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REMITTANCE PRACTICES AND TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL SPACES OF TAMILS AND SOMALIS IN NORWAY

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Abstract

The aim of the article is to map the remittance practices of two war-torn migrant communities, Tamils and Somalis in Norway, by taking into account the motives behind and the purpose of the remittances. In an age of diaspora and transnational communities, where the lives of immigrants are organised beyond the boundaries of nation-states, remittance practices have been shaped by the transnational social spaces. This article takes the transnational social spaces suggested by Faist (2000a, b), namely transnational kinship groups, transnational circuits and transnational communities as its theoretical departure. Five categories of remittances are common among Tamils and Somalis living in Norway: family, politics, welfare, network and investment remittances. These categories have links with different types of transnational social spaces.

Keywords

Norway • remittance practices • Tamils and Somalis • transnational communities • transnational kinship groups • transnational social spaces

1 Introduction

This article aims to identify different categories of remittance practices of first-generation members of two war-torn migrant communities, Tamils and Somalis in Norway, and tries to explain the connections between their remittance practices and transnational social spaces. It takes remittance practices of Tamils as the primary case and that of the Somalis as the secondary case. Remittances, from one perspective, are considered "personal flows from migrants to their friends and families and should not be taxed or directed to specific development uses" (Ratha 2006: 173) and seen as private money, but in practice, remittances are not always personal flows. In the remittance literatures, there is evidence that collective or community remittances are also sent by migrants as part of their political and sociocultural affiliations in their community life (Horst & Gaas 2008; Horst 2008; Goldring 2004; Itzigsohn & Saucedo 2002; Merz, Chen & Geithner 2007).

This article anchors itself theoretically on the concept of transnational social spaces, suggested by Faist (2000a, 2000b) and connects it with remittance practices of Tamils and Somalis. The article is empirically based on data collected through qualitative interviews conducted among 25 Tamils and 15 Somalis living in Norway, between the age ranges of 19 and 70 years at the time when the interviews were conducted. Interviewees were selected based on criteria sampling (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009) to represent different categories of migrants; for Tamils, labour, student, refugee migrants, and family reunion settlers and for Somalis refugee migrants and family reunion settlers. Among the Tamil interviewees, 3 were labour migrants, 5 migrated as students, 12 were asylum seekers and refugees, and the rest were family reunion settlers. Among Somalis, 12 were refugees and 3 were family reunion settlers. Among the interviewees, 14 were women, 9 Tamils, and 5 Somalis. All 40 interviews were mainly focused on family remittances but remittances for other purposes were also discussed where interviewees were willing. Interviews were largely conversations, guided by an interview guide, and usually started with their immigration history. Since the author is a native Tamil, all the interviews with Tamils were conducted in Tamil language and with Somalis in 3 languages. Of the 15 Somali interviews, 5 were conducted in Somali with the help of the interpreter, 5 were conducted in Norwegian, 4 in English, and one started

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in English and then switched to Norwegian. The method of data analysis was thematic, identifying patterns and subthemes with the available data (Aronson 1994). I have identified different themes and categorised them according to the patterns that emerged. Informed consent, confidentiality, and consequences are seen as three major components of ethical issues in interview research (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). These ethical concerns have been followed during the research.

2 Tamils and Somalis in Remittance Context

Tamils and Somalis have been keeping strong connections with their countries of origin while building their new life in Norway (Fuglerud 1999; Horst 2008; Horst & Gass 2008). Remittances have been one of their important ties with their home country, to the point where 79% of Tamils and 74% of Somalis in Norway send remittance monthly, few times yearly, or occasionally (Blom & Henriksen 2008).

At present, about 13,000 Tamils from Sri Lanka live in Norway (SSB 2010). The formation of the Tamil diaspora in Norway has undergone four waves of flows, the first as labour migrants from the mid-1960s until 1975; the second in the late 1970s to the latter part of 1980s as students; and the third wave from the mid-1980s as asylum seekers, who were the biggest group (Fuglerud 1999; Tharmalingam 2007). The fourth wave of family reunion settlers joined the first three and around one-third of the Tamil population were born in Norway.

Since remittances have been one of the key transnational ties for the Tamil diaspora, they have had substantial impact on the life of the receiver and sender. Remittances have helped the receivers in the country of origin to achieve social mobility and have contributed to wartime livelihoods for many Tamils during almost three decades of armed conflict and war since the early 1980s to 2009. Remittance practices by the members of Tamil diaspora have been shaping the ways they organise their new life in Norway through the positive and negative impacts the practices have produced (Tharmalingam 2011).

