

THE ICEBREAKERS

ANNE ALITOLPPA-NIITAMO



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Somali-Speaking Youth in Metropolitan Helsinki
with a Focus on the Context of Formal Education

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The Family Federation of Finland, The Population Research Institute D 42/2004

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Acknowledgements

A long research process brings many kinds of thoughts to a researcher's mind. At some point I found myself thinking about the parallels between the analysis of my data and my own life. Would it be possible to apply the concepts I have used in the research on Somali-speaking youth to understand my own life course? Or, could it be that I am unconsciously explaining the research data through experiences and understandings drawn from my own life? Be it as it may, I am convinced that the lived life of a researcher is almost by necessity somehow reflected into the research process, particularly in the case of ethnographic fieldwork.

The experiences of immigration have been central in my own life. The years spent in Stockholm and New York have been important and positive experiences. On the other hand, moving across borders and continents has meant that a number of persons are no longer present in my daily life. Hence, many individuals who were central even in the progress of this research live across the seas and cannot share in the highpoint of the completed work. At Columbia University's Teachers College, professors Charles C. Harrington, George C. Bond, Lambros Comitas, and professor Hervé Varenne, as well as Lesley A. Sharp at Barnard College, guided me to the foundations of applied anthropology and particularly to the understanding of the meaning of education in human life and culture. With my student colleagues, Dianna J. Shandy, Audrey Charlton, Charlanne Burke, Olga Conzales, Lisa Miller, Mary Kenny and Kenny Broad, I shared some important years of my life. I wish you were all here!

The immigrant experience easily creates a phase of *liminality* in a person's life. I faced the *challenges of discontinuity* as a returning migrant and a newcomer to the Finnish academic scene in the mid-1990s. Luckily, the KASVA-graduate school and the University of Oulu provided a stable starting point financially and academically. Professor Rauni Räsänen and professor emeritus Pertti Toukomaa deserve warm thanks for being my 'distant advisors' in Oulu.

While advancing on my *acculturation path*, the director of The Population Research Institute of The Family Federation of Finland, docent Ismo Söderling, made a crucial gesture by providing me with a research community, space, interesting projects and support. Later, his role in my present career has also been central. The rest of the 'gang', research secretary Stina Fågel, researchers Anneli Miettinen, Pirjo Paajanen, Osmo Kontula, as well as research assistant Mika Takoja and librarian Ulla-Maija Mattila have always been helpful and shared the ups and downs of a researcher's life. To my reviewers, professor Nora Ahlberg at University of Oslo and senior lecturer Östen Wahlbeck at Åbo Akademi University, I feel indebted for their thoughtful and knowledgeable comments. I also extend my gratitude to the Institute of Migration, the Oskar Öflund Fund, Emil Aaltonen Fund, Niilo Helander Fund, Finnish Konkordia Fund and the City Board of Helsinki for research grants that gave me the finances to go on.

At The Family Federation of Finland, the support and trust shown by the former managing director Jouko Hulkko and the present one, Helena Hiila, have helped me to develop my visions further.

Much of this work has been driven by the hope that this written account could also lead to a better understanding, greater societal equity and educational quality for children with an immigration background. The immediate and concrete consequence of the present research has been the establishment of the multicultural family counselling centre 'Kotipuu' by The Family Federation of Finland. I offer my appreciation to all those who have contributed to Kotipuu. My special thanks go to my current colleagues and Kotipuu team members, Anita Novitsky and Mohamed Moallin.

Essential *bridging social capital* in the world of academic research, and beyond it, has been provided by Annika Forsander, whose energy, knowledge on a variety of migration issues and preparedness to share that knowledge I have always admired. As she moved on in her career, I was sorry that I lost a colleague, but I am happy that I have been able to retain a good friend. Also, colleagues at the Somali Studies Network have shared many interesting discussions with me. I am thankful particularly to Petri Hautaniemi and Marja Tiilikainen who shared the field with me. Cooperation with Tuula Sakaranaho and Tuomas Martikainen in the context of the project on 'Muslims and Religious Equality in Finland' has been a very pleasant experience. Out of many friends, I express my thanks particularly to Viivi Virtanen and Elina Ekholm who have themselves 'messed up' in research - discussions with you have been a delight.

The most important persons in the field have been the many Somali-speakers in metropolitan Helsinki who have shared their lives, experiences, knowledge and perspectives with me. Many of them are real cosmopolitans and some have already moved on to other countries. My very, very special thanks go to Taariq, Khadra, Mire, Jama, Aamina and Yussuf, as well as to teacher Liisa (even here, I use pseudonyms), who let me in and guided me inside the complex lives of the generation in-between immigrants. My gratitude also goes to many representatives in the educational sector, particularly to Elisa Vilpas, whose humour and warmth, understanding attitude and open mind encouraged and impressed me a lot. Warm thanks to all of you! You made this possible!

This excursion started, however, long before the actual fieldwork began. The basis for *bonding social capital* was built on the trust, unquestioned support and caring given to me by my parents. They have provided something that has proved to be more important than any academic degree. Thank you to my mother Terttu for her continuing support and interest. I feel sadness that my father Teppo did not survive to share the joy of a completed work.

With the help of my husband Vellu, I have been able to take distance from the field that became so close. He has also provided relief in the moments of *cognitive overload* caused by the research work. Thank you! Your ability to be close to me, as well as your openness to life have been amazing! Our *second generation*, Annaliina, Jasmiina and Olli-Pekka, deserve hugs and kisses just because you have been so sweet and good over all these years!

Thank you to all of you.

Tottijärvi, March 2004

Anne Alitolppa-Niitamo

Anne Alitolppa-Niitamo, The Icebreakers. Somali-Speaking Youth in Metropolitan Helsinki with a Focus on the Context of Formal Education.

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Abstract

The aim of my research was to identify, illuminate and analyse the factors that play a role in the schooling of the Somali-speaking youth in metropolitan Helsinki in the late 1990s.

The ethnographic fieldwork consisted of community-level fieldwork in 1996–2000 and a six-month school ethnography in an upper-level comprehensive school in 1997–98. The students in the school ethnography attended an immigrant class of six Somali students, taught by a Finnish special teacher. The core group gradually expanded to include peers, siblings and other young people, making a total of 19 students (11 boys, 8 girls) between ages 11 and 20 years. In addition, 18 officials and school staff members (other than teachers), 17 Finnish teachers, five Somali teachers, 27 Somali community members and two imams were interviewed or spoken with.

The dissertation consists of five published articles that are bound together with chapters on theoretical perspectives, methodology and ethical issues, a presentation of sub-studies, evaluation and implications, and a conclusion. The ‘roots and routes’ of Somali asylum seekers are presented in light of some short life histories of the second generation. The theoretical framework focuses on the tradition of immigration research, with a special reference to children with immigration backgrounds, processes that occur in their families, and formal education. Anthropological perspectives, explanation models and concepts on education of minorities are applied and further developed.

The research contributes to the latest developments in the field by providing a model to explain the variability in the school achievement of children of immigrants. The model organizes the complex set of factors into four main categories: immigrants’ incoming resources, their social capital (divided into three levels), characteristics of the receiving society, and human agency. This multivariate framework is probabilistic, rather than deterministic, and acknowledges a multitude of factors that interact in a complex manner and affect the school performance of children with an immigration background. The research suggests that each given factor may prove to be a resource or a challenge for educational performance and claims that the accumulation of challenges reduces an individual’s coping capacity. The benefit of the model presented is that it ‘writes against’ homogenizing and stereotyping descriptions of ethnic groups.

The first two articles serve as contextualization articles and include descriptions on Somalis’ refugee migration and resettlement in Finnish society, the history of immigration in Finland, and certain group and family processes that occurred among the Somali-speaking population in metropolitan Helsinki in the 1990s. The last three articles focus directly on Somali youth and schooling.

The conclusion is that the Somali-speaking population, particularly youth, acted as ‘icebreakers’ in Finnish immigration history. Their acculturation paths in the new society included many challenges, which seemed to accumulate particularly in the case of the ‘generation in-between’, i.e. those young Somalis who entered the country in their teens (or early teens).

The present research emphasizes acculturation as a long-term process. Acculturation is conceptualized in the metaphor of ‘a path’ that is not unilinear or bounded, but, instead, may take various directions and may be highly divergent between individual immigrants and between various ethnic groups. Hence, the research suggests, it is relevant to speak of the *segmentation of acculturation* among immigrants.

Keywords: Immigrants, Refugees, Second Generation, School, Somalis

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Tiivistelmä

Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli identifioida, kuvailla ja analysoida niitä tekijöitä, jotka vaikuttivat somalinuorten koulusuoriutumiseen pääkaupunkiseudulla 90-luvun lopussa.

Etnografinen tutkimus koostui etnisen yhteisön tasolla vuosina 1996-2000 tehdystä antropologisesta kenttätutkimuksesta ja kuuden kuukauden pituisesta kouluetnografiasta yläasteen koulussa vuosina 1997-98. Kouluetnografia toteutettiin maahanmuuttajaluokassa, jossa oli kuusi somalioppilasta ja jota opetti suomalainen erityisopettaja. Oppilaiden ydinjoukko laajeni vähitellen heidän ystäviinsä, sisaruksiinsa ja muihin nuoriin siten, että kokonaisuudessaan mukana oli 19 oppilaasta (11 poikaa, 8 tyttöä), nuorin 11-vuotias ja vanhin 20-vuotias. Tämän lisäksi haastateltiin 18 virkamiestä ja kouluhenkilökuntaan kuuluvaa (muuta kuin opettajia), 17 suomenkielistä ja viittä somalinkielistä opettajaa, 27 somaliyhteisöön kuuluvaa aikuista ja kahdeksan imaamia.

Väitöskirja koostuu viidestä julkaistusta artikkelista, jotka on koottu yhteen koontiosuudella. Koontiosuus koostuu teoria- ja metodologiakappaleista, artikkeleiden lyhennelmäkappaleista, arviointi-, johtopäätös- ja päätöskappaleista.

Somaliturvapaikanhakijoiden taustoja on esitetty muutamina toisen sukupolven somalien taustoista kertovina lyhyinä elämänhistorioina. Teoreettinen viitekehys kuvailee maahanmuuttotutkimuksen traditiota, keskittyen erityisesti maahanmuuttajataustaisiin lapsiin ja heidän koulusuoriutumistaan selittäviin näkökulmiin sekä maahanmuuttajuuden aikaansaamiin perheprosesseihin. Työssä sovelletaan lähtökohtaisesti antropologisia näkökulmia, selitysmalleja ja vähemmistöjen koulutukseen liittyviä käsitteitä, joita myös kehitetään edelleen.

Tutkimus kehittää osaltaan tutkimusalaan tarjoamalla mallin, jolla maahanmuuttajataustaisten lasten koulusuoriutumisen eroja voidaan selittää. Mallin avulla koulusuoriutumiseen vaikuttavat monet tekijät on organisoitu neljään pääkategoriaan: maahanmuuttajan mukanaan tuomat resurssit, hänen saatavillaan oleva sosiaalinen pääoma (jaettu kolmeen tasoon), vastaanottavan yhteiskunnan ominaisuudet ja maahanmuuttajan oma toimijuus. Tämä monitekijäinen malli ei ole deterministinen, vaan esittää todennäköisyyksiä ottamalla huomioon koulusuoriutumiseen vaikuttavat monet eri tekijät, jotka ovat monimutkaisella tavalla vuorovaikutuksessa toistensa kanssa. Mallin mukaan jokainen tekijä voi olla joko oppilaan koulusuoriutumista vahvistava tai sitä haastava. Haasteiden kasaantuessa oppilaan selviytymiskyky vähenee. Esitetyn mallin etuna on, että esittämällä muita kuin pelkästään kulttuuriin ja kulttuurieroihin liittyviä selittäviä tekijöitä, se rikko homogenisoivia ja stereotyyppisiä kuvauksia ja käsityksiä etnisistä ryhmistä.

Kaksi ensimmäistä kappaletta ovat ns. kontekstualisointiartikkeleita, joissa kuvataan somalien pakoa ja asettumista Suomeen, suomalaista maahanmuuttohistoriaa sekä joitakin ryhmä- ja perheprosesseja, joita somalinkielinen väestö kohtasi pääkaupunkiseudulla 1990-luvulla. Kolme viimeistä artikkelia koskevat suoraan somalinuoria, koulunkäyntiä ja koulusuoriutumista.

Johtopäätöksenä todetaan, että somalinkielinen väestö, erityisesti nuoret, ovat olleet suomalaisen maahanmuuttohistorian 'jäänmurtajia'. Heidän akkulturaatiopoluillaan uuteen yhteiskuntaan oli monia haasteita, jotka näyttivät kasaantuvan erityisesti 'välisukupolven' (generation in-between) kohdalla. Termillä tarkoitetaan teini-iässä tai varhaisessa teini-iässä muuttaneita. Tutkimuksessa kuvaillaan erityisesti tämän ikäryhmän kohtaamia haasteita koulussa ja perheessä.

Tutkimuksessa korostetaan, että akkulturaatio on pitkäaikainen prosessi. Akkulturaatiota kuvailaan 'polku' metaforalla. Polku ei ole suoraviivainen eikä maantieteellisesti rajoittunut, vaan sen sijaan se voi kulkea moniin eri suuntiin ja nämä suunnat voivat voimakkaastikin vaihdella sekä eri yksilöiden että eri etnisten ryhmien välillä. Tästä syystä onkin aiheellista kiinnittää huomiota *akkulturaation segmentoitumiseen* maahanmuuttajien välillä.

AVAINSANAT: maahanmuuttajat, pakolaiset, toinen sukupolvi, koulu, somalit

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Soo koobid

Baaritaankan micnihiisu wuxuu ahaa in la is bar bar dhigo, la tilmaamo ka dibna la cadeeyo waxyaabaha sameynayey dhalinyarada (ardeyda) soomaaliyeed sida ay iskuulada uga soo baxaan (ula qabsadaan, uga gudbaan, ugu baasaan) caasimada iyo naxaawigeeda 1990 dhamaadkiisa.

Baaritaankan wuxuu ku koobnaa guroob asalkooda uu ahaa soomaali, waxaana la sameeyey sanadihii u dhaxeeyey 1996-2000. Baaritaankaas oo lagu sameeyey iskuulka dhexdiisa mudo lix bilood ah ayadoo la dhex fahiyeey iskuulka ay dhalinyaradaas ay wax ku baranayeen oo ahaa dugsi dhexe, sanad dugsiyeedkii 1997-98. Xirfadan waxaa lagu sameeyey galaaska ay ardaas ajnabiga ay dhiganayeen, galaaskaas oo ay dhiganayeen lix ardey oo soomaali ah, macallinkuna wuxuu ahaa finish oo ku takhsusey waxbarida khaaska ah, waxaa markii danbe baaritaankaas si tartiib tartiib ah u soo galey ardadaas saaxiibadooda, walaalahooda iyo ardey kale, guud ahaan waxay isku noqdeen 19 ardey (11 wiil, iyo 8 gabdhood), qofka ugu yar wuxuu ahaa 11 jir kan ugu weyna 20 jir. Waxaa kaloo la wareystey 18 qof oo mas'uuliyiin ah iyo shaqaalo ka tirsan iskuulkaa oo aan aheyn macallimiinta, 17 qof oo luqadooda ay aheyd finish iyo 5 macallin oo soomaali ah, 27 qof oo ka tirsan bulshada soomaalida iyo labo imaam.

Buugan baaritaanka wuxuu ka koobanyahay shan qoraal oo ah wareysi la soo ururiyey oo la soo bandhigey, kuwaas oo ka kooban qoraal iyo dariiqeyn, oo la soo gaa gaabiyey, qiimeyn, qo'aan ka gaarid iyo qeybo go'aan ka gaarid ah.

Soomaalida nabadgelyada u joogta wadankan taariikhtooda waxaa wax yar looga soo hadley qoraalo hore oo looga hadlayey jiilka labaad nolasha taariikhdooda, taasina waxay tilmaameysaa baaritaan ku saabsan soo guuritaanka iyo caadada, gaar ahaan caruurta asalkooda uu yahay ajnabiga iyo sida ay iskuulada uga gudbi karaan, dhinaca kale iyo arimaha la xiriira ahaanshaha iyo waxa ajnabiga uu yahay. Baaritaankan waxay hor u dhac u tahay ama lagu baranayaa ayna tusaale sharax aya u tahay dadka yar ee ajnabiga ah arimaha la xiriira waxbarashadooda taasoo weli la sii hor marinayo.

Dadka wax baarana waxay siineysaa tusaale ku saabsan sidii loo hormarin lahaa baaritaankaas taa soo sharxeysa farqiga u dhaxeeya caruurta ajnabiga ah sida ay iskuulka uga gudbi lahaayeen. Tusaalahan oo la kaashanayo ku baasida iskuulka waxyaabo badan ayaa sabab u noqon kara, kuwaas oo loo qeybin karo dhowr shey oo waa weyn: Qofka ajnabiga waxa uu wadankan la soo galey (awooda uu hayo), waxyaabaha uu heli karo, bulshada, sida dadka wadankan degan ay u soo dhoweeyaan (siin karto), sida qofka ajnabiga ah uu u daaalayo. Tusaalayaashan badan waxaa laga yaabaa in ardeygu laga dareemo sida uu iskuulka uu ugu adag yahay kuwaa soo midba midka kale la xiriira. Tusaalayaashan waxaa laga yaabaa in ardeygu uu iskuulku ku adkaado ama uu la qabsado. Dhibaatooyinka markuu ardeyga la kulmana waxaa laga yaabaa in la qabsashada sikuulka ay yaraato. Tusaalahan waxaa lagu ogaan karaa in ardeygu iskuulku hadii uu ku adkaado aan la dhihi karin dhaqankiisa ayaa ku adkeeyey ee waxaa laga yaabaa in ay jiraan dhibaatooyin kale oo badan.

Sedexda qoraal ee ugu horeeya waxay ka hadlayaan soo cararka (guurida, gaxootinimada) soomaalida iyo sida ay wadanka ula qabsadeen, taariikhda finishka ilaa inta sanadood ee loo soo guurayey iyo guruub yar iyo waxyaabaha soomaalida ay kala kulantay caasimada iyo nawaaxigeeda dhamaadkii 1990kii. Labada qoraal oo kalena waxaay ka hadlayaan iskuulada iyo la qabsashadooda iyo ku baasidooda.

Go'aanka baaritaankana waxaa lagu ogaanayaa in dadka ku hadla af soomaaliga siiba dhalinyarada ay taariikhda inta finland loo soo guurayey ay ahaayeen dadkii ugu badnaa finland hal mar u soo guurey (Baraf jebiyaashii). La qabsashadoodii bilaowga aheyd ma aheyn mid sahlan gaar ahaan dhalinyarada timid wadankan ayagoo da'yar, baaritaankan waxaa lagu soo bandhigayaa guruubkan in ay iskuulada iyo reerahoodaba aysan u aheyn mid sahlan.

Baaritaankan waxaa lagu soo bandhigayaa in guruubkan la qabsashdooda ay ahayd jid dheer, jidkaas oo aan aheyn mid toosan oo mar walba is bedeli kara ayna ku xiran tahay sida dadka ay u kala duwanyihiin ama bulshada ay u kala duwan tahay, waayo dadka isku mid ma aha, markaa sidaa daraadeed waa in la ogaadaa in dadka ajnabiga ay yihiin dad kala duwan oo aan la dhihin ayagoo dhan waa isku mid.

FURAH EYAYADA: dadka soo guurey, dadka nabadgelyada soo doontey, dhalinyarada ku dhalatay ama yimid ayagoo yar, iskuulaadka, soomaalida

List of original publications*

Article 1

Alitolppa-Niitamo, A. (2000) From the Equator to the Arctic Circle: A Portrait of Somali Integration and Diasporic Consciousness in Finland. In Gozdzia, E.M. and Shandy, D.J. (eds.) *Rethinking Refuge and Displacement, Selected Papers on Refugees and Immigrants*, vol. viii. Arlington, VA: American Anthropological Association. 43-65.

Article 2

Alitolppa-Niitamo, A. & Ali A. A. (2001) Somalidiaspora Suomessa: muutoksia, haasteita ja haaveita. [Somali Diaspora in Finland: Changes, Challenges, and Myths]. In Forsander, A., Ekholm, E., Hautaniemi, P., Ali, A..A., Alitolppa-Niitamo, A. et al. *Monietnisyys, yhteiskunta ja työ*. Helsinki: Palmenia-kustannus. 134-148. (In the appendix the English translation of the original article)

Article 3

Alitolppa-Niitamo, A. (2001) Liminalities: Expanding and Constraining the Options of Somali Youth in the Helsinki Metropolitan Region, Finland. In *Yearbook of Population Research in Finland, XXXVII, 2001*. The Population Research Institute, Helsinki. Finland. 126-147.

Article 4

Alitolppa-Niitamo, A. (2002) The Generation In-between: Somali youth and schooling in metropolitan Helsinki. *Intercultural Education* 13(3): 275-290.

Article 5

Alitolppa-Niitamo, A. (2004) Somali youth in the context of schooling in metropolitan Helsinki. A framework on variability in educational performance. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30(1): 81-106.

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AQOON

Aqoon la'aani waan iftiin la'aanee,
waa aqal iyo ilays la'aanee,
ogaada, ogaada dugsiyada, ogaada!
Oo aada oo aada, walaalayaal, oo aada!

Waa oommanaan iyo abaaree,
omos iyo oon biyo la'aanee,
ogaada, ogaada dugsiyada, ogaada!
Oo aada oo aada, walaalayaal, oo aada!

Indhaha oon kala qaadnay,
ifka ugu ilbaxsanaannee,
ogaada, ogaada dugsiyada, ogaada!
Oo aada oo aada, walaalayaal, oo aada!

Cabdullaahi Qarshe
1961

(To be) without knowledge is (to be) without
light;
It is a house without illumination;
Know it! Become aware of the schools; know
it!

Go it! And go, brothers and sisters, go it!

It is suffering of thirst and drought;
(It is) desert and thirst, (being) without water;
Know it! Become aware of the schools; know
it!

Go it! And go, brothers and sisters, go it!

(So that) we (may) open (our) eyes,
(In order) to become modern and progressive
in this world,
Know it! Become aware of the schools; know
it!

Go it! And go, brothers and sisters, go it!

Translation:
John William Johnson 1974

In: Johnson, J.W. (1996) 'Heelloy' Modern
Poetry and Songs of the Somali. London:
Haan Publishing, 186.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Inspiration

In the beginning of 1990s, the Somali-speaking population in Finland became a new and growing immigrant group with a refugee background. My first ethnographic research, a summer-long fieldwork among Somalis in Helsinki in 1993, opened up an interesting field that eventually left me with more questions than answers.¹

Such questions inspired me to continue the fieldwork among this growing population. For example, why, among all the countries in the world, did Somalis happen to come to Finland? Also, how was this ethnic group going to organize itself into an ethnic community? What kind of strategies and possibilities did they have for becoming members and participants in a new society? What kinds of changes were taking place in Somali families, and how were the children doing? How was the process of increasing diversity brought about by immigration going to change Finnish society and its institutions? Or will anything change?

Graduate school funding by the University of Oulu's Faculty of Education made it possible to continue the research that had been already begun at Columbia University's Teachers College within the Program of Applied Anthropology and Anthropology of Education. Hence, I was able to continue to search for answers both to my initial questions, but also to new and emerging ones. Gradually, the Somali-speaking population became the largest ethnic group with a refugee background in Finland, as well as the largest ethnic group with an African background and the largest Muslim population in Finland.

While the first study focused on the first generation of Somalis and their social networks (Alitolppa-Niitamo 1994), in the second I decided to concentrate on the second generation, with special reference to education. I became acquainted with the research literature on the education of minorities from an anthropological perspective. The research suggested that the children of immigrants often show lower school achievement than children belonging to the 'mainstream'. However, the variability between and within ethnic groups exists and that variability interested me. Since many researchers today seem to agree that minorities' school achievement is a complex phenomenon in which many factors operate simultaneously, I decided to explore this further and identify

¹ Here, the term 'Somali' is used interchangeably with the term 'Somali-speaking', to indicate people who arrived as asylum seekers or through the family reunification program in Finland in the 1990s, and who originate in Somalia or belong to an ethnic Somali group in other countries in the Horn of Africa.

factors in the case of Somali-speaking youth in metropolitan Helsinki in the 1990s. In order to get a comprehensive picture, I decided to conduct fieldwork both within the ethnic group level as well as at the school level. The aim of the research was intentionally left quite open, phrased simply as follows: *to describe and analyze the factors that the fieldwork indicated were effective in the school performance of Somali-speaking youth in metropolitan Helsinki.*

1.2 Orientation

The focus on topics related to youth and education was motivated by the fact that social justice and equality are central in the case of ethnic minorities and acculturation. Thus, studying schooling is important, since education is generally considered a pathway to social mobility and equality in Finnish society. Education is also a central factor determining the course of the “acculturation path” of new ethnic minorities. While the study highlights the situation of Somali-speaking youth in the context of schooling, it also describes some aspects related to the migration and acculturation process of Somalis in metropolitan Helsinki more generally.

The generally held expectation is that in the long run immigrant groups achieve equally in schooling with the native born, “mainstream” populations. However, a number of immigrant receiving countries have found that many minorities, including immigrants, encounter difficulties in their schooling and that their school achievement is often lower than that of the “mainstream” (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001; Rumbaut 1997; Gibson 1997a; Ogbu 1978, 1987, 1993; Gillborn 1997; Eldering 1997). Theories that explain these outcomes can grossly be characterized as taking the position of *blaming the victim* or *blaming the system* (see Lindo 2000). The present research draws mainly on the U.S. -based research tradition and aims to describe the multi-layered context of Somali-speaking youth from the point of view of their performance in formal education. Rather than blaming, this research attempts to understand the “victim” and at least to some degree the “system” itself.

My training as an applied anthropologist and psychologist has given the research a rather pragmatic orientation. The overall aim of the research has been to increase understanding by discovering and communicating the context and perspectives of the subjects of the study in their specific historic-cultural-societal context. Like migration research in general, the present study is multi-disciplinary, with an emphasis in anthropology, more specifically in educational anthropology, which has guided the use of methods and some of the concepts and interpretive frameworks.

Based on my first fieldwork experience, I was convinced of the benefits of ethnographic research in the case of a little known minority community. The first fieldwork opened

up issues, perspectives and processes that I would have never understood to ask, for example in a survey, and made me understand the point in Sharan B. Merriam's (1988, 68) claim as she maintains that "...before something can be quantified, it has to be identified, named, described, understood." The fact that there was very little research data available on Somalis in general, and almost nothing at all on Somalis in Finland provided the motivation to apply an ethnographic methodology that would contextualize the individuals within their larger settings and describe 'what is going on out there' (Bernard 1988, 97). This kind of open and inductively oriented research process opened up the complex and multi-layered reality out of which certain themes and issues have been taken for closer analysis.

1.3 Discourse on Immigrants

Until the beginning of 1990s Finnish society was ethnically rather homogenous and untouched by immigration movements. The country's geographic location outside of the major migration routes, a labor market that had no need for immigrant labor, and a history without colonial ties were some of the reasons for Finland's isolation from populations of foreign origin. Also the refugee policy was almost non-existent until the beginning of the 1980s because of Finland's sensitive relationship with the former Soviet Union (Salmio 2000), and for several decades, the official immigration policy was characterized by a reserved attitude toward immigration and foreigners (Kuosma 1992).

With the end of the Cold War, a new era began and immigration and refugee policy shifted to more humanitarian considerations (Salmio 2000). The number of immigrants began to grow rapidly. The collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in increased immigration and Finland's membership in the European Union opened up the borders to citizens of other EU countries, and bound Finland with common European conceptions concerning asylum policy and human rights (Lepola 2000). While the numbers were extremely low by European standards, the relative rate of growth in immigration was remarkable as the number of foreign citizens increased from 26,000 in 1990 to more than 100,000 in 2002 (Statistics Finland 2003). Although Finland had had national ethnic and linguistic minorities and even small numbers of immigrants prior to 1990s, the issue of cultural pluralism had not developed into any remarkable discourse in Finland (e.g. Wahlbeck 1999; on schools, see e.g. Alitolppa-Niitamo 2002).

In the course of increasing numbers of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees, the 1990s saw the start of an intensive public discourse on the changing composition of the population. The debate focused very much on concerns about national security as well as foreigners' rights and the conditions under which they could enter and be included in Finnish society (Kuosma 1992, Lepola 2000, Paananen 1999). Typical for this genre of discourse was that immigrants were perceived as a *threat*. At the same time in many other European countries, the discourse on immigration primarily centered

on economic and labor issues related to immigration (Necef 2000). Around the turn of the millennium, the prospective lack of employees in the future Finnish labor market brought new points of view to the discourse on immigration, and the perception of immigrants as employees and as a possible *economic resource* was introduced into the debate (see e.g. Forsander 2002).

According to Mehmet Ümit Necef (2000), in the Nordic welfare states, the new discourse took the form of the social work-centered discourse that was concerned with the integration of immigrants into the new society. In this discourse, immigrants were mainly perceived as clients of the social welfare system, and the obstacles in the integration process were often explained in cultural terms (Necef, *ibid.*). What must be seen as a positive aspect in this third genre of discourse on immigrants is that immigrants are recognized as *human beings* with human needs and not solely as a threat or an object to be controlled, or as labor force (see also Ahlberg 2002). However, as Necef (*ibid.*) points out, this discourse is restricted by a culturalist approach that explains emerging problems in integration in cultural terms and neglects the recognition of immigrants in their wider context of past and present socio-economic conditions. Finland is no exception in this regard.

1.4 Giving a Voice

Fieldwork is a demanding process that requires lots of time and effort – to find informants, gain a rapport with them, not to mention gaining access to their everyday life and learning to understand it from their perspective. The present research attempts to make a contribution in what Herbert J. Gans (2000) maintains as being a problem in immigration research. His claim that ‘... the hole in immigration research is, ironically enough, knowledge about immigrants themselves...’ (*ibid.*, 77) is unfortunately quite true also in Finland. In contrast to research on the discourse on immigrants, this study focuses on immigrants themselves and uses data that was collected among immigrants. The collection of the data was conducted in naturalistic settings, with as little obstruction as possible.

The strengths of the data are, however, also connected to its weaknesses. Due to the nature of the data collection, the core sample can’t be very large. As a result of the aim of capturing as naturalistic a setting as possible, observational data prevails over the data from verbal exchanges. Detailed descriptions of verbal data are limited also because no tape recorder was used during the study. In addition, the data is naturally limited to those contexts and situations to which the participant observer had access during the fieldwork period.

Instead of a full-length ethnography that is the typical outcome of an anthropological study, I chose another option. In a so-called ‘article dissertation’ certain central themes

of the data are analyzed in five published articles, which are attached as appendices in the present collage that consists of a theoretical background, methodology, main findings and conclusion. The benefit of an article dissertation compared with a monograph would be, I thought, that articles reach a greater audience for the issues I considered so important. Thus, the end product of the research is a collection of perspectives, ‘a bricolage’ (Denzin & Lincoln 1998, 4), that presents the important themes in the course of the five articles.

1.5 Second Generation and Schooling

In immigration research in general, the growth and acculturation of the second generation has not been studied much. This is unfortunate, claims well-known American sociologist Alejandro Portes (1996, 1997, also Portes & MacLeod 1999), because the adaptation of the second generation will have long-term consequences, and research on the second generation is therefore strategically important. Also in Finland, the research on second generation immigrants has been limited until very recently.

