SOMALI FAMILIES IN NORWAY:

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE CHANGING SOCIO-STRUCTURAL SITAUTION AND ITS CONSEQUENCE FOR THE FAMILY

KASSIM GABOWDUALE

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Department of Sociology and Human Geography

Faculty of Social Sciences

University of Oslo

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SUMMARY

An increasing number of Somali families have been flashed out of their homes and forced to migrate as a result of the ongoing conflict in Somalia. With the outbreak of the civil war in Somalia in the late eighties and early nineties, a large exodus of refugees fled the country. There are almost twenty three thousand Somalis living in Norway today; the majority of them settled in and around Oslo according to Statistics Norway (Henriksen 2008). Upon arrival, Somalis, still suffering from the trauma of war and uprooting, face the challenges of adapting to life in the modern Norwegian society. Adaptation implies bridging the cultural differences between Somalia and Norway, while at the same time trying to keep their cultural practices as Somalis.

This study, using qualitative methods of focus group discussions and interviews explores the changing socio-structural situation of Somali families living in exile in Norway. The research questions focus on the challenges Somali families face as they reestablish themselves as families in Norway and the impact of the changing cultural referents of these families.

It is shown that as refugees who fled a devastating war, Somali refugees are extensively affected by the trauma caused by their experiences from the civil war in Somalia. Somalis in Norway have some or all their families in Somalia or in refugee camps in Kenya or/and Ethiopia. This refugee facilities lack basic service like food, clean water and personal sanitations.

This study also revealed that after resettlements, Somali families are faced with the difficulties of culturally adapting to their new home country. Somali culture is very different from the Norwegian and this caused a great deal of acculturation problems. In addition to this, they have to learn a new language and adapt to a climatic condition that many are very unfamiliar with. The combination of pre-migration problems and post migration living difficulties makes their adaptation in Norway difficult.

The increasing abuse of khat by Somali men was also another finding of the study, that can be understand as the consequence for the growing social-psychological stress on the family. Many of the female respondents and some of the male respondents were worried about the impact of chewing khat for the family. Khat has negative socio-economic and health consequences for Somali families in the Diaspora. Many felt that khat is a major cause of

domestic conflict, because of its effect on the family economy and the time wasted that was meant for doing other family business.

The outbreak of the civil war in Somalia caused a large exodus of refugees to flee to different parts of the world. Families try to stay in touch and help each other with the little they can spare. Many families in the Diaspora send some of their income to family members in need in Somalia or in refugee camps in Africa. This research finds that despite the importance of remittances on the livelihood of many Somalis, it has caused some tension among family members because of the limited resources of the Somalis in the Diaspora in Norway.

Somali families have lived most of their lives in the context of gender segregated families where men and women were allocated different roles. This study finds that coming to exile has challenged the conventional ways of family relations. The growing economic independence of Somali women and the loss of the network of relations the family had, exacerbated a gender role reversal where Somali men suddenly had to assume roles that were traditionally assigned to women. These roles reversals have caused conflicts between spouses because Somali men feel that their authority is been challenged.

One other finding of the study is the challenge associated with new parenting styles the family had to adapt to. Somali children through the school and through contact with their peers from the larger society have challenged the Somali way of parenting. Somali parents feel that their children are losing their cultural values and traditions. They also felt that their authority as parents is diminishing and that they are losing control over their children.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Hawa Ahmed Dahir Hassan (Hawageni), my children Burhanudin, Ilhaan, Khaalid, Mohamedamin, Abdifataah, Duale and the rest of my beloved family.

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

A 48 years old Somali man: *"Somali families become like an old car that was driven on a rail road (...) at the end of the journey, all the nuts and bolts that hold the car together, become apart from each other. The family was much stronger in Somalia, children used to respect their parents, wives and husbands lived in harmony with each other (....). We had our family and friends around us all the time, we shared both happiness and grief, and we used to visit each other very often (...).We were very happy. Now here in Norway, the family is in conflict with themselves; the wives and husbands are quarrelling all the time, the children never listen to parents, we become like strangers living together"(One of the participants of my study)*

Somali immigrant families continue to arrive in Norway and other western countries because of the ongoing civil conflict in Somalia. These families, in addition to the traumatic experience of the war, are faced with the daunting challenge of post migration living difficulties and changing cultural referents. Recent studies suggest that immigrant families encounter many challenges as they try to re-establish themselves as families in their new homes (Bornstein & Cote 2007; Landsford *et al* 2007; Suarez-Orozco 2000, 2005; Vappu Tyyska 2007).

Previous research addressing the family dynamics of immigrant families and the challenges they face, have investigated about the relationship between the family members for example the relationship between the husbands and their wives (Mahdi 2009; Boyl and Ali 2009; Davrishpour 2002; Foner 1997; Affi 2002; Hondegneu-Sotelo 1994; Abu-laban *et al* 1991; Aswad & Gray 1996), and the relationship between the parents and their children (Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Phinney & Vedder 2006; Kwak 2003; Degni *et al* 2006; Harding *et al* 2007). Other research has also examined the impact of migration on the psychological wellbeing of individuals and the impact of migration on the socio-cultural adaptations of newcomer groups (Portes & Rumbaut 2006; Ataca & Berry 2002; Ward *et al* 2001).

This investigation focuses on the challenges facing Somali families as they reestablish themselves as families in Norway. Using qualitative analysis of interviews and focus group discussions data from 23 Somali men and women who are raising families in Norway, I argue that Somali families are facing many challenges as far as their lives as families is concerned. These families experience significant changes in how they used to organize their lives as families in Somalia. This is usually compounded by the experience of their flight and the processes surrounding their reasons for migration in the first place.

1.1 Research questions

Research that has been done on Somalis in Norway has yielded fruitful insight into the community (Fangen 2006, 2007, 2008; Thun 2004; Engebrigtsen 2004; Engebrigstsen & Fuglerud 2009) However, no research has directly been done to address the acculturation process of Somali families in Norway and the impact this has on the relationship between the family members. Such knowledge is of a profound importance in understanding their situation given the challenges facing the community here in Norway. This research is designed to address the socio-structural change that has occurred to Somali families since their arrival in Norway. The thesis will present data from focus group discussions and interviews with 23 Somali men and women who are currently raising families on their experiences as families in Norway.

The main research question guiding the study will be:

> 1. *How is the general situation of Somali families in Norway today? What are the challenges facing Somali families? What is the impact of changing socio-economic structure on the family?*

In addition to my overall research question, I will try to put focus on certain key issues like the challenges facing Somali families, shifting gender roles relations and, parenting experiences, the abuse of khat chewing, remittances, and the impact of the new economic situation on the family. Here are some of the supporting questions:

A. *What are the impacts of the shifting gender relations on the strength of the family?*

B. *What are the parenting experiences of Somali families who have children in exile in Norway?*

C. *What are the impacts of economic remittances for Somali families?*

D. *What are the socio-economic and health consequences of khat chewing on the family?*

1.1.1 Statement and objectives of the study

In the light of the background of Somali families living in exile in Norway that I have discussed so far, there exists a growing conflict within Somali families that is a cause of concern both for Somalis in the Diaspora and the authorities working with these families, conflict that is caused by the changing social structures of these families. Somali families have undergone historical changes in its structure, and these changes are some of the factors contributing to the challenges facing the Somali family in Norway.

The main objective of this study is to see Somali families own perception of the changes happening around them. In other word, I would like to hear out in their words and formulations how they feel about their new situation here in Norway. The idea behind is to create an empirical knowledge and understanding around Somali families. It will be also interesting to see if they experience any changes to the way they use to organize their families prior to their flight and consequent resettlement in Norway. I will also try to investigate how these changes affected them and how they are coping up with it. The main reason behind this, is to see if we can gain knowledge that might help us understand their situation better, so that it will be possible to cooperate and establish better action plans that will enhance the chances of the community succeeding here in Norway.

1.1.2 Research premises and rationale

Many years of living under corrupt dictatorial regime, and a civil war that destroyed all social infrastructures, is to blame for the challenges facing Somali families living everywhere of the

globe. Understanding the culture and history of how the family was organized is a key to understanding how to deal with some of the problems facing the society today. The challenge that is facing Somali families in Norway is contributing to why they are having problems adjusting to their lives in Norway.

The rationale of the study is to get a deeper understanding of the situation of Somali families. The challenges facing them in Norway and other western countries are immense with implications for the coming generations. Conflict within the family is almost a daily routine. Many families break up with dire consequences for the children. Most of these families have many adjusting problems and are performing poorly in all indicators of human development (Daugstad 2008). Many Somalis feel the pressure on their families; some of them opt to send their children away to other countries that they mean is friendly to their way of life, while others send to other European countries like England. This movement has created instability in the children's life as their schooling and social contact is disrupted when the parents move to and from different European countries. There are discussions in the mosques and in cafes among Somalis in Norway, on how to deal best with these challenges facing these families. The government of Norway is doing its best in integrating Somalis into society with differing successes, but there is still a lot of work to be done. This study will help us get insight from the Somali community on better ways of understanding them which can consequently lead to finding better ways of dealing with this group of immigrants. Progress of integrating the Somalis into society depends on understanding the community better.

1.2 Somali immigrants in Norway

"The trickle of Somali exiles become a flood of refugees first from the north of the country where the Isaq dominate and then, after the ousting of president Mohamed Siyad Barre in January 1991 and the subsequent civil war, from Mogadishu and the south" (McGown1999:14). The first Somali immigrants came to Norway in the 80's; these were mostly from the north after their rebellion to the Siyad Barre regime and the consequent bombardment of Hargeisa and other important towns of the region by government forces. The bigger part came in the 1990's, after the outbreak of chaos and clan conflicts that led to the destruction of Somalia. This anarchic situation led to an influx of refugees from Somalia in all directions of the globe. At the beginning of 2008 there were almost 22.000 Somalis in

Norway. There were more women than men and half of the Somali population lived in Oslo. (Henriksen 2008)

Somali migrants are today found in many corners of the globe. They represent a significant ethnic minority in many European countries, the Middle East and North America and Australia (Al-Sharmani 2007; Suleyman 1991). Many of the Somalis, who today live in exile in Norway, have been through a dramatic life experience. They have lost loved ones or left them, the destruction of their livelihoods, and the disintegration of their networks and the loss of familiar cultural settings. "Immigrants must come to terms with the loss of family and friends on the one hand and cultural forms like food, music, arts that have given the native world a distinct and highly personal character on the other hand" (Suarez-Orozco & Baolian 2005:208). Some of them have lived in asylum camps outside their homes that lack basic necessities like food, clean water and shelter from adverse weather.

The process of migrating and forging new lives in a new environment with other beliefs and ways of organizing society can be depressing for many. "Life as a refugee attempting to create a new life in an unfamiliar country is filled with uncertainties" (Fangen 2006:69). After coming to Norway the long process the asylum procedure takes, prolongs the anxiety of most of Somali immigrants. This in in addition to all the other challenges waiting shortly after their applications is approved. "Immigrants face multiple challenges in acculturating within their new dominant society. Migration is one of the most disorganizing individual experiences, entailing as it does thoroughgoing changes of social identity and self-image" (Bornstein & Cote 2007:3; Suarez-Orozco 2000).

Most of the immigrants who came from Somalia, are people who after many years of colonial legacies, a repressive and corrupt regime, a civil war, the destruction of the state of Somalia, suffered from many social problems like lack of education and poor living conditions (Issa-Salwe 1996). Coming to Norway, a modern state with comprehensive welfare institutions was for many a challenge of a life time. Seeing from what type of a country Somalis hail from, one can really understand why they have difficulties in adapting to their new homes here in Norway. Somalis and Norwegians are two societies that are quite different in many ways. "Somali is one of the poorest countries in the world; Norwegian is one of the richest. Somalia had a very turbulent history the last fifty years first as a colony under Britain and Italy, followed by a short period of parliamentary democracy, then a military dictator and the last

twenty years under a civil war. Norway has been stable since the end of the Second World War" (Fangen 2008:26).

Working with Somali families, have been described by many people here in Norway as somewhat problematic (Engebrigtsen 2004; Siyad *et al* 2005). Many officials experience difficulties in cooperating with Somali families in their need to make an effective program for integrating the community into the society (Fangen 2006; Siyad *et al*, 2005; Engebrigtsen 2004)). Many helplessly say they don't understand what is wrong with these families. Somali families on the other hand, are very skeptical of this officials who are trying to help them, and there is a general atmosphere of distrust and dissatisfaction as far as working together is concerned. Both the Somalis and the official are sitting with prejudice that is often strengthened by the mass media. According to researchers, almost 30% of all media reporting on Somalis here in Norway are focused about criminality, female genital mutilation, murder and lack of proper integration (Simonsen & Eide 2007; Engebrigtsen & Fuglerud 2009). The saddest part is that many among the Norwegian society and public officials believe the Medias version of the Somali community that associates Somalis with problems. For many Somalis, it is difficult to live with this negative image. The negative image created by media about Somalis, may have unintended consequence and might have created problems for some people (Fangen 2006)

This prejudice, are most of the times based on shear misunderstandings. Somalis are exposed to unparalleled negative treatment from the host society in Norway. They are usually associated with laziness, unemployment, female genital mutilation, many children and Khat chewing, (a mild narcotic leaves that Somali men chew to get stimulated). A stereotype of a Somali was created by the host society. These are some of the characteristics that define a Somali living in Norway. They experience that public officials in very important institutions, see them as problematic and humiliate them, when they ask for help (Fangen 2006). There are today Somali youths who because of this entire negative focus on the community, deny their identity as Somalis. As Fangen puts it, for many Norwegians, the Somalis has become equivalent with violence and murder, with the use of Khat, female genital mutilation, polygamy, illegal immigration and misuse of social benefits. "Many Somalis feel humiliated by this public image of the dangerous, the criminal or the non-integrated Somali – they are reduced to a stereotyped people, rather than being presented as a group of unique individuals, with a history of their own" (Fangen 2006:81; see also Thun 2004)

Most Somalis react to the way they are being treated in different ways. Some angrily defend their identity, some move to other countries like England, while others act as if they don't care. There is a general feeling of powerlessness among the Somali population.

Somalis in Norway today, are discriminated in all spheres of life, the labor market, the housing market even in government institutions like daycares and social security offices, are involved in systematically humiliating Somalis. According to statistics Norway, are Somalis one of the most discriminated groups in Norway (Tonstad 2007). They are branded problem groups that are here just to receive benefits, who don't want to contribute to the commonwealth and integrate into society. Somalis become stigmatized and excluded from the rest of the society. All this has negatively affected the lives of Somalis living in Norway. This treatment of Somalis, have caused that Somalis today scores poorly in all indicator of human development. Somalis are according to statistics Norway the non western immigrants with the lowest employment and highest unemployed numbers. At the last quarter of 2007, there were 35, 7 per cent of the Somali population in employment compared to 71, 6 per cent for the rest of the population (Daugstad 2008). At this same period the unemployment rate among Somalis was 8.2 per cent compared to 1, 1 for the rest of the population. Because of the poor performance in the labor market, a bigger part of the Somali population in Norway live on government subsidies in the form of social security funds from public institutions. For those Somalis who lived in Norway for three years or less, government subsidies made up 64 per cent of their household income (Daugstad 2008). But this number seems to improve the longer they stay in Norway. For those who are Norway for more than ten years, the dependency on government funds drops, as their participation in the labor market increases (Daugstad 2008).

However, discrimination is not the only reason why Somalis are scoring poorly in these indicators of development. Somalis are the last immigrant group to arrive in Norway, about 75 percent of them came the last ten years, and 55 have only been in Norway for an average of 5 years (Fangen 2008). Over 50 percent of the Somali population is under 20 years old. This is compounded by high illiteracy rate and lack of work experience that is necessary for their further career development.

Somali families, who came to Norway, experience a difficult living situation in adjusting to their new lives. Their way of life and how they organized their society, is in stark contrast with the way society is expected to be organized in the countries that they migrated to and

especially here in Norway. For example, having many children for Somalis is a very high status to attain, and here in Norway, it is practically and economically impossible to raise so many children and this poses a problem for many public officials who are not used to such large family constellations. This result is acculturation difficulties for Somalis in Norway.

Like many other Africans, Somalis have many children, and a very strong network of friends, relatives and clan members that often stay with the family or are connected to it in one way or the other (Engebrigtsen 2004). They came to a country that is almost difficult to identify with them. Norway is a typical modern state with institutions that function properly with democracy and the rule of law, while Somalis come from typically a failed state, where government institutions, lie in the ruins of the civil war. Society is also organized very differently in these two countries. For many Somalis, meeting the Norwegian society was a very big culture shock. They always try to distance themselves from everything that is un-Somali or un-Islam, and this made their adaptation process a difficult one.

This is in addition to all the traumas of their flight from war ravaged Somalia. Most of those who have migrated to Norway and other western countries have come through a traumatic life experiences that have shaped their lives. The civil war in Somalia have caused both the destruction of lives and properties and sent an unprecedented number of refugees across the globe, with some of them becoming refugees in neighboring countries who themselves have problems providing for their own citizens. Some of these refugees have spent considerable amount of time in asylum camps in Kenya and Ethiopia with terrible living conditions. Most of this camps lack basic human necessities like clean drinking water, proper housing and sanitation. The few, who were financially able, and lucky enough to pay for a journey, came to western European countries.

For many Somalis, a life in Europe or other western country was a dream come true, with expectation to live in a good life and care for their families and relatives back home. Meanwhile, the reception they got from the receiving society was not near what they expected. Their perception of what Norway would have been was in sharp contrast with the reality on the ground. This experience gave the meeting between Somalis and the host society a bad start.

1.3 Organization of the study

In addition to the introduction above of the background of the study and the research questions, the body of the thesis is composed of six.

Chapter two outlines important aspects of Somali society, their history, culture and the political situation. The focus will be the social organizations of Somali society. The phenomenon of clan, their settlements and composition will also be addressed. The sad situation that triggered the exodus of Somali refugees all over the world will also be addressed. In addition to this, the chapter also introduces some of the theoretical framework that will be used for the analysis of the empirical findings.

Chapter three covers the research design and the methodological aspect of the study. An introduction of the methods used in collecting data, the recruitment process, and a discussion of the merits and shortcoming of the used methods will be discussed. Important ethical issues that guided the moral of the current researched are also accounted for. Towards the end, a statement from the researcher is given to address the relationship of the researcher to the participants of the investigation.

Chapter four and five presents the findings of the current study. Here the responses from the participants of the investigation will be presented. The challenges facing the family in the immigration process, pre- and post migration living difficulties, the abuse of khat, transnational relations, changing gender roles, parenting, the loss of social network in exile, will make up the main themes presented here. At the same time I will try to discuss the findings and try to connect with the literature on the field of immigrant families in the Diaspora in general and Somali families in particular.

Chapter six makes up the concluding remarks of the current investigation. Here I try to conclude and revisit some of the main findings of the research project. I will also try to forward some preposition for future research on the field of immigrant families in the Diaspora in Norway.

CHAPTER 2:

SOMALIA: SOMALI POLITICS AND SOCIETY

For the last few years, Somalia has held strong onto the top spot in both the Index of failed States and Fragile States Index. And this country – if one can use that term – is likely to maintain its lead for the foreseeable future (Mwangi S. Kimenyi, The Brookings Institution, February 03, 2010).

Since this study is about the people who ethnically define themselves as Somalis and who predominantly inhabit the Somali peninsula, knowledge about their historical, cultural and politics is necessary in order to understand the situation of Somali families living in the Diaspora in different parts of the world. Such an understanding is also necessary in order to appreciate the findings and the analysis of this study. This Chapter is dedicated to an outline of Somali history, culture and society. A lot of attention will given to the Somali culture and society as far as the institution of the clan is concerned, at the same time the recent political development that created the Somali exodus in the first place will be addressed. Towards the end, the chapter will also introduce the theoretical framework that will guide the further analysis of the findings of the investigation.

