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Experiences of Acculturation and Stress

Young Adult Male Afghan Refugees in Vaasa

Master's Thesis

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**ABSTRACT**

There has been an upsurge of asylum seekers entering Europe. Over 1.3 million people sought asylum in 2015, resulting in the European migrant crisis, which in turn complicated the situation for other migrants and European governments. Among the countries of origin of asylum seekers, Afghanistan has the second highest population, with approximately 2.7 million refugees around the world.

As such, refugees are subject to a variety of stressful situations and challenges throughout their migration trajectory and post-migration life, all of which may greatly impede the process of acculturation and adaptation to the new environment of resettlement, while jeopardizing their wellbeing. This study aims to discover and understand the psycho-socio-cultural experiences of Afghan refugee clients of The Federation of Special Welfare Organizations (Ehjä ry) in Vaasa, in terms of acculturation and both acculturative, and chronic and multiple stress.

This study applies the 'affective, behavioral and cognitive' theoretical framework of acculturative stress (ABC model) by Ward et al. and the 'multiple and chronic migratory stress' (Ulysses Syndrome) by Achotegui. It uses qualitative methodology in an attempt to explore and understand experiences of both acculturative and chronic stress, coping, and cultural learnings among the Afghan refugees.

The analytical results of this study indicate that the major migratory and acculturative grief and stressors that the young adult Afghan refugees have experienced are mourning for loss of family, the stress of loneliness and employment. Some participants have also reported psychosomatic issues. However, they have benefited from social support as well as strengthened coping resources to overcome grief and stress, helping to achieve psychological adjustment. Participants have mostly shown socio-cultural identifications with the Finnish culture but they also, having maintained religious identity, manifest identifications with Iranian and Afghan cultures.

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**KEYWORDS:** Young adult Afghan refugees; Ehjä ry; acculturation; stress; migratory mourning; mental wellbeing; ABC framework; Ulysses Syndrome



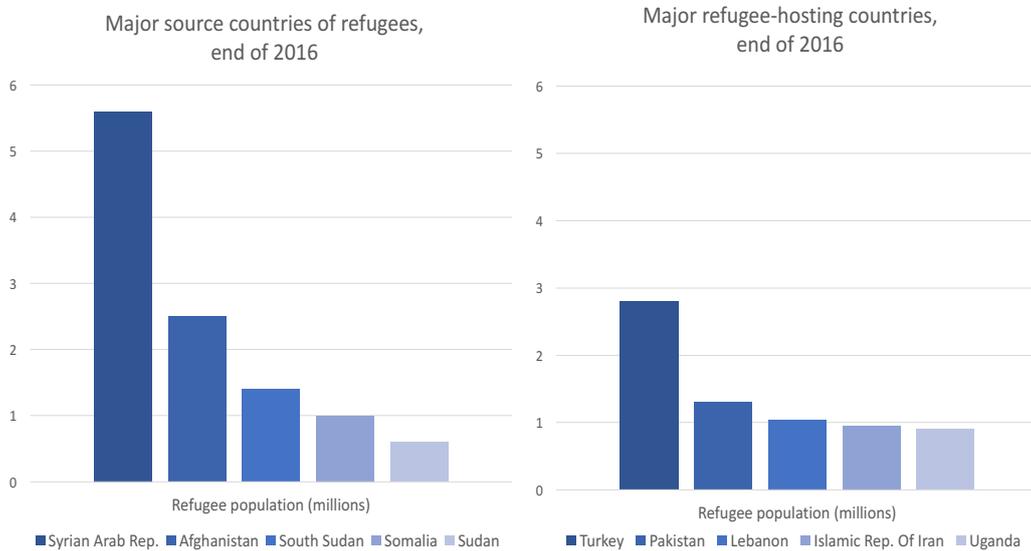
## 1 INTRODUCTION

During recent years, Europe has been confronted with an increasing migrant crisis due to the upsurge of asylum seekers. A great number of them are adolescents or young adults who having fled unsafe, war-torn countries eventually find themselves in Europe. Prior to the recent war in Syria and the current, unprecedented refugee crisis that followed, Afghanistan as the country of origin, not only held the largest source of displaced people in the world, but also holds second place after Syria, in terms of number of refugees. According to UNHCR (2017a) there are over 2.7 million Afghan refugees residing in 70 countries across the globe.

During the influx of refugees in the year 2015, Finland received more refugees than ever before. According to statistics by the Finnish Immigration Service (2017a), 32,477 people sought for asylum in Finland in 2015. The distinctly largest group were young adults and youth from Iraq with 20,484 people, whereas the second largest group were from Afghanistan with 5,214 people. Among them, however, 1,911 Afghan youth made up the largest group of minors having arrived in the country without their families in 2015. Overall, within the last three years, Finland, has received approximately 29,000 14-to-34-year-old asylum seekers, the second largest groups from Afghanistan and considerably more men than women. (Finnish Immigration Service 2017b) This gives distinctive significance to understanding experiences of young adult male Afghan refugees who have arrived in Finland as unaccompanied minors in this study; most of these Afghan refugees have lived previously in Iran.

Therefore, it is of significance to know where refugees mostly come from and go to. A great number of refugees flee to neighboring countries, before a small number of them come to resettle in Western industrialized countries (Gibney 2010: 1). Thus, refugees are destined mostly in low-income and middle-income countries (LAMIC) which have already sociopolitical, economic and health care system problems (Vijayakumar 2016). According to the UNHCR (2017b), Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon and Iran are respectively “top hosting countries”. Afghanistan is the country of origin of the second largest population of refugees. Iran and Pakistan due to their geographical, religious and cultural

propinquity have been the largest hosting countries for Afghan refugees. (see Figure 1 – there is no one to one correspondence among the countries)



**Figure 1.** Major source countries of refugees and major refugee-hosting countries (adapted from UNHCR 2017b: 15, 17)

Afghans began to migrate after the 1978 communist coup. The country has endured over 35 years of war, civil war and conflict. (Lipson & Omidian 1992: 272-273) Many Afghans had migrated to Iran because of sharing the same religion and language and existence of an Islamic government after the 1979 revolution in Iran. However, the revolution and the successive war with Iraq had brought about weak infrastructures and conditions, and instabilities for both Iranians and naturally migrants in Iran.

Given, refugees, as involuntary migrants, experience an array of life changes and are susceptible to major pre- and post-migratory stressors. These can have positive and negative effect on their psychological adjustment and wellbeing (Ward, Bochner & Furnham 2001: 79-81; 230-233). Thus, in adjusting to the new milieu, refugees experience stress and coping, trauma coping, behavioral changes, as well as cultural and social identification changes (Ward et al. 2001).

Accordingly, with respect to the stress experienced by individuals in the country of resettlement, there has been abundant literature on intercultural contact, acculturation and acculturative stress. Acculturation is defined as changes arisen from prolonged first-contact between individuals of different cultural backgrounds, whereas acculturative stress is the stress reaction as a result of experience of acculturation referred to also as “culture shock”. (Ward et al. 2001: 43, 281)

Additionally, as Ward et al. (2001: 281) state, literature on sojourners, visitors, immigrants and refugees has largely flourished in parallels, without adequate attempt in integrating. On the other hand, when it comes to migrants there is overwhelming evidence that manifest other stressors which are less-dealt-with and at least partly overlooked, yet prevailing and effective, such as multiple and chronic migratory stressors documented as Ulysses Syndrome (Achotegui 1999). These stressors evidently have impact too and can have fundamentally paralyzing effects on the adjustment – feeling well– and acculturation of immigrants in the host country (ibid.).

### 1.1 Literature Review

There is a wealth of literature on acculturation and refugees in various disciplines such as psychology, health and medical sciences and cultural studies. It is increasing due to the ongoing surge of asylum seekers fleeing from war-stricken countries to neighboring or developing countries in order to escape socio-economic and political problems. Due to the nature of refugeehood, many studies on refugee acculturation and adjustment have focused on trauma and coping, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), psychological and pathological aspects (Ward et al. 2001: 222). As the focus is on Afghan refugees, Afghanistan has always been one of the countries of origin of a majority of asylum seekers and displaced people. This section provides a review of literature, findings, research gaps on refugees and young adult unaccompanied afghan refugees in particular.

A great number of studies have concluded that language skills are significantly effective in refugee’s acculturation process, adjustment, self-confidence and self-esteem.

Vijayakumar (2016: 2) argues that an increment of prevalent psychological disorders among refugees has been discovered. However, language and cultural differences complicate the assessments and diagnosis of refugees (ibid.). Kim and Kim's (2013) study on acculturative stress among 13 Korean immigrants has confirmed positive changes as a result of acculturative stress in terms of psychological wellbeing and happiness. It emphasizes that limited language skills incur social isolation, depression and anxiety.

Literature on unaccompanied and minor refugees has mostly tackled post-migration wellbeing and mental health issues. Literature shows that exposure to violence predominantly results in poor mental health of minor refugees; a category that consists of more than half the total number of refugees worldwide whose physical, emotional and social developments are being jeopardized. It is the result of being exposed to adversities and violence in their home countries, undergoing the migration process and settlement in the host country. (Fazel, Wheeler & Danesh 2005; Vijayakumar 2016)

Newest research (Oppedal, Keles, Idsoe, Friborg & Sirin 2017) on acculturation of 918 unaccompanied refugees in Norway illustrates the roles of pre-migration traumatic factors, post-migratory acculturation hassles as well as host and heritage cultures. It differentiates and predicts four categories of young accompanied refugees in terms of mental health and depression trajectories: resilient, vulnerable, clinical and healthy. Over half of the examined unaccompanied subjects belonged to the healthy and resilient categories. It was emphasized that little is known regarding resilience – a dynamic process which yields in positive adjustment in spite of adversities and traumas. (Luthar 2006; Oppedal et al. 2017: 2)

With regard to the influencing factors of psychological adjustment in young, unaccompanied refugees, another study in Norway (with 223 unaccompanied subjects) show that young, unaccompanied refugees display higher vulnerability, symptoms of depressions and daily hassles and coping. However, it reveals a better level of life satisfaction among such refugees compared to ethnic minority and youth majority. (Seglem, Oppedal & Roysamb 2014: 293–303)

Literature has also dealt with refugees' gender as a factor in acculturation. Many studies report that male and female refugees experience acculturation differently, going through different psychological adjustment processes, stress and PTSD. A recent study of Stempel, Nilofar, Koga, Alemi, Smith, Shirazi, Efird and Bith-Melander (2017) attempt to fill the gap in the literature regarding gender differences. It assesses sources of distress and resilience among 259 Afghan refugees in California, as an example of resettlement in a developed country. One of the results is that family ties and language skills are not strongly associated with male refugees' distress levels; whereas dissonant acculturation, meaning an acculturation gap between parents and children, is positively associated with their distress levels. (Stempel et al. 2017: 16-19) In comparison with this study, previous research of Liebkind's (1994; 1996) on Vietnamese refugees in Finland has shown decrement of boys' anxiety by following traditional family rules.

Additionally, stressors such as daily hassles related to family, friends and school environment or workplace are introduced as fundamental predictors of symptoms of depression. They are emphasized as impediments to refugees' adaptation process – in initial resettlement engaging physical, affective and cognitive development – in daily life and social networking now and in the future. Therefore, they require intervention and social work. (Rutter, Kim-Cohen & Maughan 2006)

Many researchers have started to study and tackle the causal effect of daily stressors, stemming from displacement, on refugees' mental health. It was found that displacement-related stressors impact refugees' health and psychiatric symptomatology. The research specifically suggests that social isolation; lack of social support and meaningful activities; unemployment; and destituteness as daily stressors are substantially linked to refugees' mental health, stress and anxiety. (Miller, Omidian, Rasmussen, Yaqubi & Daudzai 2008)

A recent study (Hollander, Dal, Lewis, Magnusson, Kirkbride & Dalman 2016) conducted in Sweden on 1.3 million Swedish-born refugees and other non-refugee migrants confirms that the refugee population is more susceptible to psychosis compared to other groups. Among refugees, men are more vulnerable and young ones are even more at risk. Miller et al.'s (2008) study in Kabul, Afghanistan's capital city, emphasizes the

effects of exposure to armed conflicts on an individual's mental health. They also highlight the counter-effect of social support, literacy and job training in obviating the resulting daily stressors. In regard to the role of social support, earlier literature mostly highlights how in various forms it aids in decreasing stress, adds to coping resources and facilitates social and psychological adjustment of refugees. For example, Cobb (1976) and Morrison and Bennett (2006) show that social support positively influences mental health and minimizes distress through lessening the effect of stressful life events. Shumaker and Brownell (1984) also confirms the direct impact of social support on enhancement of wellbeing, discussing social support context, recipient and provider.

Engagement in meaningful social and leisure activities is vastly discussed in recent studies. Literature shows that engagement in leisure activities is a positive predictor of acculturation among immigrants (Kim, Heo & Lee 2016: 114). Kim et al. (2016) studied 434 Korean immigrants in the US and concluded that there is positive correlation between leisure activities and acculturation. This includes physical and social activities, and behavioral and cultural value acculturation. (ibid. 113–127)

Furthermore, following acculturative stress and adaptation challenges, better mental strength and cultural understanding can be yielded by engaging in various meaningful leisure activity. (Kim & Kim 2013) Additionally, many studies confirm the positive effect of stress on fortifying coping resources, mental health and general health. Literature shows that stress and posttraumatic stress for individuals having experienced major life crises may ensue positive psychological changes in wellbeing and posttraumatic growth – “a change in people that goes beyond an ability to resist and not be damaged by highly stressful circumstances”. (Tedeschi & Calhoun 2004: 1-4) Correspondingly, Bonanno (2004: 20-24) illustrates that youth confronting adversities may demonstrate favorably in adjustment process despite trajectories and risk factors.

In their study on leisure participation among Afghan refugees in Canada, Stack and Iwasaki (2009) state that leisure-time activities benefit Afghan refugees in terms of culture, education and health (physical and mental). Such activities additionally facilitate their adaptation process. (ibid.)

Also, previous studies on Afghan refugees have concluded that health professionals are to arrange for “community support services”, since a large number of psychosomatic symptoms that Afghan refugees suffer from are related to stress and possibly social isolation. (Lipson & Omidian 1992: 275) In line with this, recent studies (Renner, Laireiter & Maier 2012) conducted in Australia on 63 refugees from Afghanistan and Chechen, confirm that social support in the form of sponsorship interventions leads to decrement in stress reactions, psychological problems and acculturative stress.

Within acculturation literature in Finland, Inga Jasinskaja-Lahti, among others, has conducted research on intergroup relations and integration of immigrants. Highlighting the conceptual distinctness of ethnic identity, in a co-authored chapter in *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology*, the complexity and multiplicity of identities in acculturation process and the need for further research are accentuated. (Berry & Sam 2016: xiv; Liebkind, Mähönen, Varjonen & Jasinskaja-Lahti 2016: 30-45) Given the differentiation between self-recognized and other-ascribed identities in ethnic minority, acculturating individuals may feel even more stress over the acceptance of their own ethnic group and in-group hassles compared to the “negative reactions” of the majority group. Also, threats to in-group identity and perceived discrimination may damage one’s psychological wellbeing and intergroup perceptions. (Berry & Sam 2016: xiv; Liebkind et al. 2016: 34-37, 44-45)

Furthermore, although there is an abundance of literature on stress, trauma, PTSD and the overall health of Afghan refugees, there is still limited research on the acculturation of Afghan refugees. Especially within Finland, there is distinct lack of literature on the acculturation process and acculturative stress of unaccompanied young adult Afghan refugees.

## 1.2 Research Aims, Questions, Theory and Methodology

This study attempts to discover, understand and qualitatively assess young adult male Afghan refugees’ experiences of acculturation and stress. The special focus is on

acculturative stress and coping as well as extreme migratory stressors according to the ABC framework of acculturation and the model of migratory mourning and stressors of the so-called Ulysses Syndrome. Therefore, the objective of this study is outlined through the following questions:

- 1- In the acculturation process, what are the major migratory and acculturative stressors, stress and coping strategies and cultural learning experienced by young adult Afghan refugee clients of Ehjä: The Federation of Special Welfare Organizations in Vaasa, Finland?
- 2- How do the young adult Afghan refugees socially and culturally identify themselves?

The significance of this study lies in the following: it is an attempt to explore and understand refugees' experiences of acculturation and stress with the help of interdisciplinary theoretical models and empirical research, considering that little research has been done across disciplines in this respect (Ward et al. 2001: 281). It critically views the ABC model (ibid.) in that it is limited to intercultural contact in viewing refugee's acculturation. Embedding migratory mourning and stressors of Ulysses Syndrome in its theoretical model, this study tackles often-misunderstood non-clinical aspects of refugee adjustment impacting the acculturation process. It tackles acculturation and wellbeing of young Afghan refugees when Europe still strives to manage the recent migrant crisis and Finland has received over 25,000 young asylum seekers from 2015 to 2017, of whom Afghans constitute the second largest group in general and the largest group among unaccompanied minor asylum seekers and youth refugees. Findings of this study can be used in better planning for integration and health of youth refugees in terms of social support services and intervention, employment and migration challenges. Within Finland, on acculturation there is no study focusing specifically on the acculturation of young Afghan refugees, although it being the largest group of young refugees.

Dealing with phenomena of migration, life changes, stress and lived experiences, this qualitative study uses Interpretative Phenomenological analysis (IPA) to explore, make

sense and analyze lived personal experiences of the refugee participants who are five young adult Afghan men. Accordingly, semi-structured interview is chosen as the method of data collection.

### 1.3 Thesis Structure

This study commenced with the introductory chapter. The following chapter gives an overview of refugees, definitions of refugee and acculturation, and salient factors impacting acculturation of refugees. The study then proceeds to the third chapter where affective, behavioral and cognitive components of Ward et al.'s ABC theoretical framework, Achotegui's Ulysses syndrome and the combined model of the two are discussed. Chapter four provides information on the methodology, data collection, the participants of the study, and the researcher's role and interview procedure. This is followed by the chapter on findings and analysis of the research interview data and the discussion of the results. The work concludes with implications, limitations and recommendations for further research.

## 2 REFUGEEHOOD, WELLBEING AND ACCULTURATION

This chapter presents a concise background on refugeehood and acculturation and covers related concepts and definitions within the scope of this study. The remainder of this chapter discusses the factor affecting the refugees' acculturation.

One could claim that migration has existed for as long as human beings have. Migration never ceases to be inscribed into the landmarks of history in one way or another, thus not being a novel phenomenon, The Great Wall of China being built to block invasions, establishments of empires such as those of the Persian and Romans, “discovery voyages” and colonization of Africa in the sixteenth century, all involved and incurred local and global migrations (van Oudenhoven 2006: 163). However, the number of migrants has never been this high in the world (ibid.) and particularly at present, forced displacement of people has reached its peak in the last decade (UNHCR 2017a).

The issue of migration has always been dealt with, among other things, in terms of its impacts on the health of migrants in the receiving society. In this regard, as Furnham and Bochner (1986: 63-65) assert, earlier literature dealt with variables such as age, gender and education/literacy, how they have to do with groups of migrants, in which country of resettlement and how they are related with psychological and psychosomatic health problems. On the other hand, earlier research dealt with single or collective causes and to what extent the causes could be held accountable for such results; also, whether they appeared in research because of unsound methodological frameworks that were applied. (ibid.)

There have been abundant publications on the proximity of migration and insanity, whether or not plainly xenophobic, lacking pertinent data and defensible theoretical foundations until Odegaard (1932) and Malzberg (1940) as pioneers of research in the field developed more adequate research strategies. (Furnham & Bochner 1986: 63-64) Conversely, a paradoxical phenomenon referred to as Healthy Immigrant Effect (HIE) has been researched in the USA, Canada and Australia. According to this phenomenon,

immigrants tend to be healthier than the nationals of the receiving countries on average. (McDonald & Kennedy 2004; Kennedy, Kidd, McDonald & Biddle 2015)

To achieve a clear understanding of migration and its relevant health ramifications, one must first consider different groups of travelers. In this respect, from a cross-cultural point of view within the scope of this study, there are various kinds of travelers: tourists (eg. short-time visitors), sojourners (eg., international students), immigrants and refugees in a broad sense (Furnham & Bochner 1986: 246; Ward et al. 2001: 123). The word ‘travel’ itself shares the root with French *travail* (to work) and so this consolidates the reason why stress and strains are associated with travel in the narratives of cultural traditions (Furnham & Bochner 1986: 63). Mental or physical illness of migrants is oftentimes mentioned in old writings (ibid.). However, refugees, compared to other travelers, are more susceptible to psychosis and psychological disorders. Among refugees, men, vulnerable and young ones are even more at risk. (Hollander et al. 2016)

## 2.1 Refugees

Refugees as a group of cultural travelers are not a homogenous group (Donà & Young 2016: 154). One can think of convention refugees, refugees with temporary protection status, asylum seekers and undocumented refugees. (ibid.)

Refugee by definition is anyone who has fled their country of origin and is:

unable and or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. (Convention and protocol UNHCR 1951)

However as said, the term “refugee” is used in a broader sense to include displaced individuals needing aid (Gibney 2010: 1). However, many have fled for reasons of desperation such as famine, flood, war and post-war situations. (Eichenbaum 1975; Furnham & Bochner 1986: 96). That is why, in the aftermath of the 1990 refugee crisis

and the vast deportations (Prins & Slijper 2003; Vink & Meijerink 2003), the International Roundtable of Movement of People 1990 decided that

the refugee definition contained in the Refugee Convention of 1951 and the protocol of 1967 is too narrow to apply to situations where movements of people result from generalized violence, internal armed conflicts or other severely adverse social, economic and political conditions. (International Organization of Migrants 1990: 1)

The UNHCR therefore took it into consideration and promoted an extended definition of the term “refugee” (Allen, Vaage & Hauff 2006: 200). Yet in practice, regardless of the fact that some may have been granted “refugee status” and possess resident permit based thereon and some might have been granted a resident permit for “international protection” and some for “other reasons”, they may all be referred to as “refugees” based on the definitions by United Nations Refugee Conventions. As so it is according to Finnish Immigration Service (2018), refugee (*pakolainen*) is “a foreign national who has a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of ethnic origin, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion”, which is the definition that this study sticks to.

Afghan refugees who participate in this study are individuals who have the refugee status in Finland and were granted residence permit based thereon. They have claimed to be underage and unaccompanied when arriving in Finland. According to the Finnish Immigration Service (2017c) unaccompanied minors are children under 18 years old, who being without their parents or guardians have sought asylum. There are different procedures, services and arrangements devised for unaccompanied minors, such as group homes and supported housings, representatives designated by district courts as well as different duties and obligations. Therefore, if the asylum seeker fails to provide positive documents to show their age or if for example, their appearance does not correspond to the claimed age, then age assessment tests have to be performed. According to the Finnish Immigration Service, these tests include dental and carpal bone age determination, which requires written consent from the person in question.

## 2.2 Acculturation and Stress

This sub-chapter provides background and concepts of acculturation. It describes stress, changes, and factors involved in the process of acculturation.

Traditionally, acculturation is defined as the phenomena, resulting from “continuous first-hand contact” between individuals with different cultural backgrounds and the effect this contact has on an individual’s culture (Redfield, Linton and Herskovits 1936: 49 quoted in Sam 2006: 11; Ward et al. 2001: 99). Acculturation was first used as a term by Powell (1883) to refer to psychological changes arisen from “cross-cultural imitation” (Berry & Sam 2016: 12). Simons (1901 quoted in Sam 2006:13) regarded acculturation as bidirectional process of mutual accommodation. Acculturation however has sometimes been equated to assimilation, considered as its subset, or vice versa. However, Teske and Nelson (1974) made a distinction between acculturation and assimilation as one is bilateral and reciprocal in terms of its influence and the other unilateral respectively. Berry (1980) viewed assimilation as one of the individual’s strategies during the process of acculturation.

Acculturation involves two levels of changes which result from cultural contacts. These acculturative changes lead to cultural and psychological changes and are conducive to adaptation. They are firstly, group level changes in social, economic and political structures and secondly, individual level changes in behavior, value, attitude and identity. (Berry 1990; Berry & Sam 2016: 12-14)

With specific regard to refugee acculturation, presupposing that refugees flee their countries of origin to avoid human rights violations (HRVs) including torture, imprisonment, threats and dreadful environment (Allen et al. 2006: 198), Berry (2003) suggests refugee-specified group and individual factors.

Accordingly, the receiving country’s culture, attitude, social and resettlement policies are the group factors which impact refugee groups’ experiences of acculturation and influence the contact between the groups and the individual level factors. On the other

hand, individual factors consist of pre-contact individual and refugee group experiences of human rights violations as well as individual characteristics such as personal traits, developmental and gender factors. (Allen et al. 2006: 203-207; Berry & Sam 2016: 15)

During the process of acculturation, acculturating individuals undergo behavioral shifts. Depending on the type and degree, these changes may involve stress. Experiences of acculturation can be appraised by the individual as “source of difficulties” (stressors), benign, or as said earlier, opportunities. If individual appraisal confirms the experience as being non-problematic, then the required changes come forth with smooth behavioral shifts and the process is called adjustment. However, if the appraisal confirms it as being problematic, yet controllable, the result is acculturative stress. (Berry 2006: 46-47)

Lueck and Wilson (2010: 48) define acculturative stress as “a reduction in mental health and well-being of ethnic minorities that occurs during the process of adaptation to a new culture” on which there is a wealth of literature (Berry 2006: 44). However, Berry (2006: 47), following the stress and adaptation models such as that of Lazarus and Folkman (1984), has defined acculturative stress as “a stress reaction in response to life events that are rooted in the experience of acculturation”. In contrast to the word “shock” as in culture shock (Oberg 1960; Ward et al. 2001), these responses to intercultural contacts are not necessarily negative in terms of adaptation as an outcome (Berry 2006: 43). They are often associated with experiences of cultural loss conducive to elevated depression and connected to anxiety. Following such experiences, the response to such probable stressors can pose challenges which result positively in improving “life opportunities” for some acculturating individuals, whilst negatively in the “undermining of life chances” for others. (Berry 1997: 18)

On the internal level, the process of acculturation contains various degrees of individual adaptation (Allen et al. 2006: 203-206). Adaptation consists of long-term outcomes of acculturation and can be of three types, namely, psychological or “feeling well”, sociocultural or “doing well” and trying to “fit in” (Berry 2006: 17; Ward et al. 2001: 42) and the recently introduced intercultural adaptation or “relating well to each other in a multicultural society” (Berry & Sam 2016: 18; Berry & Ward 2016: 451).

Significantly, the outcomes of acculturation and acculturative changes in individuals concern affective, behavioral and cognitive “domains”. Ward et al. (2001) have identified and termed these three domains, the ABCs of acculturation. (Berry & Sam 2016: 17) Therefore, to be able to understand individuals’ psycho-socio-cultural experiences of acculturation (the three domains), this study adheres to Ward et al.’s (2001) comprehensive framework of acculturation. This will be discussed in chapter 3.