As the population becomes more diverse through immigration, research on the societal situation and equal opportunities connected to immigration becomes increasingly necessary. For example, schools need to prepare second generation immigrants with the skills and knowledge that allow them to enter equally into the social structures of a new society. However, immigrants are not a homogenous group, and there is a lot of diversity between ethnic groups and also within ethnic groups. This variability presupposes various directions in their acculturation paths. The *segmentation of the acculturation paths* of immigrants (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004) is a fact, but the picture behind it needs to be explored. The present study analyses it from the point of view of formal education.

The ‘picture behind’ can be opened from various perspectives. In the tradition of anthropological research, it is acknowledged that education and schooling do not exist without a context, and hence, the “context of education” does not include solely educational institutions. Instead, the research contextualizes Somali-speaking youth in the wider contexts of a receiving society, ethnic group, and their families, in addition to merely schools. After presenting the general context (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2000, Alitolppa-Niitamo & Ali 2001), the study focuses on the challenges of recently arrived refugee youth in the context of their families (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001), and on the challenges in a monocultural school setting (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2002). Finally, the study sums up the multi-layered conditions of school attainment among second generation immigrants with the help of a framework (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004). The framework names a wide variety of factors that I found to be effective in the school attainment of Somali-speaking students. By emphasizing the importance of the variability within an ethnic group, which so vividly came up in the empirical data, I

also attempted to avoid essentialism, homogenization of the ethnic group and creation of simple stereotypes.

1.6 Structure of the Research

The “bricolage” that consists of five published articles (Appendices 1 - 5) is tied together with this collage. After the introductory chapter on the collage, Chapter Two guides the reader both through the backgrounds and present lives of some of the study’s young subjects, as well as some of the history of their country of origin that has strongly influenced their present lives.

Chapters Three and Four present a review of the theoretical perspectives that ground the present study to earlier research and that have been useful in analyzing the data. The review is mainly limited to texts written in English, and the context of my anthropological training has certainly guided the choice of theoretical perspectives. In Chapter Three the emphasis is on immigration research and its concepts and perspectives. Chapter Four focuses on research on second-generation immigrants, particularly in the contexts of family and formal education. The review of theories of minority education is introduced by historical account of theoretical developments in minority school achievement. The present research builds on the presented theoretical groundwork and aims to contribute to the latest developments within this field of research.

Chapter Five addresses methodological and ethical issues. Since the audience of the present research is not necessarily familiar with the methodology of anthropological ethnography, this chapter offers a presentation of this research tradition. The chapter describes the processes of an ethnographic fieldwork on the ethnic group level and in the classroom, as well as the rationale behind the choice of the methodology.

Chapter Six consists of the presentation of the five sub-studies. These sub-studies, written in the form of published articles, are based on the fieldwork data collected in 1996-2000 in metropolitan Helsinki. The articles have been published in scientific publications with peer-review or referee practice, with the exception of article number two that was published in a Finnish compilation book without peer-review or referee practice. The articles are listed in the order of publication. The order also allows a view inside the research process: the first two articles provide a general historical perspective and temporal situatedness on refugee migration and resettlement. The third article describes more specifically the position of Somali youth in the contexts of their families and parents. The fourth article focuses on challenges in the school. The fifth article summarizes the research data in the form of a framework, which analyzes the multiplicity of variables that are effective in the outcome of the schooling of Somali-

speaking youth. It is suggested that the presented framework has an even broader relevance, since it aims to explain the variability in school achievement more generally. Understanding the variability in school achievement is essential for understanding the segmentation of immigrants' acculturation paths.

Chapter Seven consists of an evaluation of the research process, a presentation of the central findings, and a discussion of their implications for educational and social policy and immigration research in general. Topics for possible future research are also suggested in this chapter. Chapter Eight is the Conclusion.

2 Crossing Time and Boundaries

2.1 Jamal²

In a tiny classroom of a secondary school Jamal taps his fingers on his desk. He looks out the window toward the schoolyard, where the spring sun shines invitingly. Obviously this tall boy of almost two meters and eighteen years should be somewhere else. And apparently he himself would like to have another role than that of a student in a comprehensive school learning basic math and English, names of Finnish birds, and drawing a picture of a milk carton. He is clearly frustrated, and he is tired. He plans to apply to a vocational school after graduating from the comprehensive school. But prior to that, he says, he would like to have one year of 'sabbatical' just for sleeping. This is against the wishes of his parents who emphasize the responsibility Jamal should have for his own future, for his family and his 'homeland' Somalia. What seems to be clear to Jamal is that he is going to return to Somalia. 'There is a lot of work to do because the whole country has been destroyed', he says quite often.

Jamal is an extremely polite and nice young man when he wants to be, but often he sits frustrated and sour in his all-too small desk. He says that he often has a headache and that it hits him whenever someone scolds him or when there are conflicts at home. 'I'm tired to listen to other people shouting (at me)', he says. Lately, he is trying to obey his parents and he comes to school regularly, but says that he is not that interested in school. He seems to fulfill the school requirements just formally and superficially by attending the classes, but he doesn't seem to be much touched by the content of the education, which leaves him indifferent. He is physically present, but mentally absent.

However, just being present at school is better than how things were a couple of years ago. He recalls how there used to be a lot of fights in school around the time that Somali students started going there. After one such fight, he was suspended from school for two weeks, his parents were angry with him, and 'the way downward started', he explains. For the rest of the school year he hardly came to school, and even during the following school year his attendance was not at all regular. Now, he says, he has become 'more mature' and no longer hangs around the Railway Station. He explains that a visit to Somalia with his father changed his attitudes.

²In order to preserve the anonymity of the students, all names are pseudonyms. For the same reason, there are some minor fabrications in the description of Jamal, like in those of the other students in the Forest Hill School. These fabrications are, however, meaningless to the context.

Jamal is very social, and most of his friends are Somali youth. He often reminds his friend Taariq not to spend too much time with Finns. These days he emphasizes the meaning of 'one's own culture', respect for parents and all older people, but admits that he hasn't visited a Mosque for a long time. Jamal says that his parents are worried about him if he stays out late, because they fear that he will be beaten up in the street late at night. And indeed, he recalls a number of incidents where he or somebody he knows has been attacked or harassed by Finnish youth or even by adult men. 'Fuck, how much I hate racists!' he bursts out.

Jamal entered Finland at the age of ten, together with his parents, many siblings, and other relatives. In Somalia the family had been well off and he had been able to go to school regularly. He tells about the frightening journey and the stay in Moscow, and the life in the reception center for refugees in a small town in Finland. His father is involved in diaspora politics and has determined to return to Somalia within some years. Jamal's father is highly educated and would like Jamal to study at the university. 'They let me make my own decisions. ... But of course, they want me to have a good life,' says Jamal. 'Good life' for him would mean 'a big house, having five children, and a beautiful wife'. And he says that he knows that in order to achieve a good life he would need to study.

2.2 'Roots and Routes'

What happened to Jamal? What is the linkage between Somalia and Finland that brought him to this faraway country and put him in a position where he seems quite uncomfortable and somehow out of context? In this chapter we will briefly examine the 'roots and routes', linkages between one country by the Arctic Circle and another by the Equator. The migration movement that seemed so unlikely and the linkage that became strengthened, are described by looking at both the macro and micro levels. The macro level involves the national level, with Somalia described as an emerging and developing nation dissolved by a brutal civil war. The micro level describes some young individuals like Jamal in the turmoil of drastic changes in their country of origin and their subsequent status as refugees and their acculturation process in a totally different society. The description of Somalia highlights the socio-historical context with an emphasis on formal education.

Jamal and many of his classmates, some of whom are also described in this chapter, arrived in Finland in the beginning of the 1990s. This period will remain a landmark in the history of immigration in Finland because the number of immigrants arriving in the country increased drastically at that time. Among the new arrivals, Somali asylum seekers were a remarkable group in the sense that, for the first time, they formed a

sizable, single ethnic group applying for asylum, whereas previous asylum seekers had been individual persons or small groups of only a few (Alitolppa-Niitamo & Ali 2001). What are the backgrounds that made these people flee their country and remind the authorities of this faraway Nordic country of the Geneva Convention?

We have to start with Somalia's geo-political location in the Horn of Africa, close to a vital sea route that is essential to its historical developments because it attracted the attention of colonial states already in the end of the 19th century. Out of the colonial powers, England, Italy and France strongly influenced the history of the region. Later, the superpowers, first the Soviet Union and then the United States, trapped Somalia in their spheres of interest. The independent Somali Republic emerged in 1960 when British Somaliland in the northwest and the Italian-administrated United Nations Trust Territory of Somalia merged. French Somaliland had earlier become independent as an independent state of Djibouti. Since there are ethnic Somalis also in Kenya and Ethiopia, colonial politics thus scattered the ethnic group into five directions (e.g. Laitin & Samatar 1987, Simons 1995).

The Independent Somali Republic was relatively homogenous in terms of ethnic, linguistic and religious adherence, but rivalries based on 'clanism' were intense. There are six large clan families, which are divided into several clans and sub-clans. The patrilineal lineage system has been the most important unit of social organization among Somalis. Estimates of the population of Somalia vary from around six million to nine million (see Gundel 2002). Although an increasing number of Somalis are moving to towns, Somalis have been traditionally nomadic, pastoral people.

Under the regime of General Mohammed Siad Barre, who came into power in 1969 after a military coup, a 'new clan system' was born. The first half of his first regime in the 1970s was progressive in terms of education and social development projects. During this era, most of the development aid came from the Soviet Union, and 'scientific socialism' characterized the national ideology (Hannemann 1999/2000, Gundel 2002). During Barre's regime, production for export started and the state took on the role of regulating the access to the export market. In this system many clan leaders, rather than the clan, began to derive power from providing access to the resources of the colonial state. The new clan system came to assert political and legal authority over individuals whose work, wealth, power and prestige now depended largely on the world outside the control of the clan. The old system was gone, but communal identity based on kinship was kept alive. 'Scientific socialism' was adopted in order to unite the nation and to eradicate its ancient clan divisions. Although clanism, which was associated with nepotism and corruption, was officially banned in Barre's Somalia, he himself covertly relied on these networks of loyalty (Anyang' Nyong'o 1991, Kapteijns 1993).

By the end of the decade, high military expenditures, corruption, and growing debt became the burdens that directed the development towards the crises of the 1980s. The Ogaden War and the subsequent refugee migration to northern Somalia created tensions between South and North. After the war, Somalia became a 'client state' for the United States, and foreign aid started to pour into the country. Regional development and assistance were unequal, though, and the North in particular was left out of the distribution of resources. Other segments of the population who were not loyal or who did not belong to Dictator Barre's clan affiliation were discriminated in many ways. Unequal distribution of state resources, nepotism and corruption created increasing dissatisfaction with Dictator Barre's rule, particularly in northern Somalia. The dissatisfaction escalated to civil war in the north in 1988, and within following years spread also to the south (Gundel 2002).

The population movements that were launched by civil war and power struggles were immense. At the height of the crisis, nearly two million people were driven from their homes. Still, after ten years, some three hundred thousand Somalis live internally displaced, and almost as many live as refugees in neighboring countries. Although many internally displaced people and those who escaped to the neighboring countries have repatriated, by some estimates still one million - one in six Somalis - live outside Somalia (UNDP 2001). This means that Somali society has become 'globalized' by the sheer size of the Somali 'diaspora' (UNDP 2001). A substantial number of Somalis moved to North America, and around the end of the millennium, more than one hundred thousand Somali nationals lived in various EU countries (Eurostat 2001, in Poulain 2002). In Finland, the number of Somali speakers grew from around 2000 persons in 1992 to more than 7000 by the end of 2002 (Statistics Finland 2003).

The first encounters between Finns and Somalis had taken place in the 1980s in the context of international development cooperation. These contacts were limited for the most part to Finns working in Somalia and a few Somalis who studied in Finland. However, these existing networks functioned as a basis for only a limited number of Somalis migrating to Finland. (See also Aallas 1991.) Instead, cooperation between Somalia and the former Soviet Union, based on Cold War alliances in the Horn of Africa, was a stronger factor in linking Finland and Somalia in the refugee migration movement. For example, when the crisis broke out in Somalia, Somali students in the former Soviet Union functioned as links for many Somalis who were looking for a resettlement destination. As the Soviet Union underwent its own turmoil and was no longer able to host them, Finland just happened to be the closest Western country for many. Only few Somalis who entered the country between 1990 and 1992 migrated with Finland in mind as the primary destination. Financial resources, family members' place of residence and reception policies in resettlement countries determined the destination for many Somalis leaving the Soviet Union. Through the official family

reunification program and chain migration based on existing social networks, the number of new arrivals increased towards the end of the millennium (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2000).

The contrasts in terms of natural environment, societal structure, religious affiliation, and other cultural aspects differed hugely between the countries of origin and resettlement. Somalis left a country with a temperate climate, and arrived in a country with low temperatures throughout the year, and a long, dark winter. In their country of origin, most were pastoralists and agriculturists, and the proportion of skilled or educated labor was small even in urban settings. The resettlement country, on the other hand, was a service industry-oriented, technologically advanced welfare society, where the public sector had a strong role and the labor market required increasingly skilled and highly educated workers. The Somali population, who were Muslims for whom religion played a major role in everyday life, settled in a country in which 86 percent of the population was Christian, but whose lifestyle was secular. Similarly, the sense of collective identity of the Somalis derived from belonging to a patrilineage as well as participation in a social life centred on the extended family, contrasted with the individualistic values of the Finns (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2000).

While many among the first generation of Somali immigrants carry the wish to return to their country of origin, still, fifteen years after the outbreak of the civil war, southern Somalia remains in a state of anarchy and is largely ignored by the international community. Following the collapse of the central government in 1991, the state has been fragmented into clan-based factions and regional administrations. In the vacuum of no central government, northwest Somalia formed a separate administration and unilaterally declared the independence of the 'Republic of Somaliland'. Another region in the northeast declared self-determination and established independent administration as 'Puntland State of Somalia' (UNDP 2001). Due to the loss of livelihood, armed conflict and the absence of basic services, particularly health and formal education, the future perspectives of the Somali area are still bleak. In many regions, the lack of faith in the future is reflected in the fact that parents continually send children unaccompanied to Western countries, including Finland. (IRIN 2003).

2.3 Khadra

Khadra was among the approximately six hundred unaccompanied minors who came to Finland from Somalia in the 1990s. When Khadra was twelve years old, the armed conflicts spread to southern Somalia and she was first sent away with one of her relatives to another African country. The rest of the family, including her siblings, could not afford to travel. Later in the course of the journey, Khadra became separated from her relative in Moscow, and ended up in Finland as an unaccompanied mi-

nor. She did not know anybody in Finland and, naturally, did not speak the language. She lived with a distant relative and, after having received her residence permit, applied for family reunification for the rest of her family members.

After one year of preparatory instruction at school, she started in the seventh grade. She was absent from school a lot. During this time, the teacher told me, she has had a variety of somatic pains, which may be expressions of all the worries, uncertainties and feelings of loss she must have gone through at such a young age. At times she hardly ate anything and she was extremely thin and constantly tired. However, as she said herself, she has 'inner faith', which gave her strength when life was hard and which enabled her to survive.

Khadra was deeply religious. She wore a long dark veil, studied the Koran every morning for an hour before coming to school, and attended Koranic school regularly. Her classmates said that she 'is very advanced in Koran'. Once she read the Koran aloud in the classroom. The moment was chillingly beautiful: her voice was soft and the rhythm of her reading was like music. Also the boys in the classroom sat enchanted, listening, just their lips moving and quietly repeating the words.

Like that of many of her classmates, her earlier history of schooling was fragmented and short. In Somalia, she had attended Koranic school for four years. After that she attended only one year in a secular school but then her family had to move, and they lived in a distant region where going to school was impossible. At that time her father occasionally taught her at home. After leaving Somalia, she attended school in another African country for some time, before continuing her journey to Moscow with a relative. In Finland, she had a lot of problems in school in following the curriculum, but like her other female classmates, she was very good in home economics.

The waiting time for the family reunification proved tragically too long, since most of Khadra's family members did not survive to the end of the long process. Finally, only her mother came to Finland. Although Khadra was happy to receive her mother, she was also a bit nervous about how they would get used to living together again after several years of separation. The mother, who had been a professional in Somalia, had been wounded and had some physical problems. During the course of Khadra's last school term, there were some incidents when her and her mother's opinions clashed, but in general Khadra accepted her mother's authority without objections. However, Khadra took a lot of responsibility in taking care of all the bureaucracy related to her mother's resettlement and

physical wellbeing. For this reason, Khadra was again frequently absent from school.

When the comprehensive school was approaching its end, Khadra's knowledge in many subjects was still rather weak. However, she was determined to study further, and unlike the boys in her classroom, she seemed to have a clear idea of her future occupation. 'Good life' for her includes a chance to study, finding a profession one is interested in, and having a chance to work. She thought that she would get married around the age of 25 with a Somali man or perhaps with somebody of some other nationality. She thought that '... all people are equally good regardless of nationality, but living together with somebody who shares the same culture is probably easier'.

2.4 The Development of the Educational System in Somalia

Khadra's case vividly illustrates the negative impact that the scarcity of schooling opportunities and the consequences of the civil war had on the educational level of the young Somalis who entered the Finnish school system. Although one of the great achievements of General Siad Barre in the 1970s had been the development of the educational system, the system declined gradually as the warfare of border conflicts and internal strife demanded increasing resources from the national budget. The civil war, displacement and long refugee flights to other countries eventually deprived Somali children of any possibility for formal education. The following subchapter describes the educational developments in Somalia during the few last decades.

One of the major landmarks of Barre's achievements was that in 1972 the Somali language was introduced as a written language in the Roman script for the first time. From 1973 onwards the Somali language became the official language of instruction. Prior to 1973, children had to navigate between several languages of instruction in schools, with English in the North and Italian in the South. In addition, Arabic was the dominant religious language in the entire country, and was used, for example, in Koranic schools (Kahin 1997). However, even after 1973, English continued to be used in the secondary schools along with the Somali language, and English, Italian, Arabic and Somali were all used in the university in Mogadishu. Barre also invested substantial resources in education and literacy campaigns. The school system came to consist of elementary school, intermediate school, and secondary school, each lasting four years. In 1975 elementary education became free of charge and compulsory for children between six and fourteen years of age. Consequently, the number of children (6–11 years old) in primary education increased from 6 % in 1970 to 58 % in 1975. The lowest enrolment, however, was found among girls and children of nomadic background (Hannemann 1999/2000, UNDP 2001, see also Rodell Olgaç 2001).

In the 1980s, the national budget for educational services declined dramatically due to increased military expenditure. Schools were closed, enrolment sank and the literacy rate declined. And finally, the outbreak of the civil war forced the closing of the entire school system in the end of the 1980s in the North, and by 1991 in the South. Only Koranic schools and some private institutions continued to function (Kahin 1997, Hannemann 1999/2000, UNDP 2001).

Although in principle the national schools were open to all children throughout the past decades, in practice religious Koranic schools formed the only school system that systematically covered the entire country. Usually children start in Koranic school at the age of 4 or 5, and boys may continue up to age fourteen, while girls often give up their studies by age ten. The content of teaching consists of recitation of the Koran and the teaching of Islamic values, and sometimes also other subjects. The language of instruction is Arabic. Koranic schools enjoy the respect and support of local communities and have been able to adapt to changing circumstances, even during the civil war (Hannemann 1999/2000).

Already prior the civil war, in the 1980s, decreasing financial allocations to education and the collapse of secondary and tertiary educational institutions created a 'brain drain' that took many qualified Somalis abroad. Consequently, the long decline of the entire educational system has now left the country with two 'lost generations' of children and youth who have had few opportunities for education or training. The 'brain drain' and the 'lost generations' will probably constrain Somalia's development for decades. And while the Somalis who left the country may have gained from new educational opportunities in diaspora, the return migration of educated Somalis has not been particularly strong as of the beginning of the new millennium, despite a strong diasporic consciousness (UNDP 2001).

2.5 Aamina

Aamina's parents did not want their six children to become 'a lost generation'. Her mother said: 'We could have moved to the countryside (in Somalia), we could have found food and survived, but we wanted to give the children an education. We didn't want them to become just somebody who doesn't know anything.'

Unlike many Somali youth, Aamina's family had been well off in Somalia. But despite the fact that her family could afford regular schooling for her from an early age, the civil war and its consequences disrupted her schooling several times. Prior to coming to Finland at the age of twelve, Aamina had attended Koranic school for two years and an ordinary So-

mali school for three years. After fleeing the country, she stayed in two African countries where she first received private instruction in English and then briefly attended an Arabic school. Before entering the upper level of the Forest Hill School³, she had changed educational settings six times, attended school in three countries, and studied in four different languages. She recalled that the first years in the school in Finland were hard and she said that she did not have much energy to make a real effort. But later, despite her still rather weak language skills, she made an attempt to achieve. Her motivation was very strong and she was heading to high school and later to the university. Her teacher reported, however, that her plans were perhaps not very realistic.

Aamina's father had received a high-level military education, but her mother was illiterate. Aamina, as well as her other siblings had high expectations for their schooling. The appreciation of schooling obviously came from the parents. Aamina recounted laughingly that her father used to say that those children who do not study seriously are sent back to Somalia to take care of camels. However, while Aamina's mother appreciated schooling a lot, she regarded it as particularly important for boys who need to take care of their families. During the course of the fieldwork, Aamina was eagerly asking me questions about various educational possibilities, not only in Finland, but also in North America where she has some relatives.

Aamina carefully followed the norms and expectations of her parents, and emphasized the importance of respecting parents. She wore a small colorful veil ('Khamaar') of red, purple and gold. At home, the family, like many other Somali families, followed Islamic values in the upbringing of children: the children attended Koranic school during the weekends, even the smallest children were invited to conduct the daily prayers with older family members, and a strong value was placed on the 'purity' of female family members and on respecting the parents. The values and norms held by the parents were traditional. Several things in Finnish society caused Aamina's father to wonder and to be upset. When he found out that children of the same sex go to sauna and to the shower room together after a soccer match, he didn't let his son participate in the soccer team any more. He also wondered why people shake hands so much in Finland, when in Somalia only relatives shake hands. In our discussions he also took up the sensitive question related to female genital mutilation. He did not understand why FGM was seen as a crime. '...(W)e need to do it, otherwise the daughters would not be able to get

³The Forest Hill School is an upper level comprehensive school in metropolitan Helsinki. The immigrant classroom of seven students was the main site of the school ethnography of the present study.

married.' He also emphasized how important it is that children respect and listen to their parents. He complained that Finnish authorities do not respect the parents' authority over their children. 'Those children who listen to their parents always get ahead, while those who don't, go down', he explained.

Aamina's older brother had clearly more freedom to move and spend time outside the home after school hours, while she and her sisters needed to go straight home and do chores. Aamina was very efficient in the kitchen and together with her sisters she practically took care of all domestic chores after school. She and her sisters prepared meals for the small ones, baked, did the cleaning etc. Aamina reported that she often did not have time for school assignments until late evening. On the other hand, however, the older brother was supposed to help the younger children with school assignments. Despite the fact that Aamina was very busy with domestic chores and school assignments, she was trying to find a part-time job as a cleaner or delivering newspapers, because she, her sister and her mother wanted to save money for a visit to the grandmother in Somalia. The extended family, both in Finland as in other diaspora countries, was important to Aamina. 'All the relatives help one another', she explained.

2.6 Demographic Backgrounds among Somali Speakers in Finland

Aamina's parents – highly educated father and illiterate mother –illustrate the great variety of human capital among Somalis in Finland. The diversity is particularly striking in their educational backgrounds (Forsander 2002). In terms of formal education, ethnographic data also indicates a broad demographic makeup, ranging from illiterate adults with no formal education to those with a university degree. Ethnographic data from the school setting also indicated that the educational backgrounds of Somali children and adolescents were very diverse. While formal education was a privilege for only a few in Somalia, it was nevertheless widely valued (Rousseau et al. 1998).

Another striking fact among the Somali population is the large proportion of children and youth: 57 percent of all Somalis in Finland are under the age of 20 (Statistics Finland 2002b). Among Somali children and youth, there were around 600 unaccompanied minors (a proportionally significant number), many of whom lived for years in institutions before their family reunification (Helander & Mikkonen 2002). The gender division is equal among Somalis in Finland (Statistics Finland 2002b) and mixed marriages are still rather rare.

Traditionally, Somali extended families are tightly knit. Refugee migration not only split the extended families into smaller units, but acculturation into a new society often also changed some of the dynamics within Somali families. The composition of many Somali families underwent drastic changes as refugee migration cut extended and polygynous families into nuclear families. Additionally, the death of one or more family members or divorce had reduced the size of other families. New marriages were formed in connection with family reunifications and various forms of "new families" emerged. Often, children of relatives joined already existing family units. One third of all families with a Somali-speaking mother were classified as single-parent families in statistics (Statistics Finland 2001).

Taariq's case is the last description of the short life histories of young Somali speakers to be presented. Family processes seemed to play an essential role in his acculturation process.

2.7. Taariq

During his 'good days', Taariq attended school eagerly. Like other boys in his class, he wore baggy jeans, a sweater, Nike sneakers and a baseball cap. He was very smart and planned to go to high school and eventually to the University of Technology. To the question on his view on the importance of formal education, he replied: 'It is my only chance (here).' However, he was often quite negative about his future possibilities, and in classroom discussions he often brought up the prevalence of racism and segregation in Finnish society. He was also very negative about his chances to find employment. He believed that his chances would actually be better in Somalia.

In Somalia, Taariq had attended Koranic school for two years and an ordinary secular school for another two years. He remembers school in Somalia as much stricter and demanding: '... if you didn't know all your homework, you had to stand on one foot on the hot sand for half an hour. And in the Koranic school, if you could not recite everything that was expected, a jar of ants was put under your shirt'. At the outbreak of political restlessness in Somalia, he moved to another African country for 2-3 years with a relative, and his uncle used to teach him some basic school subjects privately. When he entered Finland at the age of 12, he had attended ordinary school for two years. He recalled his first reactions to Finnish school: 'Gee, here you can sleep later and it is not such a big thing if you come a bit late...But later I realized that I have to take care of myself'.

His teacher was worried about him since he often came to school late and was constantly tired. Lately he had also started to spend after-school hours with some Finnish friends 'who do not have a good influence on him', as his teacher put it. He had been involved with police for a minor offence. His mother, too, had told the teacher that she was worried and did not know how to get a grip on him. Somehow he seemed to slip out of reach of the school as well as his mother.

His parents had divorced already in Somalia, and they had moved to different countries at the break of the civil war. His mother had re-married in Finland and Taariq spoke openly about the conflicts he was having with his stepfather. Sometimes the stepfather, who was unemployed, did not let him enter the home if he came home later than at the agreed time. The stepfather abused him physically and threatened to send him back to Somalia. Taariq felt offended since the stepfather suspected that he had been drinking beer, although he said that at the age of seventeen, he had never tasted alcohol. Talking with the mother did not help since, as the other students explained when this was talked about '... a man is the boss in the family'.

Towards the end of his last term in comprehensive school, the conflicts at home with the stepfather became more severe and Taariq had difficulties concentrating on schoolwork. He gradually slipped away even more and was absent both from school and from home for several days at a time. At the end of the term, at the age of 17, he decided to move away from home altogether.

2.8 School in Finland

As already noted earlier in this chapter, Taariq, his age cohorts, and the rest of the Somali asylum seekers arrived in a country that had previously been outside of major migration routes. In the beginning of the 1990s, the proportion of immigrants and refugees residing in Finland was very low by European standards. Although some diversity was present even before the era of immigration began, consisting mainly of old ethnic groups such as the Same and the Roma, the Swedish-speaking language minority, and also including some regional cultural differences, the homogeneity of the population was striking compared with most other countries.

While there were only slightly more than one thousand non-Finnish students in comprehensive schools in 1990, ten years later the number was ten times higher, the largest language groups being Russian (ca. 2,200 students), Somali (1,000), English (600), Estonian (500), Arabic (450) and Albanian (450). Additionally there were more than 10,000 foreign post-comprehensive students between the ages of 16 and 24. (Matin-

heikki-Kokko & Pitkänen 2002.) By the 1990s, the increasing diversity among students required that the various needs arising from this variety of backgrounds should be acknowledged and responded to.

Although the ideological orientation towards the settlement of immigrants had changed over the years from assimilative to integrating, Finland was slow to develop distinctive services for immigrants. Instead, the *adaptation to the existing services* was stressed in the name of social equality (Matinheikki-Kokko & Pitkänen 2002). The issue of social equality, and particularly how it can be reached, is complex. The present study points out that the belief that universalism, i.e. providing the same services to all, leads to social equality needs to be questioned, at least when dealing with a population with an immigration background and with very different human capital backgrounds (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2002).

At the time when Taariq and his age cohorts arrived in the beginning of the 1990s, the educational policy designed for immigrants emphasized 'normalization,' meaning that maximum use of the mainstream school system was favored over segregated or tailored responses. During these years of 'cross-cultural awakening' (1989-1993), the mainstream school system was expected to integrate recently arrived students with very diverse backgrounds into the classroom following a period of only six months of preparatory schooling. The educational policy of this period emphasized social rather than educational integration of students. Some years later, the idea of multicultural education was introduced and educational improvement received more attention. However, instructional recommendations and research focused almost entirely on language learning. During this period, some municipalities extended preparatory instruction to one year. The ideas of multicultural education that emphasized cultural enrichment (i.e. celebrating the differences) changed gradually from 1997 towards more inclusive ideas on schooling. At this stage it was established that immigrant children living permanently in the country not only had a right but a duty to participate in comprehensive education, as well as a right to instruction in their native language. Moreover, a governmental program introduced several new suggestions for teaching and learning, such as pre-school teaching and increased remedial teaching. Additionally, more diversified special programs were established within the integrative school system, including the one Taariq and his companions attended at the time of the fieldwork of the present study. (Matinheikki-Kokko & Pitkänen 2002)

Although the trend in the 1990s appeared to point towards equality through an improved acknowledgement of special needs of immigrant children, students in different municipalities were in an unequal position, since many decisions concerning education were made at the local level. The local solutions to issues of education were frequently inconsistent with the general principles of the policy of multiculturalism. Also, even

though toward the end of the millennium immigrant students were better integrated at the administrative level, many challenges still remained at the level of real-life educational inclusion. Kaija Matinheikki-Kokko and Pirkko Pitkänen (2002) maintain that these challenges occurred in the areas of the development of multicultural curriculum and pedagogy (also Alitolppa-Niitamo 2002), conceptualizing students not only as language learners and instead as individuals with a variety of socio-psychological needs (also Alitolppa-Niitamo 2002 & 2004), as well as in the development of teacher education.

Jamal, Aamina, Khadra and Taariq, being newcomers in the beginning of the 1990s, can be characterized as the ‘icebreakers’, who went through most of the above-mentioned stages and developmental changes within the Finnish educational sector. While they were expected to adapt and integrate to the educational system, the system itself was changing and integrating diversity into its policies and practices. Unfortunately, that change occurred much more slowly than the pace at which the students themselves were forced to change.

3 Theoretical Framework I

Immigration Research

3.1 Immigration Research

3.1.1 Research Topics and Perspectives

Globally, the immigration phenomenon touches the lives of an ever-increasing number of people. Technological advancements, political upheavals, increasing inequality between societies, and economic globalization all have drastically increased the migration of people during the past decades. In fact, if today's immigrant stock established a country of its own, its population would be roughly the same as that of the United Kingdom, France, and Italy combined (Rumbaut 1998 in Foner, Rumbaut & Gold 2000). Although the proportion of foreigners in Finland in 2002 was the lowest of all EU countries, i.e. 2 percent of the entire population, the change from a country of emigration into a country of immigration has been rapid (Statistics Finland 2003). In the course of growing immigration, research on this issue is emerging as its own field, complete with its own perspectives, traditions, and concepts.