It is difficult to estimate the amount of remittances being sent by Tamil diasporas to their home country since the data on remittances of Tamil diaspora is limited. Total registered remittances to Sri Lanka have reached USD 3.3 billion in 2009, most of it from the labour migrants to the Gulf States (*The Daily Mirror*, Sri Lanka, 09.03.2010). These labour migrants are mainly from the southern and western parts of Sri Lanka, largely from the Sinhala community. Remittance literatures on Sri Lanka have not focused enough on mapping remittance practices of the Tamil diaspora community, including that of the Tamil diaspora members in Norway.

The arrival of Somalis in Norway began in the 1970s, with a few seamen. This was followed by refugees and asylum seekers in the latter part of the 1980s and largely in the 1990s, with the asylum seekers forming the largest group (Fangen 2008; Gaas 2007; Horst 2008; Horst & Gaas 2008). With family reunion settlers and children born in Norway, the total number of Somalis in Norway reached 25,000 in 2010.

Since Somalia still does not have an effective state, the role of remittances has become a crucial factor in stabilising the economy and safeguarding the livelihoods of Somali people in Somalia and those dispersed to surrounding countries like Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. Without the flow of remittances, Somalis and the Somali economy would have had tremendous difficulties for their survival during more than two decades of violent conflict. It is estimated that around USD 750 million to 1 billion are sent as remittance by the Somali diaspora annually (Maimbo 2006; Omer 2002). UNDP has estimated that about USD 360 million has been sent annually for livelihood purposes (Omer 2002). It was revealed at a seminar on Somali remittances held in Oslo on 23 November 2010 that nearly 40% of Somali households are dependent on remittances from abroad for their livelihood. Here, it is important to note that these figures are estimates with relatively little information available about the methods of estimation. Just like Somali diaspora in other countries, for Somalis in Norway, remittances are a crucial transnational practice, and without sending remittances they would not be in a position to justify their stay in Norway.

3 Transnational Social Spaces

Faist (2000a, 2000b) defines transnational social spaces as "combinations of ties, positions in networks and organisations, and networks of organisations that reach across the borders of multiple states." These spaces are considered dynamic social processes rather than static ties and positions. Three types of transnational social spaces, namely, transnational kinship groups, transnational circuits, and transnational communities have been identified. Faist (2000a, 2000b) also suggests three types of resources, namely, reciprocity, social exchange, and solidarity that "allow individuals to cooperate in networks, groups and organizations" (2000b: 192). Social exchange is considered as a resource in the form of mutual obligations and expectations based on Coleman's (1990) notion of social capital. Reciprocity is treated as a resource in the form of social norm; as Gouldner (1960) explains it, one party receives something from the others where others expect some kind of return from the receivers. Solidarity is considered as sharing the same positions between the groups and an important form of solidarity is "collective representation" as Durkheim (1965) framed it.

Faist also highlights the connections between transnational social space and the resources based on which the space is being created. Different types of transnational social ties are linked to different types of resources. Transnational kinship groups operate on the basis of social norms of reciprocity. Sending remittance to family members is a typical example of an act of reciprocity among transnational kinship groups. Transnational circuits operate as a social exchange based

on mutual obligations and expectations among the actors. Trading networks of Chinese, Lebanese, and Indians were cited as examples of these kinds of transnational circuits. Transnational communities are built on the idea of solidarity. They rest on some sort of collective identity through shared ideas, beliefs, evaluations, and symbols. Diasporas are considered as one form of transnational community in Faist's analysis.

4 Transnational Social Spaces of Tamils and Somalis

Tamils from Sri Lanka and Somalis have dispersed from their war-torn countries of origin largely as asylum seekers (Cheran 2003; Fuglerud 1999; Horst 2006; Horst & Gaas 2008; Horst 2008; Kusow & Bjork 2007; Mc Dowel 1996; Wayland 2004) Since their dispersal they have settled in different countries and emerged as diaspora communities with an estimated figure of 1 million dispersed people from each of the two communities being studied here. They live all over the globe, but largely in Western countries such as Canada, United States of America, United Kingdom, Australia, and various parts of Europe including Scandinavia. Many Tamils have also been living in India as refugees and Somalis live in the neighbouring countries of Kenya, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and other Gulf states, and both engage in transnational practices in political, economic, and sociocultural (including religious) spheres.

Gran (2007) in his study on Iraqi Kurds in Norway finds that their transnational social spaces are largely dominated by transnational kinship groups and communities and transnational circuits are weak among them. This article also finds that the transnational social space of Tamils and Somalis in Norway is also largely dominated by transnational kinship groups and communities, and not by transnational circuits.

