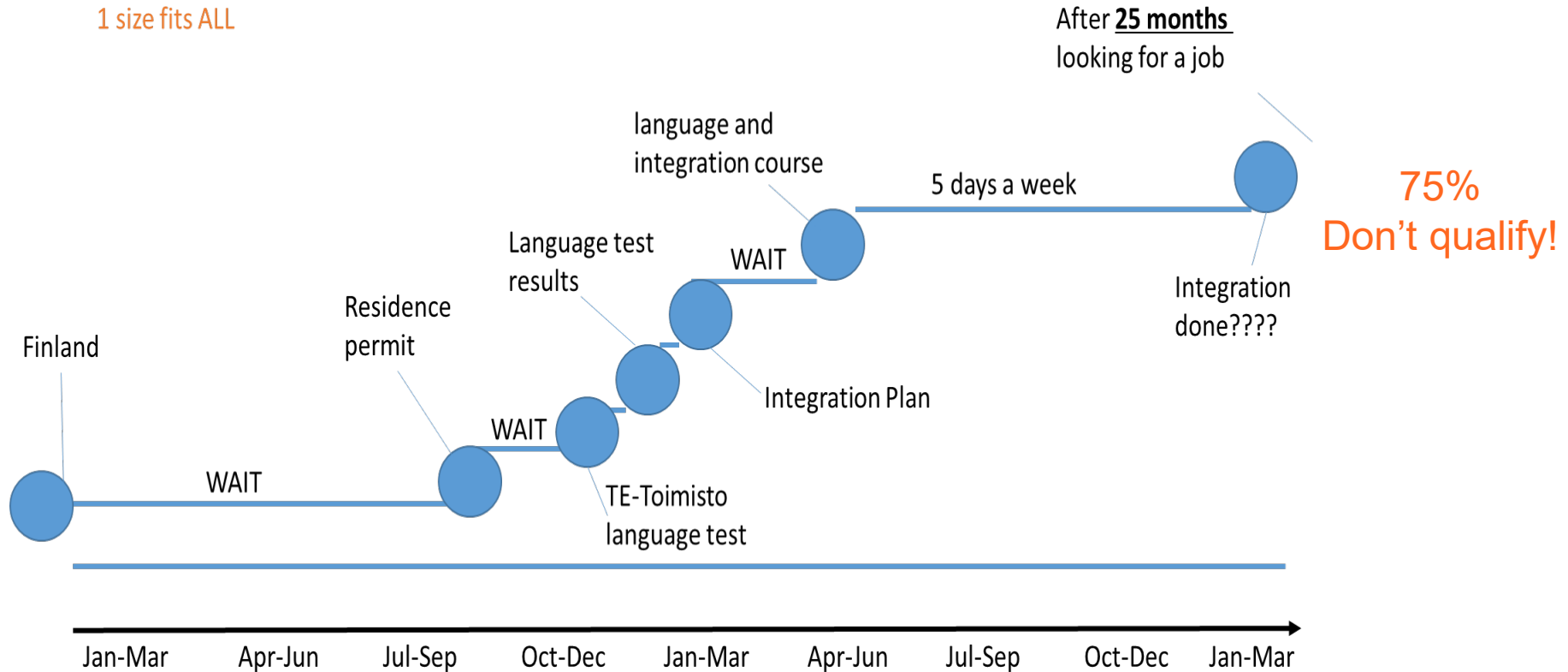# Me, Us, and Them:
Liminal identity trajectory of highly educated unemployed immigrants in capital region of Finland

Hani Tarabichi
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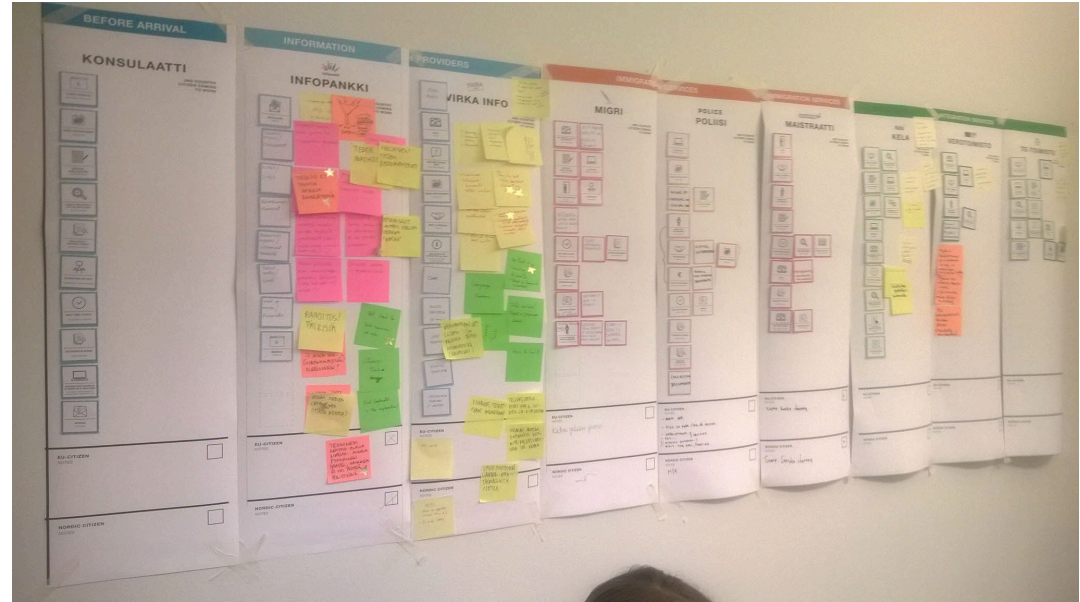
Motivation

