

SOCIAL CONTACT AND ATTITUDE CHANGE

A CASE OF HOMELESS MEN LIVING IN A DORMITORY

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of the study was to find out the causes of negative relations among two groups of homeless men. The thesis also intended to explore the role social contact plays in influencing attitude change among people who share a common living space (Homeless men). The material for this research was collected during spring and autumn of 2013. The data was obtained from a survey that constituted a group of homeless men living in a dormitory as well as from the supervisor of that dormitory.

The study followed qualitative research methodology where closed ended questionnaires were used to collect data from a heterogeneous homeless men group. Unstructured Personal interview was used to collect data from the supervisor of the dormitory. The study found out that negative attitudes existed within these two groups of men at an individual and group level. Some men may have agreed to take part in the study that is to say participate in the visits which aimed at improving attitudes amongst them in principle but their attitudes remained unchanged towards each other at an individual level and group level .

Therefore, the study showed mixed feelings about contact and attitude change. Although in some cases increment in social contact played a significant role in leading to improved attitudes among the homeless men, sometimes this increment had no effect or made the situation worse than it was hitherto. Furthermore, the study concedes that practising real contact let alone attitude change which come with it is a hard to task. It requires devising of concrete contact making methods coupled with allocation of substantial amount of time and provision of optimum conditions necessary to facilitate an effective contact making processs. In so doing sustainable attitude change can be realized.

Key words: Prejudice, Attitude, Attitude change, Stereotype, Group, In-group, Out-group, Homelessness and Diaconia.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Being a foreign student in Finland, I have attended several lectures and discussions about integration of foreigners into the Finnish society. This subject has been an everyday reality for me. I came to a personal conclusion that collective responsibility is vital in realizing a shared and lasting process of integration and social inclusion. I also recognized that culture plays an important role in human communication. People sometimes tend to display their cultural values and norms in the process of contact making. These may affect inter personal human relations involved through this process either in positive or negative ways. I also think that the current perceived methods of integration like the inclusion of immigrants into the work force in the Finnish society, teaching them Finnish language, to mention but a few, can only be necessary but not sufficient instruments to measure the progress of integration and harmonious living as well as reducing prejudiced interactions between immigrants and the Finnish people.

Therefore, meaningful and sustainable integration would then manifest itself as an offset of warm and positive attitude towards each other that is to say between the Finnish and the immigrant community. Integration then will take a new look, to be a process which is gradual and coming out of avenues that create changes in attitudes and reduction of negative attitudes from both groups. Thus a combination of some considerable amount of interest into the subject matter at a personal level together with support from a classmate (who was an employee with these two groups of men) I picked interest into studying the theme of attitude change through the provision of social contact to these homeless men. There was also suspicion that there were tensions or perceive tensions between these two groups of men cropping out of the attitudes they exhibited towards each other which made it worthwhile to undertake a study in their attitudes.

2 ATTITUDES AND CONTACT IN GROUP RELATIONS: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 In-group, Out-group and Reference group

A group is said to exist when two or more people define themselves as members of it and when its existence is acknowledged by at least one other, who can be an individual or a group of people (Brown 2000, 3). An in-group on the other hand, denotes a group of people who share in common the use the term "we" carrying the same meaning to them all. Therefore, the rest of the other people belong to the out-group. Nonetheless, individual members in the in-group can exhibit characteristic, behaviors and opinions which may be peculiar to those of other members in the in-group at large (Allport 1954, 37). In this study each of the group assumed both statuses depending on context. When the Somali men looked at themselves using "we" when referring to themselves , and "them" when referring to their fellow Finnish dormitory residents, they were looking at themselves as an In-group and at that point in time the Finnish men belonged to the out-group. This same way of looking at themselves was true to the Finnish men group and at that point the Somali men assumed the position of being out-group members.

Allport (1954) refers to Sherif and Sherif (1969) who offers another term to the modern social science repertoire which is reference group(s). To them reference groups are "groups to which the individual relates himself as a part, or to which he aspires to relate himself psychologically." as quoted in Allport (1954, 37). Henceforth a reference group is an in-group which is passionately regarded. In-groups are made up of those people with whom interaction is sought. Out-group members are held at a distance and are often the targets of rejection (Cushner & Brislin 1996, 41). These different ways of understanding groups play a big role in shaping attitudes.

2.2 Attitudes

In her bachelor's thesis entitled: How have Kouvola citizens' attitudes towards foreigners changed between 2005 and 2010? Rinne (2011,19) makes references to Phil Erwin (2005) who explains that attitudes cannot be directly observed or computed but rather we can know people's attitudes by studying their behavior'. Gordon William's (1935) defined attitudes as "a learned disposition to think, feels, and behave in a particular way towards a certain subject as quoted in Erwin 2005; 12)". This definition underscores the influence of the psychological elements of cognition, affect and behavior as cited in Rinne (2011). Rinne (2011) additionally refers to Louis Leon Thurstone who defines attitude as "a positive or negative affect towards a psychological subject (Erwin 2005, 11)". Attitude changes refers to shift in attitude position or judgment.

2.3 Prejudice

Prejudice denotes a negative attitude, emotion, or behavior towards members of a group because of their subscription to that group. It is a phenomenon that emanates from group processes. However, socio-psychological analysis views individuals acting as members of the group and is essentially concerned with their perceptions, evaluations, and actions (Brown 1995, 14-15.)

The study inquired about the state of negative attitudes between the two groups of respondents before contact was available in form of the joint visits and how much as well as in which group did the negative attitude position remained, increased or reduced. There is substantial evidence to prove that intergroup conflict, prejudice and discrimination arises when one group behaves, acts or express itself in a manner that hinder goal realization of another group (out group) or in ways that negate its welfare (Lisa Legault & Isabelle Green-Deemers 2011,143).

Prejudice can greatly injure intergroup relations. If not addressed, the troubled relations may degenerate into an atmosphere of anarchy (Vasiljevic and Crisp 2013).

The study of prejudice continues to draw heated debate in the field of social sciences. The anthropologists are interested in the cultural context in which group differences are understood. Political scientists endeavor to comprehend how prejudices come about and are manifested within the population. The economists on the other hand are concerned about how amidst market pressure; there are continued tendencies of discriminatory markets. Psychologists seek to understand why prejudiced feelings and beliefs build up and the way in which they are developed. (Green et al, 2003.) It is always a dilemma to draw a distinction of how much prejudices are influenced by individual factors for example arising out of the individual's growth and development and how much influence comes from confirming to the in-group norms, customs and values to which the individual subscribes (Allport 1954, 41).

2.4 Intergroup Contact Hypothesis

Reviewing the intergroup contact hypothesis shall help to shape the discussion about the themes of contact and attitude change raised in this study. "The central premise of the so-called intergroup contact hypothesis is that the best way to reduce existing negative intergroup attitudes between members of different groups is to bring them into contact with each other" (Allport, 1954 quoted in Brown, 1995). Nonetheless, contact itself may be lacking if certain conditions are not met. These include; social and institutional support which can be enhanced through establishment of laws and customs which allow an environment favorable for the emergence of tolerant norms. High acquaintance potential of the contact since close interpersonal interactions is perceived to be more grati-

fyng. Finally there must be equal status of the participants pursuing a common goal (Pettigrew, 1998).

Once the conditions above are optimally provided, the in-group members recognize that the pessimistic attitudes and beliefs they hold towards out-group members are unreasonable hence forth attempt to build up optimistic intergroup attitudes. On the contrary, prejudices and stereotypes are likely to go on when members of the in-group lack chances to reconsider their suppositions and labels they have towards members of the out-group as discussed by (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; Emerson et al., 2002 quoted in Megan du Toit and Quayle Michael 2011). But how does this positive change come about during the intergroup contact? Pettigrew (1998) suggests four process of change involved in the course of intergroup contact. First and foremost he identifies the learning about the group process.

Contentions to this process withstanding, new knowledge and understanding about the out-group corrects the negative views the in-group holds towards it, hence forth reducing prejudice. This study anticipated that the participants would have time to talk and learn from one another over a range of issues concerning for example their culture, the main dishes they have and the history of their countries. While on the trips, it was anticipated that the participants would share views about the unifying situation of homelessness in which they were in and ways to overcome it and by so doing this would foster learning one another and this would lead to a change in attitude.

Secondly, there is the process of changing behavior. The optimal contact situations; where the aforementioned conditions are satisfied induce behavioral change. It should be noted that behavioral change precedes attitude change. New situations requires adherence to new rules of the game. Though in the beginning of intergroup contacts anxiety and tensions may prevail, with continued engagement it tends to fade away. (Pettigrew 1998.)