### 2.3 Factors Affecting Acculturation of Refugees

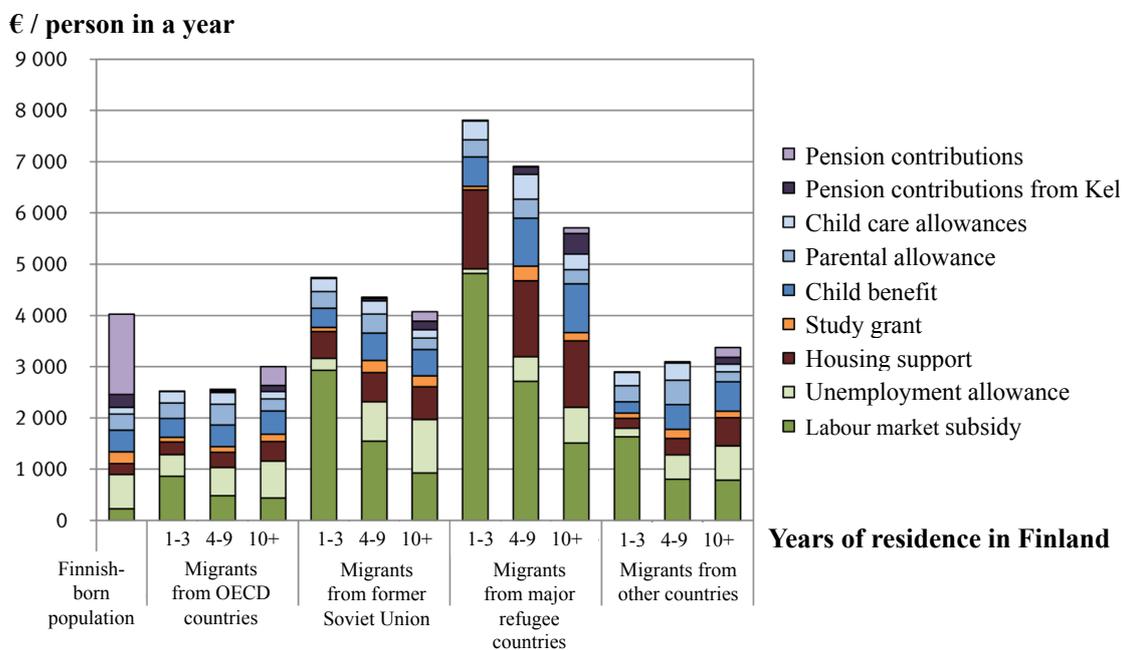
This chapter discusses factors which affect and challenge the acculturation process of the refugees. Displaced refugees’ inadequate preparedness for cross-cultural transition and socio-economic conditions of the country of resettlement accumulates with their pre-migration situations such as traumatic experiences as well as considerable insufficiency of financial resources and (linguistics, cultural, and/or practical) skills (Ward et al. 2001: 222). As such, refugees are confronted with challenges such as unemployment, disruption of social networks and cultural bereavement (Donà & Young 2016: 159, 161-162) which affect their acculturation experiences, psychological adjustment and adaptation to the new society.

#### 2.3.1 Employment and Income

Refugees can be endowed with financial benefits and improved self-sufficiency when employed (Ward et al. 2001: 235). Finding an employment opportunity however in the labor market of the country of resettlement is replete with challenges for refugees. They mostly experience “unemployment, downward mobility and underemployment”. That is, they fail to obtain a job, or their education and work experiences may not be fully recognized. Besides, they, being often from underdeveloped countries with socio-economic limitations, may have high financial expectations for improving their lives due largely to their financial losses before migration. That is also why refugee adjustment in working life is stressful. It is particularly so for refugee men coming from societies where

masculinity is associated with working and earning income. (Donà & Young 2016: 162-163)

Many refugees are unemployed and in need of social benefits. In 2011 refugees received more social benefits than any other population group in Finland and they were the largest group receiving unemployment benefits. (see Figure 2) They receive the highest amount of unemployment allowance and labor market subsidy in their first three years of residence (Tervola & Verho 2014: 11). This marks the significance of employment in acculturation.



**Figure 2.** The average social benefits received by Finnish-born population and immigrant groups in 2011 (translated from Tervola & Verho 2014: 11)

According to the OECD (2016: 20-22) only less than half of the population of refugees in Finland are employed and the employment rate of refugees is less than in other European countries such as Switzerland, Italy, Greece and Malta. Regarding skills and education of refugees, most of the refugees from Afghanistan have at most lower secondary school, and half of them have either never attended a school or had only elementary education; However, this is not recorded in all the EU countries and is self-declared by the refugees. (ibid. 15-16)

In Finland, employment of migrants is emphasized in personalized integration plans. The integration of migrants is legally based on the Acts on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers (1999) and Promotion of Immigrant Integration (2010). The main purpose regarding integration is “to promote the integration, equality and freedom of choice of immigrants through measures which help them to acquire the essential knowledge and skills they need to function in society”. (The Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers Section 1) According to § 1, Section 10, one of the means to promote integration is completing a personalized integration plan, which offers the individual migrant the opportunity to learn Finnish or Swedish sufficiently, receive possibly another education, as well as skills and knowledge needed to participate and work in Finnish society. § 1, Section 7, suggests other measures that municipalities and employment offices may take to support integration, such as providing guidance, information about the society and its functioning and promoting equality. (The Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers)

Therefore, one of the responsibilities of Finnish officials is to help immigrants in different groups to find their path in work and education. With the health, social services and regional government reforms happening in Finland, the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration is currently renewed (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment 2017). One of the central ideas of the new act is to speed up immigrants’ education to render them capable of entering the labor market, as well as meeting to the needs of different immigrant groups (Alueuudistus 2017).

Despite efforts (Alueuudistus 2017), the employment situation for immigrants is still complicated. According to previous research, finding employment in Finland is one of the most difficult parts of integration for refugees and other immigrants. For example, Salmela (2012: 94) interviewed immigrants, including Afghan refugees, in the Raahe region and she found that getting a job in Finland was what they found to be the most challenging issue. According to her interview results, immigrants also experienced that the education they have gained in their home countries was not appreciated in the open labor market in Finland.

Notwithstanding, employment is not the only factor affecting the acculturation process of refugees nor are social benefits the main means of integrating refugees into Finnish society. There are also other kinds of social support and services which play a significant role in refugees' lives.

### 2.3.2 Social Support

There is a link between stress, coping and social support, especially in major life events during cultural transition. Research has regarded social support as a coping resource and highlighted the benefit of social support for health and psychological wellbeing. (Schwarzer & Leppin 1991; Jerusalem, Kaniasty, Lehman, Ritter & Turnbull 1995: 119; Ward et al. 2001:87-89) Shumaker and Brownell (1984: 13) define social support as “*an exchange of resources between at least two individuals perceived by the provider or the recipient to be intended to enhance the well-being of the recipient.*” Considering that refuge involves separations and disturbance of family, friend and social ties (Donà & Young 2016: 161), the necessity of social support is inevitable in refugees' acculturation.

Social support, being one of the greatest stress and coping resources, can be yielded from various sources such as family, friends, and acquaintances including co-nationals and host nationals (Ward et al. 2001: 85-86, 237). Within the scope of cultural contact, social support is a determining element in psychological and physical wellbeing in such a way that the increase of social support is associated with the decrease of psychiatric symptoms, helping to improve psychological wellbeing (eg. Biegel, Naparstek and Khan 1980 in Ward et al. 2001: 85).

On the other hand, social support and services are also provided by the country of resettlement to refugees. Such support services are included in countries' resettlement policy to facilitate refugees' “resettlement and cultural transition” and alleviate HRV traumatic experiences. (Allen et al. 2006: 205) These services play a pivotal role in the acculturation of migrants and minority adolescences, as they may experience clashes of cultural norms and values in forming friendships with native peers (Sabatier, Phalet & Titzmann 2016: 430). Clashes of cultural norms for Afghan refugees have to do with

relationships in family as well, as younger family members prioritize commitment to their elders over their own needs. (Iqbal & Lipson 2006: 9; Lipson & Omidian 1992: 272) Family enmeshment is “normal family behavior” in Afghan culture and is considered as a cultural conflict hampering the adjustment to western societies. (ibid.)

### 2.3.3 Cultural Mourning

Refugees may not find the opportunity to bid to their family and friends, and attend to their affairs or possessions prior to their departure. This can lead to homesickness and can cause many to feel a strong attachment to their homeland. In cross-cultural transition, refugees may report “missing something from their previous life”. (Ward et al. 2001: 234) In initial adjustment, specifically children and adolescents report feeling disconnected from their cultural surroundings (Lusting et al. 2004 quoted in Donà & Young 2016: 164) and “mourn for homeland, family, friends and possessions” (Donà & Young 2016: 164).

In this respect, the term “cultural bereavement” was first defined by Eisenbruch (1991) in examining two groups of unaccompanied and detached Cambodian refugee adolescents in the U.S and Australia. Accordingly, cultural bereavement or mourning is:

the experience of the uprooted person or group resulting from loss of social structures, cultural values, and self-identity: the person or group continues to live in the past, is visited by supernatural forces from the past while asleep or awake, suffers feeling of guilt over abandoning culture and homeland, feels pain if memories of the past begin to fade, but finds constant images of the past (including traumatic images) intruding into daily life, yearns to complete obligations to the dead, and feels stricken by anxieties, morbid thoughts, and anger that mar the ability to get on with daily life. (Eisenbruch 1991: 674)

Eisenbruch (1991: 675-676) further claims that it seems tenable to say that the described “atypical grief reaction” could leave somatic and unusual symptoms including post-traumatic stress disorder. However, Western formulation and understanding of post-traumatic stress disorder lacks cultural meaning and awareness, especially when the symptoms do not fall into the western diagnostic categories (Eisenbruch 1991: 678; Bhugra & Becker 2005: 20).

Furthermore, Eisenbruch (1984: 329) states that refugees “are doubly vulnerable to the stress of bereavement”. That is due to stress arising from the experience of uprooting, as well as experiencing the physical loss of family members. (ibid.) In terms of mourning culture and mourning rituals, bereavement can be deeper and culturally different among refugees and immigrants, since they can only mourn distantly. Also, the unfamiliarity of health care providers with the refugee patient’s religion and culture may result in cultural insensitivity towards bereavement. (Loue & Sajatovic 2011: 269)

On the relation of religiosity and grief, one can say religiosity on the one hand may bring on mourning culture and on the other hand strengthens resilience and coping resources through faith and hope. Jahangir, Rehman and Jan (1998: 265-269) claim that the more religious Afghan refugees are, the lower the suicidal attempts.

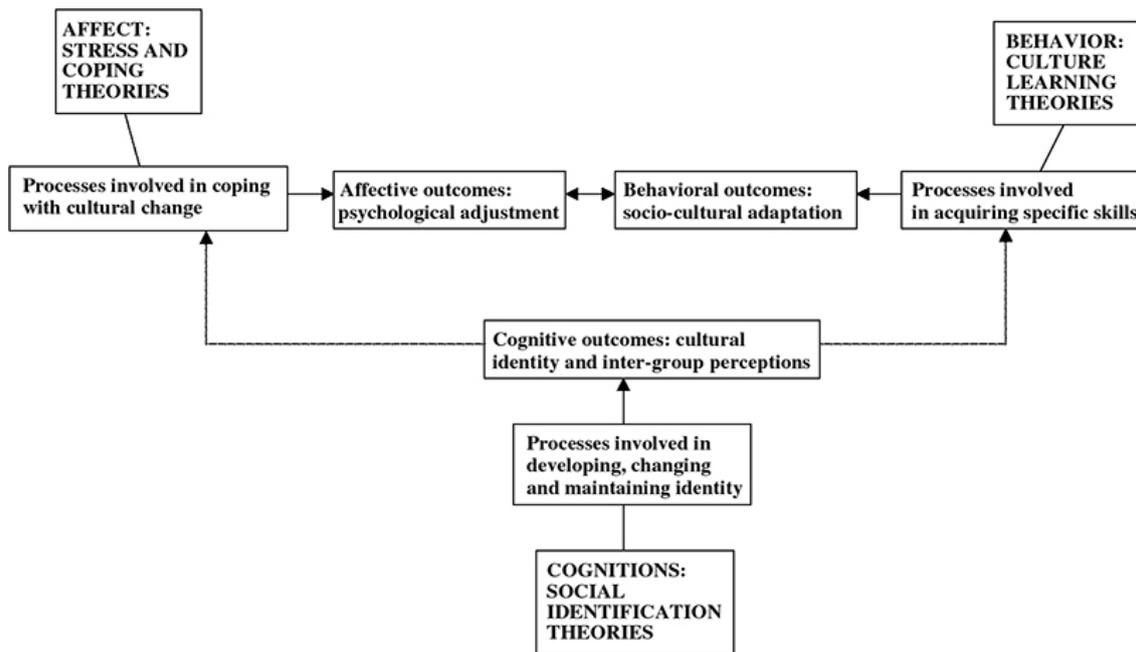
As discussed, employment, social support, and cultural mourning are the factors which mostly challenge the acculturation of refugees. Therefore, a theoretical framework to understand refugee experiences should be able to provide lenses to look into all these factors, the stressors, and individual coping mechanisms involved. Therefore, an integrated theoretical model will be proposed in the following chapter which takes cultural mourning into account as well.

### 3 ABC FRAMEWORK AND ULYSSES SYNDROME

This chapter presents the theoretical models used in this study. The first section discusses Ward et al.'s (2001) ABC framework of acculturation (also referred to as the ABC model of culture contact in Masgoret and Ward 2006: 59). The second section introduces Achotegui's (1999) Ulysses Syndrome. And the final section discusses the combination of both models.

#### 3.1 ABC Framework

Derived from Berry's (1970) acculturation theory, which is itself underpinned by Oberg's (1960) model of cultural shock, the ABC theoretical framework of acculturation consists of Affective, Behavioral and Cognitive components of cultural contacts. (Ward et al. 2001: 244; Yue & Le 2012: 134) This framework, having a culture learning approach to acculturation (Masgoret & Ward 2006: 58), views individual responses to unfamiliar culture of a new environment as "an active process" which shows how individuals "feel, behave, think and perceive" when dealing with changes (Ward 2001: 270). Accordingly, it encompasses a comprehensive array of theories corresponding to each of its components on stress and coping, cultural learning and social identification, delving into the acculturation process of individuals in unfamiliar cultural settings (Figure 3). (Ward et al. 2001: 244, 270; Yue & Le 2012: 134)



**Figure 3.** The ABC model of culture shock (Ward et al. 2001: 274)

The psychological and socio-cultural approach of the ABC model form the basis of this thesis and I will focus on the refugee part of the model. Refugees are distinguished from other travelers because of the unwanted ‘push factor’ involved in involuntary migration and pre-migratory experiences of trauma. (Ward et al. 2001: 193, 220, 222, 244)

### 3.1.1 Affect: Stress, Coping and Adjustment

The affective component of intercultural contact is accentuated by the “stress and coping” framework which appropriately fits in the ABC framework. The ABC’s stress and coping framework, which is preceded by Berry’s elaborated stress and coping model, claims that stress factors, which are present in cross-cultural transition, are comparable to those in other transitional experiences in life. Thus, after appraisal of life changes, refugees (like other travelers) need to render coping strategies to deal with such stress. (Ward et al. 2001: 71, 270) Societal and individual variables play a role in these processes of stress and coping in acculturation and therefore should be viewed from macro and micro perspectives prior to and during acculturation. Personality and cultural distance have significant impacts on acculturation. (Ward et al. 2001: 70-97, Masgoret & Ward 2006: 67-72)

The degree of impact of stressful life changes during acculturation depends on factors such as coping resources and the selection of strategies by the acculturating individual (Ward et al. 2001: 70-75). Coping as a process of “constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts” to manage stressful encounters is discussed in terms of stages, strategies and resources (Lazarus & Folkman 1984: 141). This process of changes in coping and concomitant psychological effects can happen and continue during short or long periods of time from a single moment to years as it is evident in grief over loss. Coping stages include periods of cognitive anticipation (the event has to yet unfold), impact (it has occurred or ended) and post-impact (after confrontation). As cognitive efforts of appraisals and reappraisals continue in the post-impact period, so does anticipatory cognition, meaning the processes of appraisal and coping deal with the past, present and future. It holds true also for the harmful confrontations in the impact period which leave a sense of threat in the future anticipatory processes. (ibid. 142-148)

Lazarus and Folkman (1984: 149, 151-153) define coping functions and coping outcomes as the purpose of the coping strategy and the effect of the coping strategy. They categorize these strategies as first, emotion-focused ones which address the regulation of the emotional response to distress-causing problem and, second, problem-focused ones which approach the problem itself. Cognitive efforts in altering the meaning of an event without changing the reality are defined as cognitive reappraisals and considered as a form of emotion-focused strategies. However, other forms such as avoidance, selective attention or behavioral engagement in other activities do not necessarily change the meaning of an event but may lead to reappraisals as well. Problem-focused strategies include efforts to approach the problem by deterring the problem, finding alternative solutions and evaluating their costs and benefits. (ibid. 150-153) Problem-focused strategies encompass other problem-oriented strategies which can address the environment (eg. altering the environment and resources) and the self (eg. changing behaviors and learning skills). (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek & Rosenthal 1964 quoted in Lazarus & Folkman 1984: 152)

### 3.1.2 Behavior: Cultural Learning

Focusing on the behavioral aspect of cultural contact, this social-psychology-driven component draws on Michael Argyle's model of interpersonal behavior and, on the basis thereof, conceptualizes cultural learning as the social skills required in unfamiliar settings. Should visitors or sojourners lack the culturally appropriate social skills, they may experience obstacles in interactions with their hosts or misunderstandings or offence. (Ward 2001: 51-53, 271)

Argyle (quoted in Yue & Le 2012: 137) argues that lack of social skills corresponding to the new environment may lead to conflicts and stress. Socio-cultural difficulties may arise out of cross-cultural contacts between dissimilar cultures. Different cultures may have various rules and conventions of communication governing interpersonal encounters; various proxemics and expected spatial behavior; difference in etiquettes, address and display of politeness; and conflict resolution. Therefore, acquisition of verbal and non-verbal behavioral skills and social knowledge is of significance for cultural travelers to "fit in" the host society. (Ward 2001: 51-69)

### 3.1.3 Cognition: Social Identification

The third component of the ABC framework which is related to cognition deals with cultural identity and intergroup relations. It draws on Tajfel's Social Identity Theory and Berry's categorical acculturation model. (Ward et al. 2001: 98-102, 271-272)

Since cultural contact between individuals of different cultures may bring along attitudinal, value-related and behavioral changes, acculturation research has dealt with changes in cultural identity, drawing on personality theory and studies on identity within social and developmental psychology. Cross-cultural travelers, especially refugees impacted by "push" factors and with pre-acculturation traumatic experiences, may experience contacts differently. Refugees, coming to a never-experienced before culture of the host country may experience acute pressure for cultural change. (Ward et al. 2001: 98-100, 244)

The models of acculturation varied and developed from unidimensional and unidirectional models which viewed acculturation as equal to assimilation (unilateral adoption of host culture). The later balance model of acculturation viewed biculturalism as midpoint between choosing either the heritage culture (separation) or the host culture. Later, other models were developed which viewed two referents of heritage culture and host culture as independent and orthogonal from the perspective of acculturation strategies (eg. Berry 1980). Subsequently, there is a categorical model of acculturation, showing how the maintenance of heritage culture and relations with other ethno-cultural groups is of value for the acculturating individual. (Ward et al. 2001: 100-102)

In this model, which is adopted in the ABC's cognitive component, interest in maintaining the own heritage culture and interacting with other groups on a daily basis is defined as integration. The opposite which is having little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance, due often to "enforced cultural loss", and interaction with others is known as marginalization. The assimilation strategy, on the other hand, is when one does not intend to keep their cultural identity and attempt to have daily interaction with the host culture. Conversely, separation is when one values keeping their heritage culture and avoids interacting with others simultaneously. (Berry & Sam 2016: 22) Other factors such as individual, migrant group and the receiving society were taken into account later. Such characteristics respectively include "age, gender and education"; "cultural similarity" and (in)voluntary motivations; and "monoculturalism versus multiculturalism". (Ward et al. 2001: 103)

Social identification theory (SIT) underpins the cognitive component of the ABC framework of acculturation as does Berry's categorical model. SIT, developed by Tajfel and Turner (1986), views social identification as being based on social categorization and social comparison. That is, categorizing others based on whether they belong to one's own group (in-group), or to another group (out-group). This follows group comparisons, which can be favorable or unfavorable, affecting individual's self-esteem. This is important since in-group favoritism, intergroup bias, out-group derogations and devaluations are viewed as common among groups and as inevitable to enhance and maintain self-esteem and in-group perceptions when confronted with threatened group

identity. These can be highlighted by SIT especially when immigrants and refugees are the groups in question. (Ward et al. 2001: 103-105)

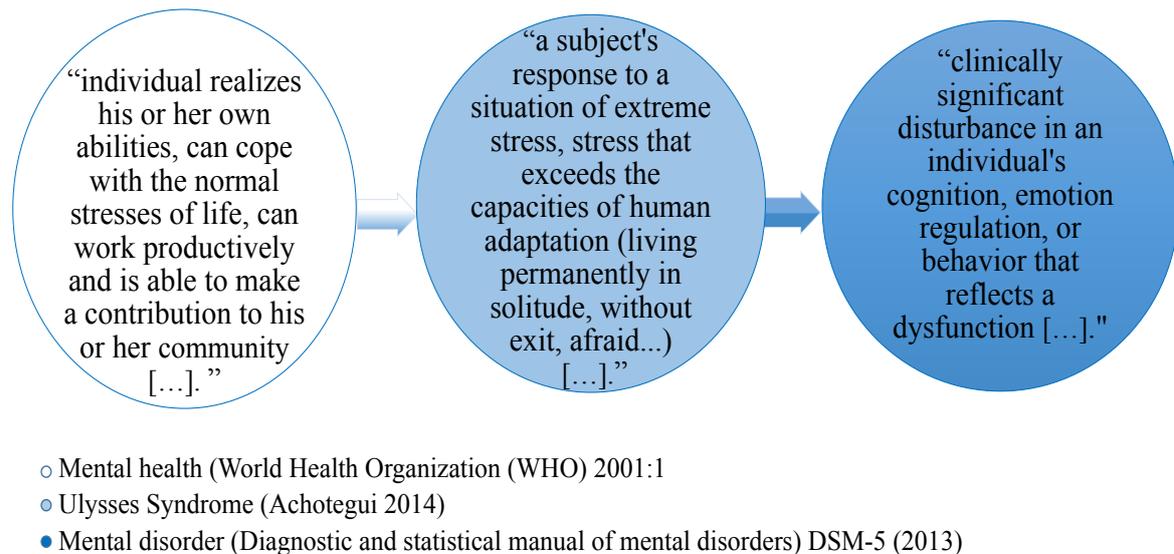
### 3.2 Ulysses Syndrome

Underpinned by the cognitive theory of stress (Lazarus & Folkman 1984) and Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory of mourning, the Ulysses syndrome is a set of psychological and yet non-clinical symptoms of extreme stress, which are of multiple and chronic nature, experienced by migrants struggling to adapt to the circumstances of the country of resettlement.

Likened to ten years of suffering and hardships of Odysseus, the Ulysses Syndrome is defined as the migrant syndrome of chronic and multiple stress. (Achetegui 2014) This syndrome is documented and described by Joseba Achetegui (2002) after having worked over twenty years with individuals dealing with often-misinterpreted psychosocial challenges (Diaz-Cuellar, Ringe & Schoeller-Diaz 2013: 1). Achetegui, professor of Psychotherapy at the University of Barcelona, is also founder and director of SAPPRI (Service of Psychopathological and Psychosocial Care for Immigrants and Refugees) at Sant Pere Claver Hospital of Barcelona.

Stress and tensions involved in the phenomena of migration are termed "migratory stress or mourning". Migratory mourning, introduced as complex mourning, is a specific characteristic of the Ulysses syndrome. (Achetegui 2014) Given that, Achetegui (1999: 88) argues that in relation to multiple migratory mourning there are seven forms of grief. These forms are, namely, grief over "family and loved ones", "language", "culture", "homeland", "social status" (e.g. opportunities, permits, healthcare), "belonging" (e.g. prejudice and racism), and "physical risks" (e.g. accidents on the journey, helplessness).

The Ulysses syndrome intends to identify and aims at reducing complications as a result of such stress throughout the migratory trajectory up until the onset of psychosomatic symptoms. Thus, the Ulysses Syndrome is not categorized as a mental disorder or as psychopathology. (Achotegui 1999, 2012; Diaz-Cuellar et al. 2013) This and the differentiation of Ulysses Syndrome, mental health and mental disorder are illustrated below. (Figure 4)



**Figure 4.** Location of Ulysses Syndrome (WHO 2001; Achotegui 2009: 168; American Psychiatric Association 2013; Achotegui 2014; Diaz-Cuellar & Evans 2014 quoting Schoeller-Diaz 2012)

This syndrome is structured on two elements: pertinent stressors and relevant symptoms experienced by immigrants. In this model stressors are, in terms of their intensity, tri-categorized as simple, complicated and extreme. The Ulysses Syndrome is situated within the extreme level of stressors which are claimed to surpass human capacity. (Achotegui 2009)

Simple stressors consist of moderate difficulties which do not hinder the capacity to overcome migratory mourning and are an inevitable part of migration. Complicated stressors, on the other hand, permit overcoming migratory mourning only after effort is made. Extreme stressors hinder the capacity to overcome migratory mourning. In connection with the aforesaid multiple levels of grief in migratory mourning, the Ulysses Syndrome's stressors from the perspective of mental health are "forced loneliness", "the

failure of migration project, lack of opportunity”, “the struggle for survival”, and “fear, terror and threats during the migratory journey”. (Achotegui 2014: chapter 2 scheme 2.2 & chapter 3 scheme 3.1)

Accordingly, “forced loneliness” refers to separation from parents, family and loved ones. Mourning over detachment from family is intense, for instance, when neither family visit nor reunification is possible due to lack of requirements and financial resources. The “failure of immigration project” is described as the lack of opportunities and failure in acquiring immigration and identification documents, work permits, employment opportunities, debts and such obstacles. The third source of stress is defined as “the fight for survival”, it includes struggles in (a) food and nourishment because of low purchasing power, sending money to relatives in their home country, consuming poor-quality food; (b) housing, meaning living in substandard, over populated and bad conditions. And, finally the fourth source of stress are mourning over physical threats on the migration journey, hazards and fear of loss of physical wellbeing, and enhancement of sensory and contextual fear conditioning. (Achotegui 2014: chapter 3 scheme 3.1)

Additionally, there are certain factors which intensify the Ulysses’ stressors. These intensifiers are, namely, 1) “multiplicity”, the stressors are not added but are mutually reinforcing; 2) “chronicity”, the cumulative effect as a result of length of exposure; 3) “absence of control”, lack of control over the stressor, lack of self-sufficiency and learned helplessness; 4) “great intensity and relevance of stressors”; 5) “absence of social network”; 6) “experience of extreme acculturation stress” and levels of grief; 7) “conversion of reactive symptoms to stresses”, stress over the symptoms of the stress; 8) misdiagnosis, discriminatory treatment and inadequacy of the intervention. (Achotegui 2014: chapter 3 scheme 3.2)

### 3.3 Using Ulysses Syndrome and ABC Models

Ward et al. (2001: 281) point out that although there have been give-and-takes across disciplines, there have not been many cases of integration. It therefore seems reasonable

to attempt to integrate the ABC and the Ulysses syndrome models to investigate and understand experiences of refugees more precisely.

