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## Integrating Somalis in Jutland, Denmark: Efforts and Obstacles

### Introduction

More than ten years have passed since the first large group of Somali refugees arrived in this part of Scandinavia, namely Denmark. With its homogeneous culture and population, this country had in the past few or no significant historical, political and traditional links with the Horn of Africa, nor with Somalia in particular.

This has created a number of difficulties facing the two peoples regarding integration, ethnicity and mutual understanding. Despite their troubles and conflicts back home, Somalis are also a homogeneous people in respect of culture, ethnicity and religion.

The modern and advanced Danish society is mainly characterised by a high degree of self-reliance and individualism, whereas the Somalis with their less developed pastoral-agricultural tradition embody elements of a higher degree of responsibility and collectivism.

This has created, among other things, in particularly complex periods, an atmosphere of misunderstanding and a rush to judgement by both societies, that has on some occasions developed into deviations, shifting the focus from the real issue that matters most, 'integration'.

Somalia is a very different country from Denmark, and so are the inhabitants of the two respective countries. Already several decades ago, some Somalis had the opportunity to come and visit the Scandinavian countries, such as Denmark. Most of these were men of the sea, *bad maaxiin*, working and travelling with their vessels around the world. The experiences they had and what they encountered in this country were obviously restricted to the areas around the port, downtown Copenhagen and certain nightclubs.

In recent years, the situation has changed dramatically. Somalis, not only in higher numbers but with quite different purposes and backgrounds, arrived onto the shores of this small Scandinavian country. This time, the Somalis didn't come just for stopovers, or sightseeing for that matter, but they were people in urgent need of support and guidance. In other words, Somalis trusted their future destiny to the authorities in this country, as they were in search of protection and security.

Following the unexpected influx of those higher numbers of Somali civil war refugees, Denmark, with its undisputed record of humanitarian effort and universal welfare system, immediately provided and transferred enormous resources to accommodate the Somalis who in turn were overwhelmed by the openheartedness of the Danish people and the help they received.

It is, however, a fact that the situation changed, and the Somalis discovered some facts about the society and the country of which they had not been aware before. For instance, the joy and the happiness one had encountered during the early stages of residence were replaced by moments of tiredness, worry and anxiety. Right after the arrival of the Somalis into the country, their immediate concerns were to settle, get a residence permit and embark on a new life. Several months and sometimes years later, some of them show signs of disappointment and stress. It is difficult - and beyond the range of this paper - to explain in depth what really causes this disappointment, but there are definitely a number of factors that contribute to this development.

Despite the huge gap of socio-cultural differences between the two populations, one could argue that there is room for integration of the Somali refugees in Jutland, Denmark. Not to mention that this country has had an advanced and stable democracy where emphasis lies on the possibilities of individual freedom and human rights, which the Somalis have the chance to learn and benefit from.

It is the purpose of this paper to highlight and analyse the difficulties confronted and developments achieved so far by the Somali refugees in Jutland in their continuous attempt to resettle and establish a proper and convenient environment for themselves and their families affected by the civil war. In addition to that, the question of whether the Somali refugees in Jutland have the opportunity to and can be part of this community will be addressed. The details and the discussion presented in this paper are based on the conclusions derived from interviews with about thirty Somalis from Aarhus, Fredericia and other cities in Jutland, Denmark. Furthermore, comments from teachers and official employees who are involved in the integration process are included. There is also a reason why the paper is particularly emphasising Jutland rather than Sjælland-Copenhagen. It has mainly to do with the fact that Jutland is the largest and most productive part of Denmark. But the central administration, international representatives and business headquarters are located in Copenhagen. That promotes Denmark's capital to become a rather cosmopolitan and international area, where for foreigners, and Somalis, unlike in Jutland, it is much easier to deal with day to day difficulties. In short, it could be assumed that the Somalis in Jutland have to make more sacrifices than their fellow countrymen in Copenhagen in, for instance, establishing contacts with the Danish.

### Somalis and the concept of integration

Somalis are generally a collectivist society, which is to say they have a social and cultural structure that has little or virtually no room for purely individual manoeuvring. For instance, the ordinary Somali individual is a member of a group, a clan, in a kinship-based society. Any individual member of this community sees and evaluates its surroundings in accordance with that socio-structure (JP 20.7.1998).

