, where I read all the interviews answers and I find the most relevant and common aspects among the answers. In content analyses I analyzed the content of my data and I have done the transcription, where the aim was to find and use similar information or information with the same meaning. From the content analyses I came out with themes.

4.6 Ethics and Validity of the Research

Schnell & Heinritz (2006, 17 cited in Flick 2011, 215). argue that research ethics addresses the question of which ethically issues caused by the intervention of researchers can be expected to impact on the people with or about whom they research. It is concerned in addition with the steps taken to protect those who participated in the research, if this is necessary. In this research names of people who participated in this research will not be disclosed. The interviews were conducted individual and none of the interviewees have information on who were the other participants of the research.

In qualitative research, the extent to which results can be generalized may be checked in two ways: by assessing external validity, one would assure that the results found for the sample are valid for the population and also test how far they can be transferred to other, comparable populations. (Flick 2011, 209-210.). Because Somali people have been in Finland only about 20 years, it is

relatively premature to predict their full integration path of the first generation, but the results in this research do not go far from previous research on the topic.

5 RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter brings the result of the research and correspond to what the interviewees had said about they experiences in Finland. Those results are presented in form of themes. As method of data collection was interview, the interviewees and I had a form of dialogue trough which I came out with themes. The findings of the research are the themes.

5.1 Identity and Belonging

In sociology identity may be defined as the collective aspects of the set of characteristics by which a thing or person is definitively recognized or know. To have our own identity means that we are unique, special, and defined within ourselves. Everything affects our identity: how we live, where we are, the choices we make, the moments we take, the people we meet, everything. Even what we do not like about ourselves makes us who we are. (Philosophy 2 B Heard.).

According to Castells (2010, 56), ethnicity has been a fundamental source of meaning and recognition through human history. It is a founding structure of social differentiation, and social recognition, as well as of discrimination, in many contemporary societies.

The respondents told of their feelings depended on their gender and occupation. And while some consider the practice of religion as the major reason for happiness others consider the acquisition of Finnish citizenship as a fundamental factor for their feelings of belonging. Below different perspectives on identity and belonging are presented.

Religion is important for me; I feel happy to found a mosque near my home and people going there are Somali also. In Finland we have freedom of practicing religion. I like the fact that we can learn religion at school. Moving from a country with almost 99% of Muslims and where people obey the Islam in Finland we have to be aware of our religious practices all the time, differently from Somali where people share same religious values, here we have to make sure that our children follow the same path. (Male, 35).

While another respondent mentions the acquisition of Finnish citizenship as fundamental for her feeling of belonging.

I have been living in Finland for 17 years and I have Finnish citizenship. I don't have problems living here as I can speak Finnish and have family members living in Finland. I have been active in affairs concerning Somalis in Finland and at home I teach my children to be active in the Finnish society. (Female, 33).

Until recently (1990) Finland was a relatively homogeneous society. The arrival of immigrants brought the necessities of the creation of tools for the integration and same time preservation of immigrant's identity. Somali immigrants can be considered as a strong example of identity preservation in Finland.

Muslim and active Muslim are different. The majority of Somalis belong to Sunni Muslim sect. Dressing is not only a religious matter but also a traditional matter. In Somalia, Men and woman play different roles in the Somali society. Man is the head of the family even when woman engages in gainful employment. Although some practices are non-longer seen as fundamental among Somalis in diaspora, there is still a strong necessity of preserving own identity and transmit the same set of values to coming generations.

Different systems of values and meanings can exist alongside shared ones without necessarily undermining co-operation, if a climate of tolerance prevails. Hence, dialogue and mutual understanding founded on tolerance of different cultures or beliefs, are important dimensions of social cohesion and help to underpin social capital. Trust supports social capital. Trust may be viewed as

both a source and an outcome (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation 2001). In general respondents consider their life as good in Finland because they can practice their own religion and mosques are near people's locations.