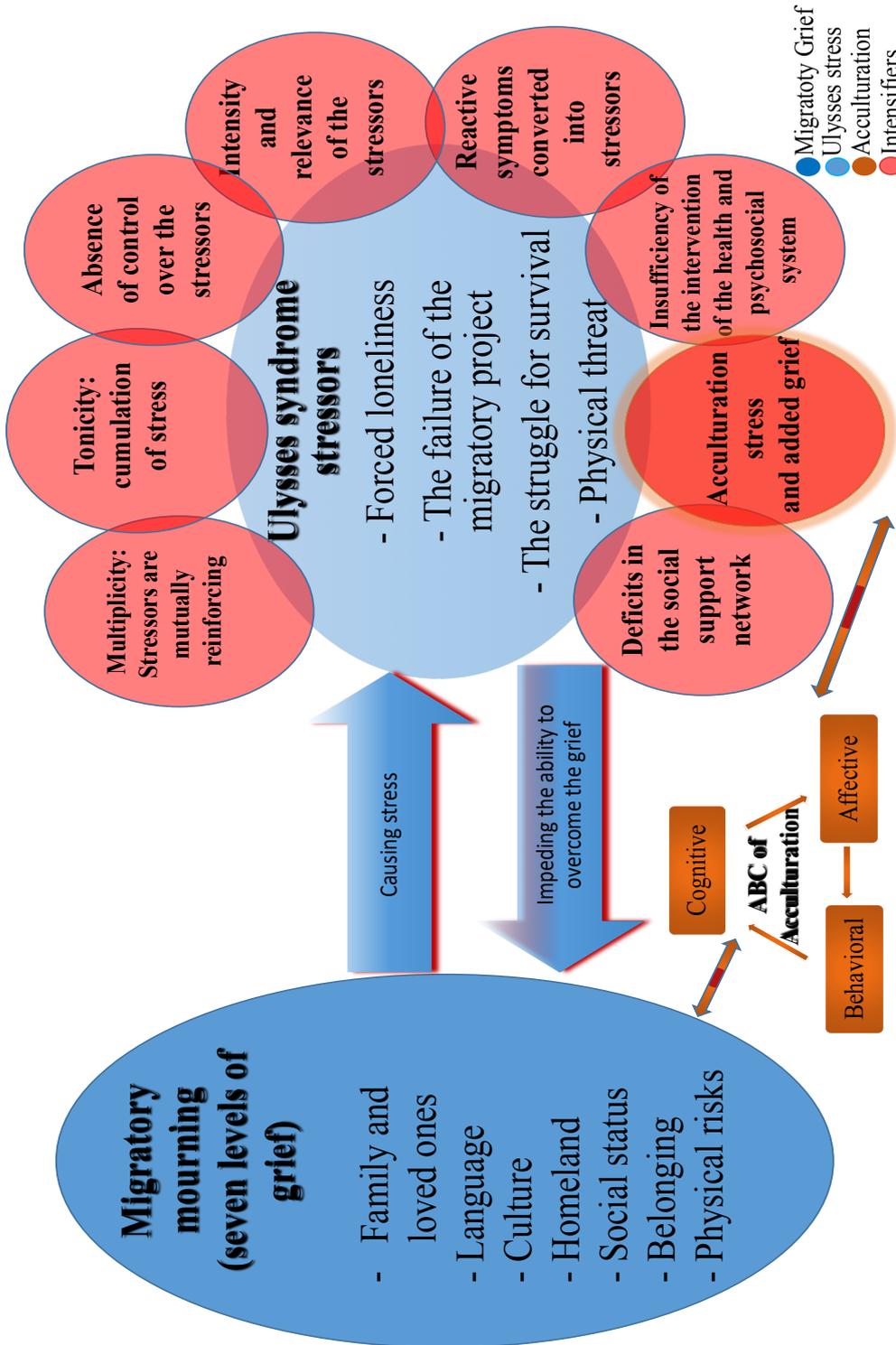
The Ulysses Syndrome model of mourning and stressors enables the researcher to specifically address the stressors and griefs both prior and during acculturation. While the ABC model, despite being comprehensive, tackles stress during and following the cultural contact, the Ulysses syndrome, on the one hand, does not provide any framework on coping, behavioral and cognitive aspects of the experiences and views acculturative stress from the migratory mourning point of view. In this regard, Achotegui (2014) states that classic migratory stressors such as language, culture and landscape are viewed as intensifying stressors in the Ulysses syndrome model. They are, however, assigned a lower position, due to the significance of new extreme sources of stress.

We could say that the basic concern of immigrants in extreme situations is not whether they prefer tacos to hamburgers, or whether they prefer the Andes to the Rockies or the Alps, but rather their physical and mental survival in the extreme conditions they endure. (Achotegui 2014)

Furthermore, the ABC framework does not include models of griefs or the psychoanalytic theory of mourning in its underpinning theories, although Ward et al. (2001: 228 quoting Eisenbruch 1991: 5) assert that Eisenbruch suggests that cultural bereavement “gives meaning to a refugee experience” and is perhaps a more suitable framework in order to apprehend and explicate refugees’ distress and hardships in the country of resettlement. However, this study takes into account migratory mourning consisting of seven levels of grief in accordance with the Ulysses syndrome, in view of Achotegui’s (1999). Bianucci, Charlier, Perciaccante, Lippi & Appenzeller (2017), also, emphasize the necessity of taking into account the Ulysses syndrome and its components, in view of the most recent refugee crisis in Europe.

This study uses the Ulysses syndrome’s model of mourning and stressors and the ABC framework of acculturation as a combined model to be able to pinpoint both migratory and acculturative stressors. The model of mourning and stressors to be used (derived from the descriptions of the Ulysses Syndrome, Achotegui 2014) and its potentiality to be

accommodated to the ABC framework of acculturation (Ward et al. 2001) are illustrated below (see Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Accommodated Model of migratory mourning, Ulysses syndrome stressors and ABC of culture shock (adapted from Achotegui 2014 and Ward et al. 2001)

As shown in the figure, on the one hand migratory mourning can affect the acculturation process, for instance, it affects the ABC's affective component by causing stress because of various single or cumulated levels of griefs, or it affects the cognitive component by influencing the socio-cultural orientations because of the grief over belonging (e.g. perceived discrimination, in-group problems). It is evident that these impacts on the components may cause behavioral changes as a result of coping, learning and inter- and intragroup perceptions (the components are connected).

On the other hand, acculturation process and acculturative stress may affect migratory mourning in two ways. Firstly, cultural transition to an unfamiliar culture and environment can itself rise or aggravate the levels of grief. For instance, if the grief over, say, culture or physical risk are present on the journey to the country of resettlement already they may become worse (from simple to complicated or multiple mourning) during the acculturation. Or if the grief over homeland or language is not present prior to acculturation, they may come into existence as result of cultural or climatic dissimilarities. Secondly, acculturative stress is considered as one of the intensifiers of the extreme stressors of the Ulysses Syndrome model; which aggravates the extreme stress and thereby impedes to a greater extent the individual's ability to overcome the migratory grief.

## 4 METHODOLOGY AND DATA

This chapter introduces the qualitative methodology used in data collection and analysis of this study. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews; where researcher and participant can converse in a manner that firstly-designed questions can flexibly change according to the participant's responses. Thus, it allows the researcher to examine significant and interesting domains. (Smith & Osborn 2015: 29)

### 4.1 IPA: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

The method of data analysis used in this study is Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). According to Smith and Osborn (2015: 25), IPA was shaped by phenomenological philosophy and developed as a psychological research methodology in the mid 90's (Smith 1996). Being phenomenological, IPA includes detailed exploration of lived and personal experiences of the participants. It involves participants' subjective perception or description of an "event or object" rather than making an objective argument on the event or object per se (Smith & Osborn 2015: 25). IPA is underpinned by works of Husserl (1927) in philosophy of phenomenology and its developments by Heidegger, theories of interpretation and Heidegger's hermeneutics, and finally Smith, Harre and Van Langenhove's (1995) idiography. (Smith & Osborn 2015: 25-27)

Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009: 51) recommend that the number of subjects should be three to six in an IPA research that deals with lived experiences. It furnishes adequate data, considering the intricacy of human phenomena, for the researcher to be able to investigate within and between accounts as well as compare and contrast them. "Most (IPA) studies have adopted straightforward designs: recruiting small, homogeneous groups of participants, and collecting data from them once." (ibid. 52)

In IPA studies, data is commonly collected by semi-structured interviews. Since in this manner the researcher can best act as a "naïve listener" and "facilitator" with a schedule of open ended questions which are flexible in order and let the participant have the

maximum opportunity to narrate their accounts in detail. It also lets the researcher delve into psycho-social aspects of the story and navigate through areas of interest. However, such interviews, which take usually at least one hour depending on the topic, are more intense, and are harder to analyze. For interviews to be suitable for IPA, they have to be audio-recorded and transcribed. (Smith & Osborn 2015: 29-35; Smith et al. 2009: 49-55)

IPA involves double hermeneutics in two ways; firstly, Smith et al. (2009: 35) using Heidegger's idea of *appearing* likens work of IPA researcher to that of a detective in exploiting the material and easing a phenomenon's way to emerge. This is followed by subsequent sense-making, comparing and contrasting of meanings with one another within the lifeworld of the subject and finally the researcher's own experience-based understanding (Stenner, Watts & Worrell 2017: 198). That is, "The researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of what is happening to them." (Smith et al. 2009: 3) Secondly, hermeneutics of empathy and hermeneutics of suspicion are both involved in the interpretation (Ricoeur 1970 in Stenner et al. 2017: 198). That is, the researcher attempts to view themselves in the position of the subject to understand them, and yet cast doubt on the meanings and shed lights on possible hidden meanings (Stenner et al. 2017: 198).

IPA has been vastly used in the fields on stress, migration, identity (Smith et al. 2009). All in all, it occurs to me that IPA suits this study, since, firstly, it explores domains of health and social psychology. Secondly, within it, an individual's own perception of their lived experiences is of paramount importance. Thirdly, there can be only few interviewees; and finally, migration as a phenomenon can be dealt with.

#### 4.2 Data

In this section the setting of the study, participants' and researcher's role will be discussed. It proceeds to explain the process of interviews.

#### 4.2.1 Setting: Ehjä ry and Vaasa, Finland

Ehjä ry provides social support services for young adult refugees in the region of Vaasa, including the participants of this study. The researcher, having worked at Ehjä ry, had the opportunity to work with young adult refugee clients and arrange the interviews with the participants since the objective of the present study was encouraged and assisted by Ehjä ry.

Ehjä ry, The Federation of Special Welfare Organizations, founded in 1983 as national child protection organization, provides social and housing services including support service and aftercare for youngsters. Additionally, since 1996, Ehjä has been providing housing, school and job seeking support services and “everyday surviving skills” for immigrants or individuals with immigrant background. Ehjä has provided its clients with job seeking skills and employment services through various projects.

Among them Kannustavat kokemukset (Encouraging Experiences) has at one point or another assisted the participants of the current study. It is organized by Ehjä and started in 2015. The project’s aim is to offer help to and support the clients, being 16-to-24-year-old immigrant youth, in finding their first summer jobs or internships. During the project, the youth are familiarized with working life in forms of teaching, group discussions, developing their job searching skills and visiting different companies. Every person has also individual conversations with the advisors, and their CVs are created or updated. The goal is to develop the customers’ job searching skills, build up networks and most importantly, help the youth to get positive experiences of work and feelings of success which will encourage them to look for jobs also in the future. (Ehjä 2018)

The participants can also get training and information, if they choose to, as well as brochures and guide booklets. Therefore, the project functions as a link between the youth and possible employers, so that even after the project they will have connections and higher chances of future employment. However, in the long run, the project is not only helping the youth, but also aims to change the general attitudes towards immigrants among employers. (Ehjä 2018)

#### 4.2.2 Participants

Participants are five young adult clients of Ehjä in Vaasa, Finland aged between 19-22 years. Having lived in Vaasa for 3 to 4 years, they are all from Afghanistan and are seeking employment opportunities, short or long term, as part of their integration plans. Some of the participants revealed only during the interviews that they have experiences of migration to other countries such as Iran and/or Pakistan. (Table 1)

**Table 1.** General demographics of the participants

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Country of birth</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Current Education Status</b>	<b>Previous education</b>	<b>Years of residence in Vaasa</b>	<b>Years of experience of migration prior to Finland</b>
<b>P1</b>	Afghanistan	20	Vocational school	Literacy through Quranic lessons	3	8-10 (in Pakistan & Iran)
<b>P2</b>	Afghanistan	20	Vocational school	N/A	3-4	12-14 (in Iran)
<b>P3</b>	Afghanistan	19	Vocational school	N/A	2-3	2-3 (in Iran)
<b>P4</b>	Afghanistan	19	Admitted to High school	Guidance school	2-3	12-14 (in Iran)
<b>P5</b>	Afghanistan	22	Readmitted to Vocational school	Elementary education	4	N/A

Although participants are all fluent in Finnish, since Persian (Farsi/Dari) is both the interviewees' and researcher's native language, interviews were conducted in Persian. From the data, I have translated the excerpts that appear in this study to English for the sake of analysis. (See Appendix 3 for excerpts in Persian)

All participants claimed to be underage and were unaccompanied when arriving in Finland. However, some were recognized as underage by the Finnish Immigration

Service and some not. They now possess residence permit due to their refugee status. Participants are residents of the city of Vaasa and thereby are able to enjoy social services provided by the municipality and other state or private organizations such as Ehjä ry. Participants' names are not mentioned to maintain anonymity and confidentiality.

#### 4.2.3 Researcher's Role and Interview Procedure

Smith et al. (2009: 35) view a 'dual role' for the researcher, that is, sense making like the participant and sense making unlike the participant through the researcher's lens. Having worked at Ehjä as a support counselor and previously as a volunteer, I had the opportunity to be in contact with many young and adolescent refugee clients of social welfare and services offices in Vaasa including the participants of this study. I have assisted the young refugee clients with paperwork, applications, forms, and school tasks.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with the participants as part of the encouraging experiences project of Ehjä. Interviews were conducted in a comfortable environment of a café in Vaasa which was chosen by the participants themselves. However, one of the participants preferred to be interviewed in his apartment where he would feel comfortable to talk about his experiences. Interviews took 100 minutes each and participants could take breaks at their ease. Participants felt free to share their experiences, although we must take into account the sensitivity of certain issues and the vulnerability of the participants due to both their conditions and the fear over the statements which may be discrepant with their narratives in asylum hearings at police or immigration services. Questions were devised theme by theme. Appendix 1 presents the translated interview questions and Appendix 2 shows them in the original language.

## 5 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the discovered themes, findings and analysis. The analysis provides the excerpted quotes (translated to English) from the interviews with five young adult male refugee clients of Ehjä.

After investigating the data, exploring the phenomena, coding processes and discovering emerging common patterns, the themes were established. The main themes are categorized as pre-acculturation factors; acculturative and migratory stress, coping and learning; social support and support services; and social and cultural identifications. The sub-themes then present the detailed analytical findings of each topic.

### 5.1 Pre-acculturation Factors

The participants have experienced trauma, stress and major life events such as migration and loss prior to their migration and cultural transition to Finland. This section presents findings with regard to experience of mourning, stress, trauma, coping and learning before participants' arrival to Finland.

Demographic factors and their effects were present throughout the data; However, due to their significant overlaps with other themes they are dealt with and analyzed in the corresponding subthemes. The factors such as age, education and literacy, and participants' family's financial situations are analyzed under the migratory mourning and acculturative stressors (see 5.2.2 & 5.2.6).

#### 5.1.1 Exposure to Traumatic Events

This sub-chapter deals with the traumatic events before the participants' flight to Iran (except for P5) and Finland. In the following excerpt participant 1 describes his childhood life and experiences:

- (1) I was a street trader in Pakistan. I did not have a father and I could not do but work to provide for my mother, sisters, brothers and family. I had no choice, I was the only one bringing home bread. I grew up under such difficult conditions. [...] being independent, for example being able to lead your own life and your issues. These are all lessons in life for a person. It is not like we just eat and sleep. (P1)

In the above excerpt participant 1 states that he lost his father in Afghanistan in his childhood. He then mentions migration to Pakistan as another stressful life event where he was expected to provide for his mother and siblings. Having worked as a child laborer, he describes his childhood life conditions as “difficult”. As participant 1, the majority of participants, expressing coping and learning, add that they have had life lessons through hardships that they experienced.

The resulted learning is not only a coping resource but also a source of knowledge and motivation on how to “lead your own life” and be “independent” despite vulnerable age and living conditions. In the following excerpt, another participant describes his childhood fear:

- (2) Since I got to know who I was, since then up to now [...] but more till four years ago, we have had this fear. It has always and always been with us. When we were in Afghanistan. We had this fear that like we are alive today but might not be tomorrow. (P3)

Participant 3 says that he has lived with the fear of losing his life due to the situation in Afghanistan. This indicates both an emotional and physical lack of safety and security which for him, started “four years ago”. The participant states that the feelings have been continuous since first arriving in Finland, though they weakened with time (example 2). The recurrent “fear” of imminent life threat that has “always” been with the participant, indicates pre-migratory traumatic stressors.

On the other hand, participant 5, who does not relate previous experiences of migration, explains the following:

- (3) I have scars on my body, knife scar on my back and head and all this [...] all this was for the fear of Talibans. They bothered me a lot because of the clothes I wore [...] I wanted to go, because I wanted to be free. [...] at night, someone might come from an ambush with a gun and bother you.  
(P5)

He shows the scars on his left arm and neck to me and asserts that he was “bothered” and fled to be “free”. Physical assault and first-hand experience of violation of human rights in addition to life threats posed by radical groups have ‘pushed’ participant 5 to flee Afghanistan.

In the example below participant 2 explains about loss of his parents and his life in Afghanistan:

- (4) [...] my father got killed in Afghanistan. My mother had gone to her father’s when I was small and my uncle, whom I used to live with, because his life was in danger left Afghanistan. Maybe 17-18 years ago, when it was Taliban’s era. So... he left for Iran because of his life and took me [with him] too. I grew up with them. My uncle used to be my guardian.  
(P2)

Participant 2 states that his “father got killed” in Afghanistan in the Taliban’s era and his mother left him to his uncle who fled to Iran “because of his life” (example 4). Similar to participant 1 and 3 (example 1-2), his account is indicative of difficult and dangerous living conditions in Afghanistan (and Pakistan). Experiences of physical loss of a father, separation from mother and flight to Iran as a child all indicate traumatic life events in his childhood. He, in line with participant 5 (example 3), describes life Afghanistan in the Taliban era as unsafe.

In general, all participants have experienced forced migration in young childhood or adolescence before arriving in Finland. These traumatic events include experiences of war and violence towards oneself and/or family, loss of family members, threats or assault from groups such as Taliban and neighborhood bullies.

### 5.1.2 From Experience of First Forced Migration Towards the Second

This subchapter tackles the first migration (in Iran/Pakistan) and post-first-migration theme (on the journey to Europe). Here, participants express their feelings and experiences with regard to migration and life in Iran.

In the following excerpts, the participants give accounts of experiences of human rights violations and lack of safety:

- (5) I saw it with my own eyes how they beat my friend. The way they grabbed him and dragged him away. In no country would they treat an animal like [how] in Iran they treat an Afghan. So, this motivated me to leave Iran as well. (P1)
- (6) There has been the experience, the experience of being an immigrant. It's not like it's a new experience [...] But we had this situation since childhood [...] those who were not such close friends would look at us differently, look down on us with contempt compared to an Iranian or someone else. [...] there, even a small child who did not know you, would see you from 100 meters away and call you names. [...] we could not for example 9 pm in the night go out in our neighborhood. If you would go out and get caught by them thieves they would take whatever you had with you, eg., mobile, money and such. [...] You would not dare to go to police. If you did, then they would capture you yourself. (P2)

Participant 1 states that he witnessed that his “friend” was treated unfairly and forcibly and views the incident as an example of how Afghans are treated in Iran. Self-reported second-hand experience of violence (example 5) and perceived racism “motivated” participant 1 to migrate yet again after Pakistan and Iran. It also makes it an issue of self-esteem when it might be the case that being “beaten” might have happened to the participant himself but in order to maintain self-esteem he reports it as a second-hand experience and then generalizes it as racism towards all co-national in-group (example 5).

Experiences of perceived racism and discrimination, and low-regard treatment of the vulnerable participants indicate dangerous stressors with inadequate resources to cope

with the stress. These stressors are ‘the struggle for survival’ and ‘the failure of migration project’ (example 5 & 6).

In the following excerpt participant 3 talks about his experience of working conditions as a child laborer:

- (7) [in Iran] I myself... got once tortured in Iran. However, I did not get tortured anywhere else. It was very difficult to be honest. It was a difficult experience because if we were in the workshop like we had to sleep in the same place as we worked in. Like there we had a room which was made of clay and no matter whether it was winter or summer we just had that one room. We could not get to see anything like heater, fridge or TV. We would work in the day and sleep in the same place at night. We had to put 2 or three blankets on us so cold as it was. We were in such a room when the weather would get cold. We could not get out because we feared that they got us deported [...] (P3)

Participant 3 unlike others reports first-hand experience of physical aggression and violation of human rights as he was once “tortured” in Iran. He states that he needed to work and live in a “workshop” and would not go outside the “room” because of the fear of deportation. This among other things deprives the participant of the opportunity to have cultural contact with other groups in the society. He describes his life and work conditions as “difficult” and with minimum facilities. (example 7)

Unlike participant 1 who has experienced child labor in Pakistan, participants 2, 3 and 4 worked as child laborers in Iran (examples 7, 8 and 9). In the excerpt below participants express how working in Iran was a challenge for them.

- (8) You know for us who had done tough work in Iran it was ridiculously easy here. It was so easy. (P2)
- (9) When I was smaller I used to go in the daytime to school and in the night to work. The older I became the responsibility became broader, well my family had expectations. I had to work so I had to do night time. (P4)

Participant 2, like the other participants, tells about his experience of child labor during the time they were deprived of basic rights and had to do difficult tasks. However, he

implies that work in Iran has not only been a source of negative stress, rather, for instance, having done “tough work” in Iran is now an effective coping resource for their experience of similar work in Finland was said to be “ridiculously easy” which comes forth with feeling of satisfaction when participants were asked about their work experience in Finland. This holds true also with the access to a better range of opportunities and human rights for them in Finland. (example 8)

Participant 4 (example 9), views the challenge in managing to work at “night” and study during the day. These all being indicative of traumatic life conditions, fear and stress are accumulated with family “expectations” and “responsibility” in case of participant 4 in Iran. However, these also imply his desire to go to school and his commitment to meet family needs. Also, “the older I became the responsibility broader” indicates adolescence stress in having to study which has to with peer stress as well as working night shifts to meet traditional family expectations.

All the participants who have experience of living in Iran have articulated lack of safety, lack of agency, feeling of insecurity in resorting to police if being a victim of violation of laws and stress of deportation (example 6 & 10). In this regard, participant 1 explains about his own experience in the following excerpt:

- (10) The main problem that I had, like I said, was that when we were in Iran we did not even have a right to possess a simple thing like a sim card. [...] You could not have driving license nor insurance. [...] [when asked about the migratory journey] I do not remember! (P1)

The inability to obtain necessary identification documents, insurance and driving license is indicative of “failure of migration project” and “lack of opportunity” which are identified as an extreme migratory extreme stressor. Lack of access to resources and safety, being extreme stress of the struggle for survival in addition to discrimination, being grief over belonging, seemed to have impacted the said participants’ psychological adjustment and their struggle to adapt to Iranian society and thereby their sociocultural adaptation.

With regard to post-first-migration experiences, all participants, except participant 1 who says he does not recall, have expressed feeling of fear and life threat on their journey to Finland. In reply to the question regarding his experience of the journey to Finland, participant 1 says “I do not remember!” (example 10). It can indeed have to do with avoidance coping as well as trust, confidentiality of asylum narrative and fear over probable inconsistency of statements with those given to authorities as discussed before.

Having been forced to flee from Iran (or Afghanistan in case of P5) participants started a new migratory journey. In the text below participant 5 expresses his feeling about his journey:

- (11) You are playing with your life. It was both fear and excitement (laughter). Thank God, we got here in one piece. (P5)

Participant 5, like the majority of the participants viewed it as “playing with your life” and he is thankful to God for arriving alive to the destination (example 11). Having experienced the pre-migration (to Finland) exposure to trauma and life threats, participants resort and thank God for their survival. This suggests an aspect of participants’ personal traits which is acceptance of external control alongside perseverance and hope (example 11-14, 64). Participant 5 perceives his experiences on the journey as entailing both “fear and excitement” which indicates both negative and positive implications. (example 11)

Participant 2 expresses his feelings about the dangers of the journey in the following text:

- (12) It was all the time full of danger and fear lest you get killed here or there or get caught by police here and there. When we were in the border zone between Iran and turkey some shootings occurred. [...] When we were going from Turkey to Greece, it was night and we threw two boats to the water and set off. There were rubber boats and there were many people. For example, if it is supposed to have the capacity for 6 people they put 30 people on. [...] But while we were going I do not know what happened to the other boat that it collapsed and people were thrown into the sea. [...] after getting off the patrol then I went under a lorry where my backpack left behind. (P2)

Participant 2, having experienced direct and imminent life threats, describes from how in the journey “shooting occurred”, how from one of the overcrowded inflatable boats “people were thrown into the sea” to later having to hide and cling “under a lorry”. For him losing his “backpack” on the journey reminded him of family-related grief, in addition to other traumas and stress, because he has lost then his mobile phone and last phone contacts of his family in the backpack. (example 12)

Participants 3 and 5 articulate their experience of imprisonment and solitary cell, detainment and deportation (example 13 & 14) in crossing countries on their migratory journey as follows.

- (13) In Greece, once we crossed the border we got captured. We are like 43 days in the prison. 43 days in the prison we had water and food but we were not able to see outside. (P3)
- (14) [...] they [countries] fight with immigrants, of course not pleasantly but badly. They either beat you up, or imprison you and deprive you of food in the prison. Or they have to return you to the previous country you were in and you know these are all bad memories [...] I remember it was Bulgarian soil. I went four times on ground into Bulgarian soil, they would catch me and return me to Turkey all the time, I go again and they deport me again to Turkey. Four times [...] but I always had hope that I would attain my goal [...] I fought and now I’m here. (P5)

Participant 3’s detainment and “43 days” of imprisonment indicates the stressor of physical threat on the journey. So does participant 5’s similar experience of detainment and deportation to Turkey. However, they have demonstrated great determination and a more problem-solving mentality when going “four times on ground into Bulgarian soil”. Also, they took advantage of emotion-focused coping through wishful thinking and “hope”, thereby generating satisfaction in “I fought and now I’m here.” (example 13 & 14)

### 5.1.3 Expectations

This sub-chapter presents the participants’ expectation of their journey and their destination. It also explores the pertinent stressors which impacted their feelings and experiences.