4.1 Transnational kinship groups

Transnational kinship groups are the result of the formation of transnational family networks. Faist (2000a) indicates that transnational family networks are formed in two ways. First, when migrants leave their home country and settle in a host country either as workers or refugees, families are scattered and family relations take place beyond the borders of nation-states. Most of the Tamils and Somali transnational families are formed in this way. Some migrants who settled in the host country moved to other countries for work leaving the family members in the country of settlement, and thus also contribute to transnational family networks. Secondly, transnational family networks are also created when older generation migrants return to their country of origin while the later generation still remains in the country of settlement. In this scenario, the later generation family members keep contacts and make visits to the county of origin of their older generation relatives. Since Tamils and Somalis are from war-torn countries and they are relatively young migrants with respect to the number of years they have lived in Norway, the common transnational family networks among them belong to the first type, not the second one. It is not common at this particular point in time to find Tamil and Somali older generation members returning to their countries of origin and the children and grandchildren keeping contact with them as transnational families, except the very few who returned to Somaliland.

Faist points out that reciprocity is a mechanism or a resource that binds members of transnational kinship groups. Remittance practice is cited as an example of reciprocity among transnational kinship groups. In the remittance practices of Tamils and Somalis in Norway, reciprocity has played a key role in keeping the connections and ties with their kinship groups. At the same time, a crucial difference between Tamil and Somali kinship groups is also identifiable. For Tamils, kinship is largely a family matter, but for Somalis, it has broader scope that goes beyond family and plays a crucial role in social organisation of Somali life. Lewis (1994) describes the strong collectiveness of Somali kinship groups and observes, "'our kinsmen right or wrong' is the basic motto of Somali social life" (1994: 7).

4.2 Transnational communities

The way Tamils and Somalis have organised their life in Norway demonstrates that they have now become diasporas and thus can be classified as transnational communities based on Faist's typology. Faist also stresses that diasporas shall have substantial ties with the host society to be called transnational communities, otherwise they are a case of exiles (2000a). Tamils and Somalis keep substantial ties with the host society even though there are differences in the ways they keep these ties, and the Tamils are more institutionally connected while Somalis are socially connected (Engebrigtsen & Fuglerud 2009). In this sense, they can both be classified as transnational communities.

For Tamils, language and ethnic nationalism are important factors that form their political identity as Eelam Tamils. Culturally, religion plays an important role, where around 80% of Tamils follow Caivam, a division of Hindu religion that worships Lord Shiva as the foremost God, as their religion, and the rest are Catholics or other Christians (cf. Schalk 2007; Jacobsen 2009). Despite religious differences, there are some common aspects in their cultural practices. Among Tamils, transnational communities are organised differently depending on their diverse collectiveness and solidarity. For examples, religious associations including temples and prayer groups are formed based on the religious collectiveness, home village networks by the migrants from the same village, alumni associations among students from the same school, political organisations based on ethnicity and nationalism, rehabilitation and development organisation based on humanitarian and ethnic solidarity, and so on. In the

social organisation of the Tamil diaspora, the support networks of the Liberation Tigers of Tamils Eelam (LTTE) have played a crucial role and solidarity based on Tamil nationalism has become a core component of Tamil transnational life.

For Somalis, three factors are important in their collectiveness and solidarity: religion, ethnicity, and clan. In the social organisation of Somali transnational life including in Norway, religion plays a crucial role. Somalis are united as Muslims. In contrast to Tamils, kinship connection plays a key role in the Somali social life through the clan system. Clan-based solidarity has been observed among Somalis and it is noted that many Somali organisations in Norway have clan affiliations (Assal 2004). It is also evident that Somalis in Norway mobilised around their clans when clan conflicts took place in Somalia (Horst & Gass 2008). Mobilisation based on nationhood has also been observed amongst Somalis especially when their nation was under occupation, as seen in Somali mobilisation in Norway when Ethiopian troops invaded Somalia in December 2006.

4.3 Transnational circuits

The transnational circuits mentioned in Faist's typology are as weak among Tamils and Somalis as among Iraqi Kurds in Norway (Gran 2007). Transnational business networks are not much stronger, except for the business of informal money transfer, hawala. Somalis' system of hawala is more established and sophisticated than that of the Tamils. Instead of business networks, among Tamils, there was another kind of strong network in the Tamil liberation movement, called Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). This network had some aspects of Faist's transnational circuits. The weak linkages of transnational circuits among these communities can be understood through the war and conflict situation in their homeland, which severely restrict the circular movements of migrants between their home countries and countries of settlement.