> *"Burburka ku dhacay manta qoyska Soomaliyeed ee kusugan qurbaha, waxaa horseeday burburka ku yimid qaranka dhisnaa ee dumay dabayaaqadii 1991"* (male 60 years).

> (The disintegration of the Somali family in exile, was caused by the collapse of the Somali state at the end of 1991) (My own translation).

2.1 Background: Somalis, their origin and settlements

The Somali speaking people hail from the bigger family of eastern Cushites according to many Somali historians and anthropologists (Lewis, 2004; Abdullahi 2001) The Eastern Cushites comprise of tribes like the Borana who are found in the border region between Kenya and Ethiopia, the Gala, the Burji and many other small clans that live in the border regions of Ethiopia and Kenya. Somalis make up the largest ethnic entity among the eastern Cushites.

The people, who identify themselves as ethnic Somalis, are today spread over a vast area of land that was once the Somali peninsula. They make up one of the largest single ethnic groups in Africa, and are found in all the East African countries (Issa-Salwe 1996; Lewis 2002). The Somali people are estimated to number almost ten million. They are distributed from the Awash Valley in the north-west, around the periphery of the Ethiopian highlands and along the Gulf of Aden and the India ocean coast to the Tana River in North Eastern Kenya (Lewis 1993, 2002 see also appendix 5 for the Map of the Somali Penninsula). Because there is no official statistics about the population of Somalis in the Horn of Africa, there is disagreement among Somali historian on their number. For example, Abdullahi (2001) puts the figure up to ten million while many other scholars put these figure to twelve million (Lewis, 1993).

My main aim of taking all Somalis under one ethnic group, is that despite the fact that many Somalis come to Norway because of the civil war in Somalia, other ethnic Somalis who inhabit for example in Kenya, Djibouti or Ethiopia, came also to Norway either because of the oppressiveness of their governments or in search of a better live for themselves and their children. But common for all Somalis are the cultural and linguistic heritage that unites them as Somalis wherever they are. "Somalis speak one language, Somali, are not confined to Somalia or Somaliland alone but also inhabit parts of Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. They are culturally homogenous with few variations" (Diriye 2001:8). Despite all the common characteristics, physical features, culture, language, religion, Somalis are divided along clan lineages.

2.2 Traditional social organization

"The most pervasive organizational principle in traditional Somali social organization is kinship, traced patrilineally in the male line. Genealogies tracing descent (*tol*) from common ancestors, are the basis for the division of the population into clan and sub-clan" (Lewis 1993:47). Kinship ties are traced backwards through the individual's father, his grandfather, and so on until the founding ancestor (ibid). Children both boys and girls belong to the clan of their father. In the event of marriage, a woman will still belong to her clan and will not take the name of her husband after marriage.

The Somalis family is a part of the clan for better for worse. This relationship is based on rights but has responsibilities too. Being a member of a clan is a very important social support

for the individual as well as the family. The clan represents a social and economical security element where members enjoy certain rights. The clan also forms the basic of political organization in Somali society. "Somali political allegiance are determined by descent in the male line, and whatever their precise historical content, it is their lineage genealogies which direct the lines of political alliances and division" (Lewis 2002:10). These genealogies also define the basic political status of the individual in Somali society at large and assign him a specific place in the social system. (Gundel 2006). The members are there for one another both in good and bad times.

Ethnic Somalis are divided into main clans and sub-clans, who are led by sultans, *garad, boqor, ugas or malaq*. As (Lewis 2002) puts it, the clan effectively forms the largest political entity among Somalis numbering somewhere between 10,000 and 100,000 individuals. Being a member of the clan for Somalis living in exile comes with its challenges and in some cases can cause family conflict especially in times of inter-clan conflict where the family is expected to support the clan with some donations of money. But it also creates social security that they can fall on in times marriage, expensive operations, death or when a clan member is denied asylum in Norway. Here the clan comes and support the person financially to travel to other European country, or home and start his life there.

For many Somalis, clan has been both a blessing and a curse. It has been a blessing because the clan was a security net that helped its members in times of need, and it is a curse because it is one of the causes of the ongoing conflict and an obstacle to peace. Clannishness as a way of life has played a key role in creating the current Somali emergency. But, together with the natural resilience of Somali society and the people's resourcefulness and self reliance, it has also played a central role in limiting the scope of the disaster. "Survival mechanisms based on networks of intra-clan cooperation as mutual assistance have provided a vital safety net and saved the lives of large numbers of women and children" (Millas 1996 in Bryden & Steiner 1998)

According to Lewis, Somalis are divided into six different clans with to some extent geographically distinct areas. These are the Dir, Isaaq, Darod, Hawiye,who collectively make up the Samaale, and Digil and Rahanweyn make up the Saab. According to Abdullahi (2002), the Sab are the largest minority who live in southwestern Somalia. The word Somali doesn't apply to them and are distinguished and described by Somalis as the saab. The saab stand opposed to the Somali. Sometimes they are called the Digil and the Mirifle, after their

political clan confederation, and sometimes they are simply called the Rahanweyn. "The saab are thought to be descended from an admixture of migrating Somalis, Oromo substrate populations who had preceded the arrival of Somalis in the area and pre-Cushitic Bantu villagers and even more ancient hunter-gatherers of the area" (Abdullahi 2001:9). "The Dir and Issaq inhabit the north western part of Somalia, Djibouti and Harar areas of western Somalia. The Darod who are the largest and most widely distributed of all the other clans, inhabit north-eastern Somalia, north-eastern Kenya and the Ogaden region of eastern Ethiopia also called Somali West. Hawiye clans stretch across Shabelle River into the region occupied by the Digil and the Rahanweyn. They occur again, along the various Darod nomadic clans in the Trans-Juba region and north-eastern Kenya" (Lewis 1993:12).

In addition to these six big clans, they are other minorities who mainly inhabit in the Banadir region and along the Indian Ocean coastline. Their ethnic origins include coastal Bantus, Persian and Arab immigrants and people of Cushitic origin. They speak a Somali dialect known as coastal Somali or Benadiri, born out contact between the Somali and Maay speakers on the one hand and Swahili speakers on the other hand (Abdullahi 2001:10) The Bantu groups, also variously known as Wagosha (the people of the marshes) are scattered groups in southern Somalia. They speak either the Somali dialect of the Benadiri or the Maay language of the Rahanweyn depending on the location of their community. The Eyle who are predominantly hunter-gatherers and the mainly Swahili speaking are much smaller communities they inhabit the Benadir region and the rest of south Somalia (Ibid).

The traditional Somali culture can't be separated from the basis of their economic sustenance which is animal husbandry. They herd camel that is considered the heart of the pastoral culture, cattle and sheep. Their lives are dictated by the prevailing weather conditions. Pastoralists move with their animals from place to place in search of water and greener pastures, these puts them in constant friction with their neighbors. Inter-clan fighting is very common between pastoral nomads (Lewis 1998).

Between 60% and 70% of the population are nomadic or have nomadic affiliations, while many of the remainder combine cultivation and also keep some animals (Lewis, 1993:10). But that number has drastically changed because of prolonged droughts many families changed their nomadic lifestyles and moved to big towns and cities for example Suleyman (1991), puts the number who are still nomads to about 30%. As far as their economic baseline and the areas they inhabit is concerned, we can broadly categorize the population into three. The most

important and the largest are the pastoral nomads who depend on their animals. They speak Somali and are the big clans for example the Dir, Issaq, Darod and the Hawiye, the second group is the cultivating societies who inhabit between the fertile land of the Rivers Juba and Shabelle (Gardner & Warsame 2004; Lewis 1993, 2002). They understand the Somali language but have their own distinct dialect; they are the Digil and the Rahanweyn, the latter comprising of many different clans who come together. The third group is a collection of different big tribes and minorities; they are involved in the formal sector either in business or working in the public sector. They usually inhabit the Banadir region and along the Somali coast.

2.3 Political Development in Somalia

For the last few years, Somalia has held strong on to the top spot in both the Index of Failed states and the fragile state Index (The Brookings Institution, 2010). By definition of a failed state, Somalia has no single legitimate governing authority and is divided among numerous constituent factions that are relatively strong and have control over lucrative source of revenue (Ibid). The country is almost on the verge of collapse with death and destruction being the order of the day. But the Somali nightmare began way beyond the outbreak of the civil war that laid the ground for the demise of the Somali state. In this part of this chapter, I will try to give a brief historical review of the Somali political development.

2.3.1   Somalia: State collapse and civil war

There was no Somali state before European colonization, which divided the nation into five parts (French Somaliland, British Somaliland, and Somali West also called the Ogaden region, Italian Somaliland, and the Northern Frontier Districts in Kenya (EU report 1995). After independence in 1960, British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland joined and created what is the Somali Republic.

Shortly after independence and the installation of a civilian administration, there were already signs of the deep division and suspicion between the different parts of the country, and between the different clans (Gassim 2002). This division was a strategy adapted by the colonialist to effectively control the different Somali tribes, putting them against each other

and arming and enriching one clan over the other. The tension, accusation and counter accusation, led to the assassination of President Abdirashid Sharmaarke, and consequently a military coup that ended the civilian government and put in place a repressive dictatorial regime that was led by Major general Mohamed Siyad Barre (see also Acord, 2002; Gardner & El Bushra; Issa-Salwe 1996). During this period, Somalia has both seen development and destruction. The years shortly after the military coup, the country has seen a lot of development most notably on the education sector where the government strategically made good programs for educating the population (Acord 2002; Issa-Salwe 1996). At the same time, the regime did all it could to consolidate power and resources on few hand and silence opponent by either jailing, killing or sending them away to exile. When these methods were not working, the regime mobilized the population towards external wars with other countries for example Ethiopia and Kenya. The main reason behind, was to turn the public critics away from the regime, and create a national feeling that will enhance unity among the people. The regime thought that in order to enhance unity among the population; they had to cultivate an external enemy. Most of these wars have catastrophically impacted the social economic situation of the country.

The repressiveness of the regime and the deteriorating socio-economical situation forced many opponents of the regime to flee to neighboring countries and beyond. Many armed opposition groups, who were mostly clan-based, were formed in order to oust the regime. These armed rebellion gained strength and momentum in late 1980s, with most of them establishing bases within the different regions of their clan loyalties. For example the SNM had their bases in Somaliland, while Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) had theirs in Puntland. According to Lewis, the latter was formed by military officers from that region who played a role in an attempted coup in 1978 to oust the regime of President Mohamed Siyad Barre. The Somali National Movement (SNM) despite its name drew support from the clans inhabiting Somaliland (Lewis, 1993:67).

Every one of these clan-based groups had their own agenda for Somalia that will see to it that their clan got as much power as they could, and never had any national or party program for their movement. "With no common national platform, none of the opposition movements was interested in discussing with others the formation of post-Siyad Barre government of national unity" (Gassim, 2002:83). The only common agenda they had was to oust the regime of Siyad Barre, but what they never taught about was the aftermath of the departure of the regime. These fatal mistake as we saw afterward, created a situation of chaos and destruction. The

pressure on the government was intensified by inter-clan fighting within the city of Mogadishu that was engineered by the regime to repress rebellious clans. Meanwhile these had an unintended consequence of what they were meant to achieve. These rebellions within Mogadishu, turn very bloody inciting a clan-based hatred which led to the demise of the regime in 1991.

After the regime was ousted in 1991, those groups who succeeded them were so disorganized and divided that they couldn't form any government that had a national profile. They started fighting against each other for control of power and resources, and the country disintegrated into anarchy and civil war. Killings, looting, rape and the destruction of property led to a large influx of refugees within the country, and some crossing borders beyond Africa and as far the northern hemisphere. The fighting between violent marauding militia created a humanitarian crisis and the death of several hundred thousand civilian deaths. This led the international community to intervene in 1992 and help the distribution of emergency relief and the protection of aid workers (Gardner & El Bushra 2004).

In May 18th 1991, Somaliland unilaterally declared independence from Somalia and named itself Somaliland republic, but no country has recognized Somaliland as a republic. Because of the prevailing peaceful situation, there is a lot of progress in socio-economic sectors (Suleyman 1991; Gardner & El Bushra 2004). Another province that declared its autonomy from Somalia is the north eastern region of Puntland. They declared their independence in 1998 and have created a suitable situation for developing into a peaceful region.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The above introduction was meant to lay the context background of the current study. In this sub-section I try to introduce some of the theoretical background that I will later use in the analysis of my empirical findings.

2.4.1 Collective versus Individual based cultures

Somali immigrants culturally differ from the Norwegian society in more than one way. Their core cultural values are based on a mixture of traditional pastoral-nomadic lifestyle and the Islamic way of life. On the other hand, Norwegian culture has been characterized as individual-based modern society. Collective cultures place more importance on the group – or the family rather than the individual. In Somali culture a strong sense of loyalty to the family and the clan is very important aspect of being a Somali. According to Eriksen & Sørheim (1999) there exist a clear value difference between tradition-based cultures and the modern ones. Modern societies are characterized by industrialization, bureaucracy, non-religious, nuclear-based family, individual, guilt and justice oriented. On the other hand, the tradition-based societies are characterized by primary production; it is hierarchical, religious, relative-based collective social and family organization. The later describes the Somali culture better because traditions and religion plays a very important role in Somali culture. Somalis in Norway are today over represented in all the mosques in and around Oslo.

Somali family structure was based on an extended network of relations who were pretty much interdependent. The family was hierarchal and gender roles were clear defined. Men are main breadwinners of the family and made important decision for their family. Women took care of the household caring for the children and the elderly. Children upbringing was a responsibility for the whole family including the relatives and the neighbors. They were brought up to obey their parents and respect the other members of the family (Diriye 2001; Lewis 1993)

Another striking difference between the Norwegian and the Somali family is the composition of the family and parenting styles. The Norwegian nuclear family is composed of father, mother and two children (Eriksen 1999), while the Somali family is larger than just parents and their children. In a traditional Somali family, aunts, uncles and their children, grandparents are also considered as an integrated part and parcel of the family (Boyl & Ali 2009). Norway is a typical individualistic culture. Children are raised to be independent and

sometimes disagree with their parents in terms of opinion. Unlike the Norwegian culture, Somali children are raised to be dependent on their parents and unquestionably listen to their advices. Failure to take their advice can result in to been cursed (Abdullahi 2001; McGown 1999).

Meanwhile as we have seen from the material I gathered, one can easily make the mistake of thinking that there is uniformity in every culture. Within the same culture, one can find both modernism and traditionalism in the one and same culture. "Both the immigrant population and the host society are heterogeneous. Immigrants, even those of the same nationality, are frequently divided by social class, the timing of their arrival, and their generation" (Portes & Rumbaut 2001:45). So to generalize the Somali culture of the Norwegian culture as either traditional or modern can be misleading (see also Eriksen & Sørheim 1999; Thune 2004)

Migration from traditional collectivist culture, like the one Somalis hail from to individualistic cultures like the Norwegian, can cause a lot of acculturation difficulties for both the individuals and the families. "The cultural distance between the culture of origin and that of the new society can threaten the harmony of immigrant family relations, but when the core cultural values of family embeddedness are supported by their own culture as well as their own ethno cultural social network, immigrant families is able to maintain healthy familial relations (Kwak 2003).

2.4.2   Immigration and acculturation

The phenomenon of people migrating from their home country has existed throughout human history. The cause of their movement can be different, but the reasons are more or less the same. Individuals immigrate for diverse reasons and within complex contexts; the decision is often connected to the hope of more satisfactory conditions of life in their new country and a better future for their children (Aizpurua 2008).

Immigration is the process of social change whereby an individual moves from one cultural setting to another for the purpose of settling down either permanently or for a prolonged period (Bhugra & Jones 2001). Immigrants to a new country face significant acculturation issues. The process of migration is stressful as it demands emotional, social, cultural and economic adjustments as it puts an extra ordinary stress on individuals and families (Thomas, 1995; Bhugra & Jones 2001).

Immigrants can be classified according to their motives and reasons for their movements from their country of origin (Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Fisher & Sonn 2005; Ward *et al* 2001; Berry *et al* 1997). "The distinction hinges on the notion of refugees as involuntary and relatively unprepared migrants "pushed out" by coercive political conditions or by an "exposure to disaster," versus immigrants as voluntary and better-prepared movers "pulled inn" by perceived opportunities for economic advancement or family re-unification" (Portes and Rumbaut 2006:179). Individuals who have decided to leave their home countries as a result of a relatively free choice, seeking to improve social and economic conditions of life are considered immigrants. Unlike refugees, immigrants are pulled towards a new country in pursuit of personal, familial, social, financial and political goals. Fong (2004) defined immigrants as foreign-born persons who have left their nation of birth to dwell in another country.

On the other extreme, refugees are individuals forced to relocate because of perceived threat. Some of the contexts of refugees' relocation are characterized by political persecution, social crisis and wars (Ward *et al* 2001). A refugee is defined according to the 1951 Geneva Convention as a person who:

> Owing to a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (United Nations 1951 Geneva Convention)

Kibreab (2005:19) defines refugees as "People who flee against their will because of fear for their lives. They are pushed from their social, cultural and their economics moorings by conditions that are or are perceived to be potentially or imminently threatening for their physical safety, security, dignity, liberty and property. An actual or perceived threat to this central tenet of human existence renders the place of their abode hazardous and consequently makes the need to see safe haven and succor in a neighboring country or elsewhere imperative".

Common for refugees and migrants is that they share many of the same characteristics and concerns as far as inter-cultural contact and change is concerned. They have crossed cultures and are confronted with the demands of adapting to life in a new and often unfamiliar setting (Ward *et al* 2001). But despite these commonalities refugees are more disadvantaged as their problems are compounded but their prior experience of traumatic situation because of the war

and their flight. This poses an extra challenge for them as they try to resettle in their new homes (Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Berry *et al* 1997; Ward *et al* 2001).

Shortly after their arrival, some of the main issues that immigrants to a new country have to deal with are how to address the difficulties involved in meeting a new culture, most of the times quite different from their own. This is even worse for those cultures that share the least with the host culture." Refugee populations traumatically displaced from familiar physical and socio-cultural context, must re-invent new identities and meanings for their lives in alien places of resettlement. In addition to coping with loss, refugees must also respond to the cultures and laws of the dominant society in which they are relocated (Krulfeld 1994:71).

The adaptation process of immigrants in a distant culture represents a complex readjustment of take-for-granted values, ideals, and ways of behaving and expressing thoughts and emotions (Aizpurua 2008). This make their acculturation and adaptation process far much difficult than for example immigrants who come from cultures similar to the host populations' culture.

2.4.3   Acculturation: Definition

Acculturation is a dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members (Berry 2005). Acculturation occurs both at a group level and an individual level. At the group level, it involves changes in social structures and institutions and in cultural practices. At the individual level, it involves changes in a person's behavior (Ibid) According to Redfield *et al*.; 1936, The term acculturation is defined as the culture change that occurs between groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changing in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups.

Another definition of acculturation given by Social Research Council in 1954:

> Acculturation may be defined as cultural change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems. Acculturative change may be the consequence of direct cultural transmition: it may be derived from monocultural causes such as ecological or demographic modification induced by an impinging culture; it may be delayed, as with internal adjustments following upon the acceptance of alien traits or patterns: or it may be a reactive adaption of traditional modes of life. Its dynamics can be seen as the selective

adaption of value systems, the process of integration and differentiation, the generation of development sequences, and the operation of role determinants (Page, 974).