5.2 Family Interaction and Gender Dynamics

The strong attachment to individuality is problematic for immigrant groups who have a wider understanding of the concept of family, as dependencies between adult generations are not recognized (Carmel et al 2011, 146). The war at the beginning of 1990 is responsible for family fragmentation, as many were divided in search of a safe place to inhabit. After settlement people start taking procedure to reunify their family.

Introduction of DNA tests to determine any family ties has contributed for many foster children to have their relatives brought to Finland. In Somali culture when parents die it is the responsibility of family members to care for the child. Somalis currently have to wait an average two and four months for a decision in family unification. Under the law, a decision should come in nine months. (International Organization for Migration 2001.).

When talking about family interaction the discussion was wide as Somali people have strong family relations. Second generation or Somalis who came to Finland at early age were pointed as having some difficulties in adjusting to two different cultures. Living away from home land can be a stressful experience. The dynamics of families and individuals change in order to adapt to the new life reality. From the respondents I got different experiences, but all with the focus on family harmony.

I help my wife with domestic work, but in the beginning we had serious problems because of that. In Somalia I can never clean the house, there are family members to do that, but here I have to do, it not easy for her to do everything alone. To be happy in my marriage I decided to help (male 35).

Another respondent mentions the law as embarrassing sometimes if viewed from a different cultural perspective. What once was shocking is today seen as a reason to laugh.

I felt bad when I was informed that money goes to my wife's account. How could she have the child allowance in her account, while I am the father? I got very upset with that, today I laugh when I remember it (male 30).

While some situations get understandable and acceptable there are still other aspects which are better not even to understand and reject completely.

I was 16 when I come and used to feel confused about what happened in my friend's home for example, when they called their uncles by first names. I never appreciated that behavior and I think I will never do it. If you call elders by their names how can you rely on them for advice? (Male 27).

In Finland there are urging many cases of divorce among Somali couples, a practice that is very rare in Somalia. Here women accuse men of wanting to maintain a behavior which cannot be acceptable in Finnish society, and when crisis begin the solution is the divorce. Also in Somalia couples have they problems but there people can strong rely of the support of family members for support and conflict solving, while in Finland those practices are often not seen as a solution for Somali couples. Family counseling guided by professionals is not believed to be a solution among Somali respondents.

Waiting for decisions relating to family reunification and difficult experiences from the past, insecurity about the future are some of the challenges Somalis face in Finland. The waiting process is usually depressing as people do not

know what their results could be. In some cases people sell all their have had in their countries of origin in order to have a new beginning in Finland, so being faced with a negative decision might mean the end of all life possibilities, as their family members are not allowed to settle in Finland.

5.3 Education and Employment

Access to education and labor market plays a crucial role for the integration of individuals in the society. With a population of 5.4 million, In November 2013 Finland unemployment rate was at 7.9 percent, Somali people has a high unemployment rate, in 2009 the rate of unemployment among Somalis was 59.7 per cent (Ministry of Employment and the economy, 2009 cited in Somalis in Helsinki 2013).

From the stand point of identity, in the study of integration many have studied employment as a major factor or indicator of integration, whereas I indicate identity as a main factor for the desire of being employed and as a factor for integration. (Pehkonen 2006).

The National Core Curriculum for Literacy Training for adult Migrants 2012 and the National Core Curriculum for Integration Training for Adult Migrants 2012 addresses that illiterate adult migrants should learn basic oral and written Finnish or Swedish language skills and that all immigrants should receive labour market integration training. The adult integration training are funded and organized by Employment and Development Offices (Finnish National Board of Education 2012).

Perception of inclusion or exclusion vary from person to person, in that order some Somali women report their level of integration as high than their spouses, that can be understood differently by the Finnish measures of integration. While Finnish integration policy emphasizes on language skills and employment to

consider a person integrated some Somali women put emphasizes on the family wellbeing.