Noting Emile Durkheim's famous distinction of two main types of human association (Durkheim 1984:31), unlike the Danish who are basically individual oriented and practice an advanced, differentiated form of organic solidarity relationships, the Somalis could be described to have a holistic, community and largely mechanical oriented society, where religion, emotions and traditions play a significant role in structuring and constructing decisive community matters and ordinary activities. The Somalis, specifically those who have grown up in smaller towns under extensive influence of the nomadic culture have different understandings of how life and relationships should be than the Danish. For example, when the Danish might focus on a big house, prestige, high paid job, success and material ownership in this world, the Somalis might prioritise something quite different, emotion, dignity and internal value possessions (JP 20.7.1998).

Still, there are a variety of reasons to assume the Somalis in Jutland have the need, the motives and the opportunity to integrate into the Danish society. For one thing, their nomadic background provides many of them with the capacity for adjustment, remaining flexible about for instance moving from one place to another, with the reconversion ability that lies deep in the nomadic people.

Almost all Somalis are also devoted Muslims. Although some of them may not practice fully the religious duties, their daily activities, concerns and viewpoints are largely shaped and determined by the Islamic faith. Here it is, on the other hand, important to underline that the number of Somalis who have substantial knowledge of the Islamic religion are limited. On

occasions, the majority even confuses the Islamic faith with the Somali and Arabic traditions respectively.

According to the holy Koran, the individual Islamic believer is strongly advised and instructed to respect and help his or her neighbours in periods of need and eventually integrate, learn and actively join the positive and social activities that take place in the areas and surroundings where one lives. Similarly, Christianity and other main religions emphasise the same principles, where concepts of respect and mutual positive relationships between humans are stressed.

The great European philosopher and thinker Emmanuel Kant argued for the creation of a cosmopolitan society in an effort to build a stable peace where respect and hospitality between humans from different places and cultures are the central point (Baylis and Smith 1997:150). Recently, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the well known American sociologist Talcot Parsons, stressed the need for a collective social attitude and coherence based on consensus and a common goal for the parties involved, while at the same time allowing a certain measure of independence and self-determination for the subsystems of which the main system is constructed (Andersen and Kaspersen 1996:246). Though it would sound ridiculous yet to state that the Somalis form a subsystem of the Danish society structure, it is possible to indicate that the integration of such large and different groups as the Somalis - and other foreigners - is vital and probably of high priority for the long term prosperity and stability of this small nation.

### Nomadic people on the move

As some empirical findings and historical facts illustrate, apart from the inhabitants who reside in the agriculturally fertile areas between the two rivers of Southern Somalia, Somalis in general are a nomadic society. Through numerous generations, they gained their livelihood in harsh and occasionally life threatening conditions. Nomadic people have to move from one place to another in search of better grazing and watering for their livestock and families. Through this process, an interaction and integration phenomenon emerge and it may eventually lead to settlement where the integrated nomads decide to remain. Conversely, this produces a new socio-structural order.

On the basis of the well-known Somali traditional and recent historical events, one could argue that the throughout history, there were nomadic migrations within and outside Somalia. For example, Somalis travelled to and settled in several places in East Africa and in many countries of the Arabian Peninsula, mainly in search of peace and a better life for themselves and their families. Evidence also shows that those who emigrated to, for example, Yemen and the Middle East initially came there following the conflict between the British colonial empire and the Somali freedom fighters, the 'Darwish', during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to avoid the fighting, but also to pursue commercial activities. Similarly, many Somalis crossed the border to Kenya and headed to East, Central and Southern Africa in search of better, stable life conditions. Contemporary Somalis who are residing now in these countries confirm that several generations of Somalis have remained there, are well adapted and almost assimilated into the respective traditions and cultures. Though still culturally and ethnically closely connected and well aware of their people and country of origin, these Somalis succeeded in transforming their lives and creating for themselves an environment and a country which they could call home. It is, however, possible to argue that these countries provided opportunities for the Somalis in cultures and traditions not so foreign and remote as the Danish.

With this background in mind, one can conclude that the Somali refugees and immigrants who came to Denmark were driven by ruthlessness and difficulties in their home country. They came to Denmark basically to find secure conditions for themselves and their families.

Obviously, there are striking similarities between them and their fellow countrymen who centuries ago migrated East Africa and the Arab countries.

