

**Transnational Active Citizens: Theorizing the experiences
of young Somali males in London**

by Mohamed Aden Hassan

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of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology**

**Professional and Community Education (PACE) Centre for Urban and
Community Research (CUCR) Department of Sociology Goldsmiths,
University of London**

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Declaration

I declare the work presented in this thesis is my own.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mohamed Aden Hassan', is enclosed in a light gray rectangular box.

Mohamed Aden Hassan

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on young Somali males in London and their transnational engagements. It offers a critical intervention within the literature on forced migration, diaspora, transnationalism, citizenship, intergenerational acculturation and masculinity and challenges existing definitions, concepts and approaches employed in this work. It further unpacks the dominant narrative of ‘citizen suspects’ associated with young British Somali men: it, thus, addresses a gap generally overlooked by diaspora and transnational theories, which commonly focus on the problematised participation of young migrants. It offers a more nuanced approach to youth migration highlighting various social and structural interactions between host-societies, diaspora communities and generations in the UK. The research seeks to engage with four key questions that have been largely overlooked in the literature:

- 1) What are young people’s understandings of notions of ‘belonging’ and ‘home’?;
- 2) How do young people perceive their place in society, deal with the challenges that they face and become active citizens while forging (united) voices?;
- 3) How do intergenerational matters affect young people?
- 4) How do young people’s networks function at the local and transnational level and how are these sustained?

Through semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participant observation, the research frames young Somali men as active citizens by shedding new light onto how they understand and construct their social, political, civic and religious spaces both locally and transnationally. In so doing, it offers a more balanced account with regards to notions of home and belonging. It contributes to research on Somali diaspora(s) in general, and its youth more specifically, as well as their more grounded transnational engagements. It unravels the complexities of intergenerational issues and reveals how young Somalis manage multiple notions of belonging, whilst negotiating broader diaspora and transnational engagements. It concludes that young people’s broader experiences and adopted social positions are firmly shaped by their historical context, interactions with their immediate social environment and more broadly the host-society and transnational narratives. Such experiences are fluid, varied and interactive usually dictating the delicate balance and outcome of reception and rejection

in the host-society. Whilst the focus of the thesis is on young Somali males, there are wider theoretical implications for the study of diaspora, transnationalism and citizenship.

Abbreviations

British Educational Research Association (BERA)
Communities Together Strategic Engagement Team (CTSET)
Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
Forced Migration Online (FMO)
Internally Displaced People (IDP)
Kentish Town Community Organisation (KTCO)
London Somali Youth Forum (LSYF)
Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE)
Union of Islamic Courts (UIC)
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
United Nations Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I)
United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II)
Unified Task Force (UNITAF)
Somali Relief Development Forum (SRDF)
Somali Youth Development Resource Centre (SYDRC)
Transitional Federal Government (TFG)
West London Somaliland Association (WLSA)

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Introduction

This thesis examines the experiences of young British Somali males in London. It draws on and critiques existing literature on forced migration, diaspora, transnationalism, generational acculturation, masculinity and citizenship. Much of the existing literature on young Somali men in the diaspora presents them as ‘suspect citizens’. In contrast, this thesis positions young Somali men as active citizens with multiple forms of belonging and engagements both locally and transnationally, while recognising the serious challenges that they face. In doing so, it adopts a holistic approach, which investigates the causes of Somali migration to the UK, experiences of settlement and integration as well as the formation of diaspora communities, transnational social spaces and extended acts of citizenship (Gaventa and Cornwall, 2001; Heath et al., 2013; Isin and Nielsen, 2008; Pattie et al., 2003; Yuval-Davis, 2011a).

The thesis conceptualises Somali diasporas as plural, given their diverse historical migration trajectories, and subsequent formations and make up. Through the analysis of diaspora formation the focus is on the influence that historical memories, relocation and dispersal have on the growth and progress of transnational social spaces and identities (Cohen, 2008; Safran, 2005; 1991; Hall, 2003; Clifford, 1997; Gilroy, 1993). The transnational social spaces I refer to were shaped through political, economic, social and religious practices and engagements (Glick Schiller & Levitt, 2006; Wald & Williams, 2006) addressing both the intensity and extensity (Vertovec, 2009; Faist, 2004; Guarnizo, 2000) of engagements, and the continued dynamic connections between people and their institutional associations and networks across nation-states (Levitt, 2005; 2001). Throughout, the thesis captures the engagements of young Somalis as transnational citizens (Dufoix, 2008; Levitt, 2004; Somerville, 2008). Meanwhile, the concept of belonging is used to explore the connections young Somalis have to the social spaces within which they frequently participate.

Furthermore, the thesis explores how young British Somali men in London stress their allegiance as British citizens at a time of insecurities and apparent hostilities against Muslim immigrants and Islam in general. Young Somalis’ sense of ‘home’ and what this means to them is explored. It highlights their active participation and multiple notions of belonging

formed and confined by the prolonged conflict in the Somali territories, Islam and Islamophobia and forced migration trajectories as well as overly negative media and mainstream political narratives, all of which seem to structurally marginalize young Somali men in London. It also highlights the disparities and commonalities between where someone feels they belong – their desired ‘cultural’ or ‘ethnic’ home – and aspirations of membership – ‘political’ or ‘civic’ home. It adopts a multi-sited approach in assessing young Somalis’ quest for gaining critical voices and becoming active citizens.