The other key process is that of in-group appraisal. Through optimal contact, the In-group reassesses its norms and values. This reevaluation causes change in the way the in-group looks at the out-group members. If the new game rule warrants respect of out-group members, then in-group members will have to comply and this leads to attitude change. In this study this would be realized out of the exchanges which took place among the participants.

Furthermore Pettigrew (1998) stresses the process of generating affective ties. He underscores the role emotions play in the intergroup contact. He deduces that substantial intergroup contact has born good results in terms of reducing prejudice and bias in society.

Though uniquely restricting themselves to cross- cultural interactions, (Brislin, 1981, 1993; Ruben & Kealey, 1979 quoted in Cushner & Brislin 1996) identified four indicators that show successful adjustment within cross-cultural encounters most especially those people who travel out of their home countries. Among these include good personal adjustment which is marked by feelings of contentment and well-being where people proclaim that they feel comfortable and are doing well in a foreign culture. There is also the development and maintenance of good interpersonal relationship with the hosts defined by good collegial relations in community or job engagements where the hosts say so and so gets along with them well. Task completion and feeling of minimal stress on part of a foreigner are signs of good interactions with the hosts in a cross-cultural arrangement.

3 IMMIGRATION

One of the groups in the study was that of respondents who come originally from Somalia. This chapter discusses the some highlights about Somalis life in Helsinki in particular and immigration in Finland in general.

3.1 Immigration Research and Immigrants Social Situation in Finland

Adequate funding has been advanced towards research into the immigration phenomenon in Finland. Major actors in immigration issues include the Finnish Ministry of Labor, Finnish Ministry of Interior, Finnish Society for Ethnic and Migration Studies, Finnish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Migration in Turku, Center of Ethnic Research at the Swedish School of Social Work at University of Helsinki and the Institute of Social Psychology at the University of Helsinki. Annually, the Finnish League of Human Rights releases a report on the state of discrimination in Finland (Mannila et al 2010, 24-28).

The proximity factor plays a role in accounting for immigrant population in Finland, with the largest number tracing their origin in Russia or the greater Soviet Union area as it was hitherto known. These account for 26% of the total immigrant population. 18% of the immigrants in Finland were born in Sweden. Other ethnic grouping of immigrant population shows that immigrants from Estonian represent 7%, countries which were part of the former Yugoslavia 3%, Somalia 3% and Germany 3%. It can also be observed that in terms of foreign language spoken, Russian is widely spoken and Estonia comes into second place, of course there is a growing number of Estonians coming to Finland with many of them commuting from Estonia to Finland for work. (Mannila et al 2010.)

Though the immigrants to Finland are mainly in the active working population age (between 15 and 64) representing a 74% compare to the native populations 66%. Only 66% of the Immigrant population is active in productive work. This is more visible among immigrant women due to cultural limitations. Constant unemployment situations surrounding immigrants could also account for this underemployment in the immigrant population. Immigrant unemployment is a function of economic cycles which affect the general demand for labor. Liebkind et al 2004, cited in Mannila et al 2010) indicates that immigration mean occupation decrease as quoted in (Mannila et al 2010, 24-28).

Due to the fact that immigrants' earnings are meager in Finland which means that they need supplementary incomes to cope with the cost of living and that immigrant's use of services is high, job agencies are reluctant in recruiting immigrant labor. They have a high number of children. This situation may cause some suspicion about misuse and putting a burden to the welfare state which can cause negative attitudes towards immigrants. 27% of Somalis did not have basic education. Several risks such as the inadequate living conditions, the life style which they came with from their home countries, poor health seeking habits have an impact on the immigrants' morbidity and mortality rates, however this improves with their continued stay in the country (Mannila et al 2010, 24-28).

3.2 Somalis in Finland

The report published by the Open Society Foundations in 2013 which aims at making governments accountable to their citizens and at creating vibrant and tolerant societies centered exclusively on Somalis in Helsinki. It highlighted the following as regards to Somalis welfare in Helsinki city.

It indicated that Somalis are the third largest group of people with foreign origin and by the end of 2012 their population stood at 14,762 with half the population living in Helsinki and in the cities around it of Espoo and Vantaa. The city of Helsinki through its department of immigration put in place policies as regards to the education, employment, housing and integration of immigrants. The contact between Finns and Somalis was described by this report as restrained but respectful with few projects set up as joint ventures to link communication and interaction gaps between these two groups of people. Mostly Somalis interact amongst themselves and the same goes for the Finnish people. Somalis relations are better with other Immigrants. Though some Somalis reported having good relations with their Finnish neighbors, usually neighborhood relations with Finnish people are problematic. Interactions between Somalis and Finns takes place mainly at workplaces during coffee breaks and in schools. Somalis interact amongst themselves in mosques and some places owned by Somalis where the Somalis meet after work like calling centers. 40% of the Somalis have acquired citizenship and this has increased their participation in the community through joining politics and working within the numerous organizations on enterprises of common good with Finnish community. (Open Society Foundation Report of 2013.)

Although the report notes that many Somalis were positive about living in Helsinki city, which felt like their own city giving them a positive sense of belonging, paradoxically the reasons they give to support this may not reflect an integrated group of minorities. They cite reasons like the fact that the city is peaceful with good infrastructure, good educational opportunities, short distances, good housing policy of mixing local population with immigrant population with less emphasis on attraction from cooperating with the host community.

The identity of Somalis is a mixture of local, Cultural, ethnic, religious and clan based components interacting with the Finnish society in the place where they are found. Islam and family relations are major pillars of Somalis identity. Reli-

gion is expressed in daily habits like prayer and dress code, which reminds Finnish Somalis however have a hybrid culture, they have different sub-cultures and coin their own mixture in their struggle with the Finnish homogeneous picture, however was feared for the young Finnish Somalis for loss of identity. They felt they are Finns where as the older generation and the mainstream group never see them as Finns. There is a big number of Somali group living in Helsinki area , and many of them have been living in Helsinki for long, but they not they feel they only belong to the city but not to the Finnish society. (Open Society Foundation Report of 2013.)

The report gave the following recommendations: City employees as well as NGOs and community workers should champion grass root interactions by organizing community events and meetings to bring together residents from diverse background so as to reduce prejudices. Stakeholders should use the media to promote a good picture of the immigrants groups available in Helsinki. The city, ministries and other public institutions should recruit people from foreign background to act as role models to young immigrant population that when one possess the right skills one is welcome to function in the Finnish labor market. The Ombudsman for Minorities should work with mosques to sensitize Somalis and other minority group about their rights and the proper reporting channels available in case of an infringement on their rights. The city should fund research and initiatives geared to creating hybrid identities among young people and attempts should be made by the City and state authorities to increase awareness of belonging and change of ethnic landscape. (Open Society Foundation Report of 2013.)

4 HOMELESSNESS IN FINLAND

"The term "homeless" is used in Finland to apply to persons living out doors or in night makeshifts or other temporary shelters, persons in institutions in search of a home, released prisoners without a home, and persons forced to live temporarily with relatives or friends because they have no home" (Kärkkäinen 1996, 5). The major cause of homelessness is the low supply of small rental houses at reasonable rates most especially to childless persons. There are some shelters which are for a special groups of people among which include those with mental health, substance abuse problems, long time hostel stay and relationship problem. Though the aim is that the homeless people can live in such places for a short time and then find houses in the normal markets, some have found themselves overstaying. (Kärkkäinen 1996.) In this particular homeless men dormitory where the study was carried out, the men were anticipated to live for three months but a good number end up staying longer. Through provision of the state owned rental houses, housing allowances and the general social security, Finland has put up an impeccable fight against this social problem of homelessness and exclusion among the population.

Unfortunately there is growing trend of hidden homelessness in Finland where young people continue to dwell in their parents' homes and increasingly families are taking small holdings which are less costly even when the area of the home is not enough for the family. The municipalities are charged with the implementation of the housing and social welfare policy. Their major focus is to reduce hostel housing but rather work towards empowering people to afford normal housing and in this way integrating them in society. The challenge is that there is always a constant flow of homeless people. Fortunately the city of Helsinki is trying to solve the problem of homelessness through production of its own houses. These are going at subsidized rates. The city buys old houses and repairs them for the homeless. (Kärkkäinen 1996.)

It is setting favorable policies in the housing sector. In the shelters the homeless are usually unskilled men, aged 45-55, either single, separate or divorced (Kärkkäinen 1996.)

4.1 Trends in Homelessness in Finland

By the end of 2012 the survey conducted by ARA, the Housing Finance and Development Center of Finland report of 2013 indicated that in the country there were 450 homeless families and 7,850 single homeless people. Showing a percentage increment of 3.7 compared to 2011 homelessness figures. In Helsinki the number of homeless people increased by 700 however a reduction recorded in the number of homeless people in the rest of the country stood at 400.