For various research topics on immigration, Portes and Bach (1985 in Portes 1997) have suggested a four-fold categorization of research topics: (1) the origins of immigration, (2) the directionality and continuity of migrant flows, (3) the utilization of immigrant labor, and (4) the socio-cultural adaptation of immigrants. Each of these topics may be studied theoretically at a close-range micro level, or from a broad structural macro perspective. In receiving societies, however, the direction and emphasis of immigration research seems quite often to occur as a reaction to issues that dominate a particular society's public discourse (Foner, Rumbaut & Gold 2000).

The research into the latter topic, namely the socio-cultural adaptation of migrants – which, at least partially, also includes the present study – is heavily U.S.-based and has primarily dealt with questions related to “assimilation”. In research into socio-cultural adaptation, to a different extent various theorists emphasize social and structural aspects of the receiving society and the resources as well as the agency of immigrants themselves.

A new and promising research tradition, however, has been emerging recently. This more recent approach provides an alternative perspective to viewing immigration merely as a unilinear movement from a home country to a receiving society (which, it is claimed, results in unavoidable assimilation after a couple of generations). The new approach describes migrant communities as transnational and diasporic, and points

out, for example, that migrants often have vibrant networks across the political borders of nation-states and that their existence is not bound by national boundaries. Along with the realization that migrants frequently span the nation-states and fuse political borders with the help of modern technology, such concepts as “immigrant”, “refugee”, “diaspora”, “nation” and “nationalism” have received new meanings (Malkki 1992, Mortland 1998).

Researchers are thus increasingly interested in how immigrants’ reality in a new society is affected by ideas and activities that cross the national borders and in the consequences of such transnational connections. However, immigrants’ transnational and diasporic orientations have largely gone unnoticed by authorities, and for example in Finland, the ‘ethos of integration’ is seen as dominating the discourse (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001, 2002). Transnationalism and diaspora are discussed in more detail in Chapters 3.2.2. and 3.2.3..

Along with transnationalism, another promising approach within immigration research that merits further exploration is the study of second-generation immigrants (Portes 1997, Gans 2000). Alejandro Portes (1997) rightly claims that research on second-generation is strategically important since the long-term effects of immigration on the receiving society depend more on the acculturation of second-generation immigrants than their parents. In comparison to first-generation immigrants, the incorporation of second-generation into the middle-class mainstream was previously regarded as more or less inevitable in American immigration research. Recently, this view has been seriously questioned, and it is emphasized that the inclusion of second-generation immigrants should not be taken as granted, but seen as selective and relational, and dependent on a multiplicity of factors (Foner, Rumbaut & Gold 2000, Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004).

Most research on immigrants draws on adult immigrants, and hence, for example the perspective of human development has been largely missing in theoretical constructs on acculturation (García Coll & Magnuson 1997). Even the present study claims that the definitions used in research on immigrant generations are too unsophisticated and suggests that the meaning of age at arrival and its connection to a child’s coping ability and developmental tasks in the course of the acculturation process should receive more attention (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2002). The suggestion is that immigrant children should not be lumped together into a category of “second-generation immigrants”. Based on empirical data, the study introduces a new category, “the generation in-between”, and analyses the challenges encountered by this age group of young immigrants particularly in relation to schooling (Alitolppa-Niitamo *ibid*).⁴

⁴ It should be noted here that following the publication of the article, the author found a similar concept, ‘in-between generation’, used in the Netherlands for the children of labour migrants from the Mediterranean region, who arrived in the country under the terms of family reunification. These children were often at an age at which they are supposed to be in the middle of their educational career (see Vermeulen & Penninx 2000).

Many theoretical constructs in immigration research give the “culture” of migrants considerable emphasis, and migrants have been seen as negotiating between two cultures. In popular discourse, “culture” is often essentialized and regarded as something static, bound and pure – a “thing” that people “have” rather than a complex repertoire people experience, learn, use and act out (Abu-Lughod 1991, Jenkins 1996, Werbner 1997, Yon 2000). As a consequence, the acculturation of immigrants and particularly the problems related to it have generally been explained by “their culture”. The risk with such simple culturalist explanations is that they encourage ethnic prejudice and obscure the importance of social structure in determining the conditions of people’s everyday life (cf. Vermeulen 2000).

Since many researchers find the culturalist explanation controversial, they may avoid the use of such a loaded concept altogether (frequently, however, by replacing it with such concepts as ‘tradition’, ‘way of life’, value system etc.). The intention of this article is not to succumb to the ‘culturalist fallacy’, where cultures are understood as homogenous, sharply defined ‘things’ that are transmitted as such from one generation to the next. (Vermeulen 2000.) However, while acknowledging that culture cannot explain everything, it is emphasized that the historical specificity that is reflected in the values, norms, experiences and knowledge of a certain social group cannot be ignored. The present study shows that culture does play a role in the incorporation of at least first-generation, in-between and second-generation immigrants. At the same time it must be conceded that culture is not an autonomous force, but instead, socially embedded in previous as well as in present social, political and economic relations, and hence, in constant fluctuation, particularly in the case of immigrant youth, as will be seen in the third article (cf. Vermeulen 2000).

Rather than emphasizing the meaning of culture as such, this research supports Ruth Krulfeld’s (1993) notion that the study of relocated groups should also be a study of *change*. Although immigrants and refugees seek change in certain aspects of their living conditions (e.g. sense of security, control of life), the change caused by the migration and acculturation processes often takes place in and affects virtually all aspects of their lives. Sometimes the fast pace of change is stressful and threatening, and particularly first-generation immigrants often attempt to slow down and control the change by trying to maintain the ‘old ways’ and enforcing ethnic boundaries. This may be done for example through various symbols, for example by dressing in a certain way (see De Voe 2002) and by guarding or insulating second-generation youth (often girls more strongly than boys) from the influences of the receiving society. How individual immigrants and immigrant families manage the challenge of multiple changes connected to the migration and acculturation process, depends largely on the resources at their disposal, their social environment, and the characteristics of the receiving society.

3.1.2 Concepts and Definitions

As already stated, discussions about “immigrants” tend toward generalizations. Immigrants are regarded as a homogenous group, and the heterogeneity in their reasons to migrate, their socio-cultural backgrounds, and the manner in which they are received have not been adequately acknowledged. Immigrants, and particularly refugees, have been characterized as the “Other”, they have been made exotic, their “culture” has been a subject of stereotypes and generalizations, and their behaviors have been explained by culture alone. The mere fact of being a newcomer to a society is no reason for lumping one together with all other newcomers (cf.e.g. Vermeulen 2000). Also, it should be considered how long it is relevant to regard a person as a newcomer; i.e. is a person who once immigrated an immigrant forever (cf. Lepola 2000)?

The present research underlines that it is important to be sensitive and to acknowledge variation among ‘immigrants’. A framework for a more sophisticated analysis of immigrants and their resources and vulnerabilities in the course of their acculturation paths is provided in Chapter 4.3.4. (cf. also Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004).

However, while acknowledging the wide heterogeneity among immigrants, it is important to remember that what unites the newcomers is the experience of change in their socio-cultural setting. This change is more drastic for some than for others, and requires some degree of adaptation at both the individual and family level. Particularly in the initial phase it also often involves the experience of stress (“acculturative stress”, cf. Berry, Poortinga, Segall & Dasen 1992; García Coll & Magnuson 1997).

A narrow definition of the term ‘acculturation process’ indicates changes in cultural patterns when groups with different cultures come into a long-term, first-hand contact with another group. The present research emphasizes the process-like nature of acculturation. In this context, acculturation is conceptualized as a metaphor for the path that immigrants – as individuals, families and ethnic groups – follow after resettling. Moving down this path includes changes both in psychological structures, as well as in actual and imagined memberships in various social frameworks. The *acculturation path* may vary greatly between individual immigrants and between various ethnic groups. It is not unilinear or bounded, but may instead take various directions in which participation and membership in the social, economic and political structures of the receiving society, of the ethnic group, and/or of the transnational communities produces new and changing outcomes. The direction and the pace of movement on the acculturation path are affected by human and social capital of immigrants, by the characteristics of the receiving society, and by human agency (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004).

During the formation of the acculturation path, immigrants usually actively try to navigate the migration-induced change to a direction that corresponds to their conception of a good life. However, as already pointed out, there is heterogeneity among immigrants, and thus their ‘coping capacity’ (Ahearn, Loughry & Ager 1999) in controlling the new situation and directing the change also varies. The logical consequence of the recognition of acculturation as a process and the recognition of indefinite variation between acculturation paths, is that it is not possible to characterize the acculturation process as producing certain outcomes (e.g. ‘assimilation’, ‘marginalization’). Instead, I suggest, it is more relevant to conceptualize acculturation as a *segmented* process.

3.1.3 Refugee Migration: Complexity of the Phenomenon and Definitions

In migration research, refugee migration has been studied much less than other forms of migration, while it is widely agreed that the question of refugees’ incorporation and acculturation is more complex than that of other migrant groups (e.g. Joly 2000). Whether we talk about ‘immigrants’ in general, or about ‘refugees’, there is a danger that their experiences are essentialized, depoliticized, and dehistoricized (Malkki 1992, 1995a & b). Although a common feature of refugees (and asylum seekers) is that they often have been seriously disempowered in their countries of origin (Joly 2000), there is great variation in their resources, the ways in which they are welcomed by receiving societies, and, consequently, in their acculturation experiences, as well as in their acculturation paths.

Ruth Krulfeld (1993; see also Malkki 1995a & b) claims that the conceptualizing and labeling of refugees represents a major force in their treatment. Refugees, for example, can be conceptualized as static objects for various integrative measures or alternatively, they may be portrayed as active participants in society, as well as in larger transnational and diasporic settings. The present research points out that the ethnocentric ‘ethos of integration’ that prevails among Finnish authorities has largely neglected the diasporic consciousness of Somali refugees (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001, 2002).

In recent years, the validity of the clear-cut dichotomy of “voluntary” and “involuntary” migration has been called into question. Along with the related typology of “push” and “pull” factors (Kunz 1973, 1981), these categories have been increasingly questioned, since it has become remarkably difficult to separate voluntary from involuntary elements in people’s motivations to move (e.g. Cohen 1997). For example, Abdi M. Kusow (1998) argues in the case of Somali refugee migration to Canada that Somalis who left for Western countries were “modern refugees” and did not conform to the traditional image of stationary masses of refugees who wait in camps for international organizations to assist them in moving to third countries. Today’s refugees,

Kusow (ibid.) claims, are resourceful and create their own routes to resettlement countries. He agrees, however, that the flight, routes and destinations are also determined by available networks, sources of information and financial resources, which are connected to a migrant's position in the social stratification system of his or her society (see also Farah 2000).

Anthony Richmond (1988) emphasizes the complex and multifaceted nature of the phenomenon by stating that the central issue in the study of refugee movements is the relation between political *and* economic determinants of population movements as well as structural inequalities in the society of origin. The complexity of picture can be seen in the phenomenon of the "African crisis", where natural calamities, armed conflicts and regressive economic trends interact cumulatively, and where weak states with fragile organizations have limited capacity for managing society and directing change (Zolberg 1989). However, it is essential to note, as Liisa Malkki (1995a) points out, that sources for refugee migration and displacement, poverty, political oppression and other such factors are not solely a "Third World problem". Instead, as a result of e.g. rapid decolonization and superpower involvement in these regions, refugee migration also becomes a global phenomenon.

Even at the family and individual levels, the multitude of factors that influence the decision to migrate or to stay is present. Some refugees flee in blind panic without any forethought, forced to escape by powerful, aggressive push factors that deprive individuals and families of their basic existential needs, while other refugees choose the flight and the destination with more deliberation and by considering the various "pull" factors (Hansen 1992). Among the decisive factors, the wish of parents to give their children a better future is often a major motivation. In many immigrant groups, the decision of an individual to migrate is made for the sake of the well being of the entire family (Landale 1997). Quite often parents' wish to give children an opportunity for schooling in the new society has been a decisive pull factor (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001; also Alitolppa-Niitamo 2000). It must be remembered, however, that although a new society may provide certain benefits and better opportunities, refugees and asylum seekers, without exception, also experience feelings of loss and pain for leaving their country of origin (e.g. García Coll & Magnuson 1997, Povrzanovic Fryckman 2001).

The debate on the complex causes of flight is beautifully summed up by Anthony Richmond (1988, 14), stating that whatever the complex reality in which the decisions for involuntary migration are made, "...[the] common denominator is the *sense of loss of control over one's own fate*". The present research points to the conclusion that children's school achievements are often a way for disempowered refugee parents to regain a sense of control over the family's fate (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2000).

3.2 Beyond the National Context: Transnationalism and Diaspora

3.2.1 Study of Change in a Global Context

To conceptualize immigrants and refugees through static concepts, characterizing their situation as if it were just one picture on the film roll of their lives, does not give a realistic, true understanding of lives that are undergoing rapid social change and a multitude of social processes in shifting environments (Donnelly & Hopkins 1993). Therefore, to comprehend and describe immigrant and refugee lives is a real challenge. How to understand and, using static concepts, models and theories, weave together something that is in constant motion and flux, not only in time, but also in space?

Theories on the acculturation of immigrants traditionally characterized migrant lives as unilinear motion in time towards inevitable assimilation with the social, cultural and structural aspects of the receiving society ('melting pot'). Later, theorists such as John Berry et al. ('acculturation strategies') and Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou ('segmentation of assimilation') constructed more multifaceted theoretical constructs on various acculturation options. These constructs added variation and dynamics to the ways migrants and their acculturation process were conceptualized. However, these perspectives continued to view migrants as confined within the boundaries of the receiving society. As already stated, the present research perceives acculturation as a path characterized by changes and a segmentation of directions and pace. This idea also encompasses the notions of transnational and diasporic activities and intentions that may exist simultaneously with the integration in the national context.

3.2.2 Theorizing Transnational Relations of Migrants

While the study of refugees has been mostly practically orientated (Wahlbeck 1999a), in recent years a more theoretically anchored discussion has emerged in the context of research on globalization, transnationalism and diaspora. While the phenomenon of transnational lives among migrants is nothing new, transnationalism as a paradigm in research into immigration and refugee migration is a rather recent phenomenon (Foner 1997a).

Linda G. Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton form a group of social anthropologists who were pioneers in identifying transnational relations among immigrants and theorizing them. Their classic definition on transnationalism as "... processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (1994, 7) is still widely referred

to. With this concept they emphasize the social fields and multiplicity of involvements of contemporary immigrants that extend beyond geographic, cultural, and political borders. The concept offers an understanding of migration and resettlement as a fluid process in which migrants are characterized as transcending, mentally and/or physically, the boundaries of nation-states. The contention is that neither migrants' daily activities nor their mental representations of the future are confined within the receiving society, but instead, they may actively create networks of social support, economic activity and political affiliation beyond the national borders.

What is new in contemporary transnationalism, argues Foner (1997a), are the technological innovations that have made it possible for migrants to maintain more frequent and closer connections across national boundaries. Technologies of transportation and communication and the global economy have changed the entire nature of the contacts (*ibid.*). Watching videos of weddings of relatives living in other countries, managing businesses in one's country of origin thousands of kilometers away, instantaneous money transfers to one's parents living in the homeland, arranged marriages across national borders, and involvement in the home country's politics are realities in transnational lives for Indians in New York as well as for Somalis in Helsinki (on Somalis, see Alitolppa-Niitamo 2000, Alitolppa-Niitamo & Ali 2001).

The description of transnational activities in the lives of immigrants and refugees gives a concrete example of the social consequences of globalization (Wahlbeck 1999a). As transnational migrants connect nation-states in their daily practices, they live in this interconnected world (Basch et al. 1994). However, there is a gap between the daily practices of "transmigrants" and the ways in which both transmigrants and academics represent these practices (*ibid.*). Particularly in Finland, where the history of contemporary immigration is new and where little knowledge exists on the lives and aspirations of immigrants and refugees, the degree and nature of their transnational consciousness and practices are still largely unknown, and hence, the "ethos of integration" prevails in public and administrative discourse and in reception practices (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2000, Alitolppa-Niitamo & Ali 2001). Related to the notion of the all-encompassing power of the receiving society, Kearney (1995, 553) points out that transnational spaces created by transmigrants may enable them "...to escape in part the totalizing hegemony that a strong state may have within its national borders."

The introduction of transnationalism as an emerging paradigm in migration research has made it necessary to further problematize the concept of "culture". While culture and locality traditionally have been intimately linked (Malkki 1992), in the era of global cultural flows and deterritorialization it is increasingly difficult to define a transmigrant community as a "cultural group" (Kearney 1995). This is particularly apparent in the case of transnational youth. For the construction of their identity,

immigrant youth do not adopt aspects from the societies of origin and resettlement solely, but they also adopt aspects from popular culture (often from the U.S.), through movies, magazines and MTV. Muslim youth may receive additional influences for example from Saudi Arabia through local Mosques and Arabic language satellite channels. Transnational ties may provide new options for immigrants, but these ties may also serve to further complicate their already challenging and “liminal” situation (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001).

In the same vein with recent academic discussions on transnational cultural forms, also discourse on creolization (Hannerz 1992), hybridity (see e.g. Werbner 1997), and diaspora (Safran 1991, Clifford 1997, Hall 1990/1999) have resisted the understanding of cultures as “pure”, communities as integrated wholes, and migrations and socio-cultural adaptations as unilinear and bounded. Liisa Malkki (1995b, 156) claims that when studying upheavals and refugee migration movements, in order to gain a more comprehensive picture, one must recognize the connections between societies of origin and resettlement as well as understand refugee migrations as “historical products, ever-unfinished projects”.

3.2.3 Diasporic Consciousness

In the case of refugees, what particularly makes their migration “an ever-unfinished project” is their diasporic consciousness. Diaspora, meaning that a homeland is central in everyday life in the country of settlement, and that is particularly characteristic of individuals and groups in exile, has for long been largely forgotten and neglected in refugee studies. The classic definition by William Safran (1991, 83-84), applied in this research, conceptualizes “diasporas” as

“... expatriate minority communities whose members share several of the following characteristics: 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original “center” to two or more “peripheral,” or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland - its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe they are not - and perhaps cannot be - fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return - when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship.”

Diaspora is a form of transnationalism, one in which national borders are transgressed between the societies of origin and resettlement. Like transnationalism, diaspora is not a new phenomenon but as a result of modern technology and increasing globalization, the contacts between diaspora communities and their homelands have become more intensive and less expensive, and often take place in real-time.

Refugees, who are torn away from their homeland, often still cling to it after many years, also through their practices (e.g. Basch et al. 1994, Cohen 1997, Safran 1991, Wahlbeck 1998, 1999a & b). Refugees are deterritorialized in the sense that they may physically be bound locally, but in their minds, in memories and in “imagined futures” as well as through their social networks, they continually cross the border to their “homeland”. For example, while Somali asylum seekers in Finland were restricted from travel outside of Finnish borders as long as they did not have valid travel documents, they nevertheless frequently transgressed the borders through telecommunication and the imagination. As soon as travel documents became available after receiving Finnish citizenship, these immigrants transgressed the national borders concretely to other Western countries, and also to safe regions in Somalia/Somaliland. Contrary to the ‘old ways’ of perceiving migration, the concept of diaspora extends beyond the artificial “before” and “after” distinction in migration research (Wahlbeck 1998, 1999a).

What is often forgotten in the enthusiasm of discussions on transnationalism and diaspora is that the other side of the coin is actually locality. While human existence is always bound to a physical space, phenomena such as borders that cross social networks or the longing for one’s homeland are not possible without the backdrop of one’s existence in some place. As Wahlbeck (1999a) correctly points out, local reality does not disappear along with global processes. However intensive a migrant’s border-crossing social contacts, (s)he is nevertheless bound to the concrete social structure that prevails in the country of settlement. Östen Wahlbeck (ibid.) also maintains that the risk with an overly enthusiastic use of the concept of diaspora in refugee research is that it may divert attention from social inequality, discrimination, racism and marginalization in the receiving society. Another risk with describing migrants as diasporic communities is that it may lead to an impression that diaspora is necessarily counterproductive to integration. In response to the last point, Povrzanovic Fryckman (2001, 25) points out that in a post-modern reality immigrants who are involved with transnational (including diasporic) activities do not need to choose between “either-or loyalties” toward a country of origin or country of reception, but may feel that they belong to both.

Qualitative research has provided information about concrete transnational and diasporic activities (see e.g. Wahlbeck 1999b, Alitolppa-Niitamo 2000, Tiilikainen 2003). We

know much less about the various experiences, meanings and consequences of these activities, based as they are on new perceptions of locality and loyalty, and affecting migrants themselves, their societies of settlement, their homelands, as well as all other countries connected with such networks. For example, what positive and negative outcomes are related to transnationalism and diaspora in terms of migrants' lives in receiving societies? When do the positive aspects outweigh the negative ones and vice versa, and for whom and in which concrete situations? The meaning of these processes to second-generation immigrants is discussed to some degree in the present research (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001). Diasporic activities may give meaning to one's existence by alleviating boredom and depression. Being involved in sending remittances to and participating in organizing development aid for the home country may also ease the feelings of guilt towards those left behind which so often plagues refugees.

3.3 Immigration Research in Finland

In Finland, where the majority of immigrants arrived during the 1990s, research on immigrants and immigration is still a limited though rapidly growing field. In her literature overview, Milla Manninen (2001) focuses on studies dealing with the integration of immigrants. A central topic in integration research has been in particular researching attitudes and administrative responses to increasing immigration (e.g. studies by Lepola 2000, Söderling 1999, Paananen 1999, Matinheikki-Kokko 1997, Jaakkola 1999, Matinheikki-Kokko & Pitkänen 2002, Suurpää 2002), as well as research on immigrants' employment (e.g. Forsander 2002, Paananen 1999, Joronen & Ali 2001, Forsander & Alitolppa-Niitamo 2000, Ahmad 2002). Inga Jasinskaja-Lahti (e.g. 2000) and Karmela Liebkind (e.g. 2000) have studied ethnic relations and the psychological acculturation of immigrants extensively.

Östen Wahlbeck (2003) has collected an extensive research overview in which he presents and critically reviews published studies, mostly in social science, on issues related to multiculturalism in relation to immigration in Finland. In his overview Wahlbeck (*ibid.*) points out that, despite the long history of cultural and linguistic minorities in Finland, a great deal of research erroneously maintains that it was not until the swell of immigration in the beginning of the 1990s that schools in Finland became 'multicultural' (see also Räsänen 1997). The perception seen in many studies – that multiculturalism is a reality as soon as people from many cultural backgrounds are present in the same setting – changed gradually, and studies published towards the end of the century seem to increasingly emphasize multiculturalism as a philosophy that should be reflected for example in education at large (Matinheikki-Kokko 1999; also Häkkinen 1998).

In terms of the use of methodology in research on immigration and multiculturalism in general, the emphasis seems to be on interviews, register data and survey-based studies. Research on Somali-speaking population include the works by Catarina Visapää on Somali youth (1997), Marja Tiilikainen (1999, 2003) on Somali women, Reetta Helander (2000) on Somali girls, Maarit Marjeta (2001) on Somali women, Petri Hautaniemi (2001, 2004) on Somali boys, Hassinen-Ali-Azzani (2002) on health perceptions among Somali women, Anu Salmela (2004) on Somali women, and the present work.

Because of Finland's brief history with immigration, the time perspective is inadequate to reveal much about the direction of immigrants' acculturation paths. Most immigrants in Finland have had a relatively limited time of exposure to Finnish society, and research findings deal with the earliest phases of the settlement of only relatively recent immigrants. Thus, research findings have to be understood against this specific background. Relevant to the Finnish situation is the recognition that the experiences of recently arrived immigrants are "in some ways unique and must be analytically isolated" (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001, 9) from the experiences of native-born individuals with an immigration background (second-generation and third+ generation).

In the case of recent immigrants, it is important to pay attention to the acculturation process and the related stress particularly during the first years of resettlement. Research on ethnic groups with a recent immigration background cannot deal with minority issues solely, but has to include the perspective of the acculturation process as well (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001; cf. also Gibson 1997b).

Research into education issues has concentrated on (Finnish) teachers' views (e.g. Talib 1999, Pitkänen & Kouki 1999), while the perspectives of students with an immigration background have mainly gone unheard, except for studies by e.g. Pirjo Mikkola (2001), Anne-Mari Keskisalo (in process), and the present research.

Östen Wahlbeck (*ibid.*) summarizes in his survey of research on multicultural education in Finland that reforming school curriculums and integrating multicultural content into it seem to be the most important fields in which re-evaluation and change should take place. Hence, structural and institutional changes should be the focus when creating a real multiculturalism that not only involves changes in the composition of participants, but also changes in society and its institutions.

Although little can yet be said about the long-term formation of the acculturation paths of immigrants in Finland, research on formal education and the educational attainment of second-generation immigrants may provide information that makes it possible to identify risk factors that can be in the way of a smooth acculturation path

into the structures of the receiving society. However, this research claims that studies on the schooling of recently arrived immigrants should not create self-fulfilling hypotheses and stereotypic images of specific ethnic groups, but should instead be sensitive to the complexity of the phenomenon. It should also recognize the multitude of factors that exist at the social, ethnic group, and individual level that are involved in school achievement, as well as the variability that is present within any ethnic group (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004).

4 Theoretical Framework II

Children with Immigration Backgrounds, Formal Education and Segmentation of Acculturation

4.1 Research on Children with Immigration Backgrounds

4.1.1 Research Topics, Concepts and Definitions

The present research suggests the importance of family and school as the institutional and culturally constructed spheres of life that direct the acculturation paths of children with an immigration background. A family provides a child with the necessary ‘bonding social capital’ (Abbas 2001)⁵ in the form of caring, support, and information. A family also defines the norms and expectations that ease family members’ mutual existence in the same household as well as functioning in the larger society. As a result of the rapid socio-cultural changes that migration brings, the socialization function of parents sometimes becomes questioned in the family setting, and, for example, a child’s peers and the ‘mainstream’ school may compete with parents for their role as the principal socialization agents.

School’s major task is thought to be to develop a child’s human capital by e.g. providing knowledge and skills (instrumental culture of schools) needed in a new society. However, a school is also an important sphere of social relations for a child, and a central source of linking social capital⁶, thus transferring new norms, roles and values to the child’s world (expressive culture of schools). (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001, also cf. Alitolppa-Niitamo 2002).

In the confluence of multiple social forces, children produce new, ‘hybrid’⁷ cultural forms. Ideally both their home and school settings respond adequately to the child’s various needs so that they together support her/his development, schooling, and acculturation. However, it may happen that even when both systems seem to be

⁵ The definition of the term is in Chapter 4.3.4.

⁶ Also this definition is in Chapter 4.3.4.

⁷ The definition of the term is in Chapter 4.1.2.

functional per se, they are in conflict with one another. For example the expressive culture of both settings may be simultaneously trying to transfer norms and values for a certain kind of expected behavior, and may thus put a child in a difficult situation of conflicting loyalties (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001, also Sakaranaho, Alitolppa-Niitamo, Martikainen & Tiilikainen, in process). The sections below deal with the issues related to family processes in the turmoil of acculturation as well as issues and theories related to the schooling of children with an immigration background.

As suggested earlier, the study of the children of immigrants is of great importance since their long-term social, economic, and political effects on the receiving society are more remarkable than the imprint made by the first generation (Portes 1996). However, despite their visibility in the receiving societies, less research exists on them than the first generation (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001, Hirschman 1996, Jensen & Chitose 1996, Rumbaut 1996). Perhaps the scarcity of research is the reason why the definitions and the use of concepts are still rather undeveloped in this regard, as will be seen below.

According to Finnish usage of categories on immigrant generations, the term “first generation” generally refers to foreign-born adult persons who settle in a new country. The term “second generation” is often used to refer to children who have an immigration background regardless of whether they are foreign-born or native-born. Also in this research, the latter term is used to generally indicate children with an immigration background. This category includes both “*immigrant children*” who are foreign-born children who have transgressed the national borders (usually together with their parents) and “*children of immigrants*” who are born in the country to which their parents have migrated. It is suggested here that the category of “immigrant children” can be further divided into the categories of “1.5 generation” (Rumbaut 1996) immigrants and “generation in-between” immigrants (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2002) (definitions below).

In the United States foreign-born immigrants are officially called ‘the first generation’ regardless of whether they immigrate as children or adults. Rubén Rumbaut (1996) has suggested that children of foreign parentage who are born in their parents’ homeland but arrive in the new country under the age of twelve, should be called the “1.5 generation”. This distinction in the concept of ‘first generation’ seems meaningful, since the experiences of immigration and acculturation are certainly very different for these two age groups. The present research suggests yet another new concept that is claimed to achieve a more sophisticated understanding of the situation of children with an immigration background. The new concept refers to those children of immigrants who are foreign-born and immigrate to a new society as teenagers. The suggested concept, “the generation in-between,” (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2002) emphasizes the significance of arrival age. It is claimed that the consequences of age at arrival

seem to be particularly significant depending on whether a child arrives prior to his/her teen-age years or as a teenager.

The challenges facing children who belong to “the generation in-between” age group are defined as those related to their acculturation process, their psychological development, as well as their cognitive resources. First, since they have spent most of their formative years in another society until resettling in a new society in their teenage years, they, along with their parents, face many challenges of *cultural discontinuity* in their everyday life. In this situation, they are often unable to get needed support from parents for the challenges connected to acculturation, since the parents too are new in the society and in the midst of the same acculturation process themselves. Secondly, being teenagers, they have to construct both their adult and their *ethnic identity* simultaneously, which may cause experiences of significant psychological stress and confusion (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001). Thirdly, they have to acquire the host society’s various forms of instrumental and expressive culture within a matter of a few years, prior to applying to post-comprehensive educational institutions. During these years, the claim here goes, they often experience *cognitive overload*, and consequently disappointments in their studies, which easily results in frustration, anger and dropping out of school. All in all, it is typical for “the generation in-between” to undergo many transitions within a short period of time, which is why they are often in need of both academic and personal guidance during these intensive years. (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2002).

4.2 Immigration and a Family

4.2.1 Challenges of Change within a Family

The family constitutes perhaps the most central unit in the migration process. Migration decisions are often made within the family context and this is particularly true in so-called collective cultures. Chain migration, which is usually essential in the formation for migration movements, is often partly based on networks within a family (Lendale 1997; on Somali refugee migration to Finland, Alitolppa-Niitamo 2000). For example, in uncertain political or economic conditions the decision to send a family member to another country can be made with the purpose of diversifying risks. When the ultimate aim is to maximize the family’s (not the migrating individual’s) well-being, the solution is to send a capable family member (often a young male adult) to a new country with an expectation for later remittances or other services (Lendale 1997).

When a family unit moves, the socio-cultural consequences of migration vary from one family to another, from a smooth and enriching transition to a stressful experience in the receiving society. A family unit often provides a buffer against a new and unfamiliar socio-cultural environment, but its internal dynamics are simultaneously vulnerable to influences from outside. Often, in a situation where most social networks have undergone a change, family members' roles in relation to one another become intensified. Amidst the many challenges of the acculturation process, family ties are, at best, a source of bonding social capital (Abbas 2001) and ideally support an individual in the course of her/his acculturation path.

However, family relations are in fact one of the most significant areas of social change in immigrants' lives (Holtzman 2000). This change in family relations may challenge the cohesion of the immigrant family (e.g. Foner 1997b, Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001, García Coll & Magnuson 1997, Rumbaut 1997, Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001), and hence threaten the availability of the bonding social capital potentially provided by family ties. Particularly in families in which the socio-cultural distance and change from the country of origin to the country of destination is greater, the models for domestic relationships may be very different.

