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UCL Migration Research Unit
UCL Department of Geography
University College London
26 Bedford Way
London WC1H 0AP

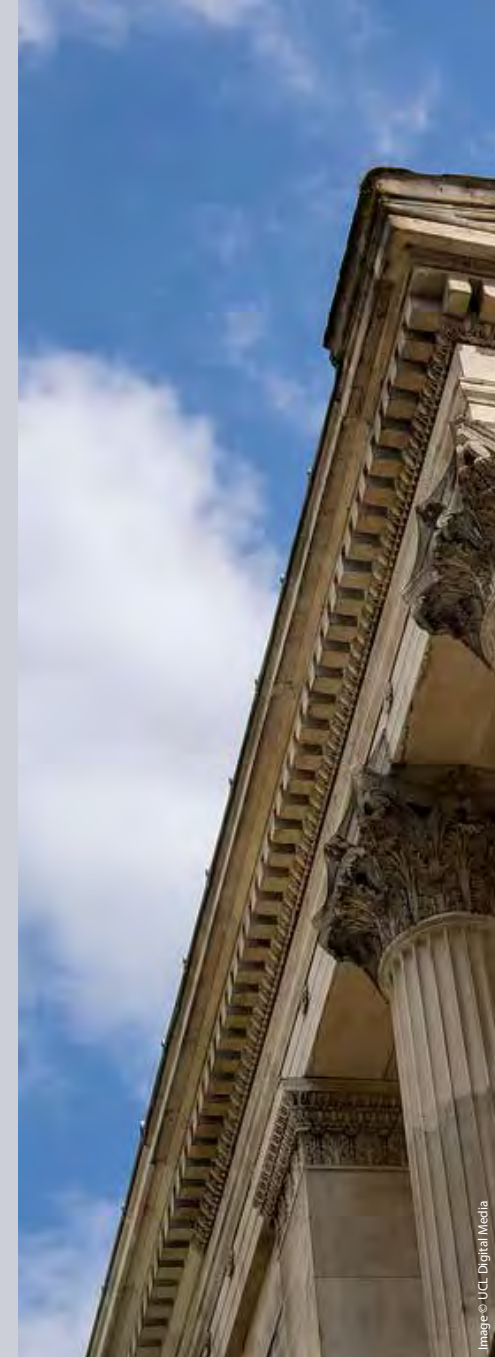
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Exploring the Social Networks of Somali Refugees Settled in Liekka, Finland

Katri M. Nevalainen



Exploring the Social Networks of Somali Refugees Settled in Lieksa, Finland



Katri Matilda Nevalainen
Supervised by Dr Ben Page

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Abstract

Drawing on ethnographic research conducted with a group of Somali refugees settled in a rural town of Lieksa in Eastern Finland, this study explores the influence of multidimensional social networks on the refugees' experiences of settlement. Social networks provide various forms of support but also create obligations and expectations of reciprocity that can be difficult to fulfil in the settlement context. In an attempt to capture the complex influences of social networks in the refugees' experiences, the study adopts an analytical framework of 'social capital enablers' as developed by Pittaway et al. (2015), which suggests that access to social capital through certain enablers facilitates positive settlement experiences and strengthens refugee communities. The study suggests that while the utility of the social capital enabler model is limited on the individual and community-levels of analysis, the sociopolitical factors dictating refugees' access to social capital, such as the opportunities of achieving family reunification, can have a major influence on how refugees experience settlement. Therefore, this study calls not only for additional participatory research which explores the role social capital in refugee settlement but also for a refined focus to address the socio-political factors that limit refugees' access to social capital.

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Terminological considerations

Somali/Somalian:

While the term ‘Somalian’ as signifying person’s nationality is largely outdated, it is also erroneous because many participants in this study have acquired a Finnish nationality and can be thus categorised as what Al-Sharmani (2006: 55) sees as ‘émigrés’ or former refugees with a Western citizenship. Some of the participants in this study are also stateless with an alien’s passport. Some studies, such as Armila et al.’s (2016) recent report use this term following the wishes of the study participants.

Nevertheless, the term ‘Somali’ as signifying someone belonging to an ethnic group has also been considered as a discriminatory term especially among those refugees who arrived in Finland in the 1990s (Mubarak et al. 2015: 83). Despite the problematic history, this term is in widespread use in English language publications because it also encompasses those who do not originate from the geographical area of Somalia and it is also the term used in the Somali language. Therefore, this study adopts the term ‘Somali’, because it is widely considered as a more inclusive term referring to a person with a certain ethnic background rather than their (assumed) nationality.

I. Introduction

Social networks have been shown to influence the trajectories of forced migrants from the point of departure to the selection of the destination country and the adaptation to the receiving society (Koser 1997: 594). Recent attention to refugees' social networks in settlement has focused on criticism of the dispersal policies that overlook the importance of social networks (Hynes 2011: 155). This issue is particularly relevant in Finland, where public discourses suggest that refugees rarely settle to rural areas due to 'the profound lack of social networks' that would facilitate the settlement process (Härkönen and Saarinen 2017: n.p.). The lack of networks is thus seen as one reason why most refugees prefer to relocate to urban areas after the initial settlement (Sjöblom-Immala 2016: 13). While criticism of the dispersal policies is well-founded, little attention has been paid to the secondary migration of refugees to the rural areas that is dictated by social networks (Marks 2014: 1). Understanding the role of social networks in the rural settlement of refugees thus becomes important to articulate the social processes that shape the experiences of forced migration.

Through an exploration of a group of Somali refugees who have settled in Lieksa, a rural town in eastern Finland since 2009, this study aims to offer insights on the importance of social networks in the refugees' experiences of settlement (Kananen & Sotkasiira 2015: 48). While the secondary migration was motivated by the availability of affordable housing, it was arguably actualised by the presence of local social networks. Past research also shows that diasporic Somalis rely on resources from transnational social networks based on familial and kinship ties to mitigate against potential risks in exile (Horst 2006: 63). Nevertheless, the study will also consider the new networks that refugees establish in the settlement context. By analysing the multiple dimensions of social networks, the study will assess how the refugees navigate the challenges of the settlement context including the high rate of unemployment and prevalence of racial discrimination in Lieksa (Sotkasiira & Haverinen 2016: 116).

The basic framework of this study is based on Williams' (2006) ethnography which distinguishes between the 'transnational networks' based on familial and kinship ties as well as the localised 'networks of weak ties'. Drawing on this typology, the study aims to recognise how different networks influence the refugees' experiences in the settlement context. To better understand the role of social networks, the study will adopt the closely related concept of social capital which is seen to contribute to the refugees' general well-being in settlement (McMichael and Manderson 2004: 89). The utility of social capital will be assessed through application of an analytical framework of social capital enablers in refugee settlement as

developed by Pittaway et al. (2015). Through the application of these theoretical frameworks, the dissertation seeks to provide answers for the following research questions:

- 1) How do social networks matter for Somali refugees settled in Lieksa?
- 2) How useful is the concept of social capital in studies of refugee settlement?
 - a. To what extent is the model of ‘social capital enablers’ (Pittaway et al. 2015) useful in understanding the settlement experiences of refugees?
- 3) To what extent do social networks influence the refugees’ experiences of settlement?

More broadly, this project aims to contribute to the studies of refugees’ social networks that adopt a qualitative approach that allows researchers to illustrate ‘the complexity of refugees’ social networks’ (Lamba and Krahn 2003: 356). In doing so, the project argues that insights from qualitative studies can be used to improve the strategies of community organisations, to recognise for example those at risk of social exclusion in the settlement context due to their social position(s) or the structural context.

The dissertation is structured in the following way. The first section will present a review of the relevant streams of literature. The literature review consists of three parts that cover the different dimensions of social networks of refugees, the conceptualisation of social capital in refugee studies and the context of the Somali diaspora in Finland. The second section will explain the methodological approach and ethical considerations in detail. The third section presents the empirical analysis which explores how the Somali refugees in Lieksa conceptualise their social networks and what functions these networks have, whether the concept of social capital is useful in understanding the settlement experiences and what are the implications of social networks on how the settlement is experienced. In the final section, some conclusions will be provided.

II. Literature review

This review encompasses diverse bodies of literature that explore experiences of displacement, social networks, transnationalism and social capital. The review draws on the fields of sociology of forced migration, anthropology and human geography, seeking to provide a context for the research project which focuses on the settlement of Somali refugees in Lieksa. After having reviewed the literature, this dissertation argues that there is a need for critical research that takes in to account the complexity of social networks and the significance of social capital in settlement processes from a micro-level perspective. By focussing on the role of social networks in refugee studies, the project will not only fill the gaps in knowledge of how social networks influence the experiences of refugees, but also contribute to the wider exploration of refugee settlement as a primarily social process. Firstly, the chapter looks at the significance of social networks in forced migration. Secondly, the chapter explores at the concept of social capital in refugee settlement. Finally, the chapter will offer a short background for the settlement of Somali refugees in Finland.

1. The Social Networks of Refugees

Social networks have attracted increasing scholarly attention within the past few decades as directing and facilitating flows of international migration (Boyd 1989: 639; Castles 2003: 17; Ryan 2011: 708-9). In her seminal study on the social networks of Salvadorian migrants in San Francisco, Cecilia Menjivar (2000) shows how social networks play an important role in the migration process but in the settlement context structural constraints such as poverty effectively deprive the migrants of the resources that would be used to maintain their familial networks. Nevertheless, migration scholarship has also downplayed the significance of social networks related to forced migration (Castles 2003: 26-7; Lamba and Krahn 2003: 336-7). Few scholars have engaged in a comprehensive analysis of refugees' social networks or described the functions of those networks to the extent that Koser and Pinkerton (2002) have in their study of the social networks of asylum seekers and dissemination of information about destination countries. The study suggests that the social networks incorporate multiple types of ties that are seen as the most trusted sources of information in the process of forced migration (ibid: 36).

The main reason behind the reductive approach seems to be an assumption of refugees as 'rootless' populations who are 'by definition violently uprooted and in need of stability and support' (Simich 2003: 874; Williams 2006: 866). This view is not dissimilar to Liisa Malkki's suggestion that refugees represent 'elementary humanity [...] stripped of the specificity of culture, place and history' (1995: 14). Even though

some early theorists such as Marx (1990) have contested this argument in his typology of the ‘social worlds of refugees’, viewing forced migration as leading to ‘a breakdown of social networks’ remains popularly endorsed (Horst 2006: 75; Taylor 2015: 154-5). At present, the assumption of refugees as rootless is easily recognisable in the policy discourses that support the dispersal of asylum seekers to smaller municipalities in Finland, which ignores the importance of existing networks as supporting the settlement process (Wahlbeck 1999: 81-2). Therefore, the agency of refugees as active social agents is to some degree denied in both academia as well as in policymaking, even though scholars such as Lamba and Krahn (2003) have underlined that many refugees remain as a part of some familial networks in settlement. Consequently, scholars have failed to consider forced migration as a ‘*social product* – not the sole result of individual decisions made by individual actors [...] [or] economic and political parameters, but rather as an outcome of these factors in interaction’ (Boyd 1989: 642, my emphasis).

Recently, migration studies scholars have started to question the notion of ‘rootlessness’ among refugees through a focus on the transnational nature of social networks that form strong ties between the society of origin and the receiving society (Portes et al. 1999: 217). This project thus understands transnationalism as the socio-cultural, economic and political networks of individuals and groups that are maintained across nation-state borders (Vertovec 1999: 3; Al-Ali et al. 2001: 631-2). In the case of the Somalis, transnationalism is linked to the ‘nomadic heritage’, which is linked to the tradition of pastoralism that encourages mobility and dispersal of assets by utilising strong social networks (Horst 2006: 2; Mohme 2014: 120). Research on the secondary migration of Somali refugees has demonstrated the powerful effects of social networks as not only facilitating mobility but also providing a safety net of support in case the settlement context does not fulfil the needs and expectations of the refugees (Huisman 2011: 29; Bang Nielsen 2004: 17). These studies are particularly relevant to this dissertation as the settlement of Somali refugees in Lieksa was often a result of secondary migration after the initial period of settlement elsewhere. In this way, settlement should be simply seen as a ‘decision to settle in receiving countries [...] [i]t does not preclude an eventual return or subsequent migration elsewhere’ (Boyd 1989: 651).

Apart from viewing transnational social networks as facilitators of mobility, scholars have shown that transnationalism also frames the concrete network practices of many Somali refugees (Horst 2006: 63-5; Lindley 2010: 141). A broad body of literature has discussed transnational families due to the importance of family as a social structure in the Somali society which continues to influence the social organisation in exile (Al-Sharmani 2010; 2016; Tiilikainen et al. 2016). These studies show how transnational family networks are maintained through family practices such as remittances, visiting or various forms of communication with the family and kin network members (Tiilikainen 2017: 63). In the Finnish context,

Al-Sharmani and Ismail (2017) for example have recently studied the marriage practices and family life of Somalis and argue that the strategies related to family formation and navigating married life are multidimensional, dictated by transnational processes as well as gendered and generational factors.

