

‘Somalia lives with me’

Homeland and Religion in the Lives of Finnish Somalis

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Subject and Background of the Study

Suomessa on mun toinen kotimaa, mutta Somaliassa toivon, että paranisi, tulee tulevaisuus.

This quotation describes the current ambivalence in the minds of Somalis who have settled to live in Finland. Although, they have integrated into the Finnish society during the last 20 years, the memories from Somalia play a significant role in their everyday lives. In this study, I will concentrate on Somalia and Islam in the memories of Somalis in Finland. The research topic is current in Finnish society where Somalis and Somalia are constantly presented in the headlines because of the chaotic situation in Somalia. In the field of comparative religion, this topic is interesting since the memories of Somalis and the significance of Islam in those memories have not been studied earlier from both female and male perspectives in the same study. This study will combine those viewpoints and connect them to the frameworks of social memory. I am going to present Somalis through their memories and highlight the meaning of religion in these memories. However, these memories cannot be properly understood without knowing the background of Somalis in Finland as a part of the Finnish immigration history.

*Suomi on hieno, se on ihmeellinen maa
kaikkialla me kaiutamme sen hyviä puolia
Luoja antakoon maineesi levitä laajalle
Niiltä jotka sinua vaivaavat menkööt järki
Yltyköön hyvinvointisi, Jumala sinua siunatkoon*

(Hibo Garaad Ibraahin 1999)

The Finnish immigration history changed radically when first Somali asylum seekers arrived in Finland in the late 1980's. Since the 1990's the number of Somalis in Finland, has risen steadily. In fact, Somalis formed the first refugee group which arrived in Finland as spontaneous asylum seekers.¹ At that time, there were headlines in the newspapers about 'the flood of Somali refugees'. Such headlines caught both Finnish citizens and authorities by surprise. The first Somalis who came to Finland were mostly young, well- educated men. Later on, Somali women and less educated people also moved to Finland. In the turn

¹ Tiilikainen uses the term "spontaneous asylum seeker" when she speaks about refugees who arrive in a country surprisingly and do not fit to certain quota which is reserved for refugees. See Tiilikainen 2003, 51.

of the year 2010, there were already 11 681 persons who speak Somali as their mother language.² Somalis form an ethnic minority and belong to a category of new minority. However, Somalis in Finland are not a homogeneous group. Many of them have come from southern Somalia and about a fifth of them were born in northern Somalia. In Somalia, the majority have lived in cities. In consequence, they are often better educated compared to average education level in Somalia. Nevertheless, there are noticeable differences in education among the Somalis in Finland. For example, there are people with advanced degrees, as well as people who cannot read or write at all.³

The Somali integration cannot be understood completely without transnational bonds. In diaspora Somali family often has dispersed. However, there are many ways for communicating. The most important means for communicating is the family web. Usually money and other financial support are transmitted through the family web. Added to this, it is not unusual that also children can move to live with their relatives temporarily. Besides the family web, the media has enabled active communicating. Television mediates the Islamic tradition from Arabic countries. In many Somali families also the Internet is a part of every day life and for example many family meetings nowadays are arranged completely virtually. Over a long time such transnational bonds can develop into a transnational space which includes combination of social and symbolic ties to the home country.⁴

One dimension of Somali integration is Somalis' encounters with Finnish people. The earlier mentioned headlines about 'the floods of Somali refugees' strengthen the Finnish conceptions of Islam and Somalis as a threat in the early 1990's. At that time Somalis faced many accusations in Finnish society. They were considered lazy for not doing any work. However, only a few Finns knew that Somalis were not able to work until they have received residence permits. Somalis were blamed also for receiving plenty of money from the authorities. In this case, the fact was that they received the same minimum subsistence support as any Finn in a bad financial situation. Such circumstances created a hostile atmosphere towards Somali refugees which resulted in high unemployment rates. The media has a huge responsibility in creating a public picture of Somalis because usually

² Taskutieto 2010.

³ Martikainen & Sintonen & Pitkänen 2006, 28-29. See also Virtanen & Vilkama 2008, 136; Tiilikainen 2003, 51, 53

⁴ Hautaniemi 2004, 52; Tiilikainen 2003, 139; Pirkkalainen 2005, 25.

Finnish perceptions about Somalis are based on the picture shown by the media.⁵ However, it must be noted that suspicious conceptions of Islam do not necessarily have a negative influence on the practice of Islam since such suspicions can also strengthen the Islamic identity, as will be shown in chapter 8.2.

1.2 Previous Research

Somalis have attracted the attention of academic researchers both in Finland and globally. The most common themes have focused in Somali civil war and political situation in Somalia. Besides these, the growing number of Somali immigrants in European countries has encouraged many scholars to concentrate on the integration of Somalis into European societies. For example, in pedagogics the integration of Somali children into European schools has been studied from diverse perspectives.

Next, I am going to present some studies which are particularly relevant for this study: In Finnish Somali research, the female perspective has, so far, been an emphasized factor; the topic of Somali women has been studied extensively. One of the most frequently referred Finnish studies of Somali women is *Arjen Islam (Everyday Islam) (2003)* by Marja Tiilikainen.⁶ In her study, Tiilikainen discusses the everyday life of Somali women in Finland. Tiilikainen stresses the elements of remembering and forgetting and how they are related to religious and cultural traditions. She investigates memories from a traumatic point of view; memories of Somali women are often related to tragic experiences in Somalia. Also Anu Salmela and Heli Niemelä have studied Somali women in Finland. Salmela writes about Somali women as tradition bearers in the city of Turku in her article *Pysyvyyttä muutoksessa ja muutosta pysyvyydessä. Turussa asuvat somalinaiset islamin ja yhteisöperinteen välittäjinä. (Stability in Change and Change in Stability. Somali Women as Mediators of Islam and Tradition in the City of Turku) (2004).*⁷ Niemelä, for her part, focuses on the youth perspective in her comparative article *Somalialaisen ja suomalaisen nuoruuden risteyksessä. (In the Crossroads of Somali and Finnish Youth).*⁸ I will discuss similar matters concerning Somali tradition in upbringing of children especially in chapter 8.3.

⁵ Haybe 2001, 81,85: Hallenberg 1997, 110.

⁶ Tiilikainen 2003.

⁷ Salmela 2004.

⁸ Niemelä 2006.

As I have pointed out, the recent studies in Finland has focused on female perspectives of Somali integration and the traumatic experiences of women. However, the topic of Somali men has attracted the attention of only a few Finnish scholars. In fact, the only Finnish study concerning Somali men particularly is *Pojat! Somalipoikien kiistanalainen nuoruus Suomessa (Boys! Somali Boys' Controversial Youth in Finland)*(2004) by Petri Hautaniemi.⁹ In this study, Hautaniemi discusses Somali boys' memories concerning Somalia and arrival in Finland. He also covers issues such as racism and being brought up in Finland. Both Tiilikainen and Hautaniemi use the concept of social memory in their studies. Theories of social memory will form the basis for my study, as well, and I will discuss those theories more in chapter 2.1.

Besides Finnish studies, several studies have been written outside of Finland. One of them is a Canadian study written by Rima Berns McGown which is particularly interesting for this thesis. In her study, *Muslims in the Diaspora. The Somali Communities of London and Toronto (1999)*,¹⁰ Berns McGown investigates Somali communities in London and Toronto. This study covers both female and male perspectives focusing especially on current matters which Somalis face when integrating into Western societies.

1.3 Aim and Scope of the Study

This study can be classified as a qualitative research. According to Hirsijärvi and Hurme, qualitative method aims to understand, interpret and contextualize the research target.¹¹ In this study, I will interpret the memories of Somalis on one hand as subjective experiences from their personal past and religion. On the other hand, I will understand those memories as a part of their collective social memory as Somalis. I will also construct a comparative perspective for practising Islam in Somalia and Finland.

The study will proceed in the following order: First, I will discuss memories from Somalia in chapter 5. In this chapter, I will provide answers to the questions: How Somalis define their relation to their past and what kinds of aspects does Somalia acquire in their

⁹ Hautaniemi 2004.

¹⁰ Berns McGown 1999.

¹¹ Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2000, 22.

memories? In chapters 7 and 8, I am going to examine Islam in the memories of Somalis and Somali Islam in Finland. In chapter 7, I will offer answers to the question, what kinds of aspects will be emphasized in the memories of Islam. Finally, in chapter 8, I will discuss the themes of Somali tradition and education. In this chapter, I will find answer to the question, has the meaning of Islam changed when living in Finland? These questions will be studied from the perspectives of social memory, oral history and narrative analysis.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH MATERIAL

2.1 Aspects of Oral History and Social Memory

Oral history is multidisciplinary and it covers many methods. Finnish research has concentrated on remembering. Outi Fingerroos and Riina Haanpää remind that studying oral history is challenging, because it offers more information about the meanings of the events rather than real life. Fingerroos and Haanpää bring out three different approaches for studying oral history. First, oral history can be regarded as a method helping to gather the research material. Secondly, oral history can be studied as a target. The focus is then on the constructions and means of the narration. In other words, the oral history itself, remembering and narrations form an object for the study. This approach will also link the study to the narrative research. According to the third approach, oral history is a construction which is produced in the remembering situation. The study will then be a reconstruction of one's memories. In this case, the researcher is interested in different meanings of such memories.¹²

Outi Fingerroos and Ulla-Maija Peltonen emphasize the perspective of individuality in oral history. They write that oral history originated from the idea of studying diverse interpretations of the past highlighting informant's own view of his or her history. In this case, study is a reconstruction of the past and the researcher presents the past and makes interpretations. Ukkonen shares this aspect by stressing the significance of the informant in a study. She states that it is vital to provide a chance for the informant's voice to be heard when they are telling their experiences and interpretations of the past.¹³

¹² Fingerroos et al. 2006, 29, 33-34.

¹³ Fingerroos et al. 2006, 9; Ukkonen 2000, 14.

Outi Fingerroos also argues about the validity of oral history as a methodology particularly in the field of comparative religion: She writes that oral history aims to search alternative interpretations for phenomena in which religion is related to social class or private life. Fingerroos states that oral history widens the fields of history and tradition emphasizing everyday life and experiences of ordinary people. She also reminds that the sources of oral history do not include solely facts since they are tied with cultural processes, expressions and unconscious decisions caused by memory, ideology or exercise of power in society.¹⁴ In this study, I will utilize this particular perspective of oral history stressing the everyday experiences of Somalis as an essential part of their memories.

The concept of social memory is complex and multidimensional. It is formed in relation to personified memory, history, time and space.¹⁵ Social memory connects people to their community. According to Hervieu-Léger, social memory is maintained by society in its structures, organization and language.¹⁶ However, Tiilikainen reminds that usually people become more aware of their social memory in some turning point of their lives. For Somalis, the diaspora has been a major turning point in their lives. After traumatic experiences, such as diaspora, people need to redefine their relation to the past. Collective past can form a basis for the construction of identity. Such identity processes are linked to the reciprocal process of remembering and forgetting. When remembering the past, usually people return to events which are personally significant for their identities stressing the social consequences of the events. From this perspective, social memory is reconstructed past of a community.¹⁷

According to Taina Ukkonen's definition, social memory contains historical interpretations which are maintained by the community. The community forms the contents of social memory by controlling which memories are worth remembering and socially accepted. These social interpretations can be based only on memory, but they can be affected also by articles, literature or movies which create public history. Collective memories reflect those

¹⁴ Fingerroos 2004, 246.

¹⁵ Jerman & Hautaniemi 2007, 2

¹⁶ Hervieu-Léger 2000, 124.

¹⁷ Tiilikainen 2003, 78-79; Jerman 2007, 127.

traditions of narrating which are typical for the culture to which they are related. On the other hand, memories can also mirror individual interpretation of one's personal life. Here, the challenge is to distinguish collective memories with social interpretations from individual interpretations. Ukkonen calls this individual interpretation personal experience narrative. The term contains many dimensions stressing the experimental contents of narrating. This concept has also been used to replace the concept of personal narrative.¹⁸

Barbara Bossak presents three approaches to social memory. Firstly, social memory can be communicative. Communicativeness is emphasized in transmission processes of the social memory. This approach stresses the orality of social memory and connects it to oral history. Secondly, social memory can be studied from objective perspective. The focus is then on the contents of social memory. Thirdly, social memory can be investigated from the subjective perspective. Subjectivity occurs in the attitudes of the certain group towards their past.¹⁹ The subjective perspective is emphasized also in this study in the interpretations of Somalis about their past.

Helena Jerman writes that social memory cannot be seen solely as objective facts. It is affected by culture and language. Memories are always related to the certain culture, and they have adopted features from that culture. Language is on the other hand an essential part of the culture, and it is one of the strongest features of the memory. She also claims that emotion is the core of the memory. According to her point of view, emotions are resources for social memory. They are always linked to some contexts which create memories.²⁰

As I have pointed out above, the most common method of studying memories, especially in sociology, is to concentrate on the phenomenon in which memories adjust to respond the needs of the present. Lawrence Rosen presents a different kind of perspective for approaching memories. He shares the view about the significance of language and culture with Jerman. Rosen has studied Muslims in Morocco. His interest is focused on the fact how memories can be seen in everyday life. He defines memory as a process in which

¹⁸ Ukkonen 2000, 25, 27, 35, 41.

¹⁹ Bossak 2007, 65-66.

²⁰ Jerman 2007, 127, 134-135.

clever actions of the past serve as a means for ruling the present moment. According to Rosen, social memory can be studied also from the perspective of cultural categories; how these categories of cultural experiences have changed, and how the past is described and explained in the present. He writes that cultural ideas and categories are dynamic, and they can change in the course of time. In consequence, there can be changes in the ways how generations understand cultural ideas and categories. Rosen emphasizes that memories can change external circumstances such as human relations in the current moment. Such changes lead to a new set of orientations which are affected by the experiences in the past. Finally, he sums up this idea by naming the memory both the creator and the result in the struggle for grasping the human experience.²¹ I understand this interpretation as a constant interaction of the past and the present moment in everyday life.

Social memory has acquired a significant role in this study. The meaning of social memory culminates in religious feasts and transmitting the essential values to the next generation. In such circumstances, shared memories of the Somali community become extremely important, as will be shown in chapters six and seven.

2.2 Working on the Field and Research Material

My preparation for the fieldwork was mainly based on *Tutkimushaastattelu. Teemahaastattelun teoria ja käytäntö (2000) (Research Interview. The Theory and Practice of Thematic Interview)* by Sirkka Hirsijärvi and Helena Hurme. From this book I utilized particularly the chapter concerning the planning of the interviews.²² This chapter includes the example of sketch of questions which proved to be very helpful when preparing my own outline for the interviews. Besides this book, I also used the article *Teemahaastattelu. Opit ja opetukset (2001) (Thematic Interview. Doctrines and Lessons)*²³ by Jari Eskola and Jaana Vastamäki in preparing for the interviews. In both of these sources, I found the practical examples from the actual interview situations extremely useful.

²¹ Rosen 2002, xiv, 88, 104, 107.

²² Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2000, 65-68.

²³ Eskola & Vastamäki 2001, 24-42.

My research material consists of seven interviews of which six were recorded. Four of the interviewees were men and three women. Finding interviewees was not an easy task to accomplish, and it took me even more time than I had expected. I had various ways of enlisting the interviewees. Some of the interviewees were recruited by an e-mail, some with a snowball effect and some of them were contacted via common friend. My only requirements for the interviewees were that they should be adults who have lived in Somalia and have memories about their lives in Somalia. These demands were filled.

I received the contact information of two interviewees after sending an e-mail to a person who is working in the Central Union for the Welfare of the Aged. This person was exceedingly interested in my research and provided me several contacts. Finally, three of these contacts accepted my appeal for an interview. The fourth interviewee was contacted with a snowball effect when one of the interviewees called to his friend in Somali League and asked him for an interview.