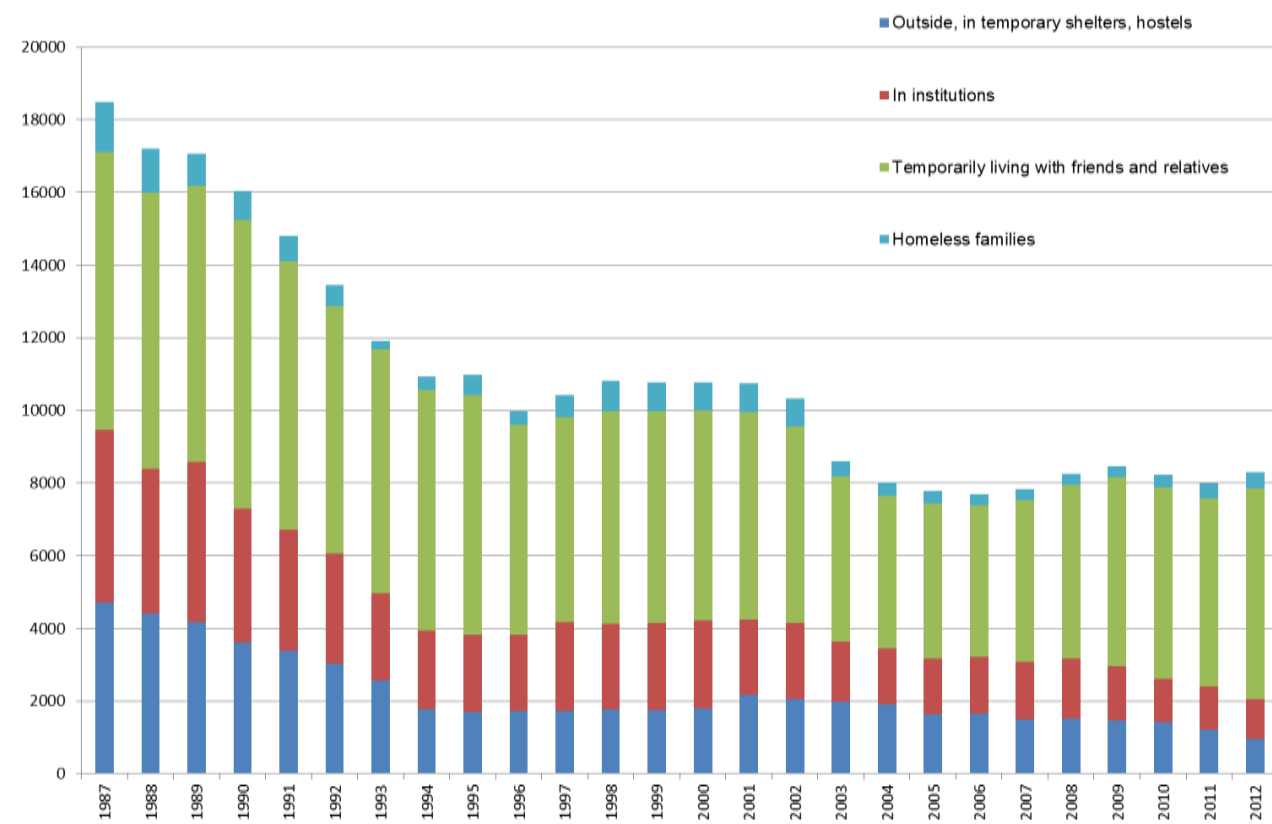


Figure 1 above shows the trend in number of homeless people between 1987 and 2012. (ARA, the Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland 2013 Report.)

From the figure above statistics on homeless has been collected since 1987, and in that year there were over 16000 homeless people in Finland. Presently the number of homelessness people is approximately 8000. This shows a 50 % improvement in solving the housing problem. By the middle of November 2012 data showed that half of the country's homeless people lived in Helsinki; three hundred homeless families and 4100 homeless single people. This reported a 35 % and a 20 % growth in homelessness between these groups respectively. A quarter of the total number of homeless people in Finland and Helsinki are under twenty-five years. There were more than 2000 young homeless people under the age of twenty-five in 2012 of which more than half residing in Helsinki.

In 2012 single homeless immigrants were about 1500, representing close to 20% of the total population of homeless people in Finland. Alarming figures indicate that three out of four and two out of three homeless people and homeless families respectively among homeless immigrants in Finland are searching for a house in Helsinki. There is a remarkable reduction in the gap between homeless men and women within the immigrant community. In 2011 women accounted for 20% of total population of homeless immigrants 24.1 % in 2012. Measures taken to reduce homelessness in Helsinki include: the Paavo I and II programme aimed at increasing the number of habitats for homeless people. Between 2008 and 2011 the target of the programme was to bring the number of long term homeless people to half. (ARA, the Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland 2013 Report.)

A total of five hundred-ninety units have been established in the municipality to combat long term homelessness. The programme is financed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in cooperation with the Slot Machine Association, RAY and ARA. The Finnish Blue Ribbon Foundation, the Finnish Salvation Army, the Housing Service Unit are among the key players in work intended to reduce homelessness in Finland. (ARA, the Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland 2013 Report.)

4.2 Welfare and Housing Services for the Homeless

The Finnish Social protection with its emphasis on the tenets of universal service provision and adequate social protection to all its residents is part of the Nordic welfare state model. This charges the municipalities with the noble assignment of organizing these welfare services. Homeless people's services for example, are provided through the mandates of the social welfare act and the legislation of people with disabilities. (ARA, the Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland 2013 Report.)

The government's programme to reduce homelessness of 2008-2011 has been the most current working tool in the fight against homelessness. The issue of homelessness is most apparent in big cities. Despite the remarkable efforts in addressing the homelessness problem in Finland as shown in the graph above, there is still a challenge of long term homelessness. This is the category of homelessness people who have not been completely taken out of the homelessness situation by the current strategies in place or those who find themselves in an off and on situation of homelessness. The highlights of the Housing First Model, a programme to reduce long term homelessness include the following: State funding (investment aid for special groups and interest subsidy loans) for constructing and renovating housing; Funding for hiring support personnel granted by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health Care, Conversion of traditional shelters into

supported rented accommodation units and the prevention of homelessness by increasing housing advice services. It was estimated that by 2012 more than 1697 new homes or supported accommodation places would be established. (ARA, the Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland 2013 Report.)

4.3 Housing in Helsinki

At a government policy level the role played by housing in integrating immigrants into the Finnish society has been well managed since 1970s. Due to the Nordic welfare system seen through for example the progressive taxation system and the great emphasis put on full employment, visible geographical differences in housing patterns cannot be visible. Studies indicate that there are no slums in Finland and there minimal segregation in housing as result of someone's ethnic origin. The housing tenure mix, which aims at integrating people from different socio-economic backgrounds in same neighborhoods, has been by and large a success in Helsinki city. Nonetheless the 1990s saw a shift in particular area preference of high social class people in the Finnish society for example the elites. Eastern and north-eastern have become less popular residential places for the elites. They prefer to stay in the western part of Helsinki. This has caused a growing gap in neighborhoods where the immigrants are taking up apartment which are cheap where majority speak foreign language and the young Finnish population is taking up homes within Finnish neighborhoods. Studies show that immigrants have a higher household compared to the Finnish people. (Open Society Foundation 2013 Report.)

5 THE STUDY AND DIACONIA

From the pages of Eurodiaconia the concept of diaconia is explained in relation to the bible derived from the tradition of "diakonia" meaning "services for and people in need." It is premised on the belief that human beings were created in the likeness of God with the same amount of value and dignity and social service should be given in a manner that upholds this dignity. Social service is a right. Some of the preconditions prescribed by the Eurodiaconia member organizations in consultation with the European Union member states to funding, legislating, supervising authorities and institutions dealing in social services of "general interest" include the requirement to inculcate community living where possible. In so doing human interaction should be at heart of service provision as well as respect of the client's culture. (Eurodiaconia 2010.)

The study made an inquiry into whether increased contact would bare results in alleviating negative attitudes among the two groups of men: Somali and Finnish men groups, thus upholding the virtue of human dignity and freedom which are objectives of the ministry of diaconia and in line with living while embracing the spirit of ecumenism and emphasizing diaconia as a manifestation of God's love to mankind. The values guiding diaconal code of conduct clearly show that what is important is not only what a diaconal worker does with the marginalized but how he or she does it and the attitudes that the diaconal worker reflects while going about diaconal work. Diaconal work has always solicited joint efforts from non Christians and atheist to bring them together to serve the marginalized world at both local and international levels so as to cultivate dialogue and reduce prejudice among people. Living examples of such ventures include the Northern Europe Initiative in the middle of the 19th Century which brought different faith denominations to stand with people in search of social justice. Others include the June 2006 consultation in Medan, Indonesia between Christians and Moslems after the devastating Tsunami which lead to joint cooperation to help

people who were affected by the Tsunami. Diakonia in form of diapraxis exposes people to transformation empowerment and reconciliation through fundamental respect to other denominations faith and world views. This type of diakonia practice subscribes to a school of thought that the church cannot do diakonia in isolation but rather through allying with other “people of good will”. The challenges that are faced by human race cannot be solved by the church alone but rather concerted efforts of all people in order to bring justice to human kind. (Lutheran World Federation 2009.) The study had the Somali men group who can be presumed to be coming from predominantly Muslim background and may be some Finnish men were Christians or Atheists, engagements with such groups as a student of diaconia can be made better with proper information about diapraxis as a form of diakonia practice.