Theoretical approaches and key research focus

Social science research has contributed to how we understand international migration and view migrants as a result. Advocating a clear context while bearing in mind the unique circumstances within which concerned groups and individuals find themselves, has been key in many attempts to formulate notions of belonging in relation to diaspora and transnational studies (Yuval-Davis, 2011a; Van Liempt, 2011; Waite and Cook, 2011; Rodgers, 2009; Somerville, 2008; Banting et al., 2007; Olwig, 2007; Skrbiš et al., 2007; Levitt and Schiller, 2004; P. Levitt, 2004; Levitt, 2002). The experiences of simultaneously belonging to places “‘here and there’ and the related practices and expressions tend to play a significant role in addressing the critical ‘challenges of ‘living together’ in an ethno-culturally diverse contexts” (Waite and Cook, 2011, p. 238). This thesis highlights the complex relationship between host nations and their immigrant citizens (Cohen, 2008; Safran, 1991; Sheffer, 1986). For example, the literature draws attention to how the ‘othering’ and/or use of dehumanizing language against certain minority groups have tendencies to stimulate various forms of isolation (Heath et al. 2013; Turton 2003) often resulting in strained relationships between diaspora communities and hostland (Cohen 2008; Safran 1991). Their sense of belonging can become defined by their active/marginal positions in contrast to the dominant group in society (Kjeldgaard and Askegaard, 2006; Woodward, 2005; Anthias, 2002; Goodenow, 1993). These contested narratives are examined through the deployment of relevant theories and conceptual frameworks.

In essence the three frameworks of forced migration, diaspora, and transnationalism are well placed to provide a meaningful picture and articulate the broader and specific experiences of

young Somali men in London. Forced migration offers the historical background that enables diaspora to form a collective memory upon which it can identify with and a strong sense of belonging to a place called home. Hall (2003) and Clifford (1997) suggest that a referent point of origin that facilitates return is not always desirable. Some diaspora members do not want to return at all (ibid). Through the concept of being and belonging this thesis aims to provide clarity as to what extent and at what level transnational practices occur and, if any, how these practices translate in to more concrete belonging to a place called home, including the possibility of return.

Diasporas could facilitate the transnational experience. However, that is not to say that every diaspora is transnational (Portes 2003). Diasporic journeys reconstruct the sense of belongingness, while transnational movements further redefine these same concepts and challenge their positioning, i.e. of refugees as passive victims of conflict and political unrest. Moreover, they alter the general boundaries of participation and the usage of cultural and social capital. This creates the need to adopt a more rigorous approach that is interdisciplinary and transnational in character that addresses the complex and often unclear disciplinary boundaries between these theories, which are addressed in this thesis. In doing so Dufoix' (2008) conceptual framework is drawn upon to define and understand diaspora and transnationalism. His approach (2008, p.79) depends on a conceptual link to a 'homeland' that is imagined. Dufoix offers four 'ideal types', which are central to this thesis including: 1) 'centroperipheral', which suggests that the diaspora community is closely linked to the home country; 2) 'enclaved'; 3) 'atopic'; and 4) 'antagonistic'. These modes are adapted where necessary to appropriately analyse the diverse experiences of young Somali males in London.

Two important subjects thoroughly examined in this study are the generational differences among and between young Somali men and their parents and notions of masculinity. Generational acculturation theories usually indicate that generational gaps form the basis for conflict and disagreements between parents and children (Rumbaut et al., 2006; Portes and Rumbaut, 2005; Brannen, 2003; Phinney, 1990). It is relevant to delineate the various aspects or arenas that define such generational gaps between the various Somali generations to assess what their possible implications were. Following my own research data there are three critical arenas: language ability, ethnic belonging and generational attitude that contributed to the gap

among various Somali generations. This study demonstrates that both language application and choice are determined by ability to speak and comprehend a language. Furthermore, it is as important to articulate the attitudes that the different generations adopt in relation to the three critical arenas mentioned above and towards the host nation more broadly. In doing so the relationships between and among various generations and their likely implications are analysed. Building on the various acculturation theories reviewed in the literature, an assumption is made that appropriated several approaches to evaluate acculturation dynamics and generational gaps between the different Somali generations. It is, therefore, fitting to suggest segmented acculturation approaches that capture the bi-directional and multidimensional depth and interaction of generational gaps (Waters et al., 2010; Tardif and Geva, 2006; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). With regards to the segmented acculturation approach three types of intergenerational acculturation were considered including: dissonant, consonant and selective (ibid). Also, the marginal positions that these Somali generations find themselves in are assessed as part of the acculturation process with references to the American and British mainstream society (Heath et al., 2013; Rothe et al., 2011; Portes and Rumbaut, 2006; Huntington, 2005). Moreover, it is indicated how language and cultural limitations among young Somali men are managed through masculinity (Hansen, 2008; Archer, 2001; Desai, 2000). The thesis demonstrates how hegemonic masculinities among young Somali men are negotiated in the various social spaces that they occupy. The intention is to identify the generational gaps and interactions between parents, who seem much more accustomed to the Somali traditions and language, and young Somali men, who are generally demonstrating higher levels of English language abilities and to a greater extent adopting British ways of thinking, in an attempt to delineate the possible implications between them.