Nevertheless, transnationalism as a theoretical concept has also been criticised for its competing definitions and the tendency to exclude those without the necessary resources to maintain these networks (Al-Ali et al. 2001: 581). Scholars such as Gail Hopkins (2010: 528) whose research focuses on the Somali community in Toronto have argued that transnationalism in the refugee settlement context can happen ‘from the sides’, as a direct result of the activities of those who are transnationally connected as they interact with those who are not. Following the work of Hopkins (ibid), this dissertation underlines that transnationalism should not be viewed in terms of measurable involvement but as a more complex process that shapes multiple levels of interaction. Consequently, many Somali refugees can be seen as ‘inhabit[ing] transnational social fields’ (Al-Sharmani 2016: 39; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004: 1009).

However, some scholars argue that the emphasis on transnationalism has ‘led to arguments that refugees are not *interested* in or willing to have much to do with local populations’ (Korac 2009: 37, original emphasis). Some have even suggested that it is the transnational networks that contain the most significant relations for the refugees in settlement (Wahlbeck 2002: 225). Even though these are profoundly simplified claims, they also highlight the failure of migration scholars to combine the analysis of refugees’ transnational activities and those related to the interactions within the receiving society. The concept of ‘localised’ networks is based on the research which discusses the ties with the majority society as the key to refugee integration, evident in the social aspects of a popular integration theory developed by Ager and Strang (2008; 2010). While challenging the assumptions embedded in the integration theory, this dissertation contests the persistent separation of the different dimensions of social networks in the analyses of refugees’ experiences of settlement.

For this reason, the thesis will draw on Mark Granovetter’s (1973) concept of the ‘weak ties’, which suggests that flexible ties with acquaintances may in some situations provide access to more useful resources and support than the networks of strong ties with family and kin members or close friends. Research on asylum seekers and refugees shows that accessing weak ties and especially formal ties with authorities such as settlement service providers potentially improves one’s social position (Wells 2011: 328). In a rare example of a comprehensive network study, Lucy Williams (2006) examined the social networks of asylum seekers and refugees in the United Kingdom and argued that despite the presence of strong transnational ties, many refugees attempted to build their network of weak ties to make the best

of their situation in exile. Nevertheless, the study also found that '[n]etworks took different shapes depending on the personality, history and circumstances of an individual' (ibid: 870) which underlines the importance of recognising differentiated social positions through critical, qualitative network research (Lamba and Krahn 2003: 356). Relevantly, this concept has been utilised in a recent thesis on the neighbourhood relations of Somali refugees settled in the area of Meri-Rastila in Helsinki by Olli Nuutila (2012), who argues that networks of weak ties were experienced by the refugees as an important link between their neighbours and themselves. However, the study also found that many of participants felt frustrated because these ties turned out to be difficult to establish with the majority population (ibid: 51).

Nevertheless, scholars have suggested that the idealised image of refugees' social networks in the settlement context should also be questioned. The present research project recognises two dimensions of this critique. Firstly, following Cecilia Menjivar's (2000: 33) analysis, research should not overemphasise the resilience of migrant networks due to the potential for conflict and tension even within small social units such as families. For instance, sending remittances can be experienced as an obligation for the settled refugee which can generate resentment within the family (Hammond 2011: 126). Secondly, scholars need to abstain from treating refugee communities as cohesive based on a common language, ethnicity or migration experience (Menjivar 2000: 34; Hopkins 2010: 526). Despite the depiction of Somalis as a homogeneous group in academia, there are significant 'fragmentations' within the diaspora based on for example clan affiliations or territorial disputes that have been a major dividing factor in the Somali Civil War (Griffiths 1997: 10-11; Kleist 2008: 313). Also, what needs to be recognised in the research that networks are fluid and shaped not only by the social position of the individual based on factors such as gender, age or clan identity but also 'contextual forces' of the receiving society, such as restrictive migration policies (Menjivar 2000: 35; Vertovec 2003: 647; Collyer 2005: 715).

2. Mobilisability of Social Capital

While the definition of social capital is highly contested, sociological literature sees the concept simply as 'norms, trust and networks' related to social organisation (Putnam: 2000: 341). However, social capital should not be used interchangeably with social networks. Theorisation of social capital in migration studies tends to draw on the typologies by Coleman (1990) and more recently by Putnam (2000), who link the concept of social capital to active participation in 'local associations, communities and neighbourhoods' (Ryan et al. 2008: 673). Putnam (2000: 22) has also divided social capital into two categories, bonding as denoting ties within a group and bridging as denoting ties between groups. The views of these theorists are echoed by Loizos (2000), who argues that refugees as 'social capitalists',

readily support their co-ethnics to rebuild social networks in exile. Similarly, Elliott and Yusuf's (2014) study on the settlement of Somali refugees in New Zealand applies Putnam's understanding to emphasise the role of social capital in refugee integration. Following similar studies, social capital has been adopted to direct social policies relating to refugee communities (Zetter et al. 2006; Griffiths et al. 2005).

The present dissertation questions the utility of the predominant view of social capital in studies of refugee settlement. Scholars in migration studies have criticised Putnam's understanding for linking the process of migration as detrimental for social capital (Ryan et al. 2008). Arguably, the theorisation is also problematic as studies applying Putnam's ideas often equate the accumulation of bonding capital within an ethnic group as harmful for the integration of refugees, even though the group boundaries are always 'flexible and changing, depending on the context and meaning' (Anthias 2007: 791). In order to challenge the neoliberal view of social capital as a solution to complex social problems (ibid: 791), the analysis adopts a critical understanding to assess the utility of social capital as shaping the experiences of refugee settlement. However, the aim of this project is not to develop a rigorous, quantitative measurement of social capital such as Espinosa and Massey (1999) endorse. Rather, the study seeks to 'identify which aspects of social capital are important in settlement' (Pittaway et al. 2015: 402) and how these are articulated in the subjective experiences of refugees themselves.

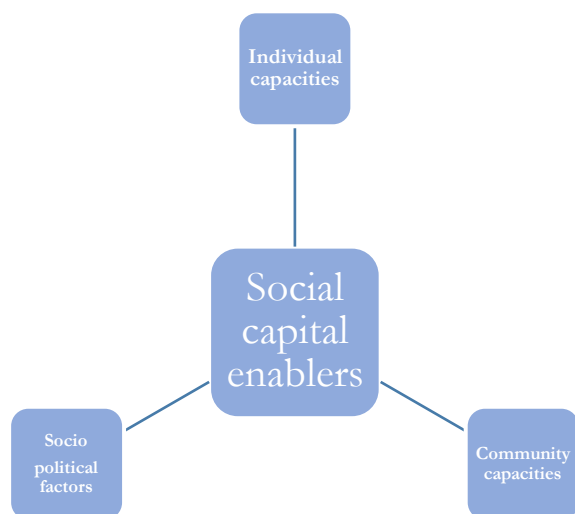
The alternative perspective of social capital is rooted in the work of Bourdieu (1986: 248), who suggests that social capital is related to resources stemming from durable group memberships, linking it to class reproduction. While Bourdieu's theorisation is not unproblematic as it expects a high network density to create social capital (cf. Granovetter 1973), this typology acknowledges that membership of a social network does not mean that all actors derive equal benefits (Ryan et al. 2008: 676-7). Consequently, as Spaaij (2012: 1521) has suggested, 'social capital needs to be conceptualised more precisely to highlight its distinctive meanings, notably how it is laden with power and inequalities'. Following this line of criticism, Anthias (2007: 789) has developed a theory according to which resources should be seen only as 'social capital if they are mobilisable and usable in pursuing social advantage'. Similarly, Portes (1998: 6) defines social capital as 'the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures'. Notably, social capital can also have negative effects such as excess claims on group members that should be considered in the analyses applying the concept (ibid: 15).

In this way, Anthias (2007: 791) suggests that group membership does not necessarily involve social capital due to the differentiated social positions related to factors such as gender, class or generation (see also Mohan and Stokke 2000). Neither should social capital be thought to resolve these hierarchies.

Drawing on feminist scholarship, Engebriksen (2007: 727) has shown how the access to social capital in Somali families settled in Norway is differentiated by gender of the spouses. This finding suggests that social capital is shaped not only by individual traits but also “from within” by cultural aspects such as kinship, marriage and gender relations’ (see also Fuglerud & Engebriksen 2006). Critical studies also show that social capital is not always easy to rebuild even if refugees had held high social capital before displacement. Discussing the resettlement of Somali refugee women in Melbourne, McMichael and Manderson (2004) show that the conditions of war in Somalia decreased the capacity of women to rebuild their social capital in the settlement context, eroding the norms of trust and reciprocity. The loss of social capital led the refugees to live in an ‘imagined social past’ of Somalia, causing feelings of disappointment and sadness to frame their experiences of settlement (ibid: 91).

When exploring the significance of social capital in refugee settlement, it is useful to develop a contextual framework for analysis. In a recent study by Pittaway et al. (2015), social capital is viewed through a participatory framework, which involved the refugee community members in defining social capital. While adopting the complete model requires more resources than what is available for this project, the analysis will utilise one element of the model to analyse the settlement experiences of Somali refugees in Lieksa. This dimension is what Pittaway et al. (2015: 411) see as the ‘social capital enablers’ – the ‘factors that are critical for enabling refugee individuals and communities to access existing social capital, to extend social connections and networks and to build new links in settlement’ (see Figure 1). Firstly, individual capacities indicate factors such as educational attainment, socioeconomic status or sense of belonging that influence social capital (ibid: 411). Secondly, community capacities consist of cultural capital and fluency related to for instance the effectiveness of community organisations (ibid: 412). Thirdly, the socio-political factors cover the issues of racism and discrimination in the receiving society, the provision of adequate settlement services, the recognition of the existing human capital of refugees as well as opportunities for family reunification (ibid: 412-4). This project thus seeks to contribute to the emerging literature of social capital by using Pittaway et al.’s (ibid.) model as a guide for analysis by uncovering the social capital enablers that are relevant for the Somali refugees in Lieksa. In doing so, the project will consider whether social capital could be used as a framework for understanding the settlement experiences of refugees (see Hellermann 2006).

Figure 1: Social capital enablers



Source: Pittaway, E., Bartolomei, L. and Doney, G. (2015), 'The Glue that Binds: An Exploration of the Way Resettled Refugee Communities Define and Experience Social Capital' *Community Development Journal* 51(3) pp.401-418

3. Contextualising the Somali Diaspora in Finland

The migration of Somalis to Finland began in the early 1990s, when many arrived in Finland as asylum seekers often through the Soviet Union (Pirkkalainen 2013: 55; Tiilikainen 2003: 49-57). At that time, Finland was considered as a country of transit to other European countries, rather than a country of settlement (Mubarak et al. 2015: 34-5). The early arrivals were primarily highly educated, young and male (Fingerroos 2016: 27). Since then, Somalis have also settled in Finland through family reunification programmes, even though this has reduced in the recent years due to the restrictive policies (Pirkkalainen 2013: 55). Notably, there are differences in the demographic characteristics of those who arrived in the 2000s. Scholars argue that the more recent arrivals have lived in circumstances of conflict with no stable state infrastructure or educational system, which may indicate that they come from relatively deprived backgrounds (Mubarak et al. 2015: 68-70). Representing the third-largest group with foreign origin in Finland, in 2016 around 19,059 people spoke Somali as their first language (Statistics Finland, 2017).¹ Initially, all refugees are subject to dispersal to municipalities, but once they have been granted a residence permit, Somali refugees have tended to move to the urban areas. Approximately 70 per cent of the

¹ Finnish government does not provide accurate population statistics on ethnic groups, which means that the number of first language speakers is used strictly as an estimate of the number of Somali refugees living in Lieksa.

Somali-speaking population in Finland resides in the cities surrounding the broader capital region of Helsinki (Sotkasiira and Haverinen 2016: 116).

The secondary migration of Somalis to Lieksa is in stark contrast to the wider developments in Finland. While accurate statistics are difficult to obtain, the Northern Karelia region has seen many Somali refugees arriving since 2010 (see Table 1). Notably, most of those settled in Lieksa represent the more recent arrivals in Finland. As a small industrial town which has undergone economic restructuring and a sharp reduction in population since the 1960s, Lieksa has never been a major destination for immigrant settlement (Kananen and Sotkasiira 2015: 48). The settlement context in Lieksa has been compared to small towns such as Fort Morgan in the United States, that have received large numbers of Somali refugees in the past (*ibid.*). Past research has noted that many Somali refugees were motivated to migrate due to easy accessibility to rental accommodation compared to the urban areas where they may have been settled initially after arrival to Finland (Sotkasiira and Haverinen 2016: 119).

