The In-Betweens of Space and Time in Transit
Spatial and temporal realities for urban refugees in Eastleigh, Nairobi

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Abstract

This is a study on how Somali and Oromo refugees manage under uncertain circumstances in Eastleigh, Nairobi. Fleeing from war, persecution and violence, the refugees expected to find protection and a quick transfer to a third country, which was not the case. Instead, they ended up in being stuck, unsafe, and questioned. The refugees aimed for resettlement to a third country; a decision depending on approval from the hosting state, a receiving state, and UNHCR. This process normally included 8-10 years or more of waiting and a positive answer was not guaranteed. The spatial realities in displacement in Eastleigh included a status of illegitimacy, socioeconomic hardships, and unpredictability of an eventual resettlement in a third country. In the protracted waiting for resettlement they struggle to become part of the place but in the state of transit, and in an excluding context, they are in-between – in a liminal state in both space and time.

Keywords: Eastleigh, forced migration, space, place, displacement, refugees, resettlement
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1. Introduction
Transnational movements and border crossings happen with a higher frequency than ever. Today one billion people live outside their country of birth according to UN (United Nations) statistics and 65 million people have been forced to leave their homes because of war and persecution (UN fact sheet 2015). Wherever migrants move, wherever they have family, friends, business partners, a web of connections is spun, not only across borders but also between migrants representing different cultures in the new country. Places are formed through activity, through interactions with others and the environment. The majority of transnational migrants are settling in cities and urban settings and contribute to the formation of the places of settlement.

Eastleigh estate in Nairobi is a setting highly shaped by migration through history. I went to Eastleigh to do a field study among Somali and Oromo refugees and to get their views on the place and their lives in displacement. I checked in at Gamaan Lodge on 10th Street and went for a walk on the dusty streets to get the ambiance of Eastleigh. Navigating through crowds of people, getting overwhelmed by the multitude of everything, the chatter, the shouts, matatus, boda-bodas (local buses and motorbike taxis) speeding and the drivers buzzing the horns. Friendly greetings, jokes, and smiles followed me all along the way from sellers sitting and waiting for customers, welcoming me to their shops and to Kenya. Moving around in Eastleigh, the social interaction happening in every street, at any time of day startled me. Eastleigh was never silent. When the motor vehicles stopped for the day, there were still the sounds of crowds of people talking all around; people greeting, meeting and sitting for late hours outside bars and shops. In the early morning, the streets were overloaded by the sounds and buzz from trucks, mkokotenis (cart drivers) and carriers at amazing speed unloading goods from trucks outside the stores of wholesalers. Frequent calls for prayers from the minarets was part of the soundscape. Business activities were apparent in every street corner and there was no doubt that Eastleigh was a busy trade center with shops and malls one after another in the main street.

Since the 1990s, Eastleigh has grown to a significant center of trade in the East African economy with global connections to the East and the West and to northern Kenya. From the 1990s, there has been a steady inflow of refugees, the majority fleeing the civil war in Somalia. The high number of people seeking protection in Kenya is of great concern for the state and the government prefers encampment or repatriation of refugees, attempting to restrict movement to the urban areas. Refugees and asylum seekers need to find their own
ways to survival and support whereas they obtain no financial support from the state and limited support from aid organizations because of lacking resources. The migrant Somali population in Eastleigh, have developed trade networks and made it a commercial area with major significance not only in East Africa but also globally; a factor that should not be neglected in this research as it gives a special character to the place and is said to provide newcomers with possibilities to generate income. Eastleigh is also for this reason called “Little Mogadishu.” According to a report from 2012, by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and UNHCR, (United Nations High Commission for Refugees), asylum seekers and refugees are surprisingly independent and integrated into the socio-economic life in Nairobi. The estate is considered a “good area” for refugees because of possibilities to socio-economic activities and according to the report, the profile of Eastleigh refugees is “one of incredible resilience and ability to survive in the face of significant odds” (UNHCR 2012:7). There are certain advantages especially for the Somali refugees in a wide community of people of Somali origin, that give possibilities to communication in their own mother tongue and connections. Contributing to independence are the opportunities in getting survival from engaging in an informal sector of sales and trade. These entrepreneurs are, except for own benefit, providing social and economic benefit to the communities they reside in (ibid). Neil Carrier writes in Little Mogadishu: Eastleigh, Nairobi’s Global Somali Hub (2016): “the area elucidates the impact that migrants and their networks can have on ‘development’, especially as it has become a key site for investment by the Somali diaspora” (Carrier 2016:8). Through my informants, I wanted to find out if this was the “good area” as it was said to be. Che, community leader, child protection officer and paralegal in Eastleigh, Airbase ward, came to Kenya from Somalia in 1994. When people started to flee from Somalia, it was mainly from Mogadishu and other cities. Many were businessmen, and many were well educated.

We experienced this country as closed in. Nobody had options to buy anything, there were no goods. We are vibrant in Somalia; imagine a Mogadishu where you could get everything, also from western countries. Here were no big brands when we came, but they were brought in by refugees. We sold cheap goods and secondhand goods. One day, refugees had land-cruisers and a lifestyle that surprised everybody. There was business, but not in hands of the people, only a few businessmen. Business is not for all and it is still not, but there is a certain creativity and solidarity.

He tells me about Garissa Lodge, originally a cheap lodging for newly arrived refugees in the 1970s, and the creativity in how it was used. The selling spots and the tables were used for
sale in daytime and beds during the night, with the goods stored under the tables. A Somali woman originally owned the lodge and offered space to the newcomers including refugees. Today Garissa Lodge is a shopping mall, with the old sign still above the entrance. The structure for trade has become more complex and Che says the gap between the established community and refugees has grown bigger. The interviews I made showed hardships in finding ways to support and additionally my informants were telling about daily issues on safety, such as fear of getting caught by police, having to pay bribes and fear of being expelled. They struggled to make earnings for their daily survival and monthly rent. However, the idea of Eastleigh being a good place for refugees still remains, and they keep coming with expectations not only on safety but also on ways to livelihoods. Depending on own history, individual backgrounds, economic situation, and the political conditions of local origins the perspectives of a place and the chances of becoming part of Eastleigh differ. We are presented homogenized images of people in displacement, but very seldom getting their own individual perspectives. The flight and the crossing of a border do not mean a closure; it does not erase the past, simultaneously the new space migrants inhabit influence their present and the thoughts on future. I wanted to get an emic perspective from refugees living and residing in Eastleigh, drawn from their own words on their striving to become part of the new place. The desire of my informants was not to stay in Eastleigh but to move on to safety in a third country. My material revealed an extensive unsafety among the group of informants. Regular ID-checks by corrupted police officers and arbitrary arrests were regular issues. Added to this, unsafe work conditions, a constant fear of counterterror raids by security forces and of being expelled made Eastleigh an unsafe and hostile place.

I wish to emphasize that I have no intention of confirming an existing picture of refugees as passive victims. There is a picture of refugees as passive, which is mostly produced by media, but I would argue people in forced displacement are and need to be extremely active. What I want to show is the constraining impact the sociopolitical contexts and power structures have on people in displacement.

Processes: Documentation and resettlement process

To get an overview of documentation and processes I will here describe what happens when a person is seeking protection in Kenya. The Kenyan Department for Refugee Affairs (DRA) is responsible for coordination and management of refugee matters. Determination of refugee
status is done in cooperation with UNHCR. At arrival, those seeking shelter need to apply for asylum and they are asylum seekers until refugee mandate is obtained. The application can be done in the UNHCR office in the camps or in Nairobi. Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps were established in the early 1990s to accommodate refugees from Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, and the Great Lakes (Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi). Dadaab is located in North East Kenya, 100 kilometers from the border with Somalia. Dadaab is the largest refugee camp in the world holding an estimated 465,000 refugees. Kakuma accommodates an additional 85,000 asylum seekers and refugees. The government of Kenya placed the camps relatively close to the Somali border and Sudanese border in the belief that the inhabitants could soon be repatriated to their countries of origin. When camps were created the politics of the GoK (Government of Kenya) included a repatriation within a relatively short time. However, refugees are still arriving, and few have the chance to leave the camps for resettlement or repatriation. There is an ongoing debate in the Kenyan government on closing the refugee camps in the country, which would leave nearly 600,000 persons displaced. Out of 550,980 refugees and asylum seekers in Kenya, 50,800 live in Nairobi, most of them of Somali origin (UNHCR 2014).

The refugee mandate entails the right to an ID-card. The Kenyan Governmental Refugee Act from 2006 is stating the following regarding documentation and movement in Kenya:

> Every refugee and asylum seeker shall— (a) be issued with a refugee identity card or pass in the prescribed form; and (b) be permitted to remain in Kenya in accordance with the provisions of this Act. (c) not leave the designated refugee camp without the permission of the Refugee Camp Officer. [Act No. 19 of 2014, s. 47.]

A year after the act received legal force and UNHCR started issuing the Mandated Refugee Certificates (MRC), a mandate valid for two years. After these two years, DRA (Department of Refugee Affairs) can issue an Alien Refugee Certificate (ARC) valid for five years. The UNHCR and DRA certificates issued to refugees in Kenya did not include permission to work, which makes it illegal to hire refugees. According to the Act, refugees have the right to work under same conditions as other foreign nationals which means with a supplementary Alien ID card (Articles 17-19).

When the refugee mandate is received, it is possible to apply for resettlement. The first stage is applying for the need for protection and the next stage for resettlement. All my informants who had received refugee mandate had applied for resettlement to a third country. The chances are small to resettlement and normally given to the most vulnerable in following
categories: woman and girls at risk, legal and/or physical protection needs, survivors of torture and/or violence, medical needs, lack of foreseeable alternative durable solutions, family reunification and children and adolescents at risk. A resettlement is though never guaranteed. When I was in Eastleigh it was possible to announce specific protection issues to the UNHCR office without appointments if showing up before 10 am. Grounds for resettlement can also be directed to legal advisers in RCK (Refugee Council Kenya) or to paralegals in Kituo Cha Sheria (human rights nongovernmental organization) who can refer these matters to UNHCR. The process included several interviews and the final decision is taken by UNHCR. Once the process is completed in Kenya the case is referred to the country of resettlement for final approval, though the process can be rejected at any stage.

The slow process of obtaining valid ID-documents was, of course, a problem. Some of my informants had only Somalian passports which are not recognized in Kenya, nor by most countries because Somalia is not seen as a legitimate state. Abdi Cawo writes in her book *Elusive Jannah: The Somali Diaspora and a Borderless Muslim Identity* (2015), “being citizens of a failed state diminishes the legitimacy of Somalis’ travel documentation and render their citizenship inflexible” (Abdi 2015: 60). Abdi’s study is carried out in Somali settlements in South Africa and the United Arab Emirates. The lack of a valid passport is severely confining freedom of movement and I reflected over my own situation, carrying a European passport and having no problems obtaining visas and crossing borders. For my informants, a Western passport indicated validity, legitimacy, and flexibility in movement and nurtured the dream of resettlement.

**Research questions and theory**

In this thesis I will explore the spatial and temporal realities for my informants in Eastleigh, drawing from their experiences and views of past, present, and future places. I will include discussion on space and place as I see these theories as useful and crucial to discussions on mobility and forced migration. In migration, both the location where migrants come from and the location they come to is significant. In a home country torn by war and conflict, the familiar place of origin has changed drastically. The homeland is not recognizable compared to what it was before conflict whereas a profound sense of security is lost already before the flight.
The terms space and place are not unproblematic within anthropology and the concept is continuously debated and redefined. Space was traditionally defined as something abstract, boundless and open-ended while place was considered closed with boundaries. In the early 1990s, there was a shift in this view and anthropological scholars as Appadurai (1988), Gupta and Ferguson (1992) and Malkki (1995) indicated a boundlessness in place and more focus on movement. In dislocating the anthropological field anthropologists also started to look on the production of space through questions of power and resistance (Auge 1995, Low and Lawrence Zúñiga 2003, Rodman 1992). Economic and social resources provide meaning and we need to look at “how different actors construct, contest and ground experience in place” (Rodman 1992:652). My informants had severe hardships in finding ways to socio-economic support and the place was constantly contested.

In their new surroundings, my informants strive to find zones of safety, familiarity and a sense of belonging. Following Rodman in *Empowering Place: Multilocality and Multivocality*, dislocated from their familiar place and local identity my informants saw the new landscape in terms of a familiar one, which was “a multi-local way of sorting out meaning” (Rodman1992: 646). I suggest that understanding multilocality is essential in studying how people make themselves part of a place, whereas networks are created both locally and globally. The lived space is connected to other spaces. Multilocality means being present and operating in many places simultaneously and migrants, travelers, anyone who is displaced from his/her familiar setting find different ways to familiarity in a new location. My informants strived to become familiar with the new place and to become part of it. I will look at practices contributing to familiarity and homeness for my informants to become part of the place and connect temporal aspects in relation to past, present, and future places. A multivocal approach is also given in *Displacement Economies in Africa: Paradoxes of crisis and creativity* (2014), a collection of articles that pay attention to the paradoxes in displacement, and the diversity of actors and practices, focusing on displacement in African countries. The editor of the book, Amanda Hammar, writes in her introduction that place is relational and should be compared to other locations, the one people come from and those they eventually move to (Hammar 2014:10). I will look at the connection between locations and how they influence my informants’ relation to current place and other places. Displacement needs to be related to a context; it should be viewed as “a complex, relational process linked to and through multiple temporalities – where ‘the future’ unpredictably opens and closes” (Hammar 2014:25). My material shows these multiple temporalities and will be discussed.
Michael Jackson states in *Lifeworlds* (2013), a collection of ethnographic essays from his field studies, that human beings not only have a desire to create a world where they can find a sense of belonging and recognition but “a desire to possess a sense of themselves as actors and initiators” (Jackson 2013:17). For my informants, daily practices were essential in order to regain some stability and a sense of familiarity, but a feeling of homeness was hard to achieve which this paper will show. Regarding this theme I will also use Michael Jackson’s *At Home in the World* (1995), an ethnographic study of the aboriginal Walpiri in Central Australia, on how people relate to and create a sense of home. I found severe elements hindering my informants of becoming a part of the place. I will look at mechanisms in the environment producing unsafety and on exclusion patterns. For this purpose, I will mainly use articles of Setha Low and Zoltan Glück, mainly *A Sociospatial Framework for the Anthropology of Security* (2017) and their discussions on how security measures produce particular kinds of spaces and exclusion.

In a lingering waiting in displacement relation to past and future places affects the relation to current place. Displacement can be compared with a liminal stage and for this discussion, I find Victor Turner’s description and discussion in *The Ritual Process* (1995) useful.

Despite staying in Eastleigh for long periods of time, my informants seemed to have severe difficulties to create viable lives in the place. My main research questions in this thesis are as follows: How do my informants manage the uncertainties in displacement in Eastleigh and do they become part of the place? How are they making sense of their displacement in Eastleigh? Is Eastleigh a ‘good place’ for my informants?

**Overview of chapters**

In Chapter 2 I will describe how I entered the field and my chosen methods which were interviews and participant observation. The latter was a big part of my methodology as I stayed in Eastleigh for 8 weeks and moved around in the estate frequently. The main material is based on interviews and I will shortly introduce the groups of informants. I will also give reflections on the interview method.