Scholars have categorized acculturation into two models: the linear-bipolar also called the unidimentional model and the two-dimensional also called multidimensional models of acculturation. The linear model assumes that acculturation is a process of absorption into the dominant culture implying a loss of identification with the culture of origin or ethnic group. The linear model supports an assimilation outcome where immigrants loss their cultural identity and adapt to the culture of the host community. Meanwhile this is less ideal nowadays because many of the receiving countries have become multicultural societies. Multicultural societies is characterised by cultural pluralism – as in the case of USA and many western European countries. As an ideal, multiculturalism celebrates cultural variety (for example linguistic and religious diversity), and may be contrasted with the assimilationist ideal (Marshal 1994). By contrast the basic premise of bi-dimensional models is that individuals can develop positive ties with both the referent ethnic group and the new mainstream culture (Castro 2003). This model is not perfect as it has its shortcomings as was confirmed by the current investigation. It cannot be assumed that immigrant can freely choose the acculturation pattern that best suits them. For instance some host countries promote as much as they can so that immigrants take the dominant host culture.

One of the most widely cited acculturation model was put forward by J. W. Berry. According to Berry's (1997) model, there are four acculturation options that are available to individuals and groups in multicultural societies. These four options are assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization.

The assimilation option is when immigrants relinquish their culture and take the dominant culture of the host society. The integration option which is the most widely used method of socializing the new citizens into society, is when the newcomers maintain their cultural identity and integrity while at the same time making some compromises so as to become an integral part of the larger societal framework. When groups try to maintain their own traditional way of life outside the larger society, they become separated. When a dominant group tries to keep the dominated group outside the participation of society, it will be segregation. Marginalization happens when a group losses their cultural and psychological contact with both their traditional and larger society either by exclusion or withdrawal from society (Berry 1997).

Meanwhile Berry's model of acculturation has not been without shortcomings. The acculturation paradigm of measuring assimilation, separation, integration and marginalization was dismissed as confusing dimensional and categorical conceptions as it fails to produce data from mutually exclusive scales (Rudmin 2003). Doubts were also casted upon the notion that integration is preferred by minority groups or are beneficial for them. Berry's model of integration also takes for granted that all receiving societies open their doors for immigrants to freely integrate. A very important prerequisite for successful adaptation is for the dominant to adapt positive measures to integrate the newcomers into society.

Another shortcoming of Berry's model of acculturation is that he takes for granted that there is one culture among immigrants. The empirical evidence from the current research has shown that despite the common origin, immigrants don't necessarily share a common culture. Differences in socio-economic characteristics and where they hail from, dictate there cultural behaviors. There are many factors that play a crucial role in the acculturation strategies individuals choose and in the resulting levels of psychological stress. Some of these factors are constituted by personal characteristics built within a specific demographic, psychological and cultural context playing an influential role prior to immigration and during the acculturation process (Aizpurua 2009).

2.4.4 Factors affecting the process of acculturation and adaptation

Many factors play an important role as individual and groups try to find their place in a new and often different cultural and environmental setting. Some of the most mentioned moderating factors are the ethnographic characteristics of both the sending and the receiving societies. As far as the society of origin is concerned, some of these factors include language, religious beliefs, socio-economic and political situation. On the receiving side, immigration history, policies and attitudes towards immigrants play a crucial role in the acculturation and adaptation of the newcomers. (Berry, Segal, Marshal, Kagitcibasi 1997). Under this category also the cultural distance between the sending and the receiving societies play a factor. The more the culture of the newcomer group is different from the host society, the difficult the adaptation process will become.

Another important factor that affects the adaptation process is the cause of the relocation in the first place. Here a clear difference exits between immigrants who out free choice as Fisher

and Sonn (2005) puts it, relocated for reasons of bettering their economic and social wellbeing and who wish to permanently relocate, and those who were forcibly flashed out of their homes because of political, religious oppression, civil strife or natural calamities. The latter comprises of mainly refugees and asylum seekers. "This group of acculturating persons faces the greatest risk during the process of adaptation because of three factors, they are involuntary, migratory and in many cases temporary (Berry *et al* 1997). They live in uncertain situation especially for the asylum seekers who are still waiting for their final status in the new country. Somalis are refugees in Norway who are accepted on a humanitarian basis. In addition refugees and asylum seekers have likely experienced the most difficult pre-acculturation situation, including war, famine, deprivation, torture and humiliation (at the individual level) and massive exclusion or domination (at the group level) (Berry *et al* 1997). Other important factors impacting the acculturation and adaptation process include gender and the educational level of the immigrating individuals. As far as gender is concerned, it has been found women are disadvantaged in the acculturation process in the sense that their attempt to assume new gender roles because of increased economic independence may bring conflict between them and their husbands. The level of educations has also been mentioned as a consistent factor associated with better adaptation capacity. The higher the education of the individual the better chances he has in for example in getting jobs or solving personal problems (Berry 1997).

2.4.5   Immigrants family dynamics

Migration has a decisive impact on the lives of individuals and families. For families, the process of immigration often includes the loss of social network, and acculturation challenges like acquiring social skills of learning a new language and culture as well as changes in both socio-cultural and economic situation. Sociologists have investigated the experience of immigrant families in their process of adjusting to new socio-cultural milieu. Some of the themes that dominated these investigations were the gender dynamics and the relationship between immigrant parents and children. Gender and generational conflict has been argued by many researchers as a cause of stress for newcomer families. A key issue in this perspective is the expectations and cultural gaps between the worlds of their former cultures and those of their new situation in the absence of all the things that supported the family in their former culture. As Foner (1997: 961) explained "The immigrant family is a place where there a

dynamic interplay between structure, culture and agency – where creative culture-building takes place in the context of external social and economic forces as wells as immigrants' pre-migration cultural frameworks.

Numerous studies have documented the experience of immigrant families as they try to reestablish themselves in a new environment (Portes & Rumbaut 2001, 2006; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994: Mahdi 1999; Darvishpour 2002).

Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) study of the experience of Mexican families revealed valuable insights in to how traditional forms of patriarchy break down or continue unchanged after migration. According to her after migration, strong traditional marriage patterns may shift as spousal separation, conflict and renegotiations and new living and working arrangements change the rules that organize their daily life. The major sources of contention between the husbands and their wives are the division of household labor, the decision making process and the new economic situation of immigrant women. Despite the relatively balanced gender among immigrants she studied, coming to a new country with a more gender equal society that gives opportunity to women challenged the male domination. The male didn't approve on for example women working and engaging in activities outside her house. Hondagneu-Sotelo also observed the process of family stage migration where the family members migrate different times. In the absence of their husbands, women assumed the provider roles of their husbands in order to feed their families. This change was later strengthened by their migration to the United States.

Gender role reversals among patriarchal societies have been also documented in other studies. Mahdi (1999) and Darvishpour (2002) study of Iranian families in the United States and in Sweden, found in change in spousal roles. The traditional Iranian family where men were the primary wage earners have been challenged by women's increased academic achievements and their entry in to the labor marker. However this new roles are accompanied by high degree of stress but also greater satisfaction and realization of their potentials.

Renegotiation of gender roles due to immigration are also illustrated in other research. Ilene, Sepali & Robin (2008) study of Ethiopian immigrants in Toronto and Boyle & Ali (2009) on Somali immigrants in Minnesota revealed similar findings. The new socio-economic reality of these families challenged conventional ways of organizing themselves as families.

Another contending issue facing immigrant families is the growing cultural discrepancies between the parents and their children. "At the heart of it are the relationship between immigrant parents and their children and the contradictions that are often engendered in the process of seeking to fulfill the hope and desires of both (Portes & Rumbaut 2001). Parents-child conflict due to cultural and intergenerational gap has been argued by several researchers as a stressor that impairs the adaptation process of immigrant families in the Diaspora (Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Phinney and Vedder 2006).

Portes and Rumbaut's Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) among Latino and Asian immigrant families found high levels of intergenerational conflict within these families. The main cause is this conflict according to the study was role reversal. This occurs when children's acculturation has moved so far ahead of their parents and the authority of the parents is challenged with children assuming the role of cultural interpreters for their parents. Because they speak the language and know the culture better, second-generation immigrant youth are often able to define the situation for themselves, prematurely freeing themselves from parental control (Portes & Rumbaut 2001).

Intergenerational value discrepancies between parents and children can cause conflict that lead to disruption in family cohesion and result in adjustment problems for adolescents (Phinney & Vedder 2006). In every society, parents strive to preserve their cultures and pass on to their children and socialize them in a way that reflects the cultural values of their parents. Immigrants from cultures that are different from the host society's culture are faced with the daunting challenge trying to preserve their cultural heritage at the face of a more dominant and totally antagonistic culture. At the same time, immigrant parents send their children to school, here the children meet and socialize and make friends with peers who hail from the dominant culture. Immigrant children are torn between two worlds; they are exposed to both the culture of the parents and the culture of the host society (Phinney & Vedder 2006). This results in a loyalty conflict among immigrant children where as we have in Thun's (2004) research on Somali adolescent girls, the choice between two ideals that are based on two different cultural values. The girls in her interview had to deal with one ideal based the Islamic and Somali cultural values on the one hand, and one that is based on Norwegian and western value on the other hand (Thune 2004: 33). The children behave in a way conformant with what their parents wish of them, and behave in another way in the presence of members of the host culture.

An intergenerational value discrepancy between parents and children cannot only be explained by acculturation, as generational gap is also a developmental phenomenon found in many cultures (Phinney & Vedder 2006). But for immigrants and refugees, they have to bear with the double challenge of growing generational gap while at the same time trying to find their place in a new cultural setting. In the light of the above perspective, *"How are Somali immigrant families faring in gender and generational challenges as they reestablish themselves as families in Norway"*

Conclusion

The above outline of Somali political history and society was meant to address important developments in Somalia. Meanwhile coming from the social and the political situations that I have outlined above, has impacted Somali families living in exile in Norway. In the next chapter I will try to introduce the methods I used in finding about the Somali families who have been granted asylum and today living in Norway.

In addition the chapter introduced and discussed some theoretical framework that will be as to help the analysis of the findings. Some of these frameworks include the dichotomies of traditional-Collective versus modern-individualist culture to describe the difference between Somali and the Norwegian culture (Eriksen & Sørheim 1999). Migration to western countries caused gender roles reversals. Traditional patriarchal cultures where the husbands were the sole providers have been challenged in exile as women because of their strengthened economic situation (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Darvishpour 2002; Mahdi 1999). Intergenerational and cultural value discrepancies as a result of migration created conflict of loyalty between children and their parents and the wider society (Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Phinney & Vedder 2006).

CHAPTER 3:

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This research project was born out of the concern for the growing debate on the Somali community in Norway. Somalis, one of the latest immigrant groups to arrive in Norway are faced with the challenge of adapting to a new country. Unemployment, poor health, housing problems and a growing rate of family breakdowns just to mention some few, are some of the problems the community is struggling with. In the years 2004 and 2005, the Communal and Regional Department of Norway (KRD), paid 4 million Norwegian crowns to projects that were aimed at improving the living situation of the Somali community in Norway. These projects were meant to address growing social problems among Somalis living in Norway (Siyad *et al*, 2005). I was one of those who got a chance to work with one of this project as a project assistant and as a result introduced me to the magnitude of the challenges the community is facing. As a result, I developed an interest to at least positively contribute to the debate and hence this investigation.

Another reason for the choice of this project was my experience in mediating between Somali families in marital conflict. I took part in more than a dozen mediation involving Somali family who were locked up in a marital conflict. This gave me an extra motivation to at least create a debate among the Somali community in order to tackle this growing family problem. What I wanted was the perspective of Somali families about their situation as families in exile in Norway. Hence the choice of my method of data collection fell on the qualitative approach. This research using the qualitative approach, explores the general situation of the Somali family living in exile in Norway, and specifically the impact of the changing socio-economic situation on their lives.

In this chapter, the practical methodological work that laid the foundation of these research findings will be discussed. An account of the methods used, the process surrounding the collection of data, and eventually justification of the choices that were made. Further the advantages and disadvantages of the approach selected will be addressed. As far as the overall picture of the project is concerned, an account of the problems that I accounted during the process of the research project as well as the ethical considerations taken will be addressed.

The chapter is organized in such as follows: I start to introduce the methods used to gather the information needed to answer the research questions, the data collected, and the process of

selecting my informants, the study community and scope of the area. Towards the end of the chapter, ethical considerations made throughout the project will be accounted for.

3.1 Qualitative research

Since the main objective of this study is finding out the impact of the changing socio-structural situation on the family, it becomes very necessary for me to talk to Somali families so that they could describe their situation and share with me their perception as far as their situation is concerned. What I needed was to catch the meaning these families attach to their different experiences, and the qualitative approaches become the method that was appropriate to gather such personal perspectives. "Qualitative research aims to provide an in depth understanding of peoples' experience, perspectives and histories in the context of their personal circumstances or setting" (Spencer *et al* 2003).

Qualitative research is characterized by a concern with exploring phenomena from the perspective of those being studied. The word qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, intensity or frequency (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). In other words qualitative research strategy usually emphasizes words and detailed description of the phenomena being studied rather than the quantification in the process of data collection and analysis (see also Bryman 2004; Widerberg 2005). Other characteristics of qualitative approach was put forward by Thagaard (2003) according to her, the qualitative approach uses analysis of text instead of numbers, it involves nearness and closeness to the respondents as opposed to distance to respondents (Thagaard 2003). The qualitative approach often deals with small and often carefully chosen selections of respondents. In the current study respondents were selected because of their experiences and knowledge of the phenomenon being studied.

The main aim of this investigation is to find the meaning the respondents attach to their lived experience and gather the truth according to their situation. As Denzin *et al* (2003) puts it, the qualitative researcher stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied. By personally talking to the respondents, the interviewer get close to their lives in a way that would have been impossible if other method

of data collections has been used. I watched as they gathered their views and try to answer the questions, this created an atmosphere of trust between me and my respondent.

Because you meet your respondents at their own premises, and that they have the freedom to answer your questions in their own words and formulation, qualitative research has been described as flexible. As Bryman (2004) puts it, one of the most preoccupations of qualitative researchers is their commitment to viewing events and the social world through the eyes of the people being studied. This flexibility helps in enriching the quality of the data that is collected. One of the most used methods of collecting data in qualitative investigation is the qualitative interview. In this method of data collection, the researcher has the possibilities of choosing between different forms of interview guide, and he doesn't have to follow it, and he can change the structure of the interview during the interview process.

This study, using qualitative methods of focus group discussions and interviewing, explores the impact of the changing socio-structural situation structure of Somali families living in exile in Norway. The main source of my empirical material was focus group discussions and individual interviews.

3.2 Data collection

The main source of my empirical data was focus group discussions and qualitative interviews with Somali men and women. The men and the women both comprised of married and some of them divorced. Common for all the respondents was they had children here in Norway. The data material comprised of four focus group discussions with a total of fifteen respondents, and eight individual qualitative interviews. The respondents lived in Oslo, Bærum and Asker. The main reason behind my choice of this area is because of the big population of Somalis living in and around Oslo. According to statistic Norway, at the start of 2008 there were 22.000 Somalis living in Norway, of which fifty per cent of that number living in Oslo.

The focus group discussion was gender segregated. The first discussion was with Somali men living in Oslo, the second was with women and in Asker followed by men in Asker and then finally women in Oslo. This was followed by the individual interviews, and of all the respondents in the project, except one person came from outside the greater Oslo area. One of the respondents was from Stange and was an important respondent, because his extensive knowledge of the Somali culture and society. The focus group discussions took between one

hour and one and half hour, while the interviews took between forty five minutes and one hour. All the conversation was audio taped and later transcribed.

The fieldwork was conducted between December 2008 and May 2009. The first focus discussion was held in a room in a Somali mosque in Tøyen. The second discussion was conducted in Asker at the home of one of the respondents. The third was conducted at a Somali community centre in Asker, and finally the fourth was conducted in the home of one of the respondents from Oslo. As far as the individual interview was concerned, some were conducted at homes while others were conducted at rooms borrowed from community centers in Oslo and in Asker.

3.2.1 Selection of informants

The selection process started with an application to Norwegian Social Scientific Data Service (NSD). This was done on connection to the collection of personal information. After my application was approved, the process of contacting my respondents followed shortly.

Respondents were selected and recruited from different arenas and places. All the respondents were directly contacted by myself both through telephone and personally speaking to them. I visited Somali mosques, cafes and even homes in the selection period. The main criterion of selecting the respondents was that they were Somalis and that they had families and children in Norway. Some of the respondents were selected because of their age, knowledge of the Somali culture and their prior experiences of raising children in Somalia and in Norway. The main reason behind this was to get a comparative picture of raising families in Somalia versus in Norway. Others were selected because they were single parents who were divorced by their spouses and who were raising children alone in Norway.

A total of 23 participants took part in the research project. Of the total number of the parents that were interviewed, 14 of them were men and 9 of them were women; 12 of the men were married, while 2 of them were divorced. As concerns the women respondents, 4 of them were married and 5 of them were divorced. 13 of those parents interviewed had children prior to their migration to Norway, while 14 of all those interviewed got children after coming to Norway. The number of those who experienced having children both in Somalia and in Norway were 11 parents (See appendix 4). Common for all the respondents, was that they share the experience of coming from a war torn country and raising families here in Norway.

The answers that emerge from the research questions were organized and categorized in topics representing the different parts of these findings chapter.

3.2.2 Focus group discussions

Since this project was designed to explore the perspectives of Somali families, my choice of focus group discussion was for three main reasons. The main reason behind my choice of these methods is in consideration of my main research informants who generally are skeptic to research and who could feel uncomfortable in being interviewed. Somalis have no history of modern social scientific research, so this form of creating knowledge was not very well know in Somalia. Secondly, Somalis are culturally known for their oratory skills and they like discussing issues informally; the use of focus group discussion creates an atmosphere of relaxation and can help us in the creation of a more natural data. Thirdly and most importantly, I needed to explore the collective meaning my respondents attach to raising families in Norway.

"The focus group method is a form of group interview in which there are several participants in addition to the moderator, there is an emphasis in the questioning on a particular fairly tightly defined topic, and the accent is upon interaction within the group and the joint construction of meaning" (Bryman 2004:346). As far as this research project was concerned, focus group interviews was used to gathering data relevant to the issue at hand, and also trying to understand what the participants are preoccupied with, when it concerns their adaptations process as families in exile and their experience of living here as families. The main idea behind the use of this method, was at the same time generate more questions for qualitative individual interviews that was to follow this line of group discussions.

During the collection of data, four group discussions were conducted. This group discussion was arranged as follows: A group of men started, followed by a group of women, then men and the final group was women. This was done strategically to lead this discussion while I still had the different gender perspectives. This helped me asked some question that I got from the preceding group discussion. The groups were gender segregated, and the main reason behind this was that Somali women are very uncomfortable discussing such a sensitive topic in front of Somali men. The other reason is that Somali is a patriarchal society with a history

of marginalizing women (Steiner & Bryden 1998; Abdullahi 2001. The male participants of a mixed discussion can easily dominate the discussion.

The main advantage in using this method of data collection was for me as a researcher the engagement of the participants and the way they challenged themselves and discussed the issue at hand in great depth. As Bryman also argued, the focus group offers the researcher the opportunity to study the ways in which individuals collectively make sense of a phenomenon and construct meaning around it (Bryman 2004:348). In this project, men and women discussed their new situation as Somali families living in Norway, and the common challenge that face them in interaction with their host communities.

Using focus groups really helped me gain great insight into the common challenges that faces Somali families here in Norway. I have seen how they collectively expressed the pain of their families breaking down due to the changing socio-economic situation.

Despite the enormous advantages of using these methods, the process of using it in my project was not without challenges. First of all, I faced a great difficulty in the recruiting process, and many didn't even turn up and when I called them, they were either busy with other things or they never answered the telephone. This was a frustrating moment for me because I borrowed some of the place where the discussion was to take place. Another challenge was a cultural one, where participants discussed in details and there was a pressure on time. Sometimes I felt I was losing the control of the process. Transcribing was also a difficult process and consumed a lot time of and concentration.