5 Five Categories of Remittances from Norway

Motivations for remittance sending can be generally attributed to three major criteria: pure altruism, pure self-interest, and tempered altruism and enlightened self-interest (Lucas & Stark 1985). In addition to these criteria, after having analysed more than 40 related studies, Carling (2008) identifies and discusses some micro-level determinants of remittances. The point of departure for this section goes beyond these motivation criteria, for which the underlying assumption is that remittances are private money. These criteria do not focus enough on the purposes of the remittances beyond personal and private purposes.

Based on data gathered during interviews and informal conversations and from other academic literatures on Somali remittances from Norway (Horst & Gaas 2008; Horst 2008), this article suggests that five remittance categories could be identified in practice amongst Tamils and Somalis in Norway, namely, remittances oriented towards family, politics, welfare, networks, and investment. These categories are not mutually exclusive on all occasions, but at times overlap when a particular remittance transfer may fall into more than one category.

5.1 Family-oriented remittances

Family-oriented remittances are remittances sent to the country of origin or elsewhere to fulfil family needs, varying from livelihoods, fleeing expenses (leaving the country due to war and conflict), medical expenses, education expenses, wedding and funeral expenses, building houses, creating job opportunities, etc. These family-oriented remittances are the strongest motivators among Tamils and Somalis in Norway since both communities have a kind of collective life and extended family tradition. For Tamils, migration expenses and dowries for sisters (Fuglerud 1999) could be considered as the most important need, although a good portion of money is being sent for livelihood needs of relatives and other purposes. For Somalis, livelihood and migration expenses top the list, although other needs, especially those related to education and health are also significant (Gaas 2007; Horst & Gaas 2008; Lindley 2005, 2007; Tharmalingam, Gass & Eriksen 2011).

Both Tamils and Somalis are bound by a "moral economy" which leads them to behave with the consciousness of duty. The term "moral economy" was originated by Thompson (1971) in explaining food riots in Britain. Here the concept of moral economy is used to denote the phenomenon of the nature of the moral obligation of immigrants towards their family and the country of origin with regard to remittance practice. Almost all the interviewees who send money to their families expressed their sense of moral obligation to their families. In the Somalis' case, religion also plays an important role in motivating them in helping those in need. "If you do not help people in need, you are not a good Muslim," Fatima, one of the Somali interviewees said. At the same time, if they have difficulty in sending money, their religion also gives a sense of relief; as expressed by Amina, another Somali women living in Oslo, "Allah will look after them."

In the interviews conducted for this study, three forms of reciprocity related remittance practices were noted. First, remittance practices that involve mutual expectations are when "what one party receives from the other requires some return" (Faist 2000a: 203). Manicam, a Tamil father who had migrated to Norway explained the remittance practices of their family before his own migration in the following terms: "We decided to send our children abroad to overcome our economic difficulty and save them from the war. What they sent back in terms of economy has had huge impact on our family." The second form of remittance practice is bound with moral commitments to send remittance to family members without expecting anything in return from them. This is their obligation or duty to look after their family members. "If a person is bleeding, it shall be the duty of a

moral person to stop that bleeding by all the means he or she can. In the same way, it is our duty to send money for starving family members," Amal, a Somali informant, said. Many Tamils have remitted large amounts towards their sisters' dowries. This is an obligation Tamil brothers have to take care of in terms of their sisters getting married, irrespective of whether the brothers had emigrated or not. The third form of remittance practice is related to reciprocity as selfless care for the people left behind in the homeland and may also be described as altruism. Here, selfless care means actions that are not bound by moral commitments or expectation of return. "After I have completed my family commitments I sent money to extended family members even though I felt no moral commitment and they did not ask. This gave me a kind of good feeling and satisfaction," Somu, a Tamil informant, said.

5.2 Politics-oriented remittances

Politics-oriented remittances are remittances that are sent for the purpose of political mobilisation in the country of origin. This kind of remittance is sent as financial support for building grassroots political organisations in the homeland, supporting political struggles including armed struggles, encouraging peace building efforts, financing the election campaigns of political parties, and so on. The politics-oriented remittances discussed in the article refer to financial and other material support from the diaspora communities to their homeland-based political organisations or networks that they support.