In Chapter 3 historical background, particularly on how the estate was formed and shaped through migration, will be presented. How it became a place of strong Somali identity and a center for trade will be described here. I will shortly describe Eastleigh today, its influence on trade and business, the cultural diversity and the infrastructure.
Chapter 4 focus on my informant’s own narrations on flight and arrival. Their experiences of violence, personal, social and material loss and combined with the rapid change to a new environment caused great stress and confusion. Practical arrangements need to be done and the alien, not recognizable place and for my informants, it was important to get familiar with the surroundings. Accounts on flight, first conceptions of Eastleigh at arrival and which measures were taken the first weeks will be rendered here.

Chapter 5 gives a closer look into the experiences of refugeeeness, the absence of safety and protection and how these affect the daily lives of the refugees. My informants told about constant fear of police and ID-checks, causing difficulties to carry out activities for daily support. I will have a discussion on if and how this is a hindering factor in making the place their own, drawing to contemporary studies on the concept of security and place.

Chapter 6 is about finding familiarity and regaining control in the new place and how my informants try to find ways to economic and social support, the importance of religion, cultural traditions and routines. Activities to find a way out of confusion and get a sense of control and stability are described here. Despite their unprotected situation in Eastleigh they needed to go on with their lives and also create some sense of familiarity with the place. I will explore if there were possibilities to become part of the place.

In chapter 7 I will look closer on my informants’ relation to past, present and future places and different temporalities. My informants describe a loss of position, statuslessness, and marginalization. My informants were in a space in between in transit, waiting for resettlement. Both space and the individual’s experience of place is changing with time, in relation to other places and other temporalities. I will show why a feeling of belonging is difficult to achieve. I sum up with concluding thoughts regarding the challenges in making one’s place in a transit state.
2. Methodology

My field study was carried out among Somali refugees in Eastleigh in Nairobi, for 7 weeks January to March 2017. My methodology included semi-structured interviews, walk-along interviews and participant observations. I will in this chapter describe how the research was conducted and the material collected. I stayed in a small Somali-owned hotel in the 3rd Street, close to the main street. The last three weeks of my stay I moved out of Eastleigh, which meant I had to travel by bus and could not spend as much time I would have needed for more in-depth interviews and observation. Albeit, it gave me a chance to evaluate my findings so far with a distance to my field and plan how to continue.

From the first day to the last I reflected on how they saw me as the interviewer. I strongly felt how privileged I was in their eyes, being a European student with a passport. I was clearly seen as an outsider. In a way, I saw it as an advantage to be an ‘outsider’ and perceived as an ‘outsider’ as many were eager to share information to fill my lack of knowledge about Eastleigh, and it also made my informants reflect over their situation; to see their situation with the eyes of the other. An advantage was having Abdi as an interpreter as he already was trusted and probably it was thanks to him I got their approval to make interviews and also got entrance to their homes.

Walking the First Avenue the first day in Eastleigh, a man came up beside me and we greeted and started to talk. He was fluent in English and French, presented himself as Robert, a Congolese refugee resident in Nairobi for 9 years. He said he could provide me with information and contact details to key persons. Robert told me he was now waiting for resettlement and the Alien ID card. He gave me my first information on procedures and the time length refugees are spending here waiting to go to a third country and all through my field study he was a resource. Through him, I got names and contact details to community leaders and social workers who in their turn gave me contact details to eventual informants, and other useful information. Through a Somali Kenyan journalist, Abdi, who was assisting Somali refugees with their cases and in their communication to UNHCR I found most of my interviewees. He also helped me with interpreting. One contact always led to new contacts and after some weeks I had more people to interview than I could possibly manage in the limited time for my study. I had entered the field and randomly found my first group of informants.
Nobody of my informants wished to be anonymous and it seemed even important for most of my informants that I used their real names. It is important to me, to be honest, and respectful to my informants and to what they told me in confidence. I have sent this paper to Abdi, my interpreter, and to Amina, one of the young Somali refugee women for review.

**Interviews**

I did 50 interviews and interviewed 31 persons whereof 20 were refugees. The majority of refugees came from Somalia, the group also including three Oromo refugees from Ethiopia. The majority were born 1985-90, except for three informants, born in the late 50s. The interviewees were refugees who arrived mainly between 2004-2016, but to get other perspectives, besides representatives of the refugee community I searched for informants among the established inhabitants in Eastleigh like community workers, representatives from the business community and the Kenyan-Somali community. I interviewed 16 men and 15 women including 2 male Kenyans, 5 male Kenyan Somalis, 3 established male refugees, 1 established female, and 20 refugees (male and female). By established I refer to those who have come as refugees but were staying permanently. The refugees I interviewed were living in three different areas, called California (south), the shopping epicenter, and Eastleigh North. All my informants lived in Eastleigh.

For the part of the refugees, from sharing background stories and telling freely about themselves and their stories on the flight, my informants were given more specific questions on day-to-day life, social life, and thoughts about the future. I wrote another set of questions for community workers, yet I retained questions on background. In the first interviews, the important thing was to gain trust and to obtain the personal details and story of the interviewee. I had four more sets of questions concerning religion and culture, meaning, and visions. One set of questions were where they moved, where they felt comfortable, with whom they built social contacts with and their relation to religion. To get a sense of their views on life and how they related to their current situation I had a set of questions regarding possibilities and own thoughts on experiences from the time in displacement, comforting practices and thoughts on personal change.

One of my worries before entering the field was the eventual language barrier. However, it appeared to be unwarranted. The first interview I did was with an Oromo from Ethiopia who spoke relatively good English. The hotel I stayed in was owned by Somalis and the owner
promised to look for English speaking people from the Somali community in Eastleigh who would be ready for interviews. The next day this was bearing fruit, and a Somali man in his late fifties, Abdinasir, came looking for me when I was having breakfast at the terrace of a restaurant next to my hotel. He was a trader, a Somali residing in Uganda, fluent in English and staying for periods in Nairobi. He said he heard I was asking questions concerning Somalis in Eastleigh and he wanted to give me information about the business community. After my first interview with Abdinasir, I started to reflect on the agenda of the interviewees for the first time. It was clear that he had an interest in contacting me and during the second interview, it got more evident. I represented somebody with possibilities to assist in a humanitarian project in south Somalia. However, he was willing to share his views with me regardless of obtaining no guarantee of assistance.

Representing West and being a student made them express a hope that I at least could make their situation in Kenya known, if even to a limited group of people. It might have affected the answers in the first interview, however, it gave me an entrance to their private homes and a willingness to share their stories with me. All in all, I experienced a willingness to share and as one of the Somali women said: “When we go to UNHCR to interviews and we tell them our stories they do not listen, and they interrupt us saying…’yes, yes…we know these things’… but you let us talk.” Semi-structured interviews facilitate a free flow of thoughts, but they are also depending on the individual will of the informant to be open and to reflect. I realized that open-ended simple questions worked well and that many of my questions made the interviewees reflect upon their answers.

**Participant observation**

Semi-structured interviews combined with participant observation provides a context to the interview situation (Davies 2008:107). In the interviews, I could listen to their own experiences and views, but the participant observation provided me with the frame for the described experiences. Accordingly, I spent a lot of time walking through the estate, exploring the streets, malls, and shops, sitting in restaurants merely observing the field. Staying in Eastleigh, doing my own daily errands to shops, markets, pharmacies, finding accommodation, visiting places where to eat and drink, I entered the flow of the estate. The interviews were made in the homes of the interviewees, in a hotel, in yards, in cafes and in other public meeting places which meant a certain interaction with others than the interviewees. I saw the participant observation as very useful to my study. Analyzing my
observations, I noticed things I did not get through direct questions. Davies is mentioning “positivist orientation” among social actors in participant observation (Davies 2008:80), which I understand as all information should be considered as valid knowledge and I followed up my interviews with notes of observations.
2. Background on Eastleigh

**Eastleigh historically**

I will give a short historical context in this section. The historic data is mainly taken from Neil Carriers *Little Mogadishu: Eastleigh, Nairobi’s Global Somali Hub* (2014). Varied cultural groups have been residing in Eastleigh through history, with linkages to people of Indian, Arabian, European, Somali and African descent. For us to understand the complexity and the dynamics of a place, its cultural processes and what happens when there is a constant influx of people from different backgrounds, we need to be aware of the history of the field where research is done as well as the history of arriving inhabitants. It is the history of migration that makes Eastleigh a specific place. In the early 1900’s most plots in Nairobi East Company were owned by Indians and attracted people of Asian descent to settle. With the death in 1916 of Allidina Visram, who owned most of the plots, many of these became available for sale and the first Somalis started to move into the area (Carrier 2016:33). The colonial history of Eastleigh and “racialized urban policy” had made the estate “Little India” but it has been far more diverse and cosmopolitan through history (Carrier 2016:54). Already in the late 18\(^{th}\) century, Somali migrants settled throughout East Africa and at the beginning of the 19\(^{th}\) they were given the right to occupy land on the Ngara plain of Nairobi, but with no legal right to the land. In 1916, the increasing Somali community was suggested to move to Mbagathi, south-east of Nairobi. A majority Somalis did not undertake this, and they moved to the area that was to become Eastleigh (ibid:37). Eastleigh grew in the south of Nairobi, relatively close to the business center of Nairobi. In the early 1990s over ten thousand Somalis and Kenyan Somalis lived in Eastleigh (ibid) and the Indian population was more or less pushed out.

Somalis have been active traders and transporters of goods in East Africa already before the civil war broke out in Somalia, especially members of Isaaq and Harti clans. Many Isaaq came as gun-bearers, hired by explorers and some of them stayed and became clerks, interpreters or livestock traders while some got into the merchant navy and settled in other parts of the world (ibid:34). In the 1970s and the 1980s, a great number of asylum seekers arrived in Kenya from Somalia, many of them highly educated and experienced in business and trade. Because of drought in the 1980s, insecurity and “state policy against nomadic lifestyle forced Somali pastoralists in northern Kenya to the city and to try their luck in business” (ibid:51). When the trade was liberalized and opened to import of larger quantities of goods, shopping malls were built by business groups. Migrants sending money through
traders gave rise to *Dahabshiil*, a network of agents for money transfer which still is significant for the economy in Eastleigh.

The first settlers to start trade in Eastleigh were Kenyan Somalis. Eastleigh represented a large diversity of cultures and people and still today there is an influx of people from other parts of Kenya and other African countries. Khat farmers from the *Meru* tribe in central Kenya, are moving in because of trade opportunities. The northern part of Kenya is marginalized and there is a high population of a Somali tribe called *Garre*, originally Somalis, with a history of close connections to Oromos in the north of Kenya. From this, we can see the connections in trade through history, between the people who inhabit the area which has surely contributed to what it is today, a transnational, multicultural estate, and a significant center for East African trade. We can also see that Somali migration into Kenya and Nairobi is not only a contemporary phenomenon.

**Eastleigh today**

Eastleigh is today one of the most important East-African centers for commerce and trade. The main trade routes link Kenya, Somalia, the Emirates (Dubai) and China. There is also a significant trade done with the northern parts of Kenya with the biggest refugee, Kakuma and Dadaab, both with the administration and the refugees in the camps. Eastleigh economy is based on networks and interconnectedness nationally and globally. There were supportive informal networks for those looking for possibilities to trade and other ideas of own agency which is contributing to the image of Eastleigh as a ‘good place’. Carrier writes about “role models of rapid economic advancement” in Eastleigh giving rise to an “Eastleigh Dream” and as a number of Somalis are moving in from the diaspora, “social mobility appear intricately connected with physical mobility” (Carrier 2016:135). Some come to Eastleigh with capital and there are possibilities to bank loans, however, it is an opportunity not frequently used as many do not trust bank loans (ibid:146). Even smaller scaled trade and shops are hard to enter, and a goodwill needs to be paid to establish a business. A common start is to become a shopkeeper or to sell goods for a wholesaler. Finding a source of outcome is not only about economic capital, but also about skills, experience, and social capital in form of networks. For most of those moving in, business is on a lower scale and many end up in service jobs (ibid:135). My material shows the difficulties of social mobility but also that the road to ‘success’ in Eastleigh was not what everybody aimed for.
The estate is divided into Eastleigh North, Eastleigh South, Airbase and a slum area Kiyambuyo. The number of inhabitants was 175,000 in 2012, according to a UNHCR report (UNHCR 2012). Refugees and asylum seekers live in Eastleigh North and Airbase, including other inhabitants, the number estimated to 43,000 (2009), according to a UNHCR report. The population is estimated at 315,496 (Government of Kenya 2009). Education and health care services are provided in Eastleigh but some of my informants testified about being rejected for treatment on several occasions because of no documentation. There are five tuition-free public primary schools, in theory, open also for refugees and asylum seekers. However, all schools are not accepting refugee children, claiming lack of teachers, desks and because of poor water and sanitation facilities (UNHCR 2012). For religious education, there were Madrasas (Quran schools) and the high number of Mosques show the Muslim presence in the estate. Due to urban mobility and a great number of refugees moving in, the Somali and the Muslim presence in Eastleigh is preserved.

In a wide diversity of different nationalities in Eastleigh, Somali presence is salient. The Somali pronunciation of the estate name, “Islii”, is commonly used among both locals and visitors which is a sign of Somali influence. Spoken Somali language and people in traditional Somali clothing dominate the street picture, but also people from Nairobi who come for trade deals, cheap shopping and bargains from the hawkers selling new and second-hand goods. Occasionally some tourists find their way to the estate. There are daily matatus between the city center and Eastleigh. Outside Gateway Bus Services where the buses leave for Garissa and for the camps in the north, people are gathering already the night before to get a ticket. Many of them are refugees who are not registered in Nairobi and need to go to the camps regularly to register. There is a constant flow of people and money. Regular money remittances are done from Nairobi to the camps by refugees who have found work and they send money to family members in the camp through local agents. The business and the crowds of people moving through the city makes it vibrant and full of life. The roads are dusty and full of potholes. What struck me from the first day was the lack of trees in the estate. GoK has still not made any major efforts to improve the roads and of the estate and the only tarmac road is 1st Avenue, the main street.

Moving in town in the late evening, I noted the 1st Avenue was crowded with hawkers (street vendors) sitting on the pavement selling their goods. They sell at night when there are no city council officials moving. The majority of the hawkers are coming from outside Eastleigh; it is a mixture of nationalities and tribes, mainly Oromos and Somalis, but also Kikuyus, Kenyan
Somalis, and Akambas from eastern Kenya. In March 2017, because of upcoming elections and competition about voters, parliament members chose to allow hawkers to sell in the streets and they became more frequent in the daytime. During my last days in Eastleigh, there were frequent riots between the street hawkers and shop owners because of the sudden refraining from the authorities. The shop owners chose to take the law into their own hands and with stones and sticks, they chased the hawkers away. People in the streets, including me, took protection in the closest malls and shops and all traffic in the streets was stopped for several hours until the situation calmed.

There is a contradictory image of Eastleigh as a good place and a terror nest and rumors are spread that a great deal of the flourishing economy is based on terror networks. The estate is by GoK considered a credible hold for terrorists and counterterror raids have been carried out in the area after the attack on Westgate Shopping Mall and Garissa University College. Eastleigh became “a no-go area” but despite this, traders, shoppers, migrants frequently visit and inhabit the area and the trade activities do not seem to cease.