However, the challenges for refugee settlement in Lieksa are numerous. Firstly, the level of unemployment in the area is above the average in Finland (Kananen and Sotkasiira: 49). Research indicates that a low level of language proficiency, lack of employment opportunities and insufficient educational attainment are the biggest barriers to the employment of Somali minority in Finland (Mubarak et al. 2015: 239). Secondly, Somalis face high levels of discrimination and racism from the majority population (Kananen and Sotkasiira 2015: 45). A recent report by Sotkasiira (2015: 9) suggests that many Somali-speaking residents have been threatened for their safety or had their property damaged in Lieksa. In their analysis of civic participation, Sotkasiira and Haverinen (2016: 117) have described the situation in Lieksa as a ‘discursive boxing match [...] in which the attempts by Somalis to establish themselves as citizens capable of handling their own affairs were met with discursive or physical blows’. While similar issues affect the Somalis settled in urban areas in Finland, it could be argued that in Lieksa the situation creates numerous challenges for settlement, which has led many to leave the town for other areas as is evident in the decline of the Somali-speaking population (see Table 1).

Table 1: Persons with Somali as the first language in the North Karelia region

Year	First language speakers: Somali
2010	297
2012	440
2014	555
2016	296

Source: Statistics Finland (2017). Population Structure. Population. [online] Helsinki: Statistics Finland. Available at: http://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/index_en.html [Accessed 17 Jul. 2017].

This study seeks to contribute to the relatively limited qualitative literature on the social networks and social capital in refugee settlement after secondary migration by focussing on an example of secondary migration to a rural town in Finland. To achieve this aim, the project will assess the significance of social capital in refugee settlement through an application of an analytical framework developed by Pittaway et al. (2015). In doing so, the study aims to create a more comprehensive understanding of the social processes that influence the individual refugees' experiences of settlement. Further, the study will not only aim to bring together the important theoretical considerations separated in the general literature, but also offer important insights to studies of rural settlement of Somali refugees in Lieksa and elsewhere.

III. Methodology

This study explores how social networks influence the settlement experiences of Somali refugees living in Lieksa. Early in the research process, it was recognised that the traditional approaches to social network analysis in the field of migration studies rely primarily on quantitative models to analyse social networks in the processes of forced migration. However, the research questions posed in this study necessitated an exploratory, qualitative approach that is found in the ethnographic studies of migrant networks (see Menjivar 2000). Qualitative methods in social network analysis allow an understanding of ‘the individual significance[s] attached to and perceptions of networks and relationships’ (Hollstein 2014: 411). Notably, this approach facilitates a critical exploration of the complexity of refugees’ social networks related to differentiated social positions and the exercise of power within these networks (Vertovec, 2009: 35).

1. Methods of Data Collection

This research project is based on the data collected during a four-week fieldwork period undertaken between June and July 2017 in Lieksa. The data was mainly collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with Somali participants with a refugee background. Preceding the interviews, hierarchical mapping technique (Antonucci 1986; McCarty et al. 2007) was utilised as a network chart to go beyond ‘metaphorical’ references to social networks (Hollstein 2014: 412). The interview data was also enriched with periods of participant observation. While using participant observation as a complementary method has been criticised by scholars who equate ethnography with participant observation (Crang and Cook 2007), this study argues that the different methods can ‘inform and enable each other’ leading to a more sensible methodological approach (O’Reilly 2012: 127; Schatz 2009: 6). Triangulation of research methods can be seen as a strategy to ‘manage the quality of ethnographic research’ (Flick 2007: 88-9).

Semi-structured Interviews

Before conducting the interviews, the interview schedule was piloted to assess whether the designed questions reflect the understandings of the participants and to test out the technique of network charting (Kissoon 2011: 82). Some problems arose during the pilot interview as few of the pre-planned questions were presented in a too complicated language and had to be revised. Conducting the pilot interview was beneficial as these issues could have become major obstacles later in the research process. The revised interview schedule was designed to be flexible, reflecting a theory of ‘active interviewing’ (Hollstein and Gubrium 2012: 296) where the researcher prepares some relevant themes but allows the participant also to guide the topic, engaged in a conversation.

Twelve semi-structured, in-depth interviews lasting on average for 40 minutes were conducted with Somali refugee participants during the fieldwork period (see Table 2). All participants were informed about the research, and their written informed consent was requested. Subsequently, the participants were asked to provide some standardised information, including their age and gender and the time they have been settled in Finland and Lieksa (see Appendix 7). The interview sessions were recorded for transcription purposes with a mobile device after the consent had been granted by the participant. However, to increase the comfort of the participants as sensitive data disclosed during the hierarchical mapping exercise, audio-recording was used only when the designed questions of the interview schedule were discussed. The interviews were held at locations chosen by the participants, some were conducted in the local cafés or the library, while others preferred to be interviewed at the property of Somali Family Association. In this way, the choice of the interview location was not treated as a ‘minor technical matter’ but as an act situated within the social context and power relations reproduced in interviewing (Herzog 2012: 210).

Name ²	Date of Interview	Time lived in Lieksa ³
Leylo (pilot) ⁴	12.06.2017	7 years
Maxamed	19.06.2017	4 years
Warsame	20.06.2017	7 years
Ayaan	21.06.2017	6 years
Obsiye	27.06.2017	5 years
Yabaal	27.06.2017	6 years
Asad	28.06.2017	5 years
Omar	29.06.2017	1,5 years
Bishaaro	30.06.2017	2 years
Fawzia	04.07.2017	3 months
Qays	05.07.2017	4 years
Jaamaac	07.07.2017	5 years

Table 2: Refugee participants interviewed

Since the participants were all first-language Somali speakers, linguistic issues were given special attention in interviewing. While the original plan was to conduct the interviews with the assistance of a professional interpreter, it was recognised that this could compromise confidentiality and influence the research

² To protect the participant’s privacy, all names are have been altered.

³ While the time lived in Lieksa does not indicate when the participant arrived in Finland, most participants had lived on average for two years in another location before moving to Lieksa, while some have arrived directly through family reunification.

⁴ The data from the pilot interview is excluded from the analysis as different interview schedule was used.

outcomes as the interpreter was locally based and known in the community (Wechsler 2016). Participants were therefore offered the choice to conduct the interview either in English or Finnish. All except one participant chose the interview to be conducted in Finnish. Therefore, it should be noted that the sample in this study is heavily biased towards those refugees who have acquired at least some knowledge of Finnish, which tends to be those who have lived in Finland for several years.

The research participants were identified using a method of ‘snowball sampling’ in which key informants with relevant characteristics are asked to nominate other possible participants, creating an ‘escalating set of potential contacts’ (Atkinson and Flint 2004: 1044; Gobo 2017: 110). Nevertheless, this technique also posed some challenges as ‘snowballing’ the sample meant that all participants would be at least partly connected to someone else in the sample through their personal networks (Knoke and Yang 2008: 18). To expand the sample, a research recruitment advert was displayed by local charities and on the social media which allowed some prospective participants to spontaneously contact the author. This method led to a discovery of new key informants. While the sample is not representative of the Somali population of Lieksa, combining different ways of sampling allowed building a small-sized but *relatively* varied sample of participants from a group that is difficult to access due to issues such as limited language skills and potential distrust towards outsider researchers⁵.

Hierarchical Mapping Technique

In the beginning of each interview, the research participant was asked to complete a network chart of people in their closest social networks. This exercise aimed to enrich the interview data by discussing the participant’s concrete social networks. The technique was inspired by a method of hierarchical mapping developed by Antonucci (1986), who argues that asking participants to simply talk about their social networks ‘leaves respondents floundering in an unstructured maze, trying to develop some criteria for including certain people from among the many that they know’ (ibid: 10). The exercise was undertaken using a template diagram (see Appendix 8) which shows three concentric circles, inside which the participants were asked to name the most important persons in their networks (ibid: 10-1). Utilising the hierarchical mapping technique facilitated discussions about participant’s relationships and the author could refer to the diagram during the interview to clarify details about the participant’s account (Hollstein 2014: 412). While some participants struggled to point out the people who are the closest to them, the exercise illustrated what kind of relationships the participants thought as the most significant and how

⁵ *Dr Tiina Sotkasiira, personal communication via email, 22.03.2017*

relationships are imagined. Using the network charts also improved the comparability between the individual accounts presented in the research process.

Observations & Informal Interviews

Participant observation provided a useful way to access the research setting and recognise any issues that needed to be explored further in the interviews. The purpose of participant observation was, therefore, the discovery of common network actors within the community, the contents of different relationships and the varying forms of interaction of Somali refugees in Lieksa (ibid: 411). The observations were conducted daily for one week at the property of the Lieksa Somali Family Association. This location was chosen because it is an informal space where many Lieksa Somalis are either employed, participate in rehabilitative work or socialising. What emerged during the observations was that, for the most part, the field notes reflected practices that Forsey (2010: 560) recognises as ‘engaged listening’ rather than what is considered as direct observational data. Consequently, notes of informal interviews and conversations made up a significant proportion of the data gathered during the participant observation, blurring the distinction between an interview and participant observation on the one hand, and between the interviewee and interviewer on the other hand.

2. Positionality and Research Ethics

Awareness of one’s social position related to social identities such as gender, ethnicity or class and how they shape the research process is particularly important in ethnographic research due to the ‘intimate, long-term and multi-stranded’ relationships that may be formed during the field research (Davies 2008: 32). A reflexive approach to ethnography goes beyond claims of objectivity and recognises that subjectivity cannot be avoided (Madden 2010: 19-20). Therefore, this thesis aimed to develop a ‘self-reflexive’ stance, which takes into account how the author’s position influenced on how the data was gathered and interpreted, what the participants shared and how the research was written up (Mullings 1999: 338). My profile as a young, white female researcher with a Finnish background, studying at an overseas university had the potential to influence the research process and the outcomes of the study. Additionally, being involved as a ‘volunteer-researcher’ further complicated my responsibilities both towards the research project and the beneficiaries of the organisation (Goerisch 2016: 308).

The issue of positionality can be related to ‘insider/outsider dilemma’ of qualitative research (Hayfield and Huxley 2015). While being a volunteer allowed me an ‘insider’ access to some settings for participant

observation, I was also an ‘outsider’ because I did not share the cultural or linguistic background with the research participants. However, the ‘outsider’ role may have been useful, as the participants can be more willing to talk to me about their social relations to a stranger. To avoid any confusion, I was open about my motivations and asked for feedback after the interviews to build mutual trust with the participants. However, this project argues that the dichotomy of an ‘insider/outsider’ is also problematic because it ‘over simplif[ies] the position of the researcher in relation to their participants’ (ibid: 93). For example, it could also be questioned how my identity as a woman influenced accessing the participants on the field. These roles can also be bound to the particular situation rather than to the predetermined characteristics of the researcher (Kusow 2003: 593). Therefore, an intersectional approach which acknowledges the multiple identities is endorsed in this project (Couture et al. 2012).

Ethical concerns guided this project throughout the research process. Practically, research ethics related to gaining an informed and meaningful consent and protecting participants’ confidentiality (Block et al. 2012: 80; O’Reilly 2012: 65-9). A written informed consent of the participant was gained using a designed consent form, which was translated to Somali and Finnish (see Appendices 3-4). Subsequently, the risks related to participation were explained to the participant, emphasising the confidentiality and the anonymous basis on which the data would be presented in the final project. The participants were also informed about their right to withdraw from the study and the data storage. An additional concern was the informed consent which is often difficult to negotiate in observational research. Therefore, when informal interviews were conducted, the consent was obtained orally before any notes were taken.

The broader challenge for ethical methodology relates to conducting field research with groups such as refugees who may be in a precarious situation (Pittaway et al. 2010; Landau and Jacobsen 2003). Even though the research participants of this study are legally in a strong position, arguably some are marginalised in other ways – ‘likely to experience other pressing structural oppressions, such as racism, sexism, poverty and so on’ (Sotkasiira and Haverinen 2016: 117; Hugman et al. 2011: 1283). Some risks for the integrity of the research could be the misuse of the research data or where insensitive interviewing results in re-traumatisation of the participants (Pottie and Gabriel 2014: 349; Pittaway et al. 2010: 234-5). Recognising these concerns, the study aimed to maintain an ethical methodology to mitigate the risks of harm for the participants. Simultaneously, the thesis notes that the assumed ‘vulnerability’ of refugees should not be confused with a lack of agency or capacity. Due to the limited resources, an ‘ideal’ model of a participatory action research could not be utilised (see Hugman et al. 2011). However, this study seeks to avoid presenting refugees as ‘research objects’, through an approach which treats them as equal partners in exchange.

3. Data Analysis

In order to make sense of the data that was collected during field work, preliminary data analysis was undertaken after each occasion of observation or an interview. This project used a technique of manual data analysis which was undertaken in Finnish to avoid the limitations of translation. The collected data was first subject to initial coding in which each piece of data was coded line by line, paying attention to the codes emerging from the text (Thornberg and Charmaz 2014: 156). The initial coding allowed 'stay[ing] close to the data' as not to lose the meanings of what participants had said but also remain open to new concepts (Wolcott 1994: 63). After this step, the data was coded using focused coding in which the most analytically sound initial codes were selected and compared to each other to create more elaborate categories (Charmaz 2006: 57-8). A flexible approach allowed the codes to be refined during the data analysis. Finally, the relationships between the thematic categories were established using theoretical coding and ideas of the previous literature were also included in the analysis (Thornberg and Charmaz 2014: 159). While this method of coding is usually used in grounded theory research, the technique allowed the researcher to recognise the new ideas arising from the data while remaining sensitive and flexible to the possibilities of existing concepts.