Qualitative research scholars discussed some of the shortcomings of focus group discussion as a method of data collection. Bryman (2004) argues that such discussions are difficult to organize. Not only do you have to secure an agreement of people to participate in you study; you also need to persuade them to turn up in a particular time. Since a lot of data is assembled in a very short time, transcribing the recordings and the analysis of data is a very difficult time consuming process (Bryman 2004:360).

To follow up the questions and discussions of the focus group, I invited a new group of Somali men and women to individual interviews. Eight participants, five men and three women were interviewed during the process of data collection. I used qualitative, semi-structured interviews as my tool for gathering the data needed to answer the research questions.

3.2.3 Qualitative interviews

In the second part of my data collection, a group of Somali men and women were selected out of their knowledge for the issue at hand. All of them were raising families in Norway and have the experience of bringing up children both in Somalia and Norway. A one-on-one interview was conducted with each one of them. Steinar Kvale (1997) characterized the qualitative interview as a conversation with a structure and a formal. Structure is concerned around the different roles of the interviewer and the interviewed. The interviewer asks questions and follows up the answers that are given by the interviewee, but the interview is more of a dialog than a question and answer (Johannesen *et al*, 2006:135)

Qualitative interview can be either unstructured or semi-structured. In the unstructured interview, the researcher uses at most an *eide momoire* as a brief set of prompts to help him to deal with a certain range of topics. There may be just a single question that the interviewer ask and the interviewee is then allowed to respond freely, with the interviewer simply responding the points that seem worthy of being followed up. On the other hand, in the semi-structured interviews, the researcher has a list of questions or fairly specific topics to be covered, often referred to as an interview guide (Bryman 2004:320).

The flexibility offered by the semi-structured interviews made my data gathering process easier. The respondents came up with a lot of information concerning their lives that was important in covering the topics at hand.

3.3 Data analysis process

The main source of data for the analysis was the focus group discussion and the individual interviews that were conducted. After audio recording the discussions and the interviews, the files were transferred into my personal computer. Shortly after every process the transcription from the files followed; this was a very tiresome time consuming process, but nevertheless valuable because the answers to the research questions contained in these files. Since all the interviews were conducted in Somali, the transcription was also done in Somali language.

The data collected was then sorted out according the themes and topic of the study; for example adaptation problems was categorized as one theme, changing gender roles another, raising children was also a category of its own. During the process of moving files and

transcribing ethical issues were addressed in accordance with the principle of protecting research subjects. For example I have left the titles of some respondents that I was afraid they could be recognized. In addition to this, all names were left out as I registered just with gender and age. As far as the principle of informed consent is concerned, all the respondents were informed about the project both orally and written. All of them have signed the project information sheet. They were informed about their rights that the participation is voluntary and they can pull out whenever they feel necessary to do that. I have also informed them that the data will be deleted after the completion of this research project.

After the categorization of the data material, the different information categories were sorted out into different topics that laid the ground for topics in my findings and in the further analysis. This form of organizing the material helped me find which quotes were relevant to which topics, and this made my interpretations much easier.

In spite of the empirical nature of my data material, I had no intention of making new theories and concepts; I relied upon the existing literatures in the files of social sciences. My main aim was conveying the perspectives of my research respondents on the issues concerning their familial lives here in exile in Norway. This research was designed to be a very experience near investigation.

3.4 The Quality of the research

A growing issue among qualitative researchers is how to evaluate the process surrounding a qualitative research from the beginning of the research idea all the way to the results of the investigation (Seale 1999; Thagaard 2002; Flick 2007; Spencer *et al* 2003). Some of the indicators used to assess the quality of qualitative research in the different stages of the research include the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, procedure of data collection, and the ethical consideration addressed throughout the investigation (Spencer *et al* 2003). In the current investigation all this quality indicators were addressed satisfactorily and the researcher was conscious all along in delivering on the quality criteria of a good sound research.

The question arising from the credibility of the findings is connected to the issue of the trustworthiness of the result (Thagaard 2002). An important indicator here is if the conclusion or the results of the investigation are supported by the empirical data or experience by other

research. Another indicator for the evaluation of the quality of qualitative research is the process that led to the collection of data. How the data collection carried out. Here a clear account of the process of data collection is needed and evidence of the collection.

As far as the ethical consideration as an indicator for good quality in qualitative research is concerned, Flick (2007) argues that quality is seen as a precondition for ethically sound research and that it is unethical to do qualitative research that has not reflected about how to insure the quality of the research. In that many people are sharing both their time and experience during the investigation, it is important to insure that their investment in the research project is worthwhile (Flick 2007)

The researcher's interpretation of data collected is a very important aspect of doing qualitative research, but can dilute the quality of the research if not managed very well. Throughout the research process it is very important to differentiate what is the empirical data from the field and what is the researcher's interpretation of the collected data (Seale 1999).

3.5   Research ethics

Since this project was about the Somali family, I started my fieldwork generally worried about the consequence this project will have on the Somali community living in exile in Norway. The Somali communities have been a subject of a negative media attention (Simonse & Eide 2007; Engebrigtsen & Fuglerud 2009). Starting from the 1990's, when Somalis started coming in large numbers to Norway, a sudden interest emerged in relation to covering the stories of Somalis who come to Norway. Unfortunately most of these interests were negatively focused. The Norwegian media conveyed a message to the masses that this refugee group represents a problem for the host society. Elisabeth Eide and Hege Simonsen (2007) in their book *mistenkelige utlendinger*, write 30% of all media reports on Norwegian Somalis are about criminality (see also Klepp2002). The media has vilified the entire population of Somali people living in Norway, just because of the wrongs of very few individuals. They are characterized as being lazy, wife batterers, khat chewers, female genital mutilation among others (Fangen 2006).

Some of the allegations made against them are unfortunately right, Somalis score poorly on all the indicators of development and there are some Somalis who abuse and sale khat. The findings of my project doesn't seem to prove otherwise either, because Somali families are

faced with the challenges of a life time. Divorce rate are soaring high, almost 29% of the Somali families, are single parented households (Daugstad 2008). My main dilemma was how the findings of this project will further affect the community that has already got tremendous beatings from every hold. My desire to convey the real extent of the challenges facing the family, and my wish not cause any more projects that will increase stigmatization of the community was my biggest ethical dilemma throughout this project.

3.6   Limitations of the research

During the initial stage of this research project, I constantly had discussions with other sociology students at the university generally about the research we are going to conduct in pursuit of our master degree. Some of these students have been already to the field and have had some contacts with the informants they needed for their research, while others like me were on the initial stage of identifying their research objects. One of the main worries of most of these students was access to informants for their project, and just from the way they described it was a very frustrating experience for them.

What I did not share with my fellow students, was exactly the access to informants for my research. I was very well known among many Somalis and had a contact network of men and women who could give me an interview at any given time. This taken-for-granted approach as far as access was concerned, was soon to be proven wrong by almost all the participants I contacted for my research.

Before I started my research project I took part in conversation with Somalis on matters concerning the community; from politics to religion to the situation of Somalis in exile in Norway. Meanwhile the situation changed when I started mentioning about my research project, and many of them became very suspicious of my intentions. The whole recruitment was one big challenge, but I will mention two incidents that in fact reminded me that being an insider is not a guarantee for access, because the situation changed when my role changed from being a Somali man to being a Somali researcher.

One participant who after our telephone conversation denied me an interview said:

> *"It is very sad that you are being used to destroy your own people. Do you think they*
> *care about Somali families? Once you write your report, it will be used by the racist*

parties to continue their abuses Somalis. I am advising you not to be a tool used to slaughter your own people" (male 56 years).

Another participant advised me about what to write about Somali family:

"Please you know about our situation here in Norway. We are discriminated, stigmatized and marginalized. If you a Somali write about our problems, they will just say "look this is what we have been saying all along. Now one of theirs is ready to talk about the truth, so please try not to cause more problem than we are already in" (male 45 years).

Another challenge I faced during the process of data collections, was participants who initially agree to give me an interview, but don't turn up at the agreed time. Most Somalis because of their culture show great hospitality to people who ask them a favor. So for some respondents, it was difficult to say no to face-to face invitation, but choose not to turn for the interviews.

I have conducted my research at the aftermath of the debate on a book written by a young Somali woman. The book called *Se Oss* which in English can be translated see us, was a critic to how Somali families raised their children, and the general situation of Somali families as such. The publication of the book and the debate that raged afterwards infuriated many Somalis, and some respondents saw me as another Somali who is willing to sacrifice his people in order to be famous.

Despite the fact that I was a Somali well known by many and despite the fact that I had the cultural advantage or being a native researcher, it didn't help me in getting the access I needed in order to get the answers I needed for my the questions.

3.7 Researchers Statement

I am a Somali man who came here almost for the same reason that brought the participants of this research. I came to Norway as a refugee from Somali for almost ten years ago. In addition to this I also share the factual situation in the sense that I have also raised a family of my own here in Norway and share most of the experiences the respondents shared with me in the current research. These factors contributed enormously to the quality of the current research. Another factor that also helped me was previous working experience in Somali projects. I

took part in projects that involved Somalis living in Norway, and I was conversant with many of the issues at hand.

The issue of researcher's connection to the people being studied has both its advantages and disadvantages (Thagaard 2002). When the researcher is from the people being studied, he is better placed in understanding the phenomena being studied. The experience the researcher has as far as people being studied are concerned, gives him or her recognition and a good point of departure for the further analysis and the end result. On the other hand, connection to the people being studied can blind the researcher and cause him to oversee the things that are different from his own experience. "The researcher then becomes less open for nuances in the situation being studied" (Thagaard 2002:180). As far as the current investigation is concerned I had a lot of knowledge both as a Somali, a husband and a father raised children in Norway. This greatly affected the quality of the data very positively. Some of the experience the respondents shared with me was something that I experiences almost on a daily basis. On the other hand being so near to the people investigated upon, may have affected my critical view as an outsider, this can also influence the quality of the data in a negative way. Somalis most of the time talk very positively about their families in the presence of other Somalis, despite the difficulties they experience. The presence of a native researcher might have also affected the responses of the participants.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to document and account for the process surrounding the methods used for data collection. The field for my research was Oslo, Bærum and Asker. This was chosen because of the big population of Somalis in these parts of the country. My initial entry field was quite surprising as people who knew me very well turned me down or never showed when I ask for their participations. This has changed my perception that native researchers are advantaged when it concerns researching on their own people.

The findings of the investigation will be presented in the following two chapters. Chapter four deals with pre-migration living situation and how it affects the acculturation process in their new settlements. Chapter five will deal with how immigration is impacting Somali families living in Norway.

CHAPTER 4:

CHALLENGES FACING SOMALI FAMILIES

This chapter intends to present the acculturation experience of 23 Somali men and women who are all raising families in Norway, of the challenges facing them as Somali and as immigrant families in Norway. This presentation and discussion will be divided into three parts:

The first part will deal with the context of flight from their homeland. Within this theme, pre-migration stressors of coming from a country devastated by war and the destruction of their livelihoods were some of the things respondents talked about. The second part will deal with post-migration living difficulties. Within this topic, the adaptation difficulties shortly after resettlement, cultural differences, language barriers and the challenge of coming with many children was some of the issues participants discussed. The third part will deal with other challenges facing the family in exile. Within this topic, the socio-economic and health impact the abuse of khat by Somali men and the impact of remittances for the participants were the discussion topics.

4.1 Pre-migration stressors

Somalis who arrived in Norway, have lived through a horrible life time – including traumatic separation from family members, direct experience of violence and threats, physical depravation. In addition to this, many Somali refugees have spent a great deal of their lives in asylum camps in other African countries with very limited resources prior to their move to Norway (Suleiman 1991). Just after their arrival here in Norway, Somalis are met with a new reality that is contrary to their imagination of what Norway could offer them. Most of them came with the expectation that coming to European countries will automatically translate to riches and a good life.

However, they become confronted with their past experiences and a host of cultural and other social barriers. Some of their main concerns are first and foremost the welfare of their family members who were left back in Somalia, but at the same time their future in a very unfamiliar landscape is also another stressor that affects their ability to adapt to their new home country. "Refugees experience a wide range of life changes and are subjected to a variety of stressors

upon their entry into a new cultural milieu" (Ward *et al* 2001:231). These experiences can later lead to challenges on their way to starting a new life in their host countries. Here participants talked about what they called the second mental displacement after coming to Norway as one participant explained.

> *"We are having many problems here I Norway. We came from a country that is devastated by war and came to a country that is totally different from theirs. At the same time everybody came with a long list of what he is going accomplish here in Norway. The program they had in mind and the reality on the ground is very different. What happens is that the person becomes mentally displaced and he starts looking for another place or country to go to. For example many Somalis after staying here in Norway for a while, move to England to find a better life. When he settles in London, a repetition of what he experienced in Norway happens again. This makes the person demoralized and losses hope for the future." (Male 37 years; male 45 years).*

According to Ward *et al* (2001), refugees are the most disadvantaged of all immigrants groups. Most of them have been through a traumatic life experience because of war or other calamities in the home countries. Most of them are poorly prepared for a life in exile without the possibility of ever returning back home. Their culture, in most of the cases is very different from the host culture. All this factors contribute to psychological and social adjustment problems. The participant of my investigation fit into the background above, and their meeting with life in exile was challenge of a life time. Because of their background, Somalis face many acculturation problems in Norway.

One of the main challenges that were mentioned by most of the participants is the effect of the civil war on their lives. They talked in details about their country of origin and how it was devastated by many years of dictatorial regime, followed by many years of civil war that destroyed their homes and livelihoods. This situation has greatly affected their psychological wellbeing. Sociologist and cross-cultural psychologist have found ample evidence of mental health situation among refugees who hail from war-torn countries (Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Ward *et al* 2001). Participants of the current investigation described how the experience of coming from a failed state affects their adaptation process in Norway. "Experiencing or witnessing killings, rape or torture often leads to transient as well as long term symptomatology. Recent arrivals from Somalia and Yugoslavia are examples of waves of

immigrants who come from regions where they may well have undergone trauma" (Suarez-Orozco 2000:136).

The impact of war on the adaptation process of immigrants is documented in many places (Bhui *et al*, 2006; Matheson *et al*, 2007; Harding *et al*, 2007). Immigration especially when it concerns people who were uprooted from their homes because of war is a challenging experience. Refugees frequently encounter pre- and post-migration trauma experience that might directly undermine their mental health and diminish their capacity to cope with acculturations stressors (Matheson *et al*, 2007). A comparative study of Vietnamese and South Koreans in Canada seem to support the above opinion. This study measuring acculturative stress among these two groups, found that there was a higher report of acculturative stress among Vietnamese who came from a war devastated country compared to South Korean immigrants (Portes & Rumbaut 2006). The participants of the current investigation narrated stress and constant fear for their families and relatives who are still in Somalia:

> *"When my telephone rings in the morning, it is the scariest time of my life. The last time my brother was killed, I was called very early in the morning by my sister. We live in a state of anxiety and fear."(Male 38 years).*

"*We are still living in a war modus, I call my family in Somalia everyday and I rarely find them living the same place because they have to relocate to safer grounds every now and then (female 45 years).*

"Many of us who come to Norway have being through many loses, and worse of all the war is still with us. Every morning when my telephone rings, I just pray that no one of my beloved families is hurt. It is like you are still living in fear of the war; this affects your concentration on work, on school and even in your family live" (male 40 years)

Somalis suffer from psycho-social problems because of the ongoing conflict in their country (Bhui *et al* 2006; Matheson & Jorden 2008). All the participants in my study, have some or their entire families still living in Somalia or in refugee camps in Kenya and/or other African countries. The long distance between them and their families, have caused mental stress that has affected their daily lives in Norway. This experience that is reported here by the respondents is in line with the general findings of other research on the effects of war on

immigrants, and the effects such an experience can have on the process establishing sustainable lives in the host countries.

Scuglik *et al* (2007) contributed to the understanding of the cause of mental problems among Somalis living in exile in different parts of the world. According to them the traumatic experience of war, for example the loss of loved ones, torture and their lives in refugee camps that luck the basic of life like food, shelter and clean water, affects the adaptation process of Somali immigrants. Similarly some of the participants of my investigation narrated the anxiety of being away from their loved ones. This is what another participant said:

> *I am worried and stressed all the time. When I think about all my family, my father and mother, all of a sudden I become very sad. (Male 38 years)*

Participants narrated the correlation between the violence in Somalia and the problems they face in adjusting to the settlement in Norway. The many years of government sponsored terror and the consequent civil war that devastated the country, many experienced traumatic situation during their flight in the hands of smugglers who demand a great sum of money, when the refugees want to cross the borders to Kenya for example. Two participants narrated about the dire situation of Somalia and the effect this has on their families:

> *"Somali families are facing challenge from all the sides of their lives. They came from a country that is struggling with the aftermath of destruction. With no sight to the end of the turmoil, the family is without much hope" (male 60 years; female 61 years)*

Almost all the participants revealed the feeling of emptiness and the pain of seeing and hearing loved ones being hurt by the ongoing civil war in Somalia. According to Bhui *et al* (2006) migration may cause mental disorders through mediators such as stress, acculturation, and loss of employment, pre-morbid personality and life events before, during and after reception into the host country. Torture, bereavement, forced separation from family and escape from war and political oppression make asylum seekers and refugees even more vulnerable to mental disorders. These findings are also supported by other studies on the mental health and acculturation experience of refugees coming from countries destroyed by war. See for example Steel *et al* 1999, and Matheson *et al*, 2007 on Somalis and the relationship between trauma experience and psychological, physical functioning and coping with acculturation stressors.

Being forced into exile exposes individuals and families into an array of dangers, abuses and other prejudicial treatment that greatly affect their health and mental wellbeing (Harding *et al* 2007). The long flight from their homes, and the constant check-points they had to pass through have had psychological impact on refugees from Somalia. "Immigrants and refugees experience multiple losses including loss of homeland and loss of loved ones" (McGraw 2004:1). Once settled, there are numerous barriers to integration, including lack of language skills, poor housing and local racism. Somalis suffer from a wide range of social and economic problems here in Norway (Fangen 2008). According to Ward *et al (*2001) Immigration especially when it concerns people who were uprooted from their homes because of war as most Somalis are, is the most challenging transitions people can experience. The finding of my investigation indicated that, Somali refugees in Norway are facing many acculturation problems on their way of becoming part of the society because of their experience from the civil war in Somalia. This partly explains why they are performing not so well in the indicators of development.

4.2 Post migration living difficulties

In the above subsection, we have seen the impact of the context of migration also known as the exit context on acculturation process of immigrants from war-torn countries. Equally important is the context of reception which also has a decisive impact of the resettlement process (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Some of the challenges that were discussed by the participants in this section, were the post migration adaptation process after arriving in Norway. After escaping the destruction of the war, coming to a safe country would have been a remedy. But shortly after their arrival in exile, post migration living problems begin: family issues, language problems, asylum procedure and asylum camps, socioeconomic living conditions, socio-religious aspects, and work-related issues (Ward *et al* 2001).

 "Catapulted by circumstances onto the mercy of the outside world, many Somalis found their way into the west: where the calamity and personal misfortunes from which they run have been compounded by the harsh reality of refugee life and its attendant cultural clash" (McGown 1999:6). For the Somalis who came to Norway, This was not the reception they have anticipated. Most of them believed that coming to Norway was the end of all their problems. Here is what some of the participants said:

"When I first arrived in Norway, I thought that I could get work almost the first day of my arrival, but when I was told that I had to live in asylum camp and share room with some strangers(...)I was really shocked. I can remember my live in the asylum camp was not easy, people were fighting everyday over useless things, I really got scared. When I called back to my family in Nairobi, they couldn't believe when I said that I was in a camp and sharing room with three strangers" (male 38 years).