In Finland “The 2000s have witnessed major changes in the attitudes, values and ways of life prevailing in the society “(Church Research Institute 2009).

Diaconia has changed in both form and structures through which it is delivered over time. It had been at some point in time the responsibility of the whole Christian community to take care of the needy amongst them in anticipation of the Parousia. Later on special people called deacons were responsible for it. It has been offered in both informal and institutionalized structures. At some point it has been called social-caritative work in communities. Nevertheless all churches embrace this service out-reach ministry to those who are marginalized or at the verge of being marginalized, hence diaconia becoming a uniting factor holding together the spirit of ecumenism and indeed the body of Christ. (Latvus 2008.)

Different countries have had events which have been milestones in the diaconia practice in their history for example the industrial revolution in Britain and the poor economic situation of the 1990s in Finland. In the 1960s diaconia experienced hype when churches realized the need for social responsibility to the people. Diaconia was also to help third world countries who needed immediate support because of growing population of people in need; it was offered as service for change. (Latvus 2008.)

In Finland, the church and parishes are present in the Finnish society as a whole and encounter people in the conditions in which they live. The purpose of work with substance abusers is to help people to seek a purposeful and meaningful existence and to liberate from the burden of guilt. The church also has extensive experience in reducing the deleterious effects of alcohol abuse. (Church Research Institute 2009.) Therefore, the study complements the participatory or comprehensive approaches of pastoral care a crucial work done by the diaconal ministry of the church.

Latvus (2008) refers to Pessi Anne Birgitta and Grönlund Henrietta who explain that the church act of 1993 states that the mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is to disseminate the word of God and give out sacraments true to its confession and, more generally, strive to spread the Christian message and practice the principle of loving one's neighbor (Chapter 1 Article 2). The church runs its welfare provision activities through doing diaconia work. Diaconia work is integrated into other work done by the parish and is professionally organized. It is offered as a safety net service, the church acts as provider of last resort, when a client's needs assessment is done followed by identification of the possible places or institution where the client's need can be met. In comparison to Liberation theology, diaconia has been much restrained to the use of critical analysis in the dispensing of services (Latvus 2008:143).

In its foresight report 2015 the church advocates for the 'we' philosophy that "our faith in God demands that we all treat one another as equals". The evangelical Lutheran church of Finland aims at increasing its accessibility to all people. Accessibility means inclusion and liberation (including homeless men) through increased contact with the people which are the aim of the study. Theology ceases to be theology of the gospel when it fails to arise out of the community of the oppressed. For it is impossible to speak of the God of Israelites history, who is the God revealed in Jesus Christ, without recognizing that God is the God of and for those who labor and are laden (Cone. H. James 1996: page1). The study was conducted among men who had different loads to carry: homelessness, prejudice, alcoholism, divorce and separations, drugs so there was need for liberation. The mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church is to protect the whole of God's creation and responsible use of all resources striving for moderation through diaconia (Evangelical Lutheran Church 2013.) The fruits of positive attitude change play a complementary role in achieving this mission.

The study was carried out among homeless men living in a dormitory that is run by the Salvation Army. This is an international Christian organization and is part of the universal church. It aims at putting in practice God's love through intervening in endless needs that menace humanity. This organization's motto is "heart to God and hand to man " (Salvation Army 2013) this is a true reflection of its belief and practice in diaconia work. It caters for people in a holistic manner for example it offers services to people facing different addictions but it does not restrict its self to only helping the clients overcome the addictions but also goes deeper to find the root cause of these addictions in general. Diaconia aims at giving holistic empowerment to people who are marginalized so as to realize their potential and their worth as a gesture of God's love. The Salvation Army Organization believes in the New Testament and the Old Testament scriptures as being true and source of God's inspiration.

Therefore this implies that they believe in story of (Genesis18-19): the story where the two angels met Abraham and later his nephew, Lot who welcomed them and protected them, only to realize that they were angels (Barton & Muddiman 2000:52-53). This means that the Salvation Army starting up such premises to house homeless people it is fulfilling the scripture which teaches us to be hospitable even to "strangers" because sometimes in doing so we welcome angels! The study implicitly aimed at making the two groups of men to look beyond their physical differences and look at themselves as humans with much more in common than what divides them therefore welcome each other with brotherly love. It is prudent also to note that the famous biblical story of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) calls upon the church to become good neighbors to each other, those who go their way to meet the vulnerable on their way instead of waiting for them to approach us asking for help, the church workers through asking ourselves of the question; How will the needy feel if we don't help him?

In conclusion, as the supervisor of the dormitory said that Finland has for long embraced the ideals of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, which have been shared and diffused into social service delivery systems, other players which may never be having religious affiliation like the municipalities and non-governmental organizations have also shared these same ideals as part of unintentionally as part of the Finnish social services delivery organization culture, hence forth making diaconia part of everyday activity of all players in the social services sector in Finland.

6 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

This chapter explains the purpose of making this study, the environment within the study was done, the choice of research methods preferred, the recruitment of participants and the process of data collection for the study conducted.

6.1 Purpose of Study

This study gave homeless men living in a multicultural dormitory an opportunity to mingle outside their routine common space. It was anticipated that this would cause a change in attitudes which these men exhibit towards each other henceforth improving the intergroup and interpersonal relations among these men. The study aimed at answering the following research questions: What are the causes of negative attitudes between Finnish and Somali homeless men living together in a multicultural men's dormitory? And what is the effect of contact on these negative attitudes? Once the change was positive that is to say, if there was a reduction in negative attitudes as a result of increased contact, the findings would be developed further and used by the management of this multicultural homeless men's dormitory to design methods of improving group cohesion and reduction of tensions between these groups of men through avenues that create contact among them.

6.2 Salvation Army

The homeless men's dormitory is under the auspice of the Finnish Salvation Army. The Finnish Salvation Army is part of Salvation Army International. Salvation Army values the important role contact plays in improving peoples welfare through its family tracing services established way back in 1885 in London named as Mrs. Booth's Enquiry Bureau, which aims at finding lost members of

the family for people. The study focused on increasing contact as a way of reducing negative attitudes thus enhancing harmonious and meaningful living among the respondents as members of one family despite their different cultural background. Salvation Army aims at empowering its service users; this means that the services are consumed without stigma. The medical services it dispenses in many countries through its local Salvationists gives an opportunity to the local population to participate in the arranging and delivering as well as consumption of the services. This is living diaconia empowerment. The organization web page indicates that it aims at doing spiritual and social ministry (Salvation Army 2013).

The dormitory accommodates about fifty members both from Finnish and foreign background. These are sent to this dormitory after filling an application for shelter at the Hietaniemi reception center. The social workers at the reception center assess the applications and determine a befitting shelter for each of them. Some residents received here have alcoholic and drug problems. Some have challenges with their physical health. The dormitory sets rules and regulations governing the residents living. Most rooms are shared between two men; some few rooms are inhabited by one man. Toilets and kitchen are used jointly. Residents are provided with beddings. Entering another resident's room is prohibited at all times. Use of alcoholic drinks is not allowed in the dormitory. Unless when special permission is sought, residents are not allowed to enter the dormitory after midnight. Continued absenteeism from the dormitory without notifying the management for two weeks leads to an automatic cancellation of stay right. Visitors are not allowed in the dormitory. Keys are supposed to be surrendered to the workers at the reception of the dormitory every time a resident goes out. Residents have access to sauna twice a week. Residents have a chance to do petty jobs within the dormitory so as to get some income. The staffs at the service of the men include; practical nurses, a social worker, a nurse, and the supervisor. The dormitory cooperates with other service provid-

ers in Helsinki like the members who organize the Alcoholic Anonymous group activities and the Finnish police and Helsinki city.

6.3 Research Methods used in the Study

"Methods are the specific techniques used in social research whereas, although strictly meaning studies of methods, the term "methodologies" is usually employed to indicate the sets of conceptual and philosophical assumptions that justify the use of particular method" (Payne & Payne 2004, 148). However methodology can also refer to "a way of thinking about and studying social phenomena" (Corbin Juliet & Strauss Anselm 2008, 1).