In education and employment opinions diverge while one is optimist about it, another considerer the job market as exclusive while one respondent says:

Life in Finland is very good for mothers and children, but for men is a bit hard. As a mother I stayed longer at home and letter joined Finnish language courses, now I am fluent in Finnish language. But things worked differently for my husband whom has never been employed in Finland and after 22 years he still cannot speak Finnish. My husband found it difficult to adapt in an environment where his role as a family provider changed. (Female, 34)

The other respondent has a different version:

The high rate of unemployment among Somalis can be because Somali women have more children than other immigrants most of the time, so their need more time to learn the langue and enter the labor market as their stay at home with children. Finland has ranked highest in the educational system but Somalis are considered as school drop outs. Education in Finland is good, but sometimes you get trained and letter no job is available; you cannot be excluded if you have never been included. (Male, 27).

In Finland education is considered as a fundamental tool for the integration of immigrants as it gives better employment opportunities and therefore a higher possibility of accessing services. The plan focuses on Finnish language and culture, training and posterior employment. The purpose of the training is to ensure that immigrants in Finland find their place in social, academic and working life.

Since the beginning of the civil war in Somalia many children have been left out from a school environment, thus affecting the level of literacy of Somali individuals. But that is not a barrier for Somali immigrants who settle in Helsinki and are willing to learn Finnish language. The policy on family, growth and the second generation includes a project on preventing drop-outs from schools among children and young people with immigrant backgrounds and offers supporting the transition from comprehensive school to secondary education (Diversity and immigration 2009, 15).

Facilitating immigrant access to Finnish society via work necessitates a deeper look into the formal and informal barriers of integration at the level of the workplace, especially in a field such as the health care sector, which may have to rely on an imported workforce in the decades to come. (Carmel et al 2011, 153).

The discussing about unemployment among Somalis raises different opinions and theories. From the interviews and dialogue with respondents a reason for unemployment among Somalis can be related with the reason for immigration. Due to internal conflicts in Somalia and a difficult perspective for homeland returning can be reason for lack of motivation among Somali immigrants. But those hypotheses can be discussed because while other are not as successful, some are reported as achieving good results in their academic and professional life. Those hypotheses are open for further research in the subject.

5.4 Housing and Neighborhood

Housing has been an integral part of Finnish welfare policies since the 1960s. The aim has been to provide affordable, decent-standard housing for all residents. According to the constitution of Finland, the municipalities have the duty to promote everyone's right to housing, and to support attempts of individuals to find housing on their own initiative (Ministry of Environment 2013).

Housing segmentation among immigrants tends to change the longer they stay in their new host country. In 2008, only 14 per cent of all foreign nationals owned a house, and 17 per cent owned a flat. However, the corresponding figures for people born outside of Finland but who had been in the country long enough to gain Finnish citizenship were 28 and 25 per cent. This suggests that the prospects of home ownership among immigrants improve over time (Vaattovaara & Vikama & Yousfi & Dhalmann & Kauppinen 2010).

Finland has a non-discriminatory housing policy which aims at preventing segregation of minorities from the mainstream society. While authorities create policies of non-segregation but individuals can decide where to have residence. From the last 10 years the eastern part of Helsinki in special is witnessing an influx of immigrants. That contradicts to the non-segregation policy. By the testimonies we can have an idea of what housing and neighborhood mean for Somali immigrants.

I feel safe living around other Somalis. 5 years ago I moved from a building where I was harassed by neighbors, not just Finns but other immigrant's as well. I believe segregation is not a good thing, but some neighborhoods are bad to live in, special without the support of own ethnic group. It makes a difference to have people of same background as me. I feel happy to be around and speak Somali (Male, 27).

Opinions diverge when we discuss about neighborhood but all respondents agree that the size of the houses is not accommodating for Somali families. Depending on the income, people became demanding of their residential area.

Most of the houses are in good condition but are small, there are not for large families. In my neighborhood I find people friendly. I have children whom always play with the Finnish children and my children have never complained about them. I get along with my neighbors whom happen to be all Finns (Male, 35).

In Finland access to social housing is determined by social and financial circumstances of the applicant. The Council of the State sets the upper income limits annually in relation to family size and region of the country. According to the legislation, the allocation of accommodation should aim to create and maintain socially balanced living environments in social-housing estates (Ministry of Environment 2013). For immigrants, housing can be a key aspect in the integration process and a central indicator of integration status.