Public policy can be a field where cultural struggles between the minority and dominant society occur (Harvey 2001). Different ideologies of family, family policies and laws, norms on gender and generational roles, and economic and educational opportunities in the receiving society form the context in which immigrants often need to rework their family relationships (see also Holtzman 2000, Foner 1997b: also Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001). In Finland, such concrete policies as child allowances paid to the mother's bank account and educational and occupational opportunities available for women seemed to challenge the traditional male authority within some immigrant families, again causing pressure for change, and eventually disagreement between family members (cf. also Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001).

This re-working process in families is often slow and sometimes painful. Minority parents struggle to maintain their values and beliefs through socializing their children – not because they just want to be different, but because they have internalized the values from their own childhood, youth and adult years. Value systems, beliefs and norms of what is considered 'right' and 'wrong' have been formed over a long period of time and are not easily replaced by others.

It often happens in families with an immigration background that various family members are ready to accept socio-cultural change at a different pace. This 'dissonant acculturation' (Portes 1997) may cause conflicts between family members, often between generations, but also between genders. In many Western countries, for example,

immigrants have to relate to new characteristics like individualism over familism, or an emphasis on gender equality and the non-authoritarian socialization of children, which may cause differing views between family members.

Although the bonding social capital provided by a family may be the most important form of social capital available for a person with an immigration background, in some cases family bonds may constrain rather than facilitate an individual family member's progression toward a desired direction on her/his acculturation path (Rumbaut 1997, see also Crul 2000, Lindo 2000, Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001).

The social capital of family members is reduced and deprived particularly in the case of unaccompanied minors (Helander & Mikkonen 2002) and transnational families (Waters 1997), when the separation places a lot of strain and psychological pressure on intergenerational relationships. The harmful consequences of separation may be visible even after the family is reunited.

Despite the obvious centrality of the family in the migration and acculturation processes, its role has not been given much attention in immigration research (also Rumbaut 1997). This may be in part due to the fact that studies that are based on questionnaires or interviews are hampered by language problems and consequently also experience low response rates. In ethnographic studies, access to everyday family life in immigrant families is not easy, nor quick to gain. What is also challenging in a field study is finding a way to stay with families and finding a comfortable role for being there for an extended period of time.

4.2.2 Cultural Construction, Hybridity, and Intergenerational Negotiations

Generational conflicts are common to most families, simply because the socialization of children takes place in a different historical-cultural context than that of the parents, often with unavoidable consequences to their conceptions of roles, norms, and values. What makes the generational conflicts more pronounced particularly in immigrant families is that children are socialized in different historical-cultural *and* national-cultural contexts compared to their parents (see also García Coll & Magnuson 1997). First-generation immigrants usually wish to *maintain* some of their own cultural traditions and values, and they often come to realize that that is usually much easier than *transferring* those traditions and values onto the next generation (Zhou 1997).

In an immigrant family, each family member is exposed to the influences of the receiving society in various degrees. In many families, particularly if parents' exposure to mainstream society is weak, children learn the ways of the new society at a faster pace

than their parents. Immigrant parents may find themselves competing with wider society as agents of socialization. The majority-minority relations creep into the private sphere of families, and manifest in the relationships between parents and offspring. The 'majority influences' are often powerful, and parents may encounter a strong feeling that their children are slipping away from them, that they are 'losing their children'.

As maintained earlier, instead of perceiving cultures as pure and bounded, they should instead be presented as something blurred, fluid and ever changing (e.g. Abu-Lughod 1991, Jenkins 1996, Vermeulen 2000, Yon 2000). This claim has been strong particularly within research on youth cultures and ethnic cultures (e.g. Werbner 1997). Although to some degree, children and adolescents acquire cultural characteristics that are transferred by their parents or care-takers, it is obvious that they cannot simply adopt the parents' cultural repertoires, but instead, engage in a cultural dialog with a multiplicity of forces that represent various values, norms and ways of living (Amit-Talal 1995). They produce new forms of cultures and in this process draw elements from various sources including home, school, peers, the street, and media. In a complex society, cultural diversity includes also class, gender, ethnicity, locality, as well as transnational influences. Such terms as bricolage, syncretism and hybridity (Hannerz 1992, Wulff 1995, Çalar 1997) are used to describe cultural and ethnic mixtures.

It has to be noted, however, that hybridity, the cultural construction that draws on various influences, concerns the adult population as well as young people (Werbner 1997). Within migrant communities, identity boundaries are drawn and ethnicity is constructed at the group level in a collectively negotiated practice (cf. e.g. Barth 1969, Geertz 1973). The individuals who participate in these negotiations belong to the same ethnic group but have very different backgrounds socially, educationally, economically and so forth, and various claims, statuses, and power positions are contested with one another (on Somali-speaking adults, Alitolppa-Niitamo 1994). But, when it comes to immigrant youth, they seldom have a voice, or their voice is ambiguous, as they negotiate at the family and group level. Since adolescents usually acculturate faster, i.e. they proceed at a faster pace toward cultural construction/ethnic reconstruction, creating more radical forms of hybridity than adults, and their behavior may threaten the conceptions and norms held by the adults.

Ruth Krulfeld (1992) explains why cultural construction may be particularly threatening within families with a refugee background. She claims that cultural construction is a creative process of innovation and reinterpretation, but, in the case of refugees, that process is often so rapid that parents may feel out of control in the situation. Krulfeld's analysis regarding on refugees can be applied even on immigrants more generally. Along with this change, adolescents with a refugee or immigration background simultaneously construct their adult identity, which further increases the pace of change and the gap between parents and their offspring (Camino 1994).

Alejandro Portes (1997) calls the pattern of first and second generation immigrants acquiring the ways of the new society at a different pace *dissonant acculturation*. He maintains that the rapid acculturation of the adolescents and the resulting generational role reversal, are unfavorable for the maintenance of parental authority. In this process the bonding social capital of the family easily breaks up. Parents may feel that they are no longer capable of controlling their offspring as the children enter a new, complex society with all its opportunities but also with all its risks.

In the cross-section of many influences, youth with an immigration background face many choices, but also challenges, particularly if expectations coming from various contexts severely conflict with one another. These challenges do not only cause intergenerational conflicts within families (e.g. Rumbaut 1996), but may also complicate the identity formation of adolescents (e.g. Phinney & Rotheram 1987, Camino 1994, Krulfeld & Camino 1994).

The concept of 'liminality' may be helpful in understanding the challenging positions of immigrant youth, and particularly youth with a refugee background (see Camino 1994, Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001). Anthropologist Victor Turner defined liminality as a state in which persons are out of their structural context, which makes their position ambiguous. He maintained that persons in a state of liminality pass "through a realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state" (Turner 1967, 94). Also Krulfeld (1994) and Malkki (1995b) find the metaphor of "being betwixt and between" to be a particularly apt description of the situation of refugees, in which one has been detached from one's old status and not yet incorporated into a new one. A refugee is in a process of transition from a past that was known to a future that is new, unknown and unpredictable (Krulfeld & Camino 1994). Referring to refugee adolescents, Camino (1994) claims that they have a double liminal status: being a refugee signifies being caught between old and new surroundings, and being an adolescent denotes the state between childhood and adulthood. In addition to these aspects, but nevertheless related to them, youth with an immigration background may face other liminalities that are related, for example, to their status in their family or their position between integration and diaspora expectations and discourses (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001). A transitional state may open up new opportunities for a young person, but the present research finds that several simultaneous states of liminality may be also confusing and may contain the risk of marginalization from societal and cultural classifications, as well as limit a person from finding his/her own group of reference (ibid.).

4.3 Children with Immigration Backgrounds in the Context of Formal Education

4.3.1 Anthropological Perspectives on Education

As already suggested in the beginning of this chapter, apart from family, school is one of the most important and influential institutions determining the direction of the acculturation paths of children with an immigration background – formal education plays a major role in their social mobility (e.g. Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001, Portes & Rumbaut 2001), and, in the long run, it enhances the socio-economic status of the entire ethnic group.

In the same way that divergent acculturation paths emerge among immigrants, there is also variability in the school performance of children who belong to the same ethnic group as well as between different ethnic backgrounds. This chapter will deal with the issue of how the variability in school achievement of minorities has been studied and explained from an anthropological perspective. The chapter concludes with the outcome of the present research. Based on the ethnographic field work data, variables that are claimed to be effective in the school performance of children with immigration background are identified and presented in the form of a framework (also Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004).

While anthropologists have studied the cultures of societies other than their own, they have accumulated an understanding of how cultures perpetuate themselves through education. They have also realized that this anthropological insight can be applied in the analysis of education also in their own societies. Even in their ‘home’ context, they see education as a major instrument in cultural survival. This is why various forms of education are of particularly keen interest for educational anthropologists (Spindler & Spindler 1997a & b).

Traditionally, anthropologists have taken a very broad view of education, seeing it as necessary for all human societies for the young members of a society to acquire culturally appropriate ways of participation. In a broad sense, education consists of *formal education* such as schooling, including various forms of state organized or regulated intentional instruction, and *informal education*, which includes both socialization and enculturation. This very broad conceptualization of education in anthropology is evident in Charles Harrington’s (1979, 4) claim that in anthropology of education, education has been conceptualized as quite nearly “everything that happens to a person throughout his (sic) lifetime.”

Human societies vary in terms of the kinds of culturally constructed environments of learning they provide and for whom. The specialized institutional form of education in the Western form of schooling is not universal in human societies. When formal schooling is not available, learning occurs at home or in other settings under the supervision of experienced persons. These informal ways of learning include, for example, participation in daily productive practices at home, learning differentiated craft production, learning to read by studying religious texts through apprenticeship. However, also in societies with Western-type schools, much of learning occurs outside the school setting, for example at home and in workplaces, as well as in peer groups and other settings where socially and culturally appropriate skills are expected (Barfield 1997).

The use of anthropological concepts and perspectives in the analysis of educational processes is not new, although its institutionalization and specialization has been slow and studied primarily in the United States. The roots of educational anthropology, also referred to as ‘anthropology and education’ and ‘anthropology of education’, date back to the late nineteenth century, when anthropology emerged as a science. However, the development of contemporary educational anthropology took place on the basis of cultural and social anthropology starting in the 1920s. During “the formative years of educational anthropology” (1925-1954), anthropological research was increasingly directed at child development and enculturation. For example, the application of ethnographic methods in American society revealed that there were diversities in enculturation and participation in formal education, which related to ethnicity, race, and social class. Researchers such as Piaget, Freud, and Watson ignored cross-cultural data, and their ethnocentric theories were challenged by educational anthropologists. During this period, anthropologists also became involved with matters of public policy where they were related to education – for example, among Native Americans and in Africa (Eddy 1985/1997.)

When the failure of formal schooling to address the needs of increasing numbers of minorities in American society became apparent, there were attempts to demonstrate the relevance of anthropological knowledge to contemporary educational problems. During the “years of institutionalization and specialization” of educational anthropology (from 1955 to the present), educational anthropologists have seen the possibilities of developing the discipline by incorporating theories and research that may be applied to contemporary, non-academic settings. (Eddy 1985/1997.)

It is typical for anthropological research into various educational processes to take a holistic approach to research and analysis and for research to take place through participant observation. The theoretical debate among educational anthropologists on whether to emphasize cultural transmission as a calculated process (macro view) or

the acquisition of culture by the individual (micro view) constitutes a central context of research within anthropology of education (Spindler & Spindler 1997b). As to the education of children with an immigration background and of ethnic minority children, for example Carola and Marcello Suárez-Orozco (2000, 2001) and John Ogbu (1978, 1987, 1993) have made efforts to combine the micro and macro level approaches.

4.3.2 Minority School Achievement from the Perspective of Educational Anthropology

The relationship between ethnic minority students and their school performance has been of major interest within educational anthropology research. In many countries, including Finland, in discourse relating to educational policy, linguistic issues have been emphasized. However, as a number of studies on the school attainment of children with immigration backgrounds show, the phenomenon has been found to be considerably more complex. Although there are commonalities in the challenges faced by most immigrants, there is also variability in terms of specific challenges faced by specific ethnic groups, and in challenges and coping capacities within ethnic groups. Explaining the variability that exists in school attainment among ethnic minorities has been a central concern of educational anthropology in the United States (Ogbu 1987 & 1993, Foley 1991, Gibson 1997a, Bankston & Zhou 2002). Researchers within the field have focused their attention particularly on factors that either promote or impede the school success of ethnic minority students.

Studies in various countries show that school attainment varies across different ethnic groups, but also within an ethnic group. Many minority students achieve well in school and often even better than mainstream students with similar class-status. However, too often minority students face obstacles in school attainment and underachieve, and their dropout percentage is higher than average (Ogbu 1978, 1987, 1993, Gibson 1997a, Gillborn 1997, Eldering 1997, Rumbaut 1997, Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001). The central question for educational anthropologists is how to explain this “ethnic school failure”. In the following, Foley’s (1991) historical overview of various explanation models is presented (see also McDermott 1997).

4.3.3 Explanation Models for School Achievement of Minorities

In 1960s, “*cultural deprivation*” was the prevailing theory for explaining why minority school achievement was often lower than that of ‘mainstream’ students. ‘Blaming the victim’ prevailed and reasons and explanations were sought among minorities. Hence, minorities were regarded as being deprived of the experiences of the dominant population. They were perceived as “impoverished” of experiences and attributes that

were valued in the culture of ‘mainstream’ society. The application of ethnocentric views made ethnic minorities look similarly as deprived, disadvantaged, and even deviant. It is important to point out here that the notion of ‘culture’ in this explanation model was detached from the material and social conditions where it is anchored. The policy implication in terms of enhancing minorities’ school achievement was to intervene in the socialization process as early as possible. (Foley 1991, McDermott 1997, see also Steinberg 2000.)

The “*cultural difference*” view, particularly perpetuated by educational anthropologists, challenged cultural deprivation as an explanation model in the 1970s. Careful ethnographic studies refuted ethnocentric notions and showed that minority children were not deprived, but instead, came from cultures that were as viable as ‘mainstream’ cultures. Ethnographic studies conducted in multiethnic schools and communities demonstrated that cultural discontinuity between home setting and school environment might explain low academic performance among ethnic minorities. The initial focus on cultural differences such as value orientations and learning styles were later revamped to emphasize differences in speech styles and communication competencies (which in the 1960s were initially seen as deficits). The socio-linguistic perspective, for example, maintained that differences in communication styles, such as communicative competence in turn-taking, question-asking and answering, literacy, story-telling and general speech style, resulted in a cultural incongruence that led teachers to treat minority children differently than mainstream children. This approach shifted the focus from the study of minority communities to classrooms to discover cultural differences. The ‘cultural difference’ perspective, which is still prevalent in the Finnish discourse, emphasized the importance of teachers’ knowledge and awareness of the cultural backgrounds of ethnic minority children. According to this view, cultural differences were not regarded as deficits but as characteristics to be celebrated, and teachers were advised to be aware of their own ethnocentric views of culturally different students. (Foley 1991, McDermott 1997.)

The ‘*structural view*’ (also called ‘political view’ or ‘macro view’) on the education of minorities that emerged in the beginning of the 1980s provided a radically new approach (Foley 1991, Gibson 1997a). Nigerian-born educational anthropologist John Ogbu argued that research on minority education had excluded the larger historical and community contexts. Since his theory is regarded as a landmark in the field of minority education, some of its main arguments are presented in the following. Also two other structurally inclined perspectives on minority school achievement are presented.

The point of departure in John Ogbu’s analysis was that given the fact that certain minority groups with distinct languages and cultures were in fact successful in mainstream schools, “cultural difference” must be incomplete as an explanation model.

He asked why certain minorities are able to overcome obstacles related to cultural difference while others are not. In his search for an answer to the question of apparent variation in school achievement among minorities, he emphasized structural factors such as a minority group's social status within society and the dynamics of the minority-majority relationship within the wider society (Ogbu 1978, 1987, 1993, Gibson 1988, 1997a). He developed a "cultural-ecological theory of minority school performance", which strove to explain the variation in minority groups' school achievement. John Ogbu, who passed away in 2003, developed his theory over nearly three decades, and re-defined the concepts considerably in the course of those years (see Ogbu & Simons 1998).

The cultural-ecological theory contains perspectives that are holistic, multilevel and comparative, and emphasizes the meaning of differences in the history, subordination and exploitation of minorities in the larger society. As a consequence of differences in experience in the past, John Ogbu claimed that minority groups have various adaptive responses to their minority status. In order to underline the importance of the historical experience and the initial terms of incorporation of minorities into 'mainstream' society, Ogbu (1993, 484-488) introduced a typology of "voluntary minorities" and "involuntary minorities".

'Involuntary minorities' have been involuntarily incorporated into mainstream society through slavery, conquest, and colonization, and their oppressed position in society is so fixed that it resembles the position of the lower castes in a caste society. Ogbu explains that involuntary minorities feel so discouraged and trapped in a racist society that they develop negative expectations towards "post-school opportunity structure" in their communities (1987, 312). The pessimistic attitude towards the opportunities one has persists from generation to generation and influences the way in which the children respond to schooling. As a coping strategy for perceived oppression, involuntary minorities create an "oppositional culture", which consists of invented, contemporary cultural styles, created to function as a boundary to the hostile mainstream population. (Ogbu 1978, 1987, 1993.)

'Voluntary minorities' (i.e. immigrants), on the other hand, have chosen to migrate and to become a minority because they have believed in better overall opportunities and/or better political freedom in a new society. Voluntary minorities develop in their communities, claimed Ogbu, "a positive dual frame of reference" that predisposes them, regardless of the difficulties having to do with cultural differences and unequal treatment, to regard the country of immigration as a land of opportunity. They don't compare their situation with the population of the receiving society but with that of their native country. He claimed that this more optimistic attitude is reflected in the manner in which first-generation encourages the younger generation in schooling and

that the children of voluntary minorities do not usually encounter long-lasting difficulty with school performance. (Ogbu 1978, 1987, 1993.)

John Ogbu's merit is that he recognizes the interaction between micro level agency and macro level inequality in a historical context. However, his theory has been criticized because its typology has been regarded as too simplistic, deterministic and contributing to the creation of stereotypical images. It has also been criticized for failing to account for the impact of class, gender and generation. It probably also has less heuristic value in European countries than in more traditional immigrant receiving countries such as the United States. (see e.g. Foley 1991, Trueba 1991, Gibson 1997a&b, Eldering 1997, Boyd 2002.)

After the introduction of Ogbu's cultural-ecological theory, the debate concerning "ethnic school failure" assumed another structural perspective as the focus shifted to schools' role in educating minority students. According to this view, minority students' 'failure' in schooling was perceived as a socially constructed phenomenon. McDermott (1987, 1997) is one of the active critics of earlier explanation models and he maintains that since we have to strive for equal education for all, we have to look at learning in relation to educational arrangements. By directing our gaze at educational arrangements, he claims, we may discover that there is a lack of serious effort in the wider culture to ensure equal opportunity for all. In McDermott's view, school failure is not a simple absence of school success in one individual – and thus not an individual phenomenon. Instead, it should be regarded as an institutional issue, an actively constructed option for all children. McDermott points out that we should really be asking what learning is made necessary and possible through social arrangements, instead of asking what individual students learn or why they do not learn. Similarly, instead of asking how individuals acquire a new (school) culture, we should be asking how (school) culture acquires new individuals.

In criticizing educational arrangements, McDermott (1997) criticizes the way in which learning is broken down into many little pieces. Referring to the works of Lev Vygotsky and Kurt Lewin he points out that "(l)earning is not ultimately a piecemeal enterprise, but a cumulative process that requires continuities...[and] that allows participants to make use of their learning in various settings over time" (ibid.121). He claims (something psychologists have known for a long time) that in order for any sustained learning to take place, many contact points between a person and the world to be acquired are necessary over an extended period of time. He points out that the ways in which learning is now arranged in school settings, not only for children with immigration background, but also for "mainstream" children, means that learning is broken into pieces and children are measured and ranked according to how they absorb these pieces.

I claim here that for immigrated children, particularly for the generation in-between, this “piecemeal” practice may be a real obstacle, since a great deal of their learning has taken place in other social and cultural contexts. For them, absorbing the pieces of culturally specific knowledge in a new setting and integrating these pieces into their earlier cognitive structures without an appropriate cognitive schemata may be very difficult (see Alitolppa-Niitamo 2002).

Critical pedagogy offers a third perspective among the structurally inclined views presented here. The aim of critical pedagogy is to confront the suppressing forces that are present in national and global settings. Peter McLaren (1997), for example, maintains that cultural hegemony confuses and creates obstacles for minorities. Cultural hegemony is understood as the conventions and constructs that are shared and naturalized so that they may be invisible and thus beyond argumentation. McLaren claims that critical ethnography should be advocacy-oriented. Advocacy among ethnic minority students could take place through the ‘conscientization’ of cultural hegemony of the dominant group(s) in the classroom. He suggests that one should re-examine certain types of “truth claims” that mainstream representatives make and assume as givens, and that exclude the experiences of ethnic minorities (McLaren 1997, 40).

The chapter concludes with the claim that the above-mentioned explanation models for minority school achievement offer some concepts and perspectives for a better understanding of the schooling of minorities. Instead of juxtaposing cultural and structural explanations, some researchers have emphasized the dynamic interplay between the two (Gibson 2000, see also Vermeulen 2000). The suggestion is, however, that in order to better understand the complex situation of *recently arrived immigrants*, the views presented here need to be further complemented, and more attention needs to be focused on the challenges related to migration and acculturation processes. This research indicates that by excluding migration and acculturation perspectives, there is a risk that the psychosocial consequences often related to acculturation stressors during the first years of resettlement become interpreted as primary cultural characteristics. The suggestion is that a more dynamic and comprehensive framework for understanding minority school achievement is needed and that also includes the migration and acculturation perspectives.

4.3.4 School Achievement of Children with Immigration Backgrounds: A Framework to Assess Variability

In the heels of concepts that underline ‘deprivation’, ‘difference’, and ‘structural’ views, many researchers today are in agreement with the latest perspective – that minorities’ school achievement is a *complex phenomenon* in which many factors operate simultaneously and change over time (e.g. Mac an Ghail 1989, Tomlinson 1991, Trueba

1991, Ogbu 1993, Rumbaut 1997, Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco 2000, 2001, Crul 2000). The more recent discourse on the theoretical foundations of minority education has resulted in attempts to synthesize both 'micro' and 'macro' perspectives, and to produce more contextualized models that encompass multiple factors.

In order to conceptualize this complex phenomenon, Marcello and Carola Suárez-Orozco (2000, 21), Harvard-based researchers, call for an interdisciplinary approach that encompasses the multiplicity of variables that affect the school achievement of children with an immigration background (cf. also Trueba 1991). By combining several research techniques, the Suárez-Orozcos have developed a multilevel conceptual framework with variables that, according to them, have an impact on the school performance of children with an immigration background. The framework includes entities such as incoming resources, host culture variables, social support networks, maintenance of the culture of origin, peer orientation, teacher expectations, and race.

The present research contributes to this latest development by revising Suárez-Orozcos' model. This revision is based on insights gained in the ethnographic research process among the Somali-speaking population in metropolitan Helsinki. The original model has been reorganized into four main explanatory categories, and some new variables have been added. The new variables are drawn from research data among Somali-speaking adolescents. The four explanatory categories represent frequently occurring perspectives that are often used separately to explain the educational achievement of minority children, i.e. their human and social capital (micro variables) and the attributes of the receiving society (macro variables) (cf. Portes & MacLeod 1999, Rumbaut 1997). This multivariate analysis does not juxtapose structural and cultural explanations. The inclusion of the fourth category, i.e. human agency, resists the deterministic view by emphasizing that individuals may, to a certain degree, actively and creatively reshape their conditions and resist the patterns and structures of domination and power (Ali-tolppa-Niitamo 2004).

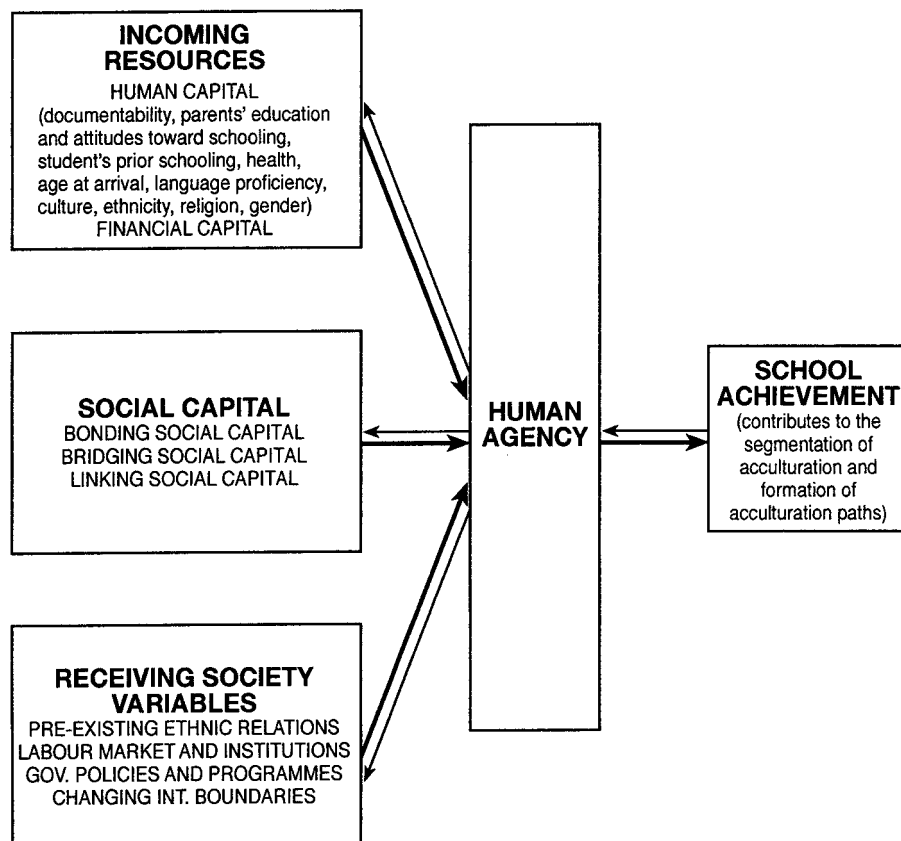
The revised framework presented below attempts to provide a systematic and holistic presentation of the multiplicity of factors that I propose would be effective in the educational achievement of children of immigrants. This multivariate framework, which is probabilistic rather than deterministic, acknowledges a multitude of factors that interact in a complex manner and affect school performance. The research suggests that each given factor may prove to be a resource or a challenge for educational performance, and that various combinations of variables can produce segmentation in acculturation paths both within and between ethnic groups. Further, I propose that the accumulation of challenges reduces an individual's coping capacity and slows down or hampers efforts to move in a desired direction along the acculturation path. My claim is that the benefits of the multivariate framework are in that it 'writes against'

culturalist and other constructions that produce stereotypes about ethnic groups, and also that it explains variability in school achievement, both between and within ethnic groups (cf. Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004).

What should be acknowledged, although not illustrated in the framework, is the factor of time. The framework is based on the understanding that many of the presented variables are not constant, but instead tend to change over time. The change and fluctuation is particularly rapid in the case of adolescents. It should also be acknowledged that the entire framework should be set in the wider context of history and global power relationships, which, however, is not an issue that this text deals with.

The revised framework and the new variables are presented below in the form of a figure and a short description of the meaning of each explanatory category. For a more comprehensive presentation, illustrated with a case study on the Somali-speaking population in metropolitan Helsinki, see Alitolppa-Niitamo (2004).

Figure 1: A framework explaining the variability of school performance of children with an immigration background.



Immigrants' Incoming Resources: Human Capital

In addition to *financial capital*, “incoming resources”, according to Marcello and Carola Suárez-Orozco (2000, 21), consist of *human capital* variables such as parental education, parental attitudes toward formal education, socioeconomic status, physical and psychological health, students' prior schooling and reading level, language proficiency, and immigration documentability. Based on the present research, the list is supplemented with such variables as ‘students' age at arrival’ (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2002), ‘cultural background’ and ‘religious background’ (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001), and ‘gender’. These variables form the basis for knowledge, skills, attitudes, capabilities and opportunities with which immigrants start to rebuild their life in a new society.

Instead of ‘blaming the victim’ for their possible difficulties in educational achievement resulting from mismatch of their human capital, one should acknowledge that many of the human capital variables are in fact products of complex and multi-level historical, societal and global processes, in the same way as the formation of migration movements. Even though the role of individual agency should not be neglected, the distribution of socio-economic status, opportunity for formal education and health care are among the variables that are tightly connected with social structures of immigrants' countries of origin. Documentability (residence status), in turn, although presented here as a resource on the part of an individual, is in fact a variable that is controlled by the receiving society. Cultural and religious characteristics represent here the historic specificity of a group of people, and are largely given, although reconstructed and interpreted by each individual to a certain degree.

Consequences of Migration and Minority Position: Social Capital at Risk

Recent immigration research has placed increased emphasis on the role of social capital in the acculturation process of immigrants (cf. e.g. Portes & Rumbaut 2001, Zhou & Bankston 1996). While acknowledging the differences in the emphasis in theoretical analyses, this presentation uses the definition by Alejandro Portes (1998,6) of social capital standing for ‘... the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures.’ Social capital inheres in social structures that are socially cohesive since they transfer and are based on common social norms and values, as well as trust, and reciprocity among individuals. High levels of social capital can be achieved when the social community is concerned about its members and cooperates for their mutual benefit. Indicators of a low level of social capital are isolation, suspicion, and reluctance to take part in mutual cooperation.

Tahir Abbas (2001) divides the social capital of immigrants into three levels of social relationships, each of which potentially has various kinds and amounts of resources to offer: family, ethnic community, and receiving society. Here the definitions regarding to various levels of social capital by Tahir Abbas are presented due to the clarity given to the role of a family as a source of social capital.

As stated earlier in the Chapter 4.2., for children of immigrants, the family is usually the main source of *bonding social capital*. Family ties provide individuals with support and caring, and transfer culturally based norms and values. The family may be a major source of psychological strength for a refugee child (Ahearn, Loughry & Ager 1999) and a strong variable in the educational performance of immigrant children (Crul 2000, Lindo 2000, Portes & Rumbaut 2001). Immigration is often a very stressful transition for a family (Suárez-Orosco & Suárez-Orozco 2001) and, hence, the bonding social capital of an immigrant family may be tried, particularly in families that experience dissonant acculturation and role reversal (cf. Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001, 2004; and Chapter 4.2.). In many present-day immigrant communities, transnational and diasporic social contacts seem to complement the locally provided bonding social capital.

Bridging social capital consists of networks between friends and colleagues (Abbas 2001). For many immigrants, particularly if they are unemployed or recent arrivals, ethnic group members may be the only source of bridging social capital. Relations with co-ethnics are regarded as important since they permit the exchange of vital information and the transfer of norms, values, and social control. Recent research among non-European immigrants in the United States indicates that social capital within the family and the community can help to generate human capital in second-generation. In fact, when human and economic capital is scarce within an ethnic group, social capital in the form of ethnic networks, mutual trust and shared values may be the only capital available (Zhou and Bankston 1996). The downsides of bridging social capital could be the exclusion of outsiders, extreme social control that restricts individual freedom, and norms that oppose involvement with the larger society (Portes 1998, Lindo 2000, Putnam 2000, Portes & Rumbaut 2001). Flip Lindo (2000) offers an example of diasporic bridging social capital where immigrants maintained close-knit contacts with villages of origin, in the case of Turkish women in the Netherlands who maintained traditional patterns of behavior, and thus interfered in particular with the education of their daughters.