IV. Empirical Analysis

1. “They told me it’s a good place”: Social Networks in Settlement

This chapter analyses the roles and functions of different social networks of Somali refugees settled in Lieksa, drawing primarily on Williams’ (2006) separation between ‘transnational networks’ and the networks of ‘weak ties’. The chapter suggests that the multidimensional social networks have many functions in the settlement processes of the refugees, depending on factors such as the social location and personal circumstances of the individual as well as the broader structural context.

1.1 Initial Settlement

The existence of social networks was the main facilitator of the secondary migration of Somali refugees to Lieksa. Social networks proved to be significant in the secondary migration process of refugees in two main ways. Firstly, the networks provided information about the location of Lieksa and the public services. Therefore, these networks offered ‘information of a tactical nature [...] [that] may concern good places to live or the relative merits of one town over another’ (Williams 2006: 872). Secondly, the network members gave practical support for the newly arrived refugees (see Huisman 2011: 29). Following the dispersal of asylum seekers across Finnish municipalities, many participants recounted being allocated accommodation at one of the reception centres for asylum seekers (Mubarak et al. 2015: 164). The initial period of reception provided opportunities for many refugees to establish new ties with others in a similar situation. As the participants illustrate, the new contacts often were often crucial in shaping the refugees’ decision of settlement location:

“When I lived in the reception centre in [a city in central Finland], I had just received my residence permit and somebody who also lived there had a friend living in Lieksa and I heard that it’s easy to get housing there, there’s a cheap apartments and it’s not a long wait. School [for the children] is not too far and it’s a small, quiet town, that’s why I moved here”

Interview with Asad, 28.06.2017

“In the reception centre, there were a few other Somali people there, they told me to call someone . . . I asked him what kind of place is this Lieksa, and they told me that it’s a good place, you can go to the school easily, everything around there is just fine, especially the apartments”

Interview with Obsiye, 27.06.2017

Nevertheless, some refugees had settled to Lieksa due to existing networks, either through the family reunification process or after being invited by a family member or a friend who was living in the town.⁶ Significantly, one participant stated that it was not the presence of other Somalis *per se* that shaped their decision to settle, but the presence of individuals whom they knew and trusted, in this case past neighbours from Somalia.⁷ Arguably, this sentiment reflects how in the context of Somalia, many refugees relied on the social support from their immediate social networks – such as clans, families or neighbours – rather than others on the basis of their common ‘Somaliness’ (McMichael & Manderson 2004: 93; Hopkins 2010: 533). While the subject of clan affiliation is not openly discussed in the diaspora, settlement patterns can be influenced by these identities (Mohme 2014: 121; Bjork 2007: 152). During the informal discussions, some participants stated that common clan identity affected the settlement of many Somalis to Lieksa, but that others were also welcomed⁸.

1.2 Transnational Networks

Strategies of maintaining transnational social networks with family and kinship members through family practices also framed the narratives of the refugees (Tiilikainen 2017: 66). Arguably, transnational engagement is an ‘effective mechanism through which diasporic Somalis seek security, protection, opportunities for a better life and different forms of capital for themselves and their relatives’ (Al-Sharmani 2007: 1). Many of the participants talked about contacting family and kin members by phone or on the internet through social media sites such as Facebook (see Leurs 2014). Some also engaged in visiting, commonly in the surrounding regions of Somalia, such as Ethiopia or Kenya. However, the practical difficulties related to maintaining transnational ties with family members in locations such as Somalia were often mentioned by the refugees, as illustrated by Fawzia whose family lives in Mogadishu:

Through the internet, it’s easy to stay in touch, but last week, there was no internet in Mogadishu and it was maybe six days and I didn’t talk to my family, then I bought a prepaid card for ten euros and it took maybe three minutes and I ran out of credit⁹

Apart from the practical considerations, participants also expressed feelings of being obliged to engage in family practices such as remitting money. Relevantly, Hammond (2011: 126) argues that the transnational networks can form ‘webs of obligation’. While many refugees deal with economic

⁶ Field notes, 12.06.2017

⁷ *Interview with Fawzia, 04.07.2017*

⁸ Field notes 07.07.2017

⁹ *Interview with Fawzia, 04.07.2017*

marginalisation due to unemployment in Lieksa, the family members in Somalia may not understand this reality¹⁰. Simultaneously, remittances can constitute a ‘glue’ that keeps families together (ibid: 126). During the research, it was noticed that especially those who had settled to Lieksa alone, stressed the importance of fulfilling their responsibility towards the left-behind families through remittances. A man whose family lives in Ethiopia stated that because the remittances guarantee the family’s survival, his own economic deprivation is only a secondary matter¹¹. On the contrary, transnational family practices were perceived as less important by those who had arrived in Finland when they were still children (Tiiilikainen 2017: 68-9). One example is Ayaan, who stated that she has no interest in engaging with many of her relatives abroad as she ‘doesn’t even know them personally’¹². Therefore, based on these observations, this dissertation suggests that while transnational networks feature in the lives of most Somalis in Lieksa. However, there are differences in how the family practices such as remittances are perceived, depending on the individual’s personal circumstances such as the separation from family, as well as their specific social position(s), such as their age.

1.3 Networks of ‘Weak Ties’

Weak ties refer to the ‘brief encounters’ or new networks formed in the settlement that are flexible and provide different benefits compared to the transnational networks (Hynes 2011: 157; Williams 2006). While these ties are less dense, they are ‘not entirely void of emotion, trust and reciprocal interactions’ (Hernández-León 2008: 21). Networks of weak ties can become invaluable sources of information that is more beneficial in the localised settlement context than the emotional support of the transnational networks (Williams 2006). The research recognised a difference between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ networks of weak ties (Wells 2011: 320). While the formal networks of weak ties with authorities were useful to the participants, many refugees struggled to establish informal networks of weak ties with people they may interact with daily, such as their Finnish neighbours. Subsequently, the distinction between the formal and informal networks of weak ties will be discussed in detail.

Ties with authorities

The quality of contacts with authorities such as the employment office staff or social workers was seen as an important factor in shaping the experience of settling to Lieksa. Navigating the ‘complicated

¹⁰ *Interview with Obsiye, 27.06.2017*

¹¹ *Interview with Omar, 29.06.2017*

¹² *Interview with Ayaan, 21.06.2017*

bureaucracy' of the institutional context was considered easier with the information derived from the weak ties with authorities (Wahlbeck 1996: 6). Bishaaro, who is currently employed told that a teacher from her school had contacted the employer of the firm where she had been on a work placement and helped her to get full-time employment.¹³ Notably, one participant also emphasised the practical support from the social workers that had shaped their decision to settle in Lieksa:

The social workers in Lieksa . . . took care of my issues. I was also happy about how 'The Immigration Service acted. My children were still in Africa, in Somalia and the war was terrible. The social worker in Lieksa helped and always called straight to the Immigration Service [to check the application]. But if you happened to ask the social workers in my previous settlement location, they just asked me to go to *Google.fi* and said I need to find my own way to bring them to Finland¹⁴

Nonetheless, establishing the formal networks of weak ties with authorities also presents some challenges. While one participant first insisted that they have only had good experiences, he later disclosed that a member of staff in the Employment Office acted insensitively by refusing to book an interpreter, while making newly arrived refugees to sign official documents that they could not understand¹⁵. Notably, some participants preferred to verify the information gained from the weak ties with authorities from people in their close networks, such as those refugees who had more knowledge of the bureaucratic system in Finland (Williams 2006: 875).¹⁶ Therefore, it could be argued that while the weak ties with authorities are valued for their practical benefits, they can also be less accessible than the networks of strong ties.

Neighbourhood ties

Good relations with neighbours were generally highly valued among the participants. Regarding their ties with the neighbours in Lieksa, many refugees told that they had close relationships with other Somalis living nearby but that they struggled to interact with their Finnish neighbours apart from the short greetings when encountering them outside.¹⁷ There was a sense of frustration in some of the narratives, resenting the lack of reciprocity despite the participants' attempts to establish good ties with their neighbours:

¹³ *Interview with Bishaaro, 30.06.2017*

¹⁴ *Interview with Maxamed, 19.06.2017*

¹⁵ *Interview with Asad, 28.06.2017*

¹⁶ *Interview with Warsame, 20.06.2017*

¹⁷ *Interview with Jaamaac, 07.07.2017; Interview with Bishaaro, 30.06.2017*

“In Somalia we treat each other differently, like for example if we miss someone today or tomorrow, we are going to ask him: ‘why, what happened to you, why didn’t you come outside’, we ask each other but here [in Finland] if you go to knock your neighbour’s door they ask: ‘are you okay’ and maybe they can also ring to the police or something”

Interview with Omar, 29.06.2017

“So our closest neighbours, their house is literally just next to ours, we always greet each other, and when we’re having a party we always bring them some food, but they never bring us any food back even when they see that we’re having a party”

Interview with Ayaan, 21.06.2017

The difficulty of forming networks of weak ties with neighbours was often bypassed by the participants with reference to cultural differences of the Finnish majority.¹⁸ However, this study suggests that these difficulties may more accurately reflect the negative attitudes towards refugees in Lieksa. As Granovetter (1973: 1377) suggests, the situatedness of weak ties should be recognised. Thus the discriminatory social structures that the refugees navigate in their daily lives as a racialised minority in Finland (Mubarak 2015: 197) can create barriers to the formation of weak ties. This finding follows the results of previous research on Somalis living in Helsinki (Nuutila 2012) which found that prejudices of the Finnish majority limit the formation of the networks of weak ties with neighbours. Even though many participants stated that they would like to know their Finnish neighbours better, these findings thus suggest that the structural context may effectively limit the formation of the informal networks of weak ties with the majority population.

2. The Enablers of Social Capital

Through analysis of Pittaway et al.’s (2015) three-dimensional model of social capital enablers, this chapter assesses whether the concept of social capital is useful to explore the lived realities of refugees. The chapter argues that while the socio-political dimension is helpful in understanding the settlement experiences of Somali refugees, the utility of the individual and community dimensions is limited due to the essentialising tendencies of social capital that overlook the complexity of individual experience and fractures within refugee communities.

2.1 The Individual Capacities

¹⁸ *Interview with Asad, 28.06.2017; Interview with Omar 29.06.2017*

The first dimension of the social capital enablers presents the individual capacities necessary to access to social capital in the settlement context. The model suggests that while social capital is a community resource, failing to acknowledge the individual dimension ‘denies the heterogeneity and inequalities in communities [...] assuming a level playing field in which all members of a community are able to access social resources equally’ (Pittaway et al. 2015: 411). In the interviews, Finnish language ability was recognised as a major individual level social capital enabler for refugees in Lieksa. The lack of language skills can limit the formation of weak ties that are used to gain resources such as employment as was discussed in the first chapter. However, language skills are not only useful in accessing social capital with the majority population but also with other refugees as Ayaan’s account demonstrates showing how she assists others due to her language abilities and a high educational background:

I provide quite a lot of information for others like my cousins or friends who are Somali but don’t necessarily live in Lieksa, they send me things like my brother when he got a letter home from the army about the draft . . . so he called me up and I spoke with him for two hours to explain everything, he also sometimes calls or texts me if he doesn’t understand some word, they [other Somalis] always ask me what something means if they don’t understand, so I can explain it to them because I think I know the system pretty well¹⁹

Even though Pittaway et al. (2015: 411) claim that the model addresses structural barriers such as poverty or lack of language skills, the individual dimension fails to consider the heterogeneity of experiences in the settlement. This shortcoming is evident as the social capital enablers are linked to social mobility defined in terms of the majority population such as the socioeconomic position (Fuglerud & Engebriksen 2006: 1131). As an example, during the participant observation, it was recognised that women with young children rarely participate in the daily events that involve language learning at the Somali Family Association, which was explained by their responsibilities of care work²⁰. While this observation could suggest that the women’s access to social capital is restricted, research shows that children are an important form of social capital for Somali families and undertaking care work implies *maintaining* this capital (Al-Sharmani 2006: 58). Therefore, one should recognise that gaining upward social mobility through language acquisition is not necessarily a priority for individual refugees in settlement (Zontini 2010: 818). Similarly, the model does not address other hierarchies, such as unequal gender

¹⁹ Interview with Ayaan, 21.06.2017

²⁰ Field Notes, 14.06.2017

relations, that can dictate whether social capital enablers are attainable for Somali women (Engebrigtsen 2007). Therefore, while it was recognised that the dimension of individual capacities can offer some insights about settlement experiences, the model does not address the differentiated experiences in which social capital deviates from the conventional understanding of social mobility or situations where access to social capital is constrained by other identities such as gender.

