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The Last and The Lasting
Male Iraqi Refugees and Managing Stigmatized Identities

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ABSTRACT

Stigma studies aim to discuss the discounted individuals and groups which have been disqualified from full social acceptance because of the discrediting attributes they hold. Even though there is a considerable amount of research on stigma. This study aims to prioritize the perceptions of people dealing with stigma by focusing on the stigmatized individual's point of view rather than societal reaction. In this research, the focus is on how male Iraqi refugees manage through talk their stigmatized identities.

Theories on stigma management strategies, individual identity, liminality and social identity build the theoretical focus from which the data is analyzed and linked to the focus of the study. A qualitative research approach was adopted in the data collection process by using Corbin and Morse (2003) unstructured interviewing method with six participants.

The results were analyzed by using Anselm Strauss' Grounded Theory and two common themes were found in the participants' narrative; first, 'The rites of passage' in which participants viewed their stigma as a temporary stage of life due to the liminal stage they are currently in. Second, the 'not ready yet' discourse where participants referred their stigma to a bigger issue which is the lack of socially valued roles in the current society such as jobs or study places.

KEYWORDS: Stigma, Refugees, Identity, Iraqi refugees, Stigmatization, Shame

1 INTRODUCTION:

It is not a fundamental human right to live wherever one chooses to be, however immigration is considered a common phenomenon throughout history which is fueled by several motives, such as; seeking refuge, study, work opportunities, or family reunions. However, the world is recently experiencing the aftermath of the biggest forced migration wave since World War II. Due to hard circumstances, an estimated 34 million people are affected by forced displacement (UNICEF, 2016). As other European countries, Finland has been on the list of migration destinations. In the past three years Finland received 74,675 resident permit applications of which 45,672 are for refuge reasons. On the list of people immigrating to Finland, Iraq has been for the past three years on the top with over 24,639 residence permit applications. (Finnish Immigration Services, 2017)

As statistics demonstrate, 79% of the Iraqi applications in total were from males between the ages of 18-34 (Finnish Immigration Services 2017). The uneven distribution of gender in the recent asylum seekers numbers raised many questions and negative attitudes in the public discourse. The dominant argument the anti-refugee advocates claimed to verify their stance via social media forums is that most asylum seekers are primarily strong men who left behind their women and children which led the public eye to review these asylum seekers as deceptive, opportunistic, or even criminals (Griffiths 2015: 468).

Considering the attributes that the recent asylum seekers wave hold, they do not conform to the typical refugee image. Hence, they are outside the social norm, which make these attributes a reason for them to be disqualified from a full social acceptance and therefore being vulnerable to marginalization, social rejection and stigma. Dealing with the ordeal of being stigmatized in social situations requires a set of skills and tactics that stigmatized individuals employ to gain a sense of control over their stigma. This set of skills and maneuvers is referred to as Stigma Management (Goffman 1963:113) which will be explored in this study.

1.1 Background

According to Statistics Finland (2017) immigration rates were insignificant in the Finnish society between World War II and the 1970s, until the end of the 1980s, rates increased slightly, however, 85% of the immigrants were Finnish citizens returning from Sweden and other Nordic countries to pursue better job opportunities. Upon the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s a significant increase in the number of immigrants to Finland occurred, mostly from Estonia, former Yugoslavia, Iraq and Somalia. Recently, numbers are showing that Finland has been a destination for immigration with an increasing percentage of 21% each year (Statistics Finland 2017).

Among the previously mentioned, the number of asylum seekers is increasing (Migri 2018). Annually, the Finnish government decides how many quota refugees they are willing to accept. The number is increasing by the year due to the difficult situation in the Middle East. However, the number of asylum seekers arriving exceeds the decided quota (Migri 2018). The grounds for meeting the asylum status in Finland are based on the following; a well-founded fear of being persecuted in the country of origin or the country of permanent residence for reasons related to religion, nationality, origin, membership in a certain social group or political opinions. After meeting the previously mentioned reasons, it is important to prove that the applicant cannot rely on the protection of the authorities in the country they are fleeing for life threatening reasons (Finnish Immigration services, 2018).

The ethnicity of refugees arriving to Finland in the late 90's has changed due to the drastic changes the Middle East has witnessed (Takeda 2000: 4-5). Among these new diverse incoming groups are Iraqi refugees. The aftermath of the Gulf war, the Kurdish-Arab conflict, the American invasion and other ongoing conflicts in Iraq resulted in putting Iraq on the top of the list of populations the UN has been called to assist (Sanchez 2010: 1). In the past three years, 24,639 of the 45,672 asylum-seeking applications in Finland were from Iraqi citizenship holders (Finnish Immigration Service 2017) as a repercussion of the ongoing international, domestic and radical changes and wars Iraq has witnessed since 2003. The situation in Iraq has

been described by the United Nations as ‘a humanitarian crisis’, an estimated 2 million Iraqis fled to other countries and 2, 7 Million have been displaced within the borders of Iraq (UNCHR, 2017). Which is by no means helpful to their situation. It is evident that in areas with ongoing armed conflict and violence, access to healthcare, sanitary food supplies and living conditions is limited to nonexistent. (Batnji et al., 2014; Behrouzan & Parkinson 2015)

1.2 Literature Review

Forced displacement have been studied in many contexts and from a variety of academic perspectives. However, tracing the origins of refugee studies is impossible to achieve (Cameron 2014: 6). According to Skran (2007), between the 1920’s and the 1980’s refugee studies emerged as a field out of the high interest many scholars from different professional backgrounds showed in the complex and worthy of studying phenomenon refugees constitute. One of the main themes in this field as discussed by Schmidt (2007) is that the refugee phenomenon is usually discussed in a political environment. In accordance with Schmidt, Black (2001: 58) referred the reason behind such a prominent theme in the field of refugee studies to the idea that the field itself is intimately connected to policy development.

Many scholars argue for the idea that the primary purpose behind refugee studies is to help policy makers and governments approach a better understanding of the refugee situation, thus encouraging them to develop better policies that will help ease their pain and respect their dignity (Teitelbaum 1980; Stein 1981; Vernez 1991; Temple & Moran 2006 & Cameron 2014). However, the gap in focusing on policy as the main solution to refugee crisis lies on the fact that even though international laws and policies oblige nations to protect refugees, it is still voluntary (Mannik 2012: 262). In addition to that, immigration policies do intersect with asylum policies which makes it hard for these laws to support refugees’ specific needs (ibid 2012: 262).

Renner (2012) attempts to explain that laws and policies are not the only part of the equation that needs reforming in order to help refugees. Encouraging and activating societies and

communal support will tremendously help the process to move forward. However, spreading awareness and providing societies with suitable tools to help refugees demand a great deal of research in what refugees actually need. According to Beiser (2006) longitudinal research in the form of observation over a long period of time has the potential to provide answers to such questions. In contrary to that, other studies showed that giving voice to the refugees themselves and hear the story from their own perspective can reveal to researchers, societies and policy makers what can help them to process the past and deal with their current situation (Abd Alsalam 1995; Hadden 1997 & Godin, Squire Hansan, Lounasmaa & zaman 2017).

Refugee's perspective on their situation is a widely researched topic in the field of refugee studies. Psychological and mental challenges (see Carlson 1991; Montgomery 2011; Weinstein 2016 & Joyce 2017) are among the most prominently discussed issues due to the long lasting effects they have. The issue of stigma among refugees has been touched upon by scholars such as; Baranik (2017) who argues that stigma in refugees is the result of vocational stress. In addition to that, Quinn (2014) and Shannon (2015) both highlighted in separate studies, the influence of social and cultural factors on stigma such as trauma, fear, racism and isolation.

In the field of refugee studies Iraqi refugees have been studied by many scholars with respect to several issues. In their study Gorst and Goldenberg (1998) investigated the effects of post exile trauma related and social factors on Iraqi individuals in exile. As a result of their research, Gorst and Goldenburg found that depressive and trauma disorders could worsen if the targeted group is not provided with suitable rehabilitation programs, social support and family reunion. In accordance with that, Shoeb (2007) discusses how the previously mentioned disorders are being handled by professional within the new cultural context. He explains how Iraqi refugees are being treated based on the standardized western psychiatric scales, which may result in inappropriate diagnosis, hence inefficient treatment.

Along the same lines is what Kira (2010) discusses in his study on how race related stressors such as perceived discrimination impact Iraqi refugees' mental health in general and post-traumatic stress disorders in specific. Kira (2010) highlights the importance of integrating

methods like the trauma model of backlash discrimination into treatment plans for Iraqi refugees. Another suggested aspect is 'Mental Health Literacy' as Shameran (2014) stated in his study, in which he explains how resettled Iraqi refugees in Sydney- Australia lack the understanding of the nature of mental health care and treatment which result in them seeking inappropriate methods to improve their psychological state.

In the context of Finland, the study of refugees is highly focused on two groups, Vietnamese (Valtonen 1994; Liebkind 1996 & Valtonen 1999) and Somali refugees (Mölsä 2010; Kuittinen 2014 & Kuittinen 2017). For the longest time, these two groups were leading the statistical application numbers in Finland hence them being dominant as targeted groups when studying refugees. However, the issues discussed with these groups are either related to mental health, language related difficulties and perceived cultural differences. On the other hand, Iraqi refugees as a targeted group in the field of refugee studies has been studied from similar perspectives (Kira, 2010). However, up to this point no previous research has been conducted on Stigma and male Iraqi refugees. Thus, this study aspires to fill the gap in the field of refugee studies by providing an insight on how male Iraqi refugees residing in Finland manage through discourse their stigmatized identities.

1.3 Framing the Research, Questions and Aims

For refugees, the road towards stability in the new hosting country is filled with undeniable difficulties, however, migration is a way to acquire new statuses and means to produce new identities (Charsley & Wray 2015: 406). According to Quinn (2013: 416) the process of shaping identities in new circumstances is often met with social pressure to meet certain criteria, adding stigma and discrimination to the equation will complicate the process which will lead refugees to adopt an isolated lifestyle.

The purpose of this study is to acknowledge and examine how male Iraqi refugees residing in Finland manage through talk their stigmatized identities. It is crucial to point out that this study

is not an attempt to answer questions such as why the world is afraid of young refugee men, why male refugees choose to come alone or to discuss the motives behind hate speech. The objectives and the focus are on the matter of stigma and how it is viewed from the point of view of the stigmatized individual. Therefore, this study will be bounded by the following questions:

1. How do Iraqi refugees identify themselves in relation to stigma?
2. If any, what stigma management strategies the participants use or formulate when talking about themselves?