Given the extremely stressful journeys that participants articulate to have experienced, they have arrived in Finland with dehydration and starvation which appeared to exacerbate their confusion in the beginning. (example 15 & 16) In this regard, in the following excerpt, participants explore their expectations:

- (15) I used to think that Finland, was somewhere near Thailand or somewhere there. Then, because I had not been going to school and I did not have enough general knowledge to know where Finland was located. When Nokia phones were out I used to think that they were from somewhere near China, Thailand or somewhere there. It did not cross my mind that they were from Europe or somewhere close. [...] I arrived and it was daytime, summer. I was very tired, hungry and all that. I don't know, I slept and then when I woke up it was still daylight (P2)
- (16) When we went to Greece, I heard of Finland as a country. Until then I had not heard of Finland to know if it was country or what. [...] we heard that the immigration office here is good like asylum seeking in Finland is good. [...] there is good immigration law in Finland and you can get asylum in Finland quickly. (P3)

Participant 2 says that he did not know that Finland was located in Europe or how it was to live there. He expresses that he had feelings of physical exhaustion when he arrived in Finland. This participant, like the others, indicates that he did not have any knowledge and skills to manage and survive in Finland as the new country of settlement nor was he in anyway prepared for the Finnish climatic conditions such as bright “summer” nights (example 15).

Participant 3 says that he did not know anything about Finland until he heard about the Finnish system of immigration on his migratory journey, thereby expected fair treatments from authorities. (example 16) Participants throughout the interviews stressed their feeling of satisfaction towards arriving and staying in Finland and that everything considered they are satisfied with and trust in the Finnish laws and justice.

Participant 1 says that he has an aunt in Finland—not necessarily a blood-related aunt since culturally speaking any close relative or friend of family can be addressed as such (example 17).

- (17) I even did not know where Finland was located [...] The only reason was my aunt. Because my uncle phoned me when I was in Iran and urged me to go to Finland [...] saying that if they capture you in Iran as well they will deport you to Afghanistan again and you do not have any relatives there. (P1)

He highlights the ‘push’ factor of forced migration and the feeling of stress over detainment in Iran and deportation to Afghanistan where he does not “have any relatives” (example 17). Having an “aunt” in Finland however might have provided him with initial information and expectation leading to a better adaptation outcome.

To compare, participant 5 states that he had not even planned to arrive in Finland but in “Sweden” in the following excerpt:

- (18) I had no idea what country it was and where it was. When I suddenly entered Finland, I was shocked [...] my destination was supposed to be Sweden. [...] I was shocked and when I got off here it was as if I had been destined to stay here. So, I stayed here. (P5)

Participant 5 manifests acceptance of external control when he claims that “I had been destined to stay here” (example 18). This originates from the traditions and religion in trusting in pre-determined destiny as a resource which might have helped him to cope with such incident and feeling of despair.

In general, none of the participants have had any knowledge about Finland, its location and specifications before their departure—except P1 knew that Finland as country exists. Participants emphasized feeling of stress and “shock” (example 18) due to having been taken by surprise for a number of reasons such as its geographical location, climatic conditions and/or as an unanticipated destination.

## 5.2 Acculturative and Migratory Stress, Coping and Learning

This chapter presents the themes related to the phase after the arrival in Finland. The sub-themes are not independent. It is evident for example that cultural distance and

communicative problems as well as perceived discrimination are also directly related to socio-cultural identifications.

Participants articulate their experiences of struggling with living alone without their family (or guardians) and old friends, and they relate their experience of being emotionally attached to their past. Moreover, their emotional and physical living conditions in the refugee camps and prolonged asylum decisions complicate and challenge their feelings, learning and strife for adaptation.

### 5.2.1 Living Alone and Loneliness

Throughout the interviews all participants have stressed that they have been struggling with loneliness and difficulties of living alone. However, they have used different strategies to cope with it. It is important to note that loneliness and solitude are linguistically homonyms in the Persian language; this is also relevant when participants elaborate on it from their individual perspectives and experiences.

In the following excerpts, participants express grief over loss of family and friends:

- (19) Being away from family is really difficult. I mean you live in *ghorbat* in a country like this, being in a foreign country where you see no family, no good friend that you can share and reveal your feelings with and chat. It is because it is not possible to trust them. I have trusted once in Helsinki but in the end it was all in vain. [...] to tell the truth, I had a Finnish girlfriend here and when I broke up with her [...] I became depressed and was not able to follow up my things here as I used to do before. I got stuck at home. All the time, I was preoccupied with thoughts and loneliness. [...] It is just you. You are alone here and you have to get every everything on your own and should not depend on anybody, have somebody do something for you or extend your hand towards somebody. I realized here it is just you, you yourself and it is all. [...] you are alone and you must cope with your problems. (P5)
- (20) Loneliness is difficult. There has to be someone, someone confidant to discuss your problems, to empty your chest with. It'd be good. Like I said if here you get sick or something there is no one to ask how you are doing. if there's family or someone it's very good they can help. But now that you

are alone there is no one to worry about you. If you get sick or a problem occurs, then it's just you alone. (P3)

Participant 5, revealing grief over an ended relationship with a Finnish woman and feelings of dependency and avoidance coping, points out another major stressful life event which impacted his emotional wellbeing and adjustment to the extent that he manifested social isolation and had recurring “thoughts” and “loneliness”. He seems to have coped with the mourning and extreme stressors, which enables him to return to school. It should be borne in mind that being “stuck at home” (example 19), not socializing with support networks and Finns might have hindered the cross-cultural transition in terms of cognitive and behavioral aspects. However, “coping” with loneliness seems to have strengthened his independency and general toughness and thereby lowered expectations from others.

Participant 3 places emphasis on the lack of empathy and sympathy, showing the importance of emotional support when in need or “sick” (example 20). This at the same time accentuates the stress over general wellbeing as well.

Also, participant 5 touches upon the concept of “*ghorbat*” which includes the sum of affective feelings of being lonely, alienated and helpless when away from home (example 19). Thus, the use of this concept highlights the participant’s mourning and mourning culture. Trust issues in connection with both co-ethnic and host contacts caused specifically participant 3 (example 20) and participant 5 to feel lonely in that there is no “confidant [...] to empty your chest with” (example 19 & 20).

On the other hand, participant 2 mentions solitude as a daily stressor:

(21) I have been experiencing [life] very badly like we go to school and then return home and we have to cook despite being tired. [...] early morning, you need to do so something to force yourself to get up, to go to work. (P2)

He expresses perception of positive stress, coping and learning that one must firstly, “get up and go to work”; and secondly “cook despite being tired” which as notions of cultural learning are not in line with norms of the traditional Afghan family life where the mother

and women in the family cook and take care of the household including offspring and grandparents in case of extended families (example 21).

Participants have approached solitude differently. In the following text, participant 4, expresses his perception of mental problem and self-reports it:

- (22) Well, like I said I am fighting with it. I tell myself that I perish unless I combat this loneliness and being lonely here. I know some people who when they cannot deal with being alone here their mental problem becomes 100 % worse than mine, there are many, I know them. They cannot deal with themselves. (P4)

He describes an individual struggle to “combat” his “loneliness”. He manifests toughness and at the same time attempts to both maintain self-esteem and highlight how grave the issue of being alone and lonely is. By “fighting” he also indicates his attempts and approach to cope with it. (example 22)

### 5.2.2 Family Stressors: Emotional and Financial

All of the participants wish to see their family, hear about them, travel and visit them although they have neither financial resources nor the legal possibility to do so. This is because firstly they have claimed asylum over persecution or life threat existing in their homelands and as such travelling thereto will disprove their claim; secondly, they say that they do not have the possibility to invite their family or apply for family reunification now.

During the interviews participants stated how strongly they are affected by worries about the emotional, physical and financial situation of their families. Forced detachment from family, grief over physical or emotional loss of a family member, especially the mother, and feelings of guilt, self-blame and grief over debts and expenses concerning the journey paid by family were mentioned by the majority of the participants. It should be mentioned that emotional attachment to family members, especially the mother, the necessity of

repayment of emotional and financial support to family and loyalty have to be considered in the context of Afghan family relations.

In this regard, in the following excerpt, a participant expresses his grief and intense affective stress:

- (23) [...] When you want to abandon your mum, and loose her being around (presence), 100% for some time you are preoccupied with thoughts and worries. [...] [Wish] only once I get to see my mom. I do not have any other wishes. This is my biggest wish. [...] my mum had some health problems and was sick. I just want to know if she is healthy and feels fine. I do not need anything else, I only want this [...] my mom had no choice but to sell her gold jewelry so that I'd be able to go abroad with its money [...] Whatever I have I have because of my mom. After all, our culture and your culture is like this. We respect our parents. (P1)

Participant 1 says in tears “[I wish] only once I get to see my mom” (example 23). Recurring “thoughts and worries” marks this stress as chronic and multiple. Also, affective stress, chronic and multiple in nature, and lack of control over the stressor are evident due to the inability to pay his emotional debt and loyalty to his family, repay his mother for “her jewelry” as well as not knowing about her whereabouts and health conditions. He seems to cope with it, at least in part emotionally, by expressing his respect for and indebtedness to his mother as well as evaluating his heritage culture positively in terms of respecting parents.

Participant 4 also self-reports having experienced “high level of stress” over not knowing his family’s whereabouts (example 24).

- (24) in the first year that I did not know where my family was, believe me, I could not enjoy anything. No workout, no interest, no studies, not for example things like, like anything, all my friends would tell me ‘come on man! you have come here to live’. [...] Then, I had very high level of stress, I mean greatly high, I had never had that much stress in life, because, as they say, no matter how many adversities you are in, it’s nothing if you are with your family. [...] your family may not be able to afford to help you with money, but to this extent that they say they hold your hand and stand by you, it is enough. [...]. But thanks to god, for this last year now that I know about my family and I am in touch with them,

even if its full of pain, it is a solace and you tell yourself you at least hear from them, this is what is important. (P4)

The participant's account indicates that social support of friends' network and involvement in social activities has helped him cope with the described stress over family. This stress, although having caused lack of enjoyment in educational and recreational activities for him, had not prevented him from involvement in such activities in the first place. Having managed to find and contact his family one year after his arrival in Finland, he expresses his satisfaction and how hearing from his family is now a "solace" although being "full of pain". It is important to note how he emphasizes and differentiates emotional support from family, who, despite physical absence, "stand by" him in coping with "many adversities" from support from friends in Finland who show sympathy. This highlights the importance of family in Afghan culture as well. (example 24)

Participant 4 expresses feeling of relief compared to participant 1 who has yet to know about his mother. This indicates how important it is to be able to have contacts with family and hear from them although one would still have the intense stress over their wellbeing and/or their stressful and dreadful situation; as the family may be experiencing life threats in unstable and unsafe districts seized by a radical group such as the Taliban (example 25).

- (25) Taliban had seized that city and my family did not have a good monetary situation. But then I had no choice here. When I was given money here. When it was 200 or 300 euros I sent them with that. I just wanted to save as much as I could and send them so that they could get out of that city. [...] [when] necessary, we had no choice but to borrow money and transfer it. (P3)

Participant 3 expresses daily stress over the situation of his family and that he "had no choice" but to transfer money to them either by saving his daily allowance or "borrow[ing]". This complicates the mourning for the family. Expressing feelings of helplessness, he says that he has struggled to proceed with his life during the time. However, it appears that in order to overcome with the stress over life threats facing his

remote family, he has taken advantage of problem-focused coping by providing his family with the means to “get out of the city” and survive.

All participants wished for and the majority of them (P1, P3, P4 & P5) had begun the migratory journey hoping they would reunify with their family at some point. Participant 5 explains about his attempt to find his family:

- (26) I sought help from the Finnish Red Cross. I have a file in there as well asserting that my family was missing and all that [...] However, when they considered me as being of age, I did not hear from them [the Red Cross]. [...] he [a friend] could bring his family to here and I could not. Because they determined I was major (P5)

He states that he has resorted to the Finnish Red Cross to know about his family whereabouts and help him reunify with his them. He expresses feelings of grief over his missing family, frustration and despair because he was detected to be “of age”. Age, among other things, is an important factor to make family reunification; that is, if the refugees were considered as minor they would be able to bring their family to Finland in certain cases. As such, if the refugee is undocumented, Finnish immigration service has to attest the subject’s age through various physical examinations; this procedure causes a great amount of stress for the subject whether or not the claim gets approval. If the claims are not approved, then feelings of frustration, despair and mourning for family can instigate intense negative stress for the subjects.

It is important to note that participant 1 and 5 state to have claimed their right age that they had then knowledge of but immigration service used a comparative method where their physical appearances were compared to those of nationals of other countries which disproved their claims. Participant 1 expresses his frustration over the unfair method which does not consider that Afghans such as him had a difficult life and been working since young childhood making their physical characteristics resemble those of older individuals. As a consequence, such stress over age may ensue further problems, distrust, and negative attitude in their contact with Finns. Given, not only is age an important demographic factor, it also may become a chronic stressor during the participants entire

cultural transition and adaptation by compromising participants' psychological adjustment and hindering their efforts for sociocultural adaptation.

All in all, family stressors include but are not limited to emotional and financial stressors. The "wish" to see the family again and/or to know about their whereabouts and wellbeing highlights the grief over family and their lives. This grief however can be linked with the participants' own wellbeing and welfare, which affect their acculturation in Finland.

### 5.2.3 Refugee Camp Experience in Finland, Health and Health Care

All participants were accommodated in refugee camps while their applications for asylum were under process. In this regard, during the interviews they express feelings of extreme stress concerning the processing period for the result of their asylum application, having taken 1 to 2.5 years, and about the time period when they were in the refugee camp.

The distress during the processing period for the asylum decision is predominant among the participants. Participant 1 explores the topic and speculates that he might have been "depressed" during the period in the following (example 27).

- (27) I was not feeling well; after some time, I became depressed or something; in the nights I used to have nightmares; I was feeling horrible. When I would wake the next morning I was afraid of my own shadow. I had been feeling so for 1,5 months or two. I have not ever said this to anyone, I even wanted to commit suicide. The authorities in A [name of the camp omitted], none of them would help immigrants. None of them understands immigrants. [...] I was living in a 'jungle'. [...] a very old building, in the middle of forests. Imagine, from that home to a corner store, it would take 45 minutes by foot. 2,5-3 kilometers away. We did not have any possibilities. [...] I had not received the result of asylum application in 1,5 years. [...] I made them get me to a psychologist. [...] the psychologist would laugh whatever I would say s/he would laugh. s/he could not understand what I was saying. [...] My knees would swell to the extent that I could not walk [...] For almost two years I just put up with it until I got positive decision. Afterwards, they themselves came to help gradually and figured out my problems. (P1)

He claims psychosomatic complications, revealing that he “even wanted to commit suicide” over fear, “nightmares”, “not feeling well”, not being understood and attended to until he received the “positive decision” on his asylum application. It appears that he articulates experiences which resemble those of multiple and chronic stress. He expresses feeling of dissatisfaction with the medical care prior to receiving the positive decision on the asylum application and the subsequent residence permit. (example 27)

Notwithstanding, the participants stress their satisfaction concerning the provision of language courses and educational support within the same period, expressing positive stress dealing with opportunities, social and cultural learning. Some, within one month, were sent to school to study along with Finns.

In this regard, participant 3 expresses general satisfaction and gratitude concerning the fact that despite “having no documents” he went to school “with the very Finns” in the following excerpt:

(28) [...] in one month, I was sent to school with the very Finns in the same classroom, having no documents though. And now like I said it is not now much different than then. It is a bit different though like I could not work or get a work permit then or could not get a driving license. [...] then it was difficult. [...] when I was in the camp. I got sick for three days and did not come out of my room and no one came to ask how I was doing. I went to the doctor's as well and the doctor said just drink water. [...] here it is good in the sense that they don't prescribe tons of pills and syringes. However, in Iran, there was a family who would come by and ask how you were doing. You could not know if they accepted you or not and what would happen in the future. This stress was with you every day. I could have gotten a negative decision and would have been deported. But then you would feel relieved because the decision came. (P3)

Non-discriminatory education opportunity seems to be appraised by participant 3 as positive stress in comparison to his experience in Iran when he did not have this right and opportunity.

Participant 3, stating similar experiences with the medical care prior to the asylum's decision as participant 1, mentions lack of sympathy and displays grief over family and

friends which intensify the daily stress about the “future” and the likelihood of “a negative decision” and getting “deported”. It is so until the relief of the positive decision and positive stress about working permit replaces them. Experience of first forced migration seems to work again as coping resource, among other resources, since the participants tend to compare the situations in Iran and Finland and manifest appreciation towards the Finnish experience although it might be a stressor as well. Having complained about the medical care prior to the positive decision, both participant 1 and participant 3 report that they were however sent to medical doctors and psychologists, who, as the participants report, did not treat them according to their expectation to receive “tons of pills and syringes”. (example 28)

Yet both participants say the doctor or psychologist could not “understand”. Participant 1 refers to the psychologist’s reaction to his accounts as unexpected “laugh[ter]” and participant 3 implies the doctor’s underestimation of his problem, mentioning unexpected medications compared to Iran (example 27 & 28). These indicate communicative misinterpretations as well. In the following excerpt, another participant highlights another aspect of communicative problems:

(29) we were living in a camp when there was no one from Afghanistan. There were people from Africa, Kurds and Arabs. It was very hard to deal with them and compromise because neither of us could understand the other’s language [...] We could not understand one another’s language and there were lots of problems in the camp. (P4)

In line with the issue of “understanding”, participant 4 states that communicative problems and language barriers between various ethnic groups in the camp incur “lots of problems”. He expresses having had feeling of affective stress in cultural contact with other ethnic refugees in the camp. (example 29)

Additionally, cultural interpretations are highlighted by the participants. In the following excerpt, participant 5 explains the reason why he would not resort to mental care: (example 30)

- (30) They even organized for me from school, to go to the psychologist and talk. However, I knew what kind of place it was, I had told my friends that [the school] had arranged for me to go to such place and my friends would tell me what kind of place it was. I was told if you go there, they give some pills that make you crazy even if you are not. Like if you are not psycho they make you psycho. That's why I feared to be honest and did not go. [...] I thought that they could not do anything for me. The pain that is inside me is inside [only] me myself and if I could not work it out neither could a psychologist nor anybody else. (P5)

He expresses his “fear” of going to the psychologist’s appointment because of how his “friends” described the “place” and its consequences. The presumption that “they make you crazy even if you are not” seems to be a barrier in helping the refugee in the camp to cope with stress, to seek for support, to survive and thrive (example 30). These presuppositions lie in Afghan culture and traditional thinking. Participant 5 manifests strong personal traits such as relentlessness and strength at the same time. It seems as though he tends to use such traits and inner strength when coping. He avoids resorting to medical or social support as he assumes nobody else can relieve the “pain”. (example 30)

#### 5.2.4 Homesickness: Grief over Language, Culture, Food and Climate

This subchapter presents the theme of homesickness. Although all of the participants express homesickness and grief over Afghanistan’s and/or Iran’s life, weather, landscape and food, they seem to have used various methods to deal and cope with these stressors. Experiencing so, the refugee participants express nostalgia for those of their homelands in addition to the feeling of missing “family and old friends” (example 31).

In the following excerpt a participant explains about his homesickness and how he copes with it:

- (31) There is this adage that “east or west, home is best” and it is truly so. [...]. When we are hanging out with friends we don’t have such thoughts but when we become alone [we have them] once every hour. Every single hour we have these thoughts because really we have such homesickness that we think of things. [...] About my family and my old friends, like our own culture. [...] The weather that we have in Afghanistan, the life style that we have there, generally the difference is huge. But there we don’t live

free, we are not free but here it is free, that is one of biggest differences.  
(P3)

Participant 3 puts emphasis on his homesickness using an old adage which literally means that home cannot be replaced. He then adds that he benefits from “hanging out with friends” as a way of avoiding recurring “thoughts” about the past, expressing grief over loss of culture, friends, family and weather in Afghanistan. Additionally, positive thinking and evaluation of “free” life and opportunities in Finland have helped him to cope with grief. (example 31)

Also, participant 4, who says he was raised in Iran, approaches his homesickness for Iran in a more cognitive way by arguing and reminding himself of comparable merits of Finland (example 32).

(32) [...] whatever memories I have, sweet or bad are from there. My friends. I have been living here just for almost 2,5 years, it is not much only 2 years. I miss so much of [my] life in Iran despite all the difficulties. I lived in such a beautiful city, which they say it is entirely picturesque. [...] however, it [Finland] is still good, it has places to see, its weather is relatively fine. Many complain about Finnish weather, but we have no choice. But even if the weather was worse, I wouldn't mind the weather, because here [Finland] has other things. (P4)

He expresses his grief over his “beautiful” hometown and its weather but simultaneously emphasizes on how his flexibility helps him to accept the merits of living in Finland and bear the “relatively fine” Finnish weather. Furthermore, like participant 3, he, using the pronoun “we”, seems to benefit from the fact that this grief is a shared and collective experience to cope better with the grief and also the affective stress in having “no choice” in this regard. (example 32)

Participant 5, however, unlike others, does not seem to consider merits of living in the new environment. He articulates strong frustration and grief over “environment, food and traditions” of his “own country”. (example 33)

- (33) Let me tell you this, as soon as I get an opportunity, considerable amount of money and have finished my school, I'll be gone to Afghanistan. I don't know if then there'd be a way to return [to Finland] because I cannot take it anymore. [...] I prefer the environment, food and traditions that I have in my own country over Finland. In terms of climate, it's a paradise there, not like here where it is 3 months summer and 6-9 months for god's sake dark. Here is good as well but it has long and gloomy winters. All the time dark. One cannot tolerate this darkness no matter how many months you have been living here. It still has a very long winter. (P5)

When participant 5 expresses clearly that he “cannot take it anymore”, it seems as though stressors have accumulated to the extent that they have intensified also the grief over homeland and made the grief emotionally unbearable for him compared supposedly to when he could “take it”. Moreover, he perceives the “darkness” to be the most unbearable experience; which may highlight another important aspect that repetition of “dark” and “gloomy” on the one side and “paradise” on the other can also be indicative of devaluation of host country environment and revaluation of home country to improve self-esteem in coping with griefs and stress.

Additionally, all participants state that they have experienced changes in their diets in adapting to Finnish meals served at school or self-made food which may be different to the traditional ones previously provided in their households. This however can have to do with the grief over food and dietary customs of their homelands, too.

Participant 2, who says he was raised in Iran, praises the Iranian cuisine and at the same time reveals his unhealthy eating habits in Finland when avoiding Finnish food in the first and second years of his residence (example 34).

- (34) There is no such food here. In my opinion, Iranian food is better. Maybe you can barely find such foods all over the world. Here they don't have any commendable food. [...] In the first and second years, I had not been eating them [Finnish food] at all. [...] having been here for two years I got weak eyesight and I lost my hairs. I do not know if it was because of the climate or food. [...] Now it is better. Better. It was not like this before. Back then I did not know to cook and if they had cooked for me I would not eat. It was like I was scavenging for some canned food which was no good and I'd just fill my stomach. It was like this. I did not know what is good for my body what is not. But now I know. [...] (P2)

He speculates on “climate or food” to account for somatic problems such as his “hair loss” and weakened “eyesight”. Although his account is more indicative of excessive use of “canned foods” which may cause malnutrition or eating disorders, it can be seen that he has acquired progressive adaptation, used problem-focused coping (among other resources), and socio-cultural learning with regard to the new dietary since “Now it is better” and he “know[s]” about importance of eating habits. This does not necessarily mean that the old stressors over mourning for homeland’s “climate or food” are not present.

In general, in response to the stress involved in grief over homeland, participants seem to use coping resources in accepting the situation and making effort towards adaptation. However, some have expressed feeling of extreme affective stress and a strong inclination to go back. This, as said, seems impossible and unaffordable. They have come to understand and learned that there are different climatic conditions and landscapes compared to those of Iran/Afghanistan, and that these may require a different lifestyle and dietary requirement.

### 5.2.5 Cultural Distance and Communicative Challenges

The refugees constantly compare their experiences of Finnish culture, language and behavior, values and norms with their perception of those in Iran and/or Afghanistan. Although in their first migration experience, as they say, the culture, language and religion of Iran (in case of P1, P2, P3 & P4) and Pakistan (P1) have been similar, it is not so in Finland.

Participants using outgroup stereotyping express acculturative stress and daily communicative difficulties in making conversations both in public and school environment and perceive Finnish culture “colder”. In the following example participant 2 explains further his perception of cultural differences between Finns and Afghans:

- (35) their culture is so that they are colder than us. We behave warmly when we get to know someone. They [Finns] don’t get close and friendly to

someone they do not know. [...]. I was in a classroom where we were almost 20 students and I was the only immigrant there. Finns are such people that for example Finnish children maybe have fear or they are not that social people. They don't talk much. Although I many times tried to start talking with them they did not show much interest to speak; not like us [...] to talk fervently and friendly right from the beginning [...]. It is difficult. [...]. Our situation is such that we are more with our own friends and not like we hang out with Finns more. [...] The environment of school is such that you cannot easily interact with people. The possibility is so little. There were some Finns whom I knew but not like I go to their home and vice versa to that extent. (P2)

Participant 2 perceives Finns as less “social” and less “friendly” compared to Afghans and speculates “fear” to be a factor too. He displays frustration and affective stress when expressing his unsuccessful attempts to initiate communication “many times”. This seems to have been a daily communicative stressor and be intertwined with status as being a minority and perceived loneliness as “the only immigrant” in his classroom as well as the outgroup’s lack of interest in interaction. It appears that he locates the stressor in the school environment with “little” chance of interaction with students who are perhaps younger than him as he refers to them as “children”. (example 35)

In the following excerpt, another participant explains about communicative challenges he faced:

(36) [...] here they say it is personal space, they stand one meter away, not that because you are an immigrant, no they are generally like that. (P4)

Participant 4 shows coping and learning in appraising Finnish “personal space” as only a “generally” cultural behavior and not a negative attitude towards “immigrant[s]”. He appears to have taken advantage of positive interpretation in dealing with the affective stress concerning the Finnish cultural learning and Finnish premises (example 36).

Participants 2 and 4 show cultural learning (language and cultural skills as “personal space”), and behavioral change with knowing “some Finns”. Also, participant 2 (example 35), implies a different cultural perception of friendship which entails visiting “their

[friends'] homes and vice versa" involving a ritual of having lunch or dinner together. This perception seems not to correspond with its Finnish cultural equivalence.

Participant 5, in addition, highlights the initial language deficiency as a major acculturative stressor (example 37).

- (37) [...] in the beginning, I did not know English or Finnish. It was really difficult for me. I was put in a place where I felt like I was mute... I was not able to talk to anybody. I had such a difficult time during the first month, until I learned the language a bit [...] before I could not take care of banking and official things; taking care of these sort of things are tough for immigrants because Finnish is very difficult. (P5)

He says that he has felt "mute" and unable to communicate to "anybody" in the beginning. As a result, he has experienced a "difficult time" and also stress in handling "banking and official" affairs. However, he has managed to start using the language after only one month, coping with the stress.