Motivation

- **Finnish Immigration and integration service system in 2015:**
  - Don't know where to start
  - Silos feeling
  - Service as a holistic journey is not seen
  - Frustration with complexity
  - Mis-understanding

Source: TEMWIST 2016 Final Report.

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Conclusion!

Integration is chaotic

(Robinson,1998)

Liminal Space and Identity Work

- **The state of liminality and in-betweenness** concerns actors on the boundaries of a changing phase of being. Scarcity of work opportunities, acting in a new environment, and changing country of residence requires immigrants to portray complex, ambiguous, flexible, and incomplete identities (Beech, 2011)

- These identities include prior to migration professional identity, new unidentified career identity, and liminal identity **where immigrants collectively practice alternative forms of work and organization** (Daskalaki & Simosi, 2018).

- Identity work = Self Identity + Social Identity

Aim

- To gain better understanding on how highly educated unemployed immigrants act in liminal space

- To understand the different dynamics and roles of actors within liminal space

- To gain knowledge on processes of self-identity and social-identify that immigrants go through?

- To deepen our knowledge about liminal space and identity work

- To discover roles of institutions in liminal space

39 interviews

- 11 Master Degree holders

- 11 Bachelor Degree holders

- 1 PhD holder

- Average age 34

- Average time in Finland 5 Years

- Average experience out of Finland 5 Years

- Average experience in Finland <1 year

39 interviews

Interview#	Min	Age	Origin	Degree	Reason	Status	Years in Finland	Experience in Finland	Experience Abroad
Inte1	58	35	Russia	Master	Au pair	Single	11	<1	3
Inte2	38	34	Hungary	Bachelor	Family	Married	12	4	3
Inte3	36	40	India	Master	Family	Married	5	<1	12
Inte4	54	41	Syria	Bachelor	Refugee	Married	6	1	17
Inte5	59	35	Russia	Bachelor	Study	Single/ Married	14	4	1
Inte6	44	33	Brazil	Master	Family	Married	1	0	5
Inte7	38	26	Vietnam	Bachelor	Au pair	Single	2	0	2
Inte8	67	45	Iraq	PhD	Refugee	Married	2	0	20
Inte9	39	37	Syria	Bachelor	Refugee	Single	5	1	12
Inte10	50	30	Portugal	Master	Family/Economic	Married	2	0	2
Inte11	46	25	India	Master	Study	Single	4	<1	2

Interview #	Min	Age	Origin	Degree	Reason	Status	Years in Finland	Experience in Finland	Experience Abroad
Inte12	53	40	India	Master	Family	Married	2	1	10
Inte13	41	28	Turkey	Bachelor	Family	Married	3	<1	6
Inte14	65	35	India	Master	Family	Married	5	2	3
Inte15	51	29	Uganda	Master	Family/Study	Married	7	1	1
Inte16	44	27	Pakistan	Bachelor	Family	Married	2	0	3
Inte17	42	32	Palestine	Bachelor	Family	Married	6	0	3
Inte18	44	35	Ethiopia	Master	Family	Married	6	<1	8
Inte19	33	35	India	Master	Family	Married	2	0	5
Inte20	54	37	Brazil	Master	Partner/something different	Relation	1	<1	10
Inte21	58	38	Egypt	Bachelor	Family/ study	Married/ separated	9	0	7
Inte22	46	32	Georgia	Bachelor	Family	Married	7	1	1
Inte23	46	40	India	Bachelor	Family	Married	3	0	11

Early findings/Observations/Reflections

- Heterogeneity of backgrounds, experiences, and education

- Low reliance on home network for support

- Willingness to take many career steps backward to gain entry to labor market in Finland (scarify)

- Low willingness/consideration for changing careers

- Content/grateful… but not happy

- Depression…anxiety…self-doubts (60%)