All these facts support the idea that the Somalis have the means, the willingness and the opportunities in engaging in the process of integration.

### Efforts by the Danish

When talking about the efforts and management of the refugees, the Somalis are not particularly different from the others. That means there is nothing special that the Danish authorities undertake to cope with the difficulties the Somalis face or present (an official of the Aarhus Municipality). There are well known standard rehabilitation programs to deal with housing, education, employment, and so on, designed to keep and preserve the wellbeing of all new arrivals in this country. For instance, in a large provincial town such as Aarhus - a town where a high number of Somalis reside - has a special policy for refugees and immigrants in an effort to promote integration possibilities. An ambitious goal where refugees and immigrants are expected to become self-helping in participating in community life, focus on four main areas: employment, attitude, language, and residence or housing (RIM 1996:3).

First, employment: integration responsibility has recently moved from the management and supervision of the Danish Refugee Council to the municipality which is already engaged in the process of creating jobs in both the public and private sectors. A widely accepted opinion is that having jobs will not only provide a healthy and respectable way of life but it will also substantiate the possibility for the refugee to be part of many other social activities (Municipality Report 1997:3).

Second, attitude: acceptance from the Danish has to be gained in the struggle of becoming part of this society. Powerful organisations such as LO (employees' union), DA (employers' union) and other companies are actively engaged in a campaign to get foreigners accommodated and to influence the attitudes of the Danish people to accept foreigners (Municipality Report 1997:4).

Third, language: teachers, well-trained staff and a lot of resources are used to get all refugees, including the Somalis, to learn the language as soon as possible. New courses and reception classes are created and enhanced so that all groups, young, aged and disabled, all are satisfied (Municipality Report 1997:4).

Forth, residence: efforts are made in the area of housing, where there were, in recent years, trouble concerning the concentration of large groups of unemployed refugees, including Somalis, in particular areas of the larger towns in Jutland and some other parts of the country. This had led to social deprivations and criminal activities where some ordinary citizens started worrying about the development and decided to move to calmer areas of these towns. In order to prevent foreigners from gathering in certain particular areas of the town, municipalities like Aarhus adopted a process of properly allocating the refugees to different areas and building blocks. Several solution models have been applied to attract also ordinary Danish to settle in these areas (Municipality Report 1997:5).

### Efforts especially directed at some Somalis

Most of these general efforts in which the Danish have invested are of standard assistance, to which the Somalis share access with other foreigners who come here. But there are also certain specific projects recently that were directed towards the Somalis, especially in the aftermath of extensive media coverage and political debates dealing with the challenges that came with the arrival of Somali refugees. These debates, however, related exclusively to internal Danish politics and had absolutely nothing to do with the refugee problems (Ina Pedersen, Journalist Information). Through these discussions and debates, politicians and

social workers realised and came to terms with the fact that there was an obvious need for action to help those of the Somalis - especially in Aarhus - who had serious difficulties in understanding Danish society.

On 18 November 1997, the central government showed interest, the Social Minister providing 8 M DKR for a project designed to help the Somalis who might need integration processing initiatives (notes from the Social Director of Aarhus Municipality). This project is unique in that it is the first of its kind to help particularly Somalis, who were assumed to be leading an isolated life. The objective of this project was to build a centre - now completed and fully functioning - where some of the unaccompanied children and lonely women who need support could come and spend their free time. According to the coordinator of this institution, Ingeborg - an anthropologist - there are both positive and negative sides involved in the application of this type of strategy of integrating the Somalis who are most in need. She states that there is obviously a dilemma in this process.

'One could argue', she stresses, 'that if one really intended to integrate Somalis, the point is that they are not supposed to be here in social activities isolated from the surrounding Danish society. But in this particular situation we are forced to compromise, because we are dealing with young Somalis and lonely women who are not yet able to communicate with and be part of ordinary Danish life. Therefore we have this centre in the hope of providing them with information and assisting them with the moral and technical support in preparation for a genuine integration among the Danish citizens', she concludes.

According to the Somali voluntary employees - Osman Naas and others - who are connected to the centre, the institution has contributed to a positive development, not only in terms of criminal prevention effects but also in terms of upgrading especially vulnerable Somalis, youth and women, and encouraging them to really learn and respect the norms and the livelihood of this country.