2.2 Community capacities

The second dimension of social capital enablers consists community-level capacities related to navigating cultural issues within the community and understanding the cultural context of the receiving society (Pittaway et al. 2015: 412). Subsequently, they argue that ‘strong ethnic organisations and effective community leadership [...] were identified as amongst the most important social capital enablers’ (ibid: 416). Past research connects the high community-based social capital to active participation in refugee community organisations (Griffiths 2005: 206). In the context of Lieksa, the study recognised that community dimension of social capital enablers is linked to the ability of Somali Family Association to respond to the needs of the community members. Several participants stated the important role of the organisation as offering assistance with practical issues in the settlement:

“At the *Somali Family Association*, [name omitted] helps with all of the paperwork. Many migrants in Lieksa can come there to get assistance. They read the papers and explain them to you. This is a form document from the doctors, that is a bill, this is to confirm your appointment. There’s a lot of different things, but they explain it all very clearly”

Interview with Warsame, 20.06.2017

“Because Lieksa is a small town, having the *Somali Family Association* is very good, you can meet other people and their children, it was set up by migrants themselves, and if you need help with anything to do with benefits for example, just call someone from the staff . . . This place is open for all migrants, not just for Somalis, they help you with anything really”

Interview with Obsiye, 27.06.2017

Significantly, the organisation has been able to secure funding through the European Union to support its activities, which in the social capital enabler model suggests considerable cultural fluency or the ‘knowledge of written and un-written rules about how to meet legal requirements and access funding opportunities’ (ibid: 412; Kämpfi 2015: n.p.). However, there is a risk of essentialism if the power hierarchies within the community organisation are not considered (Griffiths et al. 2005: 209).

Significantly, when asked whether it is difficult to meet new people in Lieksa, one man stated that the difficulty of meeting people is partly because the organisation has not facilitated interaction between the different groups in Lieksa:

I could say that there's a gap in needs . . . *The Somali Family Association* has not utilised these opportunities fully. Even though the staff are trying hard and they mean well but . . . I don't know the reasons why they [the refugees] are not actively participating²¹

Arguably, while there may be social capital enablers in place on the community level, this does not guarantee mobilisable social capital. Following Anthias (2007: 789), in order to be mobilisable, resources need to have 'transferability to other social resources or they function potentially to generate growth of resources'. Therefore, the criticism of the Somali Family Association's failure to engage the refugees can be seen as a shortcoming of the community leaders to establish strong leadership, even though the organisation is otherwise in a strong position to provide social capital. In this sense, the community-level dimension of social capital enablers can to some extent contribute to the understanding of settlement experiences related to participation in community organisations.

Nevertheless, referring to social capital as a community-level resource establishes boundaries to who belongs to the group (ibid: 791). As demonstrated in the first chapter, one marker of belonging in Lieksa for many Somalis is a common clan identity. This marker was also stated to dictate the participation in the activities of the community organisation²². Subsequently, the study suggests that community dimension of the social capital enablers endorses a problematic notion of community, that is without fractures. Consequently, this dimension of the model does not capture the settlement experiences of those refugees who are excluded from the community, such as those who are perceived to represent or affiliate with a different clan, which limits the utility of the social capital enabler model in understanding the settlement experiences.

2.3 Socio-political factors

Refugees' access to social capital is also shaped by the socio-political factors or the 'inclusive social and institutional norms and values and supportive legal and political factors to the strengthening of positive social capital' (Pittaway et al. 2015: 413). Arguably, one of the main socio-political factors that enable

²¹ Interview with Omar, 29.06.2017

²² Field notes, 07.07.2017

social capital for the participants was the possibility of achieving family reunification. Long-term separation from family members can lead to trauma that shapes not only the relations with the family but also the individual capabilities of establishing new social networks in settlement (ibid: 414). Recent restrictive legal amendments have made the family reunification process increasingly difficult as the application can no longer be filed by the family member in Finland (Harinen et al. 2014: 88). Also, the narrow legal understanding of family is articulated by the participants as limiting their access to social capital deriving from the family networks, as illustrated by Bishaaro whose application for family reunification for her elderly parents was rejected:

The Finnish law says that my mother is not part of the family. Father is not part of the family. Brother and sister, not one of them is part of the family. Your family is apparently only your husband and your children. But for me, it's different. In Somalia, everyone is part of the family, so this is really difficult.²³

The refugees' accounts of frustration related to the process of family reunification show that the social capital enablers are not always accessible in the socio-political context of settlement (McMichael and Manderson 2004: 89). Despite the fact that many refugees have access to transnational social networks many also wished to establish themselves in the settlement context with the hopes of reuniting with their families (Tiilikainen et al. 2016: 62-3). Therefore this study suggests that the socio-political factors such as the possibility of family reunification as an enabler of social capital should be given more attention in the future research to understand the settlement experiences of refugees', against the current emphasis on the individual and community outcomes. While all refugees did not disclose difficulties in the family reunification process, the socio-political dimension of social capital enablers explains some of the difficulties that refugees experience when trying to access social capital in the settlement context of Lieksa.

²³ *Interview with Bishaaro, 30.06.2017.*

Field notes – 13.06.2017 – Afternoon.

I was sat at the coffee table while talking with a few people. When asked, how did the settlement of Somalis to Lieksa began, one man explained that all the people had known someone already settled in Lieksa and then decided to move themselves to be close to *the community*. He used an example of somebody who had recently moved from Northern Finland and known him from before so they decided to migrate. According to him, Lieksa was seen as a pleasant and peaceful place and thus recommended for others. However, one of the women added that many, especially young men who had arrived in Lieksa alone as refugees wanted to move out of Lieksa to Helsinki, but did not often realise that these wishes are unrealistic with the level of welfare they receive if they cannot find a job. Living in the capital region was stated to be too expensive, a sentiment that everyone on the table seemed to agree.

3. “If I’m with my family, I’ll stay”: Experiences of Settlement

The experiences of Somali refugees in this study are strongly influenced by the different social networks as well as access to social capital enablers in the context of Lieksa. This chapter builds on the previous analyses to explore more generally how social networks dictate the settlement experiences. Some conclusions will be offered on the way these experiences lead to a long-term settlement or whether they eventually encourage mobility elsewhere.

3.1 The Difficulty in Weak Ties?

In order to understand why networks matter in the settlement experiences, it is necessary to discuss the factors that limit the opportunities for long-term settlement in Lieksa. The difficulty of establishing networks of weak ties that would provide *mobilisable* social capital was recognised as a major problem in the previous chapters. Recently, there have been signs that many of those with a Somali background are moving away from Lieksa with the main reason stated as the lack of employment opportunities (*Helsingin Sanomat*, 2016). This issue was also obvious among the study participants, some of whom were planning to leave Lieksa in the near future. One man reflected his limited networks of weak ties with the majority population as a part of the reason why he is moving, stating that ‘the people in Lieksa are always so quiet and don’t say anything [...] it might be easier to get to know people in Helsinki’²⁴. Some participants also highlighted the fact that there were no possibilities to study for professions with good prospects of

²⁴ Interview with Qays, 05.07.2017

employment such as bus drivers²⁵. Bigger cities thus featured in the participants' accounts as the opposite to the settlement context of Lieksa. Therefore, it could be argued that the presence of networks weak ties with mobilisable social capital, such as information about employment opportunities, increases the likelihood of long-term settlement.

However, this study suggests that it is not necessarily the lack of employment or educational opportunities that drives some of the refugees to leave Lieksa. Rather, these issues are related to more structural problems present in the socio-political context of Lieksa that limit the possibilities of creating networks of weak ties. Experiences of racism and discrimination frame the accounts of many refugees who discussed the difficulty of forming networks of weak ties, which reflects the findings of previous studies in the context of Lieksa (Sotkasiira and Haverinen 2016: 118). Significantly, the hostile attitudes of the majority population have been recognised as a socio-political barrier that limits the access to social capital enablers (Pittaway et al. 2015: 413). Thus it is argued that structural barriers such as racism can limit the access to social capital for Somalis living in Lieksa. In turn, this can create negative experiences of settlement and encourage further mobility elsewhere (Huisman 2011: 24). Some participants expressed the detrimental impacts of racism as a force that creates barriers between the majority population and the refugees as shown by Ayaan who recounts the experiences of blatant racism she has faced in Lieksa:

People are so prejudiced and reserved so if you consider some immigrant who has just arrived in Lieksa and if somebody looks at them badly . . . because even I hear primary school students saying the n-word but I just pass them by and don't pay any attention, but then for example my sister has been spat by people who were also primary school students, so if you are treated in that way by young children it makes you wonder what kind of treatment you can get from older people here²⁶

In contrast, some refugees do not refer to Lieksa as a location for long-term settlement. Instead, the time spent in Lieksa can be seen as what Huisman (2011: 34) has called a 'stepping stone' for settlement, during which refugees obtain education and build some social capital before pursuing better opportunities elsewhere. Arguably, the tendency to search for 'greener pastures' can be rooted in the 'nomadic heritage' (Horst 2006: 2) which involves 'a strong social network that entails the obligation to assist each other surviving and risk-reduction through strategically dispersing investments'. Even though this view has received criticism as historically inaccurate, it can serve to partly explain further mobility in

²⁵ *Interview with Yabaal, 27.06.2017; Interview with Qays, 05.07.2017*

²⁶ *Interview with Ayaan, 21.06.2017*

the case of unexpected challenges (Mohme 2014: 120-1). Because settlement in Lieksa is seen as a temporary strategy to obtain the resources for future social mobility, maintaining the transnational social networks may be prioritised over the formation of the networks of weak ties.²⁷

3.2 The Importance of Familial Social Networks

The presence of familial networks in Lieksa has important consequences on the refugees' access to social capital which shapes their experiences of settlement. When asked whether one participant could see himself living in Lieksa in the future, he stated that '[I]f I'm with my family [...] I'll stay here. However alone, it's very difficult to be here'.²⁸ While this statement illustrates that the context of settlement in Lieksa is seen as an ideal for establishing family life despite the lack of economic opportunities (see Huisman 2011: 14), the view also suggests that the failure to reunite with one's family can have serious consequences for adaptation to the settlement context. During an informal interview with the staff at the Somali Family Association, it was stated that especially the elderly and unaccompanied children who fail in the family reunification process are at risk of becoming marginalised without localised, family-based support networks in Lieksa.²⁹ While this study recognises that families can be 'fragmented' (Engebrigtsen 2007: 741), this finding shows that the lack of locally-based, strong social networks can have negative consequences for the experiences of settlement. There is a potential for additional research that investigates the access to social capital for specific age groups that are not conventionally studied, such as the elderly refugees who may be constrained in several ways in the settlement process.

Nevertheless, the role of transnational social networks in shaping the settlement experience should not be overlooked. The support provided by the transnational networks was found to consist forms of emotional support through regular communication and visits. Most participants indicated that they did not receive material resources from their transnational networks. While the emotional support allowed the refugees to deal with psychological issues such as feelings of loneliness that displacement had caused, similarly to material exchanges such as remittances, these practices also implied 'the bonds of obligation and reciprocity' (Al-Sharmani 2010: 508). These demands of reciprocity present in the transnational networks also made the participants to question their ideas about returning to Somalia and their relationship with the settlement context in Lieksa (see Hopkins 2010: 529). When asked whether they

²⁷ *Interview with Qays, 05.07.2017*

²⁸ *Interview with Omar, 29.06.2017*

²⁹ Field notes, 10.07.2017

wish to return to Somalia, Obsiye talked about the expectations of his family who questioned his decision to settle in Finland:

They [my family] always tell me that I'd be better off back in my homeland and that it's not a hard life there so I just tell them that in Finland, it's just a life. It's nothing special. You're always at work and pay the rent and a lot of bills and that you cannot save any money here. And when they ask what's the life like over here, I say to them that there's a lot of poor people here but I have a good life, when I get ill, the doctors are nearby and Kela [the Social Insurance Institution] pays for it³⁰

However, this account also illustrates how it should be recognised that social networks of transnational do not necessarily hold the same functions throughout the settlement process. The way in which social networks shape the settlement experiences is thus shaped by the social networks that the individual has access to at a certain point of time. Namely, these networks are temporally differentiated (Louise et al. 2008: 675). Therefore, while those who are recently settled tend to rely on the support of their transnational social networks, those who have lived in Finland for longer usually held more varied social networks that included a mix of weak and strong ties with different sources of social capital. This issue suggests just how difficult it is to generalise the complex experiences of refugee settlement (Bloch 2002: 201). Therefore, the study findings indicate that research should consider how refugees' perceptions about their networks and access to social capital change throughout the settlement process. While the measurement of change in qualitative social network studies is difficult, long-term, participatory research methodologies could offer more appropriate conclusions on the effects of social networks on the long-term settlement experiences.

³⁰ *Interview with Obsiye, 27.06.2017*

V. Conclusions

In many cases, the Somali refugees who have settled in Lieksa 'ha[ve] the best of both worlds, having access to flexible and adaptive networks of weak ties and to the security of the transnational network[s]' (Williams 2006: 875). This study found evidence that the social networks of the Somali refugees are multidimensional and provide different forms of support to mitigate against the challenges presented by the settlement context. The dispersed, transnational social networks of familial and kinship ties provided emotional support and were maintained through family practices that imply both obligations and reciprocity. Remarkably, the localised networks of weak ties constituted invaluable sources of information and assistance for different purposes such as gaining employment, even though they could be difficult to access. Nevertheless, the analysis also highlighted how the perceived importance and access to social networks was dictated by individual factors, namely the refugees' social position(s) such as age, their personal circumstances such as family separation as well as the more structural factors such as the prejudices within the majority population.