Some participants mention cultural differences in terms of value, liberty and social structures in comparison with their previous experiences. Participant 4 expresses feelings of affective stress over the unconformity of the familial and social norms he has "grown up" with, and perceives Finnish norms and liberties as resulting in "harder" communication initially:

- (38) when I just had arrived in here, well because I grew up in an Islamic country and obviously I grew up in a religious family. Communication and code of conduct was a bit harder first. In an Islamic country, first thing is Hijab. So when I came here it was interesting, it was the first thing that for example I observed. What more? Here for example male and female can hang out easier than in Iran. Here they see women more valuable compared to other countries I lived in. Here man and women are the same. That's so great. (P4)

He however describes this stressor as "interesting" which may have to with the way he has (re)appraised the very stressor since it has resulted in socio-cultural learning and behavioral changes. As he expresses content, stating gender equality, freedom of clothing

and women rights are “so great” and seemingly not challenging any more compared to when he “observed” them at first. This, apart from learning, seems to have helped him cope with stress in communication with women as well.

Participant 3 mentions “slot machines” which can be viewed as another difference between “Islamic” norms (forbidden or prohibited as not having ‘halal’ profits) and the Finnish ones.

- (39) Like here some fellows played with slot machines. Well it’s a bad thing. I did not know it because I had not seen such things. I had learnt on my own because here was nobody [to tell me it’s wrong]. Once we were paid I would put [everything] into those machines. Then I realized it was a bad thing. It prevents one from studying and preoccupies one with. [...] we would do football betting and such. (P3)

He expresses affective stress due to the unfamiliarity, lack of knowledge and experience in dealing with this aspect of cross-cultural transition to a culturally different and free society; he also shows coping with the stress and consequent educational and financial failures – not to mention the stress of actual playing with the machines. On the other hand, he claims that he has come to understand “it was a bad thing” and manifests learning and behavioral change.

Additionally, with regard to cultural distance, it should be borne in mind that the issue of cultural dissimilarities in the context of acculturation for the participants is not limited to cultural contacts with the local Finns but include co-ethnics, too. Participant 4 explains how he, who was raised in Iran, has experienced communication with co-ethnics in the following example:

- (40) [...] honestly, I don’t get along with them [Afghans coming directly from Afghanistan] much. That’s why, as I said, culture is very important. They have better relations with those Afghans who like them are from Afghanistan compared to Afghans who have lived in Iran. On the other hand, I don’t know why those Afghans who have lived in Iran somehow behave differently [here], for example one cannot gain trust in them quickly. [...] I don’t know why in Finland we cannot trust. (P4)

Participant 4 views cultural differences between Afghans who “lived in Iran” and the ones raised in and departed from Afghanistan as the reason why he does not “get along” with the latter. He states difficulties and “trust” issues in communication between Afghans raised in Afghanistan and those who lived in Iran. In addition to cultural differences between the two group, he wonders over behavioral changes of Afghans raised in Iran. (example 40)

### 5.2.6 Education and Literacy

Education for the majority of participants who have arrived as unaccompanied adolescents is perceived as learning Finnish and receiving vocational education which provides financial resources. Participant 3 has chosen high school and not vocational school. A majority of participants has strongly asserted that “going to school” has been their “dream”.

In the following excerpt, participant 2, who studies in a vocational school, elaborates on his experiences of stress and coping in his studies. (example 41).

- (41) In the first three months that I had been going to school here, when the teacher was teaching I was gazing at him without understanding until I got a headache. Every day for 6 hours I was sitting there trying to listen to him and feeling like my head would explode because of the headache. Then I would go back home, I eat some food and go to bed and nothing more. [...] I was three hours a day on the bus to go back and forth to school because I had to come to Vaasa from the other city. [...] it was as if my brain had been blocked to the extent that some of my Afghan friends [...] told me that ‘man you are too silly to learn anything! so silly that however the teacher tells you, you don’t learn’. [...] even though I was doing my best I could not, because one has to know [strengths and weaknesses of] himself and I knew that I did not have any background. When I was in Iran my dream was to go to school. This might be laughable for many, but my dream was to go to school. [...] So I kept studying and all that. I had only a small problem with the language at first, otherwise my grades were good. In short, I got to be a good student among all. [...] I always liked X [name of the vocational field]. I applied and got admitted. (P2)

He states that he experienced feeling of stress with regard to daily hassles and stress of going to school to sit in the classroom “without understanding”. He then describes having a “headache” and a “blocked” brain which can indicate frustration due to lack of experience and “background” with “6 hours” a day school, peer pressure and adolescent stress (being laughed at and addressed “silly”) as well as the Finnish language comprehension. However, he later on, expressing satisfaction, gives an account of his perseverance in studies, being a good student and final success in being admitted to his “always”-wished for vocational field. He, suppressing his tears, expresses his grief over lack of opportunity in Iran and his “dream” to go to school there (example 41). It should be mentioned that some participants (P1, P2 & P4) needed to shuttle to Vaasa to go to school as they were still living in the camp or were not (legally/financially) able to move to Vaasa which triggered frustration.

As participant 2 manifests also feeling of satisfaction over the fact that his dream is realized, so does participant 1 who appreciates educational opportunities in Finland and “thanks to God” (example 42).

- (42) I have got my dream so far and I’m studying. Thanks to God, I have made progress in my studies. It is very good. If I go ahead like this I see my future bright. [...] in the districts where we lived the situation was such that we could only go to the mosques and get only Quranic lessons. I for example for 1-1,5 years studied Quranic lessons in Afghanistan. (P1)

He shows feeling of content, positive thinking and what appears to be positive stress as a result of the opportunity. He, unlike participant 2, has experience of exposure to learning which has been held however in “mosques” and limited to “Quranic lessons”.

In general, the participants express feeling of affective stress with regard to their fields of study in the vocational/high school. This can be attributed to at least four stressors, namely, the degree of interest in available fields, employment prospect, peer stress and their level of Finnish proficiency. Also, they have mostly experienced grief over pre-acculturative lack of educational or linguistic opportunities. Such stress seems to be

appraised by participants mostly as positive, challenging or harmless to which coping, learning, encouragement and satisfaction pursued.

### 5.2.7 Employment and Working Life

This section tackles issues in connection with employment and working life. It consists of issues concerning job seeking and working life experiences as well as self-esteem and self-sufficiency.

Participants who have gained prior working experience, especially in Iran, state that working life and the difficulty level of job-related tasks in Finland are “easier” compared to that of Iran or Afghanistan. In the following excerpt a participant compares his work experiences and explains about his job-seeking experience:

- (43) They [work experiences] were short term experiences from 2 weeks to 9 weeks. I became accustomed to that. [...]. After all, we would like to continue our education and then go somewhere to work and have a job. [...] The work place and atmosphere in Finland, let me tell you, is better than work places and conditions in Iran or Afghanistan and such. It is easier here, I mean better and everything works according to the law. [...] I looked for jobs in Vaasa a lot. But unfortunately, I couldn't find. I search a lot wherever you can think of. I applied via the internet. Where I would go they'd say you have to apply via the internet we cannot accept you. I made CV many times but it didn't get me anywhere after all. [...] they all lie because now it's been three years that I have been sending application via the internet. Or two years. None of them has responded to me affirmatively or negatively at all [...] After all it will save me from my current mood, for example from depression. Because, now that I am at home mostly, I think more. (P1)

Participant 1, comparing his work experience in Finland to “conditions” in Iran and Afghanistan, emphasizes both easiness and legality as the merits of jobs in Finland. This has directly to do with his experience as a child laborer and work exploitation in his pre-acculturation experience in Iran, which tends to be an extreme source of stress. (example 43) In contrast to his statement that “everything works according to law”, participant 1 expresses his strong disappointment by calling announcements of job vacancies “all lie” because his applications were not considered. While stress with regard to the today's

modern recruiting procedures “via the internet” is illustrated, participant’s account indicates that he expects employment to improve his “mood” and “save” him from the self-reported “depression” as well as preventing recurring thoughts when alone.

In this respect, participant 5, having more work experience than others, expresses his feelings and views about job trainings and “requirements”:

- (44) I had also been in B [name of workplace omitted] for four months in job training and before that I had had a two-year contract with C where I was paid a monthly salary. However, after I left the job I have been all the time in job trainings here and here and there, in D, in E and etc., so that they offer me a job which they did not. [...] However, [working at C] when in the end the “*vakituisia*” [the staff who had permanent contracts] came, my working hours got reduced and I had no choice but to quit. [...] It is not like that you can go directly to work in a field you want. Finland has put such requirements for you so you would have to first study in field and get the certificate to be able to work in it. And, I have never been such a good student. (P5)

He expresses his feeling of frustration over repetitive unpaid “job trainings” and dissatisfaction over “reduced” working hours in substitute positions after the return of the “*vakituisia*” (permanent employees), which made him “quit”. Meanwhile, he reports that for him to be eligible to collect daily unemployment benefits from KELA, he is required to do 7-hour-a-day trainings or internships. That is, at least partly, why he displays more dissatisfaction with and less motivation towards working at the current place which is for the sake of KELA subsidies and benefits.

In addition to participant 1’s (example 43) stress concerning the online recruitments and applications, participant 5 (example 44) considers the recruiting system to be demanding because one cannot go “directly to work” and has to study and obtain a “certificate” first. While such statements may merely be rooted in the participants’ pre-aculturative experience of dissimilar hiring systems, participant 5 approaches the stressor of job requirements (suggesting education insufficiency) with self-blame. This is evident when he states he has “never been such a good student”. (example 44).

Furthermore, throughout the interviews, other than the necessity to have the employers' "certificate" requirement, occupational skills and proficient language skills in Finnish and Swedish, have caused stress for the participants and impacted their acculturation. (example 45-46). In the following examples participants explore this topic:

- (45) In Vaasa, we need two languages, being Finnish and Swedish. For example, if you don't know Swedish language it is hard to find a job. [...] I'm trying, because we will not be taught all those [job] skills in school. I have Swedish skills too. (P3)
- (46) [...] I myself have always this stress, I tell myself, Finns like all of them they know at least easily three languages, they have computer skills, now it comes to us, now that we want to study for a good profession, there are many people better than us out there. (P4)

Participant 3 says that when applying for a job, the requirement of proficient language skills may include both "Finnish and Swedish" as the local languages in Vaasa. He, however, shows feelings of satisfaction and confidence with having "Swedish skills", stating that he is aware that not all skills will be taught in school and he is "trying" to learn necessary skills.

Participant 4, like other participants, expresses his stress about the competition with Finns in the labor market and occupational skills required or preferred by employers (example 48). All participants, for example participant 4, express worries over their occupational skill deficits in comparison with Finns' "computer" and language competences.

On the other hand, for the participants, employment does not only render financial benefits and provide a wished-for life, they feel it also fosters sense of self-esteem and self-sufficiency. In the following excerpt, participant 1 states how he feels about unemployment and why he is motivated to get a job:

- (47) If employed, Finns or others will all respect him. However, not when you are unemployed and cannot do anything apart from hang around in the city center. When [you] sit here, everyone says that the guy is unemployed and just idles, eats and sleeps. I personally do not want to be like that and would like to look for a job. (P1)

Participant 1, like other participants, expresses his motivation for getting a job to earn high regard and respect from “Finns and others”; that is the members of out-groups. Also, he distances himself from those who “idle”. This implies the participant perceives his self-value, status, and intergroup relations in terms of how out-group members view “the guy [who] is unemployed” in his in-group.

In this respect, participant 2 says how he feels about unemployment:

- (48) In my opinion, we are not valuable in this society, we should work like those who pay taxes like citizens. For now, I think we are just being provided for and we are to their [Finns'] loss. (P2)

Participant 2 thinks he is not “valuable” when unemployed. He implies that he has to contribute to the society and be beneficial, not just “provided for”. He, at the same time, expresses his feelings of discontent over dependency, grief over status and threatened (collective) self-esteem.

In line with participant 1’s statement, participant 2 puts the focus on the collective “we” and views being employed and “pay[ing] taxes” a necessity to be “valuable”. Nonetheless, throughout the interviews paying tax and working in order to be respected by “Finns and others” (example 47) in the society reappears as a wish. At the same time, they all distance themselves from the refugee who only “eats and sleeps”. One could say that it can be indicative of their efforts towards the betterment of in-group stereotypes, yet these are perhaps also reflections of intergroup stereotypes.

In general, all participants emphasize the importance of employment to them. They all say that their greatest source of stress is finding employment opportunities. All participants say that they find getting a job in Vaasa difficult. When asked about work and job searching experiences, participants express their worries over occupational insufficiencies as well as perceived discriminative and unfair recruitment. On the other hand, they all say that they have had short- or long-term experiences of working life in Finland through jobs, trainings or internships and they feel motivated to be employed.

### 5.2.8 Perceived Discrimination

This chapter will present the analysis of the theme of perceived discrimination. It includes participants' responses regarding their experience of discrimination and prejudice.

Participants mostly attribute the refugee in-group members' and co-ethnics' experience of "racism" to the lack of migration experience prior to acculturation in Finland. In the following example, participant 2 states that compared to his experience of living in Iran "here [Vaasa] is paradise":

- (49) Vaasa is a tranquil city. It is fine and its people are not such racist people compared to other cities. They don't mind others' business. [...] Here they don't mind nationality much in my opinion. I have not ever had [such experience]. Fellows who have gone visiting other cities say that there is a lot more such, they have seen for themselves and have experienced. Many have come here, like even from Afghanistan directly, who have not experienced migration before, and say that "yeah, here there's racism and all". But I laugh for myself saying "c'mon man! In comparison to what I have been through in Iran, here it is paradise".  
[...] They admitted a Finn, although I had gone through the work apprenticeship, I tried to be punctual and did my best in the assigned task and I thought I was way better than that Finn. But we both went there, they accepted the Finn and rejected me. They don't trust us. (P2)

Two important points are worth mentioning in this regard. Firstly, participant 2, like other participants, naturally uses either the Persian equivalence of the word "racism" (*Najadparasti*) which has to do with its commonality in general language in referring to all kinds of discrimination and prejudice or its Finnish equivalence "*rasismi*" which is of similar usage. Secondly, the fact that participants view "racism" in comparable terms, using the yardstick of their perception and experience, is connected with their previous experience (example 49) That is, they have experience of racism before (e.g. in Iran and/or in Finland), and their current perception of intergroup relations and attitude with Finns as the majority group are accordingly different.

In the same excerpt, participant 2, however, explicitly claims that, although being "way better than" a Finnish competitor for a job vacancy, he was rejected after the interview.

Yet, when asked about experience of discrimination he emphatically states that he has “not ever had”. However, he rises the issue of intergroup “trust” and that he perceives a general negative attitude and regard, if not more, towards his ethnic or refugee in-group (example 49).

Participant 5, on the other hand, states that he has experienced “racism” in the following example:

- (50) [...] in Vaasa, I have now one upcoming court hearing, why? Because of this racism. They swore at my religion, my mother and my black hair. I could not tolerate it anymore, I grappled with them. (P5)

He reports about his forthcoming “court hearing” because of an ethnic-slur-provoked “grapple” with Finns. As participant 5’s reference to “black hair” (example 50) in his account is suggestive of singled-out characteristics of ethnic appearance, so is participant 3’s account in the following excerpt: (example 51)

- (51) I, personally, would see a vacant apartment on the website. But...when they somehow get to see that you are a migrant they would decline you, you’d receive a negative decision on the apartment [‘s application]. (P3)

He who wished to choose his own apartment and applied for it via the internet, expresses discontent over unfair treatment due to perceived discrimination towards migrants. However, the phrase “somehow get to see you are a migrant” may refer to signaling out refugees by their physical appearance and/or by checking specifications of the ID card such as the name and social security number.

Also, participant 4 shares an experience of perceived discrimination when asked about communication with Finns (example 52).

- (52) There [in Iran] was only one problem which was being an Afghan. But now here in Finland, the problem is a lot bigger, you cannot imagine, put aside that you are Afghan, that you are a migrant, your religion, which excuse me also comes with terrorist accusations, so communication is very

hard, these 5-6 issues, and they are all broad, and then you want to communicate with a Finn. (P4)

He views his “problem” beyond being a “migrant”. He thinks that religious stereotypes and “accusations” of radicalism are involved. By saying “excuse me”, he at the same time manifests firstly the threatened self-esteem, ethnic and religious values and identity and secondly his overt discontent about relating “religion” with “terroris[m]”.

In general, except one of the participants (P5), all other participants say that they have heard about their “Fellows[’]” first or second-hand experience of discrimination when they visited or lived in other cities, and that people in “tranquil” Vaasa are not “such racist” (example 49). However, when responding to other questions, participants relate experiences that they categorize as discriminatory treatment in consideration of their housing and/or job applications.

### 5.3 Social Support and Support Services

This chapter will present the analysis of the theme of social support and support services, consisting of in-group and out-group support and social support services. Participants have received and exchanged social support with their co-nationals, host nationals and other out-group members as well as various institutions including schools and organizations for social and social welfare services, particularly Ehjä.

#### 5.3.1 In- and Out-group Support, Leisure Activities

This sub-chapter presents the analysis of the theme of social support in terms of in-group and out-group support and leisure activities. Participants share, exchange and receive information, sympathy and empathy from co-national in-group members, host nationals and other ethnic out-group members. However, it is of significance to bear in mind that participants’ perception and definition of friendship (example 35) is not exactly in accord

with those of the host culture and may not be similar to other participants depending on their expectations.

In the following excerpt participant 2 says who his friends are and why:

(53) Most of my friends are from Afghanistan, because we understand each other's language. We understand each other's problems. (P2)

He refers to his friends as those who “understand each other's problem” and “language”. That's why they are mostly from Afghanistan. Participants have mainly co-national friends. According to participants, it is largely due to the fact that on their arrival, they did not know Finnish. Therefore, they either tried to make bonds with those they already knew; Afghan refugees from similar camps, language schools or other institutions, or, they started to make friends at a later stage in order to exchange sympathy and gain emotional support.

Participant 1 stresses the preventive effect of having “at least a friend to talk to” in the following excerpt:

(54) Hanging out with friends is a social thing that prevents depression. That is because, you have at least a friend to talk to. [...] If someone like a refugee who is new in town asks something I help them and even I go with them here and there to interpret things for them. [...] I have a Finnish girlfriend and we go to visit her family, they come visit us. [...] I do confide in my girlfriend. I trust her more than others. (P1)

He expresses feeling of content about both his Finnish language proficiency and being able to extend his “help” to the refugees and asylum seekers who are “new in town”. Furthermore, he displays feelings of happiness, coping and learning of social skills and Finnish culture, stressing that he has a “Finnish girlfriend” who he “trust [s] more than others” and in whom he “confine[s]”. To show that the “trust” is mutual he mentions regular family visits; being invited and welcome to somebody's home, especially in Afghan culture, implies trust and closeness as discussed earlier on the difference cultural perception of friendship as well.

Additionally, participants share experiences of socio-cultural learning in communicating with their friends. The circle of friends is not limited to only Afghans and Finns but extends to other nationalities and cultures (example 54 & 55). In this regard participant 5 explores his experience of friendship with non-Afghans and the participation in social events:

- (55) [...] we used to go to the theater and all those things because they are Finns and they know how to. [...] I used to go with her to their summer cottage, to celebrations [and] hanging out with Finns and all that. [...] I go [to events] but just very rarely compared to before which was a lot. In our Afghan events, to be honest, I might take part but not a lot. [...] I have one friend, an Iranian, with whom I have a very good relation. [...] whom I like as my brother. However, he is now busy with his family. We see each other maybe once a year now. I used to empty my chest and share with him. [...] I also have Kurdish friends. (P5)

Participant 5 says that he has benefited from his contact with the dominant out-group, the Finns, in learning about the Finnish culture and acquiring social skills. He has participated with his friend in socio-cultural activities such as “theater”, “celebrations” and get-togethers. In this regard, stating that “they are Finns and they know how to” indicates that he perceives the importance of cultural contacts with outgroup Finns in terms of socio-cultural learning.

However, he relates his grief over the loss of social and emotional support as well as stress of forced loneliness by saying that he has now less frequent contact with his “one friend” who is currently “busy with his [own] family”. On the other hand, he seems to have more contacts with other refugee ethnic groups such as Iranians and “Kurdish friends” than co-national Afghans. This has to do with socio-cultural identifications of the participant as well which will be dealt in the following chapter.

In addition to social and cultural activities, most of the participants spend their leisure time with their “fellows”, that is, Afghan friends, participating in in-door or outdoor activities. In the example below participant 1 says how he has experienced such activities:

- (56) Sometimes we play football with our fellows and sometimes play video games at home [...] It's fun, we go play billiard or bowling organized by EHJÄ. Or picnics, like last year we went to picnics. (P2)

He expresses his content and describes leisure activities as “fun”. He states that he has participated in sports events and picnics with his friends. Engaging in activities with individuals from other nationalities, non-Finns and non-Afghans, mostly requires communicating in Finnish as lingua franca which can result in improved language skills for the participants and others. Sports or leisure activities planned by organizations such as Ehjä ry, gives the opportunity to the participants to not only engage with co-national Afghan refugees but also have contacts with other cultural and ethnic groups.

In this regard, in the following excerpt participant 1 states how he has benefited from the socio-cultural events:

- (57) They let me know about when and where. For example, my teachers and Ehjä inform me about such events. [...] I learnt how to ask my questions bravely and how to communicate in a setting and gathering in another country. (P1)

Participant 1 says that he has learned intercultural skills and improved self-confidence in asking “bravely” in activities and events he has participated. It goes without saying that asking a question and receiving an answer can result in better intercultural learning and mutual understanding as well.

Participants emphasize the role of social and educational institutions in organizing and “inform[ing]” about socio-cultural and leisure activities (example 57). Participants overall have more contacts and enjoy social support with their co-national Afghan friends in indoor social gatherings at their homes. They have more first-hand contacts from different cultures and nationalities when they participate in the events organized by Ehjä ry, where mostly their Finnish support counselor is present as well; this helps in building relations between the clients and support counselors as well. It is of significance especially when some participants view the building of friendship and communication with Finns as being difficult at school.

In general, support from the network of friends and friendship appears to bring along coping resources, learning and improvement of “mood” through recreational and meaningful leisure activities, among others. Other aspects include sharing their stories of sadness, stress, and struggles and empathize with one another in order to change the sadness (example 31 & 54). However, friendship has not always brought forward constant support (example 55).

### 5.3.2 Social Support Services

From the first day of arrival, participants had to cope with official and bureaucratic procedures such as applications, requests, and appeals. Depending on the level of the formality, these mostly involve language and computer fluency as well as familiarity with bureaucratic and administrative processes. However, the participants of this study seem to have been provided with social and support services along the way when supervision or assistance has been needed.

In the following excerpt, a participant talks about the support he has received and how he feels about it:

- (58) [...] I was receiving help then as well. We received help more before but now that they know your language level and things like that have elevated they gradually decrease their help because you are able to cope. Then they wanted you to get familiar with this society. Like they accompany you, provide translators. But now they know that I can take care of my business myself and manage. (P2)

Participant 2, like other participants, states that they have been assisted by state social workers, support counselors and care givers in terms of language and translation services, and social accompaniment while they were expected to improve their “language level” and “get familiar with the society”. Although this expectation might have caused challenges, participant 2 expresses satisfaction with both the social support and the acquired independence because now he can “manage” on his own.

In addition, participants have received social services from Ehjä which consist of assistance with measures to be taken and applications to be filled out concerning “police” and “Finnish immigration office” (example 59). In the following excerpt, participant 5 explains how he has experienced Ehjä’s support services:

- (59) As for Ehjä, they are sincerely good people. I mean if they could help they wouldn’t hesitate. I am satisfied with their services for us, my peer group. Those services were great. They have helped with bureaucratic and official forms and letters, with Finnish immigration office, police, school works which I appreciate. [...] They have helped me in filling job applications and making my CV. I had to apply for some summer jobs and asked Ehjä, they really helped me with it. [...] and thanks to them now I am working here in this very Y (name of work place), I was here last summer as well. (P5)

Participant 5 expresses strong content with Ehjä’s services, especially with the Encouraging Experiences Project because of getting a “summer job” after receiving help with “job applications” and “CV”. It is worth mentioning here that he had not been in contact with the state social office and had unpaid bills and debts when first introduced to Ehjä and the Encouraging Experiences Project. In addition to language and computer fluency, it should be noted that predominantly “forms and letters” and formal bureaucratic procedures are sources of stress also with monetary and legal consequences. It should be noted that the participant’s statement: “if they could help they wouldn’t hesitate” emphasizes Ehjä’s general attitude and availability of social services.

In the following excerpt, another participant emphasizes the availability of social services from Ehjä and compares it to the situation in Iran:

- (60) Ehjä has helped me in many cases. [...] Compare to somewhere else like in Iran where if you don’t get what do with a paperwork or something they will just throw the paper at you and say get out of here! But, here they don’t do so. They come to help you themselves. (P2)

Participant 2 who has received similar support from Ehjä, shows feelings of content and coping. He claims that in Iran refugees would not receive support services and may be mistreated, while at Ehjä, Finland they offer their help. It is important to note that asking for “help” may challenge or threat the vulnerable participants’ self-esteem. This and the

availability of social support and services are implied in: “they come to help you themselves”.

In this regard, in the following excerpt participant 4 explains how he has benefited from his support counselor’s help (example 61):

- (61) [...] I have learned many things from Z (a social advisor’s name) in terms of language and culture, my social questions and such. She would ask some issues and in return I would ask about same things in Finland, very straightforward, very easy and comfortable. Although...like...in Iran you could not talk to the opposite sex about many issues, here it is very easy. [...] I remember I was sick one week and I had not gone to Ehjä for like one week or two and they came up to my door asked me how I was doing and if I need anything. (P4)

Participant 4 emphasizes the merit of liberty in asking “questions” and interacting with women in “straightforward” and “comfortable” ways. This can be viewed as a result of learning from his support counselor and learning Finnish socio-cultural values and behavioral norms. He states that he has experienced “language and culture” learning in dialogues with their social advisors, expressing gratitude and indicating how her assistance contributed to coping with stressors. Participant 4 gives an emotional account of when Ehjä came to his “door” to extend their support and care, to ask if he is well or he “need[s] anything”. This suggests that he has received emotional support from his support counselors as has he from his network of friends.

In the following example, participant 1, who has also received emotional support from his support counselor, relates his experience:

- (62) Y [omitted name of the social advisor from EHJÄ RY] found this [psychologist] for me. [...] Y was a good person and at least once week we could meet up. Since when Y left, the new person is not so..., let me tell you this way, we could not get along well. [right after getting residence] I consulted psychologist and psychotherapist they all said just very similar things really always. Because I was feeling terrible still then; I was all the time crying and couldn’t sleep. I had no choice but to talk to a psychologist. (P1)

Participant 1 says he was in contact with his support counselor regularly who arranged a psychologist's appointment for him the first time. He describes his counselor as a "good person". In contrast to participant 4, participant 1 manifests sadness, vulnerability and loss of emotional support and attachment because the support counselor from Ehjä "left" and he "could not get along well" with the substitute (example 62). This suggests that the young adult and unaccompanied refugee participant may view their own appointed social advisor as close as their family, expecting and seeking sympathy and emotional support more than from other social services. That is why, it may take time and emotional effort for the participant to adapt to the new situation, trust and "get along" with the substitute advisor.