The focus of this study is to examine the issue of stigma from the stigmatized individual's point of view and in order to meet these objectives, personal statements are vital and the most suitable source of data. Bogdan and Taylor (1975: 6) described personal documents as the material in which people state with their own words, for example their life story or some aspects of it. These documents come in many shapes and forms. Such as; letters, autobiographies, statements on different media platforms and interview transcripts (Brinkmann 2012: 13). In order to obtain personal documents and statements, unstructured interviews were conducted with the participants.

The data used to serve the study's purpose was collected, transcribed and translated in the period of five months, between March and July 2017 by using the software Nvivo. Six interviews were conducted with six different participants who are males, Iraqis, between the ages of 18-34 and came to seek asylum in Finland on their own. This study will adopt Corbin and Morse (2003) unstructured interviewing method to collect the data and Anselm Strauss's Grounded theory (1990) to analyze it.

1.4 Thesis Outline

This thesis consists of seven chapters. After the introduction, the study's theoretical framework is presented in the second chapter where basic concepts such as Stigma, Identity, Stigma studies,

context and Stigma Management Strategies are discussed. The third chapter focuses on the data collection process where participants will be presented along with the method of analysis. The results and findings will be presented altogether with the discussion. The fifth chapter consists of a cohesive summary of the whole process followed by proposed possible contribution, limitations and suggested future research possibilities. The last chapter is the study's conclusion.

2 STIGMA

The word Stigma first originated by the Greeks to describe the physical visible scars they used to stamp on criminals, traitors and slaves to visually indicate their subordinate lower social status (Erving Goffman 1968: 11). Although the term is still used today in a related manner. It is attached more to the emotional and psychological outcome of the degrading process (ibid, 1968:12). David Émile Durkheim (1858: 101) was the first to define stigma from a sociological point of view, to explore its origin and effects on the society as well as individuals. He defined stigma as the socially degrading mark that indicates a socially unacceptable individual or a group. He emphasized the idea that in all societies the phenomenon of stigma is found and normal yet the individual or group holding this stamp loses the character of normality (ibid. 1895: 98).

In accordance with Durkheim, Erving Goffman (1968: 10) considered Stigma as the emotional disgrace itself rather than the physical seen mark. He contributed to the definition by stating that there is much more to stigma than only a collection of undesirable attributes. It is more deeply discrediting that it becomes the language of relationships where stigmatized individuals are defined only by the attributes related to stigma (ibid, 1968:13). However, not all undesirable attributes result in stigma according to Goffman but only the ones that are incongruous with particular stereotypes societies consider as acceptable (ibid, 14). As discussed by Jones (1984: 6) these attributes when perceived as undesirable can mark the individual or the group holding it as abnormal, unacceptable and inconsistent with the collectively shared and approved characteristics and this process is called stigmatization. While the core of the definition of Stigma remains consistent and valid through time, scholars such as Huxley (1993: 76) extended the definition by viewing stigma as being equal with discrimination, by highlighting the point that they are both negative.

Later scholars debate the utility and vitality of the concept of stigma in modern settings. Gerhard Falk (2001:12) viewed Stigma as a tool the society uses to create some sort of solidarity by including some members, the insiders and excluding others, the outsiders. Falk argues for the

idea that Stigma can be described via two main categories: Existential Stigma which is derived from uncontrollable situations such as being born with a disability and Achieved Stigma which is an earned condition due to the conduct of a socially unacceptable act such as theft. He also elaborates on the previously mentioned conventional categories by touching upon the role of media and other modern outlets on the concept of stigma. For instance, he considered high achievers as a group vulnerable to stigma because of media jealousy (ibid. 17).

As a sociological phenomenon stigma has been defined from many perspectives. Levin, Laar and Crocker (2005:2) highlighted the importance of considering the point of view of the stigmatized individual or group while attempting to define stigma rather than only focusing on the way they are viewed by the dominant group; therefore, stigma is defined as the predicted reaction the excluded individual or group anxiously expects in future situations due to the prominent state of being excluded. According to Livingston (2010), the fear of being socially rejected and the anxious feelings related to being aware of one's presence as a negative entity to the social context is defined as Felt Stigma. In this case, stigmatized individuals tend to withdraw from social occasions where they expect to be confronted with rejection. Reiss, Serlin and Adams (2015: 174) elaborate on felt stigma by describing it as the stage when impairment becomes a disability and a disadvantage that affect the way stigmatized individuals are being perceived, thus they expect to be disapproved and excluded.

As stated above, the definition of stigma has no clear boundaries and can be approached in numerous ways. Each addition and elaboration through time, could be seen as an indication of the complexity of the way stigma is formed in the first place. Hence its definition is varied and open ended. It is acknowledged that the term could be approached from countless perspectives. However, for the purpose of this study, the definition of stigma will only be considered through the stigmatized person's point of view.

2.1 Individual Identity and Social Identity

Research on what is an individual, or self-identity is countless. Yet the definition of self-identity is formulated on the basis of what make a person at a certain point in time the same person at another point in time (Shoemaker 1984; Olson 1997; Markosian 2010 & Hochstetter 2017). However, the discussion around what is Individual Identity first originated from religious ideas that humans are not their bodily representations, but immaterial souls as proposed by Plato and later Descartes. The idea didn't stand in the face of many critical and epistemological obstacles which was acknowledged by John Locke (1690: 88) who identified personal identity as the human consciousness not the substance, in other words what distinguish one person from another according to Locke is the intellectual side.

While traditional scholars viewed individual identity as a static entity, later studies questioned the term in the light of change (Garrett 1998: 13). Parfit (1992: 98) argued for the idea that changes are inevitable but what matters is the preservation of the psychological relations for instance, desire, character and belief which he referred to as essential components of the individual identity. In agreement with Parfit. Garrett (1998: 41) puts the components of the individual identity into two categories. First, the psychological aspect in the form of memory and second, the physical aspect in the form of the bodily existence and conscious. He emphasized the importance of the continuity of both categories between individual and time (ibid, 43). On the other hand, Noonan (2003: 8) argues for the idea that science has a key role in changing these categories. The physical aspect for instance could change by performing brain transferring surgeries on individuals and the psychological aspect is vulnerable due to its dependability on experiences which could be forgotten.

The source of the individual identity is not original according to Rydlewska and Braid (2013:5) but a collection of references individuals base their sense of self-identification on, for instance in early childhood kids use their parents or guardians as a point of reference and in later stages society and the groups they choose to belong to. This means that the definition of individual identity is a lifespan process of self-defining (ibid. 7). According to the previously mentioned approaches to define individual identity, it is either the continuation of the personal characteristics over time or the environment's influence on these characteristics. However,

recent studies suggest a balance between the two previously mentioned approaches by defining individual identity as the link between the conditions an individual has been uncontrollably placed in and the personal habits he/she decided to adopt as a part of his/her life (Ewagner 2014: 332).

Typically, the sense of the individual identity or the sense of self lingers in the back of the mind in familiar contexts (Goffman 1968: 12) and what brings it to the frontier of the individual's focus is being exposed to a new unfamiliar situation in different social settings (ibid, 13). However, Social interaction not only contributes to the formation of the individual identity but also to the formation to what is called the Social Identity (Hannum 2007: 7). The term has been widely discussed. One of the suggested definitions of Social Identity is the cognitive sense of belonging that results from particular social positions (Sarbin & Allen 1968: 32) in which the individual can either identify as similar or as different from certain social group/s (Worchel, Morales, Paez & Deschamps 1998: 3).

In agreement with the previously mentioned definition of Social Identity, Hannum (2007: 8) defined the term as the combination of several aspects such as race, gender, religion, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status which create a link between individuals and groups. These aspects can be visible or invisible, chosen or forced upon. However, there isn't a single way to identify the individual's social identity (ibid: 11). It is better described as a collection of identities which have been conceptualized, formed and produced by individuals according to the social context (Goffman 1963: 12 & Hannum 2007: 11).

According to Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1979: 17) the importance of social identity relies in its crucial role in making social interaction possible. They elaborated on this point by indicating how individuals tend to interact based on what they perceive of each other as similar and as different (ibid 19). The categorizing process starts by identifying groups' borders and characteristics. Individuals afterwards use these categories as an identifying starting point (ibid, 35) followed by comparisons of what might fit the chosen identifiers and what not or as what they call the 'in-group' and the 'outgroup' (ibid, 39). The idea proposed by Tajfel and Turner

corresponds to what Goffman (1963: 11) proposed, that categories do exist in the social structure. However, Goffman puts emphasis on these distinctions by discussing how interactions happen between members of the 'in-group' and members from the 'outgroup'.

In the social interaction, members become aware of the previously taken for granted social identity (Goffman 1963: 12). Thus, they anticipate certain attributes regarding the other party taking part in the communication, Goffman (1963:12) referred to these assumptions as the Virtual Identity. If these members do carry these attributes it becomes their Actual Identity (ibid, 13). The question relies on whether their 'actual identity' is perceived as desirable or not. If not, then it reduces the possibility for them to be accepted in the new social context. Such a discrediting attribute is called stigma (Goffman 1963:13).

As stated above, the relationship between individual identity and social identity is a two-way relationship, where individuals construct, reform and shape their sense of self in a complex and ongoing process. For the sake of this study, both concepts were discussed in relation to each other as well as to society and how inconsistencies are being formed in the social structure. However, the focus will not be on societies or their reaction to discounted or stigmatized identities, but on how individuals conceptualize their individual and social identity in relation to stigma.

2.2 Stigma management and Stigma Studies

While many scholars characterize history as sequential and progressive where attitudes are inevitably moving toward more humane and enlightened perspectives, when it comes to stigma, the case is different (Hinshaw & Cicchetti 2007: 121). Hinshaw and Cicchetti (2007: 40) argue for the idea that throughout history societies tend to label some types of behaviors, traits and characteristics as *abnormal* in order for the *standards* to be defined (my own italics). However, these abnormalities do not follow a certain pattern, but they do exist in the social structure throughout time (ibid. 41).

The process of labeling results in creating socially shared systems where membership is granted to those who identify with certain characteristics and attributes (Goffman 1968: 12; Worchel, Morales & Paezd 1998: 3 & Hannum 2007: 8). Hence, these characteristics being the determiner of whether certain individuals belong to or are denied being members of certain groups (Goffman 1968: 12). However, the borders of these social circles are not immune to change, and they contribute tremendously in creating a sense of belonging or alienation (Mason 2000: 19).