Qualitative research methodology was considered for this study for it attempts to guide the study to follow a path leading through the eyes of the subject, describing the mundane detail of everyday settings, understanding actions and meanings in their social context, emphasizing time and process while favoring open and relatively unstructured research designs as explained by Bryman (quoted in Silverman 1997).

6.3.1 The Research Questionnaire

"Questionnaires are the printed sets of questions to be answered by respondents, either through face-to-face interviews or self-completion, as a tested, structured, clearly presented and systematic means of collecting data mainly in the quantitative methods tradition" (Payne & Payne 2004, 186). The authors continue to allude to the fact that the questions in the questionnaire must be similar to all respondents to make subsequent comparisons out of the responses raised valid. Thus questions should be easy to attempt and any kind of ambiguity should be avoided when designing them. (See appendix 1). A Likert scale questionnaire was used. This is where respondents answer according to

their level of enthusiasm by circling their preferred alternative from the rating scale (Cohen et al 2000, 253).

They answered indicating from whether they totally agreed, somewhat agreed, did not agree or disagree, somewhat agreed and totally disagreed with the attitude statement. A total of twenty attitude statements were presented in the questionnaire to both Finnish and Somali men. The questionnaire was the same for both groups of men and the same before and after the visits. Investigating what attitudes, beliefs and opinions groups of subjects with common traits hold is of value simply because it is assumed that these attitudes will influence behavior (Black 1999, 215). A questionnaire was preferred because it provides privacy to the respondents when responding to the questions and it is easy to process.

6.3.2 Personal Interview

Personal interview was used to collect data from the supervisor of the homeless men's dormitory. The use of the interview in research marks a shift from a way of seeing humans as simply subjects to be manipulated and data as somehow foreign to individuals, towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans, through dialogue (Kvale, 1996:11 quoted in Cohen et al 2000. 267). Individual interviews are detailed inquiries of an individual's point of view (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, 36). The supervisor was interviewed later after the visits were over, when all the questionnaires had been returned, in order for him to give his own assessment of the process of data collection and also to get his take on the study from a management point of view regards to attitudes and multicultural living in the dormitory. The choice of the personal interview was due to the fact that it allows the interviewee to express himself spontaneously, this free speech makes the interviewee chance to be understood and give sufficient amount of information. The interviewer can also ask question to the interviewee to clarify his submission, hence creating a cordial atmosphere conducive for

sufficient data collection. (See appendix 2 for the questions put to the dormitory supervisor).

6.5 Recruitment of Participants in the Study

This study entailed obtaining a unit sample and measuring the same sample members' responses more than one time by administering the questionnaire before and after the visits. Originally the study aimed at recruiting ten men; five Somali men and five Finnish men; however, a group of five men responses were used because the other half could not keep-up with all five visits which was an important part in the study. The men were recruited using quota sampling strategy. This strategy aims at obtaining an indicative sample. By defining the nature and characteristics of the members that will compose the sample, a quota is formed such that this sample reflects the true picture of the population from which it was drawn (Breakwell, Hammond & Fife-Schaw 2002, 98).

There were two men from the Somalia men's group and three men from the Finnish men group. As already noted not only did this group of men was faced with the problem of being homeless, many had some other social problems for example addiction problems with alcohol. From this background, to get respondents who could participate fully in the process of data collection, I had to involve some of the workers of this homeless men's dormitory who knew these men fairly well. I based on their (workers) recommendation to recruit members who made the sample. I approached and explained to these men who turned out to be respondents the nature of research and how it was to be conducted. Voluntary participation was emphasized as Breakwell et al (2002, 310) notes that the strategy of obtaining the sample members has a great bearing on the future engagements of these members. It determines the amount of cooperation and willingness they will display towards the study. Those who wished to join their names were noted.

6.6 Data Collection Process

An attitude based evaluating questionnaire was used in this study. This questionnaire was administered to the participants at the beginning and at the end of the process of data collection. Data was collected during the visits. The aim of administering the questionnaire before the visits was to get the opinion (attitudes) of the men towards the members of the out-group before the visits kicked off. When the responses for this first session were collected, the participants started visiting together. Visiting the five places lasted five months.

They visited the Finnish Parliament, the national museum, the International Islamic Center in Finland, the Somali restaurant, and the World Village festival of 2013 organized in Kaisaniemi. The aim was to visit four places that had a pivotal cultural meaning to either of the two groups and to visit one which offered an all-inclusive significance to both groups.

Therefore it was assumed that the Finnish parliament for example offered more meaning and a cultural heritage in terms of democratic governance to the Finnish community and the society in general. The people who ran the premises to be visited : those who explained what the place does were assumed to be having or sharing similar culture and norms with one of the visiting groups for example at the parliament it was Finnish people who welcomed the group and explained how work is done at the parliament. The same can be said about the Somali restaurant in Itäkeskus where the group shared a typical Somali meal prepared and served by the Somali men and in the restaurant majority clients where Somali men. The aim was to learn something about the other group through participating physically in one of events that it feels it is close to its culture and everyday life.

Therefore, participants experienced different environments from the different place they visited. At the Somali restaurant for example , the television had a live screening of a football match from Somali land. This general theme of bathing through the cultural basin of out group members was seen almost cut across all the four places visited. That is to say: including the remaining two places; the Islamic center and the national museum. It was assumed that the World Village festival organized in May 2013 in the green belt of Kaisaniemi offered joint cultural values and attachment to both groups.

Different places visited offered a particular group to have an upper hand in explaining or playing an active role in the discussions before and after the visits. When the respondents visited the national museum the Finnish men played a key role for example in explaining the events and times that were experienced by the Finish community to their Somali counterparts during the old for examples times of foreign aggressions. The Islamic Center offered an opportunity to the Somali men to explain about their religion to the Finnish men. Interaction in many cases was through question and answer as well as through discussion. The contact, the discussion, the opportunity to do it together was the main idea of the visits as well the study which would gradually translate into attitude change and enhance cohesion between these two groups of men.

6.7 Data Analysis

Though qualitative analysis does not rely on mathematics or numbers, Alston and Bowles (2013) notes that qualitative researchers count numbers of themes, or number of people for whom certain themes apply, and sometimes they use computer packages in a similar way as quantitative researchers do to their work. In analyzing the data I obtained numbers have been used to qualify themes. I used thematic analysis in analyzing the data. This can be employed in both qualitative and quantitative designs of data analysis; it preoccupies its self

with forming key themes or issues obtained from a body of evidence (Pope, Mays & Popay 2007, 96). Qualitative research uses logic and methodological principles rather than resorting to the use of formulae or quantification.

Qualitative data analysis usually happens simultaneously with data collection phase, in a continuous or cyclical process (Alston & Bowles 2013, 268-269). Data reduction was employed at this stage. This process generally consists of coding data in preparation for analysis either by hand, in case of small surveys or by computer in cases of big ones (Cohen et al 2000, 265). The questionnaire data was reduced by hand where the twenty questions in the questionnaire were grouped into two themes pertaining to the causes of negative attitudes among men. The questionnaires were compared to see how the attitudes were changing by comparing responses got from the questionnaires before the visits and those got from questionnaires after the visits. Responses were grouped into positive and negative responses. The interview with the supervisor which was recorded on the phone was transcribed and I made themes out of this interview which were in relation with the research question. The data obtained from the interview was used to discuss both the causes and effects of contact among these men.

6.8 Reliability and Validity

During research, the research question changes into hypotheses that can be measured. Precisely this is done by showing the level of measurement of the identified variables. A variable is a characteristic or condition that changes or has different values for different individuals (Breakwell et al 2002, 351). The variables for this research included : the use of the common space, sharing of rooms, open discussion to settle conflicts with member of out-group, sharing a meal, use of toilet and bathrooms to mention but a few. There is need to know how effective and important variables are. This is attained through examining

their validity and reliability. When we preoccupy ourselves with finding out whether the variables are really measuring what they are intended to measure at that point we are dealing with their validity. The measure of goodness of variables used in the study is dependent on the definition of the concept it is formulated to measure.

Four methods are used to measure validity in qualitative research: face validity - the level to which a measurement externally looks to measure what it was intended to measure. Content validity - measures the degree to which the variable include the entire content of the concept under study. Criterion validity - means the variable is valid if the findings are similar as those obtained from other measures used to study the same concept (Dudley 2011 as cited in Alston and Bowels 2013). Construct validity is interested in how good a measure is in agreement with the expectations of the theory. The concept of attitude change was explicitly and simply studied through provision direct social contact as people traveled together and discussed together which was executed through the five joint visits.