Linking social capital refers to relationships that link together individuals and groups from different levels of the social hierarchy, who have different access to power, status and monetary capital (Abbas 2001; Woolcock 1999). In terms of immigrants, the linking social capital among the residents of the receiving society is often limited during the initial period of resettlement, and certain ethnic groups may remain excluded from the

‘mainstream’ networks for generations because of racism and discrimination. Since social capital often depends on whom rather than what you know, it is clear that limited access to linking social capital marginalizes certain groups of immigrants (Abbas 2001).

Characteristics of the Receiving Society

It is important to emphasize that both the micro level and the macro level play a role in the process of the formation of acculturation paths. On the macro level, the features of the receiving society are of major importance. For an analysis of the characteristics of the receiving society, Jeffrey Reitz (2002) suggests examining four interrelated features of the host society: (1) pre-existing ethnic and racial relations, (2) labor market and related institutions, (3) governmental policies and programs, and (4) the changing nature of international boundaries that are a result of globalization. The meaning of these features to the acculturation of immigrants, including a case description on the Somali-speaking population in Finland, is discussed in Alitolppa-Niitamo (2004).

Human agency

Differences in various human capital and social capital variables in each individual case and the complex interplay between these variables in the context of the specific characteristics of the receiving society may partly explain variability in school performance, as well as in the formation of acculturation paths in general. However, it should be acknowledged that individuals do not respond to their circumstances in a homogenous manner, but even in circumstances that seem similar, the outcome varies between individuals. For example, students with an immigration background are not just passive objects amidst various social and cultural systems and structures. Instead, they actively and creatively draw on resources from various contexts and reshape the systems and structures around them through their actions (e.g. Bourne 1997). The research indicates that in the case of second generation immigrants, the multiplicity of the presented variables, interacting in a complex manner in a rapidly changing social context, produce individual acculturation paths, the direction of which is not easy to predict and predetermine.

The present research indicates also that single variables by themselves are seldom crucial in explaining educational performance, but the complex interplay between human capital, social capital, the receiving society’s characteristics, and human agency is what makes acculturation paths divergent. Small differences in vulnerabilities or strengths may accumulate in the case of individual migrants or ethnic groups and produce segmentation in their acculturation paths. These divergences may further accumulate in later generations (Zhou 1997). The effect of several simultaneous variables that turn out to be vulnerabilities in the new society (may also be called

stressors), potentiate each other and may gradually break an individual's capacity to direct her/his acculturation path to the desired direction (see also Rutter 1979, in García Coll & Magnuson 1997; and García Coll & Magnuson 1997).

The multivariate framework points out the variability particularly within ethnic groups and thus defies culturalist and other explanations that produce simple generalizations. The present research shows that complex interplay of multiple factors produce acculturation paths that are not only segmented, but often also unexpected. It is not possible to determine the relative importance of each variable on the basis of qualitative data. Instead, it is suggested that the relative importance of each variable varies from case to case, depending on the complex interaction between the variables. The framework also emphasizes the process-like nature of the phenomenon, and the indeterminacy of the outcome, particularly in the case of young and developing individuals.

5 Ethnographic Research among the Somali-Speaking Population in Metropolitan Helsinki

The purpose of the present research was to describe and analyze issues of importance to Somali-speaking youth from the point of view of their performance in formal education. As mentioned previously, the scope of the study was left quite open because there was little existing research data to guide the definition of specific research questions. In this kind of situation, where previous research on the topic is scarce, qualitative research yields new information and allows the discovery of new perspectives to describe and understand the phenomenon under study. The choice of ethnographic research methodology was based on the idea that direct observation in the various contexts of the social reality of Somali-speaking youth would open up research data regarding their multifaceted reality to a maximum degree. Direct observations were thus made both on ethnic group level processes as well as among Somali-speaking students in the context of their school and, to some degree, in their family life.

This chapter presents some characteristics and principles of qualitative research in general, as well as *anthropological* ethnographic research in particular. Against this general methodological background, the present study among the Somali-speaking population in metropolitan Helsinki is discussed from the methodological point of view. The end of the chapter will address ethical questions related to the study.

5.1 Ethnography: Why and How?

5.1.1 Qualitative Research

‘A quiet methodological revolution’ has taken place in the social sciences during the past few decades, as their focus has increasingly shifted to an interpretive, qualitative approach to research and theory (Denzin and Lincoln 1994a, ix). In the course of this development, the qualitative approach has contained different meanings and understandings and used and combined many methods and approaches such as interviews, participant observation, and visual methods (Denzin & Lincoln 1994a & b)⁸. However, qualitative research has certain common characteristics, the most central

⁸ On the “five moments of qualitative research” describing the historical development, see Denzin & Lincoln (1994b, 1998).

of which are, on the one hand, an interpretative and naturalistic approach, and on the other hand, the use of multiple methods in a pragmatic manner. While the aim of quantitative research emphasizes the measurement and analysis of causal relationships, the aim of qualitative research is *to discover new phenomena* and new perspectives and to *find meaning, insight and understanding* of phenomena. The focus of qualitative research should be on the processes rather than on the end product, and on context rather than specific variables. (Denzin & Lincoln 1998.)

Qualitative research is a creative process not only in terms of the choice of methods, but also in the manner in which the interpretations are constructed. During the interpretation process, research data that consists of fieldnotes is re-created to a form that attempts to make sense of what the researcher has discovered out in the field. The researcher does not use one theory or paradigm that would have been distinctively selected as the only one, and instead, (s)he is supposed to 'weave' between and within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms. (Denzin & Lincoln 1998.) Hence, there cannot be a single interpretative truth. Instead, the end product of a qualitative research is a "... bricolage, a complex, dense, reflexive, collage-like creation" (Denzin & Lincoln 1998, 4). A conscious attempt to monitor for observer bias, as well as reflecting on how much and in what ways the social environment being studied is affected by the presence of a participant observer, are regarded as essential in the research analysis (ibid.).

5.1.2 Why Qualitative Research?

Although qualitative methodology has been criticized for lacking scientific rigor, or as 'subjective,' and as producing merely 'idiosyncratic impressions' of one or two cases, the naturalistic approach provides certain benefits compared to a so-called positivistic approach (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995). The criticism of positivists is often rejected with the claim that positivistic criteria for research produce only a certain kind of science, which is not better or worse, but which leaves certain perspectives uncovered and too many voices unheard (Denzin & Lincoln 1998).

The key and the strength of a naturalistic approach is that the socially constructed world is respected by the researcher as such and is not manipulated by purpose. Another aspect that supports the use of qualitative methodology is founded on the understanding that human actions are based upon different interpretations or social meanings, in which various intentions, motives, beliefs, rules, and values play an important role. Because these interpretations are constantly constructed and reconstructed, the social world cannot be explained by simple causal relationships, but needs to be described in more complex and dynamic terms. The way to do this is to participate as a social actor and to learn about the culture and subculture of the people. By participating in the social world of other people, a researcher comes closer to the meanings of the subjects

of the study and learns to make her/his own interpretations in how the informants or the subjects of the study interpret the world.

5.1.3 Anthropological Ethnography and Fieldwork

Among many qualitative methods, ethnographic research employs direct observation of social realities (Vidich & Lyman 1994). While acknowledging that there exists a considerable amount of controversy related to the use of the term ethnography, Paul Atkinson and Martyn Hammersley (1994) characterize ethnographic research as: (1) exploring social phenomena rather than setting up hypotheses about them; (2) having unstructured data rather than a closed set of analytic categories; (3) studying a small number of cases; and (4) producing verbal descriptions and explanations. Additionally, in terms of the particular perspectives of anthropological ethnography, Miller (1997, in Macdonald 2001) gives the following commitments as characteristic: (1) the researcher is in the presence of people (s)he is studying ('first-hand information'); (2) the data is based on what people actually do, not merely what they say they do; (3) long-term presence in the field that allows the observation of daily life beyond what is performed for the researcher's sake; and (4) holistic analyses within a larger framework ('contextualization'). Educational anthropologist Harry F. Wolcott (2002, 33-34) adds some further points: (1) ethnography should be conducted in natural settings; it is (2) basically descriptive; (3) non-evaluative; (4) specific or "particular"; (5) flexible and adaptive; (6), idiosyncratic and individualistic; and (7) corroborative (uses triangulation).

The foundation of anthropological ethnography lies in participant observation (Bernard 1988), which is the principal technique that makes long-term immersion with the social group under study possible. When an anthropologist enters the field as a participant observer, (s)he is expected to remain open to the meanings and categories of the subjects. In contrast to quantitative researchers who focus on tiny particles of the world, qualitative researchers look for larger themes, patterns, and trends. What makes the ethnographic description scientific is that the observations of a social scientist are regular and purposive. Contrary to every-day observations, the research process is based on the awareness of a variety of theoretical approaches regarding the subject of the research, and the data is received through a regular and repeated research process (Adler & Adler 1998).

The application of participant observation is motivated and justified, for example, in modern industrial societies where there exists a diversity of lifestyles and subgroups with many different interpretations of the world (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). It is also particularly justified in a study in which the subjects represent a culturally and socially distant group, such as an ethnic community in the researcher's society or a

social group in another society. Sharan B. Merriam's (1988) previously mentioned statement in which she encourages the use of ethnography in studying little known social groups is powerful. She claims that one has to identify, name, describe and understand the field of study before one is able to quantify it.

The end product of ethnographic fieldwork is called ethnography, which is characterized by a commitment to cultural interpretation and careful and detailed description (Geertz 1973: 'thick description'), and attention to context and data gathered in situ and in person (Wolcott 1992).

In the present research, ethnography has been used as a method, but the end product is not ethnography in the form of a thick description. Instead, the results of the fieldwork data are written into five articles, which present the themes and patterns claimed to be central in the data. Ethnography as an end product of ethnographic fieldwork requires space (Kleinman 1995, in Wolcott 2002). This fact is, of course, problematic when research findings are reported in articles instead of a full-length monograph. In articles, rich, detailed description has to be substituted with a more compact form. The articles on the present research are products of a process in which the field notes were coded, indexed and analyzed. The analysis presented in the articles draw on themes or patterns that were delineated on the basis of the data.

5.1.4 Norms for Evaluation of Qualitative Research

In comparison with quantitative research, qualitative research is based on different understandings of "reality" and on a different worldview. Hence, also different criteria for validity and reliability should be applied. Norman Lincoln and Egon Cuba (1985, in Merriam 1988) suggest that some terms 'inherited' from the quantitative research vocabulary should be replaced. They suggest new concepts such as 'truth value' for internal validity, 'transferability' for external validity, and 'consistency' for reliability.

High internal validity is usually the strength of qualitative research. Internal validity is enhanced by triangulation (using multiple methods and sources of data), making insider checks (asking the members of the ethnic group if the results are plausible), by using repeated observations over a long period of time (allows the recognition of the processes, but also the repetitive nature of certain occurrences) and by trying to be sensitive to researcher bias.

The replicability of the findings is problematic for qualitative research, and in fact should be regarded as such in social science in general, since human behavior is never static, but is in constant flux and process, and in addition, highly contextual. As an

alternative for replicability as a measure of reliability, Norman Lincoln and Egon Cuba (1985, in Merriam 1988) suggest “consistency” as a criterion. Consistency would be fulfilled when outsiders confirm that the findings make sense given the data, instead of expecting them to replicate the study itself. The judgment on the consistency of the results is made possible when the researcher provides an analysis of her/his position vis-à-vis the theoretical framework and the subjects of the research, as well as an explanation of the basis for sampling and social contexts of the data collection (Merriam 1988; Lincoln & Cuba 1985 in Merriam 1988).

Judging the external validity – the transferability of the findings – from a small number of cases that are selected in a purposeful manner to something generalizable does not make sense. But the aim of qualitative research is not to examine what is generally true of many; instead, the aim is to understand a particular case in more depth (Merriam 1988).

In terms of ethnographic methodology, its strengths and weaknesses lie in the same research principles. While the naturalistic nature of ethnographic research allows data on non-manipulated, natural settings of the subjects, at the same time, the possibility of the distorting effects of the observer’s presence and of subjectivity need to be reflected. In the same vein, while the emergent, inductive nature of ethnographic research is its strength by allowing the flexibility to discover new realities and new insights into old realities (Kidder 1981, in Adler & Adler 1998), this creativity may also be regarded as a weakness, since it is bound to an individual researcher’s rationale (Adler & Adler 1998).

5.2 Fieldwork among the Somali-Speaking Population in Metropolitan Helsinki

5.2.1 The Unbound Field of the Ethnic Group

The methodology of the present research consists of a set of different methods that are typical for an anthropologically oriented ethnographic study. Participant observation formed the foundation for the fieldwork, particularly during the school ethnography. However, semi-structured interviews and unstructured discussions were also applied, for the most part among adult populations. The present study takes a holistic stance by concentrating on several issues within a single unit, a strategy that is typical of ethnographic research. Similarly typical is that the description of the socio-cultural context is regarded as essential for understanding the subjects of the study (cf. Merriam 1988).

Traditionally ethnographic research has taken place in a bounded physical space called 'the field'. However, since people are increasingly mobile and communities are more and more dispersed, this definitional limitation on fieldwork has been criticized lately (e.g. Krulfeld 1993, Malkki 1995). Globalization and transnational processes increase the existence of unbound fields, but urban settings also disperse communities (e.g. ethnic groups) over a large urban landscape. This dispersion creates a problem for an ethnographer who is supposed to locate the subjects of the study and to observe their daily life on a regular basis. In Finland, city planning and a Nordic climate add to the problem. Physical urban settings do not offer many comfortable, free public places for people to gather and meet one another in a spontaneous manner, particularly during the cold season.

In the course of the research it was known that Somali men often gathered in certain cafeterias and in the Mosques, but it was also clear that certain subgroups, for example women and young children, could not be reached in these spaces (see also Alitolppa-Niitamo 1994). Since a spatially bounded field for observation was not easy to find at the community level, in the initial phase of the study the collection of contextual data consisted of attendance at seminars and meetings on Somali matters, many of them organized by Finnish authorities, but some also by Somali associations. The initial contacts with Somali-speaking adults were made in these meetings. Many of them were active in their own groupings or associations, some were also parents, and a few were professionals in the fields of teaching or social work. I later formed a more or less frequent contact with some of them, and they were my informants for an extended period of time. Discussions with most informants took place in English.

I met with these informants and contact persons most often in cafeterias, sometimes in their homes, for discussions on such topics as ethnic community organization, composition of the ethnic groups, and parents' concerns regarding children. Topics such as unemployment and the schooling of children, and concerns related to Somali-speaking youth, were the most frequent topics of discussion in the meetings and seminars. An additional source of contextual information was the informally organized Researcher Network in Somali Studies, which met occasionally and consisted of both Finnish-born and Somali-born professionals interested in Somali studies. This network provided a framework for discussing various research topics, perspectives and findings.

Knowing that the Somali ethnic group was internally rather divided in Finland, it became clear that balancing between the groupings and maintaining scholarly neutrality and political or ideological impartiality between the various subgroups would be essential. It was my belief that association with one faction would lead to distortion in data gathering (see e.g. Gilmore 1991). Divisions among Somali-speaking adults could be found to run, for example, according to clan membership, the region of origin in

Somalia, religious orientation, and educational and/or prior professional status. Based on this observation, in the late 1990s, it seemed to be more accurate to perceive the Somali-speaking population as consisting of several communities or groupings, rather than of one ethnic community.

Below is a description drawn up from the fieldnotes on an ethnic group level meeting that took place in May 1999. The description (abridged from the original) gives a glimpse on some of the central issues and processes occurring at the ethnic group level in the late 1990s. For more information on ethnic group level processes, see Alitolppa-Niitamo (2000) and Alitolppa-Niitamo & Ali (2001).

...The meeting was organized by the Somali League, an umbrella organization for a number of Somali ethnic associations. At 3 p.m., when the meeting was supposed to start, there were some eighty men already in the auditorium. Women, who did not number more than around fifteen, were sitting in the seats at the very back of the auditorium. At 4 p.m., some one hundred men were present, and by 4.30, around ten more had arrived. I could recognize some familiar faces, such as ... (names of some persons) and Aamina's⁹ father and the interpreter I met in the school. I paid attention to some self-confident young men in the front who stood out from the rest in their stylish, Western jackets. Some of them walked and talked into their mobile phones.

I sat among the women, almost all of whom were veiled. One of the women pointed out for me a young man whom she said to be working for Nokia - in a manner that I interpreted it as being a highly appreciated achievement. Mobile phones were ringing here and there in the course of the meeting at the same frequency as in any meeting in Finland these days.

The first speaker was an invited outsider, the Ombudsman for Foreigners, who talked about the importance for Somalis of forming a well-functioning umbrella organization. He also talked about misinterpretations and negative media coverage on Muslims' pilgrimage from Finland to Mecca earlier in the year, about his worry for young Somalis who were school drop-outs and drawn to gangs and criminal activity, and about 'disappeared' children who had been sent out of Finland by their parents.

Following the Ombudsman, Nazmo gave her presentation in Somali. A young woman sitting beside me was doing her best to interpret for me. Each speaker gave a rather long talk, and the interpreter just highlighted the main topics.

⁹ All the names in this description are pseudonyms.

Nazmo first concentrated on the problems she had observed in the community: tribalism was one thing that made the group incoherent, she said. Another problem was that the young were not able to get support from the community. She continued that... people should try to find employment, because otherwise they would become marginalized. 'Previously Finland has been a good country for immigrants. Somalis should help one another more than what they do now', she said. While I listened to the lady who helpfully interpreted for me, I wrote a list of Finnish and English words that I could pick up from her talk. The words were 'ajankohtainen' (topical), 'immediately', 'toimeentulotuki' (living allowance), 'työttömyystuki' (unemployment allowance), 'globalisaatio' (globalization), 'lastenkoti' (children's home), 'kotiäiti' (full-time mother). The fact that there apparently do not exist equivalent terms in Somali language may say a lot about the differences between Finnish and Somali society and culture.

The next speaker, a man, also raised the question of the conflicts between parents and their children. ...The third Somali speaker, invited from the Netherlands, said that he is proud of the activities Somalis have been involved in, in Finland. He said that the meeting was the first 'non-clan meeting' among Somali diasporas he had attended. ... First, he said, there was a disaster in Somalia, violence, and even rapes that had never happened before. Now, as Somalis were spread all over the world, integration into one (ethnic) group was the only possibility. Somalis needed to get united into one association so that they could form one representative body that authorities could consult with, for example in family disputes. He added that there were lots of problems in families.

The next speaker was the chairman of The Somali League. He said that the League had been established two years before but that the activity had not been very fruitful yet. One rally against racism had been organized and there had been some cooperation with certain authorities...

The following person, a religious leader, was concerned about the situation of elderly people. He spoke long, and from the interpretation I picked up the following issues: In Somalia, old people were respected. Now, as they were in Finland, they became stressed and sad. In Somalia, people always had things to do. Here it was cold, people did not want to go out and felt lonely, and as a consequence, they started to feel as if they were ill, too. No one was going to come and knock on your door, and elderly people did not know where to meet people. Young people, on the contrary, thought that they were Finnish people, and they did not even know where they came from. In Somalia, dependence on parents was important, but in Finland this has changed. ...

Safya took her turn next. She touched upon women's changing role in diaspora by saying: '(As a woman), I'm not afraid to express myself anymore. Somali women have been strong, but they can't be strong without the support of Somali men. In the house, women do all the hard work, now and here, men should participate in the household work more' ...

Next, a young man stood up: 'Young people don't have same kinds of fields (football?) here as they used to have in Somalia – that is why they are in the Railway Station. However, parents should not abandon their children if they do something they shouldn't do.'

A man who took the next turn read a poem. It was an ode to women. He called forth a storm of applause. After him, another man from one of the mosques, dressed in traditional white clothes, stood up and said that women should not attend meetings. He pointed out one woman by saying she should not be there without a veil...

The meeting described here was informative since it confirmed many central themes at the ethnic group level that had already emerged in individual discussions in cafeterias and homes with some informants and through the observations. These themes were related to obstacles to community formation, changes within the family, and gender and generational conflicts. Previously acquired information that was based on idiosyncratic data proved again in this meeting to be true and transferable over the larger ethnic community.

5.2.2 Negotiating Access to the School

While the lack of a bounded field was a challenge in the first phase of data gathering at the ethnic group level, the challenge of the second phase, i.e. the classroom ethnography, was to negotiate access to the bounded field of school and classroom. After going through a number of schools, both lower and upper level comprehensive schools, where there were Somali-speaking students among the student body, I decided to focus on students at an upper level comprehensive school. I regarded teenagers as more useful for the purposes of my research, since they would be better able than younger students to express their thoughts in discussions, be better able to recollect the homeland, and to express their ideas about the future. As an intensive period of identity construction, adolescence would also bring an interesting aspect to the research from the developmental and ethnic construction points of view. The final grade in the upper comprehensive school (*peruskoulun yläaste*), which I eventually selected, provided one more interesting and important perspective, as students attending that grade would be in the process of exploring their options and opportunities for future careers and making their choices for post-comprehensive education (*toisen asteen koulutus*).

Criterion-based selection strategy was used in choosing the site and the group to be studied¹⁰. The criteria were delineated based on the initial research problem. Selection criteria for a classroom were the following: (1) sufficient number of Somali youth in the upper comprehensive classroom, (2) gender distribution of the students as equal as possible, (3) relatively easy access to the school, and (4) prospects for good cooperation with the classroom teacher. A preference was given to a school that would be located relatively close to the neighborhood where I lived myself, so that contact also outside of school hours would be easily possible. After visits and several phone calls to a rather wide selection of schools within Helsinki metropolitan area, I chose an upper level comprehensive classroom in the Forest Hill School¹¹ with six Somali students. Beyond the six students, the contacts were later expanded to their siblings, friends and some other Somali-speaking youth.

Before I found the selected classroom, the process of access negotiation to a school was more complicated than that of the first phase ethnic group level research. Reluctance to admit a researcher into a school for an extended period of time could be sensed in the discussions with the headmasters of some of the schools, which I called or visited. The explanations for the apparent reluctance were not usually openly given, except by one headmaster who expressed her view clearly:

"There have been so many researchers in this school already doing research among immigrants, so we are rather tired here. The school is too small to have space for researchers - and the results of these studies have not even been reliable."

I could understand her point partially, since I knew that since the mid-90s, interest towards issues related to multiculturalism, immigrants and refugees has grown considerably among researchers and students (also Helander 1999, Wahlbeck 2003). As one consequence, some classroom teachers complained about too many 'researchers', many of them students in polytechnic colleges with little training in research methodology or theory, coming to their schools. Teachers spoke about fatigue expressed by students in filling out long questionnaires that were often ethnocentric and even insensitive to some sensitive issues, such as mental health, experiences of traumatic incidents, and female genital mutilation.

The neighborhood where the Forest Hill School was located was not a typical immigrant neighborhood in the sense that the percentage of immigrant inhabitants was not

¹⁰ Criterion-based sampling (also called "purposive sampling") is used when selecting a sample from which the most can be learned in terms of the research topic, provided that the sampling principle is clearly indicated.

¹¹ All names are pseudonyms.

considerably high. Nevertheless, the local school's student body of some 300 students included students from a variety of countries, a majority of them students who had migrated as asylum seekers from Somalia. Some of the students with immigration backgrounds were integrated into the mainstream classrooms, but the school also reserved a special "immigrant classroom" in which more recently arrived students and students who were not yet able to study in normal classrooms were placed. In this immigrant classroom, students were supposed to receive more support and tailored teaching according to their needs.

The crucial factor in getting access and selecting this specific classroom was the classroom teacher who welcomed me to her classroom and with whom I sensed from the beginning that easy communication would be possible. She had a genuine interest in and respect for her students and towards the issues of 'immigrant education'¹², qualities that I regarded as important for our daily relationship over several months. This tiny classroom of seven students, two Somali-speaking girls and four boys, and one boy from another ethnic background, thus became my field site for more than six months. The small group of youth formed a core of my sample, although later the number of Somali youth was extended through the snowball method to nineteen teenagers.

By the time I entered the school in the fall 1997, it was the fourth year for most of the students in the school. The composition of the group had changed somewhat during these years; while some of the students had been in this classroom from the beginning, others had dropped out or had transferred to other schools or classrooms. 'The immigrant classroom' was a special arrangement that was supposed to provide extra support for students so that they could better catch up with other students and be prepared for post-comprehensive education. Prior to their final year in comprehensive school, the students had been partly integrated with other students in certain lessons, but during the last year they stayed separated from the other students for most classes.

The contacts with the students gradually opened up access to some Somali families as well, which provided additional and essential contextual information. The families had highly diverse backgrounds in terms of place of origin in Somalia, educational, professional, and social background in Somalia, length of stay in Finland, daily activities, number of family members living with them (from 1 to 16 persons), and experiences in Finland. The variability in the human and social capital within the Somali-speaking population is described in Alitolppa-Niitamo (2004).

¹² "Immigrant education" (*maahanmuuttajaopetus*) is the concept often used by teachers and school administrators.

5.2.3 Building a Rapport

In forming contacts with some of the informants and in the interviews with some group level activists the question of rapport was quite easy to overcome. This was probably because people who attended seminars and meetings were often initially open and willing to discuss issues related to their communities. They were also eager to learn about Finnish society and to form contacts with authorities and other ‘mainstream’ representatives. Many of them had also a genuine concern for the future of their ethnic group in the new society, which they wanted to bring to the attention of a larger audience. They were also probably more educated than the average Somali immigrant and, hence, also familiar with the concept of scientific research. Discussions and semi-structured interviews with them most often took place in cafeterias in metropolitan Helsinki, and sometimes in their homes and in my own home with one informant. These discussions were interesting occasions for the exchange of thoughts and perspectives in which I tried to balance the give-and-take to some degree by offering my knowledge of Finnish society for their benefit. Because access, role building and gaining the rapport were more problematic and cumbersome in the school setting, these developments are described in more detail in the sections below.

Access to the classroom and contact with the families in which the students lived mostly took place through the assistance of the classroom teacher. Teacher Liisa had gone through her own processes of gaining the trust of parents and establishing good cooperation with them. Through her acceptance and interest towards my research, she mediated the trust among the students and parents and caretakers towards me as a person and towards my research. Parents’ meetings served as an important opportunity to explain the purpose of my study for parents and caretakers, to ask for their consent, and to make initial contact with them. Below is an abbreviated excerpt from the field notes describing the first parents’ meeting that I attended at the Forest Hill School.

Today Liisa [the teacher] had a parents’ meeting in the evening. She had phoned the parents or by other means checked that the information about the meeting had reached the parents ...

Mire’s parents were not able to come, nor was Khadra’s mother. Only Jamal’s and Aamina’s mothers came. Yussuf’s father was supposed to come but he did not show up. Liisa had not been able to contact Taariq’s parents so they did not come either. Aamina’s mother came on time, and Jamal’s mother came half an hour late, accompanied by Abdi (Jamal’s brother). ...Among the participants, there was also Mohamed’s mother. Mohamed had once attended Liisa’s class, but was not there any more. Liisa did not know why she came – the mother did not speak any Finnish – but probably she had just accompanied one of the other mothers. And then there was an interpreter, a young Somali man.

Liisa was dressed in a long dress and I sensed that she was quite excited or nervous. I was dressed in my leggings and my long winter pullover, and I regretted immediately the choice of my clothing since I felt that I should have dressed more formally. The mothers all wore veils of different styles and colors and long, colorful dresses.

... Then Liisa gave me a chance to present myself. I tried to speak slowly and I told the parents my educational background and that I'm an anthropology student at the university and that I had previously worked in ... (various places). I also told them that I am married and have three children... I said that I had been visiting many schools and would like to stay in Liisa's classroom for a longer period and explained what my research would be about. I said also that their children were in an important and challenging phase now as they were making choices regarding where they would study after comprehensive school. I told the parents that I would like to learn how they made those choices and what the parents' expectations and ideas were. I asked if the parents would like to help me with this. They all listened but at first did not seem too excited. I asked if they would like to ask any questions. Then Jamal's mother asked if I would help their children in making these choices for post-comprehensive schooling. I said that I would be prepared to help in all ways, giving them information, visiting places with them etc. I also said that I would be prepared to assist them with their home assignments if they would like me to. After saying this I felt that the ice broke. The mothers seemed to be happy and satisfied for the offered assistance and they accepted my stay in the classroom. I later gave them my phone number and said that they could call me any time.

I interpreted the parents' initial hesitation toward the research as their uncertainty as to what "research" meant, what it would be about, and how it would touch their lives. Their experiences in a country ruled for years by a dictator probably influenced their cautious attitude. Also, the existence of secrets in some families regarding the actual composition of the household may have caused some hesitation.

5.2.4 Role Taking

Along with rapport building, the first task in the field was to find a plausible role among the students. This was a challenge particularly because of age, since I was too old to even try to look like a student. In the eyes of the students I was clearly first and foremost associated with the role of a teacher. However, I tried to take distance from this role by spending time with the students during recess and by dressing in a casual manner, in jeans and sweaters. I also did not get involved in the instruction or controlling roles of a teacher, but sometimes I helped the students with their schoolwork if they

themselves asked for it. The comprehensive school system and today's school culture and youth culture were rather novel experiences for me after a more than two-decade absence from school, and in this sense I was an outsider and something of a student of the larger school culture.

My role also included trying to be as non-judgmental, sensitive, unobtrusive and respectful as possible, and I never reprimanded the students in cases of possible wrongdoings. However, probably due to my generational and cultural similarities with the classroom teacher, I found it sometimes easier to understand, sympathize and feel loyalty with her in conflict situations between her and the students, but I never openly took sides in these situations.

I tried to downplay the asymmetry in our power positions by assuming the role of a novice and learner of their culture and country of origin. So, particularly in the beginning of the fieldwork, during recess, we often discussed Somalia and the ways of life there. In order to not stand out too much during the lessons and recess, I little by little got more involved in discussions with the students on various issues. I found their way of socializing more inclusive than what I had expected, and the students easily made contact with people, and talked a lot and easily included others in their discussions. I felt that despite possible cultural differences, it might have been easier for me to get involved in the lives of these students than in the lives of Finnish-born students of the same age.

Gradually the hesitation regarding my acceptance and finding a plausible role decreased, and I started to feel more comfortable going to the classroom each morning and attending the classes. My happiest moments during the school day were when the students expressed their cheerful greetings of "Hi, Anne!" in the morning, or asked where I had been if I had been away for a day or two, and when they came to talk to with me of their own initiative. The teacher, who had found herself previously quite alone with the 'immigrant issue' among her Forest Hill colleagues, said that she was happy with this situation where she had someone to talk to about topics of common interest after school hours.

Despite my efforts to mingle with the students, my notebook continually reminded them of my role as a researcher. I took fieldnotes by recording some words or short sentences as reminders of quotes, incidents, atmosphere and the course of the lessons, of breaks etc. In the beginning my note taking seemed to distract some of the students, but once I let them take a look in my note-book, they could see that I was just scribbling down some words, and their interest towards the note taking seemed to vanish gradually. The following excerpt from my fieldnotes gives a glimpse on one dilemma in the role of an ethnographer in a classroom.