- Name trauma (fitting in)
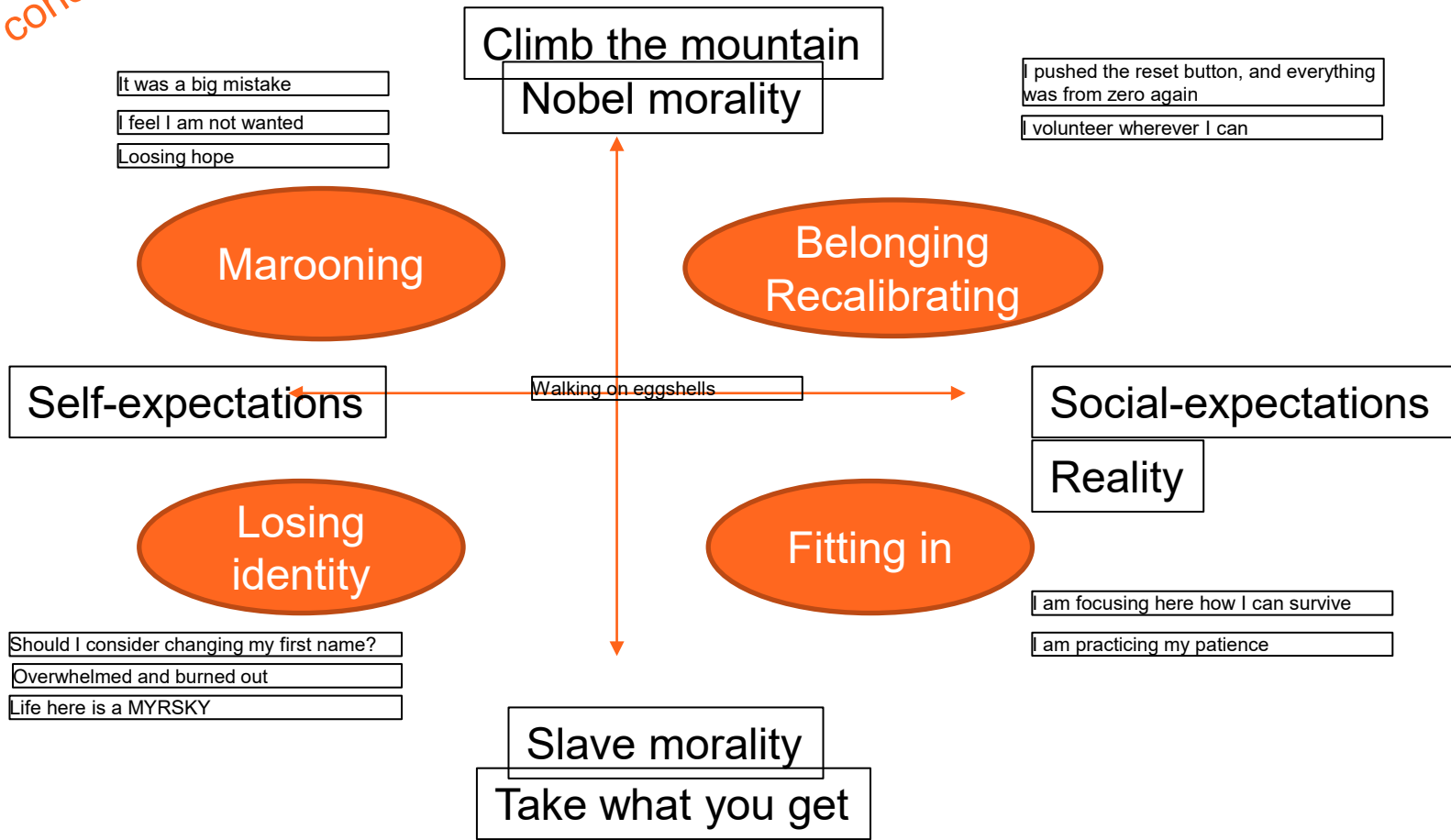
Early findings/Observations/Reflections

- Paradoxical tensions (legitimacy)
    - *Language VS Experience VS Education VS Technical Ability*

- Role of local network

- Role of NGOs

- Role of mentorship

- Importance of peer-to-peer support/mentorship

- Importance of gaining Finnish experience/internship

- 60% employed

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2023

Building a door for the right career opportunity

Hani Tarabichi

Under construction

It was a big mistake

I feel I am not wanted

Loosing hope

I pushed the reset button, and everything was from zero again

I volunteer wherever I can

Climb the mountain

Nobel morality

Marooning

Belonging Recalibrating

Self-expectations

Walking on eggshells

Social-expectations

Reality

Losing identity

Fitting in

I am focusing here how I can survive

I am practicing my patience

Should I consider changing my first name?

Overwhelmed and burned out

Life here is a MYRSKY

Slave morality

Take what you get

Practical implications OSKE/KOSKE

- Modularity of practices

- Trial-and-error mentality: Exploration vs exploitation of practices

- Magnify what worked and didn't work (learning)

- Formal and informal interactions

- Performance metrics: Evaluate beyond outcomes, look at intellectual capacity building and knowledge overflow to other fields

- Orchestrate resources rather than control resources

- Invite traditional and non-traditional players: Prize diversity of invited collaborators

Thank you

Hani Tarabichi