The influence of being excluded from certain social groups is significant not only in how the relationship would be with other social groups but also in how the individual will behave in future social encounters (MacCall & Simmons 1978:41; Wiley & Alexander 1981:96 ; Roschelle 2004:28). During social interactions, responses and reactions are dependable on familiarity. Hence, individuals tend to react in a way that they see as a suitable reaction which is usually drawn from a previous familiar situation (Roschelle 2004:28). While this sound like an easy recipe for interaction, it becomes problematic for the ones stigmatized, marked as undesirable and excluded from a full social acceptance (Goffman 1968: 169; Rolchelle 2004: 30 & Gunn 2015: 132). In this way, for individuals holding discrediting characteristics, interaction is mediated through their stigmatized identities (Goffman 1968: 172; Rolchelle 2004: 31 & Gunn 2015: 136).

In social interaction, Stigma could be recognized based on visibility. Visible Stigma is defined by physical characteristics such as race, gender, obesity and disability while the hard to recognize discrediting characteristics are referred to as Invisible Stigma like sexual orientation and illness (Goffman 1963: 57; Crocker, Steele, Gilbert & Fiske 1998: 527 & Crocker, Steele & Major 1998: 529). However, such a dichotomy has been discussed by many later scholars. For instance, Sierra (2016: 226) argues against the psychological and physical dichotomy by stating that the complexity of stigma couldn't be captured in two categories. Instead she proposes a new pattern to map stigma based on controllability and stability. Sierra (2016) places stigma into categories based on affective reactions, behavioral tendencies and expectations (ibid, 551).

In social encounters, possessing stigma characteristics has an impact on communication (Goffman 1963: 58). Being aware of the Stigmatized identity and the vulnerability to social rejection, stigmatized individuals tend to develop strategies to manage the communication of these stigmas in addition to coping mechanisms (ibid, 61). Stigma management is identified as the selective disclosures, tactics and reactions stigmatized individuals adopt in order for them to gain a sense of control over their stigma and to cope with the social reaction (Goffman 1963:113; Goerge & Gussow 1968: 31 & Savio 2017: 418). For instance, in their study on inmates, Toyoki & Brown (2014: 725) found that one of the major techniques inmates used to manage stigma was connecting themselves to socially valued roles such as being a good friend and a good person. In this way, incarcerated inmates expressed themselves as responsible individuals which was one of the ways they used to manage their stigmatized identities.

One of the proposed models in categorizing Stigma management strategies is the in-group/outgroup model. For stigmatized individuals the in-group is what they refer to as peers who share similar social statuses due to stigma. The out-group is everyone else not sharing their stigma or similar characteristics. In the in-group/out-group model, stigmatized individuals tend to use aggressive measures with the out groups in order to eliminate social interaction thus rejection. Moreover, stigmatized individuals highlight their stigma related personal qualities to stand out and show solidarity to the in group (Blum 1991:265).

Another model is the Inclusion/Exclusion model (Rochelle 2004: 35). In this model, stigmatized individuals attempt to establish self-legitimation in both hostile and supportive environments. By highlighting their stigma related characteristics in supportive environments, they imply what Rochelle calls inclusive strategies. On the other hand, in hostile environments stigmatized individuals do not take any measures to maintain a harmonious environment or seek societal acceptance which is considered as exclusion strategies (ibid, 37). Motivations behind employing Stigma management strategies range from a desire to be accepted (Goffman 1963: 59) to the need to declare resistance against social norms (Cornan 2016: 229).

Comparing the previously mentioned studies, and the considerable amount of literature focusing on a variety of groups tackling the issue from many perspectives, it is noteworthy to mention that Stigma studies examine Stigma as a social structural phenomenon (Rochelle 2004: 41 & Toyoki 2014: 724) These ideas are particularly relevant for understanding how stigmatized identities function within social contexts (Goffman 1963: 57) by analyzing the stigmatized individual's actions, the verbal and physical ones, in relation to society and its reaction. However, for the sake of this study, its purpose and objectives, the focus will be on the discursive stigma management strategies the targeted group use to maneuver their stigmatized identity.

2.3 The image of the Middle Eastern man

The representation of the “other” has been for a long time a dominant topic in cultural studies. Images of what other cultures, traditions, religions and people look like have been created by writers, artists, travelers and scholars throughout history which laid foundation for the phenomenon of categorizing people as ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Said 1978: 46). In his extensive study regarding the constructed images western scholars created about other cultures, Edward Said (1978) investigated how oriental cultures are being portrayed as the ‘other’ in different forms of art and media. In accordance with that, Shaheen (2003) discussed the way Middle Eastern people, cultures, religions and traditions are being represented and discussed in western media. Shaheen (2003: 172) states that media is persuasive in maintaining the stereotypical image attached to Middle Eastern people as the cultural “other”. However, otherness when linked to Middle Eastern people, has been discussed in the light of the stereotype that they are different and threatening (ibid 175).

These images, stereotypes and expressions do last and impact the way Middle Eastern people are being perceived. According to Simpson (2013) the longevity of stereotypes is connected to the way communication happens. When people communicate in chains about a person from a stereotyped group who exhibits both consistent and non-consistent stereotypical characteristics, there is a tendency to advance the information that is consistent with the stereotypical image; this contributes to the maintenance of stereotypes.

The discourse about the Middle Eastern male according to Rettberg and Gajjala (2016: 180) is negative. It starts with militarism and the importance of military in the making of men (Açıksöz 2012) which established the stereotype that Middle Eastern men are trained and accustomed to violence in their upbringing, hence the terrorist attacks committed by men from Middle Eastern descents (Hall 2003). However, due to the circumstances in the Middle East, different media outlets are flooded with images of men fleeing war zones and seeking refuge in other countries (Ryder 2015: 180).

In the context of the Iraqi asylum seekers, the story begins within the borders of Iraq where men are forced to take sides in the armed violent conflict, either forced to join armies and militias or threatened with detention (Sánchez, 2010: 74). After fleeing Iraq, the struggle might just take other shapes and forms. What is left of the male refugee's identity, self-esteem and sense of self is being discussed in the light of the ultimate patriarch (Bonjour & de Hart 2013: 62). The representation of the Middle Eastern man is always linked to the distribution of authority in the society in general and within the structure of the family in particular, hence him being the one privileged with power (De Hart 2015: 449). This attribute strips him from being seen as vulnerable and in need of legitimate assistance.

The repeated images of male refugees on different social media outlets are followed by hate speech with an emphasis on the stereotype that middle eastern masculinity is threatening, and refugees are potential terrorists (Rettberg & Gajjala 2015: 179). Rettberg and Gajjala (2015: 180) also discuss how the Middle-Eastern man since the colonial era has been discussed as threatening to women and as a potential rapist and abuser. Although these stereotypes are generalized over middle eastern men, according to Takeda (2000: 5), refugees coming from Iraq besides the traumatic events they witnessed both in Iraq and during their journey they have to cope with the anti-Arab, anti-Iraq negative stereotypes, such as being labeled as the aggressive people who come from the hostile country during the Gulf war, anti-western, cunning, terrorist and participants in a male dominant society (ibid, 5-6).

Middle Eastern men recently have been the focus of different media outlets due to the fact that they are the dominant group in the most recent refugee wave. This brings to the surface questions not only regarding the previously mentioned stereotypes but also regarding the vulnerability of these men. They do not conform to the visual expectations of what a “refugee” looks like. Hence, their masculinity becomes the defining criteria which could list them as either terrorists, rapists, abusers or unworthy of help. The outcomes of such labels cast negative shades on the refugee’s already fragile mental state (Rettberg & Gajjala 2015: 180) as well as the potential marginalization and stigmatization they face from the new society.

As has been displayed in this section, the stereotypical image attached to the male Iraqi refugee has been built on negative grounds. However, the portrayal of the Middle Eastern man in combination with the anti-Iraqi stereotypes, cast them in the negative light which contributes tremendously to the process of marginalization and stigmatization which is the focus of this study.

2.4 Refugees and Liminality

Reaching the safety shore provide refugees the basic right of life (Turpin 2010: 394). However, due to sudden changes and harsh conditions, most refugees are forced to leave their countries with little to no preparation (Cohen 1981: 563). Hence, they suffer the loss of property, family ties, relationships, personal resources, income and social status, in addition to witnessing traumatic events. The rapid series of unfortunate, life changing events leave their toll on refugees physical and psychological state (Mikal & Woodfield 2015: 1320).

Beside the physical and physiological challenges refugees face, they experience to some extent the effects of the process of migration and cultural differences (Takeda 2000: 24). According to Smith (2013: 26), refugees’ physical location is not the only thing that has been displaced, but also their sense of personhood, self and identity. Thus, they’re obliged to reestablish a new life and reposition themselves within the new cultural context they are currently in. Being stripped of the connections to others can leave a significant impact on the refugee’s ability to recognize themselves in the new cultural context.

According to Van Gennep (1960), the unstructured and chaotic phase that follows the physical settlement of refugees in the new country can be described as Liminal. The term liminal is highly used in the frame of culture anthropology (Mälksoo 2012: 482). As one of the rite of passage stages, it refers mainly to the in between situations where already established structures are no longer valid due to being relocated and new structures are still unclear (Turner 1969 & Gennep 1960). The atmosphere in this stage is ambiguous, threatening, isolating and confusing (Mälksoo 2012: 482)

The definition of liminality resonates with what Smith (2013) and Turner (1974) found when they studied the state of marginalization refugees go through while trying to reestablish new lives after fleeing their home country. Gennep (1960) argues for the idea that in order for an individual to be in the liminal stage, they have to pass through what he called the pre-liminal stage where they are separated from the previous social life, hence what the refugee goes through. Smith (2013) states that in this stage, refugees acknowledge that their already established social identity and its components are no longer valid in the new context and even negatively perceived. Mälksoo (2012: 488) identifies the liminal stage as the “unstructured and invisible period when the person is transitional and in the process of being initiated into a very different state of life”.

Considering the previously mentioned challenges, refugees are challenged with internal and external difficulties. Feelings of confusion and ambiguity are common in this stage of their lives due to the nature of this transitional period (Mälksoo 2012: 487). However, taking into account the stereotypical image attached to male Iraqi refugees, they are more vulnerable to discriminatory treatment, marginalization and social rejection (Hebl, 2012: 1334).

3 DATA AND METHOD OF ANALYSIS

This chapter outlines the methods used in the data collection process and the method of analysis. This study adopts a qualitative approach using Corbin and Morse (2003) unstructured interviewing method and Anselm Strauss' Grounded theory (1990).