Despite this, there are problems related to the centre. Originally it was intended that the Somalis themselves should manage the day to day activities of the institution, but because of internal Somali disagreements, the municipality had no choice but to retain the coordination task. And this is one of the many obstacles which the Somalis confront in Aarhus: their internal problems prevent them from moving forward and making substantial progress.

Another person, a Danish teacher and consultant, Lars Hansen, who lives in Fredericia, Jutland, and is involved in the schooling process of refugee and other young foreigners, stresses the complex intertwining problems that face for instance the refugees from Somalia. He differentiates two main points.

The first is the adaptation and integration problems that the refugees encounter. Among these, cultural difficulties and learning and communicating in the language of the country where they arrived. Another problem, much more serious, is the need of complete transformation required from the individual refugee. Factors which in normal circumstances embody a certain pride, such as the previous social status, have to be abandoned, and the refugee must face the reality of being dependent and in need. These could be described as external factors, dealing with the relationship between the refugee and the surrounding society.

The second point, which is primarily presupposed by the first, concerns the internal disintegration that may touch the refugee family. This has much more important consequences for the members of the whole family. Experiences such as separation, divorce, abuse, and last but not least, damaging psychological impacts are some factors.

According to Lars Hansen, the combination of these two main points contributes to the general destabilisation of the process of integration. For instance, discontinuation or re-schooling of Somali refugee children, in cases where some Somalis are extremely mobile in

settling and resettling in different parts of Jutland - as a result of their confusion they try to seek comfort in moving to a town where they know some relatives or some Somali friends.

### Efforts by the Somalis

If an integration process is to succeed, the people involved have to take greater responsibility. Which is to say that the Somalis themselves have to be offensive, rather than defensive, in their integration promoting activities. This is exactly what most of them are very reoccupied with. A survey recently published in the publication *Stiftstidende* shows that the number of Somalis who just stay at home and do nothing is very low, and in fact lower than that of the Turks and some Arab nationalities. That proves the energy which the Somalis possess in trying to do something themselves rather than sitting back and receiving welfare assistance. As for the organisational aspect, though confronting numerous hindrances, the Somalis are organising themselves, and there are today over 12 associations in a town like Aarhus.

'If I should characterise the Somalis in Aarhus, I would say that they are very good in starting an association in occasionally the shortest possible time', comments an official from the municipality. Two particular associations are worth mentioning. These are The Association of Somali Families, and The Banadir Youth and Sports Association.

The first, although focusing mainly on religious and cultural activities, has in its fourth consecutive year succeeded in managing and solving a wide variety of issues that faced the Somali community in Aarhus. These issues ranged from family problems, crime prevention, support for education and sports activities. The association is working closely with local authorities and offers guidance in the integration system to those who need it. The second, through sports and other activities, made possible a higher degree of integration with the Danish and achieved moral upgrading among the Somali youth. Furthermore, an academic and student organisation/association is under preparation and expected to emerge in the last part of this year, 1998. This organisation will especially deal with education and consulting matters. So it seems that the Somalis are indeed, on their part, working hard to be visible and active in the integration process.

### Differentiating the Somalis

It is the reality that the three main obstacles that any refugee coming to Denmark is confronted with are in the areas of language, education and professional skills, in addition to generally coping with the complexities that come along with Danish tolerance and attitude. Inspired by these three main challenges, one could construct a typology for the Somali refugees in Jutland. In order to integrate into a fundamentally different society, a strange country and environment, the majority of the Somalis are required and obliged to try to overcome first adaptation, then integration, and finally, if all that succeeds, ultimate acceptance by the surrounding Danish society.

The above mentioned typology could be carried further and be applied to three main groups of the Somali refugees. Some observers of the Somali refugees in Jutland, and in Denmark generally, are often inclined to generalise the Somalis and speak of them as a single component. It is, however, possible to differentiate Somalis into first: an educated group which consists of individuals who possess a certain higher level of education; second: a less educated group consisting of young Somalis with technical or the equivalent of secondary school education; finally: an uneducated group which includes people of various ages and backgrounds but with little or no formal education.