The very beginning of the lesson was more quiet and peaceful than usual, but then Jamal slips out from the classroom to the hallway. Soon he returns with a Finnish friend, but Mäntylä (the math teacher) doesn't allow Jamal's friend to come in. Also Taariq gets involved and he and Jamal protest against Mäntylä's refusal. Soon also Taariq slips out of the door although Mäntylä is trying to hinder him. I am sitting there and I feel that I should intervene and help Mäntylä make the guys behave better, but at the same time I know that I should not. It is hard not to get involved and take a role of another adult person in the classroom. Jamal looked at me. I think he was expecting me to react, but as he saw me just sitting there with my notebook, he says: "Write there that the whole class is childish." Then he asks me what do I usually write in my notebook. I tell him that I write about things they learn, about the things that seem to be difficult for them to grasp and about other things that might affect what they learn in the school.

One way of establishing a clearer role in the diffuse situation of school ethnography was to offer some information about my private life. In the course of the school ethnography and in contacts with the parents or caretakers, I realized again that an important aspect in my identity for adult Somalis was my status as a married woman and a mother. Since I had found this out already during the first phase of the research, I had learned to bring forth this piece of information in the initial contact with the adults. It seemed that as a mother, I had a clear role for which I also received some respect. My attachment to a university also seemed to increase my worth among the adult population so that I was taken seriously as 'an educated person'. Formal education and especially university education were clearly valued among those Somalis I had contact with.

Rather than trying to find a role of "participant-as-observer" in a classroom, it was more natural for me to take the role of "observer-as-participant" (cf. Gold 1958 in Adler & Adler 1998). This means that my role in the research setting was clearly more observation oriented than participation oriented. Later in the course of the fieldwork, the participation role was strengthened, however, as I found more ways to participate in the lives of the students, particularly with the girls, such as helping with home assignments, assisting families with errands etc. With the boys it was more difficult to find a common ground for natural contact, particularly after school hours.

Although my presence in the classroom was gradually accepted and became more or less an everyday fact, I agree with Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson (1995) and their claim that the role of the researcher as a participant in the research process cannot be without effect on the social world which (s)he is studying. As a participant observer, a researcher is part of the social world, and by necessity has an effect on the field (s)he

is studying. A researcher is also 'contaminated' by her/his socio-historical location, by its values and interests, and by his/her particular biography, which (s)he takes with her/him to the field. Because the effects of participation cannot be eliminated, the researcher should set out to understand these effects (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995).

My position as adult, white, Christian, native Finnish-speaking, middle-class representative of the majority culture was, of course, in many respects more privileged than the position of the Somali-speaking population in Finnish society. There was a wide power and status difference in our positions in society, which I attempted to downplay as much as possible. On the other hand, already during the group level research I realized that I could use my 'insider' position in Finnish society toward a positive end both in terms of my research and in terms of the subjects of the study. My insider position and knowledge, such as fluency in Finnish and, in particular, knowledge of the structures of Finnish society, could be used to balance the give-and-take of the research process. As I at times hesitated to take up the time of my informants and the subjects of the study, I started to actively look for reciprocal benefits (see, for example, Wax 1982). I tried to use my position and resources to the benefit of the students, for example by offering them assistance with homework, translating official documents, giving information about the functioning of Finnish society, particularly about various options in the educational system etc. I gradually found myself riding in my car with some family members to places such as the police station, wholesale food market, KELA (The Social Insurance Institution of Finland) office etc. In the spring, when the class raised funds for their trip to Linnanmäki (amusement park in Helsinki), we baked *sambusis* (filled and folded pies) in my kitchen. The following excerpt from the field notes (April 1998) on the occasion when we baked *sambusis* gives a picture of how sensitive and fragile I still felt my contact, particularly with the boys, to be.

...Aamina went directly to another room to change her blouse and scarf and then efficiently started the preparation. She made the dough, and said that some of us needed to cut the onions. Mire said that he is allergic to onions, and so I and Taariq started to do that. Then I assisted Mire in preparing the sweet cake. He told me that he had done some cooking and baking at home and he had also attended home economics classes at school. He seemed to be quite experienced in baking a cake. Taariq also said that he prepares food at home if his mother or sister is not available. Aamina was very goal oriented and self-confident about what she was doing. I was worrying that we would run out of time but she said that we had lots of time. ...

Everything went fine and the guys were actually very responsible, and took turns, and neither I nor Aamina needed to give them any orders. This was quite amazing if you think about how they behave in school sometimes (quite often). It was particularly good to see Taariq so coop-

erative and relaxed. Mire was cooperative too, but he is quite shy and prefers to follow things from the side. ... The music was loud (they wanted to listen to 'Energy' station) and the atmosphere was good. Somebody said that we are having a 'Sambusi disco'. I asked about the disco where the boys usually go and why they always go to this same place. Taariq explained that they have good and effective technology there and good DJs. I was expecting the reason to be somehow related to non-racist attitudes, cheap tickets or the like). He said that young people come there even from downtown because of the best technology. I kept on asking about their leisure time activities and asked whether they had seen 'Titanic'. Taariq said he had seen it, but said that he was not very much touched by it.... Aamina also had seen the film with another girl (Jamal's cousin) the day when Ramadan ended.

I was tempted to ask more about their leisure time, family relations and many other things, but I didn't want to ask too many questions now. I instead wanted to keep this situation devoted to them and to build trust and easiness between me and them...

The role of my gender and age in the contacts with the adolescents is worthy of some acknowledgement. My aim to create a holistic account of Somali youth in the context of education was not in all aspects realized since the leisure time activities of the boys remained unexplored to a great extent. The gender and generation gaps made me too uneasy to even try to be included in their activities in the evenings and during the weekends - and I am quite certain that the feeling of uneasiness would have been mutual.

More than the age difference, I felt that the gender difference played a role in the kinds of spaces and kind of knowledge that was accessible or available to me. The girls' activities outside of school hours took place mainly at home, and as a female researcher, I had easier access to the home life and leisure time of the girls. For a male researcher, the leisure time of the boys would probably have been more easily accessible (see Hautaniemi 2004). The following abstract from the field notes in May 1998 describes my hesitation in trying to find situations and ways to approach the boys.

After the lunch hour the girls went home and I decided to go and see whether the guys were in the basketball field. I had to pull all my courage together since I knew that I didn't really have any role for hanging out there, in the basketball field. Would I just stand there and feel like a fool, totally out of context? Nevertheless, I decided to go and I was lucky: there were only the guys whom I already knew, Taariq, Jamal, Mire, Mohamed, and Sebastian. And since they didn't have a ball, they were just sitting on the ground and chatting and waiting for somebody with a ball to arrive. This, I felt, was a perfect situation for me to go and have an informal talk.

What did we talk about? We talked about good quality basketballs and footballs, their materials and prices etc. We talked about some talented Somali football players. They told me that Yussuf's kid brother is very talented. Also Abdulrahman came, and he greeted me smilingly... We talked about some English language summer courses they'll attend. Then I realized that I owed an ice cream to Taariq and Mire. Taariq had not heard that I had had these 'ice cream discussions' in a cafeteria in the shopping center, and to my surprise he was ready to go there right away. So we left to go to the cafeteria, ate our ice cream and talked mainly about their school background and experiences prior to their coming to Finland...

5.2.5 Daily Classroom Ethnography

I sat in a tiny classroom of about sixteen square meters with the students, in a desk that was vacant. I observed the lessons, at times I participated in the discussions, and at times was included by the teacher in what was going on being asked something that would get me involved. During recess, I was 'hanging around' with the students in the classroom or in the hallways, and during the lunch hour I ate at the table where Somali girls were used to sitting. Depending on the situation, I stayed in the school from 2 to 6 hours each day – often the entire school day. I started the classroom ethnography in December 1997 and I finished it in June 1998. Altogether I spent some 400 hours in the school during this period. Additionally, visits to the families were usually made in the evenings. After the students graduated from the comprehensive school in June 1998, I maintained occasional contact with the core group of six students also afterwards.

In a typical day in the "field" I was sitting in my desk from the time the children were supposed to arrive until the time school was over. I scribbled my notes regarding for example the presence of the students in the lessons, the time they arrived (the boys often arrived late), their moods and behaviors (they were often tired, but usually made an effort to concentrate). The fieldnotes also include observations on classroom work (often during the classes the concentration relapsed and the students got frustrated), on the content of classes (they were almost always based on 'mainstream' curriculum and materials), and on discussions between the students and the teacher as these related to instruction, as well as far beyond it (cf. Alitolppa-Niitamo 2002).

I tried not to manipulate or stimulate the situation in the classroom in any way, and more or less I just followed the flow of events. I did not constrain myself to recording only the verbal exchanges in the classroom, but tried to be sensitive and capture the "tacit knowledge" of the context. David Altheide and John Johnson (1998, 297) define tacit knowledge as "...the largely unarticulated, contextual understanding that is often manifested in nods, silences, humor, and naughty nuances". They claim that this is the most challenging dimension in ethnography. Tacit knowledge goes beyond capturing

the informants' voice, and is expected to elucidate the experiences of the subjects of the study, as understood by an empathetic ethnographer. My training as a psychologist probably helped me to be rather sensitive to tacit knowledge, although it is certainly difficult to report those "nods and silences" in the final account.¹³

A lot of questions were raised for which I was trying to find some clarification during recess. However, it was frustrating to realize that breaks were often too short and too lively for many questions that had been raised during the lessons. Actually, breaks provided me with even more observational material, so that in the midst of happenings, old questions were often forgotten as new ones emerged. School is a lively place and it is obviously easy for an ethnographic researcher to become overwhelmed and diverted.

The language I used in the discussions with Somali adolescents was Finnish. Although Finnish created problems for the students with schoolwork, they spoke "everyday Finnish" rather fluently. In fact, particularly the boys seemed to master the youth discourse (slang) much better than I did. I had taken courses in Somali language for one and a half years, but since their knowledge of Finnish was so much better than my knowledge of Somali, it turned out to be a natural choice to use Finnish to communicate.

After school hours, I had my own personal commitments and social networks which did not allow me – for good and bad – to become engaged in the field for 24 hours a day as "real" anthropologists away from their home setting used to do. This was frustrating at times because I could not just go along with the opportunities that presented themselves in the course of the research. Particularly responsibilities towards my own family limited my ability to visit the families of the students as much as I would have liked to. The perspective into the lives of Somali-speaking families opened up unexpectedly in the course of the school ethnography, but I was not able to take up this interesting and important field of research very extensively because of lack of time.

Writing up fieldnotes on the computer usually took place in late evenings both during the school ethnography phase as well as the earlier group level phase. I attempted to type down everything that I could recall on the day's events and discussions. In my field notes, I also added my own thoughts, feelings (coded as REF – self reflection) and interpretations (coded as INT – data interpretation) to provide a guide for observations and questions to be asked in the future.

Towards the end of the school year – which was also the end of the entire comprehensive school for the students – the flow of events became very intense. The anxiety and

¹³ Also Whyte (1982, 112; in Merriam 1988) claims that one should be a good reflective listener, "like a therapist", who is sensitive to both verbal and nonverbal messages and who "listens with a sympathetic and lively interest".

restlessness – particularly among the boys – increased. I interpreted it to be largely the consequence of the many concerns they had regarding their post-comprehensive opportunities. It seemed that leaving the school, though they had been awaiting it for a long time, now raised a lot of concerns and uncertainty. At the same time as the students were eager to move on, they were concerned about the kinds of paths that would open up for them. Questions regarding their options in terms of further education and employment, whether they would be accepted, how they would cope with the challenges they were facing seemed to occupy their minds. Some of the boys skipped school for long periods of time just during the time of the school year when their active presence would have been needed to get good final grades. The following excerpt from the field notes describes the situation in May 1998.

Yussuf is missing, Taariq was late and Sebastian has not been seen for more than a week. Liisa thinks that Sebastian is staying with his girlfriend. Liisa plans to meet Sebastian's mother tomorrow to discuss him.

Everybody is concerned about Yussuf, because he has been away again for five days now. Liisa had seen him by chance in Pelikaani (a gambling hall) on Saturday. She said that he was in good spirits and that he was dressed in a black suit and white shirt because of Idh (the end of Ramadan festivity). Now his mother has sent word around through his friends, says Jamal, that if he is not going to show up at home he will be sent to prison.

Jamal is convinced that Yussuf's parents would really be able to send him to prison. Liisa says that this won't happen, but Jamal insists. He says that at least he could be sent to a place where he will be beaten. Liisa says that such places do not exist here, but Jamal keeps on arguing that he has heard about such a place. He keeps on reasoning and says that he understands Taariq's absences from home better since his stepfather is so strict, but Yussuf's absences are more difficult to grasp.

During the math lesson the students try to concentrate on exercises, but even Taariq who used to know this stuff, now seemed to have forgotten what he had previously learned. He is now wondering what do the terms like "kehä" (circumference) and "halkaisija" (diameter) mean. Only Mire seems focused and able to concentrate today.

At this point in the fieldwork, I was rather "immersed" in the classroom and it was increasingly difficult to step back and take distance from the situation. I felt very worried for some of the boys whose whereabouts not even the parents knew. I was also concerned about how these developments would influence their future. In this situation it was difficult not to interfere, and instead of maintaining the distance at all times, a more human side emerged apart from the researcher's role.

The school ethnography period of the research was very intensive, and at times I needed to take some days off from the “field” just to write up the field notes. During this period only a few interviews or discussions were held on the ethnic group level issues.

Since I did not use a tape recorder during the entire research process, the number of direct quotes in the field notes is limited, and descriptions of situations, processes and discussions prevail. Following the fieldwork period, when I was reading the field notes for an analysis, many themes came up where I wished that I had more information. I understood that I would have needed to draw myself from the field more often in order to take some distance and to conduct some preliminary analysis so that interesting, emerging themes could have been followed in more depth. If I had retrieved myself from the field more for some initial analysis, I would have probably directed the discussions in the field in the final phase more towards certain themes. But during the school ethnography phase, leaving the field even for a day or two was difficult, since new interesting issues emerged constantly, and interesting processes continued to take place even at the end of the fieldwork. I now think that actually only more time spent in the field would have given the emerging themes more ‘depth’.

5.2.6 Visits with Families

Visits to the homes of the students and discussions with the parents exposed an important contextual field in the students’ lives. This was the field that I did not anticipate opening up during the school ethnography. However, many family-related issues, such as generational conflicts, parents’ expectations and needs etc., were brought to the classroom by the students through actions, discussions and comments (cf. Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001). Visits to their homes very vividly opened up the reality of the two quite different worlds between which they balanced on a daily basis. The description below gives a picture on one student’s home setting and one of my visits there.

Aamina was one of the students who often invited me to her home, usually to assist her with school assignments. In the house where Aamina lived, a four-story rental apartment building, a strong smell of spices and incense prevailed in the entrance hall. Inside the apartment, the rooms were secluded from one another with closed doors, and windows were covered with thick, dark purple curtains. Two of the oldest brothers shared one bedroom, Aamina with her sisters shared another, and the three little brothers the third one. The youngest child, a baby, was sleeping in the parents’ bedroom. The living room was very neat and covered with a wall-to-wall carpet that was again covered with a large, thick Oriental carpet. The furniture included a second-hand leather sofa, a couple of armchairs, and a bookshelf of dark wood. On the bookshelf, like in most other Somali families I visited, there was only one book – the Koran. The bookshelf in Aamina’s house contained other objects, among other things, a TV/VCR set, eighteen

buckets of colorful paper flowers, and many other decorative objects, such as porcelain vases, teapots and services etc. In the living room, the TV was often on and a paraboloid antenna on the balcony brought news and religious programs from mainly Arabic countries. The following excerpt from the field notes describes my impressions on one of my visits to Aamina's house.

For the first time (after having visited Aamina's home several times) I was invited to the living room to talk with Aamina's father. Previously we had been sitting on Aamina's bed in the girls' room doing her home assignments...

The father... is sitting on the sofa. He is a big man who seems to be very much aware of his position in the family. He is bare-foot, wears an African style batik shirt and a cloth wrapped around his waist. His oldest son is sitting next to him and interpreting what the father is saying. The mother is sitting a little to the side in an armchair. She is listening, but doesn't say anything. She is smiling toward me. Aamina stays in another room.

Everybody is bare-foot except me. I'm sitting and sweating in my thick stockings and my long woolen dress (REF: I have learned from the parents' meeting to dress more formally in the presence of the adult Somalis). I realize that the apartment is very warm. I was thinking that heating up the apartment and being lightly dressed was perhaps the closest to a homey feeling they could get in this weather.

The father knew some words in Finnish, like "Mitä kuuluu? Kuinka lapset?" [How are you? How are the children?] He says in Somali that he would like to learn more Finnish. Aamina's sister brings me orange juice in a glass. The father talks about all kinds of misunderstandings and difficulties Somalis face in Finland. Before he finishes, he regrets that my visit to his family is not taking place in Somalia where he could be more hospitable. However, he hopes that we will have a lot of exchange in the future.

What became apparent during the research was the fact that many immigrant children and adolescents had few chances to socialize and talk with native-born adults. However, many of them seemed to be willing to take the chance when it was available to them. The absence of Somali speaking adults' contacts with native-born persons was even more striking. It is not inaccurate to claim that access to mainstream contacts and linking social capital seemed to be 'a scarce resource' for many Somali-speaking persons in Finland.

5.3 Data, Analysis and Reflections

5.3.1 Data from the Field

The contexts of the fieldwork, the ethnic group, school and families, were described above. Each of these fields required different negotiations in terms of gaining access, establishing a rapport, and finding a role.

During the fieldwork period, I also paid a visit to Somaliland (Northwest region of the former Somalia). The visit was important for understanding the backgrounds of Somali immigrants in Finland, as well as in giving a picture of the diasporic relations between these two countries. However, the observations made during the visit are not included in the analysis of this research.

In the fieldnotes, observational data prevails particularly in the description of the school context. However, there is also data that consists of semi-structured and unstructured interviews and discussions with the informants and other Somali adults, Somali students, teachers, other authorities, and children's parents. During the entire research process, 18 representatives of the authorities as well as school staff members (other than teachers), 17 Finnish teachers, five Somali teachers, 27 Somali community members, and two Imams were interviewed or spoken with, many of them several times. The core of Somali students in the context of school consisted of four boys and two girls, all students in the same classroom. The number of Somali youth was gradually expanded to include their peers, siblings and other youth, reaching a total of 19 students (11 boys, 8 girls) from 11 to 20 years of age. Discussions were also conducted with seven Somali fathers and five mothers of the students, with other researchers, and with some Finnish students in the Forest Hill School.

The fieldwork as a whole lasted from year 1996 until year 2000. The school ethnography in the Forest Hill School occurred between December 1997 and June 1998. Families of the students were visited from spring 1998 until fall 2000. Observation also took place in other school-related settings, as well as at parents' meetings, during many home visits, while running errands with some of the parents, and during a visit to the court with one of the students. The ethnic group level data was collected in seminars and meetings relating to the Somali community in Finland, as well as through discussions and interviews with some of the informants. The follow-up research with the six students in the core group took place in the form of informal get-togethers and occasional telephone calls through the autumn of 2000. The field notes consist of a total of around 1200 typed pages.

5.3.2 Analysis of the Field Notes and Emerging Categories

In order to reduce and condense the data for a description and a conceptual framework, I coded the data and indexed the fieldnotes in part manually and in part with the help of the Ethnograph-program (software designed for the analysis of text-based data). By reading through the fieldnotes several times and by coding them, it was possible to extract certain issues that clearly appeared in the text frequently. After a further careful reading, these issues and themes could be merged under certain larger categories and themes. The original data that was in a chronological order could be organized through the coding process according to new, thematic principles. These were again organized into bigger conceptually specified analytic constructs that were given meanings and displayed in the five articles. (Appendixes.)

Despite my efforts, there were many pieces in the data that did not seem to ‘fit’ with the whole. Hence, during analysis I had to change the perspective at times to see the whole in a way that would make the picture make better sense. Instead of being able to create one comprehensive picture, the inductive research process allowed the emergence of some themes and categories that could be clustered into larger conceptually specified analytic constructs. The larger constructs, such as ”generation in-between”, ”ethos of integration”, ”segmentation of acculturation”, and ”diasporic consciousness”, were used to make the picture more comprehensible and manageable.

The ethnic group level data was collected to provide a better understanding of Somali students in the context of education. This data mainly touched upon issues such as group composition in terms of educational and other demographic characteristics, its organization in Finnish society, internal networks, the role of religion etc. This data is described in Alitolppa-Niitamo (2000) and Alitolppa-Niitamo and Ali (2001), and particularly from the point of view of school performance of children, in Alitolppa-Niitamo (2004).

It was interesting to note that the more I re-read the school ethnography field notes, the more I realized that the proportion of fieldnotes concerning instruction and learning in the classroom was rather small in relation to other material. There were notes on so much else: memories from the homeland, family issues discussed in the classroom, incidents that had happened to the boys outside of school hours, concern and uncertainty about the future, frustration, fatigue, and lack of concentration. In the course of the analysis I became increasingly assured that youth with a recent immigration background are experiencing a very intensive phase of change of which schooling is only one part. Knowing and understanding the *context* of the students is important and has to be taken into consideration in their education. The context here means family, position and status in the larger school, ethnic group and social setting, as well as transnational processes.

The real meaning of the context became obvious in the acknowledgement of how forcefully it entered the classroom in discussions and emotions. The context of the students had changed drastically as a result of immigration and, at the time of the fieldwork, it was still in constant fluctuation. The change and acculturation to the new conditions required a lot of mental processing and often proceeding through trial and error. This, again, took a lot of energy, time and courage, and at times feelings of disappointment, frustration and discouragement were hard to avoid.

Although the discussions of many issues that went beyond the assigned curriculum interfered with teaching, it was clear that as certain important issues bothered the students' minds, they needed to bring up these issues - for example arguments with the parents, experiences of racism, and questions related to the wider society. The discussions with the teacher surrounding these matters are important, because, through them, the students are better able to understand themselves and the surrounding reality. The discussions also allowed them to share their experiences and emotions with others.

In terms of school itself, the students seemed to fluctuate between a sense of meaning and meaninglessness, and between hope and effort and despair and frustration. They all knew, and it was perpetuated by their parents, that formal education was important, but simultaneously they faced many difficulties in following the instruction. The difficulty was that there were so many other things beyond school that demanded their energy, and because the content of the school curriculum often did not really connect with their lives or their cognitive structures, it was hard for them to assume and internalize. The following excerpt from the fieldnotes is an example of how the topics of discussion would fluctuate from instructional materials to other topics that occupied their minds.

Liisa gives the students some homework assignments for English.

"Oh no teacher, not any more!" says Taariq.

"Yes, teacher, give us some more, one exercise is nothing" says Mire.

They look at the assignments but start to talk about employment and segregation. Taariq says: "If you go to Työtori [employment office] to look for a job, and you call asking about the job, they used promise to call you later and but then you'll find out later that the job has already been given to somebody else.

Jamal says that he frequently introduces himself as an Arab, instead of Somali, when he calls about employment.

I ask how many Somali persons they know who are employed at the moment. Mire says that he knows one who is working as an interpreter, but he thinks that this is not 'a real job'. Jamal says that everybody he knows who is employed is doing cleaning work. He says that what is certain is that no Somali is allowed to become a policeman.

Mire: Yes, there are some obstacles – it is the employer.

Jamal: Policemen, they think that all Somalis are criminals.

Aamina: Yes, in shops or in the grocery store they always follow you.

Yussuf: Once in my neighborhood, when I went to a grocery store with my mother and she walked ahead of me, I heard a guard at the entrance say to another person as my mother walked in that “these Ninjas are always stealing”. Yussuf laughs that his mother, wearing a large veil, was called a Ninja, and others laugh too.

Yussuf: When a Somali commits a crime, the Somali background will always be mentioned in a newspaper. But if you, teacher, commit a crime, then they just write that Liisa X has committed a crime.

Taariq: One week ago me and Abdirahman visited Työtori and we called at least seven places asking for employment.

Soon they move on and start talking about applications and post-comprehensive education.

5.3.3 Evaluation of the Research Data and Process

The content and the order of published articles highlight the process-like nature of the research. The first two articles shed some light on general issues at the community level, and open up some of the themes that are dealt with in more depth in the latter articles. Articles three and four deal with youth and the significance of age in the contexts of family and schooling. The last chapter is an attempt to create a larger, more holistic picture by connecting the variety of pieces with the help of a conceptual framework. The end product is a “bricolage” of various constructs and perspectives that highlight some of the aspects that are central in the lives of Somali youth in metropolitan Helsinki, with a focus on formal education.

In terms of enhancing the truth value of the present research findings, I have used triangulation, i.e. the application of several methods such as observations, discussions and multiple sources of data. Manuscripts of the articles were given to some of the insiders so that they could check the relevance of my claims, with the exception of article four (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2002). One article was co-authored with Abdullahi A. Ali, a Somali researcher who lived in metropolitan Helsinki at the time. Repeated observations over a long period of time allow the recognition of the processes and the repetitive nature of certain occurrences, which also enhances the truth value of the data.

Peer examination by colleagues in the same field of research provided support, but also alternative perspectives to my claims. Some of the themes in the articles were presented to a network of researchers in Somali Studies in Helsinki, and several papers were presented at national and international seminars and conferences, including Toronto, San Francisco, and Tallinn.

The transferability of the findings from the Somali population in Helsinki to the entire country, and to Somali diasporas in other countries, is of course questionable. Based on confirmation provided in the ethnic group level fieldwork, however, claims drawn from the school ethnography data have found relevance even beyond this particular classroom.

The fieldwork process was interesting and in many ways very rewarding. However, I became convinced that tolerance of ambiguity is one of the central requirements for an ethnographer. The massive amount of small bits of information and impressions during the fieldwork causes confusion, frustration and concerns as to which direction to go. I was anxious to “put things in order” and the anxiety continued for most of the fieldwork and analysis process.

5.4 Ethical Considerations

5.4.1 Informed Consent, Anonymity and Publishing

How to inform the subjects of the study about the research so that they are able to give their unconstrained consent? This is a difficult question since the issue of consent is not unproblematic. First, in how detailed manner does one need to describe the content of the research? Information given in the initial phase of an ethnographic, inductively-oriented research may be misleading, since not even the researcher may know what turns the research is going to take later. And even if one knew, does one tell everyone involved the same thing? Also the nature of ethnographic research, which is supposed to be naturalistic, poses restrictions on how much to reveal so as not to allow the research or the researcher to affect the setting too much. Taking these considerations into account, in the present research, the aim was described in very general terms. What I usually said to those involved was that I was a researcher and that I was interested in understanding how Somali students were doing in school, and what the obstacles might be that they face there.

Both adults and students seemed to quite easily accept the focus of my interest. In some cases, the term ‘research’ felt cumbersome. The meaning of the term was not necessarily clear to everyone, and the associations to other terms such as “examination”, “judgment”, and “categorization” may have created some anxiety. This is understandable in the case of asylum seekers and refugees who may have lived with the threat of persecution (cf. Daniel & Knudsen 1995) and may not be familiar with research conducted for scientific purposes. I did not experience this so much as a problem with adult informants, but the unfamiliarity with the term was obvious among

students and even among some of their parents in the beginning. When the teacher told the students that I would be spending time in the classroom because I was doing ‘research’, one of the students commented: *“What? Research? Are we like some animals or something to be examined?”*

At the Forest Hill School, I tried to decrease students’ anxiety and uncertainty regarding my research by explaining my intentions simply and clearly. In order to be as concrete as possible, I brought to school a published report on my first study among Somali asylum seekers and read some quotations for them. The students listened with interest, and later we talked about the content of the research, but also about the informative meaning of this kind of descriptive research for the ‘mainstream’ population. Better familiarity with research and this concrete example seemed to be quite enlightening to the students, and I felt that my intentions were better communicated to them.

Because the subjects of the study were minors, an informed consent from their parents/caretakers was necessary for the classroom ethnography. The classroom teacher, who had not had very successful experiences with informing homes by written messages, because papers tended to get lost or were not understood, advised that I should introduce myself and my research in the parents’ evening and receive consent from the parents. As described earlier, after some hesitation, the parents approved my presence in the classroom. Before the verbal consent from the parents was received, the headmaster of the school had given his permission and the teachers in the school had been informed.

In addition to informed consent, the privacy of the subjects of research needs to be maintained, but also raises a complex ethical issue. When the research is published in the same society where the subjects of the research live (unlike most anthropological research), and when the population under study is small and tightly connected in social networks, the anonymity principle requires special attention. The following guidelines by Johnson (1982, 87-88) for ‘ethical proofreading’ of the manuscript have guided the writing of the present research: (1) weigh the risks of publishing harmful material against the benefits of doing so; (2) use descriptive rather than judgmental terms, and choose the words carefully; (3) use generalizing terms rather than giving specifics when reporting private or unflattering characteristics; (4) consider the possibilities of how the information could be used by others, e.g. by popular media, in a negative way; and (5) consider your own perspectives and biases toward the subjects.

The fulfilling of ethical standards is improved if the subjects of the research are allowed to control the information that concerns them. For example, they should be able to read and comment on the text before it is published. In practice, relocating all the persons involved in a study is often impossible, and in some cases people may not be interested reading written materials. This happened with my first fieldwork report in

1993, as I mailed my manuscript from New York to four community members in Helsinki whom I had interviewed so that they could comment on it before it was published. I got no response. Later, I got an explanation: one of the community members explained that the choice of communication channel was not the best possible. He told me that Somalis have an oral culture, which means that also literate people prefer oral communication. So instead of sending a bunch of papers, I should have gathered the people together for a verbal exchange, preferably for a full day. In the present research, I resolved the issue by co-authoring one article with a Somali researcher and letting three articles be read by at least one Somali-speaking person who was or had been working in the field of education and was active in the ethnic group level activities.

Even after receiving research and publication permissions, the researcher has to consider the possibility that the research process itself or the publication of the research findings may cause harm to the group or its individual members. Cassell (1982) maintains that there is relatively little harm associated with fieldwork, and that the most serious harm usually does not occur during the fieldwork but after it, as a result of the products associated with it, such as publications and media attention. These effects are more difficult to control than those related to encounters with informants. Although the researcher may be careful in her/his writing and consider the information that might be hurtful to somebody, by reporting on the findings mass media may make intentional or unintentional interpretations that might have negative consequences for the subjects of the study. For example, newspaper editors who emphasize exciting news, novelty, and 'exotic' topics, may not value accuracy in the same way as a researcher. An example of this came, again, in connection with my first report. A major newspaper, by picking up one issue in the report, and by emphasizing it in big headlines, distorted the message of the report and created a negative image of the ethnic group. Since it is difficult for a researcher to stay in control of the research results after publication, a safer approach may be that the researcher her-/himself writes the stories that appear in publications, or at least, demands the right to review the material before it is published (cf. also Krulfeld 1993, Hammersley & Atkinson 1995, Krulfeld & MacDonald 1998).

5.4.2 The Issue of Representation

Based on some negative experiences of the publication of the first report, certain aspects made me hesitant to initiate and carry on with a new study. Questions related to ethical issues bothered me, in particular the issue of representation and my right as an 'outsider' to define a group of people and describe aspects of their lives made me hesitate. Some of the questions related to the issue of representation are discussed in the following.

Social science research often deals with issues related to power and dominance. But, as George Bond and Angela Gilliam (1994) point out, the research itself, representing

as it does the way of life of a population, is an expression and a source of power. They argue that social scientific research is most often ethnocentric: "mainstream" scholars are confined to the world views, categories, concepts, and needs that their communities represent, and the intellectual and scholarly contributions of subjugated people has not been recognized. Oftentimes subjugated groups, for example ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples, have not had an opportunity to define themselves (cf. also Said 1979, 1994). The consequences of excluding the scholarly contribution of certain groups extend in fact further than to the academy in the form of biased knowledge, because the various hierarchies of knowledge may have important political implications in the wider society (cf. also Krulfeld 1993).