5.5 Wellbeing and Social Interaction

Studies worldwide point toward increased risk of mental health issues among immigrants. Immigrant's ability to integrate the cultural identity of their new country has been found to be a key factor in their psychological wellbeing (Carpentier & Sablonniere, 2013). Subjective wellbeing as measured by immigrant's perception of quality of life, satisfaction with life and emotional state, served as a general indicator of integration (Amit & Litwin 2010, 1).

Integration is directly related to social capital which a product of inherited culture and norms of behaviour. Hence, social capital has "social" and "capital" dimensions since it resides in relations rather than individuals being also a resource that can generate a stream of benefits for society over time. However, it can also lead to dysfunction when used by one group against others (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation 2001).

Within wellbeing and social interaction different answers arose from my respondents as relevant for the success or fail of their integration. For one respondent for example speaking Finnish language in the family sphere was seen as fundamental:

My children hardly speak Somali, they are fluent in Finnish. That is how I learned Finnish myself due to the interaction with my children (Female, 33).

Other respondents focus on the preservation of Somali practices as dressing code and cooking for the family as the most important for their wellbeing.

My daughters are proud to wear clothes in the Somali way. There are cases when people assume that we force our children to wear the hijab (headscarf), which is not true. Of course children have to be taught about the meaning of dressing and religion and cooking for the family. They (daughters) have many friends who are Somali and dress the same way (Female, 34).

Respondents report the intervention of child welfare services as a risk for their wellbeing as there are misunderstandings among them. In chapter 7 on personal development and Somali League I explain what is been done to prevent misunderstanding and the discussion between authorities and Somali families.

We wish to have more people representing Somalis in the child welfare affair. Many times our actions and meanings are misinterpreted (Male, 30).

Social policy program are designed to respond to specific social risks as unemployment, old age or work disability, and not specifically to poverty or social exclusion (Carmel 2011, 146). In any society people have the ability of relating and developing immediate interest on the environment surrounding them. This phenomena is observed regardless to race or ethnicity, but when the environment or the role models have common feather with them, people are even more luckily in engaging in common activities.

One of the oldest debates in urban sociology refers to the loss of community as a result of urbanization and suburbanization. People socialize and interact in their local environment, are it in the village, in the city, or in the suburb, and their build social network among their neighbor's (Castells 2010, 63). It is important

to be cultural sensitive to understand wellbeing of individuals. Even among people of same culture wellbeing is subjective.

5.6 Role of Media

As a source of information media play a fundamental role in our lives. The content of media publication can be positive or negative, depending of the interest of people accessing that information. That information can create division among people. In the interview I asked respondents to give their opinion about how they feel represented by media. And responses were not positive.

What annoys me most in the media is the suggestion that Somalis are alienated, I do not like the way media portrays Somali people, because a person who at first felt well, starts to feel judged by his or her ways of living in Finland They always portray Somalis as outsiders, their always say we have problems. They make all Somalis look bad (male, 30).

Other respondents answer is quite similar to the first:

In major of cases as we know media publishes information that brings financial benefits to their sponsors. We can many times read articles that instigate racism. If the content is not racist at least the headlines tend to be polemic and suggestive, which can lead to negative attitudes towards immigrants (Male, 35).

It was argued that the Finnish media reports two types of Somalis. Successful Somalis are shown as exceptional cases; the rest of the community is categorized as a problem (Mukhtar Abib 2012 cited at Somalis in Helsinki 2013, 121).

A more balanced coverage of minority communities requires their greater inclusion and participation in the media. As a result of continuing bad media images, unbalanced reporting and a lack of media that represents their interests, some citizens and organizations from minorities have been active in producing different forms of media themselves (Living Together 2011, 150). One example of the media creation among minority communities is Warsan.