The test-retest situation is where the same tool is used on the same group of people (Alston & Bowels 2013). Aware of this the survey was kept short with only twenty clear and precise attitude questions. Most questions centered around normal life realities like on the use of the common space shared by all in the dormitory and the use of facilities provided by the dormitory administration, which characterize the day to day operation environment. These variables used were indicative of the day to day situations of interaction in this dormitory, hence assumed reliable and valid for this study involved in contact and attitude change.

6.9 Research Ethics in the Study

Alston and Bowels (2013) explains that there are agreed upon values and principles in research. These principles not only benefit the researcher to carry out an ethically approved research but they also help him to win the trust of those among which the research is carried out. Generally the five principles nowadays agreed upon include the following as cited from Hardwick and Worsley (2011): autonomy/self-determination, confidentiality, non-maleficence, beneficence and just. Autonomy concerns respect of participants' right to self-determination. For this study I conducted participants would decide whether or not to participate, it was a voluntary call. Participants had appropriate information concerning the type of research they were getting involved in and were informed from time to time well in advance where and when the next visit was to be conducted, reminder notices were given to all participants in time about for example departure time from the dormitory, arrival time to the venue to be visited and when the visit was to end.

Participants had a right to withdraw from the research process at any time. Research did not inconvenience participants, only provided participants a chance to showcase their cultural heritage to the members of the out-group. The Participants' privacy was of paramount concern in the study by taking anonymity and confidentiality in consideration. Right from the start they were explained thoroughly what the research was about, and how it will be conducted, agreement on the places to visit with the participants. They were not supposed to write their names on the questionnaire, they answered the questionnaire privately, sealed it questionnaire in an envelope and returned the questionnaire to the dormitory reception or drop it in the suggestion box. Once all the envelopes containing questionnaires were received (both the first and second questionnaire) they were opened without looking at them and mixed up forming two groups. The interview recorded with the supervisor was also deleted immediately after transcribing data was done.

7 RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings from the attitude statements contained in the questionnaires which were administered to the five respondents (Somali and Finnish men) as well as findings from the personal interview I conducted with the supervisor of the dormitory. Responses from the participants are discussed concurrently: before and after the visits to highlight the changes in attitudes both negative and positive and also to show cases where they were constant. Though the questionnaire was administered to individual respondents later they were collected and mixed to form two categories that is to say, the category of responses got before the visits and that of those got after the fifth and final visit.

Additionally at this level while reporting, I analyze the findings of the study. Attitudes have been referred to here in two ways: positive attitudes and negative attitudes. A positive attitude designates any response bearing the word "agree" in affirmative form (that is to say totally agree and somewhat agree). On the other hand negative attitude/ prejudice denotes results from response composed with a word disagree (totally disagree and somewhat disagree). Uncertainty is shown by the neutral response with a word (not disagree or not agree). The attitude statements have been analyzed along three themes according to possible literature reviewed as well as from my personal opinion as discussed below.

7.1 Social Grouping

Generally it was found out that both groups of men inhibited negative attitudes towards each other resulting from creating two distinct groups among themselves. Brown (1995) discusses the concept of social categorization; the sheer grouping of people.

People are assigned ascribed characteristics and behavior simply because they belong to a certain age, ethnic or gender group which exists in direct "opposition" to others. This makes it convenient for the prejudiced to order the accessed groups of people for easy identification and "manipulation".

However, the author continues to explain that social categorization begets favoritism. Prejudiced judgments towards members of the out-group are out of efforts of cognitive activity. Drawing an example from the questionnaire before the visits kicked off three out of the five respondents expressed negative attitudes towards the statement inquiring about the sort of multicultural living going that was going on in the dormitory. This essentially meant those three respondents preferred to live with a member from their in-group and not with a member from the out-group thereby forming two preferred social groups each with its own members.

Interviewing the supervisor, he explained that both groups of men do certain things, intentionally or unintentionally which end up being causes of irritation to each other. This may be in the way one group dresses, uses the kitchen, the time members of a certain group prepare their meals, how it uses the toilet to mention but a few. Brown (1995) affirms that through the act of categorizing people consequences to those that are targets of prejudiced attitudes can be easily known, and making conclusion about a certain group in turn determines how they will be treated. Therefore, members would be judged beforehand simply because they belonged to one group and not the other. Perhaps a new entrant's dormitory behavior on how he will use the kitchen tables, talk, the time he will cook and eat his meal, would be known before hand and would warrant him some particular reception and treatment from the out-group members right from day one of his stay.

7.2 Stereotypes

To stereotype someone is to attribute to that person some characteristics which are seen to be shared by all or most of his or her group members. A number of circumstances give rise to and propagate stereotypes within societies these include; the cultures within which humans are born and are brought up which may favor stereotypes to be reproduced. Stereotypes are embedded normally through the socialization process humans get from homes, schools and from the media. Stereotypes may also be as a result of some aspect of social reality, a group's culturally distinctive behavioral pattern or a particular social-economic circumstance in which it lives. (Brown 1995).

Without dwelling much on the causes of stereotypes among the respondents, the fact is their existence within this group could not be denied. The respondents were asked whether they thought members from the out-group were untidy and needed to improve their hygiene as they were making the place dirty, when the visits were over, four members expressed concern that yes it was the members from the out-group who were dirtier and needed to improve their hygiene for a healthier living in the dormitory.

Furthermore, when the respondents were asked whether they thought members from the out-group were louder than members from their in-group. Results showed that three respondents affirmed that it is true the members from the out-group were noisier than those from the in-group. This was before the visits. At the end of the visits, results revealed that three respondents still believed members from the out-group were much louder than members from the in-group and one was of the view that his own group members were much louder whereas one was unsure of the two groups which one was louder.

In my opinion, the above two examples reflect that sweeping statements or opinions would be made about the entire group for being dirtier or louder simply because may be one of the out-group members or a few participated in certain act. This is stereotyping. It can also be observed that contact in these situations did not improve prejudice as the numbers of prejudiced people in both examples were constant or increased as Brown (1995) observes that intergroup bias can spring up when two groups meet and it can be difficult to reduce this bias. He further notes that contact in itself alone is not enough to cause prejudice reduction.

7.3 Attitude Change Analysis

A total of twenty attitude statements were given to a group of five respondents comprising of two Somali men and three Finnish men as stated in the preceding chapters. Results obtained from the questionnaires before the visits kicked off indicated that thirty out of the sixty attitude statements collected in total from the Finnish men towards the out-group members (Somali men) were positive. Twelve of the attitude statements expressed by the Finnish men showed uncertainty "neutral attitudes", eighteen attitude statements expressed were negative. When the five joint visits were completed in the period of five months, the number of positive attitude statements recorded from Finnish men had dropped to twenty; those which were neutral remained constant at twelve and the negative attitudes had increased to twenty-seven.

Turning to the Somali men group respondents, before the visits, twenty-one positive attitude statements were gathered out of the total number of forty attitude statements which were collected from the Somali men group questionnaires expressed towards the members of the out-group (Finnish men), sixteen of attitudes statements expressed were negative (towards the Finnish men) and three of the attitudes statements were answered in a neutral way.

Results obtained from the questionnaire administered when the visits were over indicated an increase in positive attitude statements expressed amounting to a record of twenty-three. Negative attitude statements representation stood at ten and those which were neutral were seven out of the total number forty. Therefore, despite the similar conditions under which the research was carried out, results indicate that the attitudes of Somali men become more positive towards their Finnish counterparts and the reverse is true for the Finnish men. The explanation for this behavior can be offered by scholars who have reservations for open, face to face contact advocated for by Allport (1954).

They express fear that in such a situation, people may censor themselves for fear that they may be labeled as prejudiced. This may have an inverse effect instead of reducing prejudices; it may end up reinforcing it (Shelton, West, & Trail, 2010 cited in Megan du Toit and Michael Quayle 2011). This could have been the case with Finnish men at the start of the study who portrayed an impressive record of thirty positive attitude statements towards Somali men only to drop drastically to twenty by the end of the joint visits and activities may be at this point in time the self-censorship had ended after all no more encounter in form of visits was expected to come.

By and large Finland is commended for enforcing an atmosphere of nondiscrimination. A report published by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) cites positive developments in anti-discriminatory efforts in Finland. Furthermore, the (nondiscrimination act of 2001/2004) explicitly details the different forms through which discrimination both direct and indirect can be manifested. Section 6 of the act prohibits any form of discrimination on the basis of age, ethnic or national origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, health, disability, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics (Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Finland).

This shows that it could have been possible that the respondents from the Finnish group cognizant of such constitution acts and other formal policies against discrimination in general and took heed of them at the beginning but still inhibiting latent traces negative attitudes towards foreigners, in this case Somali men which came out at the end of the visits.