In the case of Tamils and Somalis in Norway, since the political conflict in their country of origin had emerged as armed conflicts, politics-oriented remittances by them have received much attention. Tamils in diaspora all over the globe have contributed financial and material help to the LTTE (Cheran 2003; Cheran & Aiken 2005; Mc Dowell 1996; Fuglerud 1999; Horst 2008; Human Rights Watch 2006). It has further been said that the fund-raising of LTTE has two dimensions: one is voluntary, where people have contributed through free will, and the other is forced, where funds were collected through use of various forms of intimidation. This involuntary dimension is also described as forced remittances (La 2004). Human Rights Watch (HRW 2006), after having completed fieldwork in UK and Canada, released a report that concluded that the LTTE collected funds also through coercion and extortion. Despite these observations, there are not enough detailed studies by scholars on Tamils financing or providing remittances to LTTE. The few studies on Tamils' financing of LTTE are largely reports from organisations, newspaper articles, or academic work that lack reliable data. Sources are also biased and lack rationale for their estimation of the amount.

The HRW study mentioned earlier discussed Tamils' financing of the LTTE in detail, but the study has also been criticised by the Tamils for its methodology and possible biases. The Canadian Tamil Congress, a leading Tamil community organisation in Canada, questioned the credibility of the findings of the Human Rights Watch (HRW) by raising some questions on the methodology and thus stimulated a debate among the Tamil community. HRW responded to the criticism by releasing a follow-up statement.

LTTE financing was a collective exercise rather than an individual initiative. Individual contributions were collected by the local organisation and then sent to LTTE. For individuals, in their perceptions, these were contributions, not remittances that have been sent to the homeland. The Tamil terminology for this practice of contributing to the LTTE is the Tamil word *Kasu koduthal* with the meaning of "giving money", not *Kasu anuputhal* that has the meaning of "sending money". When they send the money to their country of origin directly, they use the word *Kasu anuputhal*.

Tamils in Norway receive requests from visiting volunteers for contribution to the LTTE-led liberation struggle. The number of people contributing has varied depending upon their capacity and willingness. A good section of people did not contribute to the LTTE for various reasons ranging from a lack of financial capacity to differences they had with the LTTE.

A discourse that describes this practice as a tax is also current, but that is an oversimplified picture of LTTE financing. The support for LTTE, including financial support, among the diaspora has been a complex phenomenon that cannot be dealt with in black and white terms. There are many layers in the support mechanism as well as in the non-supporting mechanism.

Balan, a Tamil living in Oslo for more than 15 years, described this practice as follows:

> Giving money to the LTTE has been part of our extended family tradition. We support our family network financially and materially. Supporting LTTE should also be seen in this context.

Another person, Sundram, who has been contributing to the LTTE since his arrival in Norway, sees this practice as a moral obligation.

> This is our moral duty. They have been giving their lives for the cause. If we do not support them politically and financially, we are not human beings.

These two expressions demonstrate that supporting LTTE financially has links with obligation, tradition, and values. These emotions got stronger among the Tamils each time the war casualties from the LTTE side were relatively high.

Despite these emotions, politically oriented remittances given to the LTTE were also linked to community dynamics. A community support network (CSN) for the struggle for an independent state led by the LTTE has had a strong presence over a long period. Through this process, a particular type of LTTE support community that could also be described as a kind of Gemeinschaft, as described by Tönnies in 1887 (Harris 2001), has been created. This LTTE support community has several layers. The first one is the intimate layer – people who are relatives, close friends of the LTTE – who can be relied upon on any occasion. The second layer is the larger group that comprises the CSN with regular contributors. There is also a third layer, with

contributors who occasionally or seasonally support LTTE financially. There is a group of people who contribute on Memorial Day, called *Maaveerar naal*, or great heroes' day that has been observed by the LTTE on November 27 every year since 1989. November 27th memorialises the first member of the LTTE who gave his life for the cause.

This "LTTE support community" involves a large number of people; contributing to the LTTE is seen as an important aspect of remaining a loyal member of that particular community. This specific feature of the community has helped the LTTE tremendously in mobilising financial and political support. On some occasions, this community network has functioned as a kind of social pressure that stimulates the support for the LTTE. Kumaran, who identifies himself as part of this community, expresses his dilemma in the following words.

> I consider that it is my duty to support the LTTE and I support them financially and politically even though I have some difference of opinion with some of their actions. By identifying myself as one of the supporters of Tamil freedom struggle and LTTE, I felt that I am a part of a collectivity. Sometimes, I had financial difficulties and was not able to give contribution to LTTE, but I did not stop contributing. This was because I was willing to be the part of that collectivity. This may also be seen as social pressure.

Apart from LTTE, some other politically motivated groups have also engaged in small scale and closed network fundraising for political purposes. After May 2009, when LTTE was militarily defeated, there are indications that there may be changes in the funding mechanisms. The Tamil diaspora, including those in Norway, are now cautious in contributing financially and it seems that their concerns and support are more towards humanitarian issues rather than political issues. However, supporters of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) and the Tamil National People's Front (TNPF), two political formations of Tamils in the homeland, have collected money to defray their expenses on election campaigns connected to the parliamentary elections held in April 2010. These contributions were not entirely politically motivated, being partly influenced by personal relationships.