Citizenship is another relevant topic explored in this thesis. The interest in citizenship is far reaching and “has never been higher” (Bellamy, 2008, p. 1), particularly when it concerns broader important matters in relation to ethics and values of belonging (Isin, 2005). According to Yuval-Davis (2011a) various important political projects of belonging are connected to religion. Yuval-Davis suggests that “fundamentalist (or absolutist) movements ...have arisen in all major religions and are part – especially some Muslim and Christian fundamentalist movements – of the global ‘clash of civilizations’ discourse which have come to replace the Cold War as dichotomizing discourse of the globe” (2011a, p.5). As a result, a

marked shift in attitudes about ideas of citizenship has come to the fore. Beyond notions of fundamentalism or radicalization, citizenship nuances are sought along ‘those categorized as Muslims/non-Muslims, American/European/’foreign’ or citizens/non-citizens’ (Maira, 2004). More specifically, the British media appeared to be highly critical of (young) Somali citizens. For example, mainstream media discourses question the position of young Somalis in the UK: ‘wretched, jobless, invisible: are Britain’s Somalis the enemies within?’ (Fletcher, 2009). They are generally perceived as “the poorest and most disadvantaged ethnic community in the country, a people whose disaffected young are all too easily recruited by gangs or, worse, Islamic extremists” (ibid).

More specifically, and given the apparent contested relationship between young Somalis and the UK state, notions of loyalty and safeguarding of citizenship on the state’s part have become topical discussion points. This thesis indicates that such stereotypes are not new but have become intensified in the wake of Rushdie affair, 9/11 and 7/7. Consequently, many young Somalis feel that they are continuously portrayed as ‘the enemy within’ the UK. These narratives raised important questions about the position and condition of young British Somali men: Why is it that some young Muslims who are either born or brought up in Britain come to show a lack of attachment to the UK? Secondly, how does the UK state deal with its (young) Muslim citizens who are accused of committing serious crimes? This thesis engages with these important questions.

This thesis aims to provide a meaningful interpretation to the everyday experiences of young Somali men in London. Thus, the following concepts, which run through the thesis more generally, are deployed with the aim of highlighting young British Somali men’s broader experiences:

- 1) *Suspect citizens and marginalization;*
- 2) *Shared recollection or lack of memory;*
- 3) *Contested notions of nationhood and diaspora consciousness;*

Outline of chapters

Chapter One is divided into seven parts and offers an introduction to existing literature on

forced migration, diaspora, transnationalism, belonging, intergenerational acculturation, masculinity and active citizenship. Besides highlighting the common themes and concepts this chapter further identifies the gaps in existing theories, which are addressed in the thesis. The first section identifies the general processes and concepts and determines historical and relevant categories and definitions of forced migration. It stresses and links the relevance of – including the history of – forced migration (Cohen, 2008; Safran, 2005; David Turton, 2003) to the broader concept of belonging while also drawing on the concept of diaspora. The second section of Chapter One examines the existing literature on diaspora (Clifford, 1997; Cohen, 2008; Dufoix, 2008a; Hall, 1990; Safran, 2005). A clear definition of diaspora is provided while its conceptual fluidity is scrutinised. The chapter continues with the analysis of diaspora experiences in the host-land by highlighting the relevance of the history of dispersal, shared identity and connection to a place called ‘home’. The literature on transnationalism is addressed in the third section of Chapter One. In general the theoretical implications for diaspora networks and engagements are considered. More specifically, the networks of young people and their engagements in the transnational social field are discussed. Levit and Glick-Schiller’s (2004) ideas of ‘ways of being’ or ‘ways of belonging’ are referred to, to capture the (in)significance of transnational engagements. Extended discussions on intergenerational acculturation follow, addressing generational gaps particularly focusing on interpersonal relationship among young people and parents. It engages with Rumbaut and Portes’ (2005; 1993; 2004) distinct generational cohorts. Furthermore, given the extensive relevance of masculinity throughout the thesis this chapter critically employs general and academic (Desai, 2000; Hansen, 2008; Kleist, 2010) discourses to delineate hegemonic masculine attitudes in relation to young Somali males. Finally, the chapter highlights appropriate (active) citizenship theories that run through various significant parts of the thesis and largely draws on the frameworks of Marshall (2006), Isin (2008), Yuval Davis (2011), Pattie et al. (2003) and Heath et al. (2013)

Chapter Two focuses on the literature on the Somali diasporas in the UK. It discusses the context of the Somali diaspora against the backdrop of the relevant theories covered in Chapter One. Divided into different sections, the chapter first offers an account of the history of Somali migration (Lindley and Van Hear 2007; Kleist 2004; Harris 2004; Griffiths 2004; Lewis 1980). Both historical as well as more current migrations experiences are brought to

light. These migration experiences are divided into five distinct phases (Nielsen 2004). Following on from this, an account of the UK Somali diasporas is provided focusing on their experiences in settling and adapting to the UK as well as the more complex formation and identities (Hassan & Chalmers 2007; Harris 2004; Griffith 2004; McGown 1999). Furthermore, attention is given to the perceived image of Somalis (Harris 2004; ICAR 2004). Finally, this chapter addresses the critical literature on young Somalis in London while highlighting the relevant areas of focus, including brief discussions on intergenerational matters (Hassan et al. 2010; Paskell 2007; Rutter 2004), and offer some context to the development of Al Shabaab as a jihadist youth movement (Harper 2012; Barnes & Hassan 2007; Samatar 2011).