Robert Merton (1972/1994) claimed that there are contending claims for truth expressed by people who identify themselves as members of a particular group. In a situation of increasing diversity, complexity and polarization of the population, the "doctrine of the Insider" holds that only a member of a particular social group can understand the history, culture, and social life of that group. The doctrine questions whether representatives of the "mainstream" dominant culture have the right to study and define minorities, and whether they (we) are even capable of understanding the experiences of 'Others'. Robert Merton (ibid.) responds to this claim, referring to Lévi-Strauss, saying that the experiences of the 'Other' can become accessible to 'outsiders' when the research employs skill, precision, a sympathetic approach and objectivity.

It must also be noted that the definition of "outsider" is not unproblematic either. For example, in studying immigrants and ethnic groups, the dichotomy cannot be based on ethnicity alone, when gender, class, religion, sexual orientation etc. increase the possibility of drawing distinctive lines between 'us' and 'them' (cf. also Gans 2000). In the present research, there is an attempt to avoid sweeping appropriations and ethnocentric stereotypes by using a research design that is open and inductive and allows a variety of perspectives to emerge, and by using multiple methods in a respectful and sensitive manner. Finally, the analysis of the research data, in emphasizing variability within the ethnic group, 'writes against' homogenizing, stereotyping descriptions.

6 Presentation of Substudies

6.1 The Articles: From the General towards the Specific

This chapter presents the larger themes and analytic constructs included in the five articles that form the analysis of the ethnographic data. The order of presentation reflects the writing order of the articles. In the course of reading fieldnotes, coding, indexing and analysis, certain issues and themes emerged that were further explored and developed in the articles. The first two articles, so-called ‘contextualizing’ articles, were written mainly on the basis of the group level data gathered during the first phase of fieldwork.

With respect to the tradition of anthropological research that aims for a holistic description, this research pays attention to the context and processes at the level of the ethnic group as well as the receiving society. The point of departure of the present research was the acknowledgement that education and schooling do not exist without a context, and ethnographies that narrowly focus on schools or on classrooms cannot be holistic. However, it must be admitted, as Harry F. Wolcott (2002,35) points out, that one cannot pursue the examination of the context indefinitely and “...it is hard to know where holism stops.” This research reports on the contextual data that were found to play a role, in a way or another, to the schooling of Somali-speaking youth.¹⁴

In the present research, the contextualization of Somali-speaking students includes descriptions on refugee migration and resettlement in Finnish society, the history of immigration in Finland, as well as some processes at the group and family level among the Somali-speaking population in metropolitan Helsinki in the 1990s. The description of the history of immigration in Finland is based on literary sources, while the description of migration, resettlement and group dynamics is mainly based on empirical data collected in the anthropological ethnographic fieldwork. Chapter Two contains more contextual information, i.e. the presentation of a short historical overview on Somalia and Somaliland.

¹⁴ In the course of writing the articles, the term ‘Somali’ was changed to the term ‘Somali-speaking’. This was done because of increasingly negative connotations in the Finnish language in the use of the first term. Also the fact that the use of term ‘Somali’ as an signifier of ethnic identity was regarded as less valid over the years, particularly in the case of second generation, motivated the adoption of a new term. Another alternative could have been e.g. ‘Somali-Finn’ but the language-based definition was preferred because it is also applied in official statistics.

It is typical for ethnographic research that the research problem tends to change and develop to some degree according to the researcher's experience, and acquired knowledge and insight as the research progresses. This happened also in the present study. The original focus on Somali youth as performers in the context of formal education broadened to Somali youth as family and ethnic group members, as the fieldwork opened up issues such as the situation of children and youth as constructors of their identities, and ways of life in their family context.

The simple fact that immigrant youth could not be regarded solely as students in the school context, and not solely as members of a certain ethnic group, but also as members of their families, gradually became clear. Although families were an important source of support for many students, it was clear that the students also experienced certain dilemmas and conflicts within their families. Thus, article three focuses on specific conditions of cultural construction and ethnic reconstruction of young persons with an immigration background in relation to their parents and the diasporic ethnic group.

Not until article four did the analysis become focused on the context of formal education. Based on an open and inductively oriented research design, the article describes various obstacles that students were found to face in their schooling. In this article some obstacles can be classified as structural barriers, others as social barriers, while article five groups the factors according to other categories. The role of students' age at arrival to their educational achievement receives special emphasis in the article four.

Article five is the second article to focus directly on schooling. Using a framework, the article summarizes the variety of factors found to be effective in the school achievement of Somali youth. It is suggested that the framework has even wider validity in the analysis of the school achievement of children with an immigration background beyond the Somali-speaking youth in metropolitan Helsinki. The article introduces the concept of 'acculturation path' and suggests that it would replace the term 'integration' which both reflects the interests of the receiving society and is bounded to national boundaries.

6.2 Article I: 'From the Equator to the Arctic Circle: A Portrait of Somali Integration and Diasporic Consciousness in Finland'

Published in Gozdzia, E.M. and Shandy, D.J. (eds.) *Rethinking Refuge and Displacement, Selected Papers on Refugees and Immigrants*, vol. viii, 2000. Arlington, VA: American Anthropological Association.

This article is the first one based on the anthropological fieldwork among the Somali-speaking population in metropolitan Helsinki. The article, written in the spring of 2000, is the first of the two 'contextualization articles.'

This article describes the arrival of Somalis in Finland and highlights some of the general demographic characteristics among the newcomers. Although the study of the origins and directionality of the migration flow was not the focus of the study, it was regarded as important for shedding light on these issues, because they played a role in the demographic characteristics of the new arrivals. The article also describes quite generally the resettlement and acculturation processes at the ethnic group level and identifies many resettlement challenges faced by the Somalis. The data was collected by the observation-participation method in meetings, seminars and gatherings, and through discussions and semi-structured interviews with a number of Somali-speaking adults. Although the data is rather general, it is valuable in gaining a sense of some of the central processes within the group and family levels that also created the context of individual development and schooling for Somali-speaking youth.

In the contextualization of the resettlement process of the Somali-speaking population, the specific nature of the encounter between the Somali-speaking population and the host society is worth mentioning. The article contains the claim that the position of the Somali-speaking population as the first sizable group of black, African-Muslim asylum seekers in a country with very little experience with pre-existing ethnic relations, created a particularly difficult context for cross-cultural encounters and for a smooth acculturation process. The arrival of Somali asylum seekers took Finns by surprise and gave rise to a lively discussion in the media as well as among laymen. For example, Magdalena Jaakkola's (1999) survey study shows that the Somali-speaking population faced more ignorance, prejudice, and xenophobia than other immigrant groups. Also the fact that there was no previous Somali-speaking community in Finland before the beginning of 1990s must have complicated and slowed down the mutual acculturation process. Additionally, the deep economic recession and high unemployment level in Finland in the early 1990s increased negative attitudes towards 'outsiders'. Against this background, it is fair to maintain that the Somali-speaking population will remain a very particular group in Finnish immigration history.

A rather unexpected realization in the course of the fieldwork was that the Somali-speaking population in metropolitan Helsinki was such a heterogeneous group, and had quite a low level of internal cohesion. The ethnic group was found to consist of a wide variety of demographic backgrounds and human resources and was divided into many subgroups. The Somali group differs from most other immigrant groups in that the proportion of children and youth make up about fifty percent of the entire group. In terms of their educational background, both the ethnographic data as well as Annika Forsander's (2000) study indicate a broad demographic makeup, ranging from illiterate individuals with no formal education to those with university degrees. Also the ethnographic data in the school setting indicates that the educational backgrounds of Somali children and adolescents were very diverse. On average, however, the educational level of Somali speakers is lower than among many other immigrant groups in Finland (Forsander 2002). The acknowledgment of the diversity in their backgrounds and, consequently, the variety of acculturation strategies and opportunities, led to the highlighting of the importance of 'incoming resources' in the acculturation process in the final analysis (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004).

The first fieldwork among the Somali-speaking population in 1993 established that the divisions within the ethnic group according to clan lines were deep during the first years of resettlement, and the political situation in the country of origin was reflected in immigrants' social relations in Finland (Alitolppa-Niitamo 1994). In the course of the present study, it was obvious that many divisions within the ethnic group remained, although the meaning of clan membership seemed to become less important as the years went by. As a result of numerous internal divisions, organization at group level into an effective interest group was slow. The article maintains that it is more appropriate to regard the Somali-speaking population in the 1990s as consisting of several communities rather than one community.

Many of the first 'vintage' arrivals to Finland in the very beginning of the 1990s were quite young and educated (on Somalis in Canada, see also Kusow 1998). They used their human agency in creating their own routes, oftentimes through several countries. After the first arrivals began the chain migration process and family reunification, bringing in people with a great variety of backgrounds, experiences and human capital. The article maintains that, in addition to the desire to find safety amidst a cruel civil war, many Somali asylum seekers who made it to Western countries also had other expectations concerning their resettlement country. Among these expectations, the wish to give children an opportunity for schooling is here claimed to be a central one. Hence, as to reasons for migrating, this article takes a critical stand to the clear-cut dichotomy of "voluntary" and "involuntary" migration and "push" and "pull" factors (Kunz 1973, 1981) and emphasizes that a multitude of factors affect a migration decision. It is acknowledged that it is difficult to separate voluntary from involuntary

elements in people's motives to move (e.g. Cohen, 1997). However, the article emphasizes that Anthony Richmond's (1988, 14) claim that whatever the reasons, routes and expectations related to migration, the common denominator for refugees is "the sense of loss of control over one's own fate" in the country of origin, is also valid in the case of the Somali-speaking population.

Having been disempowered in their society of origin, the various activities and strategies of acculturation of adult Somalis are interpreted as being ways of gaining control of their life in a new context. This has occurred in various ways. When entrance to the labor market was more or less blocked in the mid-1990s, some Somali-speaking adults tried to re-establish control over their lives by studying, while others directed themselves increasingly to religion, and again some, for example, to diaspora politics. With regard to formal education, many parents directed their expectations towards their children (cf. Valtonen 1999).

Anthropologist Liisa Malkki (1992, 1995a & b) reminds of the risks of essentializing and describing refugee populations with simplified categories. The present research strongly emphasizes internal variation in terms of demographic characteristics, available social support, as well as human agency. It also points out that Finnish authorities failed to acknowledge the diasporic consciousness and transnational activities of Somali speakers, and largely portrayed them as static objects for various integrative measures. Due to the 'ethos of integration' (*kotoutuminen/kotouttaminen*) among the authorities, the acculturation path options of Somali speakers were largely seen as bound to the national context.

The discovery of the transnational activities and diasporic consciousness among Somali speakers was another unexpected realization in the course of the fieldwork. This realization refuted one of the initial research questions related to the meaning of formal education in social mobility and integration *in Finnish society*. I had to admit that even I had been indoctrinated by the one-sided integration discourse of Finnish society. The article establishes that Somali speakers – at least first-generation – live in a transnational context to a great degree, and with strong diasporic consciousness, and, hence, their aspirations and educational choices must be understood in that context.

Article one also takes up the issue analyzed in greater detail in the later articles: the challenges of change within families with an immigration background. These challenges became apparent both in the discussions with adults, and in the school ethnography. The change in the socio-cultural context as well as changes in family composition and psychosocial dynamics are viewed here as setting many families in turmoil. In addition, the Finnish family reunification program, based on culturally based notions of a nuclear family, reconstituted traditional, extended Somali families into much smaller units

(also Hautaniemi 2004). These numerous changes must have caused friction in social relations among family members in many households. Families that were undergoing these drastic transitions were not always able to support their individual members optimally.

6.3 Article II: Somali Diaspora in Finland: Changes, Challenges and Dreams

Co-authored with Abdullahi A. Ali. Published in Forsander, A., Ekholm, E., Hautaniemi, P., Ali, A.A., Alitolppa-Niitamo, A. ym. (2001) *Monietnisyys, yhteiskunta ja työ*. Helsinki: Palmenia-kustannus.

The second article, written in the fall of 2000 in collaboration with researcher Abdullahi A. Ali, is the second contextualization article and further develops some of the themes taken up in the first article. The article starts with a general description of the shock of encounter and goes on to a short historical and cultural account of Somalia and Somalis. Furthermore, it describes some demographic characteristics of the Somali asylum seekers, as well as some central elements in their integration process, particularly within families. Finally, there is a discussion of the diasporic and transnational nature of Somali ethnic communities.

As already emphasized in the first article, Somali-speaking immigrants will remain a very particular group in Finnish immigration history. Their arrival set in motion an unprecedented stream of reactions both in the media and in civic debate, and threatening images and negative news prevailed. Additionally, the picture that was painted of the Somali population was very homogeneous, even though the reality was much more diverse. What was generally neglected was the background from which Somalis arrived and which certainly played a role in the formation of their acculturation paths. The article describes briefly the background context of a colonial legacy, patrilinear clan families, and the manipulation of the traditional clan system by dictator Mohammed Siad Barre. The course of events resulted in a nepotistic regime, ‘a dirty war’, and eventually, mass flight of approximately one million Somalis to other parts of Africa, the Persian Gulf countries, North America, and Europe. The article goes into some of the factors that contributed to the unlikely fact that Finland became one of the destinations for Somalis’ refugee flight.

The significance of the family processes is included here in the discussion of the collective orientation within Somali culture in general. The article claims that although the political importance of clan membership may have decreased for diaspora Somalis,

the extended family continued to be of major social significance. The collective nature of Somali culture is well established in the observed frequent contact with relatives in other countries – to the point that Marja Tiilikainen and Salada Robleh (1999) maintain that the extended Somali family has become a ‘virtual family’ – and particularly in the expectation of loyalty towards one’s extended family. The expectation among Somali speakers was for reciprocal support and assistance towards the larger community, even at the cost of individual pursuits (also Hautaniemi 2004).

The second article goes further in the analysis of family dynamics and focuses on the conflicts that often seemed to take place between genders and generations. In terms of generational conflicts, children and young people and their parents had divergent opinions over what could fittingly be adopted from Finnish society. Various members of the family may adopt very different acculturation strategies, and parents may lose their role of parenthood under these pressures. The intergenerational conflicts presented in this article are further described and analyzed in Article III, and the particularly vulnerable situation of those young people who arrived in Finland as teenagers is analyzed in more detail in Article IV.

In addition to the collective orientation in Somali culture, the Islamic faith plays a major role in the way of life of Somali speakers. This notion was further established in the course of the school ethnography, as bringing up children to be good Muslims was found to be a major objective for parents. However, it is pointed out in the article, even in this regard one should be aware of generalizations since there exist numerous interpretations of Islam among the immigrants.

Orality, which the article presents as the third central characteristic of Somali culture was also later found to have consequences for Somali youth and their schooling. In Somalia, sayings, poems and legends were stored in people’s memory and passed on orally from one generation to the next. Written Somali was not widely used, and officially dates only from 1972. The article gives some examples on how illiteracy and the reliance on oral rather than written information created obstacles and difficulties in a highly literal, knowledge-based society.

As discussed earlier, culture, cultural differences and cultural discontinuity are sometimes, particularly in popular discourse, used as a solely explanation for differences in areas such as educational achievement, occupational level, and income. Many researchers find this explanation controversial, and avoid such a loaded concept for fear that simple culturalist explanations would increase ethnic prejudices and obscure the importance of social structure in determining the conditions of people’s everyday life. The intention of this article is not to fall in the ‘culturalist fallacy’, meaning that cultures are understood as homogenous, sharply bounded entities that are transmitted

as such from generation to generation (Vermeulen 2000). The article nevertheless maintains that although culture cannot provide a complete explanation, the historical specificity that is reflected in the values, norms, experiences and knowledge of a certain social group (that can be called their 'culture') cannot be ignored. Instead, this historical specificity, culture, or whatever we want to call it, I claim in the article, plays a role in the incorporation of at least the first, in-between and second generations. At the same time it must be conceded that it is not an autonomous force, but instead, socially embedded in previous as well as in present social, political and economic relations. Hence, it is in constant fluctuation, particularly in the case of immigrant youth, as will be seen in Article III (cf. Vermeulen 2000). It seems, in fact, that when family and intergenerational issues among immigrants are studied, the notion of 'culture' is difficult to avoid. Is it possible to talk about family and intergenerational issues without considering upbringing, socialization or cultural reproduction, processes in which values, norms, roles, experiences, and knowledge are so central?

Culture is thus viewed here as one among the many factors that influence the formation of the acculturation paths of immigrants. Its importance lies in sensitizing us to the histories of immigrant groups (Vermeulen 2000) as well as in making us understanding the socialization patterns and inter-generational relations in immigrant families. Article V presents a wide variety of other factors that I claim are effective, not only in the school performance of students with an immigration background, but also in the formation of immigrants' acculturation paths in general. In this framework, culture is only one among many other influencing factors.

In fact, Article II in its brief analysis of the acculturation of Somali speakers in Finland, in addition to discussing cultural characteristics, goes on to focus on the meaning of such human capital factors as age, gender, education, employment and urban/rural background of asylum seekers, as well as attributes of the receiving society, such as prejudice among the dominant population, receiving practices, and characteristics of the Finnish employment market.

The article points out that in a society in which a well-integrated immigrant, in the eyes of the dominant population, seems to be the one who is employed, the integration of the Somali speakers in that sense can be said to be rather slow. However, the article gives the prognosis that the strong orientation to and appreciation of formal education (one of the incoming resources in the later analysis) will probably improve employment in the future. And indeed, the unemployment percentage has gone down from 92 percent in 1994 to 58 percent by the end of year 2002 (Statistics Finland 2003).

Finally, Article II again takes up the notion of diasporic orientation among the Somali-speaking population, which is seen as running as a parallel process with integration

pursuits. The article, by using William Safran's (1991, 83-84) classic definition of diaspora communities, establishes that the Somali group in Finland can be characterized as a diasporic immigrant group that remains in constant contact with the homeland, feels responsible for assisting it, and where many individuals wish to return to their country of origin. The meaning of the diasporic consciousness for Somali-speaking youth is discussed in Article III.

6.4 Article III: Liminalities: Expanding and constraining the options of Somali youth in the Helsinki metropolitan area

Published in *Yearbook of Population Research in Finland*, XXXVII, 2001. The Population Research Institute, Helsinki, Finland.

Article III, written in the spring of 2001, focuses on the socio-cultural context of Somali-speaking youth. The purpose of the article is to describe some specific processes and challenges identified among Somali-speaking youth in metropolitan Helsinki, particularly in relation to their parents. The processes described in this article focus on cultural construction, ethnic reconstruction and diasporic consciousness.

The article maintains researching and highlighting the specific socio-cultural and developmental challenges of youth with an immigration background is important, since the direction of the acculturation paths of children and youth with an immigration background has long-term consequences for the entire ethnic group (Portes 1996, 1997). While the contextualization of youth with their ethnic group and with the larger society is essential, as was already pointed out in the first two articles, Article III emphasizes particularly the need for understanding the context of their families and family dynamics. Acculturation is a challenge to the family dynamics, and the article describes some of the acculturation processes identified in recent immigrant families.

In the article, the dilemmas and conflicts among Somali youth are analysed with the help of the concept of 'liminality'. Liminality, according to Victor Turner (1967, 1977), is a transitional state in which persons are out of their structural context and in an ambiguous position. In a transitional phase, an individual is simultaneously open to new statuses, norms and definitions, and at the same time (s)he is socially and psychologically vulnerable if not able to define his/her role, status or group of reference.

Adolescence as a period in-between childhood and adulthood is such a state of liminality. Another such state is the status of being a refugee in a new society (Malkki 1995). Hence, refugee adolescents in general have a double liminal status (Camino 1994). Additionally, youth face other liminal statuses, one of which is related to their role and sense of power within the family, and the other is related to the diasporic and transnational consciousness prevalent among the Somali population in Finland. While liminalities may open up new opportunities, the article points out that several simultaneous states of liminality may be confusing and difficult to handle.

The challenges of identity formation (e.g. Rotheram & Phinney 1989; Krulfeld & Camino 1994; Camino 1994) and intergenerational conflicts (e.g. Rumbaut 1996), which children of immigrants and minority youth in general face, have been reported on widely. Being in the cross-section of many influences provides youth with choice, but also poses challenges, particularly if expectations from various contexts conflict with one another. As a consequence of the exposure to the new environment, cultural construction and ethnic reconstruction take place among adults as well as children and youth. However, there is often a difference in pace and the extent to which various aspects of social and cultural change become accepted by different generations. This dissonant acculturation (Portes 1997) is one of the reasons behind the intergenerational conflicts in many Somali families.

Children and adolescents, while they acquire some of the cultural characteristics of their parents, also engage in a cultural dialogue with a multiplicity of other forces that represent various values, norms and ways of living. As a result, they produce entirely new, hybrid forms of culture (Amit-Talal 1991). The way in which Somali youth constructed new, hybrid forms of cultural characteristics seemed often to be in conflict with and threaten adults' conceptions of what is right and wrong. When family members negotiate ethnic reconstruction, claims, statuses and power positions are contested with one another. During the fieldwork it became apparent that Somali youth seldom had a voice, or that their voice in such negotiations was ambiguous, at both the family and ethnic group level.

Many Somali adults were concerned about the ways in which their offspring created new lifestyles, identities, norms and values. Particularly through their attendance in school, young people were exposed to new influences, while their parents, most of them unemployed, lived in greater isolation. Alejandro Portes (1997, also Zhou 1997) points out that the consequences of the rapid acculturation of the adolescents, and the generational role reversal that often follows, is unfavorable for the maintenance of parental authority. This was also found to be valid among the Somali youth in Finland.

Somali parents often talked about their fear of ‘losing’ their children, meaning that they would no longer be capable of controlling their offspring as they enter the complex, new society with all of the risks that it entails. This was a particularly critical issue in a community based on Islamic faith and a patrilineal kinship system in which parental respect and obedience were valued highly. This also placed the young people in a confusing liminal position, where, in one sense, they felt a sense of power as they guided their parents in the new society with their superior knowledge of the Finnish language and society. On the other hand, they were firmly expected to succumb to parental authority in the definition of accepted and unaccepted behaviors in the new society and, hence, they remained largely voiceless in the processes of ethnic construction and cultural reconstruction both inside the family and in the larger ethnic group.

Another form of liminality among Somali youth is related to the diasporic and transnational consciousness in Somali families, and the ‘ethos of integration’ in the receiving society. While the first two articles established the existence of diasporic consciousness and transnational processes among the Somali-speaking population in metropolitan Helsinki, Article III examines their significance briefly on the basis of empirical material. In the ethos of integration, the practices of various authorities (including e.g. schools and teachers) were geared solely towards the integration (even assimilation) of newcomers. Instead, from the viewpoint of Somali adults, the meaning of formal education was often connected with the idea of returning to the country of origin. While the memories of the home country among first-generation were certainly clearer and more detailed, and their relationship to Somalia closer, the empirical data shows that also youth had occupational and employment plans in which residence in Somalia or Somaliland were regarded as options.

Among the adult population, diasporic ties and activities may increase the sense of belonging and connectedness in a new social context that is experienced as alien and hostile. Diasporic consciousness may also create and keep up optimism and positive future perspectives in a situation that would otherwise be confusing and depressing (cf. also Shuval 2000). However, the situation of adolescents is believed to be more complicated (also Portes 1997). While parents encourage diasporic consciousness in their offspring, the younger generation is simultaneously a target of ‘the ethos of integration’ of the receiving society and its institutions. The conflicting message between the diasporic ethnic group and the ethos of integration in the wider society is believed to complicate the course of the acculturation path of Somali youth.

Article III concludes with the view that Somali youth can be characterized as existing in several liminal positions. In addition to the ‘normal’ liminalities of an adolescent and a refugee, they were also in an ambiguous position in terms of the processes of

cultural construction/ethnic reconstruction in their families, in terms of diasporic consciousness within the ethnic group, and the 'ethos of integration' in the wider society. These simultaneous liminalities, the argument goes, place Somali youth in a challenging, complex and even confusing situation. The young people in the study often found themselves in multiple transitional phases in which they were detached from previous statuses, norms, definitions and expectations, while not yet anchored to new ones.

Article III points out that students with an immigration background should not be viewed solely as students, or as 'Finnish as a second language -students'. Instead, it is important for educators and other school personnel to understand the many developmental and transitional challenges that young people with an immigration background experience. In addition to supporting the sense of ethnic identity and family relationships among young people with immigration background, more generally, a better balance should be achieved in the immersion of youth and their parents to 'mainstream' influences, so that the processes of dissonant acculturation can be slowed down. Another suggestion is that the diasporic consciousness of immigrated populations should be taken into consideration in the planning of educational programs and vocational training.

6.5 Article IV: The generation in-between: Somali youth and schooling in metropolitan Helsinki

Published in *Intercultural Education*, 2002, 13(3), (Autumn).

Article IV, written in the fall of 2001, mainly concentrates on the original focus of the study, i.e. Somali youth in the context of formal education. A great deal of the data is based on observations in the school setting, but also on verbal exchanges with the students during breaks and after school hours. The focal group consisted of six Somali students.

As a form of structural barrier, the article points out the consequences of universalism, which is a central principle in the Nordic welfare states. It is maintained that the underlying belief in universalism, the idea that equality in the provision of services guarantees actual equality, may have some negative consequences for immigrant populations. Particularly in the 1990s, argues the article, when the issue of cultural pluralism was not strong in Finland (e.g. Wahlbeck 1999; also Lepola 2000, Matinheikki-Kokko 1997), universalism had some harmful effects on second-generation immigrants. These harmful effects are a result of the fact that universalism often comes with homogenizing tendencies that make it difficult for minorities to maintain their cultural characteristics. Further, homogenizing politics may not only threaten the cultural reproduction and survival of distinct cultural groups, but may also forego the groups' recognition and fail to acknowledge their worth (cf. Taylor 1992/1994).

The article points out that in the 1990s in Finland, the provision of public services was based on the idea of service-users as a homogeneous population. Even in the Forest Hill School the curriculum was legitimized based on an understanding of students' as having a certain kind of a 'mainstream' background, which was demonstrated in substance, norms, values, and practices in schools. At the same time, the school functioned as a scene where immigrated children and youth with other kinds of backgrounds confronted 'mainstream' expectations to which they were not able to conform. Although there were certain special educational services for students with an immigration background, I argue in the article that the assimilative and homogenizing processes were powerful, and in some cases seemed to result in exclusion rather than inclusion.

The article maintains that apart from their different socio-cultural backgrounds, Somali students often differed from 'mainstream' expectations also in terms of their family

backgrounds and prior educational backgrounds. Although most parents appreciated formal education highly, parents were often unable to assist their children with the schoolwork and some parents also felt certain ambivalence towards Finnish school (Sakaranaho, Alitolppa-Niitamo, Martikainen & Tiilikainen, forthcoming). Parents' ambivalence towards school is analyzed in the article with the help of the concepts of 'instrumental' and 'expressive culture' of schools (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001, 156). The article argues that parents often appreciated the instrumental aspects (i.e. knowledge) of school, but many resisted some of the expressive aspects of school.

As already pointed out, although one should avoid cultural essentialism, it is not possible to entirely ignore the relevance of the cultural difference (cultural discontinuity) model presented in Chapter Two. The relevance of this perspective becomes obvious in the article as the consequences of the difficulties students face in acquiring culturally insensitive school curriculum are acknowledged. Secondly, the cultural difference view was also prevalent, as was presented in the third article, in conflicts that resulted from dissonant cultural construction between parents and their offspring.

In the same vein as Article III, Article IV also claims that the family cohesion in Somali families was threatened by the many changes brought on by the acculturation process. The empirical evidence of the present research supports Min Zhou's (1997) claim that parents' ability to support and control their children (a family's social capital) is crucial for the school achievement of children with an immigrant background.

In addition to the above-mentioned barriers in school achievement, the article makes a strong point about the significance of age at arrival in school achievement among immigrant students. The article suggests that more sophisticated categories to characterize immigrant generations are needed, and introduces the new category of 'generation in-between'¹⁵. This concept acknowledges the specific and precarious situation of immigrants and refugees who arrive in a new society as teenagers.

Several researchers (e.g. Kosonen 1994, McDonald 1998, Gynther 2001) have claimed that immigrant youth have very specific needs with regard to schooling. Article III pointed out the "normal" challenges of adolescence, but also some other 'liminalities' that may cause confusing experiences. Article IV continues with the theme related to this age group and claims that when the transition from homeland to a new country takes place during the teen-age years (often the decisive years of formal education),

¹⁵ Later it came out that a similar term, 'in-between generation', had been used in the Netherlands by Hans Vermeulen and Rinus Penninx (2000).

the consequences may be detrimental. The article argues that students who are “low-schooled” are in the most precarious situation (Mace-Matluck et al. 1998), since they face a tremendously demanding task in catching up with their age group prior to applying to post-comprehensive educational institutions.

Typical for “the generation in-between” immigrants is that they undergo many transitions within a short period of time. The article groups their challenges into three categories: acculturation stress, identity formation, and cognitive overload in school. Acculturation stress relates to cultural discontinuity and the challenges to family cohesion. The challenges in identity formation relate to the simultaneous processes of adult and ethnic identity construction and to the several ‘liminal’ phases. The challenge of cognitive overload, which receives most extensive elaboration in the article, relates to the fact that the generation in-between youth have to acquire the host society’s various forms of instrumental and expressive culture in a very short time, prior to applying to post-comprehensive educational institutions. Among recently arrived immigrants, the generation in-between is claimed to be particularly vulnerable.

The article also argues that the identities of Somali youth were threatened in many spheres of life. During adolescence, which is generally a time of intense identity construction, they needed to define their position in the social hierarchy of the receiving society and to fight against the prejudices and misconceptions of teachers, peers, and the media. In the school context, they were confronted with a culturally insensitive curriculum and homogenizing mainstream practices.

The article concludes with some suggested measures for easing the acculturation path of the generation of in-between youth in schooling. It suggests (1) making available advanced content courses in the students’ native language or in both languages; (2) using more flexible and culturally sensitive instructional materials and techniques; (3) advancing professional development among all school staff in issues of immigration/refugee migration, minority education and multicultural education; (4) establishing more links with the majority and ethnic communities for situated learning and hands-on experience in various contexts; and (5) offering intensive counseling regarding personal matters and post-comprehensive school opportunities and requirements.

6.6 Article V: Somali youth in the context of schooling in metropolitan Helsinki: A framework for assessing variability in educational performance

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Article V, written in the fall of 2002, is the second article that specifically focuses on the schooling of Somali youth in metropolitan Helsinki. This summarizing article uses a framework to gather together factors empirical data showed as influencing the school performance of Somali students in the Forest Hill School. The outcome of the premises of the study, characterized as open and inductively oriented, is a multifaceted account on a wide sector of life of Somali youth.

The article draws on the U.S.-based research tradition of educational anthropology, which has shown major interest in ethnic minority students and their school performance (see Chapter 4.3.). Increasingly, researchers within this field agree that the school performance of children with an immigration background is affected by many factors that operate simultaneously and change over time (e.g. Mac an Ghaill 1989, Tomlinson 1991, Trueba 1991, Ogbu 1993, Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco 2000, 2001, Portes & Rumbaut 2001). The existence of multiple factors could also be observed in the present study. However, Article V goes further than just acknowledging this fact, and presents a multivariate framework that identifies a multitude of factors that interact in a complex manner and affect the school performance of students with an immigration background.

The presented framework not only gives a schema of the factors influencing the schooling of Somali students in metropolitan Helsinki, but it also reveals the variability between ethnic groups as well as within an ethnic group. It also provides a framework to systematically analyze the resources and vulnerabilities of any student with an immigration background. The final article expands from the specifics of one ethnic group to a more general level of analysis of students with an immigration background.