Waxaan soo dhexgelnay bad aanan garaneynin, waana jah wareersanahay" (male 48 years)

We came into unfamiliar waters, and we are very confused (My own translation).

The main challenge described by participants included the shock they experience in the first meeting with the Norwegian society. Despite the similarities shared as human beings, Somalis differ in many ways from their host society in Norway (Fangen 2008). Somalis are Africans and they are Muslims with a culture that is based on a combination of traditional African culture and Islam. Somali culture has been characterized as a traditional collective culture where family members live in close proximity with one another, compared to more modern individualistic Norwegian culture (Eriksen & Sørheim 1999). These in many ways make them on a coalition course with the prevailing culture, and cause a great deal of hardship on their way of becoming part of the society. According to Håkonsen (2005), of all the immigrants who live in Norway, Somalis are those that share the least with the Norwegian reality. Cultural distance between immigrants and the host societies' values, are correlated with lower levels of integration. High levels of cultural distance, is also associated with discrimination (Ward & Masgoret 2008; Berry 1997). Somalis are exposed to unparalleled discrimination from the labor market, the media and even the housing market. Many of them are denied house because of the number of children they have. This has resulted in acculturation difficulties.

According to Berry & Kim (1988), individuals and groups are challenged by two issues in their desire to acculturate in the host society. The first is the individual desire to maintain their traditions and cultural identity, and secondly their desire to have a positive contact with the host society. As far as the participants of the investigation are concerned, the desire to be good Somalis and Muslims while at the same time get contact with their Norwegian society,

has been frustrating. Somali families in Norway try to behave as much Somali as they can, but the influence from the host society through the school and other social contacts, have challenged the notion of Somaliness. Here is what two participants said about coming to Norway:

Walaahi meeshaan waan kusoo qaldanay (Male 41 years)

In the name of God, we came to the wrong place

"We came to a country that is so different from our own (...) the culture is different, the weather is different. I think we are in the wrong place (...). But I hope one day peace returns to our home" (Male 45 years; female 42 years).)

Another participant described Norway as a place good only for those who have the same culture as the Norwegian, and who are not Muslims:

"We are Muslims and want to live according the Quran and the Sunna (Koran and the traditions of the prophet (P.B.U.H) (....) here I think it will be very difficult for us to live as Muslims" (Male 42 years).

One participant, who was worried about how families are going to survive in such an environment:

The Somali family lived in a situation very different from this one, an environment very different from the one we have in Norway.... for example, we were raised in very big extended families that were very united. We use to live among our aunts, uncles, grandparents and the children were raised in such an environment. Here in Norway it is you, your children and your apartment" (Male 48 years).

The socio-cultural and value distance between Somali refugees and the host society, was another finding of the current investigation. The participants of my investigation lamented about the difficulties in understanding the new culture of the host society. Migration to a country with a different culture, can involve a major challenge to an individual's value, believes and modes of behavior, the greater the cultural difference, the less positive is the adaptation. "Greater cultural difference implies the need for greater culture shedding and culture learning, and perhaps large differences trigger negative intergroup attitudes, and induce greater cultural conflict leading to poorer adaptation" (Berry 1997). The participants

revealed that the prevailing culture in their host country as quite the contrary of their culture. The main cultural conflict lines involve religious believes, the gender roles, parenting styles.

Berry (1990, 1997) in his acculturation model argued that individuals choose an adjustment strategy that best matches their interest, values and skills. According to him, there are four possible outcomes: Integration, marginalization, assimilation and separation which he said was the least desired and integration which he said was the ideal strategy for both immigrants and the receiving society. For the Norwegian government and most immigrants in Norway, integration is the outcome everyone is working to achieve, but it is not an easy process for the newcomer societies who often meet barriers in the labour market and in the housing markets. Meanwhile they are some elements both from the host country and among immigrants who don't want to integrate with each other. A good example is the many organizations that are driven by Somalis in Oslo, almost all of the members are purely Somalis. This is their answer of integrating with their own ethnic group. For integration to be attained, a mutual accommodation is required by both groups of the right of all groups to live as culturally different peoples (Berry 1997).

As one of the last immigrants group to arrive in Norway, Somali refugees have not achieved significant structural integration into the social, economic, and political structures of the receiving society because of acculturation issues. Rampant unemployment, dependence on social welfare assistance, limited educational pursuits, and social and residential segregation, Somalis in Norway find themselves at the bottom of the ladder as far as socio-economic development is concerned (Fangen 2008; see Daugstad 2008). This clearly shows that the community is facing serious acculturation problems.

As far as the Norwegian government policy of socializing and integration of minorities are concerned, the official policy is the integration where immigrants are allowed to keep their cultural identities while at same time taking part in the society (Brochmann 2002). But participants revealed the discrepancies between government policies and the expectation from the wider society. Participants said that they are met with many closed doors into the Norwegian society, and this made their lives difficult. This is also supported by research done on immigrant women in Australia who have embraced the idea of multiculturalism. One of the main finding of that study is despite Australian government policy on integration, immigrants experienced a different reality where they were expected to take Anglo-Saxon way of living (Aizpurua 2008). According to Berry (1997) integration can only be freely

chosen and successfully pursued by non-dominant groups when the receiving society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity. Equally important in such a strategy, is the requirement of the non-dominant groups to adopt the basic values of the larger society, while at the same time the dominant group must be prepared to adapt national institutions to better meet the needs of all the groups.

The participants felt that they will never have the same chances as ethnic Norwegian. One of the male participants who has being without work since finishing his studies said that when you apply for a job, the first priority is for the Norwegians, then immigrants from the Nordic countries, then other white people, and the Africans are the last to be considered. This allegation is supported by research done on ethnic minorities in the Norwegian labor market. According to Rogstad (2001) immigrants with visible minority background are discriminated in the labor market. Somalis, in addition to their color are Muslims and this has had extra challenge on their way to becoming part of the society. Such an attitude from the host society can be a constrain to positive acculturation by the non-dominant groups, and thus reduce their motivation to actively take part in the society (Berry 1997)

The participants of the current investigation have revealed the difficulties of integrating into the Norwegian society. Many of them described the confusion of trying to behave a way acceptable to the host society. This is what one participant had to say about integration in the Norwegian context:

> "*For the Norwegian, integration for them is to be exactly like them, for example they accept women who go out with trousers and tight clothes more than those that cover themselves with the Hijab" (Male 42 years).*

For the participants the acculturation process both had a positive and a negative consequence. Many women have appreciated coming to Norway because their socio-economic status improved considerably, while others see these experiences as the cause of all the familial problems they have in Norway.

The main reason behind migrating to western countries is to find better living conditions. Many of the families, who arrived in Norway, come with the expectation of becoming very wealthy and helping all their families back home. They made a lot of promise to friends and families that they will send them money and even sponsor them to join them in Norway. However, turning these wonderful dreams into reality became very difficult for almost all the

participants in my study. They acknowledged that what they had in mind of what they could accomplish in Norway and the reality on the ground was very different. A participant commented on the familial conflict created when the promises made to family members are not met as he says:

> *"My brother no longer talks to me because I couldn't sponsor him to come to Norway or send him money to open a small business. I don't work and my wife is not working either, so we already having so many economic problems. But the people back home don't understand the situation here in Norway, all they said is send money or they will never talk to me" (Male 41 years).*

Families send their sons and daughter specifically to help them either financially or sponsor them when they are granted asylum. Some families sell their plots and businesses in order to send their children abroad. When those who were sent abroad, don't keep their part of the bargain to those left behind, either willing or can't help their families because they are poor, conflict flairs between them (see also Gran 2007).

Another aspect they highlighted was coming from a country with no infrastructure to one of the most advanced modern countries. Participants argued that many of the offices like the social services, family affairs offices were never found in Somalia and that they have difficulty in understanding how they function. One participant explained:

> *"The Somali people came from a country in devastation with no institutions that are functioning. They come to a country that has a different system of governance and with institutions that are modern and functioning and a society that is organized differently. For example, in Somalia we never had social security offices, employment offices and the simple issue of applying for help from these public offices is a challenge for many. This creates a situation of hopelessness in the first years of their lives" (Female 61 years).*

Demographic challenge was also reported by many participants as a problem in integrating into society. Somalis have traditionally encouraged having many children, something that became incompatible with the prevailing socio-economic and physical environments of the

host country. Having many children in Somalia was associated with resource and personal pride. The more children you have the more respect you get from relatives and the larger community. Many of the families, who came to Norway, came with many children. The participants acknowledge that it is very difficult to raise so many children in a country that has no such tradition. Here is what some of the participants narrated about having many children in Norway compared to Somalia:

> *"In our country having children was never seen as a problem, but here in Norway it is almost difficult to rent a house when you are having more than two children. I can remember when I moved from northern Norway with my children, I tried to find an apartment to rent. Almost everyone I called, turned me down, because they meant that their houses were too small for such a large family"* (Male 43).

> *"Somali families are generally poor because of severe unemployment. Many of them rely on the government for their livelihoods, in addition to this, we have so many children in our households, and honestly we can't afford to raise so many children in this country (...) worse of all, we don't want stop having many children"* (female 32 years).

Immigration is one of the most challenging experience people can undergo. Immigrants face many acculturations issues. Learning new language, a new culture and trying to function in the absence of familiar settings and social network. This is usually compounded by earlier experience of pre migration living difficulties like their flight and direct experience of war. (Ward *et al* 2001). This has had negative impact on the acculturation process of Somali immigrants in Norway.

4.3 Other Challenges facing Somalis in Norway

Other challenges the participants said was causing problems for them in exile, was the abuse of khat chewing and the economic impact of sending some of their income to family members who are in Somalia. Here I will try to analyze what the participants narrated about the impact of the named challenges in their lives here in Norway.

4.3.1   Khat: Social remedy or self medication

Chewing of khat was another challenge that participants meant was one of the most cause of conflict within Somali families by Somali men and to a lesser extent women in Norway. Khat today is a major economic and social problem for Somali living almost everywhere in the world. In Norway this drug is readily available and is bought and sold openly in Grønland market. This was what a young female participant had to say about the use of khat by Somali men:

> *"Abuse of any kind of substance be it khat or alcohol destroys the family. When Somali men chew the whole day and through the night and comes home early in the morning when the children are going to school and goes direct to the bed without meeting the kids, then the family becomes apart from each other. When he wakes up, he is very angry and tired because he was awake the whole night and he says nobody can talk to me and tells the children and to me that everybody should be silent. You are a human being you can't live in such a situation. You need somebody to talk to and to share time with. The Somali men are married to other men who they love more than their own families; they go and spend their precious time with these men. And you know what the biggest problem is; they always lie and say that they are not from chewing. It is not a problem if a person drinks or chews, people in Norway for example drink during the weekends and work and spend time with their families. Somali men can chew and at the same time work but they don't do It (...) they want to chew everyday"* (Female 29 years).

In this section the participants narrated the impact of Khat abuse among Somali s in Norway. Most of the participants especially the female participants expressed their frustration over men who they put it, destroy their family because of abusing this substance. According to them khat is destroying the family by causing a lot of economic hardships that becomes a strain on the household economy. Some male participants also argued that khat was a growing

problem among the Somali community and as they put it, it is supplied by countries who wish Somalia no good.

Khat is the green leaf of the plant *Catha edulis*, which has being used as a mild stimulant for centuries in countries in the horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. The tree may have originated from Ethiopia, but it is widely grown in the highlands of Ethiopia, Kenya and Yemen. The people of these countries have chewed khat for centuries (Anderson 2007; Cox and Rampes 2003). The chewing of khat is widespread among the Somalis in the Diaspora, and has being a cause of concern both among Somalis and the governments of the countries where Somalis reside. This substance is illegal in the Scandinavian countries, but is free in countries like the Netherlands and England where most of the Khat is exported to the Scandinavian countries and beyond. The vast majority of those ingesting khat do so by chewing the leaves and peeling of the small branches. The chewer fills his or her mouth with leaves and stalks, and then chew slowly and intermittently to release the active components in the juice, which is then swallowed with saliva. The plant material is chewed into a ball which is kept for a while in the cheek, causing a characteristics bulge (Nancini 1986). The chewing of khat normally starts in the afternoon and goes on until the small hours of the morning. Shortly after swallowing the juice, the chewer feels euphoric and becomes very happy and social. That is why khat chewing always happened in the presence of other chewers because it enhances social interaction and a sense of belonging among the chewers (Anderson 2007).

The female participants described their husbands as absent from their daily duties towards the family and said that their men don't work because they chew khat everyday. The findings of this investigation on the problems of khat are confirmed by other findings both in Somalia and in other countries where Somalis live in exile. A report prepared by the Academy for Peace and Developments in Hargeisa in 2002, found out that, women were mostly affected by the chewing of khat by Somali men. According to them, these women complained of men who were never there for their family because of chewing together with other men away from their home and this limited the time they spent with their families. Similarly the female participants of my study also faced the same problem with their husbands who as they called it, were married to other men because they spent all their time together with their chewing comrades. One female participant said:

My husband chews khat almost every day with other Somali men; the only time he is home is when he comes for sleeping. Me and the children never get time to see him and we feel that we have a father that is not their when we need home.

Another effect of khat that was narrated among the participant of my study is the socio-economic cost of chewing this substance. The Somali chewers, who had economic difficulties from before, use their little resources to buy khat. This has caused economic difficulties in the family which resulted into marital conflict and sometimes divorce. In communities where khat is used, it has negative impact on health and socio-economic conditions (Cox & Rampes 2003; Andersen 2003). One of the male participants narrated about the economic consequences of khat chewing for the family:

"Somali families is generally poor with very limited source of income, if then Somali men want to chew everyday with khat costing almost three hundred crowns per small bundle, the family will face very severe economic problems that will lead them not being able to buy the basics such as food and medicine" (male 42 years).

Another issue that was discussed frequently in the focus groups was the health consequences of chewing khat. Many of the participants were genuinely worried about the welfare of the chewers and their families. They argued that these men are ticking time bombs who most of the time abuse their wife and children and can contribute great danger to society if they are not treated. Many of the Somali khat chewers gather in small cafes without proper ventilations and they have being spread of tuberculosis among many Somali men who are regular visitors of these places. Another health problem respondents talked about is psychological problem, as they argue many Somali men developed psychological problems because of abusing khat.

Meanwhile, the effects of khat on the health of the consumers are documented in various reports. The effect of khat on the brain is similar to that of amphetamines which are stimulated through synapses. Fatigue is alleviated, appetite is reduced, attention span is decreased and levels of alertness and motor activity are increased. Users can quickly develop a psychological dependency to the drug, which increases their confidence, friendliness and contentment. The *Cathinon* found in the drug affects the central nervous system, causing an excess amount of dopamine to be produced. High accumulation of dopamine in the brain can cause hallucinations, schizophrenia and high blood pressure (Cox & Rampes 2003)

A participant narrated about the effect of constantly chewing khat on his mental health and his family:

> *"I used to chew almost every day. When you are chewing, you make a lot of plans and build many houses and business in Somalia, but when I wake up in the morning every plan seems to be impossible to accomplish, you become very depressed. What I do to kill this depression is again to buy some more khat and start chewing again, and start building castles in the sky all over again. When you in such a situation for a long time you get addicted and get destroyed for life. But thanks to God, I am out of that trap now and I am very grateful"* (Male, 40 years).

Despite the socio-economic cost associated with khat and despite its illegality in Norway, khat is openly bought and sold in front of one of Oslo's biggest police stations in Grønland. Campaigners against khat have written a number of protest letters to the police and to the Justice Department asking for the total ban of the substances, but nothing has being done to curb the continuing abuse of khat among the Somali community. Many Somalis in Oslo are today frustrated by the inaction of the police, and accuse the government of not doing something about khat because it is not used by ethnic Norwegians and it is entirely seen as a Somali problem (Fangen 2007). This is confirmed by a participant:

> *"Khat is bought and sold in front of the biggest police station in Oslo. The police drive-by and see Somali men openly selling this forbidden substance but they do nothing about it. Many of the police and the Norwegian government think that khat is a Somali problem and not a Norwegian problem (...) but I can guarantee them when one day a crazy man stabs people on the street then they will know that khat is also a Norwegian problem (Female 29 years).*

The stress the Somali family is under due to migration and the trauma of the war, khat is used as a both a social remedy and a drug to wipe of all the problems in exile. But the consequences of using khat have likewise been problematic in the sense that it caused more problems for the families. According to Andersen *et al* (2007), khat has been implicit to conflict between married couples.

4.3.2 Transnational relations

As a consequence of the displacement of the Somali populations, families become apart from one another. This has forced the people to create a network of transnational relations between different countries. These relations are most of the time based on economic interdependence where those who are better off, help their relatives back home. The participants argued that despite the importance of these relations, it has also created economic difficulties for the families involved especially the sending part.

The outbreak of the civil war in Somalia in early 1991, and the subsequent collapse of the Somali republic, caused the destruction of livelihood and the collapse of the Somali economy. The population in Somalia is today dependent on either food handouts by the international humanitarian organization or wholly or partially reliant on support from family members and relatives living abroad in the Diaspora in western countries for those who have families abroad.

One element of concern for Somali families is the social economic impact of the money that the family sends to family members and relatives left behind in Somalia or in refugee camps in countries in Africa. *"Remittance is a concept used to describe different kinds of funds transferred from migrants to their families in the country of origin or in other places where their families have refuge. The most common type of remittances is intra-family gifts. This can either be regular, often monthly, transfers, or it can be more occasional gifts for religious feasts or weddings"* (Gran 2007: 85). All the participants in my study send money to their families on monthly basis. According to the participants, remitting part of their earnings to other family members was an obligation, but most of the time it had negative economic consequence for the family who were struggling with economic problems from before. They also revealed the dilemma of who is to be prioritized when sending money, and this, caused a lot of conflict within the family.

Somalis in the Diaspora manage their lives through extensive networks of family relations, obligations and shared resources that are set and managed in different nation-states. These networks help families to stay in touch and help each other in time of need (Al-Sharmani 2007; Horst 2001). Remittances from Somalis in the Diaspora is one main dimension of helping family members back home or in different countries in Africa and the Middle East. Diaspora help plays a decisive role in the livelihood of the recipients and the economy of the

local population in Somalia. According to Horst (2006), remittances have played a crucial part in the Somali economy for decades and are a critical source of hard currency for the country and individual households. One female participant explained how her small families remit and how often they do that:

> *"My husband and I send money every month, I send to my family and he sends to his family, this means that a certain part of our income, where ever it is from, has to be sent to our parents who are old and can't work. It happens sometimes that we don't have money to buy the basic,(…) and you know, here in Norway everything is expensive" (female 40 years).*

Many participants narrated the dilemma when it concerns sending money to relatives. One participant talked about the long discussions between him and his wife on who is to be prioritized when it comes to sending money back home as he says:

> *"We normally send money to our parents every month, but sometimes other family members call us when they desperately need money. We discuss and sometimes quarrel over this issues and it is not healthy for our family that we have to send so much money" (female 32 years).*

This is in conformity with research done on the Diaspora especially on remittances for example Al- Sharmani's (2007) research among Somalis in both Cairo and Minnesota. She found out that, despite the huge importance of the recipients, it caused tension and conflict for the senders. As she puts it, there is frequently debate and sometimes conflict on who is to get how much

Despite its importance, sending a part of their income to family members back home, is not an easy process. Somalis in Norway are generally poor and score poorly in all indicators of social development. Most of them rely on social service funds for their livelihoods (Daugstad 2008). Sending some of these money often cause economic hardship that can create conflict between the family members. The main cause of the conflict for the family is who is to be prioritized, the family of the man or that of the woman. Many of the participants in my study talked about the daily quarrels when money is sent to family members back home. A participant explained about his fear when his telephone rings:

> *"Every time the telephone rings, I really wish it is not from Somalia, because when they call, they only ask for one thing and that is money. This telephone call almost*

always creates long debate that usually ends up in a quarrel between me and my wife"(Male 40 years)

Some participants talked about the social and health consequences of sending money to Somalia. They said that because of sending some of their income back home, the family can't buy nutritious foods or go out sometimes and eat at restaurants. Some of them said that they can't buy the necessary clothes for their children and this affects the development of their kids. One participant explained the effect of sending money and the conflict it created between parents and kids:

"Because of all the money we are sending home, it is difficult for us to buy something like (...) or extra good foods. We can't buy the clothes that our children need and there is always conflict between us and the children because the children want to have the fashion clothes that their peers have. Worse of all, I can't explain to them why we send money to family members and relatives back home. One day my son told me that we love people in Somalia more than him because they don't buy anything for him. From that day on, I decided to buy my children what they need, no matter what people say back in Somalia." (Female 45 years).

