

Tiedekunta-Fakultet-Faculty Faculty of Social Sciences		Laitos-Institution-Department Department of Social Policy	
Tekijä-Författare-Author Pentikäinen, Marja			
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<p>Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract</p> <p>This study concerns the journeys of refugees through their narratives about their personal experiences. The two groups of my study, the Vietnamese and the Somali, arrived in Finland on three different statuses: as quota refugees, as asylum seekers and via family reunification. The status of these refugees is scrutinied from an individual, juridical and cultural angle. My fieldwork, with personal interviews, was done at the end of the 1990's, the time when the amount of refugees was greatly increased and, actual policy concerning refugees, was created in Finland. To study meaningful experiences requires a shared desire between the researcher and her field to be able to describe and analyze something that may be intensely personal and often hurtful. The individuals are studied both as representatives of themselves, as well as their status and the group. Both groups, the Vietnamese and Somalis, have a different culture, religion, language, ethnicity - their refugee experiences are different as well. The Vietnamese come as quota refugees, the Somalis as asylum seekers - their juridical position is different accordingly. After these groups have stayed in Finland their family reunification program becomes possible.</p> <p>The basic research material collected by myself through interviews contains life stories with a plot, the dynamic curve containing the beginning, middle and end phases. In adapting these narratives to Arnold van Gennep's crisis of passage; a three-phase model of separation, marginality/liminality and incorporation, a fourth dimension: a settling down phase is created.</p> <p>By this theoretical framework I describe the refugee process with four phases they go through: 1) Separation means the moment of escaping the homeland and the beginning of the journey. 2) In the liminality phase the Vietnamese are in the refugee camps and the Somalis in the reception centres - neither group belonging to any society. 3) In the phase of incorporation the refugees become legalized, as members of Tampere city community in this case. 4) In the fourth phase new life in Finland begins after the refugees have received their new status and space. Transition from one state to another is not automatic. My study reveals that the meanings of the refugees' own culture still continues in the new country. Having been used to an extended family system in their home country, in Finland they only have their nuclear family and a weak social network. They, however, try to live within a collective culture of home country, without being able to adapt to the new requirement of individualism. Although many of them have received Finnish citizenship they still feel being refugees. What feels positive to them, is, that they can combine their old familiar traditions with their newly achieved experiences in Finland.</p> <p>To be a refugee seems to be an endless journey as one looks for a place, a space, a self.</p>			
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