Picture from the main street in Eastleigh
3. Flight and arrival

Forced migration means broken relations with close family members and friends, and it often involves traumatic memories of violence, death, and separation. Most of my informants told about people they lost and homes that were destroyed in the war. The flight was a sudden, unplanned, forced event including separation. Somali and Oromo refugees flee to the refugee camps in northern Kenya or directly to Eastleigh. Those coming directly mostly arrive to Eastleigh with lorries and brokers who drop them in secret in the early morning at the end of 2nd Avenue. My informants told about feelings of confusion, disorientation, and alienation at arrival. Tuigi, an Oromo middle-aged man, described his feelings at arrival as “only standing on one leg”. Metaphors, as falling and standing up are commonly used when it comes to losing balance mentally which also shows the connection body and mind (Jackson 2013:55). My informants witnessed about feelings of disorientation and lost balance but also about their activity to regain a sense of control and meaning – to stand up again.

Separation and loss

The loss appears in many shapes and there had been losses and fears of death before the flight. Sadiya, born 1990, arrived in Eastleigh 2009 and this is what she tells me about her flight:

One night at home a missile hit the house and killed my brother and sister. Everybody ran... I lost contact with my parents. I don’t still know where they are. I have tried through Red Cross, but they are not found. I left with my neighbors’ family. We came directly to Eastleigh with lorry and had no problems during the trip. I was feeling disappointed and lonely because I could not stay with my own family.

The decision about leaving was taken in a moment. There was no time for planning, no possibility to take clothes and belongings. The experiences my informants shared were about immense personal losses and how they survived. Having fled their homes, they possessed nothing materially nor positionally in the new setting and they had no status. “Those actively dispossessed [...] or physically dislocated, often lose not only physical place and property and the means of production or livelihood but also a sense of their ‘proper’ place in the world” (Hammar 2014:15). Sa’ida, a young Oromo woman expresses it like this: “When you not live in your own country, you own nothing, you are nothing”. Except for loss of material things, there are losses of positions in a kinship system and in the social structure in the place of origin.

It was a loss of home and home is “a place to where your thoughts constantly return” (Jackson
1995:66). Home is a central place, but it is also a group of people (ibid). Tuigi, who arrived with a lorry in November 2016, describes his distraction and lack of memory and connects it with too much stress about the situation of his family at home:

*My nature change and my mind. There are fights in the border Somalia and Ethiopia about land. Family cannot move. Now I start forgetting things. Yesterday you called me I was thinking too much...sometimes burn inside...I did not remember today. I’m not old enough to forget things [...] Everything is new, the place, the people. Memories of the moment I left my home and family chase me.*

Tuigi is haunted by memories from the past and his thoughts are returning there. Worrying about his family makes it hard for him to concentrate on the present. The new place makes its presence in all its strangeness and unfamiliarity.

Hawa, born 1954, experienced a loss of daily routines, remembering the daily life in the countryside before the family moved to Mogadishu. She tells me about her life in Somalia before the civil war when her husband was alive, and they were still living in the countryside. He was working, and she was a housewife, washing, and cooking and she says: “Life was good.” Hawa was often talking about her life in the countryside and it was obvious that her thoughts often returned to a past homeplace. Her husband was killed in Mogadishu in an attack, not targeted at him, but he happened to be at the place. Her memories go back to the time when her husband was alive.

Fatuma, born 1950, fled from the havoc in Somalia, caused by the invasion of Ethiopian troops in 2007. She came from Galgadud region in central Somalia where she had witnessed destruction, killings, and rapes by Ethiopian military. She left 2008 with her 17-year old son to the border point Dobli and from the border with lorry directly to Eastleigh as she had a relative in the estate.

Sadiya fled first from Somalia and a second time from Kakuma refugee camp from a mistreating husband. She was pregnant, and she started to give birth in the transport. A woman assisted her, and she gave birth to a son in the car. She got injuries from the delivery and she was taken to the hospital at arrival to Eastleigh. “I did not have money, but the mosque paid the hospital bill and the woman who helped me offered me to stay with her.” This shows the solidarity that is shown during the extremely vulnerable and life dangerous event a flight can be.

Hassan came to Kenya and Dadaab refugee camp in 2008. He left Somalia without his family, accompanied by a neighbor family.
I left Somalia very suddenly in 2008, I was 16 years old, when Ethiopian troops entered, thousands of people were killed, we left immediately. Before this... life was not bad, the only struggle was for daily bread. They [family] got evacuated to other places in Somalia and I left alone to Kenya.

I cannot reach them now...the last time was 2009. I don’t know anything about them.

Hassan was at a young age separated from his parents and missing the support of close family. The neighbor family left the camp and he was again alone without their emotional support. He came to Eastleigh 2012 and he talks warmly about his relatives in Eastleigh who welcomed him to their home in Eastleigh. But most traumatic for my informants was the loss of family members and I would say not only loss of place but a strong presence of the new place.

At arrival

In this time at arrival space is unrecognizable and unfamiliar but there are urgent practical things that need to be arranged, like accommodation, finding social connections, registering to UNHCR and getting to know the place. Having relatives simplified both practical arrangements such as housing and emotional support. The search for housing was as well less urgent matter in that case. In Eastleigh, like in many other places around the world where refugees arrive, the network of compatriots is beneficial. As Abdi writes “Not only do the earlier arrivals assist with the search for employment but they also reduce the emotional costs and risks of migration to an unknown destination (Abdi 2015:14). Everybody is not fortunate to have relatives but in Eastleigh a solidarity in the Somali community and the Oromo community is present. Most of my Somali informants were hosted by relatives or neighbors from Somalia but there was also a support network of people hosting fellow compatriots. Some fled together with neighbors who already had accommodation arranged and lived with them until they found other options. A common way to save costs were sharing an apartment and refugees in Eastleigh often live in overcrowded rooms where the floor was at night covered with mattresses while some who were a little bit better of had beds in spacious rooms. Having relatives or connections already at arrival means that somebody can be helpful and assist in getting familiar with the new space, the resettlement process, and all the paperwork to UNHCR.

The ward¹ administration can be helpful at arrival. A support network is administered by the local ward, and the chairperson of each ward is also responsible for assisting refugees and asylum seekers. According to Clive, who is a community worker and chairperson of the
Airbase ward, many of the newcomers have no money or connections at arrival in Eastleigh. The Oromo refugees start looking for someone in their own community and the Somali refugees the closest mosque or a clan leader to help them with accommodation. As a chairman Clive also helps with these matters; he assists in registering to UNHCR at Saint Teresa Church in 1st Avenue and with what is necessary the first weeks.

Tuigi came directly to Eastleigh from Moyale, a market town in the border to Ethiopia, with a lorry carrying cattle. He did not know anything about Eastleigh and he says he was “very confused” at arrival. He did not have any contacts and he approached somebody he heard talking his language. He was shown to 10th street where he could get help from somebody in the Oromo community.

It was dark when I came here, I asked in an Ethiopian restaurant for help and they showed me where to get a room for the night and who could help me. I was very dirty as I had been helping with the cattle and I felt shame. I did not know anything. Now I want to stand on my both legs, not only one.

The darkness when arriving in the middle of the night made the situation more vulnerable and Tuigi expresses a feeling of shame. This together with the confusion makes the experience of arrival daunting. The last phrase was showing a determination to work on his situation and to spring to action. There was a general attitude among the informants that life needs to continue when the first confusion has abated. Tuigi, who recently had arrived seemed still in an emergency mode, in search for accommodation as the place where he stayed was temporary. In our first meeting, he said he was moving around with great care in the close neighborhood of Oromo community where it felt safe before looking for work opportunities. His biggest fear was of “spies” sent out by the Ethiopian Government to take Ethiopian refugees to the embassy and send them back.

The strong feeling of alienation and displacement needs to be substituted with substituted with a sense of stability and familiarity. Lems mentions emplacement and is following Heidegger: “Emplacement is not about creating ties to a fixed and stable built environment but about the very process of being-in-place (Heidegger 1975:147-148, Lems 2015:327). This can be applicable to next chapter as it will show the difficulties they faced connected with the space they were in. I would say this describes that we are always in place. However, becoming part of a place involves ties in some form to the place we are in. Many used the word loneliness to describe their feelings after the flight. The loss of dear ones and the memories of flight are still highly present. The new place is not recognizable and there is an absence of home and for
my informants regaining balance and getting a sense of control is necessary for making themselves part of the place.
4. Unshielded refugeeness

Most of my interviewees said they did not have any expectations before coming to Eastleigh. They were simply aiming for safety. What they did not expect was regular ID-checks in the streets and arbitrary arrests. Unexpected was the lingering waiting for interviews, for refugee mandate, for ID-documents, to reach the point when they could apply for resettlement and waiting for the decision. “At some time or another, we all find ourselves struggling to reconcile the gap between expectation and reality - to explain the sense of disappointment and unfairness that oppresses us whenever wishful thinking comes up against limited opportunity” (Jackson 2013:131). The opportunities were clearly limited for my informants in finding ways to livelihood and there was a lack of protection. In the search of how people become part of the place in displacement, it is essential to obtain the experiences directly from themselves; how they experience it and what were their expectations. In this chapter, the spatial mechanisms working against becoming part of the place will be examined and in which form they can appear for my informants in Eastleigh. In this space where they are exposed to new dangers as arbitrary arrests, governmental raids, and exploitation, the protection they have the right to is hardly obtained.

Unsafe and unprotected

One of the biggest concerns of my informants in Eastleigh were the lack of safety and institutions protecting. According to the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of refugees, they should have right to protection and right to public relief and assistance (Article 23), right to freedom of movement within the territory (Article 26), right to be issued identity and travel documents (Articles 27 and 28) (UNHCR). My informants told about difficulties in making appointments to UNHCR and that the process of obtaining documentation was slow. The unsafety was highly connected to lack of documentation. Because of the ID-checks in the streets, my informants always needed to carry documentation. The documents issued by DRA and UNHCR should include the rights to be protected but this was not the case. The slow process of obtaining the refugee mandate was further aggravating the situation for my informants. The application followed by interviews and it could last from 6 months up to many years until a decision was received. According to my informants the second ARC-document was almost impossible to receive and even if they had valid documentation and refugee mandate these were not considered as valid in the constant ID-
checks by police officers in the streets, in many cases leading to arrests if no possibility to pay bribes. Khadija, a Somali woman born 1985, says her greatest fear when she goes out of the house are the ID-checks. The police officers often required Alien IDs issued by the Immigration Office even if the UNHCR document was legitimate. Almost everyone had experienced arrest at some point of their stay in Eastleigh because of not having ‘required documentation’. Local police officers took the opportunities to fill their own pockets and if there was no possibility to pay, the accused was arrested. In some cases, the arrested were brought to court. Some of my informants had experienced harassment from state officials when applying for Alien ID cards. Che pointed out that a common reason for not applying for the Alien ID is the humiliation they are exposed to and some of my informants confirmed this.

Regular disapproving encounters with city council officials, corrupted police officers, and UN guards causes a strong feeling of not being accepted and constantly questioned in space. They did not feel protected by the host state, neither by UNHCR. Whether refugees are in camps or urban areas they have the same rights to protection. Despite the government’s efforts to keep refugees in the camp, many left for urban areas. If the special permission for movement was not received it was not possible to register in Nairobi. This caused a feeling of being “not here” and “not there” among my informants who chose to live in Eastleigh.

Outside the Saint Teresa’s Catholic Church on 1st Avenue people are lining up every day to pass the gate and enter the UNHCR office to register as refugees in Nairobi, to ask about their cases and other issues. Sometimes the hours of waiting are in vain, sometimes the gatekeepers are not giving the permission to enter, and sometimes people are physically pushed away. Amina says that she has no close connection to UNHCR if none. Many of my informants confirmed the difficulties in reaching UNHCR and that they faced difficulties in passing through gates to the institutions hindered by the gatekeepers. The gatekeepers are Kenyan citizens, a symbolic wall between the UN staff, the hosting state and the refugees. Amina tells me: “People complain that UNHCR is hard to reach, and we have experienced the same. My mother got pushed by gatekeepers once.” Amina interprets the ignorance as the fact that they are Kenyans and “they do not like refugees.” She expresses a feeling of not being accepted and this was connected with her status as a refugee. Amina was arrested during the Usalama Watch Operation. The police, in civil clothing, knocked at the door at night and asked for ID. Amina asked the officer to show his ID, but the request was neglected. She was arrested and threatened to be taken to court but was released the next day. Amina is grateful every morning when she wakes up and nothing bad has happened during the night. As they are only women
living in the apartment they feel unsafe to be forced to open the door in the middle of the
night. The home place, which should be a safe zone, also turns into a place of danger. Home
stands for safety and when exposed to danger in the safe zone the fear can be paralyzing and
traumatic.

The counterterror raids carried out by the Government and Kenyan Defense Force being
occasional events happening without warnings and inducing unpredictability and immense
fear. After the terror attack in Westgate Shopping Mall by al-Shabaab, Eastleigh was
considered a hold for members of al-Shabaab and the police was targeting the Somali
community in Eastleigh in their counter-terror operation in April 2014, Operation Usalama
Watch. Deportations, detentions and forced relocations to camps were carried out. The
counter-terror raids made Eastleigh unsafe for Somali refugees and Kenyan Somalis, and
refugees from the Oromo community were also arrested during the operation. The raids were
particularly targeted, and the Somalis as a specific ethnic group were considered a threat to
security. There have been other similar unannounced operations, usually shortly after terror
attacks in Kenya and my informants testified about fear of such attacks at any time. The terror
attacks in the state and the mere fact that the refugees are living in Eastleigh make them
presumptive terrorists or suspected supporters of the organization. Being under suspicion is
contributing to a feeling of not being protected but also of not being accepted in space.

Bureaucratic procedures and ‘non-faced’ people making decisions about their lives resulted in
a power placed upon them and “residing in an impersonal force field” (Jackson 2013:148) to
which they cannot relate or influence directly. Constant ID-checks and the fear of
counterterror raids added up the feeling of being unprotected and acted upon and fractional
possibilities to improve one’s own safety. When no possibilities in improved safety could be
imagined in the place they resided in at the moment and a return was unthinkable, the only
possibility was seen in resettlement and change of place.

Refugeeness

My informants’ first sites for protection was Dadaab refugee camp or the urban setting of
Nairobi. At arrival, the home was absent both physically and mentally, and there was an
unpredictability of what would happen. My informants, without viable documentation, are
extremely vulnerable to different forms of abuse, from the police force and from state
bureaucracies. With an additional feeling of alienation, quoting Lems, “the force of
displacement enters body and mind” and there is an “inescapable power of place” (Lems 2016:316), referring to the new environment.