In addition to social support from networks of friends, school, state and private social welfare and aftercare organizations, participants have enjoyed mental health support from professionals as well (example 62 & 63). Participant 4 states when and how frequent he has visited psychologists:

(63) I went to psychologist several times. [...] Both before and after, after the residence permit I went there a couple of times as well. (P4)

Participant 4, like participant 1, emphasizes his need for medical and psychological support both before and after they have obtained the positive decision on their asylum applications. However, he has visited a psychologist more frequently when he did not have the "residence permit". To compare, participant 1 (example 63) had more frequent visits. Despite expressing his discontent with hearing "very similar things" from the psychologists and psychotherapists, he says he had to continue his sessions because of psychosomatic symptoms.

In general, all participants, except participant 5 (example 30), at some point, have resorted to mental health care givers, psychologists and psychotherapists. It appears that the need "to talk" to a care giver such as a support counselor is not less important than the need to seek mental care and psychologic cure in the first place. This can indicate the significance

of social and emotional support at the same time with medical and professional support from mental care givers.

### 5.3.3 Religious Resources

This sub-chapter presents the analysis of the theme of social support from ethnic and religious resources. All of the participants take part in the events organized by the Islamic Society of Vaasa. These events according to the participants include celebrations and mourning which are rooted in Islamic traditions of Sunni and Shia branches of Islam.

In the following excerpt participants state how they have experienced participation in ethnic and religious events:

- (64) [...] we have an [Islamic] Society here and we celebrate the Eids [Islamic and traditional holidays] and such and I have participated in. [...] those mourning too, the religious ones. Like in Vaasa the Society has a place that we go to when it is Ashura or the like, for mourning. There is a place that we get together there. (P2)

Participant 2 says he participates in both religious celebratory and mourning ceremonies held by the Islamic Society of Vaasa for Muslims to “get together”.

- (65) We have this Muharram month. Here we have one mosque [...] I go and take part in their things like in Muharram and Eids. I am not much in their celebrations. (P5)

Participant 5 emphasizes gatherings for mourning ceremonies more. The Muharram month which embeds also the Day of Ashura consists of specific mourning rituals of group chanting, singing, grieving and recitations, among other things. Muharram rite can bring together not only Afghans but also Muslims of all ethnicities, apart from religious factions.

In general, religious resources seem to have provided coping support. This can be directly through religious events and gatherings, or indirectly, through religious lessons and/or faith.

## 5.4 Social and Cultural Identifications

This chapter presents the findings concerning the participants' socio-cultural identifications. It consists of themes of identifications towards host and home culture. All participants have been living three to four years in Vaasa. They have differing experiences of first migration and living in Iran and/or Pakistan. Cross-cultural transition from Iran/Afghanistan to Finland involves acculturation processes and identity changes for the participants.

### 5.4.1 Towards Host Culture Identification

All the participants view Finland as a country where law and rights obtain. They believe strongly that the government has provided everything for them to "progress". Importantly, they see the manner of treatment of immigrants as a criterion to accept the Finnish culture. By making comparison they make judgments based on the way they were treated in Afghanistan and/or Iran.

The preferences for the Finnish culture are articulated by the participants in such a way that they feel indebted because of what Finland has "given" to them. They think positive about the Finnish system and law regarding "immigrants" (example 16, 43) as well as "the way they [Finns] lead their life". (example 67)

On the other hand, all participants, to various extents, share experiences of identity change in terms of certain religious and ethnic values and behaviors. Participant 3, for example, when asked about eating habits and Halal food, explains his experience as follows:

- (66) At first, for almost two years I have been observing but not after that. But now, to tell the truth, I am not much like before. You have entered this society and you don't get to be like that, till when?! Then I had that kind of attitude and I had a mindset like I used to have in Iran such as, I should eat this and that, my religion has banned this and that. But, in my opinion, there is for example no difference in producing meat, they kill them [animals] anyway. As I saw, all of them are killed by machines. In Iran, also they do it in a slaughterhouse. They don't do it like one by one and

recite such and such [certain Qur'anic verses) in front of the Qibla. The machine kills them. [...] More towards the Finnish culture now because I have Finnish friends more and spend time with Finns more. when we have residence here it becomes our culture then. It starts from somewhere to become like our own culture. In general, I think highly of the Finnish culture. I don't see anything bad in their culture. (P3)

He says he has changed his “mindset” regarding eating Halal produced meat although he used to “observe” what “religion” prohibits “for almost two years”. He shows not only the willingness and a welcoming attitude towards change but also sees it as necessary: “you don't get to be like that”. This is the result of intercultural contact and dietary acculturation among other things. It is important to note that consumption of only Halal produced meat and food is seen important in respect of Islamic values to the participants notwithstanding.

Having Finnish friends and a positive perception of the host culture seems to be significantly related to participants' identification with Finnish culture. Participant 3, for example, although he says “east or west, home is best” and expresses grief over loss of “old friends” (example 31), reckons having Finnish friends as a reason why he feels “more towards Finnish culture” (example 66). He seems to feel positive about Finnish culture and that it will become finally part of his identity as a result of “residence” in Finland.

The participants who lived in Iran make comparisons between Finnish, Iranian and Afghan cultures. For example, participant 2 elaborates on his experiences in the following excerpt:

- (67) They have a good culture compared to ours. [...] The way they lead their life is good. They are the best across the world. [...] . If I consider myself, in name I am an Afghan, but I had been 13-14 years in Iran. I grew up in Iran. Like I grew up with Iranian culture and traditions. [...]. My country has given me nothing except misfortune. Iran has not given me anything, no opportunity, no chance to be someone who is a useful person. But when I came here, without asking me what my religion is, what my faction is, [...] put me to school, gave me a place, gave me food, and everything. [...] But (in Iran) I grew up in that society I grew up with those people. Back then [...] when I turned 12-13 years old [...] I had grown up with Iranians, with my friends, and then I realized yeah they call me *Afghani* [...]. (P2)

Participant 2, praising the Finnish way of life, reveals how his self-esteem and self-concept were threatened due to perceived racism and peer out-group derogation in his adolescence in Iran where they called him “*Afghani*” (instead of *Afghanestani*); which is a racist, derogatory term. Further, considering himself only in “name” an Afghan, he identifies himself with “Iranian culture and tradition”, and Iranian food. (example 34 & 67)

Interestingly, it sounds as though even now in Finland, participant 2 manifests an assimilative attitude towards Iranian culture. However, expressing pride for Finns being “the best in the world”, he demonstrates his commitment towards Finnish culture because of the non-discriminatory Finnish out-group attitude which provided him the opportunity to study and gave him “everything”. (example 41 & 67) He, unlike participant 3 (example 66), has mostly developed friendship relations with Afghan in-group members and his intercultural contacts are comparably limited (example 67).

Participant 4, who says he was raised in a “religious family” in Iran, thinks highly of and evaluates Finnish culture positively in relation to gender equality, freedom and general attitudes towards the out-group (example 38). Besides, firstly, he perceives Afghan in-group identity and Muslim in-group identity to be “a lot bigger” “problem” in Finland (example 52) affecting intergroup relations; and secondly, he speculates about negative behavioral changes of Afghan refugees raised in Iran (example 40). In the following excerpt, he explains his view on cultural identifications:

- (68) Every culture has good things in itself as it has bad things. I have lived in Iran, now even though in Iran there are cultures which are comparably better than Finnish culture, here [Finland] has some things [values] which are better than in Iran. But yeah... those good ones are here a bit more. Now, I cherry pick for myself things that I consider good here. But things I do not see good [...] they are not good for me, they might be good as well but it is just my opinion. (P4)

Participant 4 compares Iranian and Finnish cultures, stating that there is “good” and “bad” in both cultures. Therefore, he “cherry pick[s]” values and behaviors which are “better” for maintenance of self-esteem and positive self-perception.

All participants study or are going to study in vocational/high schools. They all express interests towards developing cultural contacts and mostly manifest changes in relation to behavior and attitudes, if not certain religious values, while maintaining their general identification with their home culture. However, participants who had prior long experience of forced migration and living in Iran express various socio-cultural identifications. That is, they have been eager to maintain certain cultural values, behaviors and attitudes from Afghan and/or Iranian culture and acquire some others from Iranian, Finnish cultures and keep having contacts and everyday interactions with these cultures and also with other refugees who are members of other ethnic groups in the society.

#### 5.4.2 Towards Home Culture(s)

This subchapter presents the theme of the participants' socio-cultural identifications with the home cultures. In the interviews, the participants show identifications with and orientation to their home cultures (Iranian/Afghan) in addition to socio-cultural identifications with the Finnish culture.

In the following excerpt, participant 5, who says he “cannot take it anymore” in Finland and would rather return to Afghanistan as soon as possible (example 33), explains his inter-group perceptions and socio-cultural identifications as follows:

- (69) We try to do according to their culture and traditions and get their rhythm of life and go ahead. However, it is ok, like I said Finnish culture is fifty-fifty for me in terms of their clothing, customs and traditions. But in terms of their temperament, meaning the people in the street not... my friends or co-workers, they don't cause any problems for me. But in street, you see somebody laughing but then when they pass by you they frown and even call you names. This has happened to me many times, but I have just kept walking. [...] I know, what kinds of temperaments our compatriots have, I don't want to be close to them. [...] Like I smoke and if somebody does not smoke, they go and warn him don't hang out with this guy, he is such and such and he smokes. Due to these things, I do not want to be close with them or participate in their ceremonies and gatherings much. Stay away and stay friends, like this. When I see them without going close I greet them and show respect and that's it. (P5)

He emphasizes his effort to “get the rhythm of life” in Finland and proceed. On the other hand, he, accepts the Finnish culture “fifty-fifty” in terms of their “clothing, customs and tradition”, and not their “temperament”. By temperament, he seems to mean the out-group’s negative attitude toward him “in the street”, which he has experienced “many times”. Given that he self-reports prejudicial behavior from Finns and that he has a court case on racism (example 50) as well, his accounts indicate his intergroup perceptions and a threatened self-esteem and individual identity in relation with Finns.

Furthermore, participant 5 has developed good relations with out-group “friends or co-workers” and when asked about in-group relations he is not “much” inclined “to be close to” Afghan in-group members and socialize with them in Afghan “gatherings” because they have treated him with low regard (example 69). Instead, he has “Iranian and Kurdish” friends (example 55). This indicates that he does not seem to be marginalized or separated, rather, as a result of intercultural contact, he identifies with other cultural groups in the acculturation setting.

Some participants express pride and commitment towards “own old” cultural values and traditions (example 70-71). Participant 3 expresses his opinion about Afghan culture as follows:

(70) we don’t forget our own old culture. If there are some celebrations to hold we try to hold them all totally according to the own culture. Our own old culture, Afghan’s Culture. [...] One cannot forget their own culture ever. [...] I don’t think there comes a day that they get forgotten. (P3)

Participant 3 expresses pride and a high esteem of the own national and cultural identity; he refers to values and traditions in this culture by emphatically saying that “one cannot forget his own culture ever”. This may have to do with restoration of his self-esteem where the participant reevaluates his in-group values by comparing Afghan national identity as being “older” than the Finnish one. (example 76)

Other participants use out-group stereotypes and devaluations comparing Finnish food, cooking and landscape to those of Iran or Afghanistan (example 34, 70-71). In this regard, participant 1 compares landscapes and food in the following excerpt:

(71) Afghanistan is country where at some point people from all over the world used to come to visit as tourists. A very neat country better than Finland. [...] our food is awesome; Finnish food is just all potatoes (laughter). (P1)

He compares the Finnish and Afghan landscapes and devaluates Finland by pointing out that Afghanistan used to be visited by “tourists” from across the world and be “better” than Finland. Participant 1 then, like participant 3 who does not see Finnish food “commendable”, uses the “all potatoes” stereotype for the Finnish food, while laughing, compared to “awesome” Afghan food. Thus, showing interest in ethnic cuisine, he enhances his self-esteem and in-group perception.

With regard to participation in socio-cultural activities and events, unlike participant 5 who articulates that he is not inclined to “participate” in Afghan social gatherings (example 69), participant 2 places emphasis on his Muslim in-group identity and commitment to the tradition in the following excerpt:

(72) We do hold and participate in every celebration, mourning and Eid derived out of our own traditions. (P2)

He manifests self-esteem and in-group loyalty in perpetuating “our own traditions” in Finland (example 72). Participation in religious events and ceremonies appears to be of similar significance to all participants’ Afghan cultural identity, even to participant 5 who expresses his reluctance to be “close” to Afghans in such events (example 69). This enhances in-group Muslim and ethnic perception and relations since all participants, regardless of being raised in Iran or Afghanistan, identify themselves as Muslims.

In general, it appears that the first acculturation process (experienced in Iran/Pakistan) not only heavily influences their second acculturation process in Finland but also influences their socio-cultural identifications. Although participants show strong

inclination and interest towards cultural learning as well as changes in individual and group cultural identities, they all express homesickness and grief over their homeland, family and friends (example 31-34), and “own country” ‘s “environment, food and tradition” at the same time (example 33, 70-71). It seems that perceived discrimination (grief over belonging), grief over status, intra-group relations and strong Muslim in-group values predominantly account for participants’ inclination towards home culture or other cultural groups in the acculturation setting of Finland.

## 5.5 Discussion

This study aimed at discovering and understanding experiences of acculturation and stress among young adult male Afghan refugee, who are clients of Ehjä ry and who have been living in Vaasa for three to four years. A qualitative research method was used to analyze their experiences of migration and acculturation. They expressed their feelings and articulated their experiences of migratory and acculturative stress, coping, learning, and socio-cultural identifications prior to and during their stay in Finland.

The ABC framework of acculturation (Ward et al. 2001) and the model of multiple and chronic stressors of the Ulysses Syndrome (Achotegui 2002) were used as lenses on both pre- and post-migration experiences of acculturation and stress. The ABC framework was applied to look into the young adult refugees’ affective, behavioral learning and cognitive changes in the acculturation processes. The model provided by the Ulysses Syndrome theory helped in pinpointing the mourning and migratory stressors before and during the transition to Finland. The cross-sectional design of the study linked the ABC’s culture approach in psychological acculturation with the Ulysses Syndrome’s psychosocial approach. The theoretical models enabled this study to firstly tackle grief-driven and intensified migratory stressors and challenges in addition to stressors resulting from the cultural contact; secondly, it was possible to investigate the pre-acculturation period, too in depth; and finally, it provided the means to understand and analyze the participants’ experiences better.

The objective of the first research question was to discover the major migratory mourning and acculturative stressors, the coping strategies and cultural learning of the young adult male Afghan refugees. To answer the question, the following pre-migratory and pre-acculturative experiences must be taken into account: traumatic experiences of imminent life threats, human rights violations, family separation, physical violence, child labor, perceived racism, and physical/emotional loss during childhood and early adolescence. These in addition to experiences of imprisonment, imminent life threats on the migratory trajectory account for previous experiences of migratory mourning. That is, mourning for family, status, 'belonging' and 'physical risks' on the journey. They also account for extreme stress due to 'the failure of the migration project', 'struggle for survival' and 'physical threats'.

With these in mind, the participants' experience of acculturation prior to receiving a positive decision on their asylum application and the residence permit was overshadowed, multiplied and intensified by unfamiliarity with Finland, stress over language learning, loneliness; also, due to anticipatory stress of 'the failure of the migration project' by the prolonged asylum decision, the fear of deportation, psychosomatic symptoms and dissatisfaction with the medical care. Financial and emotional extreme stress over the threatened life of remote family or the whereabouts of the mother, that is, migratory mourning for family was the major migratory mourning. The major stressor was the stress of loneliness.

Other sources of stress were: insufficiency of educational background and skills; peer stress and communicative problems in school and in society as the result of the dissimilarity of Finnish culture and Afghan and Iranian cultures; perceived discrimination and out-group and intra-group mistrust; as well as employment and labor market competition and requirements. Among these, employment turned out to be the major acculturative stressor because participants view employment as a comprehensive means which helps them to cope with financial problems and defaults, family stressors (sending money, visiting, reunion, or looking after missing family), out-group low regard and in-group low self-esteem and self-sufficiency.

With regard to coping, coping skills, and sociocultural behavioral learning, the participants' pre-migratory experiences tended to be important coping resources. Previously encountering and dealing with difficult circumstances, as for example, child labor, has strengthened the participants' resilience to cope with stress over work and vocational working conditions. They (re)appraised them as irrelevant or positive in terms of opportunities they are offered in Finland. It is also the case with perceived prejudice, discrimination and racism, for the participants, having experienced first-forced migration to and life in Iran, comparable experiences in Finland—although perceived as multilayered in including other aspects such as prejudice against religion—, are perceived as familiar and less burdening.

Resorting to religious resources, hope, wishful and positive thinking have helped the participants to cope with stress of physical threats, hazard and undesired events on the migratory trajectory. Emotion-focused coping strategies (such as perpetuating memories of and indebtedness to the mother, paying respect to parents), as well as other more problem-focused ones (such as sending money, making phone calls, resorting to the Red Cross to search for missing family) were used to cope with family-related emotional, financial and physical stress. On the other hand, learning practical and vocational skills, searching and applying for job/internship vacancies, earning income as well as language and cultural learning resulting in proficient Finnish language skills were problem-focused strategies they used to counter acculturative stress.

For the participants who have not been to school before having to sit for long hours and difficulties to understand the teachers were predominantly interpreted as opportunities and also seemed to lessen the previously-experienced deprivation of opportunities to go to school. Acculturative stress concerning Finnish cultural dissimilarities such as proxemics were approached with a positive attitude and led to cultural learning. Avoidance coping with recurring thoughts and stress through participation in leisure activities, turned into motivations to participate in socio-cultural and religious gatherings and ceremonies. This in essence followed socio-cultural learning and social skills.

However, help from friends, teachers, and support counselors constituted major coping resources. Afghan in-group friends and friends from other nationalities, as well as contacts with other ethnic refugees in the events and gatherings were resources that the participants took advantage of.

The circle of friends provided the opportunity for sharing feelings, exchanging help, spending leisure time and engaging in sport activities; support counselors helped dealing with official forms and homework, they arranged intercultural gatherings, provided social counseling and accompaniment, preparation and application for jobs. They had home visits and close contact with the participants in view of their vulnerability. From these counselors the participants have learned about Finnish values, freedom, rights of women and the necessity to resort to mental health professionals. Most participants demonstrated that they have acquired communication skills and enhanced intercultural competence from interactions with non-Afghans.

In addition, participants have shown flexibility and learning concerning food and diets. They evaluated merits and benefits of living in Finland to cope with acculturative stress due to value dissimilarities, mourning for homeland, and the previous stress of the failure of migration project and current forced loneliness.

The study also demonstrates that acculturative stress and coping as well as the multiple and chronic stressors play out in the post-arrival wellbeing of the participants. They affected the post-arrival wellbeing of the participants in two phases, the first being on arrival and before the reception of the decision on the asylum application (during the refugee camp) and the second after the asylum decision (after the refugee camp).

Upon arrival and in the refugee camp, participants had migratory mourning for family (physical and emotional loss), 'belonging', and 'physical risks' (imminent death, starvation, imprisonment) on the journey. These were along with stress of the previous 'failure of the migration project' (deprivation of human rights, education, work and documents) and 'struggle for survival' (child labor and having to provide for own food or family). These were sources of difficulties for the then-adolescent participants. Going

through these stressors, participants encountered cultural contacts with Finns and other groups in the country of resettlement too. These stressors accumulate, multiply, and intensify the old stressors and griefs to an unbearable extent for the vulnerable. For example, the stress over deportation existed during the first migration to and life in Iran. It continues to be present during the refuge along with threats, stress and griefs as well as upon arrival and residence in Finland. During the life in the camps, many other sources of stress were mentioned, such as family-related stress and financial problems. Financial problems that continued in Finland with having to repay borrowed money, sending money to the family as they are in need or danger. Stress over family's and the participants' own wellbeing after experiencing physical risks continues, not to mention self-blame and feeling of guilt over the conditions of the family that were left behind or uncertainty about whereabouts.

On the other hand, there were language barriers and the need to learn Finnish, lack of trust and friends, unfamiliarity with Finnish cultural values, behaviors and attitudes as well as lack of experience in living alone. These examples, at least in part, along with other stress, griefs and pre-migratory experiences can impact participants' wellbeing prior to the decision on the asylum application which follows residence permit.

After the reception of the decision and the residence permit, the situation improved for the majority of the participants. Most participants pointed out that they had the possibility to resort to mental health professionals and doctors, that they gained general satisfaction over life and law in Finland, and adapted to Finnish dietary and climatic conditions, they achieved relative fluency in Finnish, found friends, and could enjoy educational opportunities. Moreover, all participants had already started vocational school and were introduced to state social welfare organizations in order to receive social support and services.

In addition, participants seem to have enjoyed social support, emotional and informational support from mostly ethnic friends, which collectively led them to feeling better and fitting in better, that is, better psychological adjustment and further socio-cultural learning.

The second question aimed to answer the question of how the young adult male Afghan refugees socially and culturally identify themselves with regard to home and host cultures. All of the participants identify themselves as Afghan. However, all but one of them, had lived between three to 14 years in Iran. That is, the home culture for them seems to be Iranian and Afghan at the same time—meaning their acculturation involves three cultures.

Migratory mourning over homeland and homesickness are evident among all participants who have lived in Vaasa three to four years. While all participants are proficient in Finnish, attended vocational or high school, have in-group and out-group relations with others, have learned and experienced behavioral changes, they seem to have coped with the grief over status and homeland by engaging in religious gatherings organized by their Islamic Society as well as intercultural gatherings organized by Ehjä ry. They have welcomed cultural changes and think highly of the Finnish merits of freedom, law and justice, and the educational opportunities. Yet they maintained their Afghan traditions and Muslim in-group identity. Some have shown grief over Iranian food, environment, and old friends (P2 & P4) and some miss Afghan food and landscapes (P1 & P5). Participant 5, however, manifests strong homesickness towards Afghanistan, he feels discriminated against from the out-group Finns, and prefers not to have relations with in-group Afghans and out-group Finns. He however shows interest in having relations and making friends with Iranians and Kurds and has establish good relations with Finnish co-workers, showing enhanced intercultural competence despite his perception of inter-group relations. That is to say that, while others tend to show bi- or tri-cultural orientations in certain aspects, participant 5 situates himself in a multiethnic space while maintaining his Afghan identity.

## 6 CONCLUSION

This study attained its aim to understand experiences of acculturation and stress among young adult Afghan male refugees who were clients of Ehjä ry in Vaasa. Five participants between 19 to 22 years participated in the study and provided their responses in semi-structured interviews (see section 1.2). The data was coded and examined using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. The ABC framework of acculturation (Ward et al. 2001) and the model of Ulysses Syndrome's migratory mourning stressors (Achotegui 2002) were used to analyze data. The findings of these analyses are presented in the discussion section.

These analyses showed that the major migratory and acculturative stressors (the first research question) were mourning for family and stress of loneliness on the one hand and stress over employment and the skills to obtain on the other. However, participants have managed to approach the stressors by taking advantage of coping resources, which were learned and strengthened by the previous migration to Iran/Pakistan and later by gaining support mostly through in-group friends and social support services. The impact of acculturative and migratory stress on the participants' wellbeing was also clear. Participants self-reported psychosomatic problems, which were limited to the period of time they spent in the refugee camp. After the reception of the positive asylum decision and taking advantage from social support and mental health services, the participants have mostly felt better, that is, they could adjust better psychologically.

The participants' socio-cultural identifications (the second research question) with their home and host cultures were complex as Afghan, Iranian and Finnish cultures were involved and in fact, all demonstrate transnational orientations as they orient towards Finnish, Afghan and Iranian cultures. Whilst all participants have learned Finnish, experienced jobs or job trainings in Finland, established relations with Finns and other cultural ethnics, they have also shown homesickness and migratory mourning for Afghan or Iranian food, landscape and traditions and have mainly maintained their religious identity. However, one participant reported perceived racism from the out-group Finns and at same time unwillingness to make relations with in-group Afghans. He however

makes good relations with other migrants such as Kurds and Iranians in the society and Finns in the work place.

Whilst some of the findings of this study are in line with previous research, other findings demonstrate how previous migration impacts additional stressors, coping resources, and socio-cultural identifications when three cultures are involved in the second forced migration. The analytical information provided by this study can benefit refugees and Finnish policy makers for refugees, mental health and social services providers, and refugee education providers. The cross-sectional theoretical modeling used in this study can be used for further research on migratory and acculturative stress and coping.

Using Ward et al.'s (2001) ABC framework of acculturation and Achotegui's (2002) model of migratory mourning and stressors of Ulysses Syndrome was beneficial in addressing the research questions and analyzing the data of this study, but it had limitations as well. Ward et al.'s framework was initially designed for intercultural contacts and later added refugees and within-society contacts. Its affective component does not include grief and coping with trauma, although Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) stress and coping model as its underpinning theory provides the potential to address stress, coping resources and strategies. Its cognitive component on the other hand consists of a categorical model of acculturation strategies and social identity theory; the categorical model is limited to bidirectional and bilateral strategies and does not support tridimensional or transnational ones. As for the Ulysses syndrome theory, the provided models of migratory mourning and Ulysses' multiple and chronic stressors are predominately derived from research studies of immigrants in Spain with limited publications in English language. It does not provide any models for studying coping and learning related to the stressors and instead discusses symptoms and misdiagnosis.

This study was limited in the number of participants, heterogeneity in experience of previous migration, and lack of possibility in conducting a longitudinal research. It could not be longitudinal for it was not feasible in terms of time and financial resources to interview the participants again, besides some participants might not be clients of Ehjä in future. However, aforesaid limitations provided the research with more detailed and in-

depth interviews with the five participants concerning their psychological and sociocultural experiences in pre-acculturative period and during their cultural transition.

I recommend for the future studies on the same subject delimitating the research questions to include only certain migratory and acculturative stressors, for example, loneliness, or homesickness, their impact on refugees' experiences and their relation to specific factors such as social support. As this study revealed that experience of prior forced migration overshadows refugees' acculturation experiences and at the same time fortifies their coping resources, I recommend further research to be conducted on participants with experience of previous forced migration. Also, I recommend further research on transnational and tri-cultural identifications of Afghans in Finland.