It is important to emphasise that this type of categorisation could not be taken as an ultimate one. One could for example include other social criteria, but for reasons of simplicity, we constrain ourselves here to analysing the level of education, for education and professional

possessions are vital concepts as far as the process of integration into the Danish society is concerned. The Danish themselves set priority and pay enormous attention to the degree of education when studying the personality of their own citizens. In fact, it is a popular saying and a frequently stressed phenomenon that education is one of the few resources of which this small country can be proud and with which they can compete internationally. Therefore the assumption is that if one expects to be part of a society which values highly and appreciates education, one has to work hard at getting one. In other words, the level of education determines the position one gets in the society.

Dealing with adaptation, the first group defined above tackles this challenge with a certain enthusiasm. In the process of adaptation, one is obliged to learn the language, the culture and the society. The Danish refugee authorities prepared the so-called '18 months of integration' programme, intended to provide an opportunity for refugees to acquire a basis for understanding and an ability to communicate with the Danish society.

The second group, too, has no substantial difficulty in going through this adaptation stage. Though less enthusiastic and determined than the first group, they somehow manage to proceed forward.

The third group, with their fragile or almost non-existing educational background, confront enormous difficulties and are therefore struggling hard already during this introductory adaptation period. Unfortunately, this leads to a sense of disappointment and miscalculation among this vulnerable group of the Somali refugees.

On the issue of integration, which signifies one's ability of improving one's educational level and professional skills, the Somali refugees in Jutland find themselves in a situation of uncertainty of what to do and what to undertake in a complex modern society like the Danish, where education and professional functionalism are decisive and integrated phenomena of the social structure.

If we consider the first group, they are not in this respect put under serious pressure. Although it takes a lot of effort from this group to enhance their educational and professional skills, they eventually succeed in overcoming the integration challenges. The second and quite less educated group occasionally faces a sense of confusion as far as the issue of integration is concerned. For instance, most of them have problems in determining or structuring their future plans and goals. With the lack of comprehensive and obvious guidance and information from the Somali elders and intellectuals, the young and ambitious people of this group, because of their indecisiveness about their future orientation, often find themselves in a deadlock situation.

The only group among the Somali refugees who could be characterised as having managed to succeed in the process of adaptation and integration is the first group as defined above. But even the people in this group have systematically been confronted with the inevitable obstacles of acceptance - acceptance being the stage where one is fully integrated and received positively by the surrounding Danish society, getting jobs, etc. A lot of well informed, integrated and educated Somalis have continuous troubles, despite their satisfactory achievements in a number of social aspects and in bridging the gap between them and the Danish community.

The first group then got so far, while the second group has given up or is still in the integration period, and finally the last group, unfortunately, realises the lack of accomplishment in the area of acceptance. This acceptance, it seems, demands a profound transformation of the Danish society in the area of attitude and mentality. According to the interviews conducted, as a consequence of the disappointment met by this third group, some of them are seriously considering taking drastic actions, such as emigrating to other countries, while some are experiencing deep psychological problems.

Figure 1. Measuring the level of accomplishment in regard to education and profession.

|               | Adaptation | Partially integrated | Fully integrated | Partially accepted | Fully accepted |
|---------------|------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Educated      | Managed    | Managed              | Managed          | Managed            | Uncertain      |
| Less educated | Managed    | Managed              | Uncertain        | Uncertain          | Uncertain      |
| Uneducated    | Struggling | Struggling           | Uncertain        | Uncertain          | Uncertain      |

**Obstacles**

The aforementioned typology of adaptation, integration and acceptance could only be understood in the light of a deep analysis of attitude and tolerance. Tolerance by both the Danish and the Somalis is vital if progress in these aspects is to be ensured.

The Somalis are an ethnic group in this country which according to several main criteria is different from the Danish and other Europeans. They are of a different race, religion, culture and language. This created social conflicts between the Somalis and the Danish, which made some politicians and the media raise the issue of tolerance and integration and even politicise it to an extreme level. In talking of social cleavage regarding ethnic minorities, it is important to note three main points (Lipset 1970); first: socio-cultural difference where the minority group, here the Somalis, come mainly from less economically developed societies; secondly: a widespread formation of collective association among a group like the Somalis, who gather and create cultural borders in relation with the Danish; and thirdly and finally: this preliminary association that in the end develops into an organisational expression and political and social groupings.