In Somalia, there are sharp differences in political conditions in Somaliland, Puntland, and the rest of Somalia. In the political scene of South Somalia, apart from the clan affiliations, three political formations have attracted more concern with regard to politically oriented remittances. These are the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), Islamic Courts Union (ICU), and Al Shabaab. ICU, after having fought Ethiopian troops that invaded Somalia in December 2006, lost the battle, and later in the following year became part of Alliance for Reliberation of Somalia (ARS) that was established in Asmara, Eritrea, as a broad-based organisation. Al Shabaab, which was part of the ICU, has emerged as a major fighting force against Ethiopian invasion with the objective of ruling Somalia under Islamic tenets. When ICU was fighting against the TFG, it was able to attract broad support among the Somalis across their clan affiliations, which was mainly attributed to the stability brought by ICU and their determination to fight against the Ethiopian invasion (Horst 2008; Horst & Gaas 2008). Though Al Shabaab gained support among Somalis and the Somali diaspora in the early stages due to their fight against the Ethiopian invasion, it seems now that this support has been fading due to Al Shabaab's behaviour that has been seen by many Somalis as not grounded in Somali traditions (Gaas 2009).

The Somali diaspora in Norway has contributed financially to all three political formations, TFG, ICU, and Al Shabaab, although the degree of support differed (Horst 2008; Horst & Gaas 2008). It is also reported that "there are also few indications that large amounts are being collected on behalf of the TFG" (Horst & Gaas 2008: 14). The Norwegian media reported a fundraising event organised in Oslo in 2006 for mobilising financial support for ICU where around 600 Somalis participated. The then chairperson of the ICU and the current president of the Somali TFG, Sheik Shariif Sheikh Ahmed, addressed the event through telephone. Financial support was called on from the Somali diaspora for a Mogadishu city cleaning project for the purpose of reconstruction of roads, removal of garbage, and renovations of mosques. Participants contributed generally US $1000; some paid more, some less, and money was collected through local contacts and sent (Horst & Gaas 2008). The motivation for the contribution was attributed more to the peace and stability that had been brought by the ICU and nationalist sentiments that were high when the ICU was fighting against the occupying Ethiopian troops, not to the ideology of the Islamists.

There were also claims from Somalis in 2008 that they financially supported the Al Shabaab. Somali diaspora members in Norway, especially in Oslo, publicly stated that they were supporting Al Shabaab financially since it was fighting against Ethiopian occupiers. A leading daily newspaper *Aftenposten* in Norway published a news item with the title "All support Al Shabaab" on 01.03.2008 in which one Somali diaspora member claimed that "day and night, we send money for the fighters who fight against occupation and for liberation. Al Shabaab is one of them." Politically oriented remittance to Somaliland by the Somalilanders in Norway was largely non-conflict oriented; instead it was related to the objective of bringing stability to the State of Somaliland that has so far not gained official international recognition.

5.3 Welfare-oriented remittances

Welfare-oriented remittances include money and materials sent to the countries of origin for the general welfare of society extending beyond the needs of their own families. Here the term welfare includes humanitarian, development, and other concerns of wellbeing. These remittances do not include the remittances for family welfare purposes.

Among Tamils, welfare-oriented remittance practices exist at three levels (Tharmalingam 2007). The first level is at the national

or macro level. This refers to welfare measures that have been focused on the Tamil homeland in the North and East of Sri Lanka. At this macro level, Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO), Tamil Economic Consulting House (TECH), and Norwegian Tamil Health Organisation (NTHO) are the leading organisations in Norway that have been working for the welfare of Tamils in the homeland. Although these organisations have focused mainly on the Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka, they have also contributed their services beyond the borders of this homeland.

The second is at the meso-level in which organisations or networks in Norway collect remittances for welfare purposes in their respective regions, villages, schools, and for other specific projects. These organisations do not take a national view, but work for their particular location of interest. Home village associations or networks, alumni associations of schools, and some non-profit organisations are good examples of this kind of meso-level remittance practice. An example of this level of support is reported below.