A protracted waiting taking my informants further in the process also meant a protracted displacement. Unexpected was the lingering waiting for interviews, for refugee mandate, for ID-documents, to reach the point when they could apply for resettlement followed by several interviews and more waiting on a decision. A majority of the refugees I interviewed had arrived in Kenya between 2007-2010. This means that the average time they had waited was 8 years. Ruqiya, born 1986, fled 2004 with her uncle when the village was hit by missiles and her aunt and brother was killed. Her parents had passed away from natural causes and she was raised by her aunt and uncle. She came to Dadaab refugee camp in 2004 with her uncle but he was hunted to the camp by al-Shabaab. They got a transfer to Kakuma for safety reasons by the camp administration. Shortly after that, they did a new application for Nairobi for same reasons. In 2010 they got refugee mandate, after 6 years in Kenya. This gives an idea about the time span of waiting for different stages in the resettlement process. I was told that the process for refugee mandate was normally faster if staying in the camps but with referral to Ruqiya’s story it did not apply to all cases.

I noted that refugeeess was experienced differently among my informants. Farhan was 19 when he arrived in Eastleigh in 2009, expecting a fast transfer to a third country. At the time for our meetings, he was still waiting for a decision on resettlement. He first arrived in Dadaab but experienced the life in the camp as very difficult and he ‘ran away’ to Eastleigh.

*I never expect to be here tomorrow, then I can be somewhere else...from the government I expect nothing. You are a refugee, you are not Kenyan. A refugee is a bad word – it means you are displaced, nobody wants to be called refugee. I’m thinking, whatever happens, that is God’s plan and I believe one day I will leave the name of refugee behind.*

To be named a refugee is a label that Farhan does not wish for. He sees refugeeess as a temporary state that he can leave behind, but it includes leaving Eastleigh and Kenya behind. This is comparable with Burundian town refugees in Kigoma who experienced the label refugee neither useful nor desirable (Malkki 1995a:168). They rather experienced it as hindering. However, their situation was different, thus for the Burundian refugees in Kigoma the stay was considered permanent and seen as a hinder for settling in the place. Farhan considers his stay as temporary despite the many years of waiting. The refugee mandate is required and desired to allow him to go on with the process for resettlement. However, the
segregated and stigmatizing state as a refugee without equal legal rights with Kenyan citizens is for Farhan connected to Eastleigh as place and has an imagined unknown expiration date.

Farhiya, born 1991, arrived by August 2016 to Eastleigh. Her main reason to come to Eastleigh was that her father wanted to force her into marriage for the second time with a man she had divorced due to maltreatment. A female relative in Eastleigh sent her money for transport and she came by lorry from the border point. She has still not succeeded in getting an appointment to apply for the refugee mandate.

*My expectations were that I was going to be safe, but I don’t have any documentation and I can’t go out. If I get mandate I will be like the others. Now I am below them. I am a house girl, if I have better work I would have better living...I don’t want to go back...I am fearing I will be forced again. He [ex-husband] used to beat me, we had conflicts, here I am safer.*

For Farhiya the refugee mandate is desired and the recognition as a refugee is important for her. The refugee status is important to go on with her process and to be able to move to Eastleigh. But the recognition as a refugee also gives her a desirable position among other refugees. Her status is connected to the actual mandate, but also as she sees it, with the activities she performs. As long as she has no paper of appointment to UNHCR she cannot risk getting caught by the police. At the same time, Eastleigh opened up possibilities to apply for a refugee mandate which keeps her safe from a return to a future she does not wish for. Farhan and Farhiya are in different stages of the process which explains the differing relation of being a refugee. It shows how the conception of being a refugee also changes temporally depending on in which stage of the process they are. This shows a duality in refugeeeness; simultaneously with not being wished for it was also desired to go on to a resettlement process. They are both in a standstill, spatially and temporally, waiting for the next stage in the process.

The emergency state during flight and at arrival is replaced by a prolonged waiting in exile. An in-between state both spatially and temporally “comes with a lack of knowledge of one’s own situation” (Horst and Grabska 2015:6). Proceeding with the resettlement process, obtaining knowledge about one’s rights and how to reach UNHCR was a constant struggle. Contributing to uncertainty for my informants in Eastleigh was not knowing if, and when they would receive the refugee mandate and for how long the resettlement process would last. The insecurities linked to their refugee status and the wish to continue the journey had an impact on their belonging and wellbeing.
Vulnerability in displacement

Some of the women in my group of informants had been exposed to abuse and violence, in the camps or in Eastleigh. Health issues as allergy, and hypertension is frequent among the women I interviewed. The feeling of nobody helping was generally expressed by those with severe health problems. Many of the women told stories of witnessing own families getting killed, robbery in the border areas and of violence and rape. Rapes had occurred in Somalia, during flight, in the camps, and in Eastleigh. Khadija is born 1985 and came to Eastleigh 2007. Her entire family was killed when a missile hit their house in Mogadishu. She came with her neighbors and stayed with them working as a house girl. After two months of employment, they told her to go and look for her own survival. I met with Khadija in the apartment where she stays now. There were always many children and women present, but the ambiance was tranquil and silent. Khadija is telling what happened to her in her last workplaces:

*I started working as a house girl in a family, I was sleeping in the kitchen. One day the food got burned and the woman in the house punished me with throwing hot water on my legs. The neighbor of the family took me to the hospital and helped me later to relocate. I stayed for 5 months with the new family and then 1 year with another.*

After this she was cooking for a male household, meanwhile staying with another family. One day, she was told to come and get the salary and when she got into the house she got blindfolded and forced to the floor. She got raped by two men and has no memory of how long it was going on.

*I fainted and at night they threw me outside on the street. Some women found me and brought me to the hospital where I stayed for two months. I now stay with one of the women (Fatima) who brought me to the hospital and I help with the household...Now I just use my patience that my life will one day be better.*

She reported the rape to the police who went to search for the men, but they had shifted from the house. The men are still threatening her by phone, but the police do not want her to change the phone number as the calls can give them some information. Now she covers her face with *niqāb*, covering the face when she leaves the house. She did not cover her face before the rape but as she says, she does not want anybody to see her face now. Now Khadija helps with the household and takes care of the children while Fatima is working as a tea vendor. Khadija was a total stranger to Fatima, but she sees it as her obligation to help her. She has no relatives alive as she knows and nobody who can support her. She avoids going out and for her, space
is dangerous and limited both because of fear of abuse, the ID-checks, and the Kenyan police. Those who are expected to give protection are the sources of her fear.

Many of the refugee women had a relatively small group of people with whom they interacted. Because even if there were a big Somali community and a densely populated area it did not necessarily signify interaction. As mentioned before, many of the women were careful with their social interactions and in whom they trusted, which did not imply they did not have a relation to the place. How the recourses are desired, how they can be used, how they are controlled and by whom (Hammar 2014:10) affects the relation to place. Khadija says she basically talk and share her thoughts only with the family she lives with. She does not talk to anybody outside the house unless she is talked to.

Maryam got married in Kismayo and gave birth to three children. Because of abuse from the husband she got a divorce and left for IFO refugee camp (part of Daadab today) where she stayed for 15 days, and then left for Nairobi and Eastleigh. She was staying with relatives for one month but is now managing to pay her own rent in a shared apartment for the income she gets as a mobile tea vendor. The children go to school arranged by other Somali refugees in the neighborhood for a small fee. Maryan tells me she got raped in Eastleigh soon after arrival.

I am a rape victim, I was raped by a relative of my former husband in 2014. I reported it to the police and the police officer told me to ‘bring money and I will help’. Even Kenyans don’t go to the police. I went to the hospital and to UN to report to Protection Office.

She faced violence from other Somalis in the country where she sought protection and she got no help from the police. Her report was not considered by the police, neither has she got a response on her report to the protection office of UNHCR. She says: “They should be on our side” and by saying that expressing a disappointment in the unreachability of protecting institutions and officials.

Fadumo is born 1985 and she arrived in Kenya in 2010, as a single mother with two children. She cannot read or write, and she would like to go to a tuition class, but she says she has no money and she needs to take care of the children. Fadumo wants to do a change in her life, but she sees no solution in Eastleigh at the moment. She has severe health problems and her priority after safety is to get medical treatment and surgery but the operation she needs is not possible to have in Kenya.
A good health would change everything. I cannot do what I want now. I talk to Somali people mostly. But I have problems to hear because of ear problem and I feel nervous and I get stressed when it is too noisy.

Fadumo’s application for resettlement got rejected “due to incomplete papers”. Her doctor had given insufficient information because she was late with requested X-rays as she had to go to the mosque to request for money. She was “not on good terms” with the doctor and he did not give all the information to UNHCR. She was helped by Abdi to make an appeal. In time for our last interview, all documents were complete. She said she gave the papers to a gatekeeper at UNHCR, who never returned with information and she was not allowed to enter. Now she does not know if the appeal is submitted. “I’m tired - there is nothing I can do,” Fadumo says. The lack of information about her status combined with a total dependency on bureaucratic certifications gave rise to resignation and lost hope.

Worries for the security of family members selling in the streets were an additional cause of stress and health problems. Fatuma tells me:

When I came here I stayed with a relative. I was selling milk and cereals...6 months since I stopped because the city council officers chased me [...]my situation not good now... I have hypertension and high blood sugar. Sometimes my uncle takes me to the hospital when I feel sick.

Now he is in the UK. My son is a vendor...he sells water, sometimes he gets [money], sometimes not. If I get a chance I want to go from here for medical reasons and a better life.

Her son being a vendor is the only income source for them, but they do not have to pay rent to the Fatuma’s uncle. Fatuma says she moves only close to home in fear of ID-checks and every time her son is arrested it affects hypertension. For her, a good health is combined with another place in the future, not Eastleigh.

For many of the Somali refugee women, life in flight and displacement was highly vulnerable. Some women had received help from the mosques in urgent health matters or need of food support. A hindering factor for requesting help from a mosque was that it had to be made by a man, as the women were not permitted to the men’s area in the mosque, where the imam was to be found. It also seemed the information about CBOs and the ward community support did not reach everybody in the refugee communities. My informants lacked knowledge of this opportunity.

Lacking protection from the police was adding to the feeling of being unsafe and unprotected and they could not always be sure about who to trust among their own countrymen and -
women. Employment as housemaids involves a risk of domestic abuse and maltreatment. Those who additionally have health problems have severe problems to manage. As Fadumo expressed it: “Nobody can help me. I am alone in this”. The most requisite help were the women’s acts of solidarity and helping each other when in need. The vulnerability is to a certain extent created by the hosting state which should provide protection and information to refugees which are confirmed by Horst and Grabska:” the states that host displaced populations rarely provide them with sufficient knowledge about their situation, creating a range of vulnerabilities that they experience” (Horst and Grabska 2015:10). Due to the feeling of unsafety, unprotection, and a small social network, the women moved in limited space. Chances to become a part of the place were small and increased the wish of temporariness. Final expected safety was seen in the resettlement, in a future, and in another place.

Ways to livelihood

The socioeconomic fragile situation and lack of safety contributed to a vulnerable state. Many refugees in Eastleigh make their living as hawkers (street vendors) in the night time. Hawkers are not welcomed by the shop owners as it disturbs their business. They are also normally chased away by the city council. It is illegal to sell in the street and only allowed in marketplaces assigned for it but for my informants, this was not an option, as they could not afford to pay the fee. Selling in the street involves a risk because of state regulations and controlling city council guards. Because of governmental restricted policies for sales and work refugees were in many aspects excluded from the economics and trade that Eastleigh is known for. Most of my female informants earned their daily support through vending tea and milk in the street or as housemaids. The female vendors challenged the restrictions for the need of money for food and rent and to provide for their children. They did not see any other possibilities. The small social networks many of the women had and the difficulties they experienced in finding people they could trust and with that possibility of new and more reliable sources of income. Maryam is not satisfied with the options she has found in Eastleigh.

I’m looking forward to having a good life because it is not possible here, what can you do to have a good life here? No possibilities here, I have been working as tea vendor for 7 years, I don’t see any way forward.
Maryam shows a disappointment in that her situation has changed during her seven years in Eastleigh. She blames the state for not supporting her as a refugee, providing her with opportunities to take steps forward to get more income. Difficulties in finding work and lack of capital are constraining the possibilities to move forward. Maryam does not see any future in Eastleigh for herself and the children. With her work as a tea vendor, she barely manages to support them. Without permission to sell, her ways to support herself and the children are limited.

My informants were making a living as tea or milk vendors, hawkers, housemaids, hotel cleaners, and waiters but many also said they had stopped their activities. Those who are more fortunate in their search for livelihood in Eastleigh normally have financial capital or contacts to relatives or clan members in the estate. Some of the informants were supported by relatives in Eastleigh or outside Kenya. Idman, born 1992, came 2007 with her aunt and they are supported by her aunt’s husband in England. Idman says she is not able to support herself at the moment, as she has been taken to the police station for arrest several times when selling tea and she is now afraid to continue. “I feel unsafe when I walk the street and I see the police… I am afraid they will take me to Pangani police station, so I stay inside…the police not protect, they distort.” Idman is fortunate to have someone supporting her but her wish is to be independent and earn money for herself and her children.

When a possibility to make a living is found, it is often stopped because of fear of arrest. The possibilities to work are constrained by council regulations and lack of money to pay market fees. It is a system of exclusion, and in the role of hawkers, the refugees are “not allowed in space” (Low 2011:389). Livelihood and possibility to work for own survival are essential in becoming part of the place as the activity gives a sense of autonomy and ownership. The lack of safety attached to attempts at making a living and the limited freedom of movement within Eastleigh reduced the possibilities to earn a living through sales.

I asked about possibilities to create connections and social relations in the field of sales and to find a safer option for livelihood. Maryam describes her relations with other saleswomen from Somalia:

> Every day I meet other women at the market. What are we talking about? We talk about business – we don’t talk about Somalia, we don’t talk about private things. My problem is my problem, and nobody will help me. It is our culture, a question of to be trusted and to trust. It is not only here, it is also like that in Somalia.
According to Maryam the reason to leave others to their private matters was a cultural aspect; not talking private things with people she did not know if to trust. Selling was the important task which also explains why private matters were left out. She was careful in her social interaction. Added to this she is constantly changing place for security reasons and the people she is surrounded with vary. Simone is in his series of articles Afterword: Afterword: Come on out, you’re surrounded: The betweens of infrastructure (2015) about how people situate themselves and what impact they have on each other in different locations and times. In a discussion on the difficult balance between solidarity and difference among urban dwellers he writes following:

*The labor-intensive demands of putting bread on the table also mean that people do not have the time or energy to pay a great deal of attention to all of those who surround them. Enactments of aloneness stand out but at the same time if residents are to make creative and often parasitical use of each other, it is also important to learn how to leave fellow residents alone."* (Simone 2015:379).

For Maryam, it was not only about leaving ‘a fellow resident’ alone but also to be left alone to avoid the risk of being used. This may explain the relatively small networks some of the women had. The possibility to sell in the streets were limited and the business and trade networks Eastleigh are famous for were difficult to enter if no contacts and no capital. It was difficult to know whom to trust or to not trust in the struggle for money for food and rent along with a lacking ability to respond to mistreatment and to claim rights. My informants were at risk of abuse, discrimination, harassment, and exploitation at work and working in domestic households were not always safe. Finding ways to economical support was a difficult task and caused a lot of hardships and despair. When a solution was found it was often interrupted by state restrictions and local police.