Megan du Toit and Michael Quayle (2011) insists that optimal contact must target to destroy micro segregation which affect the benefit of contact in real sense regardless of the existence of institutional support in form of laws. The authors, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) remarks that contact-prejudice relationship is bi-dimensional that is to say; receptive and extroverts are most likely to embrace and get the best out of available contact opportunities whereas introverts and intolerant people are likely to be indifferent to contact opportunities and very critical about them.

This is supplemented by Brown (2000) who observed that most social situations will contain elements of both interpersonal dispositions and group behavior. That people enter even the most group-based interaction with a unique history and a set of personal dispositions. The recruitment of the participants on both sides was basically based on workers information whether the recruit would be reliable to participate fully in the visits with little consideration on whether the recruit was outgoing or had an extrovert personality.

Therefore may be the respondents from the Finnish men group were less outgoing and never benefited maximally from the interaction and perhaps the respondents from the Somali men group were more outgoing and open minded hence benefiting from the contact moments hence the display of an increase in positive attitudes after the final visits. This conclusion however may not hold true in all situations because of the few number of participants used in the study that is to say only two Somali men and three Finnish men used in a one off kind of attitude change study.

Cushner and Brislin (1996, 249 refers to Bond 1994) who explains that though people know that when they engage in multicultural interactions they will encounter unusual customs in salutation, eating, and taking part in the another culture's religious activities, most of them are not ready for the effects such interactions will have on their inner feelings (prejudices, sense of belonging, anxieties and emotions). I think this could be the explanation why there was a constant figure of twelve attitude statements obtained from the Finnish men's group as well as three and seven result attitude statements results recorded from the Somali men group before and after the visits respectively. Respondents opinion reflected in these numbers show uncertainty of what feelings these statements evoked inside them hence were not ready for their effect on them.

Nonetheless, Pettigrew (1998) explains that anxieties and tensions are replaced by empathy towards the out-group members after sometime when contact is allowed to take place within the intergroup relation. This resulting into positive attitude change, this can be said about the Somali men group that perhaps the increase change in attitude , recording increased positive attitude expression towards the members in Finnish men group was due to developing some sense of calmness and reduction of anxiety among them progressively as the visits were carried out. This was observed when the visits had just started respondents participated passively but with subsequent visits there emerged some level of responsibility in terms of people taking active roles to explain to others (from both the In-group and Out-group members) their memories and knowledge about the times and experiences the different places that they visited reminded them for example the Finnish men were heard narrating the hard times of foreign adversaries when the participants visited the national museum.

The main issue however was not in the visits themselves to these various places alone, but in the process of visiting. This means that the focus was on the fact that members could decide to go together, to sit together in the bus, tram or metro, and discuss together. Respondents discussed about how to get to the

different venues and shared possible expectations about the place they visited. Conversations at times touched payment of the trip, who had a ticket and who did not have and what could be done to help the situation. Members were seen at times sharing knowledge about the place visited and complementing the speech of the main hosts at the different venue visited.

Added to the above, Internal mechanisms existed within the dormitory to foster group cohesion and mutual living. "There are weekly meetings for each floor to talk about anything and sometime we call for the meeting for the whole house" said the supervisor. This meant that there was a culture at the dormitory which allowed freedom of expression on matters that concern the residents' stay in the dormitory in a straight forward manner. The supervisor stressed that if there was an important issue which needed immediate attention for instance when the floor television channels went off or when something was broken in the dormitory, the men would go directly to his office or to the reception to report that abnormality before the weekly meeting and timely action was always taken in terms of solving the problem or explaining to the residents when it would be fixed. Through the interview with the supervisor it was found out that there were suggestion boxes put in every floor at the disposal of the residents to give feedback on the way the management runs the services it gives to its residents.

I found these as internal processes within the dormitory intended to bring about cohesiveness within the dormitory between management and the residents as wells among residents themselves through democratic means. Cohesion can be defined as attraction to the idea of the group and has been correlated with factors such as physical proximity, frequency of interaction, similarity among group members, and above all the pursuit of a common goal among the group members (Brown 2000,64). The meetings offered an opportunity for cohesion to be forged by increasing the number of times men met and discussed issues together. This reminded them that regardless of natural differences in terms of

trait, race or ethnic background there was need for cooperation in some ways so as to better their living in the dormitory.

This caused attitude changes observed at the end of the study, where the magnitude was higher among and Somali men compared to the Finns, though even among the Finns there were some positive attitude statement collected at the end of the five visits, these also could have come out of the these internal mechanisms of dialoging in the dormitory.

As discussed in chapter two above, there is substantial amount of research that point to the fact that contact between groups can reduce negative attitudes given that it takes place where there is adequate institutional support for measures designed to promote the contact process. There should be sufficient frequency of contact, where there is closeness to permit the growth and development of meaningful relationships between members of the groups in question in an environment which cultivates equal status among the people in contact so as to avoid feelings of unworthiness and inferiority and superiority complexes and that contact should involve a co-operative activity. (Brown 1995, 268-269.) The above internal mechanism of communication between management and the homeless men can be seen as a form institutional support afore mentioned. Hence forth leading to the increase in positive attitudes expressed among the Somali men Group.

8 LIMITATIONS TO THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The original design of the study was to form a sample of ten participants, five Finnish men and an equal number of Somali men, but given the nature of this place where the data was collected later this would prove impossible. This dormitory intends to offer men temporary accommodation usually for less than three months. The hunt for apartments starts as soon as the men get admitted to this place. Having experienced the pinch of homelessness and its discomfort they always leave as soon as an apartment is found. For this reason some men who had participated in the research process at the beginning eventually left and were dropped from the study hence making the sample contract.

Though it was not the intention of this research, background information about collected indicate that most of these men lived in a vicious cycle of problems; many were having family or relationship problems, alcoholic problems and also some were faced with unemployment, therefore it was a common practice for someone to confirm participation in a visit for example to the national museum and eventually never turns up as they had gone to attend to their personal matters.

As an immigrant student I would relate to some experience like this one, many Immigrants take a long time to get out of the cultural shock and the challenges of moving and living in a new country most especially if it is aggravated by the above mentioned social problems. In fact I think that some people never regain their "previous self" and this may lead some to indulging more in anti-social behaviors like excessive drinking as a way of compensating for the loss. If this is true then poor attendance that was faced by this study could find its explanation in such circumstances.

Furthermore, due to personal choices, some respondents did not approve going to some places. This affected maximum participation. The aim of the visits was that participants would travel in the same bus or metro while having some conversations, it was observed that some preferred to be quite and/or talked less with others. This could be blamed on inadequate language skills and at times some would come to meet us at the venue before we entered the intended place of that particular visit. These factors constrained effective social contact to take place.

Closely related to the above, some places visited never gave the participants chance to socialize, for example the visits to the Islamic Center and the Finnish parliament. There, the participants only listened attentively to the speeches given by the host and asked a few questions at the end on the presentation with minimal group discussion, among themselves. Perhaps all places needed to be of the type that offer a chance to the participants to interact amongst themselves so as to learn from each other.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the interview I had with the supervisor of the dormitory he observed that management had chosen to continue this out-door group visit activity which had been introduced during the process of data collection. A bigger group (bigger than the one which was used in the study) goes to different places of the city once in a month to participate in some happenings together as a group in a way of consolidating the idea of harmonious co-existence among dormitory members. Though he believed that substantial results in attitude change would take time to be realized in concrete terms, the dormitory supervisor acknowledged and commended the study for it gave birth to the idea of joint visits which will forge joint cooperation among all residents of the dormitory and this would in turn be much more inclusive: including even other residents from different cultural background housed by this dormitory.

It is upon this background that I would suggest that studies in the future along the lines of attitude change in the same dormitory should be keen on being more inclusive in form of cultural representation. This will reduce negative attitudes not only between the Finnish and Somali men but among many other groups of men from different cultural backgrounds living in the dormitory hence general attitude change leading to general harmonious living.

The three months period allocated to conduct the study perhaps was unrealistic. Attitudes may be deeply entrenched in people's way of life and behavior; therefore changes may only come gradually through provision of several contact opportunities. The establishment where the study into attitude change is to be conducted should offer a relatively stable living tenure to the participants to induce favorable conditions prescribed by the contact theory of coined by (Allport, 1954 as quoted in Brown 1995). As discussed already above. These

allow people to freely express their feelings, opinions and attitudes (creation of an environment where trust is built).

The residents of this homeless men's dormitory were informed right from the start that they were to stay at that place for a short time, about three months and then vacate. If that assumption was true, it could be possible that the men "bracketed" the reactions they received from each other since they are to stay together temporarily and go away. Therefore the Somali men showing an improvement in positive attitudes towards the out-group members could have been only pseudo; just out of accommodating and tolerating the behaviors of their Finnish counterparts and perhaps if the duration of stay was to be permanent the results of the study would be different.