During the fieldwork, I realized how hard it was to recruit some Somali women to participate in the research. At that point, I received plenty of help from a person who is working as a secretary of international work in the congregation of Vantaa. This person passed my request for an interview to her contact circle. As a result, one woman responded and agreed for an interview. The other two female interviewees were contacted via friend who works as a teacher in an elementary school in Eastern Helsinki.

My first interviewee is a 45 year old man. He has moved to Finland in 1990's from Mogadishu. He had graduated from the university in Somalia but has not found any work in Finland. He told me that he has started a family with offspring but he did not mention the particular number of his children. The interview took place at a cafeteria by the request of the interviewee.

The second interviewee is 37 year old man who has moved to Finland at the age of 17 from northern Somalia. He now lives with his wife and three children. He has finished a degree in social services. At the moment of the interview, he worked two different jobs at the same time. This interviewee wanted to invite me to his office during his working hours and the interview was organized there.

The third interviewee is a 42 year old man from Mogadishu. Before settling to Finland in the 1990's, he had lived in Sudan and Egypt. He has lived in Finland for over 20 years. He has previously worked as a chairman for Somali League in Finland. Currently, he lives with his wife and a little girl. The interview was conducted at the cafeteria.

My fourth interviewee is 26 year old man from Haregisa. He has moved to Finland at the age of ten and has finished a degree of building engineer in Finland. He told me that he has siblings but he has not started a family. This interviewee was exceptional in a sense that he has moved to Finland during his childhood. For that reason, he probably is more attached to the Finnish society than the other interviewees. This interview took place in the Somaliland society where I was invited.

The fifth interviewee is a 50 year old woman who has moved to Finland from Mogadishu in 1994. In Somalia, she had worked as a teacher but she had not found any job in Finland. She has a family of five children and at the moment of the interview she lived with her daughter and grandchildren. This interviewee invited me to her home. The grandchildren were present in the interview situation and the daughter acted as a translator and shared some of her own memories in some parts of the interview.

The sixth interviewee is a 40 year old woman. She has moved to Finland at the age of 23 from Mogadishu. She works currently as a cleaning lady at the elementary school and lives with her husband and seven children. The interview was organized at the workplace of the interviewee after her working hours.

The seventh interviewee is a 40 year old woman who has moved to Finland from Mogadishu at the age of 23. She had graduated from high school and started her educational studies in the university until her studies were intermitted by the civil war. She now works as a teacher in the Finnish elementary school and lives with her husband and her little girl. Likewise the previous interview, this interview was conducted at the elementary school after the lessons.

All of the interviewees were over 20 years old, and they had been living in Finland for over ten years. With two exceptions, they were either studying or working at the moment of the

interview. In most cases, the interviews were organized either at homes and workplaces of the interviewees or in public places. This way, the environment was familiar for the interviewees and did not cause any further tensions in the interview situation.

2.3 Source Critique

There are some features in my research material which need to be taken into a critical perspective. Firstly, it has to be admitted that studying memories and religion is a challengeable task for a researcher since such themes are often considered as extremely personal matters in one's life. Consequently, when talking about such things, some kind of trust has to be built between an interviewer and an interviewee. Hirsijärvi and Hurme write that one of the drawbacks of an interview is that interviewees may provide answers which are socially accepted.²⁴ In my interviews the interviewees expressed their opinions in an extremely diplomatic way. When asked about Islam, they probably wanted to show an ideal picture of Islam and themselves as Muslims in their answers. Secondly, another factor which may have affected on the answers of the interviewees, at least in some cases, is language. All of the interviews were made in Finnish by the requests of the interviewees. Since I do not know Somali language and did not have a chance to utilize the help of a translator, some questions were not properly understood by the interviewees. On the other hand, sometimes language caused problems also for me in analyzing the interviews because I could not always understand what the interviewees meant in their answers. However, in most of the cases, language did not cause any problems.

3. METHODS OF ANALYSIS

3.1 Thematic Interview

According to Hirsijärvi and Hurme, thematic interview is a flexible concept. It is used both in qualitative and quantitative research. The interview is based on certain themes which are not detailed questions. Such open questions will help in creating a versatile concept of the phenomenon. The thematic interview is also called a semi-structured method. It leaves the

²⁴ Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2000, 35.

interview situation open to new perspectives. The basic idea of the thematic interview is that the themes of the interview are the same for all interviewees. Therefore, the significance of the interviewer is vital in the interview situation. The interviewer acts as a mediator for the thoughts, opinions, experiences and feelings of the interviewee.²⁵

In this research, I have chosen semi-structured thematic interview as method for collecting research material because it enables the interview to proceed in the form of a conversation which is nevertheless led by thematically planned questions. Conversation and narration are the best ways to gather memories of Somalis and highlight the subjective experiences of the interviewees. In an ideal situation the interviewee is seen as a subject creating meanings to topics which are important in one's life.²⁶ Originally, my aim was to organize unstructured thematic interviews in the form of informal conversation. However, in actual interviews thematically planned questions seemed necessary for conducting the interviews. The interviews were based on three main themes. The first theme covered everyday life in Somalia and memories from Somalia in general. The second theme dealt with Islam in Somalia emphasizing such topics as Ramadan, id-festivities and religious education of children. The third theme was founded on Islam in Finland focusing on the same themes which formed a basis for the second theme.

Steinar Kvale has compared thematic interview to the work of a miner. According to this definition, the researcher is interested either in objective facts or essential meaning of the story, like the mine worker who digs up granules. In this study, my interest focuses in essential meanings of the narratives. I will search for different meanings that Somalia and Islam in the narratives of my interviewees. Kvale has also contrasted thematic interview to the position of traveller whose destination is finished story: Traveller sees different domains of a country. Likewise, researcher undergoes many things in interview situations. For thematic interviewer, the most important task is, however, to search for themes and appropriate methods for studying them.²⁷

²⁵ Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2000, 34, 41, 48.

²⁶ Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2000, 35.

²⁷ Kvale 1996, 3-5.

In this study, I will lean on the definition of thematic interview as a semi-structured method. I will also take an advantage of both metaphors of Kvale by searching for meanings and classifying them in proper categories.

3.2 Content Analysis

Klaus Krippendorff defines content analysis as a repertoire of various research methods which can provide answers to all kinds of questions concerning verbal, pictorial, symbolic and communication data. He also emphasizes the fact that content analysis allows the researcher to search for meanings, symbolic qualities, expressive contents and communicative roles from the text.²⁸

I have chosen content analysis as a method for analysing my research material because I am particularly interested in meanings and symbolic qualities in the narration of Somalis' when they express their opinions about their past and the religion as a part of that past. This method provides the best means for obtaining answers to my research questions.

Krippendorff brings out the context as an important factor in the content analysis. He describes context as a construction consisting of the environment and the situation in which the text is analyzed by the researcher. Krippendorff states that this context has a crucial impact on the interpretation of the text because interpretations are based on the fact, how the context of the research is defined. However, he reminds that researcher can create multiple contexts if there are many research questions. Literature can be used to support contexts, but yet Krippendorff clearly presents that the researcher has to take the responsibility of creating the context for the text.²⁹

3.3 Narrative Analysis

I will also utilize some theories of narrative analysis, since my interest is focused on the meanings and symbolic qualities of the interviews. Hannu L. T. Heikkinen defines narratives as an approach which concentrates on stories as mediators and constructors of information. He reminds that narratives can be studied from two different perspectives:

²⁸ Krippendorff 2004, XVII, 11, 17, 44.

²⁹ Krippendorff 2004, 33, 88-89.

Firstly, narratives can be seen as research material of the study. Secondly, the research can be built on the idea that an interviewee produces a story from the world.³⁰ In this study, I consider narratives not only as research material, but also interpretations that my interviewees make from their own lives.

Heikkinen points out an important difference between analysis of narratives and narrative analysis: According to him, the analysis of narratives focuses on the categorizing of narratives based on categories, metaphors or cases. On the other hand, narrative analysis concentrates on reproducing a new story which has its basis on the narratives of the research material.³¹ In this thesis, I will use the analysis of narratives because the thematic categorization will provide the best means to study the memories of Somalis.

Leena Syrjälä brings up a significant perspective on narratives as life stories. She stresses that narrations make certain incidents of life worth remembering. Such significant occurrences can also be shared with other people in the form of narration. According to Syrjälä, the important incidents of one's life are usually extremely personal. Therefore, together such incidents form the story of one's life. Such life stories are often used as a means for striving for meaningfulness and harmony in life.³²

In summary, Hannu L. T. Heikkinen sums up the idea of the analysis of narratives. He emphasizes that narrative research focuses on the ways how people give meanings to their lives through their stories. This way, Heikkinen points out, that a study, which concentrates on the individual life stories and their meanings will provide an authentic way for the voices of the interviewees to be heard in the study. In such case, the information will be based on small stories and cannot be generalized for manipulative purposes.³³

In this study, there are two obvious contexts for the narrations of Somalis. Firstly, there is the context which my interviewees described when they shared their memories from Somalia. In other words, Somalia forms the context for memories. Secondly, there is also the context in which the interviewees produce their narratives. This will cover both the actual situation in which the interview takes place and the context which the interviewees

³⁰ Heikkinen 2007, 142.

³¹ Ibid, 148.

³² Syrjälä 2001, 208.

³³ Heikkinen 2007, 156.

set their narrations to. Since all of my interviewees are currently living in Finland, the cultural context of Finland plays an important role in the second part of the interviews which discussed the practice of Islam in Finland.

4. SOMALIA

4.1 Short History of Somalia

Somalia is situated in the horn of Africa, but there are also areas outside Somalia which are inhabited by Somalis in Djibouti, Ethiopia and north-eastern parts of Kenya. In the 19th century the horn of Africa faced colonial interventions. In consequence, the area was divided in five distinctive geographical units: French Somaliland in the present Djibouti, British Somaliland in the north-west, Italian Somaliland, the Ogaden colonised by Ethiopia and the Northern Frontier District (NFD) which was a part of Kenya and was ruled by the British. All these districts were inhabited by Somalis. After the Second World War, all these districts, apart from Ethiopia, were colonised by British. In 1950 Italy received its former district from the UN and England returned Ogaden to Ethiopia despite of resistance of Somalis. Both of these districts united to republic of Somalia, and the land received independence in 1960.³⁴

The years following the independence have brought constant struggles for Somalia. The wars with Kenya and Ethiopia, drought, famine and the fall of the economy have afflicted Somalis. At the same time different politics, derived from the British and Italian conquerors, created even worse situation. After the murder of president Shermaarke, General Mohammed Siyad Barre took over Somalia in 1969. Barre's dictatorial governance lasted for over twenty years. He aimed to connect the nation with socialism. Barre's government made two major reforms: reformation of the language and reformations concerning equality between men and women. In consequence, Somali became the official language of the country in 1972. Despite the reforms, Barre's government was criticised for favouring relatives and infringement of human rights. In 1991 Barre was unseated which was followed by total chaos and disastrous civil war. At that time, Somalia's social and economical infrastructure was destroyed. The land faced

³⁴ Tiilikainen 2003, 26; > <http://www.forcedmigration.org/guides/fmo016/fmo016-2.htm> <

extreme famine in 1991. According to the Red Cross, it was the worst human catastrophe in the world since 1945. These circumstances led to enormous flood of refugees who were trying to leave the country.³⁵

Finally, in 2004 a new parliament was established. Since then, it has faced difficulties in establishing a government and bringing the settlement into a country divided by clans. Two years later, in 2006 the authority of the government was compromised when the Islamists gained control in the southern parts of the country. In 2009 the parliament extended the mandate of the transitional federal government for two years. It also inaugurated moderate Islamist Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmad as the new president of the country. The long-standing absence of authorities has made Somali pirates an enormous threat for international ship traffic in the area. However, the north-west part of Somalia, which declared itself independent without the recognition of international bodies in 1991, has enjoyed relative stability.³⁶

4.2 People and Culture

Somalis are considered one of the most homogenous populations in Africa. Most Somalis (about 60 percent) get their living from the animal husbandry. Yet, during the last decades there has been a growing migration to cities. In Somalia family is an important social unit. In fact, it forms the core for the social system. The family concept is extended: grandparents, cousins and even close friends are all part of a large family. Family provides social security to its members, since the family members are responsible to assist each other economically. Somali society is organized according to the clan system. There are six clan families: *Darood*, *Dir*, *Hawie*, *Isaaq*, *Digil* and *Rahanwein*. The clan tradition is the widest and broadest connection, and it is most evident in cities. Clan membership includes many dimensions, but especially in political conflicts clan membership becomes visible. All in all, the kinship and the clan system have adopted a vital role in Somali culture. They are transmitted from generation to another in the collective memory of society.³⁷

³⁵ Ibid, 26, 49-50; Serkkola 1992, 63; Rätty 2002, 89.

³⁶ BBC News. Africa. Country profile: Somalia.

³⁷ Serkkola 1992, 8, 14-17, 22-23, 26-27, 88; Pirkkalainen 2005, 17-18.

In Somali society, there are no governmental institutions or authorities. Issues are solved in negotiations and every man has a right to participate in these negotiations in which clan membership plays a vital role. Clan leaders usually favour their own clan in their decisions. On the other hand, the clan system relieves social inequality, while wealthier relatives take care of their unemployed family members.³⁸

Somali culture is based on nomad life and trade. Usually oral tradition has adopted a significant role in nomad cultures. In Somali culture talking is seen as action. Accordingly, poems, proverbs and stories form an essential part of everyday life. Such poems and stories are used for diverse purposes: Besides they are important means for recording the history, they also give inspiration for current discussions concerning politics, religion or philosophy. In chaotic times poems have been used even in political battles. Added to these, poems considered as an art form. Poetry is fostered in public recitation competitions. In such competitions, the reciter acts only as a mediator between the poem and the audience. Competition can last even for weeks, and the winner receives gifts, admiration and respect.³⁹

In this research, the significance of such oral tradition is particularly emphasized in the upbringing the children. In this context, oral tradition provides vital means for sharing and transmitting the collective history to the next generation. The appreciation of oral tradition was evident in the narrations of some interviewees when they expressed that their children are extremely interested in stories concerning Somalia and Somali culture, as will be shown in chapter 5.2.

5. SOMALIA OF MEMORIES

5.1 Everyday Life in Somalia

Siellä on vaan aurinko ja kaippaa tuhansia asioita. En mä voi mitata.

³⁸ Rätty 2002, 91.

³⁹ Serkkola 1992, 53-54; Rätty 2002, 90.

The quotation above shows that Somalia of memories cannot be described in few words. Somalia is present in the memories of my interviewees on many levels. For many of them, Somalia is constantly on their minds through the family members who still live in Somalia. On the other hand, Somalia was presented through positive images which are often related to childhood. Usually, the interviewees emphasized the descriptions of everyday life in their positive memories from Somalia. In most cases they described their experiences in Somalia quite similar when compared to their lives in Finland. The interviewees did not notice any major differences in their everyday lives. They stressed that working and studying form an essential part of everyday life both in Somalia and in Finland. One of the interviewees describes everyday life in Somalia as follows:

Siinä samassa talossa, samassa kämpässä kaikki asuu. Ja herätään aamulla, ja jompikumpi vanhemmista menee etsimään perheelle leipää. Ja muut on sitte siinä joko opiskelemassa tai kotona. Aivan tavanomaista, niin ku varmaan Suomessakin.

This quotation shows that positive memories are often based on simple everyday activities, such as studying or working. Addition to this, also sun and warm climate were in the focus of the positive memories from Somalia. Good memories are also related to familial values which are fostered in Somali culture. Helena Jerman writes that memories are always related to the certain culture, and they have adopted features from that culture.⁴⁰ In the memories of my interviewees, there is a strong emphasis on the familial values. As one interviewee explained the meaning of the family in his memories from Somalia:

Perheen kokoontumiset. En tarkoita ydinperhettä, vaan että suurperhe kokoontui: tädit ja sedät, enot. Ne oli tosi hyviä tavallaan hetkiä, jolloin tunsin itsensä tärkeäksi, koska oli niin paljon läheisiä ympärillä.