**Excluding space, walls, and gates**

Fear of ID-checks and detention were part of everyday life in Eastleigh and caused a feeling of not being secure or protected. According to Glück and Low, security has two meanings; “a state of being” which means the emotional, embodied state based on experience and produced socially and that of “state power and governance” which refers to the governmental state (Glück and Low 2017:286). The latter might produce forms of social injustice and exclusion and I would argue there were clear patterns of exclusion in Eastleigh. The general comprehension among refugees was that the government and corrupt officials were to be
blamed for the difficulties in getting valid documentation. The police, security guards, gatekeepers and governmental officials turned out to be "a shadow government operating behind the scenes" (Glück and Low 2017:285). This produces a space where security is absent for a group of people.

According to a UNHCR report from 2012, the Governmental Refugee Act was a progress.

*The Refugee Act 2006 conferred progressive rights to refugees...a commitment to international refugee conventions, recognition of asylum seekers and refugees along with issuance of a refugee identity card, protection from arbitrary arrest, detention or expulsion, and recognition of refugee rights to economic and productive activities” (UNHCR report 2012).*

The reality looks different, even if UNHCR was giving training in these issues to DRA officers and the local wards are continuously working on raising awareness for the local police authority about these issues, in cooperation with UNHCR. According to some of my informants, there had been a minor decrease in arrests, though it was still a major problem. The problems that my informants faced in Eastleigh were related to accusations of not being legitimate, arbitrary arrests, corruptive officials in Government institutions, and unreachable personnel in UNHCR. All the above mentioned functioned like a wall hindering my informants to become included and feeling part of the place. According to Low, walls, and fences, visible and invisible, are ‘systems of exclusion’ and revealing these systems is essential in order to see patterns of inequality. She mentions one system as a “physical enclosure that limits who can enter or exit, such as fenced or gated spaces” (Low 2011:389). These are some of the ‘walls’ that the refugees in Eastleigh continuously need to face and force in their process for resettlement. “From border walls to gated communities, policed urban centers and “pulverized ‘peripheries’, to planetary imaginaries of terrorist threats and global surveillance infrastructures, security produces particular kinds of spaces” (Glück and Low 2017:281). Some of the interviewed said that sometimes they cannot pass the gates even if they have appointments. Many felt uncomfortable entering shopping malls even if they had means of paying for goods in the shops. Fenced and gated spaces, surveillance strategies, ability to pay, symbolically determined spaces who is welcomed or excluded are contributing to inequality and exclusion (Low 2009:391) and this is the case regarding refugees in Eastleigh. Lack of safety, forms of social exclusion and the access to spatial resources affect the relation to place becoming a part of it. Most commonly expressed by my informants was the disappointment with the institutions aimed to protect them and assist them.
What the refugees experienced in Eastleigh can be mentioned as an example of the effect of exercise of power and authority practices and it caused an insecure state of being. The lack of safety in Eastleigh through unpredictable ID-checks, arbitrary arrests, corrupted police, the risk of abuse and sexual exploitation added up the feeling of not being part of the place. It also affected the self-confidence being constantly questioned in space. With Fadumo’s words:

*A good life includes safety and to live in a place where it is peace, where I can have self-confidence and where I can be independent. To be in a place where there is no safety, no peace, it has affected my self-confidence.*

Additionally, being under watch and suspicion from the government as eventual terrorists were arduous issues the refugees had to cope with. Daily life in displacement in Eastleigh implies fear, to be aware of own privacy and to know whom to trust. “As security increasingly becomes a dominant concept and discourse of social life in Kenya, it also becomes an important mechanism through which space is produced” (Glück 2017:299). Glück & Low is calling the transformation of Nairobi and Eastleigh “security urbanism” that is “a set of urban spatial strategies through which state power, securitized subjectivities and the emergence of a Kenyan ‘counterterror state’ is being articulated in the life of the city” (Glück and Low 2017:291). The raids of governmental forces intend to create security but in fact, they create more insecurity for many inhabitants in Eastleigh. Police corruption, surveillance and the ignorance of the governmental institutions upholds patterns of inequality and creates “security space” (Glück 2017: 299). Proclaiming refugees as a threat to state security means they are not given the protection they should be authorized to. The government justifies its action to fight these threats through the terror attacks carried out in Kenya.

This securitized urban space highly affects the lives of the inhabitants of Eastleigh, particularly refugees, nurturing a wish for a temporary stay in their being under siege by forces they could not control. My informants had to accept the situation they were in, but it did not mean they accepted the spatial circumstances. Security, power structures and ascribed position as a refugee mattered and were significant hinders to emplacement. The search for place and a new home was in the displacement in Eastleigh negotiated with the hosting government, with others, with the physical landscape and with far places connected to a past and a future. My informants did not expect to be unsafe and unprotected in Kenya at arrival and there were limited possibilities to influence own fate.
5. A new becoming

My informants felt alienated at arrival and a “balance between self and the world” was lost (Jackson 1995:123). Moving from this state of mind to a feeling of at-homeness is a long-time process, if even possible to achieve in a place that is perceived as temporary. My informants were thrown into a new environment and something they could not control. Heidegger writes about our Geworfenheit (thrownness) into the world (Heidegger 1962:219). We strive for a balance between the world we are thrown into and the world we imagine we are able to create with our sayings and doings. My informants felt great confusion at arrival in Eastleigh not knowing the place, the people, the language of the hosting country nor the social structure.

“Some balance must be possible between the world into which we are thrown without our asking and the world we imagine we might bring into being by dint of what we say and do” (Jackson 1995:123). Echoing Lems, “this thrownness does not mean that they do not have the means to leap into action or obtain changes, but rather that life is never undetermined or neutral, that we are always already situated in something” (Lems 2016:322). The new place is inexorably present, and they relate to it. Something new needs to be built from existing conditions to regain a sense of control and to become part of the place. This involves a feeling of homeness. Jackson describes the term home as follows:

Home is always lived as a relationship, as a tension. Sometimes it is between the place one starts out from and the places where one puts down roots. Sometimes it is between an experience of a place when one is young and the experience of the same place when one gets old. Home, like any other word we use to cover a particular field of experience always begets its own negation. Home may evoke security in one context and seem to confine in another (Jackson 1995:122).

My informants related to Eastleigh in comparison to other places, especially their home country. In this chapter, I will look closer at how they became more familiar with the place and mechanisms favoring this. In waiting for resettlement and with the uncertainty this included there was a strive of becoming part of the place.

Community and unity

To Somali refugees, Eastleigh is a good place due to affordable rents, a network of relatives and compatriots. Second, the mere presence of Somali community in Eastleigh makes it possible to find pockets of familiarity through language, traditions, rituals, and familiar basic commodities. The predominant Somali population in Eastleigh provides a link in history and
religion and language which makes the setting partly recognizable and less strange. There is a religious heritage within the umma (the Islamic community) which is borderless in shared global affinity. Within the Somali community, there were shared cultural values, and this played a significant role in the search for belonging. All these aspects softened the initial cultural shock and feeling of alienation for my Somali informants.

Amina tells me that she, her mother, sister, and nephew came directly to Eastleigh in 2007 and stayed with people from the Somali community until they had to start paying rent. They went to Kakuma in 2008 and then back to Eastleigh 2010 because of her mother Hawa’s health condition. Since that they have together with her sister in been renting an apartment with the help of support from a relative in South Africa. Amina and Hawa did not have close relatives in Eastleigh, they did not have financial capital but a social capital in form of helping compatriots. The solidarity of helping compatriots in need as based on religious values is mentioned by some of my informants. As Hassan says, “you cannot eat or sleep when your neighbor is hungry.”

The weightiness of unity was mentioned in some of the interviews and in different contexts. Hawa says: “Our culture is based on Islam and our culture is to forgive and not to insult anybody […] religion says, we need to be in our unit, but without hostility.” To Hawa, religion and culture go together and is upholding unity. Many of my informants showed a conscious strive of unity, both in terms of unity between clans and within the own clan. The discourse of unity is focusing on ‘one ethnicity, one language, one religion as a “counter to tribalism” (Carrier 2016:101). After the election of the new president in February 2017 thousands of Somalis celebrated in the streets of Eastleigh throughout the night after the election. As Abdi and Amina put it: “He is a president of everybody and brings hope for midnimo (unity). Everybody was there, also people from other parts of Nairobi”. This strive and emphasis on unity and solidarity in form of helping compatriots are significant for becoming part of the place, at least partly in the Somali community. Jackson writes about this in his book on Politics of Storytelling (2002), about the importance of this. He argues that when we are thorn lose from the place we call our own when we have no “settled place”, we “need to be a part of some kindred community” (Jackson 2002:33). My informants felt part of different communities, if not the Somali community it was a group of relatives, friends, housemates or neighbors.

The situation for the Oromo refugees in Eastleigh was in a way more difficult than for the Somali refugees. According to the Oromos, the estate was a better place for Somalis than for
Ethiopians and as Oromos, they felt like they were less part of Eastleigh. They were also in a higher risk of being expelled because of the close connection between the Kenyan and Ethiopian Government and had to be more cautious in their interactions.

My informants shared a cultural and religious belonging to the Somali community. Regarding a societal belonging, it was mostly shown through supporting networks for accommodation and in solidarity for compatriots in need. But mostly they referred to lineage and relatives in terms of belonging to a group. There was no belonging to the hosting state, mainly of reasons I referred to in the previous chapter. It was a partial belonging in many ways.

**Prayers and hope**

It is Friday in the middle of the day. I decide to go to an Ethiopian restaurant in 2nd Avenue to have lunch. The shop-owners in 1st Avenue close their shops, malls are closing, the streets are more silent on Friday afternoon because of the Friday sermon in the Mosque. The landscape changes when I come to 2nd Avenue and I have problems to get to the door. Besides the restaurant is a Mosque and in some 100 meters distance from the mosque, in all directions, men are praying to the voice of the Imam from loudspeakers. They pray in the streets, some on brightly colored mats, some on black plastic bags and cars trying patiently to navigate through the empty passages in the street. Having lunch on the terrace I had two young men almost at the table, murmuring prayers and kneeling. Not only the Friday sermons coined the devout atmosphere, the daily prayers appeared in different contexts, in various places destined for this purpose. Through activities, the place is embodied. The men praying in the street is an example of embodying place. Praying on the ground, touching the ground, publicly in the street, I would say is both a metaphoric, symbolic and physical act strengthening attachment to the place. When the men in Eastleigh pray in the streets, they are “not only expanding their spiritual space, they are also making the place” (Werbner 1996:333). Low explains it like this:

> The body (and bodies), conceptualized as embodied space(s), incorporates metaphors, ideology, and language, as well as behaviors, habits, skills, and spatial orientations derived from global discourses and faraway places — especially for the migrant — and yet is grounded at any one moment in a specific geographical location (Low 2009:22).

Religiously, Eastleigh has a majority of Muslim population. The activity of praying is a habitual sight for non-Muslims in the estate, it is already incorporated. Those who were passing the praying men did not seem to take any special notice. Religion also appeared to be
a theme touching most of the interview answers of my informants and something that
permeated daily life. Inhabiting new space, religious belief, moral and cultural behavior are
contested. My observation in Eastleigh was that religious belief was important to both my
Oromo and Somali informants. Here it is worth to note that regarding religion and culture
Somalis were partly in a familiar environment and the social infrastructure ‘permitted’ and
couraged religious practices. The Oromo informants, who were Muslims and Christians,
were performing religious practices in their homes and did not feel secure using public space
even if there were possibilities. Religion and connected practices are framed with regulations
on how to act, schedules when to pray in a ritualized form. When it comes to settings for
activities, the mosque and the madrasa are of high importance in the meaning turning
Eastleigh into a space where my informants could feel at home in, not only because it is the
space for religious activity, but also because it is something familiar and recognizable.
Religious practice is communicating with a place in the past through the familiar context of
known rituals, language, and settings.

Mustafa prays every day. “I love my religion. I pray five times a day, it gives strength and it
is like an encouraging friend.” He adds that he wishes to follow the values which are for him
embedded in religion and tells him how to be a good person. Hassan describes why religion is
important to him:

*Religion is very important, without religion you can mess up your life, every person needs
religion. I go to madrasa... it gives strength... it is a link between me and God. Culture and
religion are very close and somehow related... in my culture, bad behavior is discouraged... you
have to help someone in need, you cannot sleep when your neighbor is hungry.*

Hassan takes his strength out of religious belief and in his opinion, religious values are deeply
embedded in Somali culture. The religious values were often mentioned as formulas for
behavior, for how to be a ‘good person’ and to give hope and strength.

I ask Farhan what keeps him going and he answers: “I believe that everything happens from
God, so I accept. If you are strong in difficult days, one day you will be happy. You just work
hard.” Farhan adds one more dimension to faith; it is not enough to put faith totally in the
hands of God – faith helps him to accept the difficulties, but he is obliged to work for a good
future and to earn it.

Praying was an important component, and everyone prayed at least once a day with the
explanation that it releases stress and keeps hope alive. It can also highlight a boring day and
bring feelings of happiness, referring to Farhiya. The religious practices were sources of
wellbeing. Farhiya says that when she reads the Quran, the stress goes and as she is happy and praying gives her hope for a better future. Mattingly & Jensen writes in *Anthropology and Philosophy: Dialogues on Trust and Hope* (2014) that hope is practice rather than an emotion. For my informants in Eastleigh hope was connected to actions of good behavior and to be a good person. People in despair try to create spaces of hope in connection with personal and social transformation (Mattingly and Jensen 2015:39). The daily prayers were actions of hope for a better life and gave space for moments of relief and well-being. The reality the refugee's face includes difficulties, but in the context of hope, reality should be explored “as a space of possibility” (ibid:53). The prayer was an action for a possible positive change and it was also a known and familiar activity.

The environment in Eastleigh encourages religious practice both at home and in public places; the religion is highly present in daily life and this provided a familiar and convenient context. The prayers, reading the Quran and other religious practice were daily routines and adding to a feeling of normality and familiarity. They were sources of wellbeing in providing zones of comfort and relaxation and actions of hope to regain strength and stability. All this created a bound to current place and temporary well-being, but at the same time, it connected them to a better future elsewhere. Simultaneously, the belonging to current place was the connection with an activity performed in a past familiar place.

**Social networks and reciprocity**

Eastleigh has a strong sense of exteriority through its cosmopolitan character and the influx of temporary visiting compatriots from the diaspora and the global trade networks. This special character of the place had its impact on my informants, on their lives and on both real and imaginary possibilities. It is not only space they currently dwell in that affect my informants, but also other connected places. All the practical arrangements my informants had to make at arrival in Eastleigh were actions of a new becoming and contributed to a sense of being part of the place. It included contacts with members of own community, Kenyans, Kenyan Somalis, other refugees, landlords, presumptive employers, schools, trade networks, religious leaders and community workers. This resulted in new relations and positions and building on Simone “perception and collaborative practice is constituted through the capacity of individual actors to circulate across and become familiar with a broad range of spatial, residential, economic, and transactional positions” (Simone 2004:208). The emerge of social networks was indeed to
depending on own capacity through language skills, education, confidence, and skills but also on contextual factors and some of my informants had a relatively big social network.

Hassan says: “I have a lot of friends, Somalis, Kenyan Somalis, Kenyans…we discuss, make jokes and laugh…it releases the stress.” He finds familiarity in friendships and a social network and through daily interaction, he is part of a community and can feel belonging in that. Hassan expresses attachment to place through different groups of people he interacts with. He stresses the importance of speaking the language of the hosting state.