10 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

I wish to state at this juncture that the data collection and designing of the whole process for example making the choice of the places to visit, deciding on the visiting schedules and recruitment of the participants to the research was done jointly with a fellow student doing the same degree as me. Unfortunately we could not write this thesis jointly. He has been however very instrumental in informing and sharing relevant ideas to the realization of this work. It will be interesting to see his work when it is completed and the angle he will take on the same data we both collected.

I have gained invaluable experience doing research out of working on this study in terms of possible lay out of a research report and how it progresses, team work, abstract thinking in the way of generating some idea and push it to being a concrete piece of work, to mention but a few. I have learnt the need to follow a progressive and systematic process in research which involves selecting a topic of study, formulating the research question(s), choosing the possible research methods, looking at the literature review, accessing the practical feasibility of the research, assessing the ethical feasibility of the research, considering possible outcomes in advance, and applying for a funding if needed as suggested by Breakwell et al (2002, 23-40). This only serves to make the journey to research easier instead of resorting to crisis management strategies to patch up the missing steps when they were not planned in advance. I think this is a valuable lesson for me in future academic and professional endeavors though some authors maintain that qualitative research never follow a linear pattern (Silverman 1997).

In addition, I am convinced that in order to understand a particular social problem or to find solutions to a social problem by way of undertaking studies into it, it is important to look at the social problem inductively. In so doing, studies may

first focus on the small constituencies around the nucleus of the problem and progressively open up to investigate the major problem itself. Taking the example of my thesis, instead of studying attitude change through provision of social contact, it would have been perhaps better to first undertake studies into how the conditions that allow effective social contact to take place could be enhanced among the two groups of homeless men. This would eventually be followed by studies into contact provision to influence attitudes at a much later stage. This would serve to smoothen the path to finding more reliable and grounded recommendations on ways of addressing this issue of negative attitudes among the men.

Last but not least I have also gained a wider understanding of the social realities of homelessness, housing services available, community participation and integration in general through this study which can be otherwise seen through the lenses of the expose learning practice. Integration, which to me used to be a duty of one group owed to the other, now I know that it takes much more than efforts of a single group and it can be a hard nut to crack, for some reasons people can shun opportunities of taking contact hence forth avoiding "integrating" within the others! Without opening another debate at this point in time, I think it shall remain a cumbersome task to the social work fraternity to design appropriate measures that can address the above mentioned phenomena which are living realities in the Finnish society today.

The arrangement of the visits was beneficial in improving my leadership and group organization skills; they were also avenues to discover the culture and history behind the two groups: Finnish and Somali groups. Due to the fact that I had to use Finnish language to be understood by all participants, the research process offered me another opportunity to improve on my Finnish language skills as well as learning a few Somalia language words. Taking part in the whole research process made me appreciate the intrinsic power behind the

English dictionary word belonging most especially among the vulnerable of society.

11 CONCLUSION

Though the contact theory in itself may sound to provide practical solutions to reducing prejudices/negative attitudes between people and groups, its implementation is confronted by challenges most especially when it is to be implemented at a micro level like in a homeless men dormitory. The necessary condition of social and institutional support envisaged by the contact theory for example, presupposes that those in authority can enforce attitude change through appeal to use of rewards and sanctions. This can never be practical in a situation where participation is voluntarily solicited and the contact process is expected to be cordial. In this particular study resorting to the use of sanctions would only escalate the problem instead of solving it as people would shun the whole process. Equal group status assumed to be between the groups of people engaging in the contact process is another form of wishful thinking or unrealistic expectation suggested by the contact theory. Society is inherently made up of contradictions and in fact that is the very reason why studies aiming at increasing positive attitude in peoples' interactions are conducted.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for the Somali Men Group.

1. it's easy to make friends with Finnish men.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

2. I find it easy to share a room with a Finnish man.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

3. I can freely discuss with a Finnish man about general issues when we meet.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

4. If I have a problem with a Finnish man, we usually solve it between ourselves.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

5. I could share something to eat with a Finnish man.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

6. I find it easy to share the common space with Finnish men.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

7. This sort of multicultural living improves my welfare and understanding of the Finnish culture.

- A. Totally disagree
- B. Somewhat disagree
- C. Not disagree or not agree
- D. Somewhat agree
- E. Totally agree

8. There is a need for regular meetings, where I can meet and talk with Finnish men.

- A. Totally disagree
- B. Somewhat disagree
- C. Not disagree or not agree
- D. Somewhat agree
- E. Totally agree

9. I feel the Finnish men need to improve on their hygiene as quite often they make this place dirty.

- A. Totally disagree
- B. Somewhat disagree
- C. Not disagree or not agree
- D. Somewhat agree
- E. Totally agree

10. A Somali man should share the same room with another Somali.

- A. Totally disagree
- B. Somewhat disagree
- C. Not disagree or not agree
- D. Somewhat agree
- E. Totally agree

11. Most Finnish men do not respect the rules and regulations of the house.

- A. Totally disagree
- B. Somewhat disagree
- C. Not disagree or not agree
- D. Somewhat agree
- E. Totally agree

12. I would be interested to join a Finnish event.

- A. Totally disagree
- B. Somewhat disagree
- C. Not disagree or not agree
- D. Somewhat agree
- E. Totally agree

13. To get to know Finnish people improves my wellbeing.

- A. Totally disagree
- B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

14. It is okay to have a Finnish workmate.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

15. I like to have community meetings with Finnish men.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

16. I feel respected by my Finnish housemates.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

17. Its normal to cook and eat any time, even after 10 p.m.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

18. I like to learn more Finnish habits.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

19. Finnish men are cleaner than Somali men.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

20. Finnish men are louder than Somali men.

- A. Totally disagree
- B. Somewhat disagree
- C. Not disagree or not agree
- D. Somewhat agree
- E. Totally agree

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for the Finnish Men Group

1. It is easy to make Somali friends.

- A. Totally disagree
- B. Somewhat disagree
- C. Not disagree or not agree
- D. Somewhat agree
- E. Totally agree

2. I find it easy to share a room with a Somali man.

- A. Totally disagree
- B. Somewhat disagree
- C. Not disagree or not agree
- D. Somewhat agree
- E. Totally agree

3. I can freely discuss with a Somali man about general issues when we meet.

- A. Totally disagree
- B. Somewhat disagree
- C. Not disagree or not agree
- D. Somewhat agree
- E. Totally agree

4. If I have a problem with a Somali man, we usually solve it between ourselves.

- A. Totally disagree
- B. Somewhat disagree
- C. Not disagree or not agree
- D. Somewhat agree
- E. Totally agree

5. I could share something to eat with a Somali man.

- A. Totally disagree
- B. Somewhat disagree
- C. Not disagree or not agree
- D. Somewhat agree
- E. Totally agree

6. I find it easy to share the common space with Somali men.

- A. Totally disagree
- B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

7 This sort of multicultural living improves my welfare and understanding of the Somali culture.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

8. There is a need for regular meetings, where I can meet and talk with Somali men.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

9. I feel the Somali men need to improve on their hygiene as quite often they make this place dirty.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

10. Finnish should share the same room with another Finnish man.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

11. Most Somali men do not respect the dormitory rules and regulations.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

12. I would be interested to join a Somali event.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

13. To get to know a Somali improves my wellbeing.

- A. Totally disagree
- B. Somewhat disagree
- C. Not disagree or not agree
- D. Somewhat agree
- E. Totally agree

14. It is okay to have a Somali workmate.

- A. Totally disagree
- B. Somewhat disagree
- C. Not disagree or not agree
- D. Somewhat agree
- E. Totally agree

15. I like to have community meetings with Somali men.

- A. Totally disagree
- B. Somewhat disagree
- C. Not disagree or not agree
- D. Somewhat agree
- E. Totally agree

16. I feel respected by my Somali housemates.

- A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

17. It's normal to cook and eat any time, even after 10 p.m.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

18. I like to learn more Somali habits.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

19. Somali men are cleaner than Finnish men.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

20. Somali men are louder than Finnish men.

A. Totally disagree

B. Somewhat disagree

C. Not disagree or not agree

D. Somewhat agree

E. Totally agree

Appendix 3: Personal Interview Questions to the Dormitory Supervisor

1. What kind of thoughts our research evoked in you?
2. What are the most common challenges between Finnish and Somali residents?
3. How do Somali/Finnish residents react to these challenges?
4. Any measures the dormitory has taken to increase contact among Finnish and Somali residents?
5. What is the situation of negative attitudes/prejudiced opinions among the Somali and Finnish men living in this dormitory?
6. Do you have any ways you think such a study can improve this place ?
7. How did this dormitory become this international, admitting all people from all cultural backgrounds?
8. What are the values of this dormitory?