3.1 Data Collection Method

The investigated problem in this research is sensitive and personal. Therefore, the chosen method of data collection is ideal in this case. According to Corbin and Morse (2003: 335) dealing with sensitive topics in research generate emotional distress, however, using unstructured interviewing as a method can give the interviewees a considerable sense of control over the interview process which can reduce feelings of distress to a level that is not greater than the one experienced in daily life. Hence the beneficial outcomes of the research process for both the interviewee and the interviewer (ibid, 339).

In accordance with Corbin and Morse (2003) is Highhouse's study on the functionality and suitability of unstructured interviewing while studying sensitive matters related to daily life (2008: 338). He argues for the idea that this method helps not only in clarifying the tackled issue but also in collecting a rich source of data for theory building. While the word unstructured signals a loose atmosphere where the conversation might take several roads, the researcher is still involved in steering the discussion in a way that serves the research. In critical moments, participants might feel uncomfortable. Thus, researchers are encouraged to withdraw for a moment from the topic that brought discomfort to recover and then redirect the conversation to the interest of the study (Corbin & Strauss 2015: 38).

Unstructured interviews according to Ramos (1989) is an interactive research method that allows researchers and interviewees to share experiences. Researchers and interviewees create together a context of conversational intimacy where interviewees feel comfortable telling their

story. The process in the unstructured interview starts with open-ended questions such as; can you tell me about yourself, or can you tell me about your daily life. The importance of asking generic questions throughout the interview according to Corbin and Morse (2003: 339) is to give the participant a sense of control over the interview which will lead into a fruitful discussion specifically if the discussed matter is sensitive.

After the introductory phase, researchers encourage participants to elaborate on issues that serve the purpose of their research (Corbin & Morse 2003: 339). This could be done by either waiting for the participant to finish narrating their story (Rubinstein 2002:139, quoted in Corbin and Morse 2003: 339), or by continuously asking for elaborations throughout the conversation (Schutz, 1992:190, quoted in Corbin and Morse 2003: 339). It is noteworthy to mention that during the process, researchers do have to a certain degree power over the conversation, however it is the researcher's responsibility to keep this power to a minimal degree. For example, by sharing information with the participant about why they are interested in their research topic (Corbin & Morse 2003: 340).

Considering the previously mentioned points, it's important to clarify that although the nature of interview is unstructured, informed consent is fundamental to the research process. Moyle (2002: 269) defined Informed Consent as the participants' right to be informed that they are being interviewed for research purposes as well as the nature of the research they are being interviewed for. After taking into account the previously mentioned measures and the characteristics of Morse and Corbin's (2003) unstructured interviews, it has been made evident that this method is suitable to serve this research objectives and aims.

3.2 Participants

Defining the research area was the first step prior to looking for participants along with determining the criteria for focusing purposes and to serve the study's objectives. Potential participants were approached mainly via social connections. They were asked if they are interested in taking part in the study which was explained briefly in clear standard Arabic -the participants and interviewer's mother tongue- to eliminate confusion while preserving the

research's neutrality and aim. Contacts were exchanged, and six participants were chosen out of the eight who volunteered to participate anonymously in the study. Then they were divided randomly to take part in the interviewing part into two stages; the initial stage, the theoretical sampling' and the final stage, the discriminant sampling. Participants' profiles are presented in the following Table 1:

Table 1. Participants Profiles

Interviewee	Age	Gender	Nationality	Place of residence	Time living in Finland
P1	28	Male	Iraqi	Vaasa	16 months
P2	24	Male	Iraqi	Seinäjoki	17 months
P3	30	Male	Iraqi	Vaasa	11 months
P4	26	Male	Iraqi	Mustasaari	16 months
P5	30	Male	Iraqi	Turku	21 months
P6	27	Male	Iraqi	Pori	13 months

It is noteworthy to highlight the fact that all participants came on their own to seek asylum in Finland, they all applied for residence permits and none of them was granted a positive decision and they are all waiting for the results of their appeal. P1, P4, P2, and P5 are married, have at least one kid and the rest of the family resided outside of Finland. P3 is married with no kids and P6 is single.

All interviews were loosely structured allowing the participants to elaborate as much as possible on their experiences and tell their stories the way they would prefer. However, the interviews in the 'Discriminant Sampling' stage were themed along the lines of the found concepts. To ensure the quality of the collected data, face to face was suggested as the main way of interviewing. Interviews took place where the participants liked to be interviewed and they were

documented with an H4 Handy recorder to ensure the sound quality. Notes and remarks were made verbally along the lines of the conversation to keep the interview as natural as possible.

The following Table 2 demonstrates the details of each interview.

Table 2. Interviews' Details

Participant	Duration of the interview (in minutes)	Language	Method of interviewing
P1	42	Arabic (Mother Tongue)	Face to Face
P2	58	Arabic (Mother Tongue)	Face to Face
P3	43	Arabic (Mother Tongue)	Face to Face
P4	66	Arabic (Mother Tongue)	Face to Face
P5	47	Arabic (Mother Tongue)	Face to Face
P6	54	Arabic (Mother Tongue)	Face to Face

As stated in Table 2 all interviews were conducted in Arabic and then translated into English and transcribed, coded and categorized by using the software NVivo.

3.3 Grounded Theory

The basics of Grounded theory was first laid down by Glaser and Strauss in 1967. It was formulated for the purpose of creating theories out of social phenomena (Corbin 2015: 11 & Denzin & Lincoln 2011: 360). The process offers flexible analytical guidelines that enables researchers to focus on the collected data and build theories in the field's setting/s (Denzin & Lincoln 2011: 360). Grounded theory is distinguished from other approaches by its structured way of alternating between data collection and analysis. In this method, data sets are compared,

categorized and cross-referenced until the core category is found. Therefore, Grounded Theory extracts the results from the data instead of applying already known results and theories. This data might be observations, diaries, interview transcripts, journals and personal documents (Strauss and Corbin 2015:7).

Strauss (1967: 11) argues for the idea that Grounded Theory enables researchers to explore and investigate behaviors and topics from different angles which will help them develop a comprehensive explanation. Hence, it is appropriate to apply Grounded theory in studies where the researched topic is recent, and no previous models have been applied to similar research topics (Cummings 2018: 118). The process in Grounded theory is iterative, where the researcher collects data continuously. The data collection procedure is called theoretical sampling which is defined by Strauss (1990: 134) as the stage in which researchers aim to find main concepts derived from the collected data. The cycle of coding and eliminating concepts continue simultaneously until main concepts are clearly defined. In Figure 1 the process of theoretical sampling is better described as a continuous cycle that alternate between data collection and analysis. The found categories, themes and concepts go through continues comparison until no new categories, themes or concepts emerge.



Figure 1 Theoretical Sampling (Strauss 1990: 136)

Theoretical Sampling according to Corbin (2015: 135) is different than other data collection methods due to its flexibility and openness. Researchers seek the leads between emerging concepts with an open mind to what might be found (ibid, 134) or in Strauss' words 'While developing theory, the research process feeds on itself' (Strauss 1990: 139). In Theoretical Sampling, researchers direct their focus in the next data collection phase according to the emerging main concepts or categories.

The procedure of Strauss's Grounded Theory (1990) consists of different steps of coding (Strauss & Corbin 1990: 16). As shown in Figure 2, the first step is called Open Coding where the focus is to analyze carefully the collected data by identifying actions, events and interactions. The identified concepts are accompanied with notes, memos and explanations in order to minimize assumptions. To get a useful set of codes in this stage, Strauss and Corbin (2015) suggest that it is important to code precisely and to stay consistent with the focus of the research.

After acquiring a set of open general concepts, the next step is to develop these concepts by performing Axial Coding (Strauss & Corbin 2015: 156) the purpose of this stage is to identify the following properties for each concept: conditions, context, consequences and strategies. According to Strauss (2015: 156-157) locating actions and linking them to interactions and consequences will eventually help the researcher recognize any patterns. The last step is the Selective Coding in which the core category is identified along with the complementary sub categories (ibid, 2015: 128).

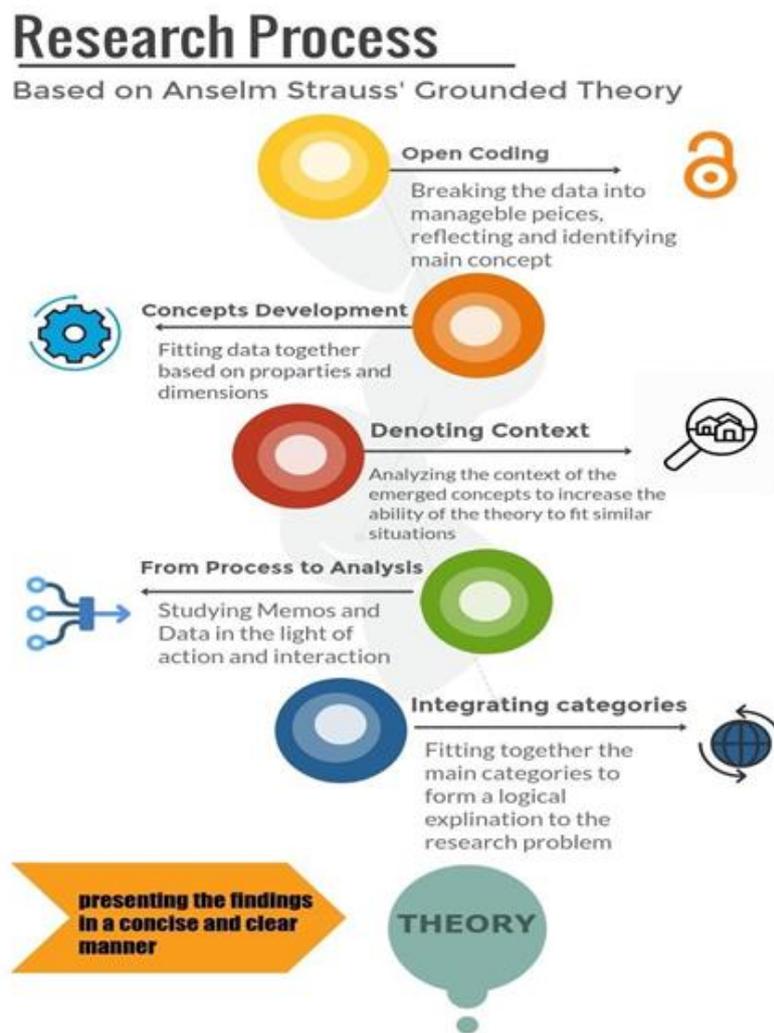


Figure 2: Research Process

While other data analysis methodologies start at one point and end at another, according to Corbin and Strauss (2015: 256), Grounded Theory aims to study certain phenomenon as an ongoing process that can be developed through revisiting the collected data and memos to reach saturation. Strauss (2015: 201) noted that during the process, the researcher must trim off any concepts that fail to develop, and to limit the data collection and coding process to the core category and the related sub categories. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that Grounded theory is about the concepts that emerge from the data not the data per se.