This description demonstrates the importance of collectiveness in Somali culture. The individual defines himself in relation to his family and community. Another interviewee brought out the collectiveness in her memories by emphasizing her close relationships with neighbours in Somalia. She described that one can visit the neighbours without informing them in advance. The vicinity of neighbours creates social security in the community.

The collectiveness in Somali culture was presented also as a responsibility for giving aid to Somalia. As one of the interviewees dreamed that after the proper education acquired in Finland, he would be able to help his country either as a volunteer or hired. This aspect

⁴⁰ Jerman 2007, 134.

reflects the responsibility of Somalis, who live in diaspora, to help their families in Somalia. The most common way of giving aid is to accommodate one's relatives who have received an asylum from Finland. On the other hand, Somalis try to help their families financially as well. According to Marja Tiilikainen, Somalis have developed an efficient system for exchanging money in exile. Due to such system (*xawilaad*) money can be transferred from all over the world to Somalia fast and safely. When Somalis want to send money to their families in Somalia, they contact the *xawilaad* which consists of various representatives in different countries who find the right persons with the help of the whole name and the sub clan.⁴¹

In addition to the family, which often acts as a concrete reminder of Somalia, some of the interviewees, mostly women, highlighted the importance of Islamic sounds, such as prayer calls from the minarets, in their memories from Somalia:

Minä kuulin äänen joskus rukoiluaikana. Ja minä kuulin äänen, tarkoittaa joskus kirkoista sunnuntaina.

KM: Niin, tulee se rukouskutsu.

Rukouskutsu, joo. Sitten Somalia on viisi kertaa rukoilee muslimit. Rukouskutsu kuunnellaan ja sitten muistetaan. Nyt ei muisteta, istuu ja sitten ei tiedä mitä kello aina, ja sitten ai jaa kello.

This quotation shows that living without daily prayer calls can be hard for Muslims in diaspora. Barbara D. Metcalf points out that the lack of Islamic sounds can prove to be crucial for many Muslims living in non-Muslim environment. Similarly, Regula Burckhardt Qureshi confirms that the Islamic culture finds its expression primarily in hearing.⁴² Muslims believe that Koran is concrete word of god which echoes among the Muslims.⁴³ This way, prayer calls could be interpreted as a collective symbol of such echo, as another interviewee recalled the collective effect of prayer calls in Somalia: According to her memories, the imam, leader of the prayer called people to pray even half an hour before the actual prayer. After hearing the call, men would come to mosques while women prayed at home. These quotations show the collective significance of prayer calls gathering people together and reminding of one of the most important elements of Islamic faith.

⁴¹ Tiilikainen 2003, 132–133.

⁴² Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe >
<http://www.escholarship.org/editions/view?docId=ft2s2004p0&chunk.id=introduction&toc.depth=1&toc.id=introduction&brand=ucpress> <

⁴³ Palva 2005, 80.

Added to such prayer calls, there are also several other things which have adopted an important position in the memories from Somalia, as will be explained in the following chapter.

5.2 In the Crossroads of Past and Present

Somalia elää minun kanssa joka kerta, kun olen töissä, kun olen kotona.

For some of the interviewees, Somalia is constantly present in their everyday life in Finland. Besides positive memories, there were mentions about the civil war in the narrations of the interviewees. However, the tragic experiences from Somalia were not in the focus in the narratives. This confirms the observation of Marja Tiilikainen who writes that difficult memories, or such memories which are not necessary in the current world view, seem to be rather forgotten in the social memory. The reason for that may lay in the fact that remembering causes pain and threatens the social order in the current moment.⁴⁴ This way, forgetting makes life easier and enables concentration on the future. The interviewees brought up tragic memories with short mentions concerning civil war. In this context, the interviewees referred to human sufferings and the long duration of that civil war. One interviewee mentioned his tragic past in Somalia when he described his current attitude towards life:

Joskus työpaikalla kysytään, et kun sä et koskaan valita tai ku sä oot vaan aina hyvällä tuulella. "Eiks sulla oo mitään ongelmia?" Mut mä sanon, et mä oon pienenä nähny siis todellisia ongelmia, ihmisiä, joilla ihan oikeesti on ongelmia. Et sä et pääse millään niistä eroon mut mä sanon, et totta kai on ongelmia, jotka on olemassa, totta kai on. Jokaisella ihmisellä pienikin episodi on ongelma, että sit ku mul on ongelmia, mä sanon sen. Et ei mulla oo mitään tällä hetkellä.

This interviewee appears to be content with his life in Finland. He compares his daily concerns to those which he has seen in Somalia stating that he does not need to complain about anything in his current life situation. Under such circumstances, those painful incidents in his past have changed remarkably his perspective of life. However, my interviewees had adopted various ways of dealing with their agonizing experiences as most of them rejected memories from their tragic past and wanted to concentrate on more positive memories. One interviewee shared his memories about Somalia as follows:

⁴⁴ Tiilikainen 2003, 79, 155.

Kyl mä muistan niin ku ajat, millon se (Somalia) oli ihan rauhallinen. Sit mä muistan ajoista, jolloin se oli vähän kaoottinen: Oli sotaa, oli pakoa. Ihmiset lähti pois kotoa, jätti kaiken taakseen. Ja sit mä muistan silloin, kun menttiin esimerkiksi Hargeisaan takas. Ja ehkä tavallaan sodanjälkeinen aika on kuitenkin paremmin muistissa.

This quotation shows that the interviewee did not want to go deeply into his tragic memories concerning the civil war. Instead, he wanted to focus on the good times and his future in Finland. Nevertheless, some of the interviewees referred to the civil war, when defining their current relation to Somalia. This reveals the fact that the civil war is present in the memories from Somalia defining the interpretations of the collective past. One interviewee described the suffering in the everyday live in Somalia:

Ihmiset kärsii aika paljon sisällissota, joka on jatkunut viimeisen 20 vuotta. Ja siinä näkyy joka päivä arkielämässäkin. Somalialaisessa arkielämässä näkyy heidän käyttäytymistä. Ja sen takia mä voin sanoa, että Somalia elää minun kanssa joka kerta, kun olen töissä, kun olen kotona. Ja sieltä soitetaan myös, ei päivittäin, mutta yleensä soitetaan. Sukulaisetkin soittaa ja pyytää laittamaan rahaa, ja tämmösiä. Se on, se elää minun kanssa.

This description confirms that Somalia is remembered also through the transnational⁴⁵ familial bonds. In diaspora such transnational ties can serve as a survival strategy. Immigrants, who have lived in a new country for a long time, often maintain transnational networks. These networks can gradually develop into transnational spaces. Such spaces are based on social and symbolic ties containing social capital such as networks, organizations and networks of organizations which exist in different states.⁴⁶

Anne Alitolppa-Niitamo studies transnational ties from the anthropological perspective: She defines transnational ties as a fluid process in which the geographical, cultural and political boundaries of the nation-states are overlapping. Alitolppa-Niitamo also notes that since the immigration history is quite new in Finland, the degree and nature of the transnational activities of immigrants have not been widely studied in the Finnish context. Added to this, the concept of integration is firmly established in the public debates on immigration. According to her, attention must be drawn also to the all-embracing power of the receiving society: in the hegemony of a strong nation-state, the transnational space of immigrants can provide means to escape such totalizing power of the receiving society within its national borders. However, Alitolppa-Niitamo reminds that one can never

⁴⁵ Transnationalism describes those social relationships which cross the frontiers. See Hautaniemi 2004, 167.

⁴⁶ Pirkkalainen 2005, 25.

completely escape from the locality of the receiving society since one is always tied to a physical place and the concrete social structure of the host country. In consequence, locality and transnational ties do not have to be exclusive. As Alitolppa-Niitamo points out, in an ideal situation one does not need to choose whether to be loyal to his or her country of origin or to the country of current residence. Instead, one can belong to both of the countries at the same time.⁴⁷

Laura Huttunen reminds that as a part of transnational space, social relationships are often contradictory and ambivalent: The families which are still living in Somalia maintain the dream of returning to the home country for those living in Finland. On the other hand, the future and security force many Somalis to stay in Finland for as long as the chaotic situation in Somalia continues.⁴⁸ The dream of returning was presented in some interviews. One interviewee dreamed about the possibility of bringing her children to Somalia. She stressed that it is extremely important for children to see where their parents have grown up. She also described that her children are especially keen on seeing their own culture and family members in Somalia. Another interviewee presented a concrete example of transnational bonds in her life when she told that Somalia is constantly on her mind, because some members of her family still live in Somalia:

Koska sukulainen on vielä, kaksi minun sisko ja lapsi siellä, kaikki on täti, kaikki perhepuoli siellä Somaliassa. Ajattelu koskee aina sota. Lapset ei muista.

This expression demonstrates that her memories are always linked to the war. In this context, she also expressed her concern about the children who now live in Finland. She was afraid that her children will not remember anything about their collective past. On the other hand, another interviewee told me about the enthusiasm of her children to visit Somalia and learn to know about their roots. According to Tuija Hovi, narrating one's personal experiences forms an essential part of everyday life. The ability to share one's experiences is a vital skill for a member of a certain community. Hovi points out that the narration of the past can cover various functions: Firstly, it can serve as a way of informing the future generations of their collective past. Secondly, narration can also act as a means to experience one's observations and organize memories. However, Hovi stresses that although the contents of a single narration is not necessarily tied to the collective tradition

⁴⁷ Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004, 41–42, 44.

⁴⁸ Huttunen 2006, 78.

of the community, narration always includes a collective perspective since the way to interpret experiences is collectively constructed in a community.⁴⁹

The interviewee, who was afraid that her children will lose the connection to their collective past, does not trust her own ability to share her experiences and values to her children, whereas another interviewee has promoted an ethnic identity of her children by telling them about their roots and ethnic background in Somalia. On the other hand, Anu Salmela writes that preserving the collective and traditional values of Somali culture has become a questionable matter in diaspora which has also highlighted the difference between Somalis and Finnish people in Finland. In consequence, Somali girls tend to show appreciation for Islam and Somali traditions through their behaviour and dressing. This way, the ideals concerning the upbringing form a way to ensure the continuity of traditions and values in Finland.⁵⁰ I will discuss the transmitting of values as an essential part of upbringing more specifically in chapter 8.3.

In this chapter, I have pointed out that in most cases Somalia plays a significant role in the memories of my interviewees. It is present in various ways in their everyday life in Finland. However, for some of the interviewees, Somalia does not form an essential part of their lives anymore:

Ensimmäiset viis, kuus vuotta ehkä meni silleen, et paljo muistaa sitä sun tätä, mut en mä tiedä. Mä oon kyllä jolleki sanonu tossa viime aikoina, et mä oon erkaantumassa siihen maahan jostain syystä. Koska mä oon täällä yksinkertaisesti rakentanu mun elämää ja saanu paikkaa tässä yhteiskunnassa, ja siinä mielessä et kaverit, ystävät, kaikki koostuu monikulttuurisista ihmisistä ja suomalaisten kanssa liikkunu aika paljon.

This interviewee has strongly integrated into Finnish society. Rima Berns McGown calls such people consciously integrationists. According to her definition, these people have adopted quite a moderate relation to Islam and they do not want to reinforce social separation from non-Muslims.⁵¹ However, in this quote the interviewee is uncertain about his current relation to Somalia emphasizing his multicultural friendships in Finland. Such uncertain relationship to Somalia could be based on fear that admitting his attachment for Somalia, he could not be regarded as an acceptable member of Finnish society. However, it is important to remember that although Somalia is not constantly in mind, it does not mean

⁴⁹ Hovi 2004, 386.

⁵⁰ Salmela 2004, 300.

⁵¹ Berns McGown 1999, 209.

that the home country would be completely forgotten, as another interviewee expressed his current relation to Somalia:

Se (Somalia), se tulee joissakin tapauksissa esille, mut ei ehkä niin. Se ei ehkä oo, jokapäiväisessä elämässä kuitenkin tulee esille. Paitsi ehkä siinä muodossa, että mä käyn netis ja mä tavallaan seuraan Somalimaan tapahtumia, ja näin edespäin.

This quotation shows that Somalia is present in the everyday life in Finland via modern communication tools. Nowadays, Somalis utilize effectively different means of media: faxes and phone calls form a vital part of communication between family members. Besides the virtual communication, also people can act as messengers. In this way videos and photos can reach the family members in another country.⁵²

As I have pointed out above, transnational networks play an important role in maintaining connections to Somalia and reinforcing one's ethnic identity as a Somali. Such ethnic identity often becomes evident on national feast days. One of the interviewees described her ambivalent identity between two countries:

Jos mä näen esimerkiksi, jos mä katson itsenäisyyspäivänä, kun mä nään, että suomalaiset juhlii oman maan itsenäisyysaikana. Mulla tulee vaan kateellinen. Suomalaisetkin, oon tosi iloinen, että suomalaisetkin puolestaan. Mun ikä, puoli asun Suomessa, koska mä oon asunu Suomessa 17 vuotta. Ja Suomessa on mun toinen kotimaa, mutta Somaliassa toivon, että paranisä, tulee tulevaisuus.

This interviewee stressed that since she has lived in Finland for such a long time, Finland has become another home country for her. Nevertheless, at the same time, Somalia is always her home country and therefore she hopes better future for Somalia admitting that the unbearable situation in Somalia makes her bitter especially on Finnish Independence Day.

In this chapter, I have presented different kinds of relationships to Somalia and on the other hand to Finland. All of my interviewees are integrated into Finnish society. All of them have lived in Finland over ten years, and for some, it has already been over 20 years, since they arrived in Finland. However, despite their integration to Finland, for most of my interviewees Somalia has acquired a constant place in their memories and everyday live.

⁵² Hautaniemi 2004, 52.

Along with Somalia, also Islam plays an important role in the memories of my interviewees.

6. ISLAM AND SOMALI ISLAM

6.1 Islam

Islam forms an essential part of Somalis' identity. Islam can be described as a way of thinking which affects every aspect of Muslim life. In this way, Islam provides a framework for life. In Islamic countries this can be seen in societies which are founded on Islamic norms and values. Islam is based on five pillars which define Muslim's life. The first pillar is a testimony of Allah as the only God and Mohammed as his last prophet, the seal of prophets. The second pillar is formed by five daily prayers. Muslims should pray five times every day. Even children are taught to pray, and by the age of ten daily prayers should be a routine in every day life. The third pillar is fasting. It can be described as transition from childhood to adulthood. Fasting requires self-discipline which can be expected from an adult. The fourth pillar is based on alms. The meaning of alms is founded more on religious obligation than economical reasons. The fifth pillar is realised in pilgrimage. It is the highlight in the religious life of a Muslim. The pilgrimage should also prepare Muslim to a physical death and a new spiritual birth.⁵³

6.2 Somali Islam

Islam was brought to Somalia in the 11th century by Arab emigrants. Arabs first arrived in coastal cities, such as Zeila in the north and Mogadishu in the south. From these cities, Islam eventually spread to the whole country. It became the religion of nomads and farmers.⁵⁴ Almost all Somalis are Sunni Muslims. They avow the three trends of the Sufi⁵⁵ brotherhood: *Quadiriya*, *Ahmadiya* and *Salihya*. *Quadiriya* is the oldest trend, and it has

⁵³ Hallenberg 2005, 13, 18, 27, 30, 39; Peltonen 2005, 122.

⁵⁴ Serkkola 1992, 48.