I move freely during the day. I go to town [Nairobi city center]. When you understand the language [Swahili] you can explain...I used to fear when coming [to Eastleigh] but I shifted here to get an education, I joined high school, a boarding school...I have been given a great chance here which I have not had in Somalia... Community is good, people want to associate and they [Kenyans] great us with ‘Wariya’ (greeting in Somali).

He has created an attachment to the place through the possibilities of education, the closeness of relatives and through social relations. Kenyans greeting him in Somali was appreciated and he felt respected.

In general, for my informants, familiarity is found through relations to relatives and friends, to people felt like “their own”, in spaces where a known activity occurs, and they had a sense of control. For the Somali refugees, some examples are the mosque, the market, where one can buy food from one’s home country, the football field, and meeting places like camel milk bars and Somali-owned restaurants. Some of my informants had connections with Kenyan neighbors and in general, they talked positively about Kenyans living in Eastleigh. Hawa tells me: “We invite Kenyans to our feasts and last Christmas we were invited to our Kenyan neighbors for their Christmas party. An acceptance in form of friendly Kenyan neighbors was extremely important in an otherwise unfriendly and unaccepting environment.

Local social interactions and connections are only a part of refugees' social network. The migrant and refugee community in Eastleigh is at many levels highly interconnected to and dependent on other parts of the world through family members in home countries or other parts of the world, through money transfers and business relations. Paid work and sales were not the only ways to financial support for refugees and some of my informants were supported by a relative or a family member overseas. There are Somali organizations, communities in the diaspora doing fundraising in their countries of resettlement and through a network of connections they receive information on people in need of support. There are links between Eastleigh, Garissa, Somalia, northern Kenya and the camps in material forms as a trade or
economical transmissions to relatives. There were an interconnectedness and interdependency of spaces. A common way to receive support for Somali refugees was through the Hawala and Dahabshiil money transfer systems. Most likely there is a connection between the sender and the receiver, though it does not always have to be. It is a very informal system and credits without interests can also be remitted. The Hawala system described in community leader Che’s words:

*It is money transfer that is built on trust. There can be bonds like kinship, but friendship is more important, it is an opportunity for new neighbors, it is a beautiful story and it upholds unity among Somalis. Somalis like to surprise you and they want to show gratitude.*

The system is simple and smooth but there is always a risk of misuse. The Hawala system is not waterproof and sometimes the trust fails in the end, and people run away with goods. However, theft is rare according to my informants, and as people are still trusted and still given credits it is a proof of a working system. There is a commitment in the Somali diaspora to support countrymen and women in need, sometimes combined with ambitions to develop a business. Some of my informants received financial support and the remitter could be a husband, a brother, or a more distant relative living in the diaspora. It was also usual that refugees in a more stable situation sent money to the camps through Hawala. According to Petri Hautaniemi, in his research among young Somali men in Finland regularly remitting money to relatives or other compatriots, it is a reciprocal act:

*In Somali families, one makes investments, whether financial or moral, in order to be a good person but also for the future. Reciprocity is not necessarily based on a mutual relationship between individuals and families but is a larger behavioral pattern of interdependency involving real and imagined people whom one may need one day” (Hautaniemi 2011:17)*

Many of my Somali informants stressed the importance of solidarity with other compatriots and unity. The reciprocity of money remittances is an investment for the future in combination with strive to be a good person and a sense of solidarity and unity.

Social networks both locally and globally were essential for escaping loneliness, for releasing the stress and to keep up social relations to family and friends in past places, homelands and in the diaspora. Mustafa left Dadaab when his neighbor got resettlement in the United States and he in his own words “felt lonely”. He keeps in contact with him, and with own family in central Somalia at least once a month and with a brother in Finland once a week. In Somalia, Mustafa’s big leisure time activity and interest was football and in Eastleigh, he is regularly playing football with a team of different nationalities. they give a “sense of togetherness and
peace.” In playing football and in other similar activities he and his friends are more or less on equal grounds; he is somebody in relation to others, and this creates a sense of belonging. The links to family and friends in Somalia and the diaspora are as important as local connections to my informants. It softens the feeling of ‘thrownness’ and alienation and facilitates the initial process of becoming part of the place.

**Routines, rituals, and normality**

The protracted waiting for an eventual opening to resettlement and continuing journey softened the state of emergency and together with established routines in daily life, it was replaced with a certain predictability. Routines and habits are activities which happen mostly un-reflected. However, this does not imply that we without conscious thoughts form habits or that our actions are ruled by “unconscious drives” (Jackson 2013:24). “Rather, it is through our daily routines and habits that we come to leave our imprints on places – and that places leave their imprints inside of us” (ibid). According to what the environment and the social interaction offer, we maintain old habits and routines, or we form new ones.

Amina mentions daily activities as reading, cleaning the house and making food which makes her calm. “Life is better now” she states, compared with the time of arrival when she felt lost and confused and did not know the place. She has promised to interpret my interview with Nasro, a shopkeeper, as Abdi is traveling. We walk together to Nasro’s shop to make an appointment. Amina stops at occasions to talk to people we meet. She is the next day planning to go the protection office to hear if there are news about resettlement. Hawa likes the routine of going to madrasa and she goes every Sunday and sometimes on the weekdays and she likes the celebrations of Somali traditional feasts. Hawa says they celebrate weddings and birthdays whenever the opportunity arises and telling this her face lights up. When I talk with Hawa and Amina I get a sense of them having a normal life and I reflect on how important these seemingly small habits we perform in our daily life are for our wellbeing. I noticed that it was even more important for my informants to get a sense of normality in an abnormal situation. Underneath the normality is great uncertainty about the future. Quoting Horst and Grabska, “protracted uncertainty is characterized by a great level of predictability with regard to the everyday present, but by an equally great level of unpredictability when it comes to people’s perceptions of a future solution for their problems” (Horst and Grabska 2015:7). This is
maybe why it is even more important for people in displacement to find some sense of normality.

Routines and ritualized practice were contributing to a sense of continuity in place and replacing the state of emergency with normality I would say that the normality also gives rise to a 'settledness'. A more or less forced will to settle for the time waiting for resettlement was beside the will to move on to a third country a twofold wish. In the present moment, there was nowhere else to go and there was no knowing when or if they could continue their journey. In this stage, the predictability of everyday routines created a state of permanence in a desired temporariness.

**Homeness**

Thrown into a new environment, there was a thrive to reach a certain at-homeness, which for my informants highly depended on the balance between “being acted upon and acting, between acquiescing in the given and choosing their own fate” (Jackson 1995:123). As seen in Chapter 5, many of my informants in Eastleigh felt they were exposed to unjust treatment, and that they were merely acted upon. However, in interaction with the environment through religious practice, daily routines and simply going on with their lives the refugees were slowly making themselves familiar with the place. Amina says: “When we came here we did not know anything, we were lost. Now it is better when we know people and the place, but we don’t feel at home, Somalia is home”. A feeling of total absence of home at arrival has turned to a more familiar feeling in place, but it is not home. Following Jackson, home is a matter of being and not a substantive (Jackson 1995:154) Amina is in between the place of birth, where she has her roots and a new place where she is ready to put down roots in her wish for resettlement.

Khadija said the only people she talked to and shared thoughts with were the people she stayed with. It was the only place where she felt safe and confident. In that sense, her feeling of homeness was limited to the house and the people she shared it with. In the house there was a “balanced reciprocity” but there was no balance in “the world beyond” (Jackson 1995:154). To return to Jackson’s quote at the beginning of this chapter, for most of my informants the house where they lived was what they called home, in shape of safety and people they trusted. But it was confined in that sense that it was not in a space they preferred it to be.
Hassan is expressing a positive attitude and a belonging, referring to the relatives offering him a place to stay. He expresses a feeling of being at home:

_I never regret that I left. I feel I am in charge of my life. My mind tells me different things, the negative I have to leave and keep the positive. I feel I belong here, my people [relatives] are very friendly to me. Since 2013 I lived here, and they never asked for anything._

He is in daily search for work opportunities which could be a sign of a will to settle, but I would say there was not a ‘settledness’ until a work he could rely on was found. He, like all the other informants, was disturbed by the constant ID-checks and not having a work permit. Hassan was present in the place he lived and in that sense part of the place. Building on Tim Ingold in _Being Alive:_ “For persons are not beings that move, they are their movements. It is in their very patterns of activity that their presence lies” (Ingold 2011:168). This can be compared with Heidegger’s theories on Dasein (1962) and his statement that emplacement is not always about creating ties to a fixed and stable built environment but of the very process of being-in-place (Heidegger 1962:219-224), Annika Lems is in her article about a Somali woman’s experience in Melbourne after resettlement and her efforts on becoming part of the place, _Placing Displacement: Placemaking in a World of Movement_ (2016), writing that “our habits, the ways we step into the world, are intimately interwoven with the textures and dynamics of place” (Lems 2016:328). Through activity and through the ritualized pattern of routines and habits my informants achieved a sense of homeness.

To show how difficult it was to reach a complete feeling of being at home in Eastleigh Nasro is one example. She came alone to Eastleigh as 17 years old to take care of her sick uncle. Now she owns a shop together with a Kenyan woman. She did not come as a refugee and she does not have refugee status. She has a travel document issued by DRA for business travels. However, she has the same goal as my other informants to go to another country.

_I want to go to another country but not as a refugee. I’m a hard worker, everywhere I go I work…I did not know the language or culture when I came here, now I can live anywhere in Kenya, I know the community. I was young when I came here._

Nasro is not a refugee and expresses wishes for a possibility to go because of business and her skills. She could consider staying in Kenya, but it is not possible for her to get a valid ID, neither citizenship. The travel document is not enough for the ID-checks. On the question, what is positive in her life in Eastleigh, she says she has a relatively “normal and safe life.” She says Eastleigh is “at home” to her and she could imagine staying if she could have a
Kenyan ID. She had a relatively big social network in Eastleigh and showed feelings of belonging and being at home. Nasro was in another starting position as coming voluntarily as a migrant and with a safety net of stable livelihood and relatives. Though for both Hassan and Nasro there was something essential missing and this was not being accepted as legal residents in Kenya thus, they had dreams and plans on settling somewhere else. Hassan and Nasro were exceptions in comparison with my other informants in that sense that they were mentioning a feeling of belonging and homeness.

For my informants, a sense of control and balance was hard to fully achieve in prevalent circumstances in Eastleigh and therefore a sense of at-homeness. There was not much consent to the situation, not much equity, and my informants were acted upon in many contexts. Unprotected and abnegated their legal rights to protection in Kenya they did not see the place as the future home. But through rituals, routines, supporting relatives and Somali community I would say there was a temporary, partial homeness.

**Purpose in displacement**

In researching how people find sense in displacement a focus on individual experience is essential and “the creativity people deploy to make sense of the events they find themselves thrown into” (Lems 2014:320). My informants tried in various ways to find a purpose and wellbeing in their stay in Eastleigh. Amina had made a vocational course for nine months. She had to interrupt it because of the ended support from a relative but she wished to be able to continue. She had learned English during her time in the displacement and she focused on educating herself by reading books, learning languages and to use the time in Eastleigh. Her vision for the future, except safety, was to get further education and a good challenging job where she could use her vocational skills and get work experience.

Hassan is thankful for his chances of education offered him in displacement, referring to his acquired knowledge of English and Swahili.

> First, I could not communicate with anybody, but now I can communicate and socialize. This is the greatest thing! It helps me now very much. I want to study applied statistics, under business management and commerce. [...] When you study, you can think of only one thing, you have your books. I like education, you need to sharpen your mind.

Displacement has given him a chance to an education and language skills, which he says would not have been possible in Somalia under existing circumstances. Hassan is goal
focused on his pursuit of language skills, social life and education and this is a source of his wellbeing. Abdi writes: “[…] migrants’ evaluations of their welfare in their new land require a more holistic sense of well-being, a sense of comfort and peace, a sense of belonging akin to being at home (Abdi 2015:2). Hassan’s acts of expanding his social network, search for work and possibilities for education were actions benefiting his wellbeing and giving a sense of purpose.

Mustafa had passed a vocational training in computer skills in Kakuma refugee camp and expressed an ambivalence in his plans for the future, changing them for every interview and considering going back to Kakuma for the sake of education. In the last interview, he had decided to go back to Kakuma to take another course. It was the closest option in reach for him and he chose it despite his unwillingness on returning to the unsafe and more restricted existence in Kakuma. For him it this was a way to find a purpose in displacement and I would say also using the opportunity to take a decision for himself. Amina, Hassan, and Mustafa were constantly searching for new options to use the time waiting for resettlement and to find opportunities to further education and work. They were all relatively good at English and Hassan was also fluent in Swahili. Language skills are openings and give chances to a bigger social network. Through education, forced migration can also be an opening to new possibilities and to personal development. It seemed that all these mentioned aspects gave a wider experience of space and a bigger social network. However, the opportunities to education were offered a few because of the school fees, which implied savings or somebody supporting. Fatuma was illiterate and would have liked to attend a literacy course but she said she could not afford it and she had nobody who could support her.

For Hawa, the concern of her adult daughters and the possibility to education for her grandson is one main reason for her to be in Eastleigh. Kiin, a single mother of 6 children expresses her aim: “My small wish is an education for my children. I work hard to give them that.” Kiin fled from Mogadishu in 2010 when her husband got killed by al-Shabaab, as it was followed by threats towards her. She fled to Kenya and had to leave the children. A year later she succeeded in getting them to Eastleigh and they are now all living in one room in a shared apartment. It is a bright apartment filled with daylight and clean white walls, sparsely furnished. She likes the apartment and the people she is sharing with and the ambiance is friendly. Caring for the children brings a sense of attachment to the place for families and single mothers. The clear primary aim of the single mothers was to protect their children, “being with and for” their children and “care for them, which is in concern for their being”
The answers from the mothers showed that the daily struggle and the mere existence is made purposeful because of the children. A sense of purpose brought meaning into a seemingly hopeless situation and gave strength to carry on. But again, a wellbeing, purpose, and belonging were not within reach for all my informants. Harsh realities in shape of refugee status and lacking capital diminished the access to sources of purpose.

**Belonging in displacement**

Summarizing Chapter 5 and 6, we can see an obvious contradiction in the strive for belonging. Daily routines, praying, caring for children, community and finding one’s own purpose were essential for making sense of the displacement in Eastleigh. Many of my informants also pointed out the importance of social relations through friendships, activities, ceremonies, celebrations for stress release and encouragement. But the most essential missing for becoming fully part of the place was still safety and socioeconomic security. There was a continuous search for autonomy, control and sense of freedom and independence.