Despite the importance of social networks in the settlement, the concept of social capital enablers developed by Pittaway et al. (2015) offers limited insights for studies aiming to understand the experiences of Somali refugees settled in Lieksa. While the model allows understanding of some issues on the level of individual capacities, such as the Finnish language ability as enabling social capital, its utility is limited due to essentialising tendencies. Fundamentally, the social capital enabler model focuses on social mobility as understood in terms of the majority population and does not recognise other structural inequalities, such as gendered hierarchies. Another shortcoming of the model is evident on the level of community capacities, which were related to the role of the Somali Family Association. The model shows how the social capital enabler of cultural fluency can exist without being mobilisable by the organisation's members through effective leadership. However, the analysis suggests that the dimension of community capacities in the social capital enabler model endorses a problematic idea of a cohesive community, even though the participation in the organisation is related to the dividing factors such as clan affiliation.

On the contrary, the socio-political factors that enable social capital were useful in assessing the experiences of refugees in the settlement context of Lieksa. Restrictive legislation on family reunification in Finland significantly limits the possibilities of many Somali refugees to mobilise the family-based social capital. Arguably, while the transnational social networks provided support throughout settlement process, this study showed how the reunification with one's family enables considerable social capital which is not necessarily attainable through transnational familial ties (see Tiilikainen et al. 2016: 32). In

particular, it was found that ‘vulnerable’ groups at risk of social exclusion in Lieksa such as unaccompanied children or the elderly benefit from the access to this social capital enabler. Another significant socio-political factor that restricts the access to social capital in Lieksa is the prevalence of racism and discrimination, which limits the networks of weak ties and can encourage mobility elsewhere. Recognising the socio-political dimensions of the social capital enablers can allow understanding of the contextual forces that shape how settlement is experienced by refugees. Nevertheless, based on these findings, the study also cautions against treating social capital as ‘an analytical tool-kit applicable in a *standardized* manner’ (Fuglerud and Engebrigtsen 2006; my emphasis) due to the aforementioned problems of essentialism inherent in the other dimensions.

On the whole, this dissertation has demonstrated that the influence of social networks shaping the experiences of refugee settlement should not be overlooked in research. While the social networks of Somali refugees provided forms of support in the settlement process, they also imply obligations. The concept of social capital enablers offers some insights into the dynamics of these relations. However, additional research is needed to establish an understanding of social capital that is sensitive to the heterogeneity of individual experiences and inequalities within refugee communities. Therefore, future studies should be participatory in nature, involving refugees themselves creating the research design based on their perceptions and needs in a particular settlement context. Additionally, the study highlights the situatedness of social networks in the socio-political context of the receiving society. By showing the importance of the opportunities for family reunification as a major social capital enabler in Lieksa, the study shows a critical need to address the structural barriers that limit the refugees’ access to social capital and risk social exclusion in settlement. Even though the study findings can inform organisational strategies that alleviate the effects of limited access to social capital in settlement such as social exclusion, it should be noted that eventually the responsibility for addressing the limitations of the socio-political context is dependent on the political actors that reproduce these socio-political structures.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Cover letter including a Research Summary for Potential Participants (Somali)

LONDON'S GLOBAL UNIVERSITY



Macsuumidda cilmi-baarista

Xiriir-bulsheedka Somalidda u soo guurtay Lieksa qaxoontinimo.

Waxa aan raadinayaa dad soomaali ah oo rag iyo dumarka leh oo 18-sanno ka wayn oo Lieksa ugu soo guuray qaxoontinimo. Sharciyadda ay Lieksa ugu soo guureen waa in ay ahaadaan kuwan: sharci-baniiaanimo (humanitäärinen) sharci badbaado nooc kale ah (toissijainen suojele) ama sharci magangeliyo ammaan ah (turvapaikan perusteella)

Taariikh

Ulajeedadda cilmi-baaristani waxa ay tahay in aan dadka Soomalidda ah ee Lieksa u soo guuray qaxoontinimo aan ka uruurino macluumaad ku saabsan xiriir-bulsheedkooda. Cilmi-baaristani sadex hadaf ayey ku salaysantahay: 1) in aan baarno soomaalidda qaxoontinimo u degan Lieksa xiriir-bulsheedka ay ku leeyihiin degaankan iyo xiriir-bulsheedka ay ku leeyihiin wadanka dibadiisa 2) in aan fahanno xiriir-bulsheedadan kaladuwan saamaynta ay ku leeyihiin nololsha shaqsigan soo degay magaaladan yar 3) in aan macluumaad ka uruurino fursadaha ama ishartaaga xiriir-bulsheedku uu ku keeni karo shaqsigu qaxoontiga ah guud ahaanba.

Qaababka cilmi-baarista

Cilmi-baaristu waxa ay u baxaysaa qaab waraysi ah. Waraysiga waxa lagaa qaadayaa halmar, waxa aanu soconayaa ugubadnaan saacad. Waxa lagu waydiinayaa su'aalo kaladuwan oo ay ka mid yihiin tusaale ahaan qaab-xiriirka aad bulshada Lieksa u wada xiriirtaan maalinkasta, taakeerka aad ka hesho dadka aad xiriirtaan iyo waa ayo dadkan aad xiriirtaan, se siidee ayey kuu caawiyaan dadkan aad xiriirtaan marka aad dhibaato la kulanto. Waxa aan waraysiga ku qaadaynaa meeshii adiga kuu haboon. Waraysiga oo dhan waan duubaynaa si aan hadhow u dhuuxno. Haddii aad rabtid waxa aan ku siin karnaa koobiga cilmi-baarista oo diyaar ah. Waxa aan kor meer ugu soo gaarayaa Metka-talo. Xagaas ayaad igula kulmi kartaan bilaha 6aad ilaa 7aad (12.06.-12.07.2017)

Isaaminaad

Ka soo qaybgalaha macluumaadkiisa shaqsiyadeed kama muuqanayaa cilmi-baarsitan. Waraysiga iyo cod-duubistana si aaminaad wayn leh ayaan u tixgalinaynaa.

Xiriirka ku saabsan cilmi-baarista

Haddii aad wax su'aal ah ay jiraan ama aad rabtid in aan ku waraysto, ila soo xiriir.



Waan idiin sii mahadcelimayaa!

University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT
Tel: +44 (0)20 7679 2000
email@ucl.ac.uk
www.ucl.ac.uk

Tutkimuskutsu

"Exploring the Social Networks of Somali Refugees Settled in Lieksa, Finland"
("Lieksaan muuttaneiden somalipakolaisten sosiaaliset verkostot")

Etsin tutkimukseeni yli 18-vuotiaita, Lieksassa asuvia somalitaustaisia henkilöitä, sekä miehiä että naisia. Heidän tulisi olla muuttanut Suomeen alun perin esimerkiksi humanitääristen syiden, toissijaisen suojelun tai turvapaikan perusteella.

Päämäärä

Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoitus on kerätä tietoa Lieksaan muuttaneiden somalitaustaisten pakolaisten sosiaalisista verkostoista. Tutkimuksella on kolme päämäärää: 1) selvittää millaisia sekä paikallisia että yli rajojen ulottuvia sosiaalisia verkostoja Lieksaan muuttaneet somalit muodostavat ja ylläpitävät 2) ymmärtää, miten nämä erilaiset sosiaaliset verkostot vaikuttavat yksilöiden kokemuksiin pienelle paikkakunnalle asettumisesta 3) kerätä tietoa siitä, mitä mahdollisuuksia ja/tai esteitä sosiaaliset verkostot voivat luoda pakolaistaustaisille henkilöille laajemmassa kontekstissa.

Tutkimusmenetelmät

Tutkimus toteutetaan pääasiassa haastattelujen kautta. Haastattelut tehdään vain yhden kerran ja yhden haastattelun kesto on maksimissaan tunnin verran. Haastatteluissa kysytään erilaisia kysymyksiä muun muassa siitä, millaisia sosiaalisia suhteita ylläpidät jokapäiväisessä elämässäsi Lieksassa, millaista tukea nämä suhteet sinulle tarjoavat, ketä näihin verkostoihin kuuluu ja miten nämä verkostot auttavat esimerkiksi, jos kohtaat erilaisia ongelmia. Haastattelut voidaan järjestää valitsemassasi paikassa. Kaikki haastattelut nauhoitetaan analysointia varten. Halutessasi saat kopion valmiista tutkielmasta. Tulen myös tekemään havainnointia Metkatalolla, missä minut voi tavata kesä-heinäkuussa (12.06.-12.07.2017).

Luottamuksellisuus

Osallistujien henkilöllisyys ei tule esiin tutkimuksessa ja aineisto käsitellään luottamuksellisesti.

Yhteydentotot tutkimukseen liittyen

Jos sinulla on jotain kysyttävää tai haluat ilmoittautua haastateltavaksi, otathan minuun yhteyttä.

Kiitos jo etukäteen!

Appendix 3: Interview Informed Consent Form (Somali)

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Codsiga aqbalaada ka qaybgalaha

Waxa aan warqadan kaaga codsanayaa saxeexaaga, marka aad akhrisid ama dhagaysatid warbixintan ka faaloonaysa cilmi-baarista.

Ciwaanka cilmi-baarista: Xiriir-bulsheedka Somalidda u soo guurtay Lieksa qaxoontinimo

Aad ayaad ugu mahadsantahay hamiga aad cilmi-baariskan u haysid. Inta aanad saxeexin warqadda, qofka ku waraysanaya ayaa kuu sharxaya ulajeedda qorshahan cilmi-baarista.

Inta aanad go'aamin ka qaybgalka cilmi-baaristan, waydiiso warbixin dheeraad ah qofka ku waraysanaya iyo in uu si fiican kuugu sharxo. Waxa lagu siinayaa koobi aad sii qaadatid oo ku saabsan waraysigaaga.

Daliilka ka soo qaybgalaha.

Aniga,

- Waxa akhristay sharaxaada iyo fahansiinta cilmi-baaristan ee kor ku xusan. Waxa aan fahansanahay macnaha cimi-baarista.
- Waxa aan fahansanahay in wakhti kasta oo aan rabo aan ka bixi karo waraysigan cimi-baarista, aniga oo ogaysiinaya masuulka waraystaha.
- Waxa aan idiin fasaxayaa in cilmi-baarista dardeed aad u isticmaashaan macluumaadkayga shaqsiyadeed.
- Waxa aan fahansanahay in macluumaadkayga shaqsiyadeed si aaminaad leh loo dhowrayo, iyada oo lagu dhaqmayo qodobada sharciga macluumaadka shaqsiga ee Finland (523/99) iyo ka Ingiriiska (Data protection Act 1998)
- Waxa aan aqbalay, in si fiican oo faahfaahsan laygu sharxay mashruucan cilmi-baarista ah, sidaa darteed waxa aan ogolaanayaa in aan ka qayb qaato cilmi-baaristan.
- Waxa aan fahansanahay in codkayga la duubayo, si fahanka waraysigu u suurto galo. Waxa aan ogolahay in codkaygan waraysiga lagu isticmaalo siiba qaybta dhamaytirka ee cilmi-baarista, sikastaba ha ahaatee codkayga lama soo saari karo, oo qofka aan ahay lama garan karo.

Saxeex:

Taariikh:

University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT
Tel: +44 (0)20 7679 2000
email@ucl.ac.uk
www.ucl.ac.uk

Appendix 4: Interview Informed Consent Form (Finnish)

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Osallistujan suostumuslomake

Pyydän sinua allekirjoittamaan tämän lomakkeen kun olet lukenut tutkimuksen esittelyn ja/tai kuunnellut selityksen tästä tutkimuksesta.

Tutkimuksen otsikko: Lieksaan muuttaneiden somalipakolaisten sosiaaliset verkostot

Kiitos paljon kiinnostuksestasi tätä tutkimusta kohtaan. Ennen kuin päätät osallistua tähän tutkimukseen, haastattelijan tulee selittää tämän projektin tarkoitus sinulle.

Jos sinulla on kysyttävää tutkimuksen yksityiskohdista, kysy haastattelijalta ennen osallistumistasi. Saat kopion säilytettäväksi tästä lomakkeesta haastattelun yhteydessä.

Osallistujan lausunto

Minä,

- Olen lukenut tämän ylläolevat ohjeet ja kuvauksen tutkimuksesta, ja ymmärrän mitä tämä tutkimus sisältää.
- Ymmärrän, että voin peruuttaa osallistumiseni tutkimukseen milloin vain kertomalla tämän vastaavalle haastattelijalle.
- Annan luvan käyttää henkilökohtaisia tietojani tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksiin.
- Ymmärrän, että kaikkia tietoja kohdellaan ehdottoman luottamuksellisina, ja käsitellään Suomen henkilötietolain (523/99) ehtojen mukaisesti (Britanniassa Data Protection Act 1998).
- Hyväksyn, että yllä mainittu tutkimusprojekti on selitetty minulle tarpeeksi kattavasti ja hyväksyn osallistumiseni tähän projektiin.
- Ymmärrän, että haastatteluni nauhoitetaan analyysin tarkkuuden varmistamiseksi ja annan suostumukseni näiden tietojen käyttöön lopullisessa tutkielmassa, kuitenkin niin että minua ei voi tästä tunnistaa (nimettömänä).