⁵⁵ Sufism is a mystic trend of Islam which was born between 8th and 9th centuries. It emphasizes an individual experience of divine presence. For more information on Sufism, see Tiilikainen 2003, 36.

many rituals and dogmas. *Ahmadiya* occurs particularly among less educated people. Dogmatically, it is the most radical trend of these three trends. *Salihya*, on the other hand, is based on a reformist movement of the 19th century. Its adherents form a small minority.⁵⁶ However, Somalis believe that every Muslim belongs to the same nation and the same family, which descends from the prophet Mohammed. This aspect binds Somalis to the global Islamic community, the Ummah. Altogether, religion connects Somalis in many ways, providing a strong base for national and cultural identity.⁵⁷

Local saints form an essential part of Somali Islam. There are many saints in Somali society, and they are firmly bound with family ties. Saints are often highly appreciated for their godliness. Even temples have been built for some of them. Such temples have become places of pilgrimage. These pilgrimages are important incidents emphasizing one's membership in the community and loyalty to its religious leader. In the north of Somalia, ancestors are usually elevated to Sufi saints. In the south, instead of canonisation of ancestors, the meaning of the saints finds its expression, primarily, in individual devoutness. However, saints fit Somali kinship, and they can also act as mediators between humans and the prophet Mohammed.⁵⁸

Somali Islam has adopted some special features which are mostly rooted in Sufism. Somali features of Islam are most clearly seen in everyday life, for example in nomadism: In the fields women perform hard work that does not fit in with the traditional conception of women in Islam. Another Somali interpretation of Islam can be seen in the segregation of men: In Somali society, religion and politics have traditionally been separate matters. That is the main reason why men are usually divided into lay men and religious men. Those men who are religious experts are called *wadaad*. They are leaders in the religious community teaching Koran to children. Usually, they also take up the role of conciliator in family feuds. Other men who have not acquired religious knowledge are called *waranleh* (javelin thrower). They are responsible for businesses which are related to their own clan.⁵⁹ The Sufi communities consist mainly of farmers. The communities are important centres of religious services bunching people together from different clan backgrounds. Added to this, they have a vital educational role in society because they provide teaching in Islam

⁵⁶ Ibid, 48.

⁵⁷ Tiilikainen 2003, 35.

⁵⁸ Serkkola 1992, 48-49; Tiilikainen 2003, 36.

⁵⁹ Serkkola 1992, 48; Tiilikainen 2003, 38.

and Arabic. Religious leaders are also very important in the Sufi communities. Particularly, the leaders of *Quadiriya* are known for being able to work miracles. It is quite usual that people come to religious leaders to ask help from God. In most cases, they hope to get help for sicknesses, infertility or drought. The ability of making miracles (*barako*) usually descends from a religious leader to his son. In society, these unique men are often greatly respected.⁶⁰

Mosques have an important meaning for Somalis. Doctrinal centres are situated in coastal cities, but nonetheless there is also a little mosque in every village. Mosques usually mediate the traditions of the saints by carrying the symbols of the three Sufi trends. Religious education, on the other hand, has its basis in the Koran schools. The majority of the students are boys. In the schools, boys learn the basics of Islam. The Arabic tradition of Islam depends completely on the rote memory of the teachers. In countryside, boys go to school only during the dry seasons, when they do not have to help their families with the browsing. In city, the Koran schools act also as unofficial kindergartens.⁶¹

Somalis believe firmly in spirits. For them, the spirit world is as real as the physical world in which they are living. However, Islam does not recognize the belief in spirits, and some of the spirits have been denounced as un-Islamic. Nevertheless, Islam and the spirits have always lived in syncretism. In most cases Islam is used as a tool for interpreting the world of the spirits. The spirits affect particularly women. These individual spirits are believed to cause illnesses and accidents. Possession by the spirits is often related to certain periods of life. Such possessions can be prevented by the reading Koran. There are also particular cures for spirit possessions. One of them is ritual dancing, whose aim is to return one's genuine mind.⁶²

7. ISLAM IN MEMORIES

7.1 The Islamic Way of Life

⁶⁰ Tiilikainen 2003, 37; Serkkola 1992, 51.

⁶¹ Serkkola 1992, 49, 51.

⁶² Ibid, 49, 51; Tiilikainen 2003, 254, 257.

Se on tapa elää, toista kunnioittamista, ja oikeastaan se on tapa elää.

In the quotation above, one of the interviewees described the meaning of Islam in his life. This quote confirms the fact that Islam forms an essential part of Somalis' identity. Islam can be described as a way of thinking which affects every aspect of Muslim life. In this way, Islam provides a framework for life. In Islamic countries, such as Somalia, this can be seen in society which is founded on Islamic norms and values.⁶³ Tuula Sakaranaho writes that Islam can function as an explanation for the social reality defining the state, how things should be in society.⁶⁴ On the other hand, according to Lawrence Rosen, Islam does not demand the individuals to make the moral realm of their own, because the moral order is given and maintained by Allah and the religious community. The moral responsibility is then shifted to the community. However, such perspective does not free Muslims from moral duty as individuals since according to the Islamic belief; everyone must take the responsibility for his or her actions in the afterlife. Therefore, individuals must adapt to live according to the precepts of the faith and learn to recognize the reasons for their deeds.⁶⁵

Islam has adopted a remarkable role in Somali society. One of the interviewees emphasized that Somalis have become more aware of Islam than they were before. According to his opinion, Islam has developed during the last 20 years in Somalia since many Somalis have studied Islam. The awareness of Islam was evident also in the memories from Somalia. In these memories, there is a great emphasis on the omnipotence of Islam. However, it is interesting to note that such obviousness of Islam does not necessarily apply to the other Muslim groups in Finland, as Minna Säävälä writes about Kosovo women in Finland. According to her observations, these women do not consider the daily practice of Islam as an essential matter in their everyday lives.⁶⁶ In contrast to this, all of my interviewees expressed that Islam is present everywhere in society. When I asked the interviewees, what Islam means for them in their lives, all of them described Islam as a way of life which provides advice for a good life. In this context, most of the

⁶³ Hallenberg 2005, 13.

⁶⁴ Sakaranaho 2006, 27.

⁶⁵ Rosen 2002, 169; Hallenberg 2005, 50.

⁶⁶ Säävälä 2008, 123.

interviewees stressed the moral aspect of Islam which influences people's behaviour and, how people are treated in society:

Joo, se on sisällä ja se antaa, uskonto antaa sulle ohjausta. Miten käyttäytyy muiden ihmisten kanssa, miten käyttäytyy vaimon kanssa, miten käyttäytyy sillon, kun olet töissä, ja tämmösiä. Se on, merkitsee mulle. Uskonto merkitsee paljon.

According to the Islamic belief, morality is largely based on the individual responsibility: every Muslim has been given a free will for moral choices. In consequence, all of the Muslims will be rewarded for the good acts and punished for the sins in the afterlife. In this way every act and choice will impact on one's status in the afterlife.⁶⁷ Such striving for the better life can be seen in the values of my interviewees. Since, the respect for other people was highlighted as one of the most important values in Somali society. One of the interviewees brought out such appreciation when he described the visibility of Islam in Somalia:

No se näkyy...sehän näkyy joka asiassa. Miten esimerkiksi lapset käyttäytyvät aikuisia kohtaan. Miten aikuiset käyttäytyvät lapsia, nuoria kohtaan. Miten vanhuksia hoidetaan, miten heikommassa asemassa olevia ihmisiä hoidetaan, ja hoidetaan jos hoidetaan. Eikä se ole niin et, näennäisesti vaan hoidetaan vaan hoidetaan. Itsensä laitetaan likoon ja sen puolesta tehdään töitä.

This interviewee expressed his opinion, how elder people should be treated in society. At the same time, he also criticizes the status of elder people in Finland. This way, he tends to point out the difference between these two cultures: in Somalia, one of the greatest responsibilities of children is to take care of their parents when they grow old, while in Finland there has been a public discussion about the loneliness of elder people.⁶⁸ The respect for elders was also emphasized by another interviewee when she described her relation to Somali elders in Finland. She told me that if she sees an older Somali woman with her heavy bags, she will instantly run to help her kissing her on the cheek and call her mother. In this context, she also expressed that she would never consider an elder home as a suitable place for her parents. In this comment, the respect for elders is culminated in small deeds in everyday life. Such opinions presented here concerning the treatment of elders in society reflect the traditional view of elders in Somali society. The respect for elder members of society is obvious since children are not only raised to respect their

⁶⁷ Hallenberg 2005, 50-51.

⁶⁸ See, for example, Syrjäyttäminen on ikäihmisen arkea.

> http://yle.fi/alueet/tampere/2009/09/vaitos_syrjayttaminen_on_ikaihmissen_arkea_1032475.html <

elders but also seek advice and blessings from them. Therefore, old parents form the centre of the extended family. This way, they can never retire from the family management.⁶⁹

Besides the binding aspect, the interviewees emphasized Islam as a peaceful and tolerant religion, as one of the interviewees shared her interpretation of Islam:

Meidän uskonto on rauha, mut ihmiset käyttäytyy huonosti. Ei tarkoita uskonto, vaan se on ihmisten oma juttu. Mut meidän uskonto on rauha ja meidän uskonto on suvaitsevaisuus ja anna ihmisten elää. Ja kato, meidän uskonto ei hyväksy huijaus, valehtelee, tappaa, raiskata. Kaikki pahoja, huonoja juttuja, että ihmiset politiikan juttuja ja omaa halukkaita tai ahneita tekevät.

This interviewee wanted to make a clear difference between Islam and people's interpretations of Islam. With this comment, she pointed out that people are using Islam for their own needs instead of contributing the image of Islam as a non-violent religion. Marja Tiilikainen has made similar observations in her interviews about the parallel of Islam with peace. According to her, considering the current situation in Somalia, Somalis hope that Islam could promote peace and reunion of people in that chaotic country.⁷⁰

In addition to the moral interpretations of Islam, the interviewees also described concrete symbols of visibility of Islam in Somalia. Veiling of women was regarded as one of the most important factors implying the presence of Islam in Somalia. One of the interviewees described veiling as follows: *Somalia laittaa huivi ja mies, ja naisten ei tarvi kärsi.* This interviewee expressed that veiling is supposed to protect women from men's eyes. She also stressed that veiling is not interpreted as an optional matter in Somalia taking into account the fact that Somalia is an Islamic country. Another interviewee stated that although veiling is necessary for women in Somalia, they did not regard veiling as a negative thing since every woman dresses in a similar way. In this context, my interviewees expressed quite a different attitude to veiling when compared to the observations of Marja Tiilikainen. She argues that usually Somali women have begun to veil after their arrival in Finland. The reason for this can lie in the fact that women have become more aware of Islam in Finland. In summary, according to Tiilikainen, veiling cannot be considered as traditional thing in Somalia. However, it must be noted that there have been some obvious changes in the

⁶⁹ Abdullahi 2001, 126-127.

⁷⁰ Tiilikainen 2004, 125.

dressing of Somali women since 1980's. Since then veiling has become more common in Somalia, and it has often been connected to the threat of war.⁷¹

Besides veiling, my interviewees described mosques as significant symbols of Islamic belief in Somalia. Mosques have acquired an important meaning in the lives of Somalis. My interviewees emphasized the significance of the mosques during the prayer times. One of them described the importance of visiting the mosques as follows:

Joo, se (moskeijassa käyminen) on tärkeä. Viis kertaa vuorokaudessa, jos on mahdollista käydä, mut yleensä ei välttämättä kaikilla oo mahdollista: jos sä oot koulussa tai työssä tai muutenki teet bisnestä tai ihan omassa firmassa oot työssä, jossa moskeijaa ei oo. Mut yleensä pyritään siihen, et laitetaan kaikki kiinni ja mennään, koska se on aika lähellä. Yleensä ne sijaitsee sellasessa paikassa, et ehkä sä voit tulla.

The interviewee wanted to point out that although visiting the mosques is important especially during the daily prayers, the practical reasons could form a hindrance for visiting the mosque in Somalia. On the other hand, another interviewee reminded that participating in daily prayers is, above all, a personal matter:

Mutta kun tiedämme, että rauhoittuminen, se on henkilökohtainen asia. Se ei kuulu kaikille, mutta moskeijat, siinä on paljon ihmisiä, jotka rukoilee. Koska se on Jumalan ja henkilön välillä, mutta yleensä moskeijat on ollu täynnä. Muistan rukoushetkiä varsinkin päivällä myös illalla, mutta aamuisin se oli vähän vähemmän väkeä kuin esimerkiksi keskellä päivää.

This interviewee stressed the popularity of mosques in prayer times, although men tend to rather pray at home in the mornings. Both of these quotations above show that visiting the mosques especially during five daily prayers is regarded as an important matter. However, the interviewees also showed quite a liberal attitude admitting that this kind of public practice of Islam is a private thing, and there could be practical reasons, as well, which inhibit people from visiting the mosques as often as they might want to.

Mosques also demonstrate the visibility of Islam in Somalia. These mosques are significant representatives of the Islamic belief. All of the interviewees described the amount of the mosques in Somalia and linked them to their practice of Islam. One interviewee explained the importance of Islam in his childhood by sharing the memory how he used to run to the mosque and washed before the prayer. Another interviewee stressed the fact, how easy it was to go to a mosque in Somalia because the mosque was always near:

⁷¹ Tiilikainen 2003, 140.

Usein naisten ei mene moskeijaan, kotona koko ajan, mutta mies, kaikki mies, pieni ja iso, meni moskeijaan. Lähellä paljon moskeija. Kotona lähellä, ei pitkä matka.

In this narration, the interviewee highlights the different roles of men and women in Somali society. In Somali culture, children learn such gender roles in early childhood. Young boys are taught to carry out familial responsibilities by encouraging them to develop qualities which will help the boys to ensure a livelihood for their families in the future. On the other hand, girls are expected to distinguish themselves in housekeeping activities and taking care of the children. Therefore, women, who stay at home, instead of going to the mosque during the prayer times, are appreciated in Somali society.⁷² However, women are expected to visit mosques after Ramadan on id-days. On those days, it is usual that the whole family participates in the short morning prayer.⁷³

7.2 Ramadan

Ramadan is a fasting period for Muslims. This period lasts whole of the Ramadan month ending to the appearance of the crescent moon. During the Ramadan, the collective practice of Islam is emphasized: Fasting connects people and even pregnant women usually want to fast during the Ramadan. At that time, also women visit the mosques.⁷⁴ Helena Hallenberg describes Ramadan as a practice of both body and mind: Besides restraining oneself from eating and drinking, one should also avoid any kinds of struggles with other people. The main aim of the Ramadan is the re-creation of a person.⁷⁵ Ramadan is strongly present in the memories concerning Somalia. During the Ramadan there is time for silent self reflection and re-evaluation of one's life:

Sen Ramadanin idea on, että ettei eletä sillä tavalla, että kaikki on itsestään selvää tässä elämässä. Että se, joka on terve, huomenna voi olla ei-terve. Se, joka on fyysisesti hyvässä kunnossa, se voi olla huomenna heivertynyt, tai niin ku elämässä mikään ei oo itsestään selvää.

The celebration of Ramadan was often closely related to religious values, such as mercy and forgiveness. One interviewee described that during the Ramadan one is supposed to behave in a different way than during the other months of the year:

⁷² Abdullahi 2001, 120, 124.

⁷³ Tiilikainen 2003, 139; Tiilikainen 1999, 67.

⁷⁴ Hallenberg 2005, 30; Tiilikainen 1999, 67.

⁷⁵ Hallenberg 2005, 31.

Se (ramadan) tarkoittaa, että olet erilainen kuin muina kuukausina: Sä et syö liikaa. Sä olet hyvin kohtelias kaikille ihmisille ja tulet olemaan esimerkiksi Jumalan lähellä.