Warsan is a community radio station launched in 2007. The station aims at supporting the effective integration of Somali people into the Finnish society and helps building a positive relationship between Finns and Somali immigrants in Finland. Although Warsan station is directed to Somali speakers it works towards better integration, by announcing vacancies opportunities, education, commerce and relevant aspects of Finnish society.

Hirschman focuses on the value of “social energy” in the form of friendship, shared ideals and ideas that transcend rational self-interest and market transactions and promote social co-operation. Whatever the motivation for co-operating and trusting, investment in individual and group identity can lead to the creation of dense social networks and ultimately better economic and social outcomes. In this way, civic engagement, honesty and social trust can reinforce each other (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation 2001).

6 CONCLUSION

Somalis living in Finland have mixed feelings about their Integration and sense of belonging. While some report positive experiences others are unhappy and plan to move from Finland. The move is reported to be possible to Somalia or other European Union countries were they have relatives. By doing this research I conclude that factors related to gender, background and family situation play a fundamental role in the integration and wellbeing of Somali Immigrants.

In Finland people of Somali origin found that they have space to practice their own religion, learn own language, and the possibility for mothers to raise their child at home without compulsory day care are some of the fundamental aspects contributing for the preservation of Somali Identity in Finland and thus wellbeing of Somali immigrants and people with Somali background.

The ways people perceive and interpret their own culture is fundamental in the learning of the foreign culture. Somali society is of collectivistic sets, therefore Somali immigrants have strong social capital and effective peer support which helps in their settlement process in Finland.

As integration plan and program has as main point maintaining the wellbeing of people while making them productive. We come to a point where we can say that assimilation is not necessary if we have the genuine intention of creating the wellbeing of our citizens. Finland as a country with highest levels of human resource focuses first on the wellbeing of citizens to posterior focus on the results coming from that wellbeing instead of vice-versa.

Policy makers have the responsibility of creating rules and guidelines that encourage the wellbeing of all individuals living in Finland. By daily life experiences I have I conclude that in general human beings want to live happy and

in peace although people search for those things in different ways. It is on the Government's best interest to have people working, as that can diminish the level of domestic violence, substance abuse, and criminality.

Making adjustment in the actual situation evolves the immigrants as well. For people who never had the opportunity to education is more difficult to find a way of expressing their feelings, but the associations are the basic for their voices being heard in Finland. Somali women complain of the lack of hobbies, they wish to have more interaction with Finnish and other immigrant women.

Somali women have a key role in the education of their children, thus women (younger or elder) have being willing to participate in discussions about integration, not only at family, or community but also at a national level. All respondents mentioned misunderstanding by Finnish teachers and child protection intervention as contributing for their decreasing of their wellbeing. They mentioned cases where the procedures of taking a child into care were not clearly explained.

The feeling differ at an individual level, although policies are designed to meet the needs of immigrants in general. The manner of living is a choice of each individual. If an individual is feeling apart from the society where he or she lives, his or her behavior can directly affect the family and therefore the community. The family will also be vulnerable to less hope in the future.

Health or unhealthy behavior are influenced by one's cultural background but most by the immediately environment surrounding the person. Following this ratiocination we can found different levels of integration within Somali individuals. Depending on the immediate environment, personality, and willing can determine the individual choices and outcomes along his or her life.

Due to the way people departed from Somalia, many have the feeling of one day returning back to their home land. That is a barrier in their integration process as well as the integration of their children in Finland. Some children feel demotivated achieving great results at school; they feel disconnected in the Finnish society as they parents do as well.

Instead of talking about marginalization in open discussions, Somalis wished that in open discussion we could bring positive aspects of Somalis living in Finland as those individuals can be seen as role models for others not only with Somali background but any other immigrants in a new environment. They wish that Somali women whom have been successful in raising their children in Finland could be heard as a way of incentive and motivation for other women.

Definition of integration into Finnish society varies from person to person. The discussions about racism makes immigrants feel less than natives. In those discussions Somalis do want to be well represented in a positive manner.