Chapter Three presents the methodology and the research tools employed to address the research questions. This chapter starts with a brief general overview, looking at the philosophical foundations and understanding of qualitative and quantitative research traditions while highlighting their critical assumptions (see Cresswell et al. 2011; Bryman 2001). Following on from this, the research design and core methods relevant for my thesis are identified. This section proceeds with the thesis objectives wherein the research questions are discussed and their underlying principles explained. Moreover, a discussion on research tools follows including preferred data collection methods (Denzin & Lincoln; May 2001). I draw on my own knowledge of the Somali communities and that of young Somalis in particular. Also my extensive engagements, experience and personal relationships with key youth organisations, personnel and young Somali people in London offer a rare platform from which to address the key research questions discussed further in this chapter, using a multi-sited ethnographic approach (Marcus 1995). Before concluding this chapter, I discuss my initial engagements with the research sites. Furthermore, my position as a researcher will be covered followed by a discussion of ethical considerations and reflections on my own role as an insider/ outsider researcher.

Chapter Four disentangles the common challenges that exist between Somali parents and their children. Attention is given to the intergenerational value commonalities and differences that are common between parents and young people. This chapter draws on acculturation theories particularly referencing the work of Ruban Rumbaut and Alexandro Portes (2001;

2004) on the typology of distinct generational cohorts. Related to that, segmented acculturation theories are proposed encapsulating bi-directional and multidimensional depth and interaction of generational gaps (Heath et al., 2013; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Prensky, 2001a, 2001b; Tardif and Geva, 2006; Waters et al., 2010). Also, hegemonic masculine attitudes are discussed by way of managing the limitations of i.e. language and culture (see Hansen 2008; Desai 2000). The chapter captures the changing characteristics more commonly associated with generational acculturation matters and the impact these have on the actual parent-child relationship.

Chapter Five focuses on generational belonging through the lenses of diaspora and transnationalism (Clifford, 1997; Dufoix, 2008a; Glick Schiller, 2006; Levitt and Schiller, 2004). More specifically emphasis is put on how young Somali males relate to the wider concepts of 'belonging' and 'home' (Levitt and Schiller, 2004; Yuval-Davis, 2011a) and how these, if at all, impact on their general perceptions in their day-to-day experiences. The processes within which these perceptions and attitudes with regards to belonging take shape become focal points for analysis. It is worth noting that this chapter is less interested in the formation of identities but rather focuses on how engagements, whether at the local or transnational level, impact on the processes of identification. More specifically, the practical interpretations of belonging to various social spaces, where possible, are underlined (Rapley, 2001).

Chapter Six deals with the broader interpretation of the concept of citizenship (Marshall, 2006). It is particularly interested in the various ways in which young Somali people are represented in the wider mainstream society and how they perceive and internalise these forms of representations. The chapter addresses what citizenship means to young Somali people. In doing so the important tenants of active citizenship are explored through its common features of rights and responsibilities (Isin and Nielsen, 2008; Yuval-Davis, 2011a). More specifically, the discussion draws attention to acts of civic, political and social participation of young Somali males (Rothe et al. 2011; Pattie et al. 2003). The chapter further highlights how the mainstream media represents young Somalis drawing on various social narratives and political rhetoric often underpinned by an anti immigration agenda

(BBC News, 2012; Heath et al., 2013; Hugh Muir, 2012; Kermani, 2012).

Chapter Seven addresses a number of fundamental areas, which significantly run throughout the thesis. It shows how young Somali people create their social spaces and through what means these engagements are maintained i.e., through formal or informal settings (Dufoix 2008; Levitt & Schiller 2004; Kivisto 2001). More importantly, attention is given as to how, if at all, these may affect young people's social mobility. Through the multi-sited ethnography the three research sites (LSYF, Assunnah mosque and WLSC) are explored and analysed in detail (Jones, 2011; Kundnani, 2009; Bowen, 2004; Sheffer, 2003; Clifford, 1997). Here young people's daily experiences are addressed through their engagements in the three sites.

Chapter Eight concludes the thesis and synthesizes its findings focusing on the broader ways that young Somali males articulate their belonging through their social engagements. It further offers the opportunity to relate the thesis outcomes to themes and concepts of diaspora and transnational theories charted in the initial stages of the research design. An outline of the specific theoretical concepts is presented, including those built on and critiqued throughout the thesis. To conclude, the thesis limitations are highlighted and potential areas that deserve further attention and research are briefly discussed.

Contribution

The study contributes to a small but significant body of research on young Somali people. While existing research focuses on Somali people in the diaspora and processes of adaptation and integration (Mohamoud, 2011; Van Liempt, 2011b; Sporton and Valentine, 2007; Alitolppa-Niitamo, 2004), my own research is specifically concerned with young Somali men who are often perceived as problematic. The analysis of the general literature on key theoretical concepts is conducted in a way that not only links the history of (forced) migration to the other main theoretical frameworks – diaspora, transnational, acculturation, masculinity and citizenship – but also attempts to provide macro level explanations for the main flows of Somali mobility to the UK through different phases. The objective here is to provide a more logical and comprehensive understanding of the history of Somali migration by focusing on

the generally neglected macro factors – such as the impact of (de)-colonisation, the Cold War, civil wars etc. Furthermore, it is recognised that existing literature on Somali diaspora youth is scarce. Therefore, this thesis provides valuable theoretical and empirical contributions within this area. More specifically, the multi-sited ethnographic method enhances the overriding theme of belonging. Each site offers an insight into different dynamics and experiences of young Somalis and their place in the Somali community and the wider mainstream UK society. Young Somali people in their respective social, cultural and religious spaces provide valuable insights as to how young people articulate their broader sense of belonging and negotiate these varied spaces.