With this expression, the interviewee wanted to emphasize the importance of good acts, such as giving alms and food to poor people during the Ramadan. Through these acts people tend to evince mercy and forgiveness to other people hoping to win the mercy of God in the afterlife. Heikki Palva describes the Islamic hospitality as a response to the benevolence of God.⁷⁶ Such hospitality was described by one of the interviewees who remembered that people could invite anyone from the streets to have a dinner in their homes. This way, it is also easier to identify oneself with the position of the poor people while fasting from the sunrise to sunset and sharing food with other people. This reflects the theological view of Ramadan which emphasizes the sensitivity of a person to hear the voice of God while fasting.⁷⁷

Such interpretations of Islam, which are described above, reflect the collective history of that religion. Ari Hukari writes that the social reality of Muslims is founded on the conception that describes afterlife paradise including the revelation which formed the basis for the Koran and the life and the actions of Prophet Mohammed. These notions of the paradise and the revelation are explained entirely in the Koran. Therefore, all of the norms and values of Muslims are rationalized by these ideas.⁷⁸ The presence of such idea of the paradise is evident in the narrations of Somalis. Especially, the memories from Ramadan are related to the striving for the paradise. As one of the interviewees explained the meaning of Ramadan:

Se on kuukausi, jossa kaikki ihmiset yrittää saada armoa Jumalalta. Se on kuukausi, jossa sanotaan, että jos käyttäytyy niin kun islamin uskonnosta on kirjoitettu. Että kaikki syntiä, joka olet tehnyt sun elämän aikana, pyyhitään. Sitte sulla tulee uus sielu ja olet paratiisin lähellä silloin.

It is important to bear in mind that the history of Islam forms only a part of that collective history of Somalis. As Anne Ollila addresses that the history must be studied as a history of the nation which created that history.⁷⁹ In consequence, the collective history of Somalis as a nation is based both on historical events of the people and the history of Islam which

⁷⁶ Palva 2002, 165.

⁷⁷ Hallenberg 2002, 54.

⁷⁸ Hukari 2006, 31.

⁷⁹ Ollila 1999, 9.

affects to values and moral choices in everyday life. As a part of the collective history of Somalis and the history of Islam, religious feasts create important links between the present moment and collective memories.

7.3 Religious Feasts

Id al-fitr and *id al-adha* are two most important religious feasts for Somalis. *Id* has adopted a meaning of returning or joy. *Id al-fitr* is celebrated after Ramadan. It is one of the most important feast days of the Islamic calendar.⁸⁰ *Id al-adha*, on the other hand, is celebrated for the remembrance of the prophet Abraham from whom God asked to offer his only son, Ismael. Therefore, *id al-adha* has adopted a meaning as an offering celebration. Praying has adopted a significant role also during these two feast days. Both of these days begin with the collective prayer. Usually, the whole family participates in the prayer, but women can pray at home, as well. Washing is vital before visiting the mosque. In the mosque, the imam will give a sermon. During the *id al fitr* he usually reminds people about the obligation to pay the compulsory tax, *zakat al fitr*; whereas during the *id al adha*, the imam will highlight the obligation of sacrifice which forms an essential part of the traditional festivity. After completing such obligations, the rest of the day is dedicated to the giving of the alms.⁸¹

My interviewees linked memories about religious feasts to familial values. According to Taina Ukkonen's view, the community forms the contents of social memory by controlling which memories are worth remembering and socially accepted.⁸² Since the significance of the family is highly appreciated in Somali culture, it is then socially accepted to emphasize the familial aspect in the memories. All my interviewees expressed that one of the most important features of the religious feasts is the chance to spend time together with one's family and friends. Many of them remembered visiting relatives as the highlight of the *id*-celebration. One interviewee described the meaning of *Id al-fitr* as follows:

*Sehän on sama kuin joulu. Ihan kuin olisin kysynyt sulta, että mitä joulu sulle merkitsee.
Sehän on valtavasti paljon, koska sillan on mahdollisuus tavata kaikkia ystäviä, kaikkia*

⁸⁰ Hämeen-Anttila 2008, 127.

⁸¹ Islam. Opas > <http://www.islamopas.com/hogtider.html> < ; Tiilikainen 1999, 67.

⁸² Ukkonen 2000, 25.

perheenjäseniä, kaikkia sukulaisia ja yhteisön jäseniä. Ja sit sulla on kaks, kolme päivää, juhliitaan ja syödään ja ihmiset ovat iloisia ja kauniita vaatteita laitetaan päälle ja semmosta yhdessäolemistä.

This description expresses the emphasis on collectiveness in Somali culture: besides meeting one's family, the members of the community are also remembered during the id-festivities. In Somalia, family is an important social unit. In fact, it forms the core for the social system. The family concept is extended: grandparents, cousins and even close friends are all part of a large family. Family provides social security to its members, since the family members are responsible to assist each other economically.⁸³

Religious values, which have been highlighted during the Ramadan, are culminated in the id-celebration. As one of the interviewees stressed the meaning of forgiveness on id-day:

Sinä päivänä annetaan anteeksi kaikille. Itse asiassa, ehkä anteeksianto on kaikkein mieleen jäävin hetki nyt vähän vartuneempana...Se on tosi tärkeä, koska sinä päivänä, ne päivät on just sitä varten, et sit annetaan niin ku menneistä anteeksi ja katotaan eteenpäin. Et se on ehkä mun mielestä kaikista suurin ja antoisin hetki id-juhlasta.

Most of the interviewees expressed that during the id-festivities the attention is drawn to children. One interviewee shared his memories from the id-festivities in his childhood:

Mut ehkä pienempänä oli paljo enemmän muistoja. Se oli tosi kivaa mennä sukulaisten luo, ja he antoivat jonku tietyn rahan id-juhliä varten. Me sit kierrettiin monissa kodeissa, ja kertyi yleensä hyvä summa, jonka myöhemmin lähdettiin tuhlaamaan kaupungille.

Such childhood memories are often influenced by the commerciality. One interviewee remembered that when he was a child, he would always wait for his father to buy him new clothes for the id-festivities. However, the commerciality is not only present in childhood memories, as a mother of eight children told me that she would buy plenty of new clothes and toys for her children on id-day. She also remembered that everybody would buy new clothes and things for themselves on id-day.

Id-days are busy time especially for Somali women. Women make preparations for these festivities for a week before the actual celebrations. One of the interviewees shared her detailed memories concerning the preparations and celebration of id-days in Somalia as follows:

⁸³ Serkkola 1992, 88; Pirkkalainen 2005, 18.

Kun on ramadanin viimeinen viikko, ihmiset järjestää ja valmistautuu id-juhla: vaihdetaan verhot ja kotona tehdään suursiivous ja äidit tekee tai vanhemmat siskot leipovat Somalia leipomo, makeita, suolaisia ja kaikki.⁸⁴ Ja ostetaan lapsille lahja, ostetaan uusia vaatteita. Ja odotamme, kun tulee id. Ihmiset aina soittaa kaverille ja kutsutaan, koska kun kuu loppuu ja kuu syntyy, silloin on ramadan päättynyt. Ja ihmiset odottavat, onko ramadan jatkuuko vai id alkoi. Sitten radio tai uutiset kertoo, sanoisi, että esimerkiksi joku pieni kylässä tai kaupungissa, pääkaupungissa löytyy, aurinko syntyy ja ramadankuu loppuu. Syntyy uusi kuu. Sitten ihmiset, laitetaan toi tuli, mikä se oli...vuoden alkanut...

KM: Ilotulitus?

Ilotulitukset, joo, ja sitten ihmiset soittaa puhelimeen ja onnittelee hyvää ramadan loppuu. Kun alkaakin on sama (...) Ja naiset laittaa henna, koristelee tutuille ja itselle. Ja aamulla, kun aurinko nousee koko perhe menee moskeijaan. Ja koko perhe pukeutuu uutta vaatteet. (...) Rukouksen jälkeen ihmiset kokoontuu, sukulaiset, suku kotiin, ollaan yhdessä ja syövät ruokaa. Ja koulut ja työ ja kaikki on vapaa. Se on loma.

For my interviewees, the religious feasts are primarily events that gather families together. Therefore, the most memorable moments are strongly related to the times which families spent together. In this context, many of the interviewees also highlighted the meaning of mercy and forgiveness in their descriptions. Besides the religious aspects of the id-festivities, most of the interviewees described also commerciality as an essential part of such feasts. In summary, the id-festivities share many similarities with the current Christmas celebrations in Christian countries.

7.4 Koran and Koran Schools

According to the Islamic belief, Koran is based solely on the revelation of God. Therefore the truth in the Koran is regarded as eternal and unchangeable. Originally, the Koran was written in Arabic. For that reason, the Arabic Koran is still considered as the only authentic version of the Koran. Consequently, the translations of the Arabic Koran are regarded only as interpretations or comments which lack the authority of the Arabic Koran. Learning the whole of the Koran by heart is considered as a great virtue.⁸⁵

Koran has acquired a significant role in the lives of Somalis. Reading and learning Koran is a part of the everyday life, as one of the interviewees explained, how he used to carry the Koran with him while walking in the city. Most of my interviewees also remembered

⁸⁴ This sentence means that sisters bake different kinds of traditional Somali pastries for the id-festivities.

⁸⁵ Hämeen-Anttila 2008, 89-90; Hallenberg 2005, 64.

several suras by heart. Learning Koran can be regarded as a lifelong project, as one interviewee described his memories about learning the Koran:

Kun olin Somaliassa, isä hänen tavoite oli, että hänen lapsista tulivat oppimaan koraania, koska se oli...se on velvoite vanhuksilla ihmisillä opettaa heidän lapsilleen koraania. Ja hänen täytyi, koska muistan, että kaksi kertaa olen, aloitin ihan alusta koraanista ja lopun aikaan. Ja jopa opin monta suuraa koraanista, pitkiä suuria. Ja edelleen muistan. Ja nyt mä yritän, että oppia ulkoa vähän enemmän.

There are also diverse learning techniques to learn the Koran, as another interviewee told that he usually reads certain pages of the Koran three times one after another during the day or night in order to learn them by heart. On the other hand, Koran can also provide means to cope with difficult situations in life, as one interviewee expressed:

Joskus mä istun täällä ja luen koraania, nii silloin päässä, ehkä se vaan auttaa henkisesti tai tavallaan semmosta, että kyllä sä jaksat, ei tässä mitään.

Islam has always emphasized the significance of the education since everyone should learn the basics of the religion. In the 8th century, the children in the Arabian Peninsula were taught by Medinan Jews. In those days, the education formed the most effective means to connect Muslims who represented different nationalities and languages. Eventually, the first Islamic education model, *kuttab* was founded. Also the Koran schools of today have their roots in those Islamic schools in the Arabian Peninsula.⁸⁶

Religious education has its basis in the Koran schools. For centuries, the education has been provided by private Koran schools in Somalia. In these schools children are supposed to learn to read and write in Arabic which will support their understanding of the Koran. The majority of the students are boys. In the schools, boys learn the basics of Islam. In countryside, boys go to school only during the dry seasons, when they do not have to help their families with the browsing. On the other hand, in urban areas, there are some schools which teach both the knowledge of Arabic and secular subjects as well. In city, the Koran schools act also as unofficial kindergartens.⁸⁷

The Arabic tradition of Islam depends completely on the rote memory of the teachers. According to such tradition, the teaching is concentrated on learning by heart. Heikki Palva

⁸⁶ Hallenberg 2002, 123; Palva 2005, 286.

⁸⁷ Serkkola 1992, 49, 51; Abdullahi 2001, 161.

writes that explaining Koran is not always considered as necessary or even recommended since Muslims believe that the text itself is sacred word of God and each attempt to explain it is a subject for misinterpretations.⁸⁸

Koran schools are considered as important educators in Somali society. These schools are responsible for the religious education of children. Children learn to pray, fast and practice religious rituals. Besides the religious aspect of the education, the schools are also significant bearers of the Somali tradition. Such things as cohesion of the family and the meaning of maintaining good relations in society are emphasized in the teachings.⁸⁹ Koran schools have also adopted a visible role and authority in Somali society. One interviewee highlighted the significance of the Koran schools by describing their visibility in Somali society:

Koraanikouluhan on...koraanin opiskelu on jokaisen lapsen, tietysti jokaisen perheen päätavoite, kun lapsi syntyy, et lapset oppii sitä (koraania). Jotkut on taitavia, ne oppii koko koraanin ulkoa, jotkut ei. Ja siis kuitenkin että on, et perusjutut ainaki opitaan. Se on hirveän tärkeä jokaiselle perheelle. Ja sitä et voi olla huomaamatta, jos sä kävelet tuolla kadulla, et heti näät et semmosia pieniä majoja, missä sitte kolmekymmentä neljäköt lasta ja sit joku aikuinen siellä rivi rivissä. Eikä siellä kuule kinastella eikä mitään.

In this description, the interviewee pointed out the authoritative role of the Koran schools in upbringing of the children. The responsibility of upbringing was emphasized also by another interviewee when he described Koran schools as places where children are supposed to find their own place and role in society:

Koraanikoulu on...se ei oo pelkästään koraanikoulu. Nyt kun olen aikuinen ja olen oppinut, että koraanikoulu ei oo pelkkä koulu, missä opetetaan koraania. Se on enemmän tästä kasvatuskoulu. Kasvatetaan lapsia että yhteinen, ja sitten hän oppii, ottaa roolin.

The quotations above attest the significant role of the Koran schools in religious education of children. Since Koran schools form an essential part of Somali society, every child must attend these schools. One interviewee described that families want their children to read the Koran. So in consequence, it is a traditional thing to put a child to a Koran school. Some of the interviewees described large groups of children attending Koran schools. For that reason, children were often divided into two groups: one was organized in the mornings, and the other was held in afternoon. One interviewee remembered that such

⁸⁸ Serkkola 1992,51; Palva 2005, 80.

⁸⁹ Tiilikainen 2003, 33.

large groups could cause learning difficulties for some of the children although everyone was allowed to study in one's own time.

8. SOMALI ISLAM IN FINLAND

8.1 The Background and the Practice of Somali Islam in Finland

Somalis form the largest Muslim group in Finland. They are also important actors in the Muslim community of Finland. About 86 percent of Somalis live in the Uusimaa region, in southern Finland. Therefore, there are already about 20 mosques in that region. Also in Finland, mosques are significant for Somalis. According to Barbara Metcalf, for Muslims in diaspora, the significance of mosques lies in their symbolic role marking the presence of Muslims in Western society.⁹⁰ Besides the symbolic meaning, mosques have also acquired an important social function: they bring people together, promoting social relations and creating social capital. Mosques often serve as meeting places where people can both chat and discuss current topics. Furthermore, mosques also provide a place for religious education. Education is provided for men, women and children, separately for each group. Men have adopted an active role in the religious community, whereas women are responsible for upbringing the children in the family. In Finland, the upbringing of the children is challenging, because women do not receive as much support from the community as they did in Somalia. There the community shares the responsibility of upbringing the children. Dealing with large families is often the main reason that women go to mosques only occasionally. The religious role of Somali women is, for the most part, concentrated on religious education of other women. In the Helsinki area, Somalis usually gather in the Islamic Society of Finland and Helsinki Islamic Centre. There is a mosque in both places. In addition to the mosques mentioned above, there is at least one prayer room used by Somalis in the Helsinki area.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe >
<http://www.escholarship.org/editions/view?docId=ft2s2004p0&chunk.id=introduction&toc.depth=1&toc.id=introduction&brand=ucpress> <

⁹¹ Sarinko 2008, 6; Tiilikainen 2003, 179. See also Tiilikainen 1999, 66.