Explaining the motives and the reasons behind the tension and the intolerance oriented towards the Somalis in Denmark, several points can be raised. We will refer here to Lisa Togeby, an expert in ethnic issues. First, the competition theory, where the weakest groups of the native population feel pressured because of the arrival of more refugees who in their views overcrowd the welfare system and make the list of transfer recipients much longer. It is especially the groups of elderly and unemployed who feel most threatened and thereby become more intolerant (Togeby 1997). A comprehensive survey conducted in Denmark also showed that people in larger cities are more tolerant towards foreigners than people from the smaller localities, and that people who support leftist political parties are more tolerant than conservatives (Togeby 1997). Almost all Somalis are welfare recipients, and thereby their position and the trouble they face daily confirm the competition theory showing them to be vulnerable to intolerant attitudes.

Figure 2. Indication of how the relationship between foreigners, here the Somalis, and the Danish are shaped and mediated by the media and the political machine, both of which were negatively concentrated on the Somalis in 1997.

|  |                   |                             |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Objective and other differences between the Somalis and the Danish | → Discourse       | → Political conflict        |
|  | Media             | Negative/positive attitudes |
|  | Political parties | Intolerance/tolerance       |
|  | Social groups     |                             |

Obviously, regarding the formation of the relationship between foreigners and the Danish, in this case the Somalis and the Danish, the media and the political parties perform a decisive role in shaping ideas and attitudes. In periods of media focus - particularly on negative issues - and political party agitation, the level of tolerance towards foreigners falls and the negative

attitude rises, and conversely, in periods of silence, there is tolerance and a positive attitude (Togeby 1997).

As far as the life process of the Somalis now living as refugees in Jutland, Denmark, is concerned, three significant periods are important to mention. The first is the negative period which represents the first stage or the root of the crisis. It is the period characterised by brutal and disastrous civil war that forces the individual first to concentrate purely on the real meaning of the concept of survival. In other words, it is a time dominated by uncertainty and anxiety. This period ends when the person concerned arrives in Denmark. The second and the most promising period is the one of the introduction, reception and resettlement process in Denmark. It is in this second period that the individual refugee receives comprehensive assistance in a variety of areas, such as accommodation, health care, education, access to a secure and stable life. The Somali refugee who has fresh experience of disaster and a lack of a peaceful environment, in his/her mind immediately looks back to the recent catastrophic developments in his homeland and compares that to the situation in Denmark, and thereby feels the euphoria of being there. Following the immediate programmes provided and designed for further integration, the Somalis quickly adapt and understand more underlying social phenomena and aspects of the country where they reside, and that makes them raise their hopes and construct new demands. Those who are integrated and in certain aspects also those who are not behave rather ambitiously in looking to the future.

The third period is when the experiences of civil war and survival have slowly faded away. This is a period of negative developments. For a large part of Somalis, especially those who are less educated or uneducated, the disappointment created by the lack of accomplishment and fulfilment is obvious. For the well informed and well integrated, the disappointment of the lack of acceptance is quite clear. In general, among the Somali refugees in Jutland, there is a wide spread sense of discomfort and psychological confusion. According to the interview data, most of them complain of the lack of progress so far, despite staying for a long period in the country, and of the uncertainty of their situation. Therefore one could conclude by saying that the life process of the Somalis in Jutland - and probably in other parts of the country, too - is characterised by a development from a negative phase through a period of positive outlook and resettlement to again negative and uncertain conditions.

Figure 3. The life development of the Somalis interviewed in Jutland, probably shared by many of their countrymen and -women in other parts of the country.

|                  |                        |                                |
|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Negative period  | → Positive development | → Negative feelings            |
| - civil war      | - receiving help       | - unfulfilled dreams and hopes |
| - survival       | - new country/people   | - return of worry and anxiety  |
| - refugee, exile | - sense of hope        | - sense of no progress         |

**Conclusion**

The existence of some complications concerning the integration of the Somalis in Jutland, and in other parts of Denmark, is an almost undisputed matter. But how these problems could be addressed or managed, and what causes them, is open to a variety of suggestions. Optimistic views emphasise the need for time and a transition period, where the Somalis like other foreigners need a period of settlement and consolidation. Contrary to this, the pessimistic view focuses on the huge differences between the Somalis and the Danish and argue that the Somalis - particularly those who reside in Jutland, the area where the Danish culture and attitude are the strongest - will continuously face difficulties in becoming part of this community. It is, however, a fact that neither position could be taken as given, as, first and

foremost, the future is the most complex of phenomena to predict. And another point is that there is nothing special that makes the Somalis more different than other foreigners. On some occasions, the Somalis prove to be much more accommodating and they have favourable and respectable attitudes (comments made by a Danish public employee).