In conclusion, Grounded Theory is not descriptive, it is the study of a concept, which names a pattern that gets tested and revisited until it becomes a theory (Strauss & Corbin 2015: 358). Grounded theory offers explanations as well as the ability to examine topics from a variety of perspectives. It is useful in investigating new emerging issues such as the focus of this study. Stigma research has accentuated the importance of the social reaction to stigmatized people while this study will focus on the stigmatized person's point of view and by employing Grounded Theory it will be possible to explore how stigmatized individuals manage their stigmatized identities through discourse.

4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The analysis of the interview's data will be presented in this chapter, it is divided according to the prevalent themes that emerged through the coding process. The main categories are presented and discussed in relation to the theoretical section of this study (section 2). The motive of this analysis is not to simplify the statements made by the participants but to discuss the main themes in relation to the topic of Stigma. It is just an attempt to approach a better understanding of what is the participant's point of view on the matter. The analysis concludes with suggestions for further research on the subject and acknowledged limitations.

4.1 Acknowledging Stigma

In his extensive monologue when asked about his daily routine, participant P5 says:

- (1) I used to wake up thinking about how my day should look like, you know. Work and all the things related to family. Now I wake up thinking of totally new things. Where am I supposed to go? Today for instance, I thought for hours while sipping my coffee whether I really can participate in that free gym session the local gym offers or not. Can I just show up? What if it was not meant to be for people like me? What if everyone felt uncomfortable because of my presence? What if I had fun? Is it ok for me to show it? (P5)

According to Livingston (2010), the fear of being socially rejected and the anxious feelings related to being aware of one's presence as a negative entity to the social context is defined as *felt stigma*. Hence the feelings P5 was encountering while thinking of engaging in new social situations. The previously taken for granted social identity that he possessed became invalid after moving to a new social context (Worchel, Morales, Paez & Deschamps 1998: 3). Being aware of one's self is not the key term here but the anticipated negative response from others. Participant P3, P1 and P5 expressed how they experience similar feelings before engaging in social situations.

- (2) In the Finnish language course, I sit next to an engineer from Portugal. He has just started his own business here. After few classes, we started to talk more. I like the guy he is very humble, and he told me he likes how I know a lot about ship engines. One day he invited me for his office opening party, I apologized

and told him I had to be somewhere else that day... I didn't have anywhere to be that day! That was the first thing that came to my mind, I went once to a Christmas party and I was like a shadow. No one was interested to talk to me. Maybe because they thought I was an intruder. I regret my immediate response though, I really wanted to ask who is coming to this party, I was curious to know if it is possible for me to fit in. but I think it is impolite. Who am I to ask, so I didn't. (P3)

- (3) I have updated my Facebook profile so many times. I used to have so many Arabic sayings in my profile. I was afraid they will be misunderstood if translated. It is hard to know how people will understand them. The last thing I need now is to be labeled as a religious person. To be honest I don't even know what that means. It is used as a compliment in the Arab world. Everyone feels safe with someone who fears God. But here it is intimidating and repulsive. I avoid critical discussions. It always leads to questions and sometimes I don't know how to answer them properly. Even if I say I don't know. My ignorance will also be taken negatively. It is better not to share much either Facebook or views with people. I stopped thinking about it, maybe it is best not to have any. It causes headache. (P5)
- (4) In fact, I still didn't manage to have a routine in my life, so I can call anytime as "free time". However, I like physical activities sometimes I go to the football field near our old camp place it is easier there to communicate, find people to play with and form a team. I like to sit in cafes as well but there are certain ones that I go to same with the football field. I find it easier to relax in places where we are (refugees) kind of expected to be. (P1)

All the Participants expressed that they feel that they are more vulnerable to rejection. When asked about why they expect such treatment, P3 explains that he will not 'fit in' because he looks, acts and dresses differently than others in social occasions such as parties. Based on his previous experiences he believes it is perceived negatively because he was ignored. On the other hand, P5 thinks his views and religious beliefs will be a reason for others to reject him. Thus, he chooses to conceal his thoughts and avoid as much as possible situations where he might be asked to explain his religious beliefs. As for P1, he explains how his physical appearance is easily recognized as a refugee, hence he tends to avoid potential negative treatment by spending his time only where he thinks it is socially acceptable for him to be.

The previously mentioned examples provide an insight that the participants are aware of their identities as stigmatized and more vulnerable to rejection (Goffman 1963: 58). However, they take certain measures to manage such treatment. The selective disclosures and reactions stigmatized individuals adopt in order to gain a sense of control over their stigma and to cope

with the social reaction is identified as Stigma management (Goffman 1963:113; Goerge & Gussow 1968: 31 & Savio 2017: 418).

The practical tactics like avoiding certain occasions, isolating one's self or limiting the social circle to only peers are all strategies to manage the societal reaction to the stigmatized individual (Goffman 1963: 60). However, the focus of this study is to explore and find common themes in how the participants explain their stigma. The previously mentioned examples were a part of the introduction to the topic which indicated that the participants do recognize their identities as stigmatized.

4.2 The 'Rite of Passage' Discourse

During the interviews, participants were asked about stigma in their daily lives. For instance, how they experience stigmatization while taking public transportation, in their free time, at shops, social occasions, etc. This was discussed with the participants in order to understand how much stigma really influence their daily lives. However, the focus while analyzing the data was on the way participants discursively manage to talk about stigma. It is important to note that during this part of the interview, the discussion was hard to maintain without discomfort. In this way, participants used storytelling as a method to steer the conversation.

Participant P3 explains how he feels about stigma when he takes public transportation. He tells about how he learned the hard way that he shouldn't put his luggage on his lap or close to him but in the luggage compartment. In his statement P3 associates stigma with the fact that he is still learning how to use several things in this stage of his life in Finland and sometimes things are quite different to what he is used to.

- (5) When I came from Helsinki to here, I had a big laundry bag as my luggage. I know no one was interested to even touch it but I was worried that I will lose it. I sat down and placed the bag in my lap. the lady sitting in front of me kept staring. I thought maybe it was because I look dead tired, but she looked a bit scared. she changed her place to another seat. She had to come back to her in the next stop. I was worried when she said something very loudly while pointing at my bag. She said in English what are you hiding under that bag? I said what, the guard then told me that I should put it downstairs in the luggage compartment. The lady was still unhappy and demanded several times to

change her seat. I then sat on the stairs for the rest of the trip. I was really tired I couldn't take her complains anymore. (P3)

The conversation then shifts to a story about his father and how he used to bring back home big bags of grocery and it is normal to ask the passenger next to him to put some of the bag on his lap.

- (6) May his soul rest in peace. My dad used to go every Friday to the farmers market and buy Cotton and groceries for us. He used to sit on the cotton bags and place the groceries in his lap and the one next to him. He always says tomatoes should never touch the ground again. (P3)

Participant P1 tried to explain how he thinks stigma is a shared phenomenon. He mentions that most of the people he knows who moved to Finland either as refugees or immigrants experienced similar situations because they were still unaware that what they used to know as normal back in their country is no longer accepted in the new social context. This resonates with what Hannum (2007) stated regarding the perceived inconsistency between the individual identity and the social identity when individuals try to apply their taken for granted social identity in new social contexts (see section 2.1). When asked about how he feels about these situations, participants P3 says:

- (7) When these situations happen first I feel angry because I don't understand why. The problem is that I don't know what are the things that might trigger such treatment. I just wanted to hold my bag, maybe next I can't wear yellow on Wednesdays or something, you'll never know. (P3)

Participant P3 was not the first to express confusion in similar situations. when asked about how they feel about stigma in their daily life, participant P2 and P3 answer:

- (8) It comes with the package I guess, I must keep looking for answers. I'm not that young, changes are not that easy anymore. I do feel that I need to change something to stop this treatment (being stigmatized) from happening but to be honest with you I'm not sure what would work. (P2)
- (9) Somedays nothing happens, others I found it hard to cope with everything. I find my postbox filled with letters and life becomes full of action. I'm now waiting, and I don't know what to expect. Every day I come up with new plans and nothing sticks... I guess the best way to describe it (Stigma) is that I'm *not*

yet divorced and not really separated (Arabic proverb used to describe the stage where conditions are uncertain while having a feeling that it is temporary). (P3)

In the participants' answers, themes of ambiguity and confusion were dominant when they explained how they feel about stigma. Participants think that they experience feelings related to stigma when they act inconsistent to what they were supposed to do because now they still don't know what to do. The in between situation they are experiencing where already established structures are no longer valid due to being relocated and new structures are still unclear is coherent statement to what Turner (1969) Gennep (1960) and Mälksoo (2012: 482) referred to as liminality (see section 2.4).

During the interviews, participants were asked to share their thoughts on stigmatization, specifically why they think they are stigmatized. This was a sensitive topic for the participants to discuss. First the participants' answers were short for instance what participants P1, P4, P6 and P5 say in the next excerpt. This was noted by Goffman as a stigma management strategy where stigmatized individuals make the effort to get themselves away from the dilemma (Goffman 1963: 133).

(10) I don't know, maybe because I'm not respected. (P1)

(11) It is not only me, every man I know in my situation is experiencing a similar treatment now. (P4)

(12) I cannot control how people think about me or treat me, I'm the new member here. (P5)

(13) News, movies and terrorist attacks (P6)

The above excerpt reflects how the participants need to avoid this part of the conversation. It also shows that they are aware of some of the stereotypes attached to them (Shaheen, 2003). Hence what participants P4, P5 and P6 mention. It was noted that the participants chose to withhold from expressing their views by either providing short answers as shown in the previous excerpt, or by changing the topic which was what participant P3 and P2 chose to do.