In the Finnish context, it must be noted that the possibility for practising Islam in Finland is based on the Finnish constitution issued in March 2000 which guarantees the right to the positive religious freedom including the right to religious belief, practice and belonging. In this context, the latter is considered as a membership of a certain religious community. In the light of religious freedom, the right to organize and profess one's religion in public is vital for new religious communities, such as Somalis in Finland.⁹²

The interviewees did not mention any major differences in their practice of Islam in Finland when compared to the situation in Somalia. In Finland, they tend to visit the mosques regularly and live according to the Islamic belief. Added to this, women stressed that they wear veils and long skirts likewise they did in Somalia. Nevertheless, Anne Alitolppa-Niitamo writes that living in the diaspora has had its impact on the new ways of combining religious and cultural elements. For example, the veiling of Somali women is becoming more common in Finland, than it was before. In some cases, veiling is seen as a means of showing appreciation for Islamic traditions and customs in Finnish society.⁹³

In my interviews, one of the women noted the different style of dressing as the most remarkable difference between Somali and Finnish women. Besides dressing, such issues as avoiding alcohol and pork meat were not considered as dilemmas. In this context, the interviewees highlighted the importance of halal stores and the fact that nowadays people are aware of Islamic diets in schools and kindergartens. Yet, it must be noted that the amount of mosques and halal stores, which enable the practise of Islam in Finland, has increased during the last two decades. As, one interviewee described the situation in the 1990's: She recalled that in those days there was only one mosque in Helsinki. In addition to that she told me how difficult it was to buy halal meat. According to her memories, her family was able to eat halal meat only once in a month and they often replaced such meat with beef at that time. Nowadays, the practice of Islam has become easier than it was back in those days for Muslims in Finland. In my interviews, the practice of Islam was generally described as habitual as one of the interviewees shared his experiences about the daily practice of Islam in Finland as follows:

Se (islam) ei välttämättä merkitse sen kummempaa mitä se on merkinny siellä Somaliassa, mutta perjantaisin mä käyn moskeijassa. Pysin ainaki ku mahdollista oleen, kaks, kolme

⁹² Sakaranaho 2006, 129, 132, 196.

⁹³ Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001, 41, 43

kertaa, kaks kertaa vähintään kuussa, koska sillä on sekin se mahdollisuus, että siellä sä voit tavata muitakin, joita et oo vuosikausiin nähny. Ja tietysti mä rukoilen viis kertaa päivässä, mut siis täällähän mä rukoilen toimistossa.

For this interviewee, mosques have acquired various functions in his life: besides the religious aspect, mosques serve as vital meeting places for Somalis and other Muslims. Added to this, he also expressed that his daily practice of Islam does not require any special arrangements. In the same way, another interviewee showed a flexible attitude to his daily prayers in the workplace:

Minä ymmärrän, että jos esimerkiksi rukoushetki on nyt kello 15, sulla on joustava aika. Voit rukoilla ennen kuin seuraava rukousaika tulee. Sen takia tuo oleminen, se ei vaikuta, eikä tule esteenä rukoilemaan, koska kaks tunnin sisällä sulla on, mikä se oli – tauko. Ja tauko vois olla viistoista minuuttia tai kymmenen minuuttia. Rukous kestää yleensä alle viis minuuttia. Jos olet, jos haluat, koska uskonto ei kieltää, että teet työtä. Koska työn tekeminen, se kuuluu tähän uskontoon.

This interviewee highlighted the significance of working. He stated that working forms a part of Islamic belief, and the daily prayers can be arranged in a flexible way in workplaces. The increasing amount of Muslims in Finland during the recent years has made many schools and workplaces to react to daily prayer times and Islamic holidays. According to the European Court of Human Rights Islamic holidays are not official free days in Finnish society. Therefore either Ramadan cannot be regarded as an eligible reason for absences from schools and workplaces. However, in practice such problems have been solved without conflicts, and there even have been organized suitable places for Muslims to pray during the day at school or work.⁹⁴ One of my interviewees provided an excellent example of the solution which has been made for Somalis in a Finnish education centre for immigrants. She explained that in this school prayer calendar has been made for students. Added to this, the school has also organized a room for Muslims to pray and the breaks have been arranged during the daily prayer times.

The quotations presented above demonstrate that Islam plays an important role in the lives of my interviewees in Finland. They have continued to practice Islam and adapted to the circumstances in the cultural context of mainly Christian Finland. Many of the interviewees emphasized the positive freedom of religion when they expressed their opinions about the official status of Islam in Finland. One of them described his conception of such freedom as follows:

⁹⁴ Sakaranaho 2004, 225.

Kun on annettu tämä vapaus, se tarkoittaa, että minä voin rukoilla. Ja samanaikaisesti ei tarvii rikota systeemi, joka on elänyt täällä Suomessa pitkän aikaa. (...) Minusta ajattelen, että täällä täytetään islamin uskonnon odotukset samalla lailla kuin Somaliassa.

This quote demonstrates the situation in which Islam has preserved its position in the current live of the interviewee. However, the practice of Islam cannot always be taken for granted in diaspora or even in Somalia. As Marja Tiilikainen discovers that for some Somalis, Islam has not formed an evident part of their lives in Finland. In Somalia Islam is often taken for granted, whereas in diaspora the personal significance of Islam has to be reconsidered. In such cases Islam can usually be interpreted as a way to reinforce Islamic identity in a Christian society, such as Finland. One of my interviewees shared this perspective when he told me that while living in Finland, he has become more aware of his Islamic identity when people have asked him questions concerning Islam, and this has forced him to find out more about Islam. He described people's reactions to Islam in Finland as follows:

Et ihmiset ei tiedä islamista paljonkaan. Toisaalta, et heillä on niin ku tavallaan negatiivinen kuva islamista. Mut ehkä suurin syy on se, et islam on täällä aika outo. Ja sit tavallaan ihmiset ei niin ku tiedosta näitä asioita. Esimerkiks niin ku sen, et aina joku kyselee ruoasta. Sen eteen joutuu selitteleen aina, et mikä on niin ku tavallaan islam ja mistä se kertoo, ja tota väärien mielikuvien murtaminen.

This interviewee emphasized the importance of breaking wrong images concerning Islam. He thought that negative opinions about Islam are caused by the ignorance. This way, the reactions and curiosity of other people have strengthen his Islamic identity. According to Barbara D. Metcalf, practising Islam in a non-Muslim environment can be seen as a great achievement since knowing the Islamic customs and following the practises requires a real effort in a foreign country.⁹⁵ On the other hand, Marja Tiilikainen points out that for some Somalis, Islam can also lose its meaning in a non-Islamic country, where Islam has acquired a status of a minority religion.⁹⁶

All of my interviewees expressed that they are free to practice Islam, and their practice is not restricted in Finland. Such expressions, as 'freedom' and 'without distractions' were used to describe their practice of Islam. In conclusion, my interviewees seem to be content

⁹⁵ Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe >

<http://www.escholarship.org/editions/view?docId=ft2s2004p0&chunk.id=introduction&toc.depth=1&toc.id=introduction&brand=ucpress> <

⁹⁶ Tiilikainen 2003, 65, 69, 135-136.

with their lives as Muslims in Finland. However, one cannot ignore the fact that the interviewees may stress their satisfaction consciously. In an interview situation they might not want to be critical to Finnish society because some of them may fear that opinions presented in such interview could be regarded as public criticism.

8.2 Religious Feasts in Finland

Religious feasts form a significant part of Islam also in Finland. On id-days all Somalis participate in the morning prayer. In Helsinki, large buildings, such as the Fair centre or ice stadium are usually hired for these occasions. Likewise in Somalia, people celebrate id with eating well, sharing gifts and visiting friends and relatives. In Finland, id-celebrations last for three days. On id-days, mosques usually organize feasts particularly for women and children. Women prepare large amounts of pastries and cakes for these feasts. Since the feasts are meant for women and children only, women can wear beautiful clothes and take off their headscarves.⁹⁷

Marja Tiilikainen writes that religious feasts can serve as a means of maintaining social memory in diaspora. Such calendar feasts do not act only as reminders of the incidents from the past, since they also have a function in the current moment creating and reinforcing social memory.⁹⁸ For Somalis, the id-festivities provide a chance for spending time together with one's family and sharing experiences from the past. This way, besides the religious meaning, the id-festivities have acquired also a strong ethnic significance in the lives of Somalis.

The interviewees described their id-celebrations in Finland quite similar when compared to Somalia. Meeting family and relatives seems to form the most important feature of id-celebrations. In some cases, if the family members are not able to meet on id-days, they will make calls to wish happy id to each other. The collectivism of id-celebrations culminates in the morning prayer, as one interviewee described the atmosphere following the prayer when everybody is shaking hands and hugging each other in the spirit of forgiveness. After the prayer, people celebrate id at homes or visiting relatives.

⁹⁷ Tiilikainen 1999, 67-68.

⁹⁸ Tiilikainen 2003, 79.

Celebrations in restaurants are not rare either, as one interviewee described the different ways of celebrating the id-day. Another interviewee described id-celebrations from children's perspective: children are given balloons and toys. Usually, a small quiz is organized about Koran. However, despite the fact that the id-celebrations in Finland do not seem to differ much from those in Somalia, one of the interviewees stressed that for her, the atmosphere of celebrating the id festivities has changed in Finland:

Minä en täällä paljon id. Ei tuntu samalta kuin oma kotimaa (...) Joo, ja sitten uskonto ja kaikki, ei ole sama juhla. Naapurilla ei ole sama juhla ja sitten ei tuntu iloiselta.

This interviewee told that she missed the shared joy of id-celebrations from Somalia. For her, the fact that these feasts are not common for all the members of society in Finland was diminishing her willingness for the celebration. In this context, she also claimed that there is no need to wear beautiful clothes on id-day because no one will see them underneath her winter clothes. In conclusion, the quotation above shows that the meaning of id-celebrations is primarily culminated in social gatherings. In diaspora, the communal aspect of celebrating has changed since the id-celebrations have become a feature of minority religion in Finland.

8.3 'You can always tell' - Different Worlds of Values

The quotation in the title of this chapter is quoted from one of my interviewees when she described her responsibility in the upbringing of her children. She stressed that there is always enough time for telling the children about Islam and traditional values of Somali culture. This quote confirms the fact that children form important social capital for Somalis. Therefore parents usually set high expectations for their offspring. Children are supposed to behave politely, study hard and assist their family according to Somali tradition. In Somali culture, women are usually bearers of values and tradition. They transmit their information orally to the next generation. In the upbringing of children, various differences are obvious between Finnish and Somali culture. According to Anu Salmela, many Somali women consider respecting the elders and teaching the Islamic belief as the most important factors in the upbringing of their children.⁹⁹ Such issues were

⁹⁹ Tiilikainen 2007, 273; Salmela 2004, 297.

emphasized also in the interviews, as one interviewee described the difficulties in raising her children in Finland:

Lapset, kasvatus on tosi erilainen, koska Somaliassa on vanhemmat aina määräälee. (...) Kunnioitetaan lapset, mutta täällä ei. Kun lapset kasvaa neljätoista, viisitoista vuotta, kahdeksantoista, tosi vaikea. Ei haluaisi, vanhemmat määräälee, ei haluaisi. ”Minä haluan itse”.

This quote shows that Somali parents face similar problems with Finnish parents in raising their teenage children. However, the essential difference between Finnish and Somali culture lies in the fact that in Somali culture, children are supposed to respect all of the elder members of society. In Finland, Somali parents seem to be rather confused when they cannot find the same emphasis in the Finnish culture.

Rima Berns McGown states that Somalis in diaspora often prefer to emphasize their Muslimness as opposed to their Somaliness.¹⁰⁰ Living in Finland can be hard especially for Somali girls who want to practise Islam in society in which religion has not adopted a visible role in public places. Heli Niemelä writes that Somalis who have arrived in Finland in their childhood now live between two cultures with different values and traditions which can be conflicting. In such circumstances, girls must consider which values they can give up and which can be preserved and linked to the Finnish culture. In this way Somali girls are creating new youth culture which is a combination of both Somali and Finnish cultures.¹⁰¹

Marja Pentikäinen defines such new culture which is born between two cultures as third culture. According to her, immigrants attach deliberately to Finnish culture. In other words, they adapt to Finnish culture in terms of Somali culture. In case of Somalis, they gradually become Finnish Somalis. Pentikäinen writes that immigrants are often well aware of both good and bad sides of the cultures in which they are living. In most cases, they accept selectively norms and values from the Finnish culture comparing them to their own cultural and religious traditions. Usually they first adopt the external features from the host culture whereas the internal features, such as norms and values are absorbed later in the

¹⁰⁰ Berns McGown 1999, 99.

¹⁰¹ Niemelä 2006, 177-178.

integration process.¹⁰² In such circumstances in between two cultures, women's role in the upbringing of children is crucial.

One interviewee emphasized particularly her current position as a raiser between two cultures. She expressed that she would like to include best parts from both cultures in the upbringing of her child. She shared her conception about the upbringing in the following:

Suomessakin on hyvä kulttuuri, koska suomalaisilla on hiljaisuus ja hyvät tavat. (...) Ihmisillä on hiljaisuus, ei huutaa, ei kovilla äänillä. Suomalaisessa, emme voi yksilöittää suomalaisessa kulttuurissa, jos mä puhun hyvistä puolista. Somaliastakin mä kaipaen monta asiaa. Mä haluaisin kasvattaa tyttärenti, jos vaan pystyy kasvattaa, auttaminen, joo, sukulaiset, ystävät ja naapurit. Somaliassa kaikki naapurin ovet on auki.

In this quote, the interviewee showed appreciation for silence and good manners as a part of Finnish culture. On the other hand, she also wondered the extreme individuality in Finland. In this context, she referred to some incidents concerning elder people who had been lying dead in their apartments even for a year. She stressed that such incidents would not happen in Somalia, since the elder people are taken care of by the community. She also hoped that her daughter would not adopt such excessive individualism from the Finnish culture. In this framework, the interviewee stressed the importance of reciprocity. According to her point of view, children should look after for their old parents, since parents took care of them during the years of childhood.

Marja Tiilikainen observes that most of the Somali women think that Finnish society is dangerous for Somali youngsters. She writes that in Somalia, most of the Somali women shared the responsibility of upbringing their children with society. In Finland women feel that they no longer have such connection to Somali community. Without the support from the community women feel insecure fearing that their children might sin when they go out in the evenings.¹⁰³ The lack of social support from other Somali parents was brought out also in my interviews:

Haluaisin vahtia lapset, kasvatukset hyvin. (...) Haluaisin tukea, vanhemmat auttaa, keskusteleee enemmän.

This interviewee is in a fortunate position since she has some Somali neighbours with whom she can talk to occasionally. She told me that in summertime it is easier to meet

¹⁰² Pentikäinen 2005, 172, 241.

¹⁰³ Tiilikainen 2003, 179

people and sit outside talking about children but during the winter, it is difficult to meet people because everybody is tired and busy most of the time.

Lacking the social support from the community, Somali parents try to supervise their children's friendships with Finnish people because they fear that when visiting Finnish families their children might see things which are in conflict with Islam, such as, dogs, pork and alcohol.¹⁰⁴ Rima Berns McGown points out similar perspectives in her interviewees with Somali women. According to her observations, Somali women fear that individualization will affect their children negatively. This can lead to unwillingness of Somali women to have children in a foreign country.¹⁰⁵

Despite the fact that my interviewees were mostly men, and for that reason, they do not carry the primary responsibility for the upbringing of their children in Somali culture, some of them expressed their concern for the upbringing of their children in Finland. One of the interviewees wondered, how he could transmit Islamic values to his children in Finland:

Ja sama tieto, mikä mulla on nyt, millä tavalla siirtäisin minun lapsille. Se on iso vastuu, mutta millä tavalla noudatetaan täällä Suomessa, mulla ei oo mitään tietoa.

In this quote the interviewee stated that he does not know how Finnish people are raising their children and teaching values to them. It seems that he hopes to receive some support and would like to share experiences about upbringing of children with Finnish people. According to Danièle Hervieu-Léger, the chain of memory contributes the continuity of religious tradition in inconsistent social circumstances, such as diaspora. She writes that religious tradition is composed of such elements which are necessary for the continuity of that tradition. The religious tradition, for one's part, is always maintained by society which develops the tradition with the help of the data received from the past.¹⁰⁶ In summary, social religious memory plays an important role in transmitting values to the next generation in a foreign country. My latter interviewee knows which elements from his religious memory he would like to transmit to his children but he is lacking the information and the means how to accomplish the process in the current situation.