Furthermore, accompanying young British Somalis on a journey to Somaliland offers unique perspectives beyond the notions of imagined ‘home’, and enabled me to test their civic participation. Likewise, how intergenerational issues affect the day-to-day experiences of young Somalis is examined. Moreover, it highlights how young people create their own social spaces to express and unite themselves to help them deal with the social structures and powerful institutions that affect their general way of life and the means they use to deal with these.

This study focuses on some important aspects of youth research and, thus, by no means offers a comprehensive analysis of youth engagement and experiences. Therefore, it cannot claim to fully represent the existing diversity of Somali diaspora youth. However, through the deployment of multi-methods rooted in sociology and application of ethnographic approaches it is been possible to capture varied personal experiences of certain individuals, while locating some common topics and trends in the knowledge construction of Somali youth. Therefore, through empirical research on young Somali men, this thesis contributes to a wider and more extended project of Somali research production. Furthermore, while it specifically focuses on diasporic youth belonging, this research attends directly to the scale of Somali diaspora experiences and the rather complex power relations between the young and marginalised and host societies. The research raises important questions of youth, belonging, diasporic and transnational engagements as well as generational differences that have further greater significance for the study of diaspora youth more generally.

Clarification

There are various terms and concepts used in the thesis, which deserve further clarification. Continuous reference is made to ‘young Somali males’ ‘young Somalis’ or ‘young British Somali males’. The thesis focuses on young British males of Somali origin aged between 16 and 25. They fit the generational cohort commonly referred to as first, one-and-half (1.5G), and second generations (2G) (see Rumbaut, 2004). Such generational cohorts are employed throughout to delineate the various experiences within and amongst the diverse age divisions on which the thesis focuses. I refer to the first generation to describe Somali parents and adults who were born in their country of origin. The 1.5G generations refers to young Somalis who were born outside the UK but arrived here in between the ages of six and twelve. 2G are those who were born in the UK. To a lesser extent some reference is made to two other variants including 1.25G (arrived in the UK between 13 and 17 years) and 1.75 (arrived at the age of 5 or under) generations. The terms ‘British’ and ‘mainstream society’ are used interchangeably to denote what is commonly understood as the dominant white cultural and often secular values. Although the thesis does not analyse these concepts in much depth, it does present empirical work to show how many young people were unable to identify with them. The term ‘British’ is highly contested and many young people did not seem to understand what it really stands, nor did they feel indentified with it. Another more closely related and equally loaded term is the phrase Western/West/the West, which I have commonly used to describe the power relations and structures with regards to British, American and European social spaces commonly indicating their political, social and economic aspects. This is not to suggest that the term ‘West’ embodies a large structure in relation to broader cultural values but it is strictly used in a descriptive sense. I also use the plural variant of the term diaspora as in ‘diasporas’ in my thesis in recognition of the existing diversity of the various Somali diasporas that exist.

Chapter 1. Literature review and theoretical framework

Introduction

Theorising migration trajectories is a complex undertaking. This is particularly the case when factors relating to diversity and dynamism are considered; and the longstanding historical movements most common among many migrants further sustain such complexity. Hence, the deconstruction of migration processes requires a rigorous analysis that addresses the “complexity, interconnectness, variability, contextuality and multi-level mediations of migratory processes in the context of rapid global change” (Castels, 2001, p. 1). Castles points out that “a general theory of migration is neither possible nor desirable”, and he further argues that it is more appropriate to be “re-embedding migration research in a more general understanding of contemporary society, and linking it to broader theories of social change across a range of social scientific disciplines” (2001, p. 1). Thus, a single theory approach is less fitting when addressing the diverse trajectories of contemporary international migration. With regards to the Somali context, transnationalism and diaspora theories are relevant in understanding the multi-dimensions of their international migration routes.

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight seven main areas of analysis including forced migration, diaspora, transnationalism, intergeneration, acculturation, masculinity and citizenship. It reviews the relevant literature covering these key areas. The final part offers a brief summary and draws together the different areas of enquiry.

Forced migration

I will start with a number of questions to help us understand the relevance of engaging with this theoretical framework: what is the relevance of the history of forced migration in addressing the key thesis objectives (more thoroughly discussed in Chapter Three)? How does this link to the overall research project? Assessing the impact of forced migration can be complex and multilayered. This is particularly the case when there are macro and micro level factors that need to be considered. Kothari (2002) argues that macro level factors:

provide an overview of historical and contemporary international, national and local policies and approaches towards migration to identify the ways in which they have shaped patterns of movement

and erected barriers to movement, and how the policies are founded upon particular understandings of the costs and benefits of migration (2002, p. 25).

Against this background, by focusing on macro factors, including the impact of imperialism, (de)colonisation, the Cold War, civil wars, and natural disasters, a more satisfactory understanding of the Somali migration experience can be conceived. There are a few key issues to consider here. Forced migrants are often viewed as homogenized, passive, deprived individuals with no or little agency (Alitolppa-Niitamo, 2004; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2009; Torres, 2010). In contrast, more recent research (see Rumbaut & Portes 2006; Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004; Torres 2010) goes beyond the description of ‘the refugee’ as a generic essentialized figure’ (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2009, p. 2) to one where they are considered active characters in their own right.