One thing that most will agree on, is the existence of a particular group of Somalis who is more vulnerable, including the old, the youngsters and the lonely women. Elders or senior Somalis have grown up in a society where they enjoyed respect and acceptance. In Denmark, their children and grandchildren - if there are any - are preoccupied with coping with their own difficulties. The most challenging fact is that aged people have a different status and position in this ever competing and modern society (the Danish), where young and middle aged are more appreciated and on occasions favoured. Somali youngsters, because of a lack of idols and of guidance, show a tendency of turning into a wrong and disgraceful direction. Lonely women without education nor support from relatives and friends are in a threatening and dangerous zone as well.

Khat is also a major problematic factor in the lives of many Somalis, both in exile and back home. The green poison is not part of our cultural heritage as the abusers of this catastrophic tree constantly claim. A disastrous trouble facing the Somalis in Aarhus is that there is a tiny minority of khat eating middle aged and young men who, because they didn't work hard, could not accomplish any progress. Their future looks hopeless, so what they are doing is trying to convince as many Somalis as they can that integration and making progress is an illusion. Promising and ambitious young Somalis have fallen into the hands of those intelligent but demoralising elements. This has resulted in the misleading of curious and less experienced Somalis, in diverting them from seeking progress and contact with the Danish but to retreat to a defensive and hostile, dangerous position.

The efforts made by the Danish are sincere and legitimate, the system obviously supports Somali initiatives and associations. But things could be improved and numerous mistakes and misunderstandings that occur repeatedly could be avoided if there was a dialogue between the Somali associations, intellectuals and experienced people and the Danish authorities. One of the most notable blunders is the generalisation aspect, where Somalis with potentialities are considered clients who can just receive but not give. According to the interview data, the Danish system is very fond of generalisations about not only the Somalis but also other foreigners. For instance, in the education system, occasionally children with enormous talent have been denied participation in ordinary Danish classes and forced to continue in 'modtage klasse' (reception class), regardless of already being capable and competent. Similar obstacles face Somalis with some sort of education where they have been considered unqualified and sent to lower level institutions.

Among the Somalis, two major obstacles are worth mentioning: the psychological connection to Somalia, and the complex and multiple loyalties in which many of them find themselves. One of the most difficult hindrances for Somalis to integrate in Denmark is that most of them are only physically here, but mentally not fully present. They have daily connections with Somalia and pay much attention to the warring parties and their leading warlords. Some of them even undertake the responsibility for the livelihood of whole families back home. Such a person will definitely have less energy and concentration for facing the social difficulties met with in this cold Nordic country.

Somalis have their own separate kind of social structure, based on clans, and for those in a defensive position, this represents their only hope if the Danish system lets them down. Therefore it is important that the Somalis with educational resources and experience, in cooperation with the local and national authorities and all people involved, would help any Somali group or individual who runs into difficulties. Somalis, in associations and on the

individual level, have to come to terms with the idea that their success in integration and in becoming a respected part of this society mainly depends on themselves. In economic support and the protection of rights, the state and the system can probably help, but only the Somalis could rise and transform themselves to be contributors to the society they are part of - rather than remaining recipients - in actively participating in a modern society where education and professionalism play a decisive role rather than clan connections and dependence.

Finally, Somalis are solidarity oriented and sometimes collectivists, which is to say that they pay attention not only to themselves but to others around them, too, and it will be almost impossible to demand them to behave otherwise. The problem of being trapped in the dilemma of being either a collectivist or on your own would have been non-existent in Somalia, but in a country where individual potentiality, rationality and creativity are the core, loyalty to clan solidarity and collectivism in general will have lesser significance. The individual has to be responsible for his own life and actions. Therefore it is high time for Somalis in Jutland to realise that in a western society, where individualism is the norm in order to achieve progress, a collectivist dominated attitude might seem ridiculous. Thus a balance has to be found between the collectivist socio-structure and the individualist dominated socio-norms, and it is the well informed, educated and capable Somalis that have the privilege to undertake this task in guiding their fellow countrymen - this might sound like yet another collectivist call - to overcome this challenge. If they themselves manage to do so!

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