The author had an opportunity to participate in a dinner held in Oslo in September 2008 by his home village network. The organisers gave the details of an education development project designed by the village development committee and requested the author to present the project at the event to the attendees. This project was about sponsoring poor pupils from the village towards their secondary and upper secondary education. The project plan requested 100,000 Sri Lankan rupees (nearly USD 1000) per student as educational support for a period of four years. The amount was to be paid as fixed deposits in a bank and the students would be supported monthly with the interest received from the bank for the amount deposited. After four years when the support for one student came to an end, a new student would be supported from the interest amount. The support could come from individuals or groups. The organisers reported that the commitments made on that specific occasion were for the sponsorship of 11 students (nearly USD 11,000) by individuals and groups. In a follow-up conversation six months later, it was revealed that more than 60% of the money had been sent for the project through a bank account.

The third or the micro level is where money and material support are given by individuals directly to welfare projects in the homeland. In most cases these kinds of remittances are individual remittances, not collective remittances.

Among Somalis, welfare-oriented remittances are getting more attention than before (Abdile 2010; Hoehne 2010; Horst & Gaas 2008). Many Somalis see development initiatives as very important to bring peace and stability in their country leading to an increase in welfare-oriented remittances. Education projects for supporting primary, secondary, and tertiary education in Somalia attract most remittances. Development of the health sector and infrastructure development have also been prioritised. Somalis in Norway have financially supported education projects for the purpose of rehabilitating young combatants (mooryann) in order to empower them to manage their livelihood (Horst & Gaas 2008). One of the Somali interviewees stated that she had contributed to an education project in Somalia. Many Somalilanders in Norway send welfare-oriented remittances to Somaliland.

Often welfare projects are organised through clan-based networks. In such scenarios, the remittances are mostly collective remittances. Since these remittances are also mobilised mainly based on the clan network, these would be part of the category of the network-oriented remittances. In some cases individuals also send remittances directly to projects in Somalia and the surrounding places where Somalis live, for the purposes of collective welfare.

5.4 Network-oriented remittances

Network-oriented remittances are remittances sent for the partial or complete fulfilment of needs of the senders' personal, social, and religious networks. These remittances are either individual remittances or collective remittances. Among Tamils, friendship societies and village and school networks are the main forms of networks connected to remittance sending. Remittances from friendship networks are largely individual remittances while for village and school networks they are largely collective. Although Tamil society is a caste-bound society, there are no indications in the public sphere of mobilisation for remittances based on caste networks.

Among Somalis, remittances organised and transferred through clan networks are the most appropriate example of network-oriented remittances. Affiliation with clan networks, the tradition of clan-based contribution of blood compensation *diya,* and the mobilisation of resources during times of conflict and for social wellbeing have contributed to stronger ties for network-based remittance. Somalis in Norway have sent remittances during the time of clan conflicts through their clan network to look after the interests of their clan. For example, during the period of 2004–2006 when there were conflicts caused by pastoral and grazing issues between two clans, Salebaan and Sacad, which are sub-clans of the Habar Gidr Hawiye clans, in the Mudug and Galguduud regions, Somalis in Norway who belonged to these respective clans sent remittances to Somalia to strengthen their clan's position (Horst & Gaas 2008). Another example of clan-based financial mobilisation in which Somaliland diaspora members in Norway supported conflict resolution was when two sub-clans of the Isaq clan were fighting each other within the Ogaden region in Ethiopia. Somalilanders in Norway mobilised USD 150,000 and sent the amount for supporting the delegation under the leadership of clan elders (Suldaan) to bring the conflict to an end (Horst & Gaas 2008).

5.5 Investment-oriented remittances

Investment-oriented remittances are remittances sent for investment purposes, for capital accumulation, for creating self-employment, or for business development purposes.

Tamils in Norway have invested in land in their villages and in apartments and houses in the capital city, Colombo. Their investments in properties have also been in India, Singapore, Malaysia, and other parts of the world. Most of these investments were in real estate for capital accumulation purposes. There were some cases of investment-oriented remittances to buy boats to support fishing activities. There were also cases of remittances for the purpose of small business development. Business investments are also made in other countries where Tamil diaspora members have established businesses.

Conversations with members of Somali diaspora in Norway have revealed that Somalis in Norway have been sending investment-oriented remittances. Among Somalis, business investments were the main purpose for the investment-oriented remittances rather than capital accumulation. Somali diaspora members have invested not only in Somalia in telecommunication and other profit-making projects but also in the surrounding countries and in Dubai. Dubai is the main hub for the Somalis for financial and business activities and transfers. There are cases where dispersed Somalis have established business ventures throughout the African continent and in other parts of the world with the support of investment-oriented remittances from the Somali diaspora. Somalis have also invested in camels in Somalia.