There are evident links between macro and micro factors. For example, how have macro level factors (such as (de)colonisation, civil and Cold wars, as well as natural disasters, etc.) shaped micro factors (including how parents’ experiences with forced migration, settlement, and integration impact on how their children progress)? Also, can we speak of ‘chronic poverty’ and understand it as an indication of an ‘intergenerational transfer of poverty’ (Moore 2001 quoted in Kothari, 2002, p. 27)? The micro factors, which are particularly embedded in the family sphere, are addressed in the context described in Chapter Two and more thoroughly examined in chapters four and five.

In the following section, I aim to unravel existing theoretical concepts relating to forced migration while examining their value and sufficiency in addressing the research objectives.

Brief historical context

International migration has had a tremendous impact in the social, political, and economic development of societies more generally (Moch 2003, cited in Castles & Miller 2009). Several types of migration were produced by European colonialism that shaped the history of international migration. Among them are the ‘large *outward movements from Europe* (original emphasis) to, first Africa and Asia, either permanently or temporarily, as sailors, soldiers, farmers, traders, priests and administrators’ (Castles and Miller, 2009, p. 80). The

slave trade in Africa seems by far to be the largest and most widely documented type of forced migration. Wallerstein asserts that the unique account of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the history of forced migration is characterised by the ‘magnitude, the prolonged period of its practice, the suffering its victims endured and the profit that it generated, which laid the foundation of the development of the capitalist world’ (quoted in Rwamatwara, 2005, p. 187; 1976). Thus, migration was a long-standing and important facet of social life and political economy ‘from 1650 onwards, playing a vital role in modernization and industrialization’ (quoted in Castles and Miller, 2009, p. 79; Moch, 2003). For example the so called ‘chattel slavery’¹ did not only provide labour opportunities for Europeans serving the colonial empires² but also “formed the basis of the commodity production³ in the plantations and mines of the New World from the late seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth century” (Castles et al. 2009, pp. 50-67).

In Africa, the displacement of indigenous people (i.e. Southern Africa, Kenya, Algeria etc.) by arriving white settlers marked another important type of forced migration (Rwamatwara, 2005). Here, settlers (or colonial states acting on their behalf are said to have uprooted entire communities from their commercially viable fertile lands to non- or less economically feasible semi-arid areas where they, in turn, were forced to seek employment in farms, mines, or industries⁴ (See Falola and Usman (2009). Lenin defined this imperialism as the *highest stage of capitalism* – the New Imperialism post-1870 – associated with oppression and economic exploitation (quoted in Falola & Usman 2009). However, such a definition of capitalism is dismissed as narrow and too economically determined by orthodox historians who define it as ‘...a tendency of a state or society to control another by whatever means or for whatever purpose’ (quoted in Bush, 2006, p. 45; Fieldhouse, 1981). The ending of this

¹ Outright ownership of slaves as commodities.

² Britain and France were said to be the two dominant colonising states in the eighteenth century, with Spain, the Netherlands and Portugal also significantly participating.

³ *ibid.* Among the most important commodities were sugar, coffee, cotton, and gold.

⁴ It is understood that in some instances African rulers got into treaties with little understanding of their actual content and complexities. This resulted in forceful acquisition of land, which led to conflicts with the Europeans. The military encounters with the Zulu King 1879-80, with Egypt 1882, Madagascar in 1895-96 and Sokoto Caliphate in 1898 are some relevant examples. Further, African rulers often took part in economic activities to satisfy the colonial empire often resorting in authoritarian mobilisations of manpower; i.e. capturing of slaves, forceful relocation etc.

colonial period⁵ is defined as post-colonialism (Childs and Williams, 1997). However defined, the apparent legacy of imperial and colonial history and their visible demise have shaped the colonial states.

Adepoju (1998, p. 387) argues, that ‘the migration phenomenon in Africa is to be better understood within the context of political and historical evolution of African societies’. It appears that the norms and values of African cultures predating the colonial period were interrupted and boundaries were brought in to lay the foundation for internal conflicts and political calamity. Consequently, the post-colonial era involved many African countries faced with a difficult refugee challenge while they tried to establish themselves as credible and reliable states in their respective countries. Independent Africa became besieged by ‘the ever-growing number of refugees and the general fatigue in handling the refugee problem’ (Rwamatwara, 2005, p. 178). Some have suggested that the colonial impact cannot be used as an excuse for the failure to develop prosperous African states since respective countries had enough time to address their matters. In fact, as argued by Ekundare in his *Economic history of Nigeria* (1973), ‘plans and other colonial policies contributed to the rapid growth and development of the country’(Ekundare, 1973; quoted in Falola, 1996, p. xxii). However, Rwamatwara (2005) asserts that many political and economic analysts are adamant that both western governments and multinationals have contributed to on-going conflicts through the supply of weapons, supporting certain groups with the intention to gain access to mineral rich areas. Thus, these armed conflicts make it practically impossible to run effective functioning governments, with tendencies to lead to failed States and national and international insecurities that hinder the emergence of democratic processes and adequate development (ibid).

I argue that these historical narratives – colonial, decolonisation, (post) Cold and civil wars, as well as natural disasters and globalisation – have, to a great extent, played a role in the formation of the Somali diasporas and continue to do so, as will be discussed in Chapter Two.

⁵ The term post-colonialism refers to a period that occurs after the end of a colonial period. This indicates that there have been several endings of colonial eras. In this regard post-colonialism refers to the end of the British and French empires.