Working against a belonging to the place were struggles with socioeconomic activities and absence of legal status. However, for the Somali refugees in Eastleigh, there was a partial belonging to the Somali Muslim community, through a common language, rituals, feasts and cultural heritage. There was a familiar landscape and ethnic community for Somali and also to some extent for Oromo refugees in Eastleigh, but among my informants, familiarity was not self-evident. As said by Farhan, a Somali refugee, 27 years: “Islii [Eastleigh] is not our place even if here are many Somalis.” Co-ethnicity is not automatically synonymous with proximity and community. There was a distance both to the Kenyan Somali community and the established community of Somalis and the refugees were selective and careful in establishing relations with compatriots. It was much a question of whom to trust or not trust. This carefulness and the limited space many of my informants moved through reduced to some extent their activity. A sense of home is grounded more in activities going on in the place than in the place itself (Jackson 1995:148). Ingold confirms this: to become part of the place the inhabitant needs to take up a position and contribute with own activity to close “the gap between person and place” (Ingold 2011:168). For my informants, this closure was hindered by the sociopolitical context of the hosting state and the gap remained. There was no
proximity to the hosting Kenyan community, culturally nor religiously which contributed to alienation and diminished a feeling of belonging.

The majority of my informants did not see Eastleigh as the place where they could achieve a ‘good life’. One crucial aspect for not reaching a feeling of homeness was the lack of documentation and the experience of not being accepted as legitimate. Eastleigh was a temporary solution where they had to find ways to support themselves, to find some sense of place while waiting to continue their journey. As refugees, with limited space of movement, lacking documentation and position, being unsafe, it was extremely hard for my informants to feel at home. Even in displacement, place is strongly present; it cannot be escaped from, but this does not necessarily include a belonging. The belonging was within trusted groups of people, being either family, kin, compatriots, friends or neighbors. There was an obvious contradiction in a strive to become part of the place in a state of displacement and with the intention to move on. As a lingering waiting for resolving the situation of displacement went on, the time aspect gets more visible and this is what I am going to discuss in next chapter.
6. In-between state; in space and time

Eastleigh was the choice of destination for various reasons; relatives living in the estate, a community of compatriots, decisions of those they fled with or hearsays that it was a good place to be in for refugees. The absence of safety, lack of protection and difficulties to find ways to socioeconomic support affected my informants’ relation to the estate after arrival and the reoccupation of stability. When the balance between self and world was thrown as described in Chapter 6, my informants felt that they had little control of their lives. The regain of control and stability and to become part of a place appeared to be a challenging task. According to Jackson, if we cannot control our world, we “take refuge in imagination” (Jackson 1995:124). I would add that my informants also took refuge in memories of the past. Coming to a new location my informants saw the environment, the landscape, in terms of old familiar ones, but also in terms of imagined future places where they could settle. Both a return to the homelands and a third country resettlement are imagined scenarios while Eastleigh is reality and present moment between a home in the past and a home in the future.

Relation to Eastleigh

My informants’ relation to Eastleigh varied over time and through the activities they performed. The opportunities to be active were constrained in Eastleigh and my informants expressed a frustration of not being allowed to carry out the activities for the livelihoods that they found were in reach for them. This meant they could not ‘fill the gap’ between person and place which in turn affected their relationship to the place. Here I wish to stress the fact that not all my informants experienced Eastleigh the same way, even if there were generalities. As Rodman puts it: “A single physical landscape can be multilocal in the sense that it shapes and expresses polysemic meanings of place for different users (Rodman 1992:647). Depending on ethnicity, education, gender, and class, the relation to Eastleigh differed. Tuigi is expressing his situation in Eastleigh as follows:

*Still I have the same fear, [but] time changes and we change with time. Every day is different if I think too much I get crazy [...] Nobody can disturb me here, but in Ethiopia, I was arrested and harassed, even in the hotel if letting rooms to Oromos.*

In relation to the past, Eastleigh is a safer place. Tuigi still has the same fear as he experienced in Ethiopia, but he is sure it will vanish with time. He is more active than in our first meeting, he can see possibilities and he spends his days searching for work, reading and cooking for the
couple he lives with. He is also reflecting over the state he is in at the moment of the interview compared with the state at arrival and says he is now more active.

Hassan engages with his environment and he says life in Eastleigh is more secure in comparison with the camps and it is “normal life”. A good life for him includes “a place to sleep, a clean environment, clean food, to afford to buy bus fares and attractive clothes.” and this what he had at the moment. His Eastleigh is relatively secure because of hosting relatives, language skills and temporary small jobs at occasions. Khadija has another relation to Eastleigh because of her small social network and limited space of movement. Khadija and Hassan had different starting positions and their relation to Eastleigh, therefore, was distinctly different. The act of making creates a productive relationship with the place (Ingold 2011:178, Lems:2015:327) and my material shows that the more activities in place the stronger the relation to place. “Whatever the body is engaged in, concentrated activity is experienced as a quickened relationship between oneself and whatever one works upon” (Jackson 1995:148). However, most of my informants had very limited possibilities to be active because of the confining environment.

To return to Tuigi, he considers Eastleigh as his only option.

Eastleigh is not a good place for me but not any other place where I can survive now. Here I have people helping me. If I compare my country – this is not my country... it is no better at any other places and here we are now.

What Tuigi says is that Eastleigh is not home, and he does not belong. But it is the place the only option at the moment. The Oromo interviewees said they were not thinking of leaving Eastleigh as they have made social connections in the Oromo community. They have built a relation to Eastleigh merely by their activities in the place.

Significant for my informants’ relation to place was how they related to and were perceived by others in the environment. A positive effect on the relationship was achieved through kinship and friendship. Those who had relatives and groups of friends in Eastleigh seemed more confident. Another was the partial belonging experienced in the Somali and the Oromo community. Many of my informants talked warmly about friendly and supportive neighbors.

The contradiction in becoming part of the place concurrently with a desire of resettlement affected the relation to Eastleigh. The absence of legal status was a clear indication of not belonging and this affected the relationship negatively. My informants were clearly in a transit state and in an in-between state. The wish of resettlement and an ending state of transit, concurrently with the lingering waiting was another contradiction. Eastleigh became long-
term instead of expected short-term stay. The time aspect and outcome of the resettlement process were all uncertain elements and affected the relation to the estate. However, considering Eastleigh as the only option at the moment was consistent in the interviews. The relation to the estate was twofold, in the sense that there was a non-acceptance, unwillingness, and at times resistance towards the place but also a decision to stay because of no other evident better options.

**Relation to other places**

The relation to Eastleigh was born out of comparison with other places – the camps, past homelands, and future imagined places. The protracted process of waiting for resettlement involved a lot of uncertainty for my informants in terms of not knowing the outcome, not knowing who was deciding about their fate. There is a difference in how displacement is experienced physically, socially and culturally, depending on if the context is rural, urban or camp. “Each context, in turn, has its own combination of histories, resources, populations and politics that affect the parameters of the possible” (Hammar 2014:16). Some of my informants have stories from the refugee camps where they stayed before coming to Eastleigh. The camp and the urban setting are totally different environments with varying possibilities and constraints, but both are considered temporary settings by my informants. Some changed between the settings more than one time.

*Physical dislocation may occur many times, over time, from or between multiple sites. It may entail permanent or temporary relocation or resettlement, at closer or longer distances from place of origin, each context in turn having particular effects on social, political and economic realities (Hammar 2014:15).*

Change of space requires “re-purposing of space itself” (ibid) and the displaced needs to restart socially and economically for every change of place, including getting a sense of purpose and a sense of place for every change. Mustafa sees the camp in a relatively positive light as he received the refugee mandate in a shorter time in the camp and passed a vocational education. When Mustafa finished his education, he came to Nairobi for medical reasons and decided to stay to search for a job. He found a part-time job as a waiter in a hotel but considers going back to the camp for another vocational course even if he has a network of friends in Eastleigh, and he feels safer and more ‘normal’ than in the camp. But for Mustafa, the waiting makes sense as long as he is active, and in the camp, he can take free vocational courses. However, both Eastleigh and the camp are temporary solutions as he sees a
resettlement in West as the only place where he can have a “good future” and finally settle. Notable is also that Mustafa was the only one of my informants who expressed an intention to go back to the camp.

In the camps, my informants were dependent on humanitarian aid and there was not much room for own agency according to my informants. The possibilities to decide about own affairs and doings were essential to them. Hassan had been in both Dadaab and Kakuma and he tells me about the worst experiences he had in Kenya and in the refugee camps.

The family [I came with] left me in Dadaab when I was 16. I could not read or write, and I could not go and ask for food as I had to write my name. I hid in the food lorry to come to the food queue. Later, 2009 I left to Kakuma, hiding in a food transport. In Kakuma once, at midnight, a gang came into the house and robbed food and everything [...] I had nobody in Kakuma, here I have relatives. There were rapes and guns in Kakuma. We found a lot of challenges there, no security there. Here [we have] problems with police but better security. I’m here to live with my relatives and for education.

For Hassan, Eastleigh is a better option regarding security compared with the camps. He is also mentioning the relatives as an important motive for being in Eastleigh. In comparison with living in camps, Eastleigh is seen as a better alternative for most of my informants, even if it is not the like the home they left. The relatively normal life they can live in the urban setting where they can feel a certain autonomy, even if it is not optimal, is preferred.

Amina and Hawa tell me about the life in Kakuma. They faced lots of problems in the camp with daily practices like carrying water, fetching firewood and standing in line for food and they said it was hard for families consisting of only women. Hawa got allergic problems because of the dust in the dry desert area where the camp is located. She compared the camp and Eastleigh with former home grounds, landscapes, and daily life. For Hawa camp life, but also the life in the city was far from what she had in Somalia. Hawa has problems to get attached to the dusty, urban surrounding. It is the home village in a peaceful Somalia where her thoughts roam, even if she lived in Mogadishu before arriving in Kenya. On my question to Hawa and Amina, if they would be ready to move to a small village if offered this possibility, Hawa answers, “I would love to, I would get fresh milk every day, it would be green. If I would understand the language I would go.” Amina mentions Garissa in the North Eastern Province of Kenya, as a place of a rural setting where Somali is spoken. But she adds that the Kenyan Somalis living there are “not very welcoming.” She thinks the reason is that al-Shabaab destroyed the image of Somalis and Somalis traveling in Kenya are checked very
thoughly, also by other Somalis. Amina excludes Garissa as an option and in that sense, Eastleigh is preferred.

When I ask Tuigi if he has been considering other options, he mentions Kampala, Uganda, as there is an Oromo community. He has no means to go there and he also says that now he is in Eastleigh and intend to stay as he says, “I cannot think two things at the same time.” The place would be an alternative because of the Oromo community. A return home is unthinkable as he says he will be jailed if coming back. Seeing Eastleigh as the option, for now, was something the majority of my informants expressed. It seemed that changing place was not an option as Eastleigh in relation to other places was a better option.

**Relation to homeland**

Home is safety, as stated by Jackson at the beginning of Chapter 6. The homes my informants left behind were not equivalent to safety in the time of separation as violence and destruction threatened this. Safety was something most of my informants had not experienced for a long period of time but despite this, the former homelands were still seen as home. For my informants, the meaning of home was found in family, relatives, familiar landscapes and customs – in the homelands. Even if the homeland was not physically present it was constantly in the minds of my informants. Jackson writes “Our consciousness shifts continually between home and the world […]” (Jackson 1995:122). He focuses here on the notion of home as a lived relationship, not an entity (ibid:123). The memories of the life lived in the homelands affected the relation to Eastleigh. The homelands are where life has been carried out and where birth, initiations, life events, death have happened; where deceased family members and ancestors are buried. In Eastleigh, my informants and “the body of the land” did not “share the same language” (Jackson 1995:125), symbolically speaking. There is a meaning in the landscape of the homelands that cannot be found in Eastleigh. It does not mean that affects the process of becoming part of the place negatively. “In many works of refugee studies, there is an implicit assumption that in becoming "torn loose" from their cultures, "uprooted" from their homes, refugees suffer the loss of all contact to the lifeworlds they fled” (Malkki 1995b:515). This is not the case as Malkki also argues. Leaving the home country does not mean leaving the culture behind, one carries it with and it is not lost.

Hawa and Amina have created a social network and routines, but they do not feel at home. Hawa compares Eastleigh with a place distant in time with green pastures and trees, a
landscape completely different from her current living place. When Hawa talks about Somalia she talks about a place before the conflict, when life was good, and the family was living in the countryside. For her, dreaming of a future in a third country does not exclude a dream of a return to a peaceful Somalia, an elsewhere that is for her more of a utopia as she knows she cannot and will not go without her daughters. Dwelling in the past and comparing the place with former places can hinder an attachment to place. The young Somali refugees did not have the same pictures of Somalia than the elder. Mustafa said that he had only read and heard about Somalia before the civil war and was too young at that time to remember. He mentioned lost monuments and destroyed cultural sites. He had grown up in the civil war in Mogadishu with all it included of fear of violence and missile attacks. For him, Somalia was something else than it was for Hawa.

The relation to the homeland was among my informants clear in the sense of return; a return to Somalia in its current state was unthinkable. They did not still see it as a democratic and peaceful country. In addition, they had no home, no land, nothing to return to. Mustafa and the young informants did not see any future opportunities concerning education and work. But the one thing in common was that Somalia was home. Abdi says: “Even Kenyan Somalis born in Kenya see Somalia as home. I do”. Amina agrees and for Abdi and Amina, the allegiance was still with Somalia. In their homelands, my informants were acted upon in a sense as there was a violent civil war going on and no peace in certain areas, nor safety. Somalia represented the history and familiar settings, and they were in their legal right to be there.

**Relation to place of resettlement**

The word hope was mentioned in all interviews and mostly in connection with a better future and a better life. And this was supposed to be possible in a Western country. There was an image of West as standing for democracy and human rights which my informants expressed on many occasions. West represented everything that Eastleigh did not. West was safety, protection, democracy, education, health, social security and last but not the least, a Western passport. The latter was equivalent with freedom of movement and legitimacy. With a Western passport, they could cross borders, exit and enter countries and even Somalia, with a possibility to exit again.

The unsafe and non-acceptive situation in Eastleigh, nurturing the dream of safety somewhere else, made it extremely difficult to see a future and a sustainable life in Eastleigh.
For Hawa and Amina, the dream is about another life somewhere else and Amina says:

_The definition of life is not this life now, but to go to Europe or America where we can have human rights and can be properly taken care of in terms of food, housing, medical treatment also for refugees. In the future, I want to be where no conflict or war and have a good job._

When adding this to her statement quoted before that Somalia is home, a state of being in between emerges. Hawa and her daughters have applied for resettlement like most of the refugees I interviewed. They are in the last stage of the process and now they only wait for a decision. Having human rights in West as a refugee is a point she wants to stress as this is not experienced in Eastleigh.

For the mothers, the hope of a good future for the children was of importance. Kiin mentioned that if there were guarantees on education for her children she could consider staying in Eastleigh. But as the oldest of her children were now taken out of school because lack of required birth certificate the only guarantee Kiin saw was resettlement. She says: “We want to go to a democratic country.” For her and for many of my informants West represented democracy.

The desire to go to Europe gave rise to thoughts on using the dangerous road crossing the Mediterranean by boat among some of my interviewees. Ruqiya, who earlier had received a positive decision on resettlement with her uncle and husband, recently got it rejected because of failed DNA-test. She says: “This costs a lot of disappointment and frustration…sometimes I feel like going to the boats.” She added that it is not a serious thought as she knows the risks and she does not have the money. Mustafa mentioned the boats, but because of the cost, it was not an option. Farhan called it “craziness” to go with the boats and for him it was unthinkable. It seemed that for all my informants the best and only alternative was through resettlement and considered having a case strong enough, whereas it also guaranteed direct legal status at arrival and a safe transfer.