Allekirjoitus:

Päivämäärä:

University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT
Tel: +44 (0)20 7679 2000
email@ucl.ac.uk
www.ucl.ac.uk

Semi-structured interview schedule

Before the interview starts

Explain the project: this research seeks to understand the effects and functions of different social networks on the settlement experiences of Somali refugees in Lieksa

Explain the consent form: tell participant the key aspects of what is involved in the research: confidentiality, anonymity, data protection, audio-recordings and the holding of data (safely secured), voluntary participation, opportunity to review the information, possibility to withdraw if necessary

Fill in the background information form with the participant. After this, assist the participant to complete the hierarchical mapping exercise.

1. Context of the participant's social networks (refer to the HME)

- Tell me about the people you have referred to in the mapping exercise. Why have you chosen these individuals?
- - o What is your relationship like?
 - o How long have you known them?
 - o Where are they located? Does their location influence your relationship with them?
 - o When you are facing problems, do you turn to each other for support?
 - o What possible benefits (e.g. economic, emotional, social) do these relationships provide for you?
 - o Are there any problems or conflict within these relationships?

2. Arrival and settlement to Lieksa

- When you first came to Finland, did you know anyone who had already settled there? In turn, when you decided to move to Lieksa, did you know anyone already living there?
 - o Could you tell me more about these individuals and/or groups.
- What was your main reason for relocating to Lieksa? Did anyone actively encourage or help you to move here?
- Tell me about your settlement process. What did you experience as particularly difficult/ easy about adapting to Lieksa/Finland?

3. Familial and kinship-based networks

- Who would you say belongs to your family? Where do your family members live?
- In what ways do you maintain contact with your family? Do you contact them often? (phone calls, letters, online, visits...)
- Do you support anyone within your family? How do you feel about supporting others? (e.g. a source of happiness and or an unnecessary obligation)

- Do you ever send monetary remittances or other types of material goods for your family? If so, what are your reasons for doing this? If you don't remit yourself, what are your reasons for not doing so?
- Does your extended family offer to support you in any way? Is this support important in your daily life in Lieksa?

4. Diasporic engagement

- What is your relationship with other Somalis living in Lieksa? Where do you see yourself in wider Somali community in Finland?
- Are you a member of any associations or NGO(s)? If so, what is your role within these organisations? (includes *Lieksa Somali Family Association*)
- Do you ever travel to see your family and friends in Somalia or in other countries outside of Finland?
- Would you consider moving back to Somalia at any point, if the political and security situation improves?
- In your opinion, how important is it to stay in touch with other Somalis living in the diaspora, whom you are not related to?

5. Friendship networks

- Do you have many friends in Lieksa? Who are your closest friends?
- Do you have many Finnish friends? If so, how did you meet them?
 - o How about people from other immigrant/refugee backgrounds?
- Do you share similar interests, beliefs or hobbies, if so, what are they?
- Do you ever help or support for each other when you face problems?
- Is it difficult to meet people and get to know people in Lieksa? If so, why?

6. Networks of localised 'weak ties' (acquaintances)

- Do you know your neighbours? Are good neighbourhood relations important to you?
- Tell me about your experiences of interacting with representatives in institutional authorities such as Kela (The Social Insurance Institution, ISS) or Työvoimatoimisto (Jobcentre). What is your experience with such authorities?
 - o Have you ever sought and received support or assistance of these bodies? What did you think of this experience?
- If you are currently working or studying, where have you gained the information regarding employment or studies?

7. Plans for the future

- Do you see yourself living in Lieksa in the future?

8. Concluding the interview

- Would you like to add anything else (to what we've discussed already)?
- Do you have any suggestions to improve the process?

Puolistrukturoitu haastattelupohja

Ennen haastattelua

Selitä projektin tarkoitus: tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on ymmärtää Lieksaan asettuneiden somalipakolaisten sosiaalisia verkostojen toimintaa ja tarkoituksia

Selitä suostumuslomake: kerro osallistujalle tärkeimmät seikat tietoiseen suostumukseen liittyen: luottamuksellisuus, nimettömyys, haastattelun nauhoitus ja kerätyn datan tietosuojaja säilytys (turvassa salasanan takana elektronisesti), osallistumisen vapaaehtoisuus, mahdollisuus nähdä haastattelun data ennen julkaisua, mahdollisuus vetäytyä tutkimukseen osallistumisesta milloin tahansa.

Täytä osallistujan tietolomake haastateltavan kanssa yhdessä. Tämän jälkeen, auta haastateltavaa suorittamaan 'hierarkkinen kartoitus' –tehtävä.

1. Sosiaaliset verkostot yleisesti (keskustelu HK tehtävästä)

- Kerro minulle henkilöistä kehen olet viitannut hierarkkisen kartoituksen tehtävässä. Miksi olet valinnut juuri nämä henkilöt?
 - o Millainen on sinun suhteesi? (henkilö henkilöltä)
 - o Kauanko olet tuntenut heidät?
 - o Missä he asuvat ja kuinka usein tapaatte? Vaikuttaako heidän sijaintinsa sinun suhteeseesi?
 - o Kun kohtaat ongelmia, saatteko tukea toisiltanne?
 - o Miten hyödyt tästä suhteesta (esim. taloudellisesti, emotionaalisesti, sosiaalisesti)?
 - o Onko suhteessasi ongelmia tai konflikteja?

2. Lieksaan saapuminen

- Kun saavuit Suomeen ensimmäistä kertaa, tunsitko ketään kuka oli aikaisemmin asettunut (muuttanut) sinne? Entäs tunsitko ketään Lieksassa asuvaa ennen kuin päätit muuttaa Lieksaan?
 - o Voitko kertoa minulle lisää näistä henkilöistä ja/tai ryhmistä
- Miksi päätit muuttaa Lieksaan? Vaikuttiko kenenkään apu tai kannustus päätöksen tekemiseen?
- Kerro minulle kokemuksistasi tänne asettumisesta. Oliko mikään asia erityisen vaikea tai helppo Lieksaan muuton jälkeen?

3. Perhe- ja sukupainotteiset verkostot

- Ketä kaikkia kuuluu perheeseesi? Missä perheenjäsenesi asuvat?
- Millä tavoin pidät yhteyttä perheeseesi? Oletko heihin yhteydessä usein? (esim. puhelimella, netissä, kirjeitse tai käymällä kylässä)

- Tuetko ketään perhepiirissäsi? Mitä tunteita tämä sinussa herättää? (onko se mielestäsi iloinen asia vai koetko sen ylimääräisenä taakkana/ velvollisuutena)
- Lähetätkö ikinä rahaa tai muita hyödykkeitä perheellesi ulkomailla? Jos vastasit kyllä, miksi toimit näin? Jos et yleensä lähetä rahaa itse, mitkä ovat syysi tähän?
- Tukeeko perheesi puolestaan sinua mitenkään? Millä tavoin?
 - o Kuinka tärkeänä koet tämän tuen arkisessa elämässäsi Lieksassa?

4. Osallisuus diasporassa

- Mikä on suhteesi muihin Lieksassa asuviin somalialaisiin?
 - o Millaisena koet asemasi Suomen laajemmassa somaliyhteisössä?
- Osallistutko yhdistystoimintaan esimerkiksi diasporan liittyvissä somaliyhdistyksissä? Jos vastasit kyllä, mikä on roolisi näissä yhdistyksissä? (sisältäen *Lieksan Somaliperheyhdistyksen*)
- Matkustatko ikinä tapaamaan perhettä tai ystäviä Somaliaan tai muihin maihin Suomen ulkopuolella?
- Voisitko harkita muuttavasi takaisin Somaliaan, jos poliittinen ja turvallisuustilanne muuttuu?
- Kuinka tärkeää on pysyä yhteydessä muihin diasporassa asuviin somalilaisiin?

5. Ystävyyshverkostot

- Onko sinulla paljon ystäviä Lieksassa? Ketkä ovat tärkeimpiä ystäviäsi?
- Oletko ystäväystynyt monien kantasuomalaisien kanssa? Jos vastasit kyllä, missä tapasit heidät?
 - o Entäpä muiden maahanmuuttaja/pakolaistaustaisten henkilöiden kanssa?
- Jaatko samoja harrastuksia tai mielenkiinnon kohteita näiden ystävien kanssa? Mitä ne ovat?
- Saatko/annatko tukea näiltä ystävilta, kun kohtaat ongelmia elämässäsi? Millä tavoin? (esim. informaatio tai rahallinen tuki)
- Onko Lieksassa vaikea tutustua uusiin ihmisiin? Jos vastasit kyllä, miksi olet tätä mieltä?

6. 'Heikkojen siteiden' verkostot

- Tunnetko naapurisi? Ovatko hyvät naapurisuhteet sinulle tärkeitä?
- Kerro minulle kokemuksistasi vuorovaikutuksesta viranomaisten kanssa (esim. Kelan tai Työvoimatoimiston työntekijät). Mikä on kokemuksesi näiden tahojen kanssa?
 - o Oletko ikinä saanut apua näiltä tahoilta? Millaisina koit nämä tilanteet?
- Jos olet tällä hetkellä töissä tai opiskelijana, keneltä tai miltä taholta sait tietoa näistä mahdollisuuksista? (jos haastateltava tullut aikuisena Suomeen)

7. Tulevaisuuden suunnitelmat

- Näätkö itsesi asumassa Lieksassa myös tulevaisuudessa?

8. Haastattelun lopetus

- Haluaisitko lisätä mitään muuta (liittyen teemoihin joista olemme jo keskustelleet)?

- Onko sinulla mitään ehdotuksia tämän haastattelun parantamiseksi?

Appendix 7: Interviewee Personal Details Form

Perustiedot liittyen tutkimuksen haastateltaviin

Haastattelun tunnus: _____

1. Ikä ja sukupuoli

2. Siviilisääty

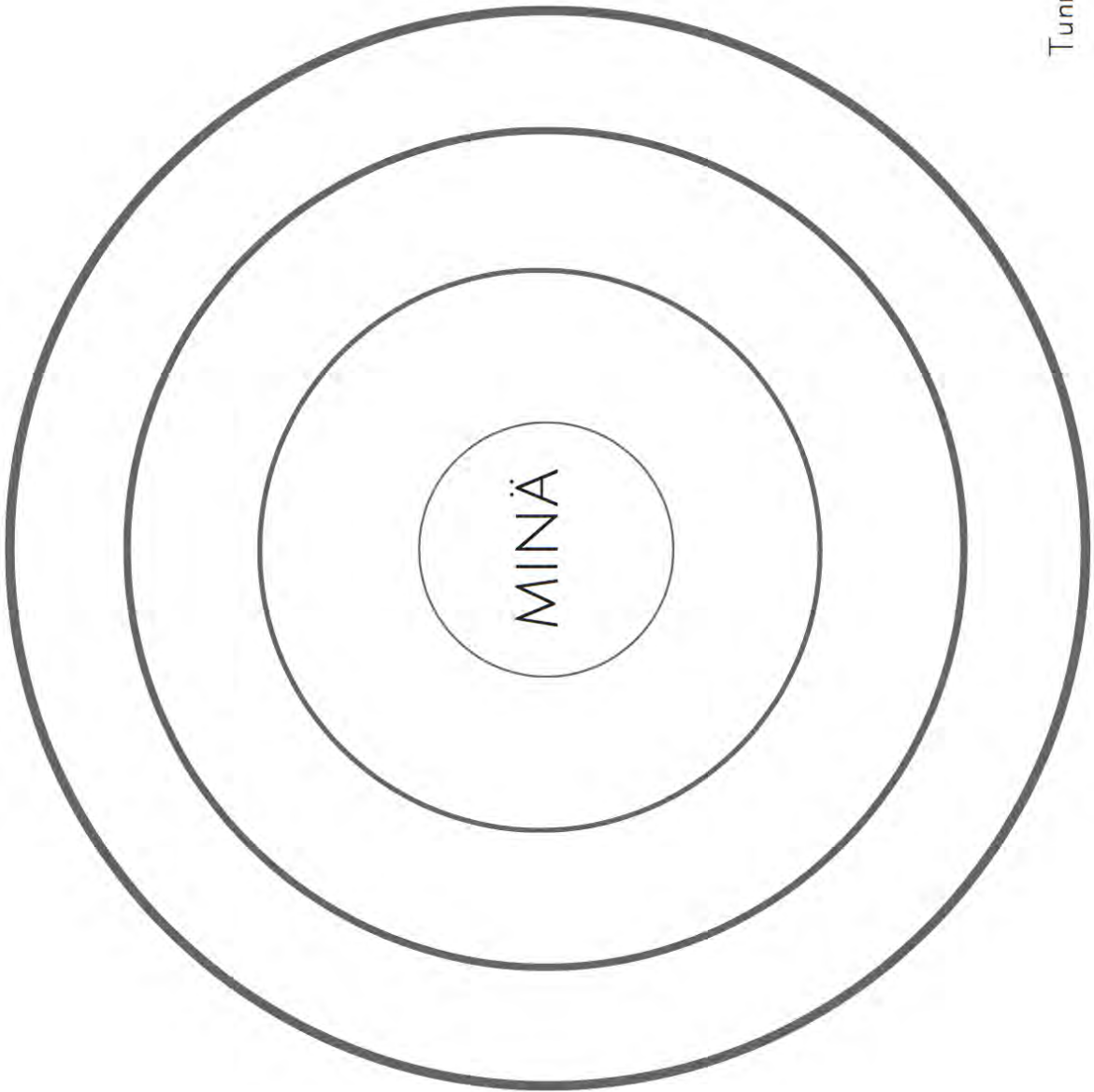
3. Ammatti/koulutustausta

4. Syntymäpaikka

5. Kuinka kauan olet asunut...

a. Lieksassa?

b. Suomessa?