During my field work in Somali league I have observed that Somali people and Somali women in special are extremely focused on the development of own communities in Finland and are increasing their participation on Somali issues in the Finnish society.

Integration of Somalis is also directly related to the globalization phenomena and the Finnish policy approach to multiculturalism. Accessible communication means and mobilization of people also brings an increase in the sense of belonging. Somalis reported feeling happy when having the opportunity to travel and see relatives around the world. Practice of Islam religion (including access to hallal products) and services in Somali language are mentioned by the interviewees as being fundamental for their wellbeing, thus increasing their sense of belonging.

6.1 Recommendations

It is difficult to think of any culture save perhaps the most primitive and isolated that is not influenced by others. The trend towards intercultural interaction has gained considerable momentum in recent years. Increased migration brings cultures into closer contact. In multicultural societies dress often becomes a site of the most heated and intransigent struggles. Acceptance of the diversity of dress in a multicultural society is a good indicator of whether or not the latter is at ease with itself (Parekh 2006, 163-164, 243.)

Media should work in order to tackle racism but also bring the definition of racism. While conducting interviews with people from immigrant background I found that in many times racism is a perception, a misperception. One of the factors for the miss perception is cultural differences, inferiority complex and inherited aspects.

In racism tackling it is important to define well what can be considered as a racist attitude that is because suffering racism it is a negative experience but being called a racist is also not a positive statement to hear. Those measures should be done in a very careful way; hence we avoid dismissing offensive cases.

A person might be integrated in their family and home level but will have feelings of alienation when having to live in a different country, special in a country with different values of the individual. An example is of the role of Somali women who play a significant role within their own community and families in Somalia but fail in the criteria of the Finnish standards on integration.

Young people felt familiarized by positive stories, music and culture about Somalia rather than racist and victimization actors. Therefore if we start

promoting similarities between people instead of differences we might make a huge progress in integration and in the feeling of being integrated.

It should be created an environment where minorities can feel secure and integrated without losing their own identity, but instead increase the awareness about the similarities we all have as human beings, make understand the benefit of being an active member in their family, neighborhood and community as this can benefit themselves in short and long term.

Integration process should not only involve the government, but networks as well. Create an environment where Somali men can engage in dignifying activities and play a role model for their children. That can be a way of promoting respect and make people feel respected. Take each person as individual can be a sign of welcoming people.

7. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By doing this research I developed skills in multicultural work and observation of different means and definition of society. I have developed skills in immigration and integration. I have learnt important skills on how to develop a guide for immigrants' integration into society that is inclusive and participative. As this research was a project for me it has a starting time and ending. During this period I had my appointments scheduled in a manner that my research activities did not influence on my role as a practical worker in Somali association.

Flick (2008, 11) mentions that researchers themselves are an important part of the research process, either in terms of their own personal presence as researches, or in terms of their experiences in the field and with reflexivity they bring to the role- as are members of the field under study. Contrary to what I had been warned, during my research I did not encounter any difficult due to my gender. I met people who were willing to cooperate in the research. As I have mentioned before during the seminars and events organized by Somali League there where active Somali women participating as well and that aspect made me feel comfortable.

During my research I have developed a deep understanding of qualitative research, specifically on interviews and content analysis. The study was a primary source for the development of my interest in the social research field and interaction with the subject of my research. I have gone deeper into the Finnish legislation concerning integration programs and I developed critical analysis of the social policy in Finland.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions:

What is the role of man in Somali society?

What is the role of woman in Somali society?

What is the role of children in Somali society?

Until how old a person is considered a child?

When is a person considered as an old?

What is the marriage age girl/boy?

What are the levels of education between girl/boy in Somalia?

How is your role in Finland changed (if you are man, woman, boy, girl)?

What do you think is positive about Finnish culture?

What do you think is negative about Finnish culture?

What are the Somalia practices that you can no longer practice in order to integrate yourself in the Finnish society?

What are the institutions close to you in Finland?

What media represents to you?

How or what do their represent to you?

What do you suggest in order for yourself to feel comfortable in your home, family, community and within Finland in general?