¹⁰⁴ Niemelä 2006, 183.

¹⁰⁵ Berns McGown 1999, 112.

¹⁰⁶ Hervieu-Léger 2000, 87; Tiilikainen 2003, 80.

Besides the responsibility of transmitting vital values, the harmful effects of Finnish society caused worry for another interviewee who showed particular concern for the negative influence of modern rap music:

Osa lapsista hakee tavallaan niin ku roolimallia näist räppäreistä ja tavallaan...mun mielestä, jotka ei oo kuitenkaan hyviä roolimalleja. Et he opettavat semmosii tai he saarnaavat niin ku asioista, mitkä on tavallaan niin ku yhteiskunnalle haitallisia. Niin et tavallaan niin ku esimerkiksi huumeiden käyttö, paha käytös, et ne asiat on esillä kuitenkin. En kuitenkaa niin ku lähde yleistämään tavallaan, miten sen sanois, niin ku tavallaan räppäreiden ajatusmaailmaa, mut aika monet on sellasii, et sit he niin ku tavallaan ottavat väärän roolimallin ja tavallaan sit heidän elämä voi edetä tavallaan niin ku väärään suuntaan.

This interviewee regarded rap music as a threat for upbringing of children. He stressed the meaning of proper role models in the lives of children. The fear of wrong role models and the influences of Western values are also in the focus in Berns McGown's research concerning Somali women in London and Toronto. She discovers that Somali mothers have become more religious in Western societies in order to protect their children from foreign values. In this case, women hope that children will understand the harmfulness of Western values and will take their example of being a good Muslim.¹⁰⁷

It seems obvious that there are some crucial differences in the ways of upbringing the children in Somalia and in Finland. Women emphasized respecting the elders as the most important factor in raising the children. The respect for elders was also seen as the most striking distinction between these two cultures. Whereas men showed a concern for the negative influences of western society, such as rap music, women talked about raising the children to the right direction. The women also missed communal support in upbringing the children. Although the interviewees were worried about negative influences of western culture, it has to be noted that according to Rima Berns McGown, Somali youngsters are not drifting away from Islam. In contrary, they are constantly redefining their Islamic identities in relation to acceptable behaviour for a good Muslim. This way, they combine Islamic practises to the Western culture in which they are living at the moment.¹⁰⁸

8.4 Koran Schools

¹⁰⁷ Berns McGown 1999, 208.

¹⁰⁸ Berns McGown 1999, 133.

Rima Berns McGown stresses that Koran education in Somali forms an important part of a child's education in diaspora.¹⁰⁹ In Finland, religious schools are private. In recent years, there have been many plans for organizing private Islamic schools but so far none have been founded yet, since there have been differences in opinions among Finnish Muslims. In the current circumstances, many Somali children go to Koran schools on weekends. Such schools are usually organized in mosques. In Helsinki area the Islamic Community of Finland and Helsinki Islamic Centre provide teaching based on Koran for children.¹¹⁰ However, it must be noted, that such organizations are relatively small facing various practical problems in organizing religious education. Firstly, organizations have to gather people from large areas to receive education. Secondly, since the education is not tied to the official school system, it has to be arranged after school or on weekends. Added to these, the children face usually linguistic problems as well, since they are not able to understand abstract religious conceptions in Finnish. Nevertheless, it cannot be forgotten, that small Islamic organizations can also take advantage of their smallness because it emphasizes their position as community centres which provide an opportunity for children to familiarize themselves to a physical religious environment. However, the religious education does not lie solely on the shoulders of Islamic organizations since there are also some schools in suburbs organized by parents. Somali parents consider Koran schools as significant factor in the religious education of children: according to Hanna Virtanen and Katja Vilkama the vicinity of Koran schools was extremely important for Somali parents when they evaluated their residential environment in Helsinki area.¹¹¹

The interviewees had various opinions concerning Koran schools. One interviewee, mother of seven children, described Koran schools in Finland from children's perspective comparing these schools to those in Somalia:

Joo, Somalia on joka päivä, sama kuin koulu. (...) Kaikki naapureita ja tuttuja. Sama kulttuuri ja sama uskonto ja kavereita, mutta täällä lapset kaveri ei sama uskonto joskus, ja sitten lapset vähän ujoja, ei halua ja väsynyt, ei halua. Jos kaveri sama uskonto ja menevät, se on mukava. (...) Sama uskonto ja sama halu olla, ja helpompi sitten, piiri on sama.

¹⁰⁹ Berns McGown 1999, 104.

¹¹⁰ Sakaranaho 2004, 221; Tiilikainen 1999, 66.

¹¹¹ Martikainen 2004, 228-229; Virtanen & Vilkama 2008, 140.

In this quotation, the interviewee wanted to emphasize the importance of social support from other children in Koran schools. This way, Koran schools serve as meeting places for Muslim children. However, despite the social function of Koran schools, children are often tired and would not want to go to Koran school because such schools are organized in weekends.

On the other hand, whereas women expressed their concern for children's social life, cultural conflicts between the official Finnish school system and private Koran schools formed a major concern for many male interviewees. One of them was particularly concerned about different teaching methodologies:

Minä toivoisin, että koraanikoulun opettajat pitäisi kouluttaa opettajiksi. Ja sitten koraanikoulun opettajan pitäisi saada tutkinto, koska siinä tulee ristiriitoja lasten kannalta. Koska se voi tapahtua, että lapset päivällä ovat suomalaisessa koulussa, missä on eri, mikä se oli, oppimismetodologia käytetään kun esimerkiksi koraanikoulussa. Ja opettajat ei tiedä, esimerkiksi, millä tavalla lapset opetetaan koulussa. Ja se olisi hyvä nyt, kun saadaan tää koraanikoulun opettajakoulutusta ja lisätään heidän koulutusta, osaamista. Se helpottaa, ehkä koraanikoulun opettaja samaistuu suomalaiseen koulukulttuuriin.

This interviewee hopes that by improving the education of teachers in Koran schools, teachers can then identify with the Finnish school culture. The identification of Muslim teachers with the Finnish culture was a major concern also for another interviewee:

Ku mä sanon pätevä opettaja, tarkoitan sitä, et semmonen opettaja, joka pystyy jotenki kykenemään tai yhteistyötä luomaan vaikka suomalaisten opettajien kanssa: pystyy jotenkin kertomaan tästä uskosta, uskonnosta ja niihin uskontoon liittyvistä asioista, koska nehän kieltämättä joskus tulee esille koulussakin. Ja kielitaitoisia koraanikouluopettajia on vaikee saada. Saatikka sitte on suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa kiinni oleva ihminen, joka on kiinnostunu täällä henkisesti olemaan, jolla on halu elää täällä, ja on kiinnostunu näistä ympärillä olevista ihmisistä ja kulttuurista.

This interviewee emphasizes that it is extremely important for a teacher to commit oneself to live in Finland and learn about the Finnish culture.

8.5 Religious Education of Children in Finnish Schools

In Finland the Lutheran and Orthodox education has been integrated within the official school system. There are, however, Sunday schools and confirmation classes for teenagers within the Evangelical Lutheran church which form a counterpart for Islamic Koran

schools.¹¹² Besides the Lutheran and Orthodox education, nowadays Finnish schools provide religious education in various religions. This is due to the Freedom of Religion Act (2003) which assures the religious education of children according to one's religious conviction. This particular Act adapts to the international and European human rights conventions.¹¹³ However, the education should be non-confessional serving the educational aims of Finnish school system. Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that each school has made its own scheme for religious education, and therefore there can be small differences in the contents of teaching in every school of the country. Added to this, it is important to remember that individual teachers usually have divergent opinions and attitudes about which should be the most important factors in religious education and teaching in general. In summary, despite the small variations in religious education, Finnish schools aim to offer all-round education in different religions and worldviews. This way, Finland follows a multiform mode of teaching in ethical studies which demands municipalities to provide pupils teaching corresponding their own ethical background.¹¹⁴

According to the latest school syllabus for Islam, which was made in 2006, Islamic education in schools aims to increase pupils' understanding of Islam both in their private lives and in society. In addition to this, pupils are also taught to live in harmony with different people and understand them. All of this aims to support the Islamic identity of the pupils.¹¹⁵

Leena Maijala brings out an interesting subject in her research concerning the pupils' perspective of the Islamic education in public schools in Finland. Her research reveals that in general, pupils like Islam and consider it as an important school subject because they know something about Islam in advance. The pupils expressed that although the teacher speaks the whole time, the atmosphere is still relaxed. This supports the fact that pupils like to participate in the lessons and they are even looking forward to the next lesson.¹¹⁶

Despite the fact that pupils are usually pleased with the Islamic teaching they receive in school, parents are often concerned for the education provided by the public schools.

¹¹² Martikainen 2004, 227.

¹¹³ Sakaranaho 2006, 196

¹¹⁴ Sakaranaho 2008, 163-164; Olin 2000, 112.

¹¹⁵ Sakaranaho 2008, 170.

¹¹⁶ Islamin opetus kouluissa. Oppilaiden puheenvuoro. >

http://www.teologia.fi/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=414&Itemid=59 <

According to Rima Berns McGown, the dilemma lies in the fact that parents are usually unwilling to restrict religion to the private domain. For them, the religious education should be an interaction of both private and public domains.¹¹⁷ In Finland, the cooperation between parents and public schools has been established, at least in Espoo. There, parents have been informed about religious education in school in their own language, and teachers of religion have discussed with parents.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, the Islamic education in public schools was one of the main themes in the interviews. The interviewees expressed a great concern about religious education of their children in Finland. All of them stressed the significance of religious education of children. As one of the interviewees described religious education as a vital means for managing in everyday life:

Toiset puhuu siitä, et islam rajottaa elämää, mut mä puhun siitä, et islam kertoo esimerkiks ne rajat, joissa niin ku hyvä elämä on mahdollista. Et jos me sanotaan esimerkiks se, että lapsille opetetaan vanhempien kunnioittamista, et heille opetetaan esimerkiks olemaan ahkeria, ja heitä opetetaan, et he olisivat tavallaan kilpailukykyisiä ja tiedonjanoisia. Niin tavallaan se on oikeesti islamii. Islam just kehottaa näitä asioita, et ja toisaalta se esimerkiks kieltää niin ku alkoholin käytön, varastamisen, valehtelemisen kaikki, mikä huumeiden käyttöön, kaikki merkilliset asiat.

This interviewee did not stress the significance of doctrines in the religious education of children. Instead, he wanted to demonstrate that it is extremely important to provide Islamic education for children since it includes all of the essential values for a good life. The responsibility of teaching Islamic values is usually shared between the parents and the teachers of Islam in schools. However, in the light of the non-confessional syllabus of Islamic education, teachers are not allowed to include prayers or any other confessional contents in their teaching if it is not pedagogically relevant. Consequently, under such circumstances, the confessional education of children remains to parents. In the context of public education of Islam in schools, many of the interviewees brought out the dilemma of unqualified teachers of Islam. The question of qualified teachers forms a real challenge for Islamic education in schools: according to the Finnish legislation, a personal commitment to Islam is not required from the teachers of Islam. In consequence, anyone who is qualified in teaching and has acquired a proper knowledge of Islam is allowed to teach Islam in Finnish schools. The personal religious commitment of a teacher is extremely current and complicated matter. For example, in December 2009, the association of

¹¹⁷ Berns McGown 1999, 103.

¹¹⁸ Uittamo 2007, 133.

Muslim parents in Turku was concerned about the contents of the Islamic education in lessons taught by a teacher who is not a Muslim.¹¹⁹

Besides the Islamic identity of Muslim teachers in public schools, the integration to the Finnish culture forms also a vital factor in the education of Islamic teachers for public schools. Nevertheless, acquainting oneself with the Finnish culture is a long process which can only be reached gradually in the course of time. Usually, the fact that Islamic teachers must travel from one school to another during one week complicates their integration to the Finnish school system. Added to the integration, the Islamic teachers face various challenges in their everyday work. They should be able to teach groups which can consist of pupils with very different backgrounds and also manage challengeable situations in classrooms. Since 2007, the University of Helsinki has organized education for the teachers of Islam. However, the education is still at the stage of development. It cannot provide solutions to various practical problems mentioned above but it should respond to the wide range of pedagogical and doctrinal questions.¹²⁰

In this chapter, I have presented a variety of challenges in Islamic education. Most of these challenges are same for teachers in Koran schools and public schools. Recently, the educational needs of Islamic teachers in public schools have been responded when the University of Helsinki launched education for the teachers of Islam. However, this education does not cover imams who are usually responsible for teaching in Koran schools. Therefore, there has been a public discussion about the education of imams in Europe. Isra Lehtinen provides a solution for this problem by suggesting that the doctrinal contents of the education should be common for Islamic teachers in public schools as well as in Koran schools.¹²¹

9. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis, I have examined the everyday life of Somalis through their memories. Based on my work on the field, I can say that most of my interviewees have maintained firm

¹¹⁹ Sakaranaho 2008, 171-172; An example from the current debate, see > <http://www.ts.fi/online/lahialue/85082.html> <

¹²⁰ Sakaranaho 2007, 25.

¹²¹ Lehtinen 2007, 238.

relations to Somalia. The reason for that lies in the fact that many of my interviewees have family members who still live in Somalia. Such strong relationships are maintained through transnational networks. Modern means of media facilitates the communication between several countries. The significance of close relationship to Somalia was stressed particularly by those interviewees who have children since they dreamed about the possibility of visiting Somalia with their children. For these children, the chance of travelling to Somalia would confirm their ethnic identities as Somalis.

Altogether, the relationship to Somalia is mainly constructed on positive memories. In other words, the interviewees were not eager to share memories from their tragic past with me. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the tragic past of Somalia was not emphasized in the memories, the civil war is still present in those memories from Somalia. It defines the current relation of the interviewees to their country of origin. However, all of the interviewees wanted to concentrate on positive aspects of their memories from Somalia and their future in Finland. In these memories, the social memory plays an important role defining the memories which are socially accepted and worth remembering. Such positive memories were culminated on the significance of the family. Especially, the family gatherings during religious festivities were brought up as the most important childhood memories in the interviews. These gatherings can be considered as significant maintainers of the social memory of Somalis. In summary, it seems that memories from Somalia have acquired a significant role in the lives of my interviewees. Those memories will define their relation to both past and the present.

In the religious memories, Islam was described as a way of living which provides advice and defines the terms of everyday life. In this context, the interviewees described Islam as extremely personal and moral matter in one's life. According to them, Islam is something that is rooted inside of a person and therefore it cannot be properly explained in words. Added to this, there seemed to be a clear emphasis on the Islamic festivities in the memories from Islam. Especially, the *id al fitr* which is celebrated at the end of the fasting period Ramadan played an important role in the memories of Islam.

In the context of religious memories, the transmitting of Islamic and Somali values formed an important theme of the interviews. In such transmitting process of the values, the social religious memory has acquired a significant role. However, some of the interviewees were

confused, how to transmit the essential values and traditions to their offspring. Many of them were also concerned about the negative influence of Finnish society on their children. In spite of this, most of the interviewees expressed that there are good and bad features in both cultures. From Somali culture, the interviewees wanted to bring up the communality and respect for elder people, whereas the Finnish culture was acknowledged by its freedom of religion.

As a part of the tradition, the religious education of children was mentioned as one of the most important features of the Islamic faith by the interviewees. The education was emphasized particularly in the context of Islam in Finland. The Somali parents stressed the vitality of Islamic education for their children in Finland. However, since the Koran schools are organized privately after schooldays or during the weekends in Finland, some of the parents considered it hard to motivate their children to study Islam. Addition to this, another major concern of the parents was the lack of qualified Islamic teachers in Finnish public schools.