(14) Erm. Sadly, it is what it is. Not only your home gets lost in the fire during the war I guess. I'm no longer *Ibn Abu Ali*-the son of my father an Arabic expression used to express feelings related to isolation and exile-, I have three more brothers and they are all in different countries seeking asylum. I don't remember who told me that Finland would be the fastest to make asylum decisions

and we all could be reunited [...]. I just wish I have a certain date to when the process ends, I just must wait. (P2)

(15) Maybe you should ask this question to the ones stigmatizing me, I know during trials you ask the accuser for their motives not the one being accused. I have a strong feeling you will get many answers. It depends on who do you ask of course. If they are from the *Perisuomalainen* – True Finns, a Finnish political party- they will give you a list filled with things you have never heard of before. Once someone from this party asked me about a place in Iraq that allegedly has a lake where people made sacrifices to God every year. Well, this place doesn't exist. I even asked for the address and asked a friend who lived his whole life there and he confirmed that it doesn't exist. we had a good laugh about it that day. (P3)

In the pervious answers, P2 explains how he feels as if he has no control over the situation of being stigmatized, then he continues to talk about his brothers and how he wishes to be reunited with them. On the other hand, P3 expresses his frustration by telling the interviewer that he is not the one who can answer this question, then he switches the topic by telling a story. However, to steer the conversation away from the uncomfortable moment, the participants were encouraged to tell more about what they think might reduce stigmatization either now or in the future. Participants P2 and P6 answer:

(16) I can't really control the reactions of other people. I only have few friends, erm, they are more like acquaintances to be honest. If I can gain their trust maybe they will talk more about me in a good way and I will build a good reputation, then being stigmatized will not be the last thing I will think about when I go somewhere new. (P2)

(17) Having the opportunity to be myself. If I can speak Finnish, have a job and take care of my family of course it won't be the same. I can then express myself easily and be active member of this society. (P6)

In the above excerpt, participants showed a positive attitude by expressing that stigmatization might be reduced in the future. However, what they suggested as solutions to stigma depend on them transitioning from their current statues to one that is more stable. For instance, participant P2 pointed out that his social circle might help him in the future spread his good reputation among others and stigma might subside and becomes a minor issue in his life, while participant P6 emphasizes the importance of gaining societal knowledge in order to reduce stigmatization. This is again reflective of what has been discussed by Smith (2013) and Mälskoo (2012) regarding the transitional period refugees experience (see section 2.4), but it should be noted

that the participants recognized the stage they are in now as the peak of the struggle with Stigma. As participant P6 and P2 say after they were asked to express their thoughts on future and stigma in the following excerpt:

(18) I had a house, a job and a family. I used to wake up to family noises then we all woke up to gunshots. We lost everything including being together. I don't think it will get any worse from here. I must stay focused and take what I can get. Nothing stays, but the face of God. (P6)

(19) I have some things to be stigmatized for like leaving my family behind, but I know we will eventually get back together. That is something I'm sure I will fulfill. Meanwhile, trying to organize my life will help me gain some respect and stay sane. (P2)

Participants P6 and P2 presented their view on stigma as temporary. They stated that after they are initiated to the next stage of their lives, stigma and stigma related issues will reduce due to obtaining more structure and social statuses in their lives. Hope is a reoccurring theme in the participants statements. Participant P6 explains how he has seen worse circumstances and they improved. Now he is looking to stay focused on seeking opportunities that might offer new positive outcomes. While participant P2 sees that once he gets his family back he will no longer be stigmatized for leaving them and the effects of stigma will reduce tremendously.

As mentioned in section 2.2, the motivation behind employing Stigma management strategies ranges from a desire to be accepted (Goffman 1963: 59) to the need to declare resistance against social norms (Cornan 2016: 229). The focus of this study is on what kind of discursive stigma management strategies the participants use to cope with their stigmatized identities. The strategy they employed was referring to Stigma as a part of the liminal stage they are currently in, thus it is temporary, and they do have hope it will subside in the future. What the participants stated resonate with previous studies that identified the unique state of marginalization refugee face also as liminal (Turner 1974: 504 & Smith 2013: 17).

4.3 The 'not ready yet' Discourse

The role of communal engagement in improving the lives of the participants in general and the way they view their stigma was a recurring topic during the interviews. Every participant highlighted the importance of being engaged in the surrounded society. They see that a good relationship between the individual and the surrounded community is meaningful and rewarding. However, participants had varying levels of enthusiasm regarding how to build a relationship with the surrounded society. The following excerpt from participants P5 and P3 shows that they do care about how they are perceived by the community, yet they are worried about not being received as responsible and respected individuals due to either the lack of a socially valued role or negative stereotypes.

(20) People see me as a threat. On TV you only see Iraqi men holding guns and women alone on borders fleeing war in hard circumstances. I can't change how people see me I will always be linked to war even though I chose not to be a part of it. (P5)

(21) How do you interduce yourself to others. You say I'm Flan from Eltan (means somebody from somewhere, a common Arabic slang) and I do this for a living. I do the same thing, but I'm embarrassed to say it in the past tense, people think I changed my career path and ask what do you do now? and if I say it in the present tense people will ask where do you work? I don't know. (P3)

Participant P5 is aware of the negative stereotypes he has been attached to. Yet, he clarifies that he does not confirm to these stereotypes by saying that he chooses not to be a part of the ongoing war. However, these stereotypes impact the way he is perceived by society (see section 2.3) and by distancing himself from these stereotypes he is closer to societal acceptance. On the other hand, Participant P3 expresses how not having a job is an obstacle on his way to successful social interactions.

In their study on inmates, Toyoki & Brown (2014: 725) found that one of the major techniques inmates used to manage stigma was connecting to socially valued roles such as being a good friend and a good person. Toyoki and Browns (2014) study resonates with what participants expressed regarding the importance of such roles to stigmatized individuals. During the interviews, the participants were aware of the moral dimension of their stigma and showed interest in showing themselves as responsible and trustworthy. For instance; participants P5, P3

and P4 presented themselves as good fathers, good citizens and hardworking individuals, when encouraged to tell more about themselves:

(22) I help the Red Cross in distributing food to people in need whenever I'm needed. I feel like I'm doing something. (P4)

(23) I don't know how old my kids are going to be when I finally reunite with them, but I have collected over the time good toys that might work. (P5)

(24) Even though I've lost everything, I'm a hardworking man. I didn't want to get married until I bought my own apartment. (P3)

In his statement P3, made the effort to highlight that he is a hardworking man. He explained extensively how he managed to support himself and his family and made the sacrifice to postpone his marriage until everyone in his family is financially safe. P4 told stories about his involvement in humanitarian activities and P5 gave evidence that he is a good father. All what they mentioned above is socially valued characteristics and by highlighting what might be perceived as a good quality, stigmatized individuals manage to acknowledge themselves as a complex persona with many attributes other than the ones that are viewed as stigma (Goffman 1963: 157).

The participants were asked about their point of view on various aspects relating to their future and how they vision their daily lives. Goffman (1963: 113) argues for the idea that how stigmatized individuals vision their future daily lives and rounds can tell a lot about how they think of stigma and how they strategically through talk manage their stigmatized identities. While the participants emphasized already possessed socially valued roles like being a good father, pro-peace and war survivors, they also expressed how they lack other socially valued roles such as a job or a study place. In the following excerpt participants P6 and P2 present their views on societal engagement and stigma.

(25) I would like to be more active and have a full social life. After all *Heaven without Companions is Boring* (Arabic proverb), I have so many plans prior to that. I need to learn Finnish and try to get to university. Getting to know people is so much easier when you have something in common. Now I really struggle to open a conversation with someone without be perceived as suspicious. While when you are a student, you are treated differently. (P6)

(26) I really miss normal life routine. Waking up early, going to work, coming home and socializing at the weekends. I feel like a part of why we (refugees) are stigma is due to how chaotic our life is. I'm ashamed of going in the morning to the nearby shop because the only ones who go there during this time are either alcoholics or retired people. I need a routine in my life, I know it will help to have coworkers and companions. It is hard for Arab men to be unemployed. (P2)

Participants in the previous excerpt explain how the lack of certain socially valued roles can limit their possibilities of being involved more in the society. Participant P6 values social life and society yet he explains how important it is to first learn the local language in order to eliminate any linguistic barriers and obtain a study place at the university. He believes that having a common interest with a community such as a class will ease his way into society or at least a part of it. P6 notes that having the role of a student is more valuable to the society which might help in reducing stigma as well. Participant P2 admits that he needs a structure in his life and he elaborates on the idea that when he obtains a job it will be easier for him to organize his daily life to include socializing, but for now he is not in the position yet to be able to engage in the society.

Overall, during the interviews participants managed tactfully to talk about their stigmatized identities. The participant's attitude while talking about stigma in the future and communal engagement was leaning more towards positivity. All the six participants made effort to cast themselves as responsible, respectful and moral individuals. However, they emphasized the idea that being a contributor in the new society requires certain socially valued roles in order for them to be treated as themselves and as their stigma.

5 CONCLUSION

In this study, the issue of stigma was explored from the stigmatized individual's point of view. The focus was on how male Iraqi men seeking asylum in Finland manage their stigmatized identities. Six unstructured interviews were conducted with six Iraqi refugees between the age of 25 and 32. The collected data was coded with the software Nvivo and analyzed by using Anselm Strauss's Grounded theory.

The process started by seeking answers to the first research question, how do Iraqi refugees identify themselves in relation to stigma? The main purpose behind seeking whether participants acknowledged or identified their identities as stigmatized was fundamental to the core of this study. The targeted group is quite recent to the overall stigma research and no previous research proved that they perceived their identities as stigmatized (see section 1.2).

Results show that participants do acknowledge their state in the current society as marginalized, stigmatized and unaccepted. They expressed a sense of awareness to potential rejection. However, the participants didn't show themselves as stigmatic which is according to Goffman (1963: 155) "a sense of worthlessness or a picayune in which stigmatized individuals are ashamed of being ashamed", but as individuals who experience stigma due to circumstances they couldn't control such as negative stereotypes that became prevalent after moving to a new cultural context (see section 2.4 & 4.1).

The focus of the analysis was on what stigma management strategies participant described when they were talking about stigma and stigma related issues (research question 2). Participants managed skillfully to express themselves in relation to such a sensitive topic. Individual differences and the way the topic was touched upon presented many strategies that could potentially answer the question. However, the analysis process narrowed down the results into two strategies or categories.

The first was the ‘rite of passage’ discourse where stigma was discussed as a part of the transitional process participants are currently facing in their lives. The ambiguity and uncertainty in this stage contributes negatively to their sense of self. The second category was the ‘not ready yet’ discourse where the participants tactfully managed to talk about themselves and stigma, by steering the talk towards either the lack of socially valued roles such as jobs and study places or by highlighting what they possess as a socially valued attribute.