Remittance is also a source of intergenerational tension between children and their parents. Many children and youth who were born in western countries and who have not seen their relatives don't understand why their parents are sending money that they are in need of (Lindley 2007)

Another important finding from my study is the general helplessness among these families when it concerns sending money. Many of them said that they don't have choice and are obliged to help their families with or without money. Some of them felt that there relatives are manipulating their feelings so that they can send money. One female participant expressed her frustration:

"I have a brother that was always sick and his hospital, but one day when I enquired some of my relatives about him, they told me that he is not sick and he married his second wife, I felt very sad and frustrated".

This is also in line with other research findings on the consequences of remittances. Horst (2008) argues that while family obligations cause great pressure in the personal lives of the

senders, many feel that their effort to support their families is not appreciated and that relatives misused the funds they sent (see also Lindley 2007)

Another negative aspect of remittance is that it creates dependency between the senders and the receivers. Many of the receivers who solely depend on these handouts rely heavily on this for the better parts of their lives and loss their craftsmanship and their ability to create their own income generating activities (see also Horst 2008). However in spite of the hardship involved in sending money to their families, the participants said that they can never stop sending money to their families. They felt that they were obliged to help their families in these times of difficulties. A male participant narrated about the good feeling when remitting money to his family:

> *"I really feel very satisfied when I send money to my mother and called her to confirm if she received it. It gives me pride in my work that I am really helping those who have done a lot for me when I needed most"* (Male 45 years).

This is in confirmation with Lindley's study where she concludes "Remitting can be a source of familial and cultural reaffirmation. At the individual and family level, being able to support a relative can make a painful separation seem more worthwhile (Lindley 2007)

Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen how coming from a society plagued by war affected the adaptation process of the respondents. The traumatic experience of the war and their flight from their country has greatly impacted their capacity to reestablish their lives here in Norway. This was compounded the post-migrations living difficulties where they are suppose to cope up with a new culture and a new language. This process was very stressful for the participant of my study. The economic and social difficulties caused by the abuse of khat by Somali men, and the impact of remittances, was also another issue that caused conflict in the family according to the respondents. The combination of the mental stress, acculturations caused by the war, and the economic difficulties of khat and remittances, conflict between members of the family has been almost a daily routine. In the next chapter I present the impact of the migrations on family relations.

CHAPTER 5

IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON FAMILY RELATIONS

In the last chapter, I presented and analyzed the challenges facing Somali immigrants in the Diaspora and in special reference to Somalis in Norway. In this chapter I will try to analyze how migration to Norway affected the relationship between the family members. The aim is to find how these families are adapting to their new situation as families in exile in Norway.

The changes that were described by the participants included the power relationship within the family, for example the different role of married couples, challenges regarding parenting experience, and the loss of social network that provided both moral and material support to these families. Immigration constitutes a double transition for married immigrants in that the individual, the marriage and the parental relation need to adapt to the new culture. My study found out that due to immigration, marital conflict was a growing problem among Somali families living in exile in Norway. According to the participants the new situation in Norway was creating a challenge to the conventional ways of organizing a family.

The impact of immigration on Somali families living in the Diaspora have been argued by many researchers as a very distressing process for the people involved (Degni *et al* 2006; Harding *et al* 2007; Affi 2004; Boyl & Ali 2009). Immigration causes marital conflict and creates intergenerational discrepancies between parents and their children (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Phinney & Vedder 2006; Vappu Tyyska). According to Degni *et al* (2006) immigrant experience of bringing up families in western culture raised important parenting challenges associated with changing generational; gender and family relations within the family. The focus of this section will be two-fold:

Family relations in Somalia: Here the experiences of the respondents as families in Somalia will be presented. The participants described the relationship between the members of the family the father, mother and the children; the division of labor, the families' relation with the extended family.

Family relations in exile: The second part of this presentation will be about familial experience in exile. Some of the areas covered will be how the participants perceived their new lives in Norway. Special focus will be given to the changing relationship between the genders and the parenting experience in exile.

5.1 Family relations: Gender roles in Somalia

Qoyska soomaliyed wuxuu ahaa, qoys dad badan ku xiran oo qaraaba leh, oo xigta leh,(...) hadda ma annaga iyo caruur iyo dumar ayaa is arki jirnay. Waxaay masuuliyadeyda ahayd inaan reerkaas daryeelo, dhaqaala soo geliya, dhaqanka iyo aadaabta carrurtana ilaaliya. Hada wixiiba way siku qasmeen (Male 60 years).

The family was dependent on many people, close relatives, in-laws (...), I never used to have any problems with my wife and my children. My responsibility was to provide for my family and give financial support and make sure the children were disciplined. Now, everything is mixed (My own translations)

Somalis have traditionally organized their families in such a way that different members of the family were assigned to different roles. The division of labor in the family was organized in a very predictable way, where clear cut roles existed and everybody accepted and behaved according to their respective roles (Abdullahi 2001; Lewis 1993). Women and men were assigned to different functions and arenas, and society expected them to behave in a certain manner. This was mostly true for both villages and town for dwellers. These roles were administered according to the family's expectations and according to the prevailing social condition. There were clear cut roles that were mirrored on the division of labor and privileges among family members (Lewis 1993). In rural Somalia, labor was divided according to the hardship and difficulty involved, for example, the women was assigned to taking care of the home and milking the goats and sheep. The men on the other hand were responsible for taking care of the outside business like milking the camel, watering the animals, going to meetings of the community, waging war or defending the settlements (Diriye 2001). On the other hand, in the towns, the division of labor between the sexes was also clear-cut with the men working outside and fending for the family, while the women is the care-taker of the home and children (Abdullahi 2001:122). Another very important matter of familial importance was marriage. Men and women are urged to marry both by their families and as commanded by the Quran and Islamic teachings.

5.1.1 Marriage, arranged marriages, forced marriages and divorce

Marriage is a very important social phenomenon among Somalis both those living in the villages and those in towns. Men and women in their teens are urged to get married so that

they can reproduce and help the family live generations to come. As Lewis puts it, the primary aim of marriage is to reproduce children, especially male heirs who will add strength and honor to their father's lineage and enhance his reputation and status (Lewis 1993). Normally, the marriage bond was considered a bond that not only joins the husband and wife, but also the two families they hail from (Abdullahi 2001). It enhances good relation, harmony and respect between the two families. Historically, marriage amongst the nomads was usually outside the Diya-paying group, the basic political unit. This reflected the political significance of marriage as an alliance between potentially hostile groups and sometimes included in peace terms (ibid). Marriage is initiated according to the strict rules of the Islamic sharia law that also creates the backbone of the Somali culture. As far as the age of first time marriage is concerned, "girls marry for the first time between the ages of fifteen and twenty years, and men usually marry a little later, between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five" (Lewis 1994:33).

Another important practice is the marriage of more than one wife also known as polygamy, by men who have the financial ability. As Lewis describes it, the Somalis are traditionally polygamous, marrying according the Islamic code, a maximum of four wives at any one time. The number of wives a man has varies generally with age: seniority being associated with many wives. "In the polygamous family, each wife and her children form a separate unit with their own dwelling. Each uterine family (*xaas or raas*) within the polygamous family (*xaasa or raasas*) is called the *bah*, its children being full siblings but only paternal half siblings to the children of the other families. The first wife is the senior (bahweyn or minweyn) and being the mother of the first children enjoys a lot advantages" (Lewis, 1993:11).

Somalis have a tradition of both marriages on the basis of love and normal courtship (*Shukaansi*) and other forms of marriage where the family arranges the setting for a marriage to happen or sometimes force the young adult into a marriage without his/her consent (Abdullahi 2001). Arranged marriage is normally arranged by the parents or relatives of either the future bride or the groom. This type of marriage normally happens in case the man or the women have not succeeded in attracting a marriage partner and are getting older than thirty for the man and twenty for the lady (Abdullahi 2001). Their relatives through contacts with neighbors try to find an appropriate mate for their son or their daughter. Arranged marriages are more often than not between cousins or in the case the families because of economic reasons want to marry off their daughter with their business associates.

Another type of marriage which is not very common in Somalia these days is forced marriage where a boy or a girl is married off without their consent. In the case of such a marriage the young bride is exposed to social coercion and forced to accept to marry a man who she doesn't want to marry. If the girl refuses, she is threatened with curse or banishment from the family. Many forced marriages ended tragically where the young bride runs away and never comes back to home. One of the main reasons for forcing young people into marriage is economic reasons where the parents are promised good economic compensation and a good future for their daughter (Abdullahi 2001).

Somalis are not strangers to divorce. Men can divorce their wives with no big difficulties while women can apply for divorce in very special circumstances (Lewis 1994). In the case of divorce, furis/furiin in Somali, the husband vocalizes the divorce formula in front of a qadi or a wadaad (A qadi is a sharia judge who precedes over familial Islamic laws) in the presence of witnesses (Abdullahi 2001; Lewis 1994). On the other hand, a woman can apply for divorce from her husband if he doesn't take care of his family or can't sexually satisfy his wife or wives. In that case the woman and her relatives would petition for divorce before a qadi's court (Abdullahi 2001).

In the current study, the participants painted a picture of a harmonious family with pretty much predictable ways to behave. There was a clear overview of who was to do what and when, as was explained by some of the participants.

> *"In Somalia the father was the head of the family who was responsible for fending and feeding the family. He was the one who was working for the family and the main and sometimes only source of income. He proceeded over general matters pertaining the family and had the last word in the decision making process" (Male 60; female 61: male 45).*

> *"The father comes home and expects food to be ready for him after work. His main responsibility when at home was disciplining his children and making sure that social cultural codes are adhered to. He had a special responsibility towards the boys who were raised to be the future heirs of the family and future elders. The men were for example exempted from cooking food and going into the kitchen. It was almost a taboo for men to cook food for their families" (Male 45 years).*

"In Somalia, I had nothing to do in the kitchen nor did I have anything to do with helping my wife in the daily tasks of the family. My main responsibility was bringing money home and making sure that my wife and children had clothes and a roof over their head" (Male 48 years).

We can see from the description of the role of men given by these participants as a male dominated society, where being a man gives you a clear position of authority and exempts you from helping your wife in the household affairs.

Another area the participants commented upon, was the decision making process. Here, they acknowledged as the monopoly for men where all the decisions were made exclusively by the male of the house be it husbands, brothers or grandfathers as two female participants explained:

"In Somali culture, women were exposed to a lot of injustice and treated as children whose opinion never weighed anything. It was only men who decided things and we were there to obey and never complain. In case of deviant behavior women were physically disciplined, but this was not widespread in the cities." (Female 45 years; female 42 years).

"In Somalia we have been raised to believe that men are responsible for their families and they always decide what is good for their family. Some men are still holding to these traditions and never discuss anything with their wives when reaching important decisions. This is the major cause of many of the conflicts because two people who raising a family together have to talk" (Female 30 years).

On the other hand, the domain of women according to all the participants was at home. The women were responsible for the day-to-day running of the family. Their status was sealed by their dependency on her husband. But this doesn't mean that Somali women are merely the property of their husband and don't have a say. As Abdullahi (2001) puts it, Somali women have both freedom and responsibilities in the household and in society. One female participant describes her life as a mother and a wife in Somalia:

"Staying at home and taking care of my children was very important for me. Most of the times I cooked for my family and cleaned after them, but there many more times

that I had help from relatives, especially young girls who were staying with us. Being the head of homes affairs, I had my privileges. I was responsible for the management of the income of the family and I decided who to help. My husband I had nothing to argue about, he goes and works and take care of the children. Everything was so predictable. Also I never had to worry about the economy of our family" (Female 42 years).

Somali roles dynamics in Somalia represent typical traditional gender role relations where women and men are assigned different values. According to Best & Williams researchers have classified sex role ideologies along a continuum ranging from traditional to modern. In traditional cultural ideologies of which Somali culture can be part hold the notion that men are more important than women as can be seen from the division of labor I just have discussed above. In such societies, men subordinate women and put them under their control and influence. On the other hand, modern ideologies hold a more egalitarian view where women and men are held of equal importance (Best & Williams 1997)

5.1.2 The status of Somali women

"In Somalia, women were expected to work like a donkey. They got no help from their husbands who were away most of the times. This way of treating your wife is also against Islam, but Somali men don't care about religion, as long as they get what they want" (Female 45 years).

Traditionally, Somali women and girls were exposed to different forms of male domination. Women and young girls in Somali families were denied participation in education and other decision making processes. As Dorian (2006) describes it, in traditional Somalia education on all levels, but particularly higher levels, was mainly a male privilege. In rural areas, the family sacrificed to send boys to the university instead of girls, due to the cultural perpetuation of specific gender spheres. Bryden and Stenier (1998) also describe that women have typically been forbidden to participate directly in important gatherings, to hold positions of community responsibility or to testify as legal witness. They were merely reduced to their reproductive roles and looking after the family of their husbands. Living in a highly structured patrilineal society, women and girls in Somalia are traditionally assigned a status inferior to men, who take the dominant roles in society, religion and politics (Gardner & El Bushra 2004). These

inequalities affect women in differing degrees, with those living in the villages mostly disadvantaged compared to those living in big cities and towns. A male participant described the treatment of girls in his family:

> *"Women and girls were subjected to many hardships. I can remember in my family of four, three boys and a girl all of us boys were sent to school, but my sister was left to help my mother at home. And when I think about all the work my sister and my mother did, it was just too much. So we as Somalis didn't treat our women very good, we have to change that now" (Male 45 years).*

An older female participant disagreed with the portrayal of women in Somalia as just victims of male chauvinism. She argued that women participated in very important social and poltical work:

> *"Before the outbreak of the civil war, and before the collapse of our beloved state, there were many women who were working and actively contributing to society. They were doctors, nurses, and government executives, so it was not all the women who were just at home and dependent on their husbands. (Female 61 years).*

However there were differences in the status of women when it concerns the urban areas and the pastoralist. In the urban areas both girls and boys were sent to school and women work almost in all walks of life. During Mohamed Siyad Barre's regime, women enjoyed more political representations. In the pastoral societies, women are still underprivileged with the bulk of work falling upon their shoulders. And generally speaking, in the rural areas educational offers were limited and this was compounded by the constant movement of these pastoral communities.

5.1.3 Parenting experience in Somalia

> *The bringing up of children was not a difficult task. We exactly knew how to take care of our children and they knew their responsibility. (Male 48 years)*

Another area the participants discussed was raising children in Somalia. Totally 11 parents had the experience of raising children both in Somalia and in Norway. According to them, children upbringing was not a complicated affair in Somalia. In Somali culture the main responsibility of bringing up children fall upon their parents, but this is not exclusive to them.

The rest of the family, including the relatives and neighbors, contributed to the upbringing of the children to be responsible members of the society (Abdullahi 2001). From a tender age children are socialized in a manner that will reflect their future roles as men and women. They are recruited into their special responsibilities and society expects them to behave in that direction. Children are expected to obey their parents, aunts, uncles and take their orders. Failure to do this can cause children to be physically disciplined or cursed by their parents when they get older (McGown 1999). In Somalia, children are physically disciplined both at home and in schools (Degni *et al* 2006; McGown 1999). Children are expected to show humility, to demonstrate respect for elders, but in particular to obey their parents and not to protest even if they are unjustly accused or punished. If reprimanded by their parents, children should keep their eyes downcast to indicate respect (Degni *et al* 2006).

Children are also socialized in a way that will prepare them for the roles of a future mother or father. Children in a Somali family learn their respective and complementary gender roles from a tender age. A young boy is encouraged to develop qualities capable of sustaining and securing a livelihood for his family and ensuring the safety of his wife and children (Abdullahi 2001:120). The girls are also prepared for their role as future wives and mothers and very strict discipline is expected of Somali girls. "For boys and girls, many behavioral differences are often attributed to socialization. Boys are generally raised to achieve and to be self-reliant and independent, while girls are raised to be nurturent, responsible and obedient" (Best & Williams 1997:181). Like in many other African cultures, Somalis value their boys more than their girls. In Somali culture, all children are considered a blessing from God. However, it is a patriarchal society and greater symbolic value is placed on a male than a female child. The birth of a boy is celebrated with the slaughter of two animals, while for a girl one is slaughtered (Gardner and El-Bushra, 2004).

5.1.4 The beginning of gender roles reversals

Gender roles reversal started before Somali families started to migrate to western countries and to Norway. Both in the villages and in big cities, these changes were noticeable, as more women were seen engaging in outside home activities. *"In the pre-war period, gender was varied as they are today, between urban/rural, pastoral/agricultural household and were delineated strictly. In urban household, women were predominantly housewives depending entirely on their husbands as breadwinners. Their responsibility was confined to the*

household where they were expected to bear and care for children and generally maintain the household. In pastoral households, women were engaged in different productive roles such as care and feeding of calves, kids and ewes, selling milk. In agricultural communities, women were engaged in cultivation of the fields and care for the crops" (Acord 2002:9).

Traditionally, Somali women and girl child were belittled and seen as a necessary liability. The subordination of women was institutionalized in the cultural and religious believes of the Somali community. However, this changed in the aftermath of the civil war when the formal Somali economy was brought to its knees by internal strife and consequently the loss of work for Somali men. One major impact of the war was that women are increasingly replacing men as the breadwinners for their families (Gardner & Bushra 2004:10).

Because of the war, families were torn apart from each other and many households lost their men who were the sole breadwinners. The women were left to fend for their children. Those men, who were lucky and survived the war, were rendered jobless because the only available work was those that were traditionally done by women. The only businesses that survived the destruction were the informal markets where women sell vegetables and small outdoor tea stalls. Women started to fend for their families, they started to buy and sell anything they could make money out of. "Because of the impact of the war on the family and household nowadays almost every family – urban and rural, educated and uneducated – depend on the economic productivity of women to a far greater extent than before" (Gardner 2004:100). All over sudden, Somali men became dependent on their daughters and wives. At the same time, the men were shy of taking these jobs that most of them feel as demeaning and inferior to their status. Gender role reversal began before Somalis arrived in exile in Norway. Traditionally, it was a shame for a man to be dependent on a woman, but that has changed because in many household women are the sole breadwinners (Gardner 2004). Coming to exile in different parts of the world, Somali women have further strengthened their positions, but this was not without confrontation.

5.2 Family relations in exile

In this section of the findings, I will analyze the perspectives of the participants, as far as the impact of the shift in gender roles dynamics is concerned. In addition, I will also analyze their perspectives as concerns parenting in exile in Norway.