Host countries and adaptation dynamics

The Somali community in the UK is often viewed as a marginalised group that faces enormous difficulties with adapting to British life. Though some references are made in most studies on Somali historical migration (Adam and Ford, 1997; Alitolppa-Niitamo, 2002; Harris, 2004) ‘the predominance of local level empirical studies in migration research has led to an overemphasis on issues of cultural distinctiveness and adaptation and a neglect of the overarching factors of economic and social structure’ (Portes 1997, quoted in Castles 2003, p.12). Hence, the Somali experience in the UK is often constructed through local level encounters within the host society. As argued by Castles:

It is, of course, important to study the cultural dimensions of exile and of the encounter between different groups, but to generalise from micro-studies of diversity can lead to a false impression of a fragmented social world. Rather, it is necessary to relate such studies to broader theoretical explanations of the structural causes of forced migration and the structural determinants of the patterns of incorporation of forced migrants in various types of society (ibid).

Following on from this, I will discuss some of these broader themes in order to provide a more meaningful and expansive understanding of the influences of the local level experiences related to forced migration while taking account of such relevant structural influences and processes.

Forced migration needs to be understood as a social process with historical relevance to the present. For example, in the colonial period many Africans were dispossessed from their land and the ‘foreign-dominated export economy’, as well as the post-colonial conflicts and the insecurities that arose from them, led to both international and internal migration (Falola and Usman, 2009). This further led to a growing number of Africans affected by draconian social reforms, such as land disposal strategies and unfavourable political, social, and economic climates, to migrate to various western countries in search of safety and better life conditions, particularly after World War II (ibid). The point here is that global colonial histories have significant connections with the here and now that require adequate political, social, and economic responses.

Looking at more recent interventions (i.e. the Western backed Ethiopian invasion and the Al Shabaab uprising in Somalia and the famine that occurred as a consequence of such events, more thoroughly discussed in subsequent chapters) a reasonable conclusion can be drawn that these interventions have caused more instabilities and outward migration to neighbouring countries and further afield.

Once arrived in Europe for example both forced migrants and host societies are faced with the question of adaptation and integration and how to manage these as well as issues in relation to racism, isolation, etc. Sardar (2008) evaluating critical events in the past few years argues that:

there has been *Fitna*, the film by the right-wing Dutch politician Geert Wilders, which projected the Quran as a text that justifies terrorism against all. Before that, in 2006, a university lecture by Pope Benedict XVI, purporting to represent the Prophet Muhammad as a violent bigot, received publicity. There was the Danish cartoons affair, followed by the less-known incident of the Swedish cartoon in which the Prophet was depicted with the body of a dog. And we must not forget ex-Muslim champions of western civilisation, such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali, running around Europe decrying Islam as ‘the new fascism’.

Further, France has received global media attention when its parliament decided to ban the burqa⁶ and the niqab⁷ from being worn in public arenas. *The New York Times* published a critical article on the matter stressing that women’s human rights are violated by such policies (The New York Times, 2010). The paper argues that the numbers, a mere 2000 – out of a Muslim population of between five to ten million (The Connexion, 2011) – women in France who wear full-body veils, are so insignificant, “posing no obvious threat to national security”. ‘But because they are so few, they make a temptingly cheap electoral target’. The article concludes that “no political gain can justify hate-mongering” (ibid).

These events should be viewed within the political context of the time. Most events arose during elections in a critical time of economic downturn and high unemployment. Preventing

⁶ Burqa is a loose garment (usually covers the body as a whole with veiled holes for the eyes) worn by some Muslim women (particularly in Afghanistan).

⁷ *Niqab* is a type of veil worn by some Muslim women that is made of lightweight opaque fabric and leaves only the eyes uncovered.

public anger over such issues becomes almost impossible. “It is hard to produce jobs and far too easy to fan anti-Muslim prejudices” (ibid). There are similar trends to be observed in the UK, which are more thoroughly observed in the following paragraphs.

Further, for this thesis, participation in the mainstream of British society in its broadest sense is relevant. Here we can think of access to public and social services – including housing, education, benefits, jobs, etc. – but also participation in more specific social and political networks – community networks, political representation, etc. (Castles and Miller, 2009; Castles et al., 2003). Thus, the concept of integration is often used as a driving policy instrument in areas of immigration and community cohesion, particularly for the reception and resettlement of refugees (Ager & Strang 2004). However, the concept is blurred and lacks a generally accepted definition. It is too broad, which makes it difficult to adopt a precise definition (Ager and Strang, 2004; Castles et al., 2003; Mestheneos and Ioannidi, 2002). Also, it tends to be seen as a one-way process, which requires forced migrants “to integrate into the existing culture or society without any reciprocal accommodation” (Castles et al., 2003, p. 113). The assumption has been that immigrants will undergo a natural process of assimilation. However, “culturally distinct groups almost always maintain their languages and certain elements of their homeland cultures, at least for a few generations” (Castles, 2000, p. 278). This has prompted governments such as the UK to recognise some cultural differences while promoting permanent settlement through the policies of multiculturalism, as the right to cultural preferences is inherent to democracy (Castles and Miller, 2009; Castles et al., 2003; Koser, 2007). However, as Sardar points out there is ‘racism behind integration’, with the potential to possibly complicate the lives of certain immigrant groups, such as the Muslim community in Europe (Sardar, 2008). Johnson (2011), who draws on several studies, argues:

that Muslims face discrimination in all aspects of life, from housing to employment opportunities to education to cultural practices. For many Muslims, being ethnically different and immigrant is often a greater challenge than their religious differences.... As Muslims in Europe are overwhelmingly non-white, ongoing racial disharmony naturally impedes integration.