Understanding stigma in general is challenging and rarely simple. Therefore, it is important to search for answers where the issue itself matter the most. In this study stigmatized individuals expressed their own point of view. It is highly noticeable that the way stigmatized individuals conceptualize their identity is contradictory, confused and complicated. Exploring stigma through the eyes of the ones holding it, proposes an insight to what might help in easing the pain of the discredited individual.

Considering that the purpose of stigma research is to solve the issue of stigma, this study offers an idea of how stigmatized individuals talk about themselves and manage their identities tactfully. It also shows that even vulnerable groups such as refugees can employ successfully discursive tools to manage their stigmatized identities. As for the implications of this study, it proposes a gate where the issue might be tackled by professionals who work on solving problems related to stigma and its effects. The idea of participants considering stigma as a temporary problematic situation in liminal stage and that they identify themselves as holders of socially valued attributes suggest that they have hope in reducing the consequences of this issue.

It is crucial to acknowledge the limitation of this study which suggest the opportunity for future research within the same topic. One of the main limitations is that the analysis and the results are based on participants who live in Finland under certain unique circumstances which suggests that other Male Iraqis who reside within other cultural contexts might experience stigma and manage it differently. Another limitation is that the targeted age of the targeted group was chosen based on Finnish statistics and with other age groups the results might differ. Further future research could look deeper into issues related to integration and stigma or

searching stigma from the point of view of the surrounding society rather than the stigmatized individuals.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Interview questions and guidelines

The following questions were the total sum of what has been asked to all participants. Some needed more encouragement to open up and narrate their stories.

Stage 1: Who I am.

1. Can you tell me about yourself?
2. Can you tell me about your daily life routine?
3. What kind of activities do you like to do in your free time?
4. How do you describe yourself?
5. Can you tell me about your social life?

Stage 2: The journey

1. Can you tell me about your journey (no need to mention places or names)?
2. How did you feel about it?
3. How do you feel about it now?
4. Can you tell me about some of the challenges you faced?
5. Did you manage to accomplish what you planned for (reaching Finland)?

Stage 3: Where I am

1. Can you describe your daily life here in Finland?
2. Can you tell me about your social life now?
3. How do you find yourself in the new society?
4. Can you tell me about any challenges that you face in your daily life?
5. Can you describe yourself now?

Stage 4: The Future

1. How do you vision your future? Your daily life?
2. How do you feel about it?
3. Can you describe your vision about the future before the war started?

4. Could you tell me how do you feel about your plans now?
5. What do you consider as an obstacle in your future?

Stage 4: Stigma and Myself

1. Can you tell me more about that feeling of shame?
2. Can you mention a negative incident that happened to you and this feeling became prevalent?
3. What are your thoughts on this feeling?
4. Do you talk about it to your companions? Family?
5. Can you tell the reason behind this feeling?
6. What might help in relieving this feeling?
7. Can you tell me some of your thoughts on this feeling you are experiencing?

Appendix 2. Interview questions in Arabic

- المرحلة ١: من أنا.
١. هل يمكن أن تخبرني عن نفسك؟
 ٢. هل يمكن أن تخبرني عن روتين حياتك اليومي؟
 ٣. ما نوع الأنشطة التي تحب القيام بها في وقت فراغك؟
 ٤. كيف تصف نفسك؟
 ٥. هل يمكن أن تخبرني عن حياتك الاجتماعية؟
- المرحلة ٢: الرحلة
١. هل يمكن أن تخبرني عن رحلتك (لا داعي لذكر الأماكن أو الأسماء)؟
 ٢. كيف تشعر حيال ذلك؟
 ٣. كيف تشعر حيال ذلك الآن؟
 ٤. هل يمكن أن تخبرني عن بعض التحديات التي واجهتها؟
 ٥. هل تمكنت من تحقيق ما خططت له (للوصول إلى فنلندا)؟
- المرحلة ٣: أين أنا
١. هل يمكنك وصف حياتك اليومية هنا في فنلندا؟
 ٢. هل يمكن أن تخبرني عن حياتك الاجتماعية الآن؟
 ٣. كيف تجد نفسك في المجتمع الجديد؟
 ٤. هل يمكن أن تخبرني عن أي تحديات تواجهها في حياتك اليومية؟
 ٥. هل يمكنك وصف نفسك الآن؟
- المرحلة ٤: المستقبل
١. كيف ترى مستقبلك؟ حياتك اليومية؟
 ٢. كيف تشعر حيال ذلك؟
 ٣. هل يمكنك وصف رؤيتك للمستقبل قبل بدء الحرب؟
 ٤. هل يمكن أن تخبرني ما هو شعورك حيال خططك الآن؟
 ٥. ما الذي تعتبره عقبة في مستقبلك؟
- المرحلة ٥: وصمة العار ونفسي
١. هل يمكن أن تخبرني المزيد عن هذا الشعور بالخجل؟
 ٢. هل يمكنك أن تذكر حادثة سلبية وقعت لك وأصبح هذا الشعور سائداً؟
 ٣. ما هي أفكارك حول هذا الشعور؟
 ٤. هل تتحدث عن ذلك إلى أصحابك؟ أسرة؟
 ٥. هل يمكنك معرفة السبب وراء هذا الشعور؟
 ٦. ما قد يساعد في تخفيف هذا الشعور؟
 ٧. هل يمكن أن تخبرني عن بعض أفكارك حول هذا الشعور الذي تعاني منه؟

Appendix 3. Participants' handouts

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته
 إسمي ميس سويدان ، أنا طالبة ماجستير في جامعة فاسا. حالياً أنا في مرحلة التحضير لرسالة الماجستير. بعد بحث و تفكير عميق قررت أن
 احد أهم المواضيع التي يجب دراستها على نطاق أوسع هي المواضيع المتعلقة باللجئين. الهدف من رسالتي هي اعطاء صوت للأشخاص
 أنفسهم بدلا من دراسة القوانين المتعلقة بهم أو الإعلام. لكي احقق هدفي في هذه الدراسة احتاج الى ستة متطوعين . رجال بين عمر ال
 ١٨-٣٢ حاملين للجنسية العراقية. الموضوع المطروح يتعلق بالتهميش المجتمعي لهذه الفئة من اللاجئين. يمكن عقد المقابلة في اي مكان و
 زمان يناسب المتطوع. ليس من الضروري الاصرار عن الهوية الشخصية و لن تكون هناك اي اسمااء او بيانات شخصية محددة في النسخة
 النهائية للرسالة . يمكنك ان تسأل ما تريد عن الرسالة قبل الموافقة على المشاركة و إلغاء اشتراكك اذا احسست بعدم الارتياح. للتواصل الرجاء
 الاتصال على ##### او على رقم البريد الإلكتروني @@@@@@@@

Alsalam Alykum (Greetings in Arabic)

My name is Mays Sweidan, I'm currently studying at the University of Vaasa and preparing my Master's thesis. For a topic I've decided to focus on refugees and asylum seekers specifically the least studied group Iraqi refugees. However, instead of studying media or integration rules I've decided to actually ask people and use their words as the soul of my research. The main focus in my study will be in exploring feelings related to marginalization in the society–The closest translation from the Arabic word-. The targeted group is Iraqi men between the ages of 18-32. The interview can be arranged based on the participants' convenience including the place and time. No detailed personal information are needed and if you choose to share any, they won't be included in the final version of the study. If you fall under the previously mentioned category and you are interested please contact the following number ##### or via Email @@@@@@@@. Don't hesitate to ask any questions before you agree to take part of this study. If you decide to proceed and at any point you feel uncomfortable you can cancel your participation and all the collected data will be handed back to you at the spot.

Thank you

Mays Sweidan

Appendix 4. Quotations in Arabic

(1) اعتدت أن أستيقظ أفكر كيف يبدو يومي. العمل وجميع الأشياء المتعلقة بالعائلة. أما الآن عندما استيقظ أفكر في أشياء جديدة تماما. أين من المفترض أن أذهب؟ اليوم ، على سبيل المثال ، كنت أفكر لساعات أثناء إحساء قهوتي ، هل من الممكن لي حقاً أن أشارك في جلسة الرياضة المجانية التي يقدمها النادي المحلي أم لا. هل يمكنني فقط الظهور؟ ماذا لو لم يكن من المفترض أن يكون لأشخاص مثلي؟ ماذا لو شعر الجميع بعدم الارتياح بسبب وجودي؟ ماذا لو استمتعت؟ هل هو جيد بالنسبة لي إظهار ذلك؟

(2) في دورة اللغة الفنلندية ، أجلس إلى جوار مهندس من البرتغال. لقد بدأ للتو عمله الخاص هنا. بعد دروس قليلة ، بدأنا نتحدث أكثر. أنا أحترمه هو متواضع جدا ، وقال لي إنه معجب بمعلوماتي الكثيرة عن محركات السفن. في أحد الأيام دعاني إلى حفل افتتاح مكتبه ، اعتذرت وأخبرته أنني يجب أن أكون في مكان آخر في ذلك اليوم ... لم يكن لدي أي مكان لأكون فيه ذلك اليوم! كان هذا أول شيء يتبادر إلى ذهني ، لقد ذهبت مرة إلى حفلة عيد الميلاد وكنت أشبه بالظل. لم يكن أحد مهتماً بالتحدث معي. ربما لأنهم اعتقدوا أنني كنت متسللاً. تدمت على إجابتي الفورية رغم أنني أردت حقاً أن أسأل من الذي سيأتي إلى هذا الحفل ، كنت أشعر بالفضول لمعرفة ما إذا كان من الممكن بالنسبة لي أن أكون في وضع جيد ، لكنني اعتقدت أنه من الأفضل أن لا أسأل هذا السؤال الغير مهذب.

(3) لقد قمت بتحديث ملفي الشخصي على الفيسبوك مرات عديدة. اعتدت على الكثير من الأقوال العربية في ملف التعريف الخاص بي. كنت أخشى أن يساء فهمها إذا ترجمت. من الصعب معرفة كيفية فهم الناس لها. آخر شيء أحججه الآن هو وصفي بأنني شخص متدين. لأكون صادقاً ، أنا لا أعرف حتى ماذا يعني ذلك. يتم استخدام هذه الجملة كمجاملة في العالم العربي. الجميع يشعر بالأمان مع شخص يخاف الله. ولكن هنا هو ترهيب ومثير للاشمئزاز. أتجذب المناقشات النقدية. إنها تؤدي دائماً إلى أسئلة وأحياناً لا أعرف كيفية الإجابة عنها بشكل صحيح. حتى لو قلت لا أعرف. جهلي سيأخذ أيضاً بشكل سلبي. من الأفضل عدم المشاركة كثيراً في الفيسبوك أو الآراء مع الأشخاص. توقفت عن التفكير في الأمر ، ربما من الأفضل ألا يكون لديك أي شيء. يسبب الصداق.