5.2.1 Shift in gender roles in Norway

Most of the participants experienced the changing gender and parental roles within their families as a challenge that has shaken the foundation of the social structure of the Somali community living in Norway. The prevailing socio-cultural environment of the host society caused a disruption to the conventional ways of organizing family life. "The process of uprooting and resettlement in new and alien dominant societies has usually necessitated this re-creation, re-invention and re-negotiation of new gender roles and relations. Often this changes must be made rapidly, leading to attendant difficulties, because they entail important aspects of self-identity and power that affects relations between men and women, those within the family, the workplace, school and elsewhere" (Krulfeld 1994:71).

According to the female participants, the background of all their problems was, how they were treated in Somalia and they seemed clearly to challenge the notion that, men don't have to work at home. As one female participant explained:

> *"Somali families have many problems, but the origin of the problem is that in Somalia women were exposed to many injustices by society. There are many men who want to continue with this injustice against women here in Norway and treat women the way used to in Somalia. This often creates a situation where the husband and wife are always in misunderstanding. Many of the problems are related to the task at home and who is to do what. In Somalia the situation was very different, women used to get a lot of help from relatives who were staying with her at all times. Here we are stuck with all the task alone and we can't do all by ourselves; we need help from our men" (female, 42 years).*

Within Somali society, gender roles are divided between women and men. This is supported by Somali traditions and the Islamic teachings that clearly defined Muslim men as the leaders of their family. "Islamic teachings often emphasized the equality of all people. However, there has been a considerable variation in the interpretations regarding the status of women"

(Abu- Laban 1991). For example, there are Somali men who use religion as a pretext to marry four wives without adhering the rules and the regulations that state that they have to treat their wives equally which is practically and emotionally impossible. Most of the interpretations are often done by, and this clearly explains the discrepancies between the Quran and many interpretations.

According to Best & Williams (1997) religious beliefs and cultural based view of family honor may also influence views of women and react to women's working outside their homes and becoming independent. Some Somali men have resentment against their women participating in the labor market and mixing with other men. This also partly explains the distressing statistics I have discussed in chapter one, where the unemployment of women is double that of men.

Meanwhile migration to Norway with better economic opportunities for the whole family has challenged this hierarchal power relationship and with consequences for family relations. Somali women are either working and earning their own money or receiving welfare from the government. With their growing economic independence, Somali women are demanding more power within their families. One of the main grievances the female participants in this investigation discussed, was their husband's unwillingness to participate in their daily chores of the household. As they said, many Somali men don't want to contribute to the domestic affairs of their homes. A young male participants supported women in their frustrations:

> *"There are many Somali men who just don't acknowledge that things are changing around, and who want to behave as if they are still in Somalia. They want to sit in cafes in hours and talk about useless politics, when what they were supposed to do, was helping their families. Women can't do everything alone, they need our help and it is time to bury that arrogant culture of mistreating women" (Male 30 years,).*

Despite the improved economic and decision making status of Somali women in the Diaspora, they are often frustrated by their men's reluctance to take more responsibilities for their families (Al-Sharmani 2004). Somali men's uncompromising attitude to hold on to traditional patriarchal role is causing Somali homes a lot of mental distress. With their increased economic contribution to the family, Somali women have strengthened their bargaining position and are challenging their men either to fit in and contribute or be thrown out. In addition, Somali men's deterioration of their economic situation and the loss of their role as

the breadwinners of their families, have reduced their power bargain and this is a cause for frustration for many of them. There is a general feeling of uselessness among the many unemployed men, and this causes spousal conflict. This is how a female participant described the situation of Somali men (Tyyska 2007).

Nimankii soomaliyeed waxaad mooda inaay is dhiibeen kalsoonidana ka luntay. Nimankii waxay cuqdad ka qaadeen xaasaskoodi. Waxay leeyihiin anigu naag ima xukumeysa, raganimadeydana ma doonaayo inaay lunto (Female 45 years)

It looks like Somali men have surrendered and have no confidence at all. Men have developed a negative attitude towards their wives. They say that a woman will never rule me, and I don't want to compromise my manhood (My own translation)

As a result, many Somali men in Norway today seek remedy from other Somali men who they feel are in the same situation, sitting either long hour in cafes chatting about politics and trying to forget about the reality back home. While others turned to religion and spend the bigger part of their days praying and chatting with other Somali men in mosques in Oslo. In Somalia, there were more mosques than all the mosques in Europe put together, but Somali men never used to spend so much time there. Meanwhile, what I found out about the religiosity of Somali men is that they use it most of their time to legitimize their authority as men. Both Somali men and youth have seen the mosque as a refuge from all the familial challenges they are facing. Another reason for the increased religiosity can also be a way to escape the daily discrimination they are exposed to both from the labor market, the media and the host society at large (Fangen 2006)

The participants acknowledged that they come to Norway with the full baggage of a traditional gender role dynamic that we have described in the above section. The female participants seemed to appreciate change while the men try to hold on to their traditional cultural practices. "Since gender identities are cultural constructs, like other aspects of culture, they may be transmitted to new settings following older models, created a new or modified in a response to changing circumstances and renegotiated within the community" (Krulfeld 1994:71). Many of parents initially try all their best to hold on to these forms of organizing the family, but when the task of their households are increasing from what they used to know, and with the network the family has at their disposal shrinking, it is very difficult to sustain

such type of a division of labor within the family in Norway. Pre-migration cultural conceptions and social practice continue to have force and sometimes stay unchanged (Foner 2009). Moving to Norway has brought Somali women out of their role as householders and exposed them to the culture of the host society and to the new economic reality. All the participants talked about the challenges facing them in their quest for raising sustainable families in Norway.

In exile taken-for-granted gender roles are put to the taste because of the changing dynamics of the family as was also argued by other researchers (Darvishpour 2002; Boyle & Ali 2009; Mahdi 1999). Migration seems to have strengthened the women in patriarchal society against their men. "Urban refugees adapt to such dramatic changes in gender specific changes. Whilst men react to the changes in a confused defeatist and chaotic manner, the need to meet the daily bread of the family members, forces women to waste no time and consequently engage in a menial economics activities without being constrained by their previous economic and social status" (Kibreab 2005:20). The new social and economic situation of the family forced certain roles to change. Somali women in Norway are even more secure economically than they were in Somalia due to social benefits from the government, and this has further strengthened their position in relation to their men.

Some of the male participants saw this new found freedom of Somali women as a challenge to their traditional authority. They described what is happening to Somali women as un-Islamic and against the Somali tradition. However, there was a difference of opinion among the different participants. For instance the younger male participants and most of the female participants saw these changes as positive and good for the family, while some of the older male and female participants saw it as cultural erosion that will lead the Somali family into social decadence. Change in social status among Somali families is mentioned in other research. McGown (1999) found that the role of Somali men as the authority of their houses was challenged because men have not continued to be the breadwinners after settling in their homes in exile.

These findings are supported by Heitritter (1999) who identified the main challenges facing Somali families in Minneapolis. Some of these challenges are the disruption of authority within religiously prescribed hierarchy, disruption of responsible role functioning and psychological stress from the effects of the conflict. She argues that immigrant families often face difficulties in adapting to their lives in exile when their expectations of what family life

was for them in their homeland is in stark contrast to the realities on the ground. The disruption of the hierarchal and extended family and the consequences this has on immigrants from traditional societies has been identified as a problem for families by the study of Arab-American families in the United States (Aswad and Gray 1996).

Heitritter (1999) says a differentiated hierarchical role structure was considered important for enhancing family unity and building stronger families. She found out that women were mostly defending a gender differentiated family where women have the role of traditional women in patriarchal societies. However, in my investigation most of the female participants wanted their men to be more involved in household affairs and a more gender equal relationship.

Going against this notion of gender differentiation forwarded by Heitritter and in support of the findings of my study, Affi (2004), describes the conflict caused by cultivating traditional gender role relations. According to her, the new economic situation of Somali women is seen by most men as a challenge to their authority and that men are still reluctant to accept their new status and help their families. She also argued that despite the economic independence of Somali women in the Diaspora, women have still not realized full gender equality. A weakness of Heitritter's finding can be the she did not separate the men and the women during group discussions, because Somali women have a tendency to be shy in the presence of Somali men. My study has separated the female and the male participants both during the focus group discussions and the individual interviews. The opinion on gender equality was mixed, with the older generation both men and women supporting traditional roles, while the younger generation supporting gender equality in their families.

Some of the female participants of my study, described their situation in Somalia and expressed a lot of frustration towards men who are still living in their past and don't want to help their families here in Norway. As one female narrated:

> "I think the problem we face today started way before we migrated to Norway. We had many traditions that mistreated women. When we came to Norway, women see many of the injustices that they were patient on because her needs were covered by the bigger family. Here nobody is covering for you except your husband and if he wants to live in the past, then there will be conflict" (Female, 43 years).

Similar finding were revealed by Degni *et al* (2006). Some of their findings included how the gendered family with clear cut roles among the different members changed. They argue that

in Somalia the main responsibilities of women were parenting, while men were the breadwinners and not involved in taking part in domestic affairs of the family. In the meantime, they found out that these ways of organizing the family is changing among the families living in Finland. Because of the new socioeconomic situation of the family, women are becoming more advantaged and are assuming more powerful roles as not only house makers but also decision makers. Unemployed men have lost their role as the breadwinners, and henceforth had to adjust to their new situation. They also found out that these new roles are hard to swallow for Somali men.

Some of the participants also disagreed with the changes that are taking place, and said that our families are pushed to take a culture that is imposed to them by the host society. A culture that according to these participants, was against their traditions and their way of life as one participant explained.

> *"The Somalis behave themselves like people who never had a culture of their own. They want to copy a culture that is not theirs (...) overnight. For example women have been brainwashed to believe they can do whatever they want to their men. They ask men to change dippers, cook for them, even some of them tell their husbands to serve other women at their own homes. This is cultural erosion"* (Male 42 years).

A female participant agreed with this opinion to some extent as she argues that some women, after coming to Norway, are negatively taking advantage of this new found freedom and pushing their men to the wall:

> *"Some women are pushing this whole idea of gender equality a little bit too far. They want to treat their husband like servants. He is the one who is working, he is the one who is picking up the kids from school, and she wants him to cook and wash after he comes from work. Such women are also wrong just the same as the men who think women have to do everything"* (Female 32 years).

Another area that participants said is the cause of many the family breakdowns is the administration of the family economy. The constant quarrel over how the money will be spent and which post should prioritized, was according to the participants, the cause of family conflict. Many Somali families are dependent on social help from the government. The money they get is just enough for their daily bread and when family members call from Somalia for

help, it creates a heated debate within the family. A male participant described the poverty among Somalis:

> *"Somalis in Norway are generally poor and most of them either rely on social security funds from the government or in some families, there is only the man or the woman working. Here in Norway, the economic life depends on a two incomes. When the expenses of the family are exceeding the income, conflict is not far away"* (Male 48 years).

A female participant also described the increasing economic difficulties among Somali families as the cause of concern:

> *"Here in Norway, the woman is given her own account where she receives her own money; the man is either working or getting social security in his own account. The woman wants to have a say in how her money will be spent. Many men feel threatened by the women having their own incomes and they develop inferiority complex and cause problems for the family. In Somalia, life was much easier, the woman is at home and doesn't need to worry about money because it is the responsibility of the man to work and bring money to the family"* (Female 42 years).

Many of the female participants are very pleased in their husbands taking more and more responsibility, while at the same time acknowledging the difficulties in the process of having a more gender balanced household. One female participant describes her new situation in relation to her role in Somalia:

> *"In Somalia, my husband never used to lift a finger to help me with daily chores. Now when I see him shopping food, helping me sometimes cook food, I really appreciate it. Somali men are becoming more involved and more responsible for their families. Many of them are not happy with this, but they realized that they have no choice, otherwise the family will collapse. Here in Norway, I don't have anybody helping with the kids and the house, in our homeland things were different. There were always my relatives who were around to help me out whenever I needed help. Things are very different here in Norway, everybody has something to do. For example all my Somali neighbors are either working or going to school, many of them have their own things to do."* (Female 40 years).

The losers of the changing gender roles, as they put it are men. First the men had to deal with the loss of their identity and status as the head and breadwinners of their families, and the loss of their power not to take part in the family affairs. Some of the male particpants expressed their dissatisfaction with their new situation, while others just followed the direction of the waves and changed their attitudes towards their wives. One of the male participants who said that he is speaking from his heart and said that he didn't need to be politically correct, lamented about the situation of Somali men:

> *"Waxaa weyaan owrkii oo caloosha laga raray.. ma aniga ayaa guriga sii joogi oo cuntada Karin og ciyaalka umeyri ayadana waxay aadeysa shaqo. Waa aduunya la dhala rogay"*

> *"It is just like the camel was loaded from the stomach. Is it me who is going to stay at home cooking food, cleaning the children while she goes to work? It is a world turned upside down   (Male 50 years).*

There has been a difference of opinion between the older participants who had families before they came to Norway and those younger ones who have married here for the first time. The older generations are those that have most adaptation problems. The younger ones, especially those who have gone to school here in Norway, seem to have no problem taking part in activities of their homes. As one young male participant said:

> *"I came to Norway as a teenager and married after seven years, I don't see a problem helping my wife with the daily chores. I cook food; I change the dippers for my kids. I don't see any other alternatives, but to help my wife raise my children"* (Male 30 years).

Another young man also agreed with the opinion of Somali men taking greater responsibilities towards their families:

> *"Our situation is not as it used to be. Our wives don't have any relatives helping them. They are human beings; they can become sick or for example become pregnant and get hospitalized. You have several other kids at home. Are you going to just fold up you arms and do nothing? I don't think so. If we are to succeed in this difficult transition, we have to help each other and pull our resources together"* (Male 38 years).

Immigration to Norway, has had both a positive and a negative effect on gender roles among Somali families. This study and many other studies suggested that, with the increased economic resources of women and the decrease of the status of men because of unemployment, traditional gender roles relations cannot be sustained in exile. Somali women in the current study are raising their voices in unison for better gender equality between them and their men.

5.2.2 Parenting experiences in Norway

In this section, the participants were asked to describe their parenting experience in exile in Norway. Almost all of them compared parenting experience in Somalia with that of Norway and acknowledged that there are real differences between the two countries. The Somali parents both men and women agreed upon that parenthood in Somalia was not a complicated task.

Somali culture places a strong emphasis on the nature of the relationship between parents and their children. Parents expect their children to behave according to the Somali culture and become good Muslims. This taken-for-granted expectation of how children are supposed to behave is however put to the taste the minute Somali children arrive in Norway and started attending school and making friends with their peers. The parents who took part in this investigation were worried about the cultural heritage of their children. Most of them blamed what is happening on the school and the culture of the host society. A common challenge found in research done on immigrant family's adaptation process has been parent-child conflict (Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Phinney & Vedder 2006; Thune 2004). The most important issue and the main source of conflict is the cultural and generational gap between first generation immigrant parents and their children who grew up in exile.

For all immigrant families, intergenerational relations are framed by complex and often difficult processes of acculturation. Tensions arise when parents try to maintain the family's ethnic culture while children, more exposed to forces of socialization adapt more rapidly than their parents (Phinney & Vedder 2006; Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Tyyska 2007). Somali children are often caught up in the daily dilemma of two life-worlds that are based on two different cultural believes. The children are taught a lot of things that are forbidden for a Muslim to do when he is at home with his parents or the Koran school. The next day when he

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is at school, the child may hear or find that the same things that are forbidden for him at home are allowed at school. For example the issue of homosexuality is a taboo even to talk about in Somali homes, while in the school, this can be presented as any other arrangement of sharing life with someone else. Another example is the issue of having a lover either a boyfriend or a girl friend. In Somali culture the official social policy is you are either married or you are not. Having for example sex before marriage for Somali girls, is the worst shame a family can exposed to. On the other hand, in any modern country, having a lover is pretty much a normal business. However, I don't want to make the generalization that Somalis don't entertain love and courtship, or don't have sex without marriage. In Somalia, all types of life style were found, but most the time they were suppressed from the public life. Somali children and adolescent are in an emotional dilemma of how to behave, when what they want is against what they parents want them to be. This is what a participants who is also a Somali language teacher had to say:

Somali children behave like Norwegians when they are at school or together with their friends, and behave the way they are expected by their parents when they at home. It seems that these children get confused so many times in the course of their childhood. (Male years)

"Somali children are brought up in homes that are suffering with many problems. The children are living between two different cultures. In the school the children are shown a lot of affection, love, and respect for other people and the respect for each and every person has his or her turn. In their homes these children don't get this kind of treatment, because the parents listen to the BBC Somali service which always report on killings and on suicide bombings. This dilemma makes the children get a very bad picture of their community something which will affect their self image and self esteem" (Male 40 years).

These findings are in line with Thun's (2004) research on Somali adolescent girls on the issue of love and marriage. According to her, these Somali girls were faced with challenge of trying to please their parents, while at the same time they desired to live as young adults and behave like their peers from the host society.

The participants expressed the prevailing conflict between them and their children, especially the youth. As they said, they are having difficulties in bringing up children in a country that has another culture and way of organizing the family. Because of the differences between the cultures of the immigrants and the cultures of settlement, parents face the task of teaching their children the values of their cultures of origin, while at the same time living in a new society that holds different values (Phinney & Vedder 2006). The participants, who were all parents with children, said that their children were not taking their advice, because the school was teaching something that was not appropriate according to their traditions and believes, like homosexuality, love and courtship, and gender equality in the form of boys and girls mixing freely. "Intergenerational discrepancy is larger in the presence of what might be called an acculturation gap, that is when adolescent lean towards assimilation and parents wish to maintain their own cultural tradition without assimilating" (Phinney & Vedder 2006:218).

Here in Norway, Somali children seemed to have embraced the Norwegian culture, while the parents still struggle in keeping their culture and traditions intact, do everything possible to convince their children to remain within their culture. I have observed in several areas where Somali children go to after school for example the mosques. The main communication language for most of these children is Norwegian. But from time to time, you will see their parents or any other adult who hears them; try to challenge them to communicate the Somali language and not the Norwegian language.

The tension between the parents and that between the parent and their children, have had negative consequences on Somali children. Some of the Somali parents I have talked with, narrated, their fear for children from Somali families are being recruited into different criminal groups in Oslo and may be outside the country because of the difficulties and misunderstanding at home. Signs of Somali young men selling narcotic around the Aker River and under the Nyland Bridge in Grønland can be seen on a daily basis.

However not all the parents had intergeneration conflict with their teenage children. Some of the young participants seem to have no problems in giving some freedom to their children to freely make friends with their peers from school. This is what one of the female participants said about this:

> *"I don't see problem with for example my daughter going to party with her friends in the weekend as long as she tells me. I can remember when I came here in Norway with*

my parents, I wasn't allowed to go and part with my classmates from school, because my parents said this was un-Islamic. When my friends are talking about their party the next day at school, I felt very bad. I don't want my daughter to feel what I have felt. I just have to trust her and support her with her choices in life" (Female 30 years)

Numerous studies have documented cultural difference in parenting styles. An empirical study by Degni *et al* (2006), explored social-cultural changes within migrant families. As far as parenting experiences are concerned, they argued that Somali children are expected to show unquestioning respect to their elders and a certain degree of corporal punishment in parenting practices was an accepted part of the Somali culture and a valid parenting practice. The parent in my study have narrated the dilemma they have in the best way of bringing their children in the absence of the family network that they used to have as was explained by some of the participants:

"Back in Somalia, parents exactly knew how to raise their children. Society there had one value to teach their children, and it was almost very automatic because everybody was doing the same way. I was not afraid of my children going out with their neighbors because; we belonged to same value and culture" (Male 40 years).

"My biggest worries are the growing influence of the Norwegian society over our lives. The Norwegian culture is integrated in their school system no matter what we do; our children will be exposed to other values that are sometimes contrary to our values and believes." (Male 41 years).