For my informants, West stood for everything that Eastleigh could not provide them. Some had relatives in West and hoped to join them. If this was not possible they relied on Somali communities where ever they would get settled. Abdi writes: “Attention to the role of imagination in migration does not discount the crucial role of material resources, family and community networks […] (Abdi 2015:11). Abdi suggests that imagination is essential but not sufficient to realize dreams; its role lies more in “permitting people to access what they imagine remains limited” (ibid:12). What my informants imagined their lives could be in a Europe or America was a result of their discontent and limited existence in Eastleigh.
Except for peace and basic human rights, there were clear life goals connected with a future which were only possible in the country of resettlement. Good education, good job, and a good health were often mentioned and none of the mentioned was seen as possible to achieve in Eastleigh, neither in another African country. In the sense of being the transit hall to West, the stay in Eastleigh was purposeful. However, with their thoughts simultaneously in a past homeland and in a future somewhere else, Eastleigh was a non-home between past and future homes.

**From emergency mode to flight mode**

My informants all testified about fleeing under chaotic circumstances, sudden and unplanned, about material losses as well as losses of family members. They had not planned to leave, and they could not bring any material belongings, nor had they any savings for the unplanned event. Slowly the pace slows down and the urgency is replaced with a more or less permanent state, though with a wish of being somewhere else. Horst and Grabska write:

> [...] when certain things become more predictable, when the speed of change slows down, and when more knowledge about what is happening and has happened becomes available. This occurs when both conflict and displacement become protracted. People shift from emergency mode to a mode where the feeling of 'permanent impermanence' is matched with the certainty and predictability of everyday routines. Although refugees may not accept where they are, their daily lives do continue, focusing on food, shelter, and care for family members (Horst and Grabska 2015:8).

Waiting for something that may not happen, being questioned as legitimate and under constant suspicion was extremely difficult but it did not imply passive waiting. The conflict in Somalia and persecution of Oromos in Ethiopia have been going on for decades and as these continue, the lingering displacement continues. Social relations and comparison “[f]or those who move and end up in contexts of protracted uncertainty that are seen as temporary, social navigation strategies are strongly context-dependent” (Horst and Grabska 2015:12). The unpredictability about the future, unfulfilled expectations on safety, and lacking socioeconomic security in Eastleigh gave rise to a to an impermanence and a transitory state. A certain predictability in everyday practices, a protracted waiting and no visible options of other places to go to, gave rise to a permanent impermanence. Two of my informants had received rejected applications. The others were still waiting. This waiting with an uncertain outcome “creates an expectation of temporariness in situations that can only be described as chronic, but where various actors
have an interest in holding on to this expectation of temporary exile” (Horst and Grabska 2015:7). Various actors in Eastleigh were the hosting government, institutions, UNHCR, and NGOs and in all their interests was a temporary stay. My informants had expectations on a temporary stay as they saw they had refugee mandate and rights to protection. A protection they did not experience from the hosting state. Each event or act can “encompass a pattern of retentions of the past and pretentions for the future” [...] (Ingold 1993:157). This would mean that we in our actions preserve certain acts and behavior from before as we at the same time entitle ourselves to a future we believe ourselves in rights to demand. A sense of the place in Eastleigh had changed over time, but a home feeling was not attained - for them the past homeland was still home. Even though, the images of a past Somalia, a past Ethiopia became more and more blurred with time, the idea of returning is preserved for some of my informants, though in a far future. Gupta and Ferguson write:

*It is here that it becomes most visible how imagined communities (Anderson 1983) come to be attached to imagined places, as displaced peoples cluster around remembered or imagined homelands, places, or communities in a world that seems increasingly to deny such firm territorialized anchors in their actuality.* (Gupta and Ferguson 1992:525).

A place where they can find safety, social security, healthcare, education, and work was part of the dream vision and not seen as possible in a return to Somalia. My informants did not expect to be protected still by their home state, nor in the hosting state where they were denied protection, they were justified. Thus, there was an attachment to an imagined future place.

I reflect over Tuigi’s personal change from my first interview to the last. In the first interviews he was giving an impression of still being in confusion and he seemed scared and insecure. In the last interview, he had started to act and to take charge of his life and he was more confident.

He is active even if he is expressing worries about his mental state.

*Successful long-term waiting can be understood as managing everyday life while coming to terms with the underlying structural uncertainty. Such acceptance takes time while getting used to harsh everyday realities, so psychological pressures are often great. Protractedness, however, does not mean that a situation is necessarily static. As a consequence, the waiting that occurs in protracted displacement is often active and dynamic* (Horst and Grabska 2015:8).

Tuigi seemed to manage the uncertainties even if he says the memories of the moment he left home still haunts him. He is aware of the situation and the time he has to wait as he would have his first interview in UNHCR in May 2019 and plans for years of stay in Eastleigh. In protracted waiting for return or resettlement, my informants did not accept the current
situation because they did not accept a status quo, but also because the hosting state is not accepting them (Horst and Grabska 2015:14, Malkki 1995b). The present needs to be lived in a place that they are not part of. Thus, the ‘permanent impermanence’ is the stage reached when daily life gets more predictable but there are still pretentions of basic human rights of safety and protection applied to both the present and the future. Eastleigh did not become the temporary solution that my informants first expected it to be and a continuous desire for a better life combined with the uncertainty replaced a temporariness with a state of permanent impermanence.

In between

Memories of past homelands, a liminal state in the present, and a hope for a good life in another country beget an in-between state. The place was there but it was not home. My informants were in a liminal stage both in space and time. “Liminality in protracted conflict and displacement can be seen in the light of the dynamic nature of the waiting that accompanies it” (Horst and Grabska 2015:2). I will in this section use Turner’s theories on liminality and relate them to spatial and temporal aspects of forced displacement. Being a migrant and particularly a refugee in transit can be compared with being in a liminal state. Turner's discussion is drawn out from Arnold van Gennep’s (1909) definitions of rites of passage as liminal phases which “accompany every change of place, state, social position, and age” (Turner 1995:94). According to Victor Turner, “Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between” and there is an ambiguity in a change in state and position (Turner 1995:95). In flight and change of place my informants entered a liminal stage, they were betwixt and between. In this liminal state, the attempts to get familiar with the place and an eventual belonging were hard to achieve. Concerning the relation to social structure, liminality is a temporary state according to Turner and can be compared with marginality. This can be applied to the state of my informants. Displacement is a liminal state and my informants were “in transition” and “without position” there was no structure, no order (Turner 1995:103); they were not in their homelands neither did they belong to the new land. This means that we need to consider temporalities in displacement, whereas the homelands historically are connected to the past and the current place at arrival is an unfamiliar place that the displaced is not part of. There is a liminality in both space and time. The liminal state should be followed by a passage to another state – it is a temporary stage intended to lead to another. The third state is “aggregation or reincorporation” (Turner
1995:94) which includes reintegration to structure and an ordered world. Praying, routines and a certain predictability of everyday life were essential for getting a sense of being in place for my informants and through this they found some stability. However, the lack of safety, accessibility to livelihood, local support networks, protection from governmental institutions, and being under constant suspicion and surveillance; all these factors enforced alienation and ‘orderlessness’. Consequently, the third state required to exit the liminal stage was not reached which I suggest implies a protracted liminality. A feeling of belonging and being at home was not possible to fully achieve in current place and when in displacement the place is other than the one of separation and not possible to return to. The only option for incorporation is to leave the state of transit and displacement which was associated with another place. Maryam says there is no possibility to go back as it is too dangerous, and she has nothing to go back to. She adds “and why should I then have come here?” She expresses a feeling of no return, no way forward and an uncertain future. A statement on her resettlement application had recently been transferred from the Refugee Council of Kenya to UNHCR and she was waiting for the decision.

Amina applied for a job in Mogadishu and she was chosen for the position. Her family and relatives strongly advised her not to go because of safety reasons and she decided to reject the offer. The possibility of receiving a good and challenging work was worth to take the risk of going back to Somalia. A feeling of being stuck in waiting for resettlement is mixed with an openness of place and a more or less imagined freedom to move. To return is for Amina significant with progress and exiting the liminal stage with going back, but it was a thought she had to abandon because of the risk. This is an example on how time and place intersect, and on pretentions for the future that are basic human rights, safety and social security seen as only possible to achieve in a third democratic country in West. For my informants, West stood for everything that Eastleigh did not provide. Besides mentioned safety, peace, social security, education, and work, to say ‘a good life’, for Somalis a common desire is the freedom of movement and status in form of a passport from a Western country.

For my informants, Eastleigh comes into being in relation to other places both of the past and the future. Because of its spatial character, expressed through the physical act of movement, displacement becomes a “distinct point in time as well” (Horst and Grabska 2015:7). A “before is also an “elsewhere” (ibid). The social landscape takes a broader view of time and space, it is both context and content, enacted and material (Rodman 1992:650). For my informants, the time
aspect was near in everyday life, through an existence also in memories of the past and future visions.

At many levels, the refugees were in an in-between state, both temporally and spatially. They were in between camp and town, between staying or going to a third country. They are pending between different possible statuses - not still a refugee, refugee, alien. They were not considering a return to Somalia claiming that this was an impossible thought under current circumstances, even though it was seen as possible in a more distant future. Some of the young informants seriously weighed different options to have good future and Eastleigh was not part of their future image. The individual narratives showed a roller coaster of emotions, bonds to former places, no attachment to present place and visions on an imagined future place; a constant dribble between a being in the present, in a past and in a future. In a longing for familiar places and imaginations of a future place elsewhere, time and place become intertwined. Temporality and historicity merge in the experience of those, in their activities, and carry life forward.

Concluding thoughts

Eastleigh was not the safe haven that many of the refugees expected it to be. Making a living was extremely difficult because of laws and regulations and the fear of ID-checks, arrests and counterterror raids were always present. The desire of my informants was to get resettled in a Western country and the non-supportive, excluding space added with “involuntarily immobility” (Hammar 2014:10) because of no valid travel documents strengthened this desire. The struggle of finding ways to daily support did not give much space to relief and hindered the notion of being part of the place. For my informants Eastleigh was not the ‘good place’ it was said to be. The ultimate goal became a third country resettlement to a Western country. West stood for safety, social security, education, work and the freedom of movement a Western passport included. Nothing of this was seen as possible in Eastleigh.

In getting familiar with the environment through finding solutions for basic needs, through daily practices, the creation of social networks parallel with keeping up connections outside the estate the place slowly became recognizable and some sense of wellbeing was found. The global network shows how the lived space is connected to other spaces, a multilocality. Waiting for resettlement and for the migration dream to come through my informants tried to live as normal as possible and gain a sense of control. However, following Jackson, to be part
of the world, and I would add part of a place, we need space and freedom to act and initiate actions. The safety conditions, patterns of exclusion, being under constant suspicion were immutable aspects out of control for the group of refugees, and I suggest this was determining factors for not becoming part of the place.

My informants experienced same space differently and the experience also changes with time. In common for my informants was that the flight seemed an ongoing process; there was not a feeling of belonging, but a longing for an elsewhere. Not everyone has access to what makes Eastleigh a ‘good place’. For some, Eastleigh is a chance to proceed in the vision of success in migration and to manage to create a place for themselves, temporary or permanent. For others, Eastleigh is more of an unsafe, unfriendly and unaccepting place. The informal economic infrastructure which Eastleigh is famous for and which is said to give space for agency is not reachable for everybody; if hindered because of state restrictions and socioeconomic reasons the chances to move forward and develop ways of support was small. If we are constantly questioned in space and constantly met with closed doors it is not easy to belong. Which framework the environment allows the displaced to move in is crucial to reach a belonging and to become part of it. Eastleigh is not a good place for everybody and there are not equal opportunities. The displacement in transit was spatially and temporally a standstill, an in-between state. Eastleigh filled a purpose as a transit hall to resettlement. Routines and normal life gave a sense of permanence in an uncertain situation and desired temporariness, but not a sense of belonging. It became more of a non-home in two concurrent and more or less contradictory processes, to become part of the place and a resettlement process.
Notes:

1 Former name of Eastleigh was Nairobi East Township area and in 1904 Nairobian and South African investors formed The Nairobi East Township company. The estate was originally planned for European and some plots were sold on the basis that non-Europeans would not settle there, but the interest was small. Nairobi municipality took no responsibilities for the area and there was no road access and the company decided to market the area for Asians advertising it as an ‘Asiatic’ estate. Allidina Visram owned almost half of what was to become Eastleigh (Carrier 2016:31,33).

2 Worldwide money remittance company founded in the early 1970s with headquarter in Dubai, United Arab Emirates and present in 120 countries.

3 A traditional herbal stimulant used in both Kenya and Somalia

4 21st of September 2013 al-Shabaab militant group stormed Nairobi’s biggest shopping center Westgate mall, located in the Westlands, and kept it under siege for 80 hours, resulting in 67 deaths. 2nd of April 2015 gunmen attacked Garissa University College, leaving 152 dead and 79 injured. Al-Shabaab took responsibility for the attack.

5 Kenyan towns are divided into wards, with their own administrative units. Ward officials are elected after every national election

6 Usalama Watch Operation described by Amnesty International in a briefing report from 27th of May 2014: “Thousands of Somalis have been subjected to arbitrary arrest, harassment, extortion, and ill-treatment since Operation Usalama Watch began in early April 2014. Over a thousand individuals have been forcibly relocated to overcrowded, insecure refugee camps. Hundreds of others have been deported back to Somalia, a country that has been in conflict for 22 years. Amnesty International is not aware of any Somali arrested during this counter-terror operation who has been charged with terrorism-related offences”.

7 After 8th grade a birth certificate is required for attending governmental schools in Kenya and with the signature of a Kenyan citizen. It was usual that Kenyan Somalis signed these papers for refugees to make them pass and to continue school.
References:

Abdi, Cawo M. 2015: *Elusive Jannah: The Somali Diaspora and a Borderless Muslim Identity*. University of Minnesota Press.


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www.unhcr.org/ke/resettlement


Informants:

Abdinasir, born 1954 in Somalia, trader

Amina, born in Somalia, refugee, arrived 2007

Che, born in Somalia, settled in Eastleigh, arrived 1994

Clive, born in Kenya, community leader

Fadumo, born 1985 in Somalia, refugee, arrived 2010

Farhan, born 1990 in Somalia, refugee, arrived 2008


Fatuma, born 1950 in Somalia, refugee, arrived 2008


Hawa, born 1954 in Somalia, refugee, arrived 2007

Idman, born 1992 in Somalia, refugee, arrived 2007

Kadro, born 1977 in Somalia, refugee, arrived 2008

Kamal, born 1968 in Ethiopia, refugee, arrived 2005

Khadija, born 1985 in Somalia, refugee, arrived 2007

Kiin, born 1975 in Somalia, refugee, arrived 2010

Maryam, born 1985 in Somalia, arrived 2010

Mustafa, born 1982 in Somalia, refugee, arrived 2008


Sa’aïda, born 1970 in Ethiopia, refugee, arrived 2009

Sadiya, born 1990 in Somalia, refugee, arrived 2009

Tuigi, born in Ethiopia, refugee, arrived 2016