(4) في الواقع ، لم أتمكن بعد من تحقيق روتين في حياتي ، لذلك يمكنني وصف أي وقت كـ "وقت فراغ". ومع ذلك ، أنا أحب الأنشطة البدنية أحياناً أذهب إلى ملعب كرة القدم بالقرب من مكاننا القديم في المخيم فمن الأسهل التواصل ، والعثور على أشخاص للعب معهم وتشكيل فريق. أحب الجلوس في المقاهي أيضاً ، لكن هناك بعض الأماكن التي أذهب إليها. أجد أنه من السهل الاسترخاء في الأماكن التي من المتوقع أن تكون نحن فيها (اللاجئين).

(5) عندما جلثت من هلسنكي إلى هنا ، كان لدي كيس بلاستيكي كبير أستعمله كحقيبة. أنا لا أعرف أي أحد مهتم حتى بلمسها ولكني كنت قلق أن أفقدها. جلست ووضعت الحقيبة في حضني. كانت السيدة الجالسة أمامي تحرق. اعتقدت أنه ربما كان ذلك لأنني ابدو متعب ، لكنها بدت خائفة قليلاً. عبرت مكانها إلى مقعد آخر. كان عليها أن تعود إلى مكانها السابق في المحطة التالية. كنت قلقاً عندما قالت شيئاً بصوت عالي جداً أثناء الإشارة إلى حقيبتى. قالت بالإنجليزية ماذا تختبئ تحت تلك الحقيبة؟ قلت: ماذا ، أخبرني الحارس بعد ذلك أنني يجب أن أضعها في الطابق السفلي في صندوق الأمتعة. كانت السيدة لا تزال غير سعيدة وطالبت عدة مرات بتغيير مقعدها. جلست بعدها على الدرج لبقية الرحلة. كنت متعباً حقاً لم أستطع الإستماع لشكواها أكثر من ذلك.

(6) أسأل الله ان ترقد روحه بسلام. اعتاد والدي أن يذهب كل يوم جمعة إلى سوق المزارعين ليشتري القطن والبقالة لنا. اعتاد الجلوس على أكياس القطن ووضع البقالة في حضنه والأخره إلى جواره. كان دائماً يقول أن الطماطم يجب ألا تلمس الأرض مرة أخرى.

(7) عندما تحدثت هذه الحالة ، أشعر بالغضب لأنني لا أفهم السبب. المشكلة هي أنني لا أعرف ما هي الأشياء التي قد تؤدي إلى مثل هذه المعاملة. أردت فقط أن أحمل حقيبتى ، ربما بعد ذلك لا يمكنني ارتداء اللون الأصفر يوم الأربعاء أو أي شيء من هذا القبيل.

(8) تأتي مع الحزمة على ما أظن ، لا بد لي من الاستمرار في البحث عن إجابات. أنا لست ذلك الشاب ، التغيير ليس بهذه السهولة بعد الآن. أشعر أنني بحاجة إلى تغيير شيء ما لإيقاف هذه المعاملة من الحدوث ولكن لأكون صادقاً معك ، فأنا لست متأكدًا مما قد ينجح.

(9) لا شيء يحدث في يوم من الأيام ، والبعض الآخر وجدت صعوبة في التعامل مع كل شيء. أجد صندوق بريدي مليئاً بالرسائل والحياة تصبح مليئة بالحركة. أنا الآن أنتظر ، ولا أعرف ما يمكن توقعه. كل يوم أخطئ خطأ جديدة ولا شيء يحدث ... أعتقد أن أفضل طريقة لوصفها هي أنني لست مطلقاً و لست منفصلاً (مثل العربي يستخدم لوصف المرحلة التي تكون فيها الظروف غير مؤكدة مع وجود الشعور أنه مؤقت).

(10) لا أعرف ، ربما لأنني لا أختزم هنا.

(11) لست أنا فقط ، كل رجل أعرفه في وضعي يعاني من نفس المعاملة.

(12) لا أستطيع التحكم في كيفية تفكير الناس أو في كيفية معاملتهم لي ، فأنا عضو جديد هنا.

(13) الأخبار والأفلام والهجمات الإرهابية

(14) للأسف ، لا حول لي ولا قوة. ليست فقط الأوطان تضيق في الحرب أعتقد. لم أعد ابن أبي علي. لم أعد ابن أبي (تعبير عربي يستخدم للتعبير عن المشاعر المتعلقة بالعزلة) لدي ثلاثة أخوة وهم جميعاً في دول مختلفة يطلبون اللجوء. لا أتذكر من أخبرني أن فنلندا ستكون الأسرع في اتخاذ قرارات اللجوء ويمكننا جميعاً أن نلتقي مجدداً [...] أتمنى فقط أن يكون لدي موعد معين حتى تنتهي العملية ، يجب أن أنتظر فقط.

(15) ربما يجب عليكي أن تطرحي هذا السؤال على من يوصونني ، وأنا أعلم خلال المحاكمات أنك تطلب من المتهم أن يتطلى من دوافعه وليس المتهم. لدي شعور قوي بأنك ستحصل على العديد من الإجابات. ذلك يعتمد على من تسأل بالطبع. إذا كانوا من Perisuomalainen - True Finns ، وهو حزب سياسي فنلندي - سوف يعطونك قائمة مليئة بالأشياء التي لم تسمع بها من قبل. عندما سألتني شخص من هذا الحزب عن مكان في العراق يزعم أنه يوجد به بحيرة حيث يقدم الناس التضحيات إلى الله كل عام. حسناً ، هذا المكان غير موجود. حتى أنني طلبت من صديقي الذي عاش حياته كلها هناك وأكد أنه غير موجود. أمر مضحك حقاً.

(16) لا أستطيع التحكم في ردود أفعال الآخرين. ليس لدي سوى عدد قليل من الأصدقاء ، لا بل أقرب الى معارف من أن يكونوا اصدقاء. إذا استطعت اكتساب ثقتهم ، فربما يتحدثون عني بطريقة جيدة وسأبني سمعة جيدة ، ومن ثم لن يكون أكثر شيء سأفكر فيه عندما أذهب إلى مكان جديد.

(17) امتلاك الفرصة لنفسى. إذا كان بإمكانى التحدث بالفنلندية ، لدي وظيفة و أستطيع الإعتماد بعائلتي. بالطبع لن تكون المعاملة هي نفسها. يمكنني بعد ذلك التخيير عن نفسى بسهولة وأن أكون عضواً نشطاً في هذا المجتمع.

(18) كان لدي منزل ووظيفة وعائلة. اعتدت أن أستيقظ لضوضاء العائلة ، ثم استيقظنا جميعاً على طلقات نارية. لقد فقدنا كل شيء بما في ذلك أن نكون سوياً. لا أعتقد أنه سيزداد سوءاً من هنا. يجب أن أركز وأخذ ما أستطيع الحصول عليه. لا شيء يبقى ، لكن وجه الله.

(19) لدي بعض الأشياء التي تشعرني بالعار مثل ترك عائلتي ، لكنني أعرف أننا سوف نعود معا في نهاية المطاف. هذا شيء أنا متأكد من أنني سوف أكمله. وفي الوقت نفسه ، فإن محاولة تنظيم حياتي ستساعدني في اكتساب بعض الاحترام والبقاء عاقلاً.

(20) الناس يرونني كتهديد. في التلفزيون ، لا ترى سوى رجال عراقيين يحملون السلاح والنساء وحدهم في ظروف صعبة على الحدود. رجال فارين من الحرب. لا يمكنني تغيير الطريقة التي يراي بها الناس ، سأكون مرتبطاً دائماً بالحرب مع أنني اخترت ألا أكون جزءاً منها.

(21) كيف تعرف عن نفسك للآخرين. تقول أنا فلان من عثان (تعبير يعني شخص ما من مكان ما ، عامية عربية شائعة) وأنا أفعل هذا من أجل لقمة العيش. أفعل نفس الشيء ، لكنني أخرجت من قول ذلك في زمن الماضي ، ليعتقد الناس أنني عبرت مسيرتي المهنية. وإذا سألوا ماذا تفعل الآن؟ أين تعمل؟ لا اعرف.

(22) أساعد الصليب الأحمر في توزيع الطعام على المحتاجين عند الحاجة. أشعر أنني أفعل شيئاً.

(23) لا أعرف كم يبلغ عمر أطفالي عندما ألتقي بهم أخيراً ، لكنني جمعت على مر الزمن بعض الألعاب الجيدة التي قد تعجبهم.

(24) على الرغم من أنني فقدت كل شيء ما زلت رجلاً مجتهداً. لم أكن أرعب في الزواج حتى اشتريت شفتي الخاصة.

(25) أود أن أكون أكثر نشاطاً وأن يكون لي حياة اجتماعية كاملة. يقولون بأن الجنة بدون الصحبة مملة (المثل العربي) ، لدي الكثير من الخطط قبل ذلك. أحتاج لتعلم الفنلندية ومحاولة الوصول إلى الجامعة. سيصبح التعرف على الأشخاص أسهل بكثير عندما يكون لديك شيء مشترك معهم. الآن أنا أناضل حقاً لفتح محادثة مع شخص ما دون أن ينظر إلي على أنني رجل مريب. عندما تكون طالباً ، يتم التعامل معك بشكل مختلف.

(26) أفقد حقاً لروتين الحياة العادية. الاستيقاظ مبكراً ، الذهاب إلى العمل ، العودة إلى المنزل والتواصل الاجتماعي في عطلات نهاية الأسبوع. أشعر بأن أحد أسباب الشعور بالعار (اللاجئين) هو مدى فوضى حياتنا. أشعر بالخجل من الذهاب في الصباح إلى المتجر القريب لأن الوحيديين الذين يذهبون إلى هناك خلال هذه الفترة هم إما المدمنين على الكحول أو المتقاعدین. أنا بحاجة إلى روتين في حياتي ، وأنا أعلم أنه سيساعد في الحصول على زملاء عمل وأصحاب. من الصعب على الرجل العربي أن يكون عاطل عن العمل.