Another important aspect of their finding was how the parent-children relationship was shaping itself in exile. They found out that children integrate faster than their parents creating a power imbalance where children get the power of interpreting the finish culture for their parents. Participants in my study narrated similar frustration as far as the diminishing use of the Somali language and the growing use of the Norwegian language by their children was concerned. Many of them argued that Norwegian language is slowly wiping out the Somali language. Another possible reason for the parents to discourage their children to use Norwegian language at home, can their desire to hear what the children are saying if the parents themselves can't speak the language. A female participant described her effort to teach her children the Somali language.

"I encourage my children to speak Somali when they are at home, I even promise to give them reward to those who speak most in Somali at home. But it is difficult because the kids are at school the bigger parts of the day when they are active; I am as well a way the whole day working. When we all come back everybody is tired and the understanding capacity is less than ten per cent. Lately I have almost given up fighting a war that I know I can't win" (Female 32 years).

The learning of the language helps the children to understand the host culture better. This development doesn't happen at the same pace when it concerns parents learning of the language. The family can end up with the children becoming the cultural interpreters for their parents this create a sudden power shift in the family that can be challenging to the parents.

According to Portes & Rumbaut (2001) one of the most poignant aspect of immigrants' adaptation to a new society is that children can become, in a very real sense, their parents. Somali parents were also very worried about how their children were assimilating into the host culture and losing respect for their authority as parents. The participants of my study seem to share the concerns of their Finish counterparts, as they are very worried about the future of their children in a very different cultural milieu than the one they are used to live in.

Similar study done in other European countries found the same. Harding *et al* (2007), describes the cultural tension between children and their parents. They have also extensively addressed the issue of intergenerational conflict; Somali youths and their parents have difficulties in adapting to their new roles. The children through school, and contact with their peers from the host communities integrate faster into the society, while their parents want their children to adhere and respect the Somali and Islamic code of conduct.

The parents of my study also complained about the negative influence of the school where according to them, children are given a lot of freedom to do what they desire without respect for their parents. The notion that they cannot physically discipline their own children was something difficult to understand. In Somali culture, children are physically disciplined both at home and school and is a very socially accepted method of correcting deviant children. Many of them believe that the children are directly taught to disobey their parents by the school. Somali children are brought up to respect their parents and to see advice and blessings

from them (Abdullahi 2002; McGown 1999). A male participant explains his opinion about children in Norway:

> *"Here in Norway children are told they are free individuals by schools and that nobody can even look at them. Now we have children that will argue with their parents and sometimes even threaten them with the police if they are not given what they want from their parents. Worse of all even disciplining them is even unthinkable because we are being told that according to the Norwegian law you cant physically punish your own children (…) this is absurd" (male 38 years).*

Despite all the challenges associated with being a parent in a new country, almost all the participants appreciated the opportunity their children have in Norway. As they said their children are enjoying better education and better healthcare and they were very happy with their new lives. This is what two of the participants said:

Thanks to God, our children are not exposed to the dangers of disease and ignorance. Here in Norway they have the opportunity to progress and get a good life for themselves and their families. (Female 39 years; female 32 years).

There has been a difference in the opinion of intergenerational conflict between parents and their children among the parents in my study. Again, the younger participants both the male and the female seemed to understand the need of their children and try to be supportive. Two female and a male participant who all of them had teenage children, said that if at all their children are to succeed here in Norway, they have to take part and interact with their classmate and communicate in the Norwegian language whenever they wish.

5.2.3 The loss of social network

Another aspect of change that participants dwelt upon was the loss of the ever existing network of family relations that were previously there and lived practically with the family. The family was surrounded by aunts, uncles, relatives who helped the family to function harmoniously. Migration to Norway made the family to depart from their relations and this has adversely affected their adaptation process. "Immigration, voluntary or involuntary, is a transition that often entails the severing of community ties, the loss of social network and familiar bond – it can mean the loss of taken for granted source and system of meaning"

(Sonn 2002:2). This network of people helped the family in the running of the family affairs like babysitting, running errands and bringing up children.

The participants of my study grieved about the loss of the people that were constantly around them and who helped them raise their children. "When refugees flee their areas or countries of origin and cross into other countries in search of succor and safe haven, they become uprooted from their social and cultural moorings with the consequence of being stripped of web of relationships. The loss of relationship is said to represent an enormous threat and challenges to the individual's copings and adaptive capacities in the new environment" (Kibreab 2005:20). The participants reminisced about all the helping hands that were available in Somalia who helped the family especially with the children. But here in exile, the participants said that the children are pretty much a business for the small family and that there are no relatives to help them out in times of need as explained by a female participant:

> *"All of a sudden we become very alone with our children; no relatives are there to help you, no neighbors. When you become sick or during child birth no mother or sister is there to help you out. The first years of our lives were a very depressive period and we were pretty confused. The other problem is the many children Somali families have (...) It is just impossible to raise so many children In Norway" (female 32 years).*

> *"I don't really remember getting tired bringing up my children in Somalia. Almost all the time there was my family helping me with the kids or the neighbors. For example during pregnancy and child birth my mother and sisters were always there and helped with the children. I was almost treated like a queen (...) I loved childbirth in Somalia" (Female 40 years).*

According to the answers given by the participants, this network of relations provided the family with security, unity and social belonging for the different members of the family. This is in line with other research done on Somali families in exile. Heitritter (1999) argued that the traditional Somali family was characterized by a sense of unity based on traditional values. The findings of my study show the network of the family shrank with consequents for the socio-psychological wellbeing of its members. One female participant had this to say about the loss of relatives due to their flight in exile:

> *There is nobody who is here to help if we become sick or need to go out and buy something. When my husband is out working, I am forced to postpone all I want to do until after he comes back from work.*

The loss of social network among immigrant families and the consequences this has on the sustainability of the family is also mentioned in other research. Degni *et al* (2006) in their research on Somali parenting experience in Finland found out that the loss of the collective culture made the family vulnerable to internal conflicts. The loss of social network of the family also means more work to be shared between the man and his wife. One of the main causes of conflict according to the participants, was the division of labor within the family. The female participants clearly revealed their frustration as far as their husbands are concerned. They described men who are never there for their families. According to them, Somali men either spending most of their times with other men either in the mosque or in cafes around Grønland. This is what a female participant said about absence of her large family:

> *"I really miss my family who were there helping each other with everything. During the festivities everybody will come to our house and spend several days with us, eating and sleeping with us. Here in Norway, we are all alone with our children. Worse of all when my husband goes out and spends all his time with other men, this is very lonely and I get tired". (Female 40 years)*

Another consequence of the loss of the extended family that the participants revealed, was the lack of family elders who used to mediate between the wife and the husband in the event of conflict. This resulted is an ever increasing family breakdown. In Somalia, domestic conflict that might lead to divorce are often solved by in-laws and extended family, thereby saving the marriage (Affi 2004). The consequence in Norway is that, many of the marital conflicts end up in divorce because of the lack of clan elders. Because of the high divorce rate among Somali families in Norway, single parented household make up about 29% (Daugstad 2008). The single mothers who participated in the current research described the difficulty in raising children alone in Norway. One young female participant who was divorced and raising a child alone said this:

"Life as a single mother is a painful one, I cry a lot alone especially when am sick in the morning the children have to be prepared for the school (...) nobody is there to help you" (female 39 years).

As far as the participant of my investigation, all of them agreed upon the negative impact of not having your family network around you here in Norway.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen how migration from Somalia where the family was organized in a different way than in Norway, affected the families. The participants felt that their lives were put upside down because of the cultural distance between them and the host society. Due to the loss of the extensive network of family relations that helped the family, the men and women found themselves in a difficult situation. Marital conflict becomes a reality for most of the respondents when the desire to live in gender hierarchy is confronted with a new reality with household tasks to do. The women were demanding their husbands to adjust to the current situation and help them, while the men felt their authority as husband and the head of the household to been threatened. Another contending issue faced by the participants was the different in parenting styles between Somali culture and the Norwegian culture. According to them, their children have lost respect for them and they can't discipline their children because of laws that prohibit the physical punishment of children in Norway. However, some of the younger parents seemed not having any problem with respecting the choice of their children.

CHAPTER 6:

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This research project took a broader look at the process surrounding the psychological and socio-cultural adaptation of refugees who in addition to experiencing war, came from a cultural background that is very different from the host culture that they try to be a part of. The main findings of the study was broadly divided into three: the first stressors that challenged the participants adaptation process, was the refugee background and coming from a society that was plagued by many years of systematic corruption, civil war, flight within and outside the country and their lives in very overcrowded asylum facilities that lack the basics of life. The second challenge that had an impact on their lives is the post-migration living difficulties. Learning new social skills of language, culture and adapting to environmental conditions was also some of the moderating issues to reestablishing their lives. The third challenge that this family's face is the impact the process of migration had on their family relations. Here the loss of the network of family relations that gave both moral and material support to the family, the changing economic situation of the family with women gaining and men are losing economically. Another impact of migration that was also mentioned by the participants as one of the most difficult and a cause of concern were the changing gender roles and the relationship between the parents and their children. All this factors had an impact on the acculturation process of this families.

Berry (1997) in his acculturation model identified a number of factors that influence the acculturation process of new-comer societies. He categorized this factors in two namely the situation of the society of origin and the society of settlement. As concerns the society of origin, the cultural characteristics individual's posses, the political, economical and demographic conditions faced by the acculturating group in their society of origin all play a role in the adaptation process. Secondly in the receiving society, the general orientation of the citizens towards immigration and pluralisms and government policies towards integrating newcomers in to the mainstream society are moderating factors that play a key role in how easy of difficult it will be for the acculturating society to reestablish themselves in the new country.

As far as the participants of my study are concerned, the ongoing conflict in Somalia has negatively affected their lives in Norway. The traumatic experience of the civil war in

Somalia, the flight and their lives in overcrowded asylum camps, has impacted their adaptations process. The impact of war on the adaptation process is documented by many researchers as a metal health stressor (Scuglik *et al* 2007, Bhui *et al* 2006; Matheson & Jorden 2008). These studies suggest that the mental condition of most of the victims of war, negatively influence their psychological acculturation into their new societies.

According to Ward *et al* (2001) refugees experience a wide range of life changes that has exposed them to a lot of stressor upon their entrance in to a new cultural situation. Some of the major pre- and post-migration stressors that hinder the positive acculturation of refugees include: loss and grief, social isolation, pre-migration trauma, culture shock, acculturation pressures, accelerated modernization and minority status. Most of the participants in my investigation have experienced war and trauma of losing loved ones. In addition to this, they talked about the culture shock shortly after arriving in Norway. Somali culture is a traditional collective based culture, and coming to Norway, a modern country was a cause of stress for some of the participants. This has had negative influence on their acculturation process as psychological wellbeing is a prerequisite for good positive acculturation.

Shortly after their arrival in Norway, they were confronted with a new unfamiliar culture, a new language and a very hostile environmental condition. The participants were torn between their desire to maintain their tradition and believes, and their desire to have a positive contact with the host society. According to Berry's (1997) acculturation model individuals choose the strategy that best serves their interest, values and skills. According to him, there are four possible acculturation outcomes: marginalization, separation, assimilation and integration. For the participants of my investigation, some of them felt that it is not easy to integrate into a society that only accepts those that behave exactly like them in other wards – assimilate to their culture. This was not the best alternative for the participants, as their culture and ethnic identity was very important for them.

The abuse of khat by Somali men, and the money remitted by the participants to their families, was also mentioned as an economical and social challenge. Khat's impact on the health and economy of Somali families have documented by many research. Khat causes both mental and physical problems and has adverse effect on the economy of the chewers (Cox & Rampes 2003; Andersen 2003). The participants of the investigation have mentioned khat as not only an economic health problem, but also a cause of marital conflict between the spouses.

Another element of concern the participants mentioned, was the socio-economic impact of the money they send to their families and relatives back home in Somalia or in other African countries. This, according to them, caused a lot of conflict in the face of economic difficulties here in Norway. Most of the sending families live on government financial support in the form of social security funds. The economic hardship caused by remittances has been argued by many researchers. (Gran 2007; Lindley 2007; Horst 2006, 2008).

The impact of migration on the relationship between the family members had both positive and negative outcomes. The strengthened economic situation of Somali women was welcomed by the participants as one step closer to gender equality. Women are either employed or receiving public; the men are unemployed and have to take part in domestic responsibilities. This new position, allowed them to renegotiate traditional power relations where women were put on the sideline. But this new found power and freedom came with a price. Somali men translated the new situation of their women as a threat to their traditional authority and feel depressed about their inability to adjust to their socio-economic reality of their families. Marital conflict due to gender role reversal has been revealed by many researches (Tyyska 2007; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Darvishpour 2004; Mahdi 1999).

According to Darvishpour's (2002) investigation of Iranian families' adaptation process in Sweden, women from patriarchal society who were under the domination of their men increased their power resource after arriving in Sweden. Education, employment opportunities and government help in the form of social security enhanced their independence from their men. This strengthened their power ratio in relation to their men. This resulted in the renegotiation of traditional gender roles relations. The female participant in my study, have clearly marked their territory and are demanding that Somali men take greater share of the household chores. But despite this gains Somali women end up doing most of the work at the end of the day (Affi 2004).

A very interesting revealing in my study, is the generational differences as far as the issue of the division of household labor and the gender equality generally. The older generation both the men and the women, advocated for a more traditional gender role relation, while the younger generation argued for more gender equality among Somali families in Norway.

Intergenerational and cultural value discrepancy between the parents and their children was also another finding of my study. The desire of the parents to teach and preserve the cultural heritage to their children, and the desire of the children to be similar to their peers, was the

cause of great frustration for the participants of the current investigation. In this situation, the children according to some of the participants are torn between two ideologically different worlds; that of their parents and that of the host society. This has a negative impact on the identity development of Somali youth (Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Phinney & Vedder 2006).

A so comprehensive research is not without its limitations. The participants group of my study, is not representative of the Somali community in Norway because of the approach employed in the process of data collection. Secondly, when talking about Somali culture, one can easily make the mistake of assuming that all Somalis have one distinct culture. The participants despite their common origin as Somalis, and despite their shared experience, they are as different as any group of people can in relation to their social, economical, and where they come from villages or towns. Another difference among the participants is the age differences, the length of stay in Norway. These differences are clearly reflected in the lives and in their opinions as far as the research topics were concerned. But despite these limitations, the current investigation was driven by the hope of contributing to the debate of the Somali community in Norway in order to at least shade some light into their lives as families in Norway.

Suggestion for future research

My study represents one of first step in broadly addressing the impact of migration on immigrant families in Norway in specific reference to the Somali community. Given the importance of the adaptation of immigrant in their new home, further research involving other parts of the Somali population such as children and youth, is needed in order to see the magnitude of the challenges facing immigrant families in the Diaspora in Norway. As far as the issue of parent-child conflict is concerned, the current research presented the perspectives of the parents. It will be very interesting to see a research involving both parents and their children, when it concerns issues of cultural and intergenerational value discrepancies.

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ALL SOURCES USED IN THE THESIS ARE LISTED

NUMBER OF WORDS EXCLUDING APPENDICES: 37 707

APPENDIX 1:

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Changing socio-economic role among Somali families living in exile in Norway

The Main Objectives of This Research

The purpose of the study is to conduct a qualitative research among Somali families living in exile in Norway on their experience as far as their lives here in Norway is concerned. The goal of the research is to create some insights into the organization of the Somali family so as to understand them better and put the necessary action plan in order to help them adapt to their lives here in Norway.

SOMALI FAMILIES IN EXILE IN NORWAY:

1. How is the Somali family living in exile in Norway? Has any changes occurred?

2. How are they coping with the social economic changes that have occurred since their arrival in Norway?

3. How are these changes perceived by Somalis?

SOMALI FAMILY AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION:

1. How was the Somali family organized in Somalia?

2. How is the Somali family organized in exile here in Norway?

3. Has any changed occurred, socially and economically?

4. How are they handling these changes?

SOMALI FAMILY AND CHILD UPBRINGING

1. How are children brought up in Somalis?

2. How are they brought up here in Norway?

3. Do you think that changes have happened?

4. How is the relationship between children and their parents in Norway?

SOCIAL NETWORK AND TRANSNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. How connected are Somalis living in exile in Norway?

2. What are the effects of sending money to relatives for the Somali family?

KHAT AND THE SOMALI FAMILY

1. What are the effects of chewing khat for the Somali family?

Acknowledgements and Conclusions

That is all I have, I want to thank you for honouring my invitation and sharing your insights with me. I really appreciate your time.

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

The purpose of the study is to conduct a qualitative research among Somali families living in exile in Norway on their experience as far as their lives here in Norway is concerned. The goal of the research is to create some insights into the organization of the Somali family so as to understand them better and put the necessary action plan in order to help them adapt to their lives here in Norway.

Please provide relevant information about yourself:

1. When did you come to Norway?
2. Are married?
3. How many children do you have?

The Somali family in exile – some general questions

1. How would you describe you own experience as a family man or woman about living in exile in Norway?
2. What are the challenges facing your family? Please name them.

The family and social changes

1. How would you describe a typical Somali family in Somalia?
2. How was the family organised back home?
3. How was labour divided among the family members?

The family and children upbringing

1. How will you describe your own experience in raising children in Norway?
2. How will you describe raising children in Somalia?
3. From your own experience, has any change occurred as far as raising children is concerned in exile?

Khat and the family

1. Is any one in your family chewing khat?

2. What is your experience of chewing khat?

3. What do you think are the consequence of chewing khat?

The family and social networking

1. How would you describe your relationship with other Somali families in Norway?
2. Do you visit these families or do they visit you?
3. Do you have contact wit other family members in Somalia?
4. Do you send them money, if yes how often?

APPENDIX 3:
FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Personal details

Location: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Please provide the following information:

_____

First Name: _____ **Last Name:** _____

Age range: 21-30_____ 31-40_____41-50_____51-60_____61-70_____ 71+_____

Sex: M _____   F_____

Civil status: M_____   D_____

Children: 1 – 2_____ 2 – 3_____ 3 – 4_____ 4 – 5_____ 5 – 6 _____ 7+

APPENDIX 4:

OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPANTS AND SOCAIL TRAITS

Participant	Gender	Civil status	Number of children Born in Somalia	Number of children born in Norway	Age
Male 1	M	Married	2	2	45
Male 2	M	Married	3	0	60
Male 3	M	Married	2	2	38
Male 4	M	Married	0	3	30
Male 5	M	Married	0	3	37
Male 6	M	Married	4	2	40
Male 7	M	Divorced	0	4	42
Male 8	M	Married	3	2	56
Male 9	M	Married	2	2	45
Male 10	M	Married	3	2	40
Male 11	M	Divorced	2	3	38
Male 12	M	Married	3	3	41
Male 13	M	Married	3	3	48

Male 14	M	Married	2	3	43
Female 1	F	Married	3	0	61
Female 2	F	Divorced	0	1	29
Female 3	F	Married	0	3	40
Female 4	F	Divorced	0	1	45
Female 5	F	Divorced	0	3	42
Female 6	F	Married	1	1	40
Female 7	F	Divorced	0	3	39
Female 8	F	Divorced	0	2	30
Female 9	F	Married	0	3	32

Married	16
Divorced	7

Men (Total)	14
Women (Total)	9
Total number participants	23

APPENDIX 5: Map showing the Somali peninsula

Appendix 6: Somali Country profile

Population:	8 million
Urban Population:	28 %
Major Ethnic and Linguistic Groups:	Somali – 85 % Bantu, other - 15%
Religions:	Sunni Muslim -
Population Growth Rate:	3.43 %
Life Expectancy:	47.3 years
Infant Mortality:	120per 1,000 live births
Under Five Mortality:	225 per 1,000 live births
GNP Per Capita:	$120
Percentage of Literate Adult Males:	50 %

Source: http://www.care.org/careswork/countryprofiles/95.asp