The article presents Somali students in metropolitan Helsinki as a case study for the framework by describing the variables as they relate to this ethnic group. The article proposes that depending on the complex interplay between variables, there is variability in the school performance of second-generation. Consequently, their acculturation paths take various directions and become segmented.

The term ‘segmentation of acculturation’ (drawn from ‘segmentation of assimilation’ by Portes and Zhou 1993; also Portes and Rumbaut 2001) emphasizes heterogeneity among individuals with an immigration background, variability in their opportunities, and the indeterminacy of the outcome of their acculturation. It is maintained that acculturation is a process, a path, which, due to the undetermined combination of variables, may take various turns and directions over time. Sudden turns and changes of direction of an acculturation path seem to be particularly characteristic for youth. The term is not limited to the receiving society solely, but also encompasses diasporic and transnational activities and intentions that further diversify acculturation options among immigrants over national boundaries.

The variables of the framework are divided into three categories. Additionally, human agency is presented as the fourth category to underline the probabilistic nature of the model as opposed to a deterministic one. The first category, ‘incoming resources’ (term by Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2000, 21) consists of financial capital, and of human capital variables such as parental education, parental attitudes toward formal education, socioeconomic status, physical and psychological health, students’ prior schooling and reading level, language proficiency and immigrant’s documentability. On the basis of the empirical data of the present research, the list is supplemented with students’ age upon arrival (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2002), students’ cultural and religious background (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2000, 2001, Alitolppa-Niitamo & Ali 2001), and gender. These variables, each presented and illustrated with research data and examples on the Somali population in the article, form the basis for the knowledge, skills, attitudes, capabilities and opportunities with which immigrants start to rebuild their life in a new society.

The second category of variables – the role of social capital in the acculturation process of immigrants – has recently gained recognition in the sociology of immigration (e.g. Portes & Rumbaut 2001, Zhou & Bankston 1996). The article employs Alejandro Portes’ (1998, 6) definition of social capital as ‘...the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures’. Social capital is understood to derive from social structures that are socially cohesive since they transfer and are based on common social norms and values, trust and reciprocity among individuals. Tahir Abbas’ (2001) definitions of the social spheres of immigrants (family, ethnic group and receiving society) are employed in the framework. Social capital is regarded as a central factor in the school performance of children of immigrants since it creates the context of support and information provided to children. In the article, the availability of and obstacles to social capital among Somali youth is described from the perspectives gained through fieldwork.

The third category that features the receiving society is important since it is a reminder that it is not solely the resources of immigrants themselves that determine the turns and directions of immigrants' acculturation paths. Jeffrey Reitz' (2002) four categories for the description and analysis of the features of host societies are employed in the article¹⁶. Based on these categories, some characteristics of Finnish society are analyzed briefly in the article, particularly from the point of view of Somali asylum seekers who arrived in the 1990s.

As already mentioned, the framework is probabilistic rather than deterministic. It is acknowledged that systems and structures do not exist independently of individual actions; instead, individuals have a certain freedom to make choices. In the case of immigrated youth, multiple variables that interact in a complex manner in rapidly changing social conditions, along with individual agency, produce individual acculturation paths. Further, when challenges and vulnerabilities accumulate in the case of one individual student, (s)he probably experiences stress, weakening her/his coping capacity.

The core group of six Somali students had experienced many ups and downs in their efforts to find post-comprehensive school educational institutions where they would have a realistic chance of success. Four years from the completion of comprehensive school, two students had received a post-comprehensive school certificate, one was still studying, two had moved abroad, and one had been unemployed most of the four years.

In conclusion, some of the challenges and obstacles encountered by Somali students were universal to most students with an immigration background, such as coping with cultural and linguistic discontinuity in their everyday life. In addition, receiving society variables such as the unpreparedness of Finnish schools to receive students from diverse backgrounds and monocultural school practices are claimed to have impeded the performance of most immigrant children in Finland in the 1990s.

As to social capital, bonding social capital based on family and kinship, which was traditionally strong among Somalis, was now in some families undermined by rapid changes in family dynamics and subsequent conflicts between family members. This had some consequences on the school performance of the children, as already described in the previous articles. As far as racism, prejudice and anti-immigration sentiments in the receiving society, Somali students seemed to be hit the hardest, with severe

¹⁶ The categories are (1) pre-existing ethnic and racial relations, (2) labor market and related institutions, (3) government policies and programs, and (4) the changing nature of international boundaries.

consequences for their self-esteem and availability of linking social capital. Further, as the African-Muslim “icebreakers” without any previous co-ethnic communities to cushion the acculturation process, as well as the slow organization of their ethnic group, limited the availability of bridging social capital.

Based on the empirical experience, the following human and social capital vulnerabilities that create a risk for underachievement in school seemed to be particularly prevalent among Somali students: (1) lacking or seriously disrupted previous education background in the country of origin, (2) being an unaccompanied minor, and (3) having illiterate/low-educated/unemployed parents who, as a consequence, lived in isolation from society.

Students with an immigration background are ordinary young people, some of them with extraordinary contexts of development. In their case, the principle of universalism may not bring educational equality – instead, they need supportive and tailored educational as well as other measures. If these are not available, no matter how motivated and ambitious the students may be, accumulated challenges may weaken their coping capacity and prevent them from achieving their full potential.

Given the complex interactive nature of school achievement of immigrant children, the article makes the suggestion that there is no single field of intervention, nor a single measure that would guarantee them equal opportunity in educational achievement. The existence of a multitude of variables implies that there are several possible fields where the schooling of children of recent immigrants could and should be enhanced and acted upon.

Instead of regarding students as representatives of a particular ethnic group, we should understand the position of each individual student in the context of the characteristics of the receiving society and her/his unique incoming resources and available social capital. This understanding is the key when attempting to provide better educational equality for children with a recent immigration background. In the formation of relevant and need-based policies and programs, the acknowledgement and understanding of the significance and consequences of all of these factors is essential. Such understanding can only be reached through linking social capital, i.e. ties and cooperation between newcomers and more established members of the society.

7 Main Findings, Evaluation and Implications

7.1 “Icebreakers”

Although the Somali-speaking population in Finland has been a victim of the civil war in Somalia and of superpower politics in the Horn of Africa, the Somali immigrants definitely do not identify themselves as victims. On the contrary, the individuals I met during the course of the fieldwork had strong aspirations, formulated their own goals and ideals for a good life, and actively resisted the stereotypes projected onto them by the receiving society. However, the turmoil of the civil war that had touched their lives so deeply was not resolved following immigration to another country.

The Somali-speaking population, particularly Somali youth, have acted as ‘icebreakers’ in Finnish immigration history. After having faced many uncertainties in their country of origin and during exile, their acculturation paths in the new society included many challenges, but also offered ways in which they could attempt to re-establish control over their lives. At the time of their arrival, the pre-existing attitudes of the receiving society toward ethnic groups were based on a view that immigration posed a threat to society. Negative media attention contributed to the fact that Somali immigrants were initially placed at a disadvantage in terms of their acculturation process. The aim of this research is to make a positive contribution by creating a more sophisticated description of this ethnic group and the multitude of factors that influence its acculturation process.

Their challenging role as pioneers was obvious also in the sense that there had been no previous Somali communities in Finland to cushion the acculturation process, and at a time when the scars of the civil war were still fresh, ethnic organization was a complex process, thus limiting their bridging (intraethnic) social capital.

In the vanguard of the Somali population, linking the newcomers to the receiving society, were youth and educated young adults. They learned the language more quickly than others and were often given the role of informal translators and cultural mediators. For many, the role was not easy, particularly those who were too young and who were in need of guidance themselves. In the absence of an established community, role models and sources of information on various educational options and future careers were not easily available for these young Icebreakers.

Strong expectations were directed towards the schooling of children and youth. In the meantime, parents often felt ambivalence towards Finnish school as a result of its role not only as a transmitter of knowledge (instrumental culture), but also as the site of socio-cultural reproduction (expressive culture).

School as a formal site of education ‘organizes diversity’ (Wallace 1961) in society, with the unavoidable consequence of producing cultural homogenization. Social advancement in a knowledge-based society such as Finland requires a long educational career, which by necessity has wide-reaching effects on individuals in terms of their worldviews, norms and values. Hence, social mobility through formal education implies change for most immigrants, and cultural *maintenance* as such, as Hans Vermeulen and Rinus Penninx (2000) claim, is not possible. They continue, however, that this does not mean that the younger generations cannot feel connected to their ethnic group or their country of origin, or that they cannot keep some of their parents’ customs. However, bonding social capital based on family and kinship is sometimes undermined by inter-generational conflicts related to processes of cultural construction and ethnic reconstruction.

In terms of racism, prejudice and anti-immigration sentiment in the receiving society, Somali students seemed to be hit the hardest, with severe consequences to their self-esteem and to the availability of linking social capital. Furthermore, certain vulnerabilities seemed to accumulate among Somali students and create a risk for underachievement in school, including the lack or serious disruption of previous education, and being an unaccompanied minor.

7.2 Acculturation Paths and Formal Education

The present research emphasizes acculturation as a long-term process. Acculturation in this context is conceptualized with a metaphor of ‘a path’ that immigrants – both as individuals, families and as ethnic groups – take following resettlement in a new society. Moving down this path includes changes both in their psychological structures, as well as in their memberships in various social networks. It is not unilinear or bounded, but, instead, may take various directions in which participation and membership in the social, economic and political structures of the receiving society, of the ethnic group, and of the transnational community produces new and changing forms and processes. Acculturation paths may be highly divergent between individual immigrants and between various ethnic groups. It is suggested that the direction and pace of movement on an acculturation path is affected by the human and social capital of immigrants, the characteristics of the receiving society, and human agency (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004).

Because of the process-like nature of acculturation and the multiplicity of variables that have an impact, it is not possible to characterize acculturation as producing certain clear-cut outcomes (e.g. ‘assimilation’, ‘marginalization’ etc.); rather, it is more relevant to use the more open-ended and flexible concept of *segmentation of acculturation* (cf. also Portes and Zhou 1993; also Portes and Rumbaut 2001).

As a contribution to the development of perspectives that can help to enhance our understanding of the school achievement of minority students with an immigration background, the present research presents a multivariate framework. This framework includes factors that have an impact on the school achievement of children with an immigration background. In the presented framework, the variables that affect school achievement are divided into four main explanatory categories (human and social capital, characteristics of the receiving society and human agency). I propose that the variables interact in a complex and often unanticipated manner.

The framework provides an alternative to single-factor studies that have been found to be inadequate in explaining the complexity behind the school achievement of minority students. I propose that single variables by themselves are seldom crucial in explaining educational performance, and instead, complex interplay between human capital, social capital, receiving society characteristics and human agency is what makes acculturation paths divergent. Different combinations and accumulations of vulnerabilities or strengths produce segmentation of acculturation paths. These divergences often further accumulate in later generations (Zhou 1997). The effect of several variables that turn out to be vulnerabilities in the new society potentiate each other and may gradually break an individual’s capacity to direct her/his acculturation path in the desired direction (cf. also Rutter 1979, in Garcia Coll & Magnuson 1997; and Garcia Coll & Magnuson 1997). The multivariate framework is a tool for a rather sophisticated analysis of individuals and ethnic groups regarding their capacities and needs on their acculturations paths. The framework emphasizes variability between individuals within an ethnic group, thus combating culturalist and other simplified explanations that may produce generalizations about ethnic groups.

7.3 Evaluation of the Research Process

The benefits of this ethnographic research are regarded as being related to the lengthy research process of several years at the ethnic group level, which gave insight into certain processes that were relevant in the school achievement of Somali youth, as well as into the formation of their acculturation paths. The open-ended ethnographic research process produced a bricolage description on Somali youth that goes ‘beyond the foci of single perspectives’ – the goal that Tuula Gordon, Janet Holland and Elina

Lahelma (2001, 199; also Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2000) claim is the challenge for future ethnographic research in educational settings.

The advantage of an open and inductively oriented research design is that, even if it creates lots of ambiguity and uncertainty, particularly in the beginning of the fieldwork, it is equipped to open up new perspectives and understandings of the subjects of the study and to highlight their multifaceted and complex realities. However, a researcher can hardly avoid carrying her/his culturally biased perspectives into the research design. I realized this myself, as I recognized how indoctrinated I was e.g. by the one-sided “ethos of integration” discourse. In the course of the fieldwork I gradually understood the point in Ruth Krulfeld’s (1993, 33) claim as she writes, “...our research [on refugees] will suffer from being falsely bounded, while the refugees we study are not bounded”. The transnational paradigm of immigration research suggests that it should be global.

Limitations that are related to the reporting of the data include the scarcity of rich description, which is due to the lack of space for full-length descriptions when description and analysis is written in a form of articles. The preservation of the anonymity of the informants and subjects of the study also limited detailed descriptions. This precaution was especially important in the present context, where the ethnic group was relatively small and people may easily recognize one another in detailed descriptions.

There were also limitations that were related to the availability of data on certain issues. For example, some age and gender related issues limited my participation in after-school activities. My aim to create a holistic account on Somali youth in Helsinki in the context of education was not realized in all aspects, since the leisure time activities of the boys remained unexplored to a great extent. With the girls my involvement was easier, but also here my participation after school hours was mainly limited to home visits.

The data does not allow any deeper analysis on the gender differences in participation and achievement in formal education. There is, however, some indication, that what seemed like the relative isolation of Somali girls resulting from the stricter control kept by their parents, may actually be a factor that saved them from some of the disturbances and negative influences of Finnish youth culture, and allowed them more time and better concentration on home assignments. There were also clear indications that Somali parents increasingly valued their daughters’ education (cf. also Tiilikainen 2003). However, regarding parents expectations on girls’ schooling, the picture is more complex than for boys, since there seem to be more intertwining factors (e.g. early marriage).

Also Hans Vermeulen and Rinus Penninx (2000) report the same two contradictory explanations for girls' superior school performance in the Netherlands. On the one hand, parents apply traditional gender roles and expectations on their daughters (controlling the 'purity' of girls), and on the other hand, a certain modernization is expressed in the recognition of the meaning of formal education for girls. Vermeulen and Penninx (*ibid.*) claim that the positive effect on the school achievement of girls seems to be a combination of these two trends.

Some themes presented in this bricolage would have benefited from the availability of more data, so that a more in-depth understanding of their various meanings could have been achieved. When analyzing the data, I realized that in the course of the school ethnography I would have needed to withdraw from the field more and occasionally take some distance. On the one hand, I limited my questions since I wanted to concentrate on the natural course of events. On the other hand, I became so "immersed" in observing the processes that I did not understand that I should take a brake to conduct some preliminary analysis. Preliminary analysis on some interesting and emerging themes would have helped me to direct my observations and questions and to focus more on interesting themes.

The fieldwork experiences made me often juxtapose Finnish ways of life with those I saw among the Somali population. The fieldwork made me question some beliefs, attitudes, and practices that I had previously taken for granted in Finnish society and in my own family life. For example, the notion of freedom in the socialization of children and adolescents started to seem rather excessive or wrongly understood in Finnish society, specifically in the case of youth. I also started to question not only the friendship-like relationship between parents and their offspring in Finnish society, but also the fact that children in many families have been robbed of tasks and small jobs that would give them a sense of responsibility and pride. Children are expected to play (or watch TV/videos, play computer games, have hobbies etc.), not to learn to do everyday chores. As a consequence of this, their sense of being needed and useful to the rest of the family has been taken away. In Somali families, I witnessed a smoother transition, particularly among girls, from childhood to adulthood through the tasks that were assigned to them according to their age. As a consequence of this experience, I started to assign some everyday jobs to my own children (not always very successfully) with the (unselfish) belief that they would benefit from it.

Many encounters in the field also made me confront experiences of loss, suffering, and pain. I had to question myself how I could remain sufficiently analytic in the midst of upsetting accounts of life experiences that create intensive emotions. Does one always merely observe the natural course of events, or are there situations when it becomes necessary to leave the analytic role of a researcher and become a fellow

human being? At times I felt young, naïve and inexperienced in front of much younger persons who had experiences that would have been a burden even for an adult.

7.4 Implications for Educational and Social Policy

The present study maintains that school achievement cannot be explained with exclusively individualistic models. More encompassing explanations are needed. Given the complex interactive nature of a multiplicity of variables that explain the school achievement of children with immigration backgrounds, it is suggested that there is no single field of intervention or measure that would guarantee equal opportunity in educational achievement. The existence of a multitude of variables implies that there are several fields of action where schooling could and *should* be supported.

I propose that a key in moving towards equal opportunity in education is in understanding each student as a developing individual in the context of her/his unique incoming resources and available social capital. It is equally important to be aware of the role of the receiving society in providing adequate measures that respond to the needs that arise from these background factors. The presented framework can be applied in identifying the strengths and challenges of each individual student, and also in deciding on the areas where support and tailored measures are needed.

Because of the complexity in the ways in which acculturation paths take shape, there cannot be a universal, 'best-practice' model fit for all. Acculturation is a versatile process in which each individual proceeds in her/his own manner. For analysis and understanding of this process, it is necessary to have both a minority perspective (lack of equality of opportunities) and acculturation perspective (the effect of a newcomer status). In addition, flexibility, diversity and collaboration of various actors in the planning and implementation of policies and programs should be the norm.

Acculturation paths that lead to blocked opportunities should be discovered in time, since these processes have not only tragic consequences on the individual level over generations, but are also harmful for the future of entire ethnic groups and for social equality at large. Thus, the schooling of students with an immigration background should not be an issue of academic interest only, but should be taken up in the interest of equal opportunity in society in general.

For better overall inclusion of children and youth with an immigration background, it is suggested that schools should focus more on communication with the parents of students and involve parents more, for example, in classroom instruction on topics

they have some special knowledge in (perception on diversity as a resource). These measures would increase mutual understanding, enable the formation of shared goals in the schooling of students, and balance the process of dissonant acculturation in families with an immigration background (cf. also Matinheikki-Kokko & Pitkänen 2002). Involving both parents and students with immigration background in the planning and practice of work at schools would help 'build up multiculturalism from down to top instead of trying to do from top to down' (Wahlbeck 2003, 15).

It is also suggested that teachers' competence should be enhanced on issues related to principles of multicultural pedagogy (e.g. teaching methods, assessment). Pedagogical materials, for example, should reflect cultural tolerance, understanding and balanced perspectives related to geographical and historical presentations, as well as various worldviews and lifestyles (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2002; also Matinheikki-Kokko & Pitkänen 2002). As already mentioned, students with an immigration background should not be perceived solely as learners, but as developing individuals in the midst of a complex reality. The understanding of this reality is essential for the adults around them, as well as for the students themselves. As to the 'generation in-between', they deserve special attention and flexible and tailored measures so that they can preserve their sense of worth in the demanding situation in which they approach adulthood in a new society.

To restrain the destructive patterns of dissonant acculturation and role reversal within families, the role of the receiving society is central in providing first-generation immigrants with *real opportunities* to come into contact with the larger society very early on following resettlement. This would enable them to learn to understand the new society, to cope within it, and to guide their offspring within it. Measures such as language courses (adequate in number and quality), supported jobs, employment, and various leisure time activities all contribute towards this goal. These measures should be obvious, in fact, in a society such as Finland, where the 'ethos of integration' prevails! Schools should also support the children of immigrants in maintaining and developing their first language so that they become fully bi-lingual and are able to communicate with their parents, within their ethnic community, and in their country of origin.

When it comes to dissonant acculturation, it is important to ask whether it is more essential to support a quick incorporation of children and youth to the mainstream institutions than to support the maintenance of bonding social capital in an immigrant family? Is the first alternative possible without the second? Do these two necessarily exclude one another?

In addition to the importance of the role of the receiving society, the role of co-ethnic communities is also central. Close contacts with the ethnic community provide an

individual and a family with bridging social capital, which supports the maintenance, construction and transference of culturally based norms and values among children and youth. Through contacts and common activities, a cohesive ethnic community empowers the first-generation in their role as socialization agents, and may slow down dissonant acculturation. A slowed-down, "selective acculturation" (Portes 1997, 816; see also e.g. Gibson 1989, Zhou & Bankston 1996) is associated with more positive outcomes for children of immigrants than dissonant acculturation.

7.5 Implications for Immigration Research

In the course of the research process, the acknowledgement of the existence of two characteristics among the Somali population, neither of them novel inventions, but for some reason nevertheless unexpected for me, led to some further developments in terms of the concepts and perspectives I used in this study.

The first one, the tremendous heterogeneity among the Somali population in terms of incoming resources, particularly in educational backgrounds, was quite startling for a researcher who grew up in a Nordic country during an era when formal education has been a strong equalizer of different backgrounds. This realization led to emphasizing the role of incoming resources in the acculturation process.

Hence, acknowledging heterogeneity within immigrant communities is perhaps the most important challenge receiving societies face in the reception of immigrant communities. The heterogeneity among immigrants is directly connected with the variability in their opportunities to enter the social, political and economic structures of the receiving society or those in the transnational sphere. Diversity among immigrants does not exist only between groups of different ethnic or national backgrounds, but – what most often goes unnoticed – within the groups themselves. Culturalism and the use of essentializing simplified categories of ethnicity and nationality will obscure the vital differences among immigrants, which, in turn, may flaw planning and implementation of tailored and need-based integration policies and programs.

The other characteristic, the strong diasporic and transnational consciousness among the Somali population, raised the question of the adequacy of the term 'integration', so widely applied in the Finnish discourse on resettlement of immigrants. It became clear that in this era of unbound societies and mobility, the one-way perception of immigrants' integration into a receiving society is less valid than ever. The 'ethos of integration' should be complemented with views that recognize e.g. repatriation and 'serial migration' (Reitz 2003) as viable options. Many present-day immigrants live with a transnational and diasporic consciousness, maintaining relationships and

transgressing national boundaries. Particularly many first-generation Somalis seemed to imagine their futures in their country of origin. The research data indicates also that in the 1990s, Somali youth had, to various degrees, a diasporic consciousness, and, therefore, their educational pursuits should have been perceived from that perspective.

In addition to acknowledging the heterogeneity and diasporic and transnational processes within immigrant communities, a more sophisticated use of categories that recognize the vital differences among immigrants is suggested. I propose that the individual development perspective and the significance of age at arrival have not been acknowledged appropriately in immigration research. In this study, in addition to the concepts of first- and second-generation, the term 'generation in-between' has been introduced to indicate youth who enter the country at a challenging age and therefore encounter special demands related to several simultaneous transitions.

The present research also inspired some suggestions for future research. The first one relates to the meaning of various forms of social capital in the formation of the acculturation paths of immigrants, the second one relates particularly to bonding social capital in families, and the third to the importance of diasporic and transnational consciousness among children with an immigration background.

Regarding social capital, its relevance in the formation of acculturation paths is obvious. As Min Zhou and Carl Bankston (1996) maintain, social capital may be the only capital available to some newcomers in a situation where their incoming resources are limited and the receiving society is not welcoming. Social capital in the form of trust, shared norms, obligations and expectations in a social system facilitate activities and co-operation for mutual benefit. Social capital ideally exists in both private and public domains, including emotional ties within a family, and bridging and linking ties within the ethnic community and in the receiving society. Yet migration often cuts or weakens previously existing ties and reciprocal social systems, and it is neither easy nor quick to form a new social system where no or few pre-existing networks are present.

Secondly, changes in family dynamics that take place as a consequence of immigration need to be studied more extensively. Ethnographic research on immigrant families is scarce, probably because of the difficult entrance to such a private field and the difficulty of finding a role as a participant observer in the setting. In this research, the family perspective opened up more or less by accident, first in the form of classroom discussions, and later in the form of visits, often with the researcher as home assignment helper for girls. Several processes that are related to immigrant families need to be studied, e.g. changes in family structures due to migration, dissonant acculturation, role reversal between generations, and changes in gender roles – all of which may undermine the bonding social capital of an immigrant family. Research on these topics might give us a better understanding of such family related issues as the high frequency

of single parent families among certain ethnic groups and growing numbers of women and youth in shelters (*turvatalo/turvakoti*) and children's homes.

Thirdly, related to transnationalism and diaspora, it would be important to study the practical relevance of these processes in the lives of immigrants and in the reception of refugees. In particular, research into the consequences of these processes for the in-between and second generations is central (cf. also Foner 1997, Suarez-Orozco 2001). We currently know too little, for example, about the specific conditions that put youth in diaspora in an ambiguous situation (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2001; also Weiner 1986 in Van Hear 1998), or about conditions that have an encouraging and additive meaning to younger generations. Additionally, from the point of view of the present study, it would be interesting to further explore how young people with a diasporic consciousness negotiate education, and how educational institutions should respond to the educational needs of students with strong diasporic consciousness (cf. also Basch et al. 1994). Since diasporas are understood as processes in which ethnic communities "...wax and wane ...depending on changing possibilities..." (Clifford 1997, 285), it would also be appealing to examine how diasporic consciousness survives through generations and whether it strengthens the socialization values of first generation and the cultural survival of ethnic groups.

8 Conclusion

“(T)he children of immigrants follow many different pathways; they forge complex and multiply determined identities that resist easy generalization...”

(Marcello and Carola Suárez-Orozco, 2001, 1)

The present research has described Somali youth in the context of formal education in metropolitan Helsinki in the end of the 1990s. It has analyzed their vulnerabilities and opportunities in Finnish society and identified a variety of factors affecting their school performance. The study provides perspectives into the complex reality and many challenges of, not only Somali youth, but also other young persons with a recent immigration or refugee background. In receiving societies, where racist and simplified culturalist explanations prevail, a more sophisticated understanding is needed.

Studying the conditions of development and education of children with an immigration background is essential. For children who are born in Finland (‘second generation’ in the strict sense of the word) or who arrive in their early years (Rumbaut: ‘1,5 generation’), the challenges of acculturation are usually much less demanding than those of the ‘generation in-between’. For younger arrivals, learning the new language is easier, school is less demanding since the curriculum is more concrete, the formation of social relationships is often more spontaneous, and by the time they reach their teenage years, their parents are usually more established in the new society and thus, better equipped to guide and support them. Consequently, one should not draw too far-reaching conclusions on the future of a certain ethnic group based on research on the ‘generation in-between’. The risk is that the picture may look too pessimistic. It is imperative, however, that the special challenges of the ‘generation in-between’ are acknowledged so that appropriate support and opportunities can be provided to this vulnerable group of immigrants in time.

Because of Finland’s short immigration history, it is still too early to say much about the acculturation paths of second generation immigrants (except perhaps in the case of Vietnamese refugees, who arrived already in the 1970s). Paying attention to the succession of generations and the differences in their acculturation paths will point out the significance of the time factor in the acculturation process and make it clear that re-establishing control over one’s life and finding a niche in a new society is a time-consuming process. This fact is often overlooked in research and in the planning of integration policies (Vermeulen & Penninx 2000).

However, as Hans Vermeulen and Rinus Penninx (2000) point out, one should not suppose that integration takes place as an autonomous process in the succession of

generations. We should not be content to think that even though first generation of refugees and asylum seekers may be mostly unemployed, and the prevalence of school drop-outs and early marriages among the generation in-between may be high, that second generation, and at least the third one will fare well. Marginalization is often perpetuated and has far-reaching negative consequences both among the 'mainstream' population as well as among minorities with an immigration background. Although circumstances and opportunities may vary between generations, integration cannot be regarded as self-evident. What really happens is the segmentation of acculturation among and within ethnic groups. The segmentation of acculturation is explained with a complex interaction of a multiplicity of factors, out of which the duration of residence is only one.

In the 1990s, policies acknowledging the diverse needs of newcomers were rather undeveloped. For example in educational policy, the ideas of multicultural and inclusive education were not developed until the end of the millennium, and there is still an inconsistency between policy and practice (Alitolppa-Niitamo 2002; Matinheikki-Kokko & Pitkänen 2002). Since the curriculum, pedagogy and social relationships in schools reflected the dominance of worldviews of the wider society, Somali students faced tremendous challenges in trying to bridge the gap from their prior experiences to the expected mainstream cultural meanings. In these circumstances, both the classroom teacher in the Forest Hill School as well as her students were put in a very demanding and unfair situation which caused a lot of frustration and disappointment.

The challenge for the Finnish school system is to understand the complex situation of children and youth with immigration backgrounds, and particularly their challenges in the context of formal education. Educational practices that respond to their specific needs should be applied. United Nations guidelines state that the basic educational rights of young immigrants include not only a right to available and accessible formal education, but also to education that is "acceptable" (relevant, culturally appropriate and of good quality) and "adaptable" (flexible to the needs of a changing society and communities) (Commission on Human Rights Resolution 1998/33, referred in Gynther 2001). In the case of the generation in-between Somalis, formal equality did not guarantee equal opportunity. Their schooling included a lot of anxiety, disappointment and frustration, but also lots of effort and tenacity and, in many cases, slow success.

Bringing up and educating a native-born infant to become a productive adult is a long and costly process in a knowledge-intensive welfare society. Hence, it is unreasonable to expect a young immigrant, who has arrived in the country in the midst of his/her enculturation process, to acquire the needed knowledge, skills and capabilities in an essentially shorter time. In order to ensure equality in learning and achievement in schooling, fair resourcing is needed. It is unwise and hypocritical of the receiving

society, which will be increasingly dependent on immigrants as workers and taxpayers, not to dedicate sufficient resources for the creation of real and realistic chances. These individuals with multicultural and multilingual backgrounds will be effective and valuable cultural brokers in national, transnational or global settings.

Currently, there are more than 30.000 children and youth under the age of twenty with an immigration background in Finland (Statistics Finland 2002)¹⁷. The question remains whether they will become full-fledged participants in the social, economic and political fields of the society. As a result of their minority position and their newcomer status in Finnish society, many of them have special needs that should be understood and addressed by the receiving society. They, as anybody else, deserve fair and equal opportunities to fulfill their aspirations for a good life.

Today's modern societies are stone-cold environments for those with little education and marketable skills – whether or not they are immigrants. Even if immigrants in industrial societies had reasonable opportunities to become integrated at least economically, present-day immigration to service or knowledge-based societies offers a different reality. In these societies, language skills are a minimum requirement, and specialized formal education is almost a necessity. If the incoming resources of immigrated populations do not fit in with the requirements of the labor market, the educational system has to respond to this possible mismatch. It is an issue of human rights that immigrant youth are provided with an equal opportunity to achieve in school. As a shortage of employees threatens European nations in the near future, it is not enough that we support immigration. We also need to identify risk factors, groups at risk, and special needs, and we need to provide appropriate support accordingly.

Actually, Finland is not facing a new challenge. During and following the war in the 1940s, state officials organized the resettlement and education of approximately 55,000 Karelian school-aged evacuees in Finland. At that time, officials emphasized the importance of good governance in the matter and teachers in particular were encouraged to participate in this '*important and timely work that would enhance the mutual good of the entire nation*'. (Virta, 2001)¹⁸ Also Anneli Ilonen (2003,5) maintains that, although the fates of Karelian school-aged evacuees were destined by the historical events of

¹⁷ Children and youth with 'immigration background' are here defined as persons under the age of twenty whose first language is other than Finnish, Swedish or Same.

¹⁸ The italicized text is a direct quote from a letter, dated 06.02.1940, by the elementary school inspector of the North-Karelian district, and addressed to the elementary school teachers and school boards in the respective district (see Virta 2001, 135).

that time and their learning options were somewhat restricted, the 'wise decisions and activities' by resettlement and other officials had a decisive impact on the good outcome. Ilonen (ibid.) goes on to maintain that, as a result, 'Karelians have contributed with their own input to the building up of our country and to the positive change of our society.' I look forward to a time in the future, when, due to the wise decisions and activities of officials, we can add the word 'immigrants' to join that of 'Karelians'.

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