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## Appendix 1. Interview Questions Translated into English

1. How do you introduce and describe who you are?
2. What do you do for living in Vaasa?
3. Have you had any kind of job yet in Finland? How do you feel about working life in Vaasa?
4. What profession are you pursuing or studying for and what skills do you think you need to obtain a job?
5. What are your motivations to obtain a job and enter Finnish working life? What changes would this make?
6. How is your relationship with classmates and teachers at school? Have you changed anyhow since your first language/vocation class?
7. How do you feel and think about Finland and Finnish culture?
8. How do you feel motivated in learning Finnish culture and language and how have experienced learning them?
9. What were the challenges you have faced as you settled in Vaasa? (How did you cope with them what did you learn from them?)
10. How do you feel when you communicate with foreigners How have you experienced communicating with Finns?
11. What kind of supports (from family or institutes) have you got since you have come to Vaasa, Finland? What are your experiences from EHJÄ's project?
12. How do you describe life satisfaction and how you feel about your life in Vaasa? What do you usually do when you feel sad/happy?
13. Have you ever thought of returning to Afghanistan or moving to another country?
14. How do you feel about Afghanistan and Finnish (language/culture/landscape/family and friends) how does this feeling affect your life here in Vaasa?
15. Have you been abroad before your departure to seek asylum? If yes, for how long and how did you experience it?
16. What did you know about Finland, Finnish culture, language and weather before your coming to Finland? And Why Finland at all?
17. How did you experience your migratory journey from Afghanistan to Finland? How do you feel about experiences of danger, threat, prison and injustice, if any, in your homeland, on the journey and in Finland?
18. How do you think you (in terms of personality, lifestyle, worldview and beliefs) have changed, if at all, ever since you have resided in Vaasa, Finland?
19. What do you think your life may lack or miss, if any, in Vaasa?
20. How do you describe your relationship with your friends? Are there any close friends or confidants among them to talk and share freely with?
21. How have you experienced participating in social, cultural and religious events in Vaasa and in Ehjä? Were they Afghan events or Finnish ones?
22. How do you feel about yourself, your values, worth, and role in Finland?

23. What is your feeling and experience of being away from your family and close friends, if any? Have you visited or contacted them since you left Afghanistan?
24. How have you been experiencing living alone in Vaasa, if at all?
25. How did you experience finding housing in Vaasa? What about your whole stay in Finland and when you sought asylum?
26. How do you feel about your family's and your own wellbeing and welfare? How have you experienced health services, consulting specialists and medical doctors? How often?
27. How have you experienced feelings of stress, fear, anxiety, and disorderedness, if any, in dealing with the new environments in Finland and your experiences in Afghanistan?
28. How do you feel about your sleep, appetite or expression of your emotions?
29. Do you have any relatives in Finland? If yes, how often you visit or contact them?
30. What do you do in your leisure time? Do you pursue any hobbies or sports?
31. How do you feel about the way Finnish society treats you?
32. Have you reached your goals and expectations so far? How do you feel about future (in terms of language, employment, studies, friends, relationships and family)?
33. How did you experience the period of time when you were asylum seeker and without papers?
34. How have you experienced interacting with people in public and officials, officers, personnel of state or private sector institutes?
35. How do you describe your family and how do you think what you have learned from them have helped you in your journey and in Finland in coping and surviving?
36. What are your experiences of social services, especially at EHJÄ and EHJÄ's project?
37. What kinds of support have you received from EHJÄ's Encouraging-experiences project?
38. How have you been benefited from the assistance provided by EHJÄ's Encouraging-experiences project, if at all? How?
39. Have EHJÄ's Encouraging-experiences project helped you integrate and adapt into Finnish society?
40. What other kinds of help you might need to be offered by EHJÄ? What sort of information and help with regard to Finnish working life?

## Appendix 2. Interview Questions in Persian

1. چطور خودتان را معرفی و توصیف میکنید؟
2. برای زندگی در واسا چه کار میکنی؟
3. آیا تا به حال در فنلاند شغلی داشته اید؟ در مورد زندگی کاری در واسا چه احساسی دارید؟
4. چه حرفه ای رو تحصیل یا دنبال میکنید و چه مهارت هایی فکر می کنید لازم است بدست آورید؟
5. برای به دست آوردن شغل و ورود به زندگی کاری در فنلاند چه انگیزه هایی دارید؟ این چه تغییری در شما ایجاد می کند؟
6. رابطه شما با همکلاسی ها و معلمان در مدرسه چگونه است؟ چطور از زمان کلاس زبان اول / فنی حرفه ای تا به حال تغییر کرده اید؟
7. در مورد فنلاند و فرهنگ فنلاند چطور احساس دارید و چگونه فکر می کنید؟
8. چقدر انگیزه در یادگیری فرهنگ و زبان فنلاند و چه تجربه ای در یادگیری این ها دارید؟
9. چالش هایی که در واسا با آن روبرو شدید چه بوده اند؟ (چطور با آن ها کنار آمدید و چه یاد گرفته اید)
10. هنگامی که با خارجی ها ارتباط برقرار می کنید چگونه احساس دارید و چه تجربه ای از ارتباط با فنلاندی ها دارید؟
11. چه نوع حمایتی (از طرف خانواده یا مؤسسات) از زمانی که شما به وایسا، فنلاند آمده اید دریافت کرده اید؟ تجربیات شما از پروژه EHYA چیست؟
12. چگونه رضایت از زندگی خود را توصیف می کنید و در خصوص زندگی در واسا چه احساسی دارید؟ هنگامی که غمگین / خوشحال هستید، معمولاً چه کاری انجام می دهید؟
13. آیا تا به حال به بازگشت به افغانستان یا رفتن به کشور دیگری فکر کرده اید؟
14. در مورد زندگی در افغانستان و فنلاند (زبان / فرهنگ / چشم انداز / خانواده و دوستان) چه احساسی دارید؟ فکر می کنید که این احساس در زندگی شما در واسا تاثیر می گذارد؟
15. آیا قبل از خروج تان برای پناهندگی خارج از کشور بوده اید؟ اگر بودید، برای چه مدت و چگونه آن را تجربه کردید؟
16. قبل از آمدن به فنلاند، درباره فنلاند، فرهنگ فنلاند، زبان و آب و هوا چه فکر میکردید؟ و چرا اصلاً فنلاند؟
17. چگونه راه سفر از افغانستان به فنلاند را تجربه کردید؟ در مورد تجربیات خطر، تهدید، زندان و بی عدالتی، در صورت وجود، در کشور خود، در راه سفر و در فنلاند چه احساسی دارید؟
18. آیا فکر می کنید (از لحاظ شخصیت، شیوه زندگی، جهان بینی و اعتقادات)، تا به حال از زمان اقامت در وایسا، فنلاند، تغییر کرده اید؟
19. فکر می کنید که در زندگی شما در واسا ممکن است چه چیزی نباشد یا کم باشد؟
20. چگونه رابطه خود با دوستان تان را توصیف می کنید؟ آیا در میان آن ها دوستان نزدیک یا محرم برای گفتگو و آزادانه و درد و دل دارید؟
21. چگونه مشارکت در رویدادهای اجتماعی، فرهنگی و مذهبی در واسا و در اهیا را تجربه کردید؟ آیا رویدادهای افغان بودند یا فنلاندی؟
22. در مورد خودتان، باورها، ارزش ها و نقش خود در فنلاند چه احساسی دارید؟
23. در مورد دور بودن از خانواده و دوستان نزدیک خود، اگر هست احساس و تجربه تان چیست؟ آیا از زمانی که افغانستان را ترک کرده اید، آن ها را دیده اید یا با آن ها تماس گرفته اید؟
24. تنها زندگی کردن در واسا را چگونه تجربه کرده اید؟

25. خانه پیدا کردن در اسارا چگونه تجربه کرده اید؟ در مورد زمان اقامت در فنلاند و هنگام درخواست پناهندگی چطور؟
26. در مورد رفاه و سلامت خود و خانواده تان چه احساسی دارید؟ چگونه خدمات بهداشتی، مشاوره متخصصان و پزشکان را تجربه کرده اید؟ برای چه مدت؟
27. چگونه احساس استرس، ترس، اضطراب و اختلال را در برخورد با محیط های جدید در فنلاند و تجربه های قدیم تان در افغانستان تجربه کردید؟
28. در مورد خواب، اشتها و بیان احساسات خود چطور تجربه و احساسی دارید؟
29. آیا در فنلاند اقوامی دارید؟ اگر بله، هر چند وقت یکبار آنها را می بینید و یا با آنها تماس میگیرید؟
30. در اوقات فراغت خود چه کار میکنید؟ آیا شما سرگرمی یا ورزشی را دنبال می کنید؟
31. در مورد نحوه برخورد با جامعه فنلاند چه احساسی دارید؟
32. آیا تا به حال به اهداف و انتظارات خود رسیده اید؟ چگونه در مورد آینده (از لحاظ زبان، اشتغال، تحصیلات، دوستان، روابط و خانواده) احساس می کنید؟
33. چگونه دوره زمانی که پناهجو و بدون مدارک بودید را تجربه کرده اید؟
34. چگونه با مردم در اماکن عمومی، افسران، پرسنل موسسات دولتی یا خصوصی ارتباط برقرار کردید؟
35. چگونه خانواده خود را توصیف می کنید و فکر می کنید چه چیزی از آن ها آموخته اید، و این چطور به شما در سفر و در فنلاند در مقابله و زنده ماندن کمک کرده است؟
36. تجارب شما در مورد خدمات اجتماعی، به ویژه در پروژه EHVÄ و EHVÄ چیست؟
37. چه نوع حمایت هایی از پروژه تجارب مشوق EHVÄ دریافت کرده اید؟
38. چطور از کمک های ارائه شده توسط پروژه تجارب مشوق EHVÄ بهره مند شدید؟ (اگر اصلا سودی بردید)
39. آیا پروژه تجارب مشوق EHVÄ به وفق پذیری و سازگاری شما در جامعه کمک کرده است؟
40. چه نوع کمک دیگری فکر میکنید باید توسط EHVÄ ارائه شود؟ چه نوع اطلاعات و کمکی در مورد زندگی کاری فنلاند؟

## Appendix 3. Excerpts in Persian

(1) دستفروش بودم تو پاکستان. پدر نداشتم و چاره ای نداشتم جز این که برای مادرم، خواهران، برادران و خانواده‌ام کار بکنم. من هیچ انتخابی نداشتم، من تنها کسی بودم که نان آور خانه بودم. من در چنین شرایط دشواری بزرگ شدم [...] مستقل بودن، مثلاً قادر به هدایت زندگی خود و مسائل خود بودن. این همه درسهای زندگی برای آدمه. این که اینطوری نیست که بخوریم و بخوابیم. (P1)

(2) از وقتی خودمو شناختم از آن زمان تاکنون [...] اما بیشتر تا چهار سال پیش، ما این ترس را داشته ایم. این همیشه و همیشه با ما بوده. زمانی که ما در افغانستان بودیم ما این ترس را داشتیم که مثلاً امروز ما زنده هستیم اما فردا ممکن نیست که باشیم. (P3)

(3) من جای زخم رو بدنم دارم، جای چاقو روی کمر و سرم و این ها [...] این همه برای ترس از طالبان بود. من به خاطر طرز لباس پوشیدن خیلی اذیت شدم [...] من می خواستم بروم، چون می خواستم آزاد باشم. [...] در شب، یکی ممکن بود با یک اسلحه از کمین بیرون بیاید آزار اذیت کنه. (P5)

(4) [...] پدرم تو افغانستان کشته شد. مادرم وقتی که کوچک بودم رفت خونه باباش و عموم، که قبلاً باش زندگی میکردم، چون زندگی اش در افغانستان در خطر بود از اونجا رفت. شاید 17-18 سال پیش، زمانی که دوران طالبان بود. پس ... به خاطر زندگی اش به ایران رفت و منم با خودش برد. من با اونا بزرگ شدم عمومی من قیم من بود. (P2)

(5) من با چشمای خودم دیدم که چطور دوستم را ضرب و شتم کردن. اونطوری که گرفتندش و کشیدن بردنش. توهیچ کشوری آنطوری که با یه افغان در ایران برخورد می کنند، با حیوان هم رفتار نمی کنند. بنابراین، این باعث شد من از ایران بیرون بروم. (P1)

(6) این تجربه بوده، تجربه مهاجر بودن بوده. این یه تجربه جدید نیست [...] اما ما از دوران کودکی این وضعیت را داشتیم ... [...] کسانی که دوست نزدیک نبودند، ما رو یه طور دیگه نگاه میکردن، در مقایسه با یه ایرانی یا شخص دیگه، به ما با تحقیر نگاه میکردن. [...] اونجا، حتی یک بچه کوچک که تو رو هم نمی شناخت، را از فاصله 100 متری می بیندت و هرچی از دهنش در بیاد میگه. [...] ما نمیتونستیم به عنوان مثال 9 شب در شب در محله ما بیرون بیاییم. اگر بیرون بروید و گرفتار دزدا شوید، هرچه با شما باشه میگردن، تلفن همراه، پول و غیره. [...] جرات نمیکنی پیش پلیس بروی. اگر بری، اونا خودتم می گیرند. (P2)

(7) [تو ایران] من خودم ... یه بار تو ایران شکنجه شدم. با این حال، هیچ جای دیگه شکنجه نشدم. راستش خیلی سخت بود. این یه تجربه سخت بود چون اگر ما تو کارگاه بودیم مثل اینکه ما مجبور بودیم در همان محل که در آن کار می کردیم بخوابیم. مثل آنجا اتاقی داشتیم که از خاک رس ساخته شده بود و فرقی نمکرد که آیا زمستانه یا تابستانه یه اتاق بود. چیزهایی مثله بخاری، یخچال یا تلویزیون به چشم نمی دیدیم. روز کار می کردیم و در همونجا شب می خوابیم. 2 یا 3 پتو رومون مینداختیم آنقدر که سرد بود. وقتی هوا سرد بود، توهمچنین اتاق بودیم. نمی توانستیم بیرون بیایم چون ما می ترسیدیم که ما را دیپورت کنند [...]. (P3)

(8) میدونی برای ما که کار سخت تو ایران انجام داده بودیم خیلی مسخره بود اینجا. خیلی آسان بود. (P2)

(9) وقتی کوچکتر بودم، من روزا به مدرسه میرفتم و شب کار میکردم. بزرگ تر که شدم مسئولیت سنگین تر شد، و خانواده ام انتظارات داشتند. مجبور بودم کار کنم، مجبور بودم شبها کار کنم. (P4)

(10) همون طور که گفتم، مشکل اصلی من، این بود که وقتی ما در ایران بودیم، حتی حق داشتن یه چیز ساده مانند کارت سیم کارت نداشتیم. [...] نمیتونی گواهینامه رانندگی یا بیمه داشته باشی. [...] [وقتی که در مورد سفر مهاجرت پرسید شد] یادم نمیداد. (P1)

(11) داری با زندگی باز می کنی. هم ترس و هم هیجان (خنده) بود. خدا را شکر، تا اینجا صحیح و سالم رسیدیم. (P5)

(12) همش خطر و ترس بود که نکنه اینجا یا آنجا کشته بشی یا توسط پلیس اینجا و آنجا دستگیر بشی. وقتی که ما تو منطقه مرزی بین ایران و ترکیه بودیم، تیراندازی شد. [...] وقتی از ترکیه به یونان رفتیم، شب بود و دوتا قایق را به آب انداختیم. قایق های بادی بودن و پر از آدم. مثلاً، اگر قراره ظرفیت برای 6 نفر داشته باشن، 30 نفر پر کرده بودن. [...] اما وقتی که ما داشتیم میرفتیم نمی دونم چه اتفاقی برای اون یکی قایق افتاده که چپ شد و مردم به دریا افتادن. [...] از پشت پاترل که در اومدم رفتم زیر یه کامیون که اونجا کوله پشتیم رو جا گذاشتم (P2).

(13) تو یونان وقتی که ما از مرز عبور کردیم دستگیر شدیم. 43 روز زندان بودیم 43 روز تو زندان ما آب و غذا داشتیم اما نمی تونستیم خارج از اونجا رو ببینیم. (P3)

(14) [...] اون [کشورها] با مهاجران مبارزه می کنن، البته که نه خوشایند بلکه بدجور. یا می کشتن، یا زندانی می کنن و تو زندان از آب و نون محروم می کنن. یا مجبورن شما را به کشور قبلی برگردونند و می دونی که این ها همه خاطرات بد هستن [...] یاد دارم که تو خاک بلغار بود. من چهار بار زمینی به خاک بلغار رفتم، اونا منو گرفتند و به ترکیه بازگردوندن، من دوباره رفتم و دوباره به ترکیه برگردوندن. چهار بار [...] اما من همیشه امیدوار بودم که به هدفم برسم [...] مبارزه کردم و حالا اینجا هستم. (P5)

(15) من فکر می کردم که فنلاند جایی نزد تایلند باشه یا یه جایی اون ورا. بعد، چون مدرسه نرفته بودم سواد کافی برای شناختن فنلاند نداشتیم. وقتی گوشی های نوکیا اومده بودن، فکر می کردم که از جایی نزدیک چین، تایلند و یا جایی در اون طرفا باشن. فکر نمی کردم که اونا از اروپا یا جایی نزدیک اروپا بودن. [...] من رسیدم و روز و تابستان بود. خیلی خسته بودم و گرسنه. نمی دونم، خوابیدم و بعد وقتی بیدار شدم هنوز روز روشن بود. (P2)

(16) وقتی که به یونان رفتیم، شنیدیم فنلاند یه کشوره. تا آن زمان من در مورد فنلاند نمی دانستم که آیا کشور بود یا چه. [...] ما شنیدیم که اداره مهاجرت اینجا خوبه، مثلاً پناهندگی در فنلاند خوب هست. [...] قانون مهاجرت خوب تو فنلاند هست و میشه تو فنلاند سریعاً پناهندگی گرفت. (P3)

(17) من حتی نمی دونستم که فنلاند کجا واقع شده. [...] تنها دلیل اش عمه ام بود. چون که عموی من وقتی که من در ایران بود تلفن زد و از من خواست که فنلاند بروم [...] گفت اگر اونا تو ایرانم بگیرن، دوباره به افغانستان دیپورتت میکنن و تو هیچ کسی رو آنجا نداری. (P1)

(18) من نمیدانستم کنوم کشور بود و کجا بود. وقتی اتفاقی وارد فنلاند شدم، شوکه شدم [...] مقصد من قرار بود سوئد باشه. [...] شوکه شدم وقتی که اینجا رسیدم، لابد سرنوشتم بود اینجا بمانم. پس، منم اینجا ماندم. (P5)

(19) دور شدن از خانواده واقعا دشواره. منظورم اینه که تو غربت زندگی میکنی کشوری مثل این، تو یه کشور خارجی که در اون هیچ خانواده ای نداری، دوست خوبی نداری که بتونی باش حرف بزنی و درددل کنی. این دلایلش این هست که همیشه اعتماد کرد. من یه بار تو هلسنکی اعتماد کردم اما در نهایت همه چی الکی بود. [...] راستش رو بگوم، من یه دوست دختر فنلاندی اینجا داشتم و وقتی که ازش جدا شدم [...] افسرده شدم و نمیتونستم کارامو اینجا مٹ قبلا که انجام میدادم ادامه بدم. تو خونه گیر کردم تمام وقت من با فکر و تنهایی مشغول بودم. [...] فقط خودت هستی و خودت و باید همه چیز رو به تنهایی بدست بیاری و نباید به کسی وابسته باشی، از کسی چیزی بخوای انجام بده یا دست خودت رو پیش کسی دراز کنی. من متوجه شدم که اینجا فقط خودتی، خودتی و خودت. [...] تنها هستی و باید با مشکلات خودت کنار بیایی (P5).

(20) تنهایی سخته. باید کسی، کسی که در مورد مشکلات باش حرف بزنی، دل خودت رو پیشش خالی کنی، باشه. خوب می شود. گفتم وقتی بیماری یا چیزی هیچ کس نیست بپرسد حالت چطوره. اگر خانواده یا کسی باشه که خیلی خوبه، میتونن کمک کنن. اما حالا که تنها هستی هیچ کس نگرانت نیست. اگر بیمار می شوی یا مشکلی پیش میاد، فقط خودت هستی. (P3)

(21) من [زندگی] بسیار بدی را تجربه کردم، مثلا وقتی مدرسه می ریم و بعد خانه برمیگردیم و با وجود خستگی باید غذا پخت کنیم. [...] صبح زود، باید خودت رو مجبور کنی تا بلند شی و برید کار کنید. (P2)

(22) خوب، همونطور که گفتم من باش مبارزه می کنم. من به خودم میگم که من از بین می برم مگر اینکه با این تنهایی و تنها بودن مبارزه کنم. بعضیا اینجا میشناسم که وقتی که نمی تونند با این موضوع کنار بیایند، مشکل روحی شون 100٪ بدتر از من میشه، خیلی هاشون رو می شناسم. اونا نمی تونن با خودشان مقابله کنند. (P4)

(23) وقتی که می خوام مادرت رو ترک کنی و (حضورش را) اطراف نداشته باشی، برای مدتی 100٪ با فکر و نگرانی مشغولی. [...] [آرزوم هست] تنها یه باری خواهم مادرمو ببینم. من هیچ آرزویی ندارم این بزرگترین آرزو من هست [...] مامانم مشکل سلامتی داشت و بیمار بود. من فقط می خواهم بدونم که آیا سالم هست و خوبه. به هیچ چیز دیگری نیازی ندارم، فقط اینو می خواهم [...] مادر من هیچ چاره ای نداشت جز فروش طلا و جواهراتش تا من بتونم با پولش خارج بروم [...] هر چه که دارم من از مادرم دارم. بالاخره، فرهنگ ما و شما اینه. ما به والدینمان احترام میذاریم. (P1)

(24) سال اول که نمی دونستم خانواده ام کجان، باور کن، نمی توانستم از هیچی لذت ببرم. نه ورزش، هیچ علاقه ای، هیچ مطالعه ای، مثلا نه چیزهایی مئه، مثلا هر چی، همه دوستام بم میگفتن "پاشو بابا! تو برای زندگی اینجا اومدی. [...] اون موقع، استرس خیلی بالایی داشتم، منظور من بسیار بالا بود، من هرگز تا به حال استرس زیادی در زندگی نداشتم؛ چونکه، به قول معروف، مهم نیست که چقدر مصیبت داری، وقتی درکنار خانواده باشی. [...] خانواده ام ممکنه که نتونن بت پول بدن، اما همین که دست تو رو بگیرن تو دستشون و کنارت ایستاده اند، کافیه. [...] اما به لطف خدا، توی این یه سال گذشته که من خانواده ام رو پیدا کردم و باشون ارتباط گرفتم، اگرچه پر از درده، ولی باعث آرامشه و به خودت میگی که حداقل از حالشون خبر داری، این چیزی هست که مهمه. (P4)

(25) طالبان این شهر را تصرف کرده بود و خانواده ام وضعیت مالی خوبی نداشتند. اما اون موقع من اینجا هیچ چاره ای نداشتم. وقتی اینجا پول میگرفتم وقتی 200 یا 300 یورو بود، اونا را برایشون میفرستادم. من فقط می خواستم تا آنجا که می توانستم پس انداز کنم و بفرستم تا

بتوانند از آن شهر بیرون بیایند. [...] [هنگامی که] ضروری بود، هیچ انتخابی نداشتیم جز پول قرض بگیریم ارسال کنیم. (P3)

(26) از صلیب سرخ فنلاند کمک گرفتیم. من به پرونده در آنجا دارم و اعلام کردم که خانواده ام که گمشده اند و همه اینا [...] با این حال، زمانی که اونا سن من را بالای سن در نظر گرفتند، از شون [صلیب سرخ] دیگه هیچ خبری نشد. [...] او [یه دوست] خانواده اش رو به اینجا آورد و من نتونستم. چون که اونا اینطوری تصمیم گرفتند که من بزرگسال بودم. (P5)

(27) احساس خوبی نداشتیم؛ بعد به مدت، افسرده شدم و این چیزها؛ شب ها کابوس میدیدم؛ احساس وحشتناکی داشتیم وقتی صبح بیدار میشدم از سایه خودم میترسیدم. تا 1.5 ماه یا دو ماه این احساس بام بود. من تا به حال این را به کسی نگفتم، حتی می خواستم خودکشی کنم. مسئولان توی [ A نام اردوگاه حذف شده]، هیچ کدام به مهاجرها کمک نمی کنن. هیچ کدام از اونها مهاجران رو درک نمی کنند. [...] من تو "جنگل" زندگی کردم. [...] یه ساختمان بسیار قدیمی، در وسط جنگل. تصور کن، از اون خانه تا فروشگاه، 45 دقیقه طول می کشید. 2-3 کیلومتر دور بود. ما هیچ امکاناتی نداشتیم [...] من نتیجه درخواست پناهندگی را بعد 1.5 سال دریافت نکرده بودم. [...] وادارشون کردم من رو به یه روانشناس ببرن. [...] هرچی که من می گفتم به روانشناس میخندید فقط می خندید. / نمیتونست درک کن که من چی میگم [...] زانوها ورم میکرد به اندازه ای که نمی توانستم راه بروم. [...] تقریباً برای دو سال من فقط تحمل کردم تا جواب بگیرم. بعدش، اونا کم کم کمک کردند و مشکلات من را متوجه شدند. (P1)

(28) [...] در یه ماه، من رو فرستادن به مدرسه با خود فنلاندی ها تو یه کلاس، با اینکه هیچ مدرکی نداشتیم. و حالا همونطور که گفتم الان خیلی متفاوت از اون موقع نیست. این کمی متفاوت هست با این حال مثل اینکه من قبلاً نمیتونستم کار کنم یا اجازه کار بگیرم و یا نمیتونستم گواهینامه بگیرم. [...] پس سخت بود [...] وقتی که تو کمپ بودم. سه روز مریض شدم و از اتاقم بیرون نرفتم و هیچ کس نمی آمد که بپرسه حالمو. دکتر رفتم و دکتر گفت فقط آب بنوشم. [...] اینجا خوبه یعنی اونا قرص و سرنگ تجویز نمی کنند. اما، تو ایران، خانواده ای بود که میومد سر میزد و احوال میپرسید. تو نمیتونی بدونی که آیا اونا بت قبولی میدن یا نه و در آینده چه اتفاقی خواهد افتاد. این استرس بات بود هر روز. من می تونستم یه جواب منفی بگیرم و اخراج بشم. اما بعدش جواب میداد و احساس آرامش میکنی. (P3)

(29) ما در کمپی زندگی می کردیم که کسی از افغانستان اونجا نبود. از آفریقا، کردها و عربا بودند. بسیار سخت بود که با شون ارتباط برقرار کنیم و به مصالحه بپردازیم چون هیچکدوم از ما نمیتونست زبان دیگری رو درک کنند ... [ما] نمیتونستیم زبان یکدیگر را درک کنیم و مشکلات زیادی تو کمپ وجود داشت. (P4)

(30) از طرف مدرسه برای من هماهنگ کردن برای رفتن به روانشناس و صحبت کردن. با این حال، من می دونستم که چه جایی هست، من به دوستانم گفتم که [مدرسه] برای من هماهنگ کرده بود که به این مکان بروم و دوستانم میگفتن که جای هست. به من گفتن اگر آنجا بری، اونا قرص هایی می دهند که دیوانه ات می کنن حتی اگر نیستی. مثلاً اگر روانی نباشی، روانی ات میکنن. برای همین بود که من ترسیدم راستش و نرفتم. [...] فکر کردم که اونا نمیتونن کاری برای من انجام دهند. درد که درون منه تنها در خودمه و اگر من نتوانم اون رو حل کنم نه روانشناس و نه کسی دیگه میتونه. (P5)