6 Remittance practices and transnational social spaces

The transnational social space of Tamils and Somalis as transnational kinship groups, circuits, and communities shapes the patterns of their transnational practices and relations, including remittance sending. Since transnational kinship groups are strong among Tamils and Somalis they do send substantial remittances to their families and relatives. In this way, family-oriented remittances have become the most important category of remittances for both Tamils and Somalis. In family remittances, reciprocity in its three forms – expectation of return or as a kind of risk insurance, morally bound commitments without expectations, and selfless care to the people left behind – plays a crucial role. Since Tamil kinship groups largely constitute reciprocity aspects within the family sphere, remittances are largely family remittances. Among Somalis, kinship-based reciprocity transcends family boundary and contributes to other categories of remittances, especially to network-oriented remittances.

The lives of Tamils and Somalis as transnational communities is one of the types of the transnational social space as suggested by Faist, and has contributed to the evolution of sending remittances beyond personal or family purposes. This has led to solidarity-based community remittances.

Community remittances of Tamils based on solidarity and collectiveness are largely politics and welfare-oriented remittances. Politics-oriented remittances result from solidarity-based collectiveness of Tamil nationhood. Solidarity among members from the same villages, schools, and religion and collectivity as a nation are instrumental for welfare-oriented remittances among Tamils. The dominant force in Tamils' transnational organisational life has been the institutions created by or influenced by the LTTE support community network and these have also shaped the nature of the transnational practices of Tamils as a transnational community. Amongst Tamils in Norway and in other countries where the Tamil diaspora members have established themselves as a transnational community, diaspora organisations can be categorised under three groups: pro-LTTE, non-LTTE, and anti-LTTE organisations. Since LTTE has dominated the political and social space of Tamils for nearly three decades, the political position of these organisations has been centred on the LTTE. Among these three groups, anti-LTTE organisations were relatively weak and non-LTTE organisations co-operate with the LTTE support community network or take a neutral stand on political and social issues. In this way, with the pro-LTTE and non-LTTE organisations, the transnational social space of the transnational community has been largely dominated by the LTTE support network. This has been an important reason for Tamils having had politics-oriented remittances as the second most important priority. However, since May 2009, after LTTE was militarily defeated in Sri Lanka, there have been indications that LTTE domination in the transnational community is slowly getting weaker.

Somalis as a transnational community have diversified orientations. As clans play an important role in the Somali transnational life, clan affiliations have played a crucial role in shaping transnational practices, including remittances. Due to the strong ties clan networks have, network-oriented remittances have become the second highest priority for the Somalis. Trust based on reciprocity among transnational kinship groups also contributes to strong network-oriented remittance practices among Somalis. As a community dispersed from war-torn areas, Somalis too have had strong concerns for the welfare of the people affected by the war in their homelands. Hence, they have also formed organisations that play a crucial role in mobilising welfare-oriented remittances to their homeland. The war and conflict situation in the homeland and the weak ties in the transnational circuits have had a negative impact on investment-oriented remittances. It can be expected that improvements in conditions in the homeland and the possibility of getting more economic resources in Norway over the period would contribute positively to the investment-oriented remittances in the future.

7 Concluding Remarks

This article has focused on remittance practices amongst Tamils and Somalis by looking at different categories of remittances. Tamils and Somalis have organised their new life in Norway after having fled from their war-torn countries of origin and also established a transnational social space. While territorially located in Norway, they

live transnationally through transnational kinship groups and communities and to a lesser extent through transnational circuits. These types of transnational space, as suggested by Faist, have some sort of connection to the categories of remittances being sent by them.

Transnational kinship groups among the Tamils mainly practice family-oriented remittances and investment-oriented remittance and among Somalis this has been mainly in the form of family and network-oriented remittances. Life as a transnational community has contributed to political and welfare-oriented remittances. Investment-oriented remittance flows within the transnational circuits, even though it is not a strong practice.

Contrary to the perception that remittances are personal flows of private money, this article finds that remittance practices transcend the realm of personal flows and private money and also finds community resources among diaspora communities as community remittances. In our case of Tamils and Somalis in Norway, politics, welfare, and network-oriented remittances are mostly considered as community remittances. Private money is more often in the form of family-oriented and investment-oriented remittances. Contributing to community-mobilised remittances is a crucial factor in keeping their social network within the transnational social space and also for their status within the community.

These categories of remittance practices are largely based on the practice of the first generation of Tamils and Somalis in Norway. The crucial aspect of these practices is how the second generation of the same immigrant communities will continue the practices. Indications are that the second generations would give lower priority than the first generations to morally bound remittances due to their weak contacts with the country of origin and the way they have been brought up in Norway. They might give more importance to investment-oriented remittances than to other categories of remittances. The remittance practices of second-generation Tamils and Somalis require further study.

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