Tunnus:-----

Transcription key

// = overlapping talk

Bold: emphasis

(.) (..) (...) = short, medium and long pauses

(?) = unclear on recording

[Action] = non-verbal cues

A= Author

P= Participant

A.: Elikkä, voisitko harkita muuttavasi takaisin Somaliaan, eli jos poliittinen ja turvallisuus tilanne siellä muuttuu kokonaan, harkitsisitko paluuta?

P: En.

A: Miksi et, voisitko kertoa hiukan yksityiskohtaisemmin?

P: Miksi en haluaisi muuttaa? Koska haluan rakentaa lapsilleni hyvän taustan ja tulevaisuuden (..) jos vaikka lähtisinkin ja se maa on muuttunut hyväksikin, siellä on vaikea menestyä, turvallisuudesta ei ole mitään takeita eikä miksi niitä nyt sanotaan, eikä myöskään perusoikeuksista, kuten koulutus, terveys ja muut mahdollisuudet joten luulen että täällä Suomessa on parempi jos minun perheeni tulee tänne, he voivat saada hyvän koulutuksen, ja hyvissä ajoin he voivat jo kehittää tulevaisuuttaan. Joten tällä hetkellä minä en ajattele itseäni, puhun nyt isänä ja ajattelen lapsiani joten valitsisin mieluummin että he saisivat (..) elää suomalaisina, eivätkä somaleina.

A: Okei, eli näät paremman tulevaisuuden täällä enemmän kuin Somaliassa. Etenkin sen kehityksen puitteissa minkä Somalia on käynyt läpi, palaaminen ei siis ole kovin todennäköistä. Eli viimeinen kysymys tästä aiheesta eli kuinka tärkeää on mielestäsi pysyä yhteydessä muiden somalien kanssa kun asut ulkomailla, diasporassa eli kun siis pakolaisena?

P: Se riippuu paljon henkilöstä ja heidän näkemyksistään, kuinka he ajattelevat (..) jos ulkomailla eläminen on heidän mielestään hyvä asia, jos ne henkilöt ajattelevat positiivisesti niin se on tärkeää, mutta jos heillä ei ole mitään mahdollisuuksia, tai jos he eivät vaan tartu näihin mahdollisuuksiin ja etuihin, he häviävät ja minun mielestäni se on ihan tarpeetonta.

A: Joo, ymmärrän mitä tarkoitat.

P: Tunnen niin monta ihmistä jotka eivät pärjää kovin hyvin vaikka heille annettiin tämä mahdollisuus, he eivät käytä sitä siihen mihin se on tarkoitettu.

A: Okei. Onko mielestäsi tänne tulevilla paljon toiveita ulkomaille muuttamisesta mutta kun he sitten muuttavat tänne se ei olekaan kuten he sen elämän kuvittelivat olevan, yleensäkin pakolaisten osalta eli onko mielestäsi täällä paljon ihmisiä joilla on ensin joku idea päässään millaista on asua lännessä tai Euroopassa ja sitten kun he tulevat Eurooppaan tai Suomeen, se ei ole niin kuin he ajattelivat ja sitten heistä tuntuu toivottomalta?

P: Ei (..) koska tuo on ihan hyödytön ajatus, vaikka ihmiset, jotkut ihmiset ovat negatiivisia minä näen sen positiivisena koska minulle ensimmäinen ongelma on minun turvallisuuteni. En kyennyt nukkumaan

kun olin Somaliassa, olin shokissa ja sain traumoja konfliktin takia, jatkuvan konfliktin ja rikkomusten takia. Mutta kaikista ihmisistä he joilla ei ole hyvää näkemystä tai käsitystä ensinnäkään saattavat ajatella että Suomi ei ole heille sopiva tai merkityksellinen, ja vaikka he menisivät Amerikkaan tai Kanadaan, he sanovat että he häviävät. Häviäjäät menettävät aina. Mutta joku toinen jolla on hyvä näkemys ja jotka ovat eteenpäin katsovia, he voivat kehittää elämäänsä missä tahansa.

A: Eli sinulla täytyy olla myös hyvä asenne. Okei hyvä, siirrytään sitten sinun ystäviisi. Onko sinulla mielestäsi paljon ystäviä Lieksassa?

P: Kyllä minulla on paljon ystäviä täällä.

A: Onko sinulla monta ystävää jotka ovat suomalaisia, eli onko sinulla monta suomalaista ystävää?

P: Etsin kyllä sellaisia mutta en nähnyt sitä kovin todennäköisenä.

A: Miksi se on niin sinun mielestäsi?

P: Ehkä se on siksi koska me emme menneet kouluun yhdessä, emme ole (..) minä en ole tarpeeksi kielitaitoinen ollakseni tekemisissä heidän kanssaan ja täällä Lieksassa suurin osa asukkaista on tosi vanhoja, täällä ei ole yhtään nuoria ihmisiä.

A: Eli täällä ei ole paikkoja jossa voisitte kokoontua ja olla tekemisissä? Uskotko että tällaisia aktiviteettejä tarvittaisiin lisää esimerkiksi Metkalla?

P: Voisin sanoa että täällä on aukko tarpeissa (..) Metka ei myöskään käytä näitä mahdollisuuksia **ihan täysin**. Koska [nimi poistettu] suuren osan ajasta hän yrittää, hän on todella ahkera työntekijä mutta minun näkemäni mukaan, luulen että hän on tosi hyvä, täydellinen ja tarkoittaa vain hyvää mutta mielestäni somalit ja muut pakolaiset, kun puhun heille ymmärrän että he ovat hyljeksittyjä mutta eivät he ole, en tiedä mistä heidän tilansa johtuu, en tiedä heidän heikkoutensa syytä, en tiedä mitään näistä syistä mutta he eivät osallistu aktiivisesti.

A: Olen kuullut samankaltaisia mielipiteitä. Jos he lähtisivät, en tiedä mitä tästä tulisi.

P: [Nimi poistettu] on hyvä verkostoituja ja myös tuottaja, voin sanoa että he varmasti elävät vielä ainakin kuusikymmentä vuotta. Toivon tätä hänen vuokseen koska hän on avoimin mielin ja ajattelee. Mutta kun täällä ei ole aktiivisia ihmisiä, enemmän aktiivisia.

A: Ehkä sinä voisit tulla hänen tilalleen?

P: Kielen takia, minulla on kieliongelmiä, mutta haluan vain sanoa että ainakin he ovat yrittäneet. Sen takia, katso kuinka monia tapaaamisia täällä on pidetty, joihin ministerit ovat tulleet paikalle, tunnetut poliitikot Turusta, Tampereelta ja Helsingistä ovat myös olleet täällä. He tekevät hyvää työtä, koska hän on hyvä verkostoituja. Nämä ihmiset tulevat tähän pieneen paikkaan, he ovat tehneet (...) siitä kuuluisan ja se on nyt tosi tunnettu. Kaikki tietävät nyt missä Lieksa on.

A: Joten he pistivät sen kartalle.

P: Kyllä, he todella yrittävät. Mutta minulla ei ole paljon suomalaisia ystäviä.

A: Haluaisitko saada joitakin?

P: Tottakai, kyllä.

A: Joo entäs sitten muut maahanmuuttaja tai pakolaisryhmät, kuten irakilaiset, täällä on paljon irakilaisia?

P: Kyllä, minulla on joitakin ystäviä heidänkin joukossa. Olemme kaikki koulukavereita, yhdessä koulussa (..) puhumme toisillemme siellä.

A: Oletko tavannut heitä myös moskeijan kautta?

P: En ole.

A: He eivät mene siihen moskeijaan, vai menevätkö?

P: Joo, eivät he mene.

A: Entäs sitten onko sinulla yhtään mielenkiinnon kohteita tai harrastuksia ystäväsi kanssa, kuten uhreilu tai mitään muita?

P: Kaikilla on joitain harrastuksia tai mielenkiinnon kohteita, minä pidän jalkapallosta ja tykkään pelata shakkia, mutta minulla ei ole (..) me olemme kaikki myös ihmisiä täällä.

A: Kyllä. Pidätkö sinä, kun täällähän on jalkapallo klubi, oletko pelannut heidän kanssaan vai?

P: He kertoivat minulle että harjoitukset alkavat heinäkuussa.

A: Joo, kunnan harjoitukset alkavat heinäkuussa. Se on hienoa. Okei eli onko mielestäsi, tämä on vähän erilainen kysymys mutta sinun ystäväsi jotka asuvat täällä tai muualla, jos sinä vaikka, olen kysynyt tämän kysymyksen muilta ihmisiltä mutta jos joku soittaa ja sanoo että 'tarvitsen vähän rahaa', autatko ystäviäsi tällä tavoin vai onko se sinusta tarpeetonta?

P: Koska minulla ei ole (...) mitä ne ovatkaan?

A: Keinoja?

P: Ei, minulla on vain rajalliset resurssit, se määrä mitä saan sen käyttö on jo valmiiksi suunniteltu. Käytän vähän täällä, lähetän vähän perheelleni ja siinä kaikki. Toisekseen, minun mielestäni kenenkään ei pitäisi auttaa toisia [rahallisesti] koska kaikilla on täällä jo jotain oikeuksia. Miksi, miksi heillä edes on tällaisia ongelmia. Jos joku, jos tunnen jonkun Metkalta voi lainata minulle tai ottaa minulta velkaa, me voimme sopia siitä. Mutta jos joku vain soittaa minulle pyytääkseen, en lainaa.

A: Okei eli se ei ole mahdollista tilanteessasi tällä hetkellä. Hmm, tämä on vähän samantapainen kysymys kuin aikaisemmin, mutta onko mielestäsi vaikeaa tavata uusia ihmisiä Lieksassa, ei vain suomalaisia ihmisiä?

P: Hmm, se riippuu ihmisestä mutta kun jotkut ihmiset voivat mennä vaikka baariin, ja sieltä klubeille missä he voivat tavata ihmisiä, mutta minä en voi mennä. Toiset taas voivat mennä kirkkoon ja saada sitä kautta ystäviä mutta minä en voi (..) Minulla on vain muutamia paikkoja missä voin tavata uusia ihmisiä joten minulle se on tosi vaikeaa mutta ehkä jollekulle toiselle se on sitten helpompaa.

A: Joo, eli se riippuu ihmisestä, kyllä. Entäs sitten tunnetko naapurisi Lieksassa?

P: Ei, en minä tunne. Koska he ovat vanhoja ihmisiä, he menevät nukkumaan tosi aikaisin ja meillä ei ole paljon yhteistä, siitä asti kun olen ollut täällä kuvittelisin että tunnen vain (..) [nimet poistettu] tiedän vain kolme tai neljä.

A: Suomalaista?

P: Kyllä.

A: Eli ovatko, sinun naapurisi, oletan että he ovat suomalaisia ja vanhoja ihmisiä. Okei, ymmärsin tämän. Onko sinun mielestäsi tärkeää että sinulla on hyvät välit naapureihisi, tai siis oliko se ehkä vielä tärkeämpää Somaliassa kuin täällä?

P: En, minä pidän (..) kaikista ihmisistä. Koska minä olen ihminen ja he ovat ihmisiä. En pidä enemmän somaleista kuin muistakaan, en tosiaan.

A: Ei, se mitä minä tarkoitan että oliko tärkeämpää että sinulla oli hyvä naapuruussuhteet siellä kuin täällä? Koska Suomessa ihmiset eivät oikeastaan puhu toisilleen vaikka he asuisivat toistensa naapureina.

P: Joo Somaliassa me kohtelemme toisiamme eri tavalla, kuten esimerkiksi jos me emme näe jotakuta tänään tai huomenna, me menemme kyllä kysymään häneltä 'miksi, mitä hänelle tapahtui, miksi et tullut ulos', niin me kysymme toisiltamme mutta täällä jos menet koputtamaan naapurisi oveen he vain kysyvät 'oletko kunnossa' ja ehkä he vielä siihen päälle soittavat poliisille tai jotain.