(31) این مثل که "هیچ جا خونه خود آدم نمیشه" و این واقعیه. [...] وقتی که ما با دوستانمون میگردیم، چنین فکر هایی نداریم، اما زمانی که تنهائیم هر ساعت یکبار فکر میکنیم. هر ساعت ما این افکار را داریم، چون واقعا ما چنین دلتنگی رو داریم که به چیزها فکر می کنیم. [...] به خانواده و دوستان قدیمی، مثلاً فرهنگ ما. [...] آب و هوایی که ما در افغانستان داریم، سبک

زندگی که در آن وجود دارد، به طور کلی این تفاوت بزرگه. اما ما زندگی آزاد نمی کنیم، ما آزاد نیستیم، اما اینجا آزاد هست، که یکی از بزرگترین تفاوتهاست. (P3)

(32) [...] هر چه که خاطراتم داشته باشم، شیرین یا تلخ از آنجاست. دوستام. من فقط تقریباً 2.5 ساله اینجا زندگی کرده ام، 2 سال زیاد نیست. من با وجود تمام مشکلات، دلم بسیاری از زندگی ام در ایران تنگه. من در شهر زیبایی زندگی می کردم، که درموردش می گن تمام زیباییست و خوش منظره. [...] با این حال، [فنلاند] هم خوب هست، جاهای دیدنی داره و هواش نسبتاً خوب هست. خیلیا از آب و هوای فنلاند شکایت دارند، اما ما هیچ چاره ای نداریم. اما حتی اگر آب و هوا بدتر بود، من برام مهم نبود؛ چون [فنلاند] چیزهای دیگری دارد. (P4)

(33) بذار اینطوری بگم، به محض اینکه فرصتی پیدا کنم، پول تپل دستم بیاد و مدرسه را به تمام کنم، من میرم افغانستان. نمی دونم که بعدش راهی برای بازگشت وجود دارد یا نه چون دیگه نمی تونم تحمل کنم. [...] من محیط، غذا و سنت های کشور خودم رو نسبت به فنلاند ترجیح می دهم. از لحاظ شرایط آب و هوایی، اونجا بهشته، نه مثل اینجا که 3 ماه تابستان و 6-9 ماه برا خدا تاریکه. اینجا هم خوب هست، اما زمستان های طولانی و غم انگیز داره. تمام وقت تاریکه. فرقی نمیکنه که چند ماه اینجا زندگی کردی، این تاریکی را همیشه تحمل کنی. همچنان به زمستان بسیار طولانی داره. (P5)

(34) اینجا همچنین غذایی وجود نداره. به نظر من، غذای ایرانی بهتره. شاید شما اصلاً نتونید از این غذاها در تو دنیا پیدا کنید. اینجا اینا غذای قابل تعریفی ندارند. [...] سال های اول و دوم، من هیچ وقت غذا نمیخوردم [غذای فنلاندی]. [...] دو سال اینجا بودم چشمم ضعیف شد و موهایم ریخت. نمی دونم که آیا این به خاطر آب و هوا و یا غذا بود. [...] حالا بهتر هسته بهتر. مثل قبل نیست. در آن زمان من نمی دونستم که غذا بیزم و اگر اونا برای من پخته بودند، غذا نمیخوردم. مثل اینکه همش دنبال غذای کنسروی بودم که خوب نبود و من فقط شکم رو پر میکردم. این طوری بود. نمی دانستم که چی برای بدن من مناسبه. اما حالا می دونم. (P2)

(35) فرهنگ اونا طوریه که از ما سرد تر هستن. ما وقتی با کسی آشنا میشیم گرم برخورد میکنیم. اونا [فنلاندیها] نزدیک و صمیمی نمیشن با کسی که نمی شناسن. [...] من تو یک کلاس بودم که تقریباً 20 دانش آموز بود و من تنها مهاجر بودم. فنلاندی ها آدمایی هستن که مثلاً بچه های فنلاندی ممکن است بترسند یا این که اصلاً اجتماعی نیستند. خیلی صحبت نمی کنن اگر چه من چندین بار سعی کردم با اونا صحبت کنم، علاقه زیادی به حرف زدن ندارند؛ مثل ما نیستن [...] که از ابتدا گرم و صمیمی هستیم [...] سخته. [...] وضعیت ما اینطوریه که ما بیشتر با دوستان خودمان هستیم و نه اینکه مثلاً بیشتر با فنلاندیها باشیم. [...] محیط مدرسه چنین هست که شما به راحتی نمی تونید با افراد ارتباط برقرار کنید. احتمالش خیلی کمه. بعضی فنلاندی هایی بودن که باشون آشنا بودم، اما نه اینطور که به خانه شون بروم و اونا پیام خونه من. (P2)

(36) [...] اینجا به چیزی هست به نام فضای شخصی، اینا با فاصله به متر ازت می ایستند، اما نه به خاطر این که مهاجر هستی، نه اونا به طور کلی اینطوری هستن. (P4)

(37) [...] اولش، من انگلیسی یا فنلاندی نمی دونستم. برام واقعا سخت بود. من جایی بودم که احساس میکردم لال هستم ... نمیتونستم با کسی صحبت کنم. طی ماه اول خیلی برام سخت بود، تا زمانی که کمی زبان آموختم [...] قبلاً نمیتونستم کارای بانکی و رسمی ام رو بکنم؛ این نوع کارا برای مهاجران سخت هست چون زبان فنلاندی خیلی سخت هست. (P5)

(38) وقتی که من اوادم اینجا، چون من تو یه کشور اسلامی بزرگ شدم و مسلماً در یه خانواده مذهبی بزرگ شدم. ارتباطات ابتدا کمی سخت تر بود. در یه کشور اسلامی، حجاب اولین چیزه.

بنابراین وقتی من اینجا آمدم جالب بود برام، این اولین چیزی بود که برای مثال من مشاهده کردم. دیگه چی؟ در اینجا برای مثال مرد و زن می تونن از ایران راحت تر باهم در ارتباط باشن. اینجا زنان را نسبت به سایر کشورهایی که من در آن زندگی می کردم ارزشمندتر می بینند. اینجا مرد و زن یکسان هستند. این خیلی عالی هست. (P4)

(39) مثلاً بعضی بچه ها با دستگاه های قمار بازی می کردن. خوب این چیز بدی هست و من نمی دونستم چون همچین چیزهایی را ندیده بودم. من خردم یادگرفتم؛ چون هیچ کس نبود [به من بگوید این اشتباه است]. وقتی که به ما پول میدادن [همه اش را] را تو این ماشین ها می ریختم. بعد متوجه شدم این کار بدی بود. جلوی درس خوندم رو میگرفت و فکرمو مشغول میکرد. [...] شرط بندی بازیهای فوتبال و غیره هم بود. (P3)

(40) [...] راستشو بگم که من با اونا [افغان ها مستقیماً از افغانستان مستقیم می آیند] خیلی خوب کنار نیام. به همین دلیل، گفتم که، فرهنگ بسیار مهمه. اونا روابط بهتری با دوستشان که از افغانستان هستن دارن، در مقایسه با افغانهایی که در ایران زندگی کرده اند. از طرف دیگر، من نمی دانم که چرا افغان هایی که در ایران زندگی کردن رفتارشان عوض میشه اینجا، مثلاً همیشه به سرعت بشون اعتماد کرد. [...] نمی دانم چرا تو فنلاند نمی تونیم اعتماد کنیم. (P4)

(41) در سه ماه اول که من اینجا مدرسه میرفتم، وقتی معلم درس میداد، بدون اینکه فهمیدم به او نگاه میکردم تا که سردرد میگرفتم. هر روز 6 ساعت من آنجا می نشستم و سعی می کردم گوش بدم و احساس می کردم که از سردرد سرم منفجر داشت می شد. بعد من به خانه برمیکشتم، غذا می خورم و می روم بخوابم و هیچ چی دیگر. [...] سه ساعت در روز باید با اتوبوس رفتم تا مدرسه میرفتم و برمیکشتم، چون مجبور بودم از شهر دیگه ای به واسا بیام. [...] اینطوری بود که انگار مغزم بسته بود تا حدی که بعضی از دوستان افغانم [...] به من گفتند: "تو اینقدر احمقی که هیچ چیزی یاد نمیگیری! خیلی احمقی که هرچقدر معلم بهت می گه، یاد نمی گیری. [...] اگرچه من تلاشمو میکردم، نمی توانستم، چون هرکی باید خودشو بشناسه و من می دانستم که هیچ زمینه ای در مورد درس ندارم. وقتی که من در ایران بودم آرزوی من این بود که به مدرسه بروم. این ممکنه برای خیلیا خنده دار باشه، اما رویای من این بود که به مدرسه بروم. [...] پس درس خوندم و اینا رو ادامه دادم. من در ابتدا فقط به مشکل کوچک با زبان داشتم، به غیر از اون نمراتم خوب بود. خلاصه اینکه، من تونستم دانش آموز خوبی در بین همه. [...] من همیشه [نام رشته فنی حرفه ای] را دوست داشتم. اقدام کردم و پذیرفته شدم. (P2)

(42) تا الان به آرزو رسیدم و دارم تحصیل می کنم. شکر خدا، در درسم پیشرفت کرده ام. خیلی خوبه اگر اینطور پیش برم، آینده ام را روشن می بینم. [...] وضعیت در مناطقی که در آنجا زندگی می کردیم اینطور بود که، فقط میشد برای درس خوندن به مسجد بریم و درس های قرآنی یادگیریم. من برای مثال یک یک و نیم سال درس های قرآنی در افغانستان خوندم. (P1)

(43) اونا [تجربیات کاری] تجربیات کوتاه مدت از 2 تا 9 هفته بود. بش عادت کردم. [...] بالاخره، ما هم می خوایم درس خودمون رو ادامه بدیم و بعد به جایی برویم تا کار کنیم. [...] محل کار و جو کاری تو فنلاند، بذار بت بگم، بهتر از جای کار و شرایط در ایران و یا افغانستان و غیره هست. اینجا آسون تره، یعنی بهتر و همه چیز با قانون کار می کند. [...] من در واسا دنبال کار گشتم. اما متأسفانه، نمی تونستم کار پیدا کنم هر جا که می تونید فکر کنید، خیلی جستجو کردم. از طریق اینترنت اقدام میکردم. هرجا میرفتم میگفتن بایر از اینترنت اقدام کنی و نمی تونیم بپذیریمت. من چندین بار CV درست کردم اما برام هیچی نشد. [...] همه شون دروغ می گن، چون الان سه سال هست که من از طریق اینترنت درخواست می فرستم. یا دو ساله. هیچکدام از اونا به من جواب مثبت یا منفی نداده اند. [...] بالاخره این من رو از این خلق

و خوی الان ام، مثلاً از افسردگی، نجات می‌ده. چون در حال حاضر بیشتر تو خانه هستم، بیشتر فکر می‌کنم. (P1)

(44) من هم سرکار [نام محل کار] برای چهار ماه دوره آموزشی بودم و قبل از اونم من یه قرارداد دو ساله با (س) داشتم که اونجا به من حقوق ماهانه پرداخت کردن. با این حال، یعدش که من کار را ول کردم، همش در آموزش های شغلی در اینجا و آنجا [نام محل کار] و غیره میرفتم، تا اونا به من کاری بدن ولی نمیدادن. [...] وقتی سرکار توی س بودم "vakituisia" [کارکنان که قراردادهای دائمی داشتن] اومدن، ساعت کار من کم شد و من هیچ گزینه ای نداشتم جز ترک اونجا. [...] این نیست که شما بتونی مستقیم به کار تو زمینه ای می‌خوای بروی. فنلاند این الزام رو برای شما قرار داده که شما ابتدا باید در اون زمینه تحصیل کنی و مدرکش رو بگیری تا بتونی در آن کار کنی. و من هرگز همچین دانش آموز خوبی نبوده ام. (P5)

(45) در واسا، ما به دو زبان نیاز داریم که زبان فنلاندی و سوئدی هستن. به عنوان مثال، اگر شما زبان سوئدی رو نمی‌دونید، کار پیدا کردن سخت هست. [...] من دارم تلاش می‌کنم، چون ما تمام مهارت های [شغلی] را در مدرسه یاد نمی‌گیریم. من سوئدی هم بلدم. (P3)

(46) [...] من خودم همیشه این استرس رو دارم، به خودم می‌گویم، فنلاندی‌ها یعنی همشون ها، حداقل به راحتی سه زبان رو می‌دانند، مهارت های کامپیوتری هم دارن، حالا که به ما می‌رسه، حالا که می‌خواهیم برای یه حرفه خوب درس بخونیم، خیلیا بهتر از ما هستن. (P4)

(47) اگر کار کنی، فنلاندی و دیگران همه احترام می‌ذارن. اما نه وقتی که بیکار هستی و هیچ کاری غیر از تو شهر گشتن انجام نمیدی. وقتی اینجا نشستی، همه می‌گوین که طرف بیکار هست و فقط وقت تلف میکنه، میخوره و می‌خوابه. من شخصا نمی‌خواهم این طوری باشم و می‌خواهم دنبال کار باشم. (P1)

(48) به نظر من، ما در این جامعه ارزشی نداریم، ما باید مثل کسانی که مالیات میدن مثل شهروندان، کار کنیم. در حال حاضر، من فکر می‌کنم فقط اونا به ما می‌رسونن و ما فقط برای اونا ضرریم. (P2)

(49) واسا یه شهر آرامه. این خوبه و مردمش مردم نژادپرستی نیستند در مقایسه با شهرهای دیگر. اونا سرشون تو کار خودشونه. [...] اینجا اونا به نظر من به ملّیت اهمیت نمی‌دهند. من تا به حال چنین تجربه ای نداشتم. دوستانی که از شهرهای دیگر دیدن کرده اند می‌گن که اینا خیلی بیشتره، اونا خودشان دیده اند و تجربه کرده اند. خیلی از افرادی که اینجا اومدن، مثلاً به طور مستقیم از افغانستان، قبل از این مهاجرت نکرده اند و می‌گویند "آره، اینجا نژادپرستی و این چیزا". اما من می‌خندم و می‌گم: "بابا! در مقایسه با چیزایی که تو ایران انجام تجربه کردم، اینجا بهشته."

[...] اونا یه فنلاندی را پذیرفتن، گرچه من کارآموزی کار کرده بودم، سعی کردم که سر وقت کار کنم و تلاشمو برای انجام وظایف انجام بدم و فکر میکردم خیلی از اون فنلاندی بهتر بودم. اما ما هر دو اونجا رفتیم، اونا فنلاندی رو پذیرفتند و من رو رد کردند. اونا به ما اعتماد ندارن. (P2)

(50) [...] تو واسا، من الان یه جلسه دادگاه دارم همین زودی ها، برای چی؟ به خاطر این نژادپرستی. اونا به دین من، مادرم و کله سیاه من فحش دادن. دیگر نمی‌تونستم تحمل کنم، من با اونا درگیر شدم. (P5)

(51) من شخصا به آپارتمان خالی توی وب می بینم. اما ... وقتی اونا به نحوی می فهمن که شما به مهاجر هستی، شما را رد می کنن، جواب منفی در مورد [درخواست] آپارتمان بت میدن. (P3)

(52) اونجا [تو ایران] به مشکل بود اونم افغان بودن بود. اما حالا اینجا تو فنلاند، این مسئله خیلی بزرگتره، نمیتونی تصور کنی، غیر از این که افغان هستید، مهاجر بودنتون، دین تان، که من معذرت میخوام با اتهامات تروریستی مواجه هست، بنابراین ارتباط خیلی سخته، این 5-6 مسائله همه هستن، و بعد شما می خوای با به فنلاندی ارتباط برقرار کنی. (P4)

(53) اکثر دوستان من از افغانستان هستن، چون ما زبان یکدیگر را میفهمیم. ما مشکلات یکدیگر را درک می کنیم. (P2)

(54) گشتن با دوستان خودش به چیز اجتماعی هست که از افسردگی جلوگیری می کند. به همین دلیل که شما حداقل به دوست داری که باش صحبت کنی. [...] اگر کسی مثل به پناهنده که تو شهر جدید هست، از من چیزی میپرسه من به اش کمک میکنم و حتی من و اونا رو اینجا و آنجا میبرم و برایشون ترجمان میکنم. [...] من به دوست دختر فنلاندی دارم و میرویم به خانواده اش سر میزینم، یا اونا میان. [...] من به دوست دخترم اعتماد دارم و حرفامو میزنم بش. بیشتر از بقیه به اون اعتماد دارم. (P1)

(55) [...] ما قبلا با هم تئاتر و این چیزها میرفتیم به دلیل اینکه اونا فنلاندی هستن و می دونن این چیزا چطوری هست. [...] قبلا من باش به کلبه ی تابستانی شون میرفتم، به جشن هاشون با فنلاند و اونا میرفتم. [...] من [مراسم ها] می روم، اما به ندرت در مقایسه با قبل که خیلی بود. در مراسم های افغانها ما راستشو بگم میرم اما نه خیلی. [...] من به دوست دارم، به ایرانیه، که باش ارتباط خیلی خوبی دارم. [...] مثل برادرم هست. با این حال، الان با خانواده اش مشغول هست. ما سالی به بارهمدیگر را میبینیم. من قبلا با اون حرفا میزدم و درد دل میکردم. [...] دوستای کرد هم دارم. (P5)

(56) گاهی اوقات ما با دوستانمون فوتبال بازی می کنیم و بعضی اوقات بازی های ویدئویی تو خانه بازی می کنیم [...] سرگرم کننده هست، همینطور بازی بیلیارد و یا بولینگ که اهیا ترتیب بده. و یا پیکنیک، مثلا سال گذشته ما رفتیم پیکنیک. (P2)

(57) اونا به من اطلاع میدن که در کی و کجا. به عنوان مثال، معلمان و اهیا در مورد اینطور رویدادهایی اطلاع رسانی می کنن. [...] من یاد گرفتم که چطوری سوالاتم رو شجاعانه ببرسم و چطوری در یک محیط و دورهمی در به کشور دیگر ارتباط برقرار کنم. (P1)

(58) [...] اون موقع هم کمک دریافت میکردم. ما قبلا کمک بیشتری می گرفتیم اما حالا که اونا سطح زبان ات رو میدونن و این چیزا بهتر شده و به تدریج کمک شون رو کاهش می دن، چون شما میتونی از پیشش بریبای. اون موقع اونا می خواستند شما با این جامعه آشنا بشی. مثلا همراهی ات میکردن، مترجمان میدادن. اما حالا می دونن که من می توانم از عهده کار خود برام و مدیریت کنم. (P2)

(59) در مورد اهیا هم، اونا واقعا آدمای خوبی هستن. منظورم اینه که آیا اونا آگه بتونن کمک کنن دریغ نمیکنن. من از خدمات شون برای من و هم سن وسالهام راضی هستم. خدماتشون فوق العاده بود. اونا بابت فرم ها و نامه های رسمی، با اداره مهاجرت فنلاند، پلیس، کارهای مدرسه ای کمک کرده اند که من سیاستگذارم از شون. [...] اونا به من در پر کردن برنامه های شغلی و نوشتن رزومه کمک کردند. من باید برای بعضی کارهای تابستانی درخواست میکردم و از

اونا خواستم، اونا هم واقعا به من کمک کردند. [...] و به لطف اونا در حال حاضر من در اینجا (نام محل کار) کار میکنم، من تابستان قبل هم اینجا بودم. (P5)

(60) اهیا در خیلی از موارد بم کمک کرده. [...] در مقایسه با جایی دیگه مثل ایران، جایی که اگه نتونید از فرم ها و کارهای اداری و این چیزا بر بیاید می گن از اینجا گمشو بیرون! اما، اینجا اونا این کار رو انجام نمی دهند. به شما کمک می کنن. (P2)

(61) [...] من چیزهای زیادی از (نام راهنمای اجتماعی) از لحاظ زبان و فرهنگ، سوالات اجتماعی و غیره یاد گرفته ام. اون برخی از مسائل را میپرسید و در عوض منم همون موارد رو در فنلاند میپرسیدم و اینطوری، بسیار مستقیم، بسیار آسان و راحت. اگرچه ... مثلا ... در ایران شما نمی تونید با جنس مخالف در مورد مسائل بسیاری صحبت کنید، در اینجا خیلی آسان هست. [...] یادمه که یه هفته مریض بودم و یه مدت یک یا دو هفته اهیا نرفتم و اونا اومدن دم در از من پرسیدند که حالم خوب یا نه و آیا به چیزی نیاز دارم. (P4)

(62) [نام مشاور اجتماعی اهیا] برام این روانشناس را پیدا کرد. [...] آدم خوبی بود و حداقل هفته ای یک بار ما می توانستیم ملاقات کنیم. از وقتی اونی که جدید اومد خیلی... نیست بذار اینطور بت بگم، ما نمیتوانیم با هم خوب کنار بیایم. [درست بعد از گرفتن اقامت] با روانشناس و تراپیست مشورت کردم و اونا واقعا همون چیزا رو گفتن مثل همیشه واقعا. چون هنوز اون موقع هم حس وحشتناکی داشتم؛ همیشه گریه میکردم و نمی تونستم بخوابم. من چاره ای نداشتم جز اینکه با روانشناس صحبت کنم. (P1)

(63) چند بار به روانشناس رفتم [...] هم قبل و بعد، بعد از اجازه اقامت هم، یه سه چهار بار رفتم. (P4)

(64) [...] ما یک جامعه [اسلامی] اینجا داریم و جشن عید می گیریم و این چیزا و من درشون شرکت کرده ام. [...] همینطور عزاداریهاشون که مربوط به دین هستن. مثلا تو واسا، جامعه جایی داره که وقتی عاشورا و اینا هست میرویم، برای عزاداری. جایی هست که اونجا دور هم جمع میشیم. (P2)

(65) ما ماه محرم رو داریم. اینجا ما یه مسجد داریم [...] من می روم و تو چیزهایی مثل محرم و عید ها شرکت می کنم. اما زیاد تو جشن هاشون نیستم. (P5)

(66) اولش، تقریبا برای دو ساله من رعایت میکردم، اما نه دیگه بعدا. اما الان، راستش، من خیلی مثل قبل نیستم. وارد این جامعه شدی و نمی توانی دیگه اینطوری باشی تا کی؟ قبلا من اون نگرش را داشتم و به نظرم مثل اون موقع بود که قبلا تو ایران داشتی مثل اینکه، باید این رو بخورم و اون رو نه، چیزایی که دین من اونا رو ممنوع کرده. اما، به نظر من، به عنوان مثال هیچ تفاوتی در تولید گوشت وجود نداره، اونا به هر حال اون [حیوانات] را می کشند. اونطوری که من دیدم، همه اونا توسط ماشین کشته می شوند. تو ایران هم اینکار رو توی کشتارگاه انجام می دهن. اونا این کار را مثلا یک به یک انجام نمی دهند و این و آن آیه رو جلوی قیله نمی خوانن. دستگاه اونا را می کشد. [...] بیشتر به سمت فرهنگ فنلاند در حال حاضر، چون دوستای فنلاند بیشتری دارم و بیشتر با فنلاندیها وقت میگذرونم. وقتی ما اینجا اقامت داریم، این به فرهنگ ما تبدیل می شود. از جایی به بعد فرهنگ خود ما میشه. به طور کلی، من برای فرهنگ فنلاندی ارزش قایلیم. من هیچ چیز بدی تو فرهنگ اونا نمی بینم. (P3)

(67) اونا فرهنگ خوبی در مقایسه با ما دارند. [...] نحوه زندگی اونا خوبه. اونا بهترین در سراسر جهان هستند. [...] اگر خودم را در نظر بگیرم، من به نام افغان هستم، اما 13-14 سال در ایران بودم. من در ایران بزرگ شدم مثلا من با فرهنگ و سنت های ایران بزرگ شدم [...]

کشور من چیزی جز بدبختی به من نداده. ایران هرگز به من چیزی نداده، هیچ فرصتی، هیچ فرصتی برای اینکه فردی مفید باشم. اما وقتی به اینجا رسیدم بدون اینکه به من بگن دین ات چیه، یا فرقه ات، [...] منو مدرسه بردن، به من جا دادن، غذا و همه چیز. [...] اما (در ایران) من در آن جامعه بزرگ شدم با آن افراد بزرگ شدم. در آن زمان [...] وقتی که 12-13 ساله شدم [...] من با ایرانیان، با دوستانم رشد کردم، و بعد متوجه شدم که اونا من را افغانی [...] صدا میکنند. (P2)

(68) هر فرهنگ چیزهای خوبی در خودش دارد، همینطور چیزهای بد. من در ایران زندگی کرده ام، در حال حاضر اگرچه در ایران فرهنگ هایی هست که نسبت به فرهنگ فنلاند بهتره، در اینجا [فنلاند] ارزش هایی هست که از ایران بهتره. اما آره ... خوبباش اینجا کمی بیشتر هست. حالا، من برای خودم گلچین می کنم اون چیزهایی که اینجا خوب می بینم. اما چیزهایی که خوب نمی بینم [...] اونا برای من خوب نیستند، شاید خوب باشند، اما فقط نظر منه. (P4)

(69) ما سعی می کنیم با توجه به فرهنگ و آداب و رسوم اونا، ریتم زندگی خود را به دست آوریم و پیش برویم. با این حال، درست هست، همانطور که گفتیم فرهنگ فنلاند برای من پنجاه و پنجاه هست یعنی از نظر لباس، آداب و رسوم و سنت ها. اما از نظر خلق و خوی خود، به معنی مردم در خیابان نیست ... دوستان و همکاران من، اونا برای من هیچ مشکلی ایجاد نمی کنن. اما تو خیابون، کسی رو می بینی که داره می خنده، اما زمانی که از کنار شما عبور می کند، اخم میکنه و حتی بد و بیراه هم میگه. این چند بار اتفاق افتاده، اما من فقط راهمو ادامه دادم. [...] من می دونم، چه نوع از خلق و خوی هموطنان دارن، من نمی خواهم به اونا نزدیک بشم. [...] مثلا اینکه من سیگار می کشم و اگر کسی سیگار نکشد، می روند و میگن که او با این نگرده است، او چنین و چنان هست و سیگار می کشد. با توجه به این چیزها، نمی خوام با اونا در ارتباط باشم یا در مراسم و جشن های اونا شرکت کنم. دوری و دوستی، مثل این. وقتی من اونا را میبینم بدون اینکه نزدیک بشم، سلام میکنم و احترام نشون میدم و همین. (P5)

(70) ما فرهنگ قدیم خودمون رو فراموش نمی کنیم. اگر جشن هایی باید برگزار شود ما سعی می کنیم همه اونا را کاملا با توجه به فرهنگ خودمان نگه داریم. فرهنگ قدیم ما، فرهنگ افغان. [...] هرگز نمی توان فرهنگ خودمان را فراموش کرد. [...] من فکر نمی کنم روزی بیاد که فراموش بشه. (P3)

(71) افغانستان کشوری هست که قبلا مردم از سراسر جهان به عنوان گردشگران به آنجا سفر می کردن. یه کشور بسیار تمیز و منظم بهتر از فنلاند بوده. [...] غذای ما فوق العاده است؛ غذای فنلاند فقط سیب زمینی هست (خنده). (P1)

(72) ما توی هر جشن، عزاداری و عید که از سنت های ما ریشه میگره، شرکت میکنیم و برگزار می کنیم شان. (P2)