In general, the practice of Islam does not create any major problems for the interviewees in Finland. All of them described their practice of Islam quite similar when compared to their religious life in Somalia. Added to this, the interviewees also stressed that the meaning of Islam has not changed after moving to Finland. However, some of them mentioned that they have become more aware of their religion in a non-Islamic country due to the curiosity of other people towards Islam.

This study and the questions which have been examined in this research have brought up some questions which could be interesting for upcoming studies: One of the most interesting questions is connected to the Islamic and Somali tradition and the transmitting of such values to the next generation: how Somali children and adolescences in Finland will relate to Somalia, and what kind of position will Somalia and Islam have in their lives? Will this generation be able to transmit Islamic values, traditions and memories from Somalia to their children?

In this study, I have presented Somalis in between two countries, Somalia and Finland. Although, all of my interviewees were content to their current lives in Finland, the hope for the better future in Somalia is constantly present in their dreams.

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Interview 9.4.2010 conducted by the author. The interview is in author's possession.

APPENDIXES

Appendix 1

Interview questions

Tausta: ikä, minkä ikäisenä tullut Suomeen, ammatti, perhetausta, asuinalue Somaliassa / background: age, age when arrived in Finland, profession, family relations, residential area in Somalia

1.) Somalia muistoissa / Somalia in Memories

tyypillinen arkipäivä Somaliassa? / typical day in Somalia?

Esim. Perhe, ystävät, työ/ koulu?/ family, friends, work/school?

Muisteletko Somaliata paljon?/ Do you often recall Somalia?

Millaisissa tilanteissa ja mitä muistelet useimmiten? / What do you mostly look back?
and in what kind of situations you recall Somalia?

Millaiset asiat muistuttavat Somaliasta?/ What kinds of things remind about Somalia?

Hyvä muisto?/ Good memory?

2.) Uskonto muistoissa / Religion in Memories

Mitä islam merkitsi sinulle Somaliassa? / What kind of meaning Islam had to you in Somalia?

Miten islam näkyy Somaliassa? / How is Islam visible in Somalia?

islam arkielämässä? / Islam in everyday life?

Miten islam näkyi arkielämässä? / How did Islam occur in everyday life?

Kotona, kaupungilla, kylällä, koulussa, mediassa?/ at home, in town, in village, in school, in media?
Ramdan?

Ramadanin päättävä id al fitr?/ Id al fitr at the end of the Ramadan?

Pyhiinvaelluksen päättävä id al adha Abrahamin muistoksi?/ Id al adha at the of the pilgrimage for the
memory of Abraham?

Koraani/Koran

Koraanin tuntemus/ knowing Koran

Kuinka paljon muistat Koraanin tekstejä ulkomuistista?/ How much you have learned Koran by heart?

Millainen koraanikoulu oli Somaliassa?

Mitä muistat koraanikoulusta?/ What do you remember
from Koran school?

moskeijassa käynti? / visiting mosques?

Jos, kuinka usein? / if so, how often?

rukousaikojen noudattaminen? / following prayer times

kuinka usein?/how often?

ruokailusäännöt?/ food regulations?

pukeutuminen? / dressing?

lasten uskonnollinen kasvatusta? / religious education of children?

Kuinka tärkeä?/How important?

Kuinka toteutettu?/How realized?

3.) Uskonto Suomessa / Religion in Finland?

Mitä islam merkitsee tällä hetkellä?/ What does Islam mean to you at the moment?

koraanikoulu

Millaisia ovat suomalaiset koraanikoulut?/ How are Koran schools in Finland

miten eroavat somalialaisista?/ How they differ from Somali ones?

moskeijassa käynti? / visiting mosques

Jos, kuinka usein? / if so, how often?

rukousaikojen noudattaminen? / following prayer times

kuinka usein?/how often?

ruokailusäännöt?/ food regulations?

pukeutuminen? / dressing?

lasten uskonnollinen kasvatus? / religious education of children?
Kuinka tärkeä?/How important?
Kuinka toteutettu?/How realized?

Miten islam näkyy suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa?/ How Islam is visible in Finnish society?
(Onko mieleen jäänyt erityisesti jokin uskontoon liittyvä juhla, kokemus tai tapaaminen?)

Mikä on vaikeaa islamin harjoittamisessa Suomessa?/ What is challenging in practising Islam in
Finland?

Miten islamin harjoittaminen on muuttunut Suomessa?/ How practise of Islam has changed in Finland?

Mainitse jotain mitä et tee Suomessa, mutta teit Somaliassa, jos merkityksellinen?/

Mention something that you don't do in Finland that you did in Somalia, if relevant?

Mainitse jotain, mitä et tehnyt Somaliassa, mutta teet Suomessa, jos merkityksellinen?/

Mention something that you didn't do in Somalia that you do in Finland, if relevant?

Appendix 2

Quote translations (translated by the author)

(In the order of the appearance in the text)

In Finland, there is my other home country, but I hope that there will be improvements in Somalia, the future will come.

There is the sun and I miss thousands of things. I cannot measure.

Everybody lives in that same house, in that same flat. We wake up in the morning and one of the parents goes seeking bread for the family. The others either study or stay at home. Just usual, likewise in Finland.

Gatherings of the family. I do not mean nuclear family but extended family gathered: aunts and uncles. Those were really good, sort of moments when you felt important having so many relatives around.

I heard the voice sometimes during the prayer times. I heard the voice, it will say sometimes from the churches on Sundays.

KM: Yes, there is the prayer call. In Somalia, Muslims pray five times in a day. We hear the prayer call and then we remember. Now we do not remember. I sit and do not know what time it is. Then I realize the passing of the time.

Yes, the prayer call.

Somalia lives with me every time I am at work, I am home.

Sometimes my colleagues ask me for the reason, why I am not complaining or why I am always on the good mood. 'Don't you have any problems?' But I say that when I was little, I have seen real problems, people who really have problems. You do not get rid of the problems. Of course, there are problems which are real. People have small episodes which are their problems. When I have problems, I will tell. I do not have any problems at the moment.

I remember the times when it (Somalia) was peaceful. Then I remember times when it was chaotic: There was war and fleeing. People left their homes leaving everything behind. Then I remember the moment when we returned to Hargeisa. In a way, I remember better the times following the war.

People are suffering quite tremendously from the civil war which has now lasted for the last 20 years. It can be seen from the everyday life. Their behaviour can be seen in Somali lifestyle. That is why I can say that Somalia lives with me every time when I am at work, when I am at home. I also receive calls from there, not daily, but they often call. Relatives call and ask me to send money. It is, it lives with me.

Since my relatives, my two sisters and my daughter still live there. Aunts and all the members of the family are in Somalia. Thinking is always related to the war. Children do not remember.

The first five or six years may have passed so that I remember this and that but I do not know. I have said someone lately that I am separating from Somalia for some reason. Since, I simply have been building my life and received my place in this society. All of my friends are multicultural people, and I have hanged out quite a lot with Finnish people.

It (Somalia) comes to my mind in some cases. It may not be, still it comes to my mind in the everyday life. I go to the internet and follow the news from Somaliland, and so on.

If, I see, for example, on the Independence Day, I see Finnish people celebrating the independence of their country. I am just jealous. I am very happy for the Finnish people. I have lived a half of my life in Finland, since I have lived in Finland for 17 years now.

It is a way of living, respecting others. Actually, it is a way of living.

Yes, it is inside. It gives me, religion provides me advice. How one is supposed to behave with other people, how to behave with one's wife, how to behave at work, and so on. It is, it means to me, religion means a lot.

It can be seen, it can be seen in everything. For example, how children behave towards adults. How adults behave to children or adolescents. How elders are taken care of, how people who are in a fragile position are taken care of. And they are taken care of. They are not seemingly taken care of, but they are really taken care of. One sticks one's neck out for it, and puts an effort for it.

Our religion is peace, but people are behaving badly. It does not belong to religion, but it is their own thing. Our religion is peace, it is tolerance, to let people live. You see, our religion does not accept cheating, lying, killing or raping. These are all bad things, political things. People are greedy self-seekers.

In Somalia, women wear veils, and men... women do not have to suffer.

Yes, it (visiting the mosque) is important. Five times in a day, if it is possible to visit. Usually, people do not have the possibility, if they are at school, at work or make business in their own company, where there is no mosque. Usually, one aims at putting everything aside and going to the mosque, because it is quite near. The mosques are often situated in such places that one can visit.

We know that quieting, it is a personal matter. It is not everybody's business. But in mosques, there are many people praying. It is a matter between God and a person, but usually mosques have been full of people. I remember prayer times, especially during the daytime, but also in the evenings. In the mornings, there were less people than during the daytime.

Usually, women do not go to the mosque. They stay at home all the time. But all men, small and elders go to the mosque. There are several mosques nearby. Back in home, they were near.

The idea of that Ramadan is that you do not live in that way that everything is taken for granted in this life. Someone who is healthy tomorrow can be non-healthy. Someone who is physically in a good condition can be tomorrow debilitated, or you know, in this life nothing is taken for granted.

It (Ramadan) means that you are different than during the other months. You do not eat too much. You are very polite to all the other people and you will be close to God.

It is the month, when all the people are trying to receive mercy from God. It is the month, when, it is said that, if one behaves in such a way that it is written according to the Islamic belief, all the sins which one has done in a lifetime, will be washed away. One will be given a new soul and one will be close to the paradise.

It means the same as Christmas. It is like I would have asked from you, what Christmas means to you. It is a great deal, because it is the time when one has the opportunity to meet all the friends and family members, relatives and the members of the community. One has two or three days to celebrate and eat. People are happy; they wear beautiful clothes and spend time together.

That day, one is supposed to forgive everybody. Actually, for me, maybe it is the moment of the forgiveness which has become the most memorable moment now that I have grown up. It is very important, because in that day, these days are meant for forgiveness. One is supposed to let go of the past and look forward. I think it is the greatest and the most rewarding moment of the id-feast.

Maybe, when I was younger, I had more memories. It was a great fun to visit the relatives and they gave me some money for the id-festivities. We visited many homes. Usually we got a good sum of money which we later spent in the city.

During the last week of Ramadan, people organize and get prepared for the id-festivities. Curtains are changed and the house is cleaned. Mothers or older sisters bake different kinds of savoury and sweet pastries. Presents are bought to children, as well as new clothes. We wait for the Id. People call to their friends and invite them when the new moon is born. It is the end of Ramadan. People wait whether Ramadan continues or is it already the beginning of Id. Then it is said on the radio or in the news that sun is born in some small village or city or in the capital and Ramadan ends. The new moon is born. Then people put those fires .What was it at the beginning of the year?

KM: Fireworks.

Yes, the fireworks. People call to each other on a phone and wish happy Id at the end of Ramadan. It is the same in the beginning. (...) Women put henna decorations for themselves and for others. In the morning, when sun arises, the whole family goes to the mosque and wear new clothes (...) after the prayer, people gather. Relatives spend time together eating food at homes. One do not have to go to school or work. It is holiday.

When I was in Somalia, father's aim was that his children were supposed to learn the Koran because it was...it is the responsibility of the elders to teach the Koran to their children. And he needed to because I remember that two times I started from the very beginning of the Koran to the end. And I even learned many suras from the Koran, long suras. And I still remember. And now I am trying to learn a little more by heart.

Sometimes I sit here and read the Koran, and then in the head, maybe it just helps mentally, or in the way that you can handle it, no worries.

The Koran school is, learning the Koran is the main goal of every family. When a child is born, he or she should learn about the Koran. Some of the children are talented: they learn the Koran by heart, some of them will not learn the Koran by heart. However, the main thing is that one learns the basic dogmas, at least. It is extremely important for each family. You cannot ignore it. If you walk on the streets, you can see those small huts where there are thirty or forty children in straight rows and then there is some adult. There is no quarrelling.

The Koran school is...it is not just a Koran school. Now that I am an adult, I have learned that the Koran school is not just a school, where the Koran is taught. It is rather a raising school. Children are commonly raised so that they can learn and take their roles in society.

It (Islam) does not necessarily have a different meaning when compared to those days in Somalia. On Fridays, I go to the mosque. I aim to visit there at least two or three times in a

month, two times at least. There is also the chance to meet other people whom you have not seen for years. And, of course, I pray five times in a day, but I pray here, in the office.

I understand that if the prayer time is at three o'clock, it is flexible time. You can pray before the next prayer time. It has no effect; there is no hindrance for praying, because in two hours you will have a break. The break lasts from ten to fifteen minutes. The prayer usually takes less than five minutes. If you are, if you will, because religion does not prohibit working. Working is a part of this religion.

When the freedom is given to us, it means that I am allowed to pray. At the same time, I do not have to break the system which has been dominant in Finland for a long time. I think that here the expectations of Islam are filled in the same way that they are in Somalia.

People do not know much about Islam. In other words, they have adopted a negative impression of Islam. Maybe, the main reason for that lays in the fact that here Islam is foreign. People are not aware of these things. For example, there is always someone asking about the food. Every time, I have to explain, what Islam is, what it is about, breaking the wrong images.

Here, I do not celebrate Id so much. It does not feel the same than it did in the home country. And the religion, everybody do not celebrate the same feasts. The neighbours do not celebrate the same feast. It does not feel happy.

Children, the upbringing of children is very different, because in Somalia the parents are in charge. The children are respected, but here, there is no such thing. When children grow up turning fourteen, fifteen eighteen years, it is extremely hard. Children do not want the parents to advice them. 'I want to do it my way'.

There is a good culture in Finland as well, because the Finns have the silence and good manners. (...) People are silent and they do not shout aloud. One cannot individualize the good features of the Finnish culture. There are also several things that I miss from Somalia. I would like to raise my daughter, if it is possible, to help the family members, friends and neighbours. In Somalia, the doors are always open to neighbours' houses.

I would like to look after my children and their upbringing. (...) I would like to receive some support. Parents could help and discuss more.

The same knowledge that I now have, how should I transmit to my children. It is a huge responsibility. How is it followed here in Finland? I do not know.

Some children search role models from rappers. I think that they are not good role models. They teach or they preach about things which are harmful for society such as taking drugs

and bad behaviour. Such things are present anyway. I do not want to generalize, how should I say, the intellectual world of the rappers. However, many things are, they adopt a wrong role model and their life can be proceeded to a wrong direction.

Yes, in Somalia it is every day. It is the same thing as school. (...) Everybody is either neighbours or acquaintances. They have the same culture and the same religion. But here, children's friend do not follow the same religion and then children can be shy, they do not want and they are tired. If a friend follows the same religion and then they go, it is nice. The same religion and the same will to be. It is easier, when the circle is the same.

I hope that the teachers of the Koran schools should have a qualification of a teacher. A teacher should acquire a degree, because it is conflictual to the children. During the daytime, children go to Finnish schools, where they follow different teaching methodologies when compared to the Koran schools. The teachers do not know, how the children are taught in schools. It would be good, now that we get more pedagogical education for the Koran school teachers. We can add their education and knowledge. It becomes easier, maybe a teacher of the koran school will identificate with the Finnish culture.

When I say qualificated teacher, I mean such teacher who is able to create cooperation with the Finnish teachers; who can tell about this religion in some way and such things which are related to this religion. Sometimes, such things are undoubtedly brought up in schools as well. It is extremely hard to find such teachers for the Koran schools who could speak the language. No to speak of those teachers who would committed themselves to Finnish society and would be interested to be here spiritually. People who want to live here and would be interested in the surrounding people and the culture.

Some people say that Islam restricts life, but I say that Islam dictates the limits which make good life possible. For example, children are taught to respect their elders. They are taught to be hardworking so that they could be competitive and thirsting for knowledge. It is real Islam. Islam encourages to do such things and avoid the use of alcohol, stealing, lying and everything, things which are related to the use of drugs, all the weird things.