Similarly, Khalid Koser (2007) suggests that, for example, Muslim migrants across Western

Europe are unequally affected by unemployment rates and other common challenges such as education and housing. He goes on to point out that greatly politicized identity matters such as ‘the Rushdie affair, the global ‘war on terror’, and the invasions of majority Muslim countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq have contributed to fundamental socio-political tensions. Besides the rise in fundamentalism, Koser (ibid) further highlights the upsurge in anti-immigrant extremism and the growing support for right-wing political ideologies leading to a move away from multiculturalism and a rejection of permanent resettlement and pluralism, which are deemed to be ‘a threat to national unity and identity’ (Castles and Miller, 2009, p. 15). Consequently, this tends to lead to restrictive immigration policies fostering a hostile and xenophobic environment more likely to push migrants into marginal positions (ibid). Despite the recognition of the economic benefits of migration – i.e. willingness to accept low wages, etc. – migrants are often blamed for taking jobs away from the native population, crime, rising housing prices, and overstressing social services (Borjas, 1990; Brettell and Hollifield, 2008).

So how does this affect international migration, established migrants, and new arrivals in the rich industrialized world? Jürgen Habermas, who has been concerned with the problematic relationship between national identity and citizenship, argues that:

...the tremendous influx of immigration from the poor regions of East and South with which Europe will be increasingly confronted in the coming years lend the problem of asylum seekers a new significance and urgency. The process exacerbates the conflict between the universalistic principles of constitutional democracies on the one hand and the particularistic claims of communities to preserve the integrity of their habitual ways of life on the other hand (quoted in Beiner 1995, p.22).

In response to these events and political crises some governments (such as France) have rapidly come to terms with such developments and consider granting rights and citizenship in exchange for individual cultural assimilation (Castles and Miller, 2009).

In most Western European countries there appears to be a feeling that the domestic national culture is under attack and in response integration appears to have become a euphemism for assimilation (Sardar, 2008). Johnson (2011) draws on comments made by the Oxford based academic Tariq Ramadan and suggests “at the very moment Europeans find themselves

asking, in a globalising, migratory world, ‘What are our roots?’, ‘Who are we?’, ‘What will our future look like?’, they see around them new citizens, new skin colours, new symbols to which they are unaccustomed,’ (ibid). These challenges are linked and underpinned by citizenship and raise further important questions about responsibilities and entitlements. Responses to these questions seem to take different forms in different European countries. In Germany, for example, this is done through blood-based citizenship and a *Leitkultur* (dominant culture). In France, however, this goes through citizenship by birth and earth and by *laïcité* (secularism). In Norway the idea of *likhet* (sameness) is entertained and the Netherlands employs the concept of *verzuiling* (religious/cultural blocs) (ibid).

Despite the above challenges Castles and his colleagues found overwhelming evidence supporting the notion that integration is in fact a two-way-process (Castles et al. 2003; see also Ager & Strang 2008; 2004). But what this two-way-process should entail is and has been a matter of debate in both academic and policy circles. It is argued that ‘research is based on a set of assumptions, concepts and definitions that are often tacit rather than explicit, which are multi-layered and complex, and may lack coherence or even contradict each other’ (Castles et al., 2003, p. 112). Hence, it is important ‘to discuss the varying meanings of ‘integration’, and to examine the conceptual frameworks which underlie these’ (ibid). For example, social inclusion has become a collective term to fight against poverty and social exclusion (Atkinson et al., 2005). The term, however, is said to be too broad and vague if relevant indicators are not provided (Castles et al., 2003). Incorporation is another common phrase used to ‘indicate the overall process by which newcomers become part of a society’ while gaining clear rights and responsibilities (Castles et al., 2003, p. 112; see also Hatziprokiou, 2003; Pries, 2003). This concept has its own flaws and inflexibilities. Other more terms include ‘*holistic approach to integration and settlement or resettlement*’ (original emphasis) (Castles et al., 2003, p. 123), recognising the fact that the forced migrants often come from a ‘settled’ environment with jobs, education, networks, etc.

It seems clear that integration should be viewed within a comprehensive domain of activities “each with its own processes, modes and meanings of what integration should entail: social, cultural, religious, political, economic, geographical/spatial, media, leisure” (quoted in Castles et al., 2003, p. 127). In turn ‘the velocity, trajectory and outcome’ of each of these are

significantly shaped by a number of factors such as “demographic characteristics of a group, legal status, labour market and social status, and cultural and religious elements brought from the home country” (ibid).

Categories and definitions of forced migration

Somali migration can be generally divided into five major phases, as follows: the (British) imperial migration, labour migration during the industrial revolution, family reunification, forced migration as a consequence of the civil war, and the so called onward migration to the UK of EU nationals of Somali origin. These phases will be more thoroughly discussed in Chapter Two. It is worth noting that the first Somali experience involving sizeable forced migration is often linked to the 1977 Ogaden War with Ethiopia. It is generally understood that from the point of war onwards the situation deteriorated gradually across the Somali region, which was largely marked by civil wars and UN interventions (FMO, 2010)⁸. Further, ‘drought, flooding, and famine have combined with warfare to cause the mass flight of refugees and the large-scale displacement of Somalis inside the country’ (ibid). In this section, an attempt is made to demonstrate how these factors have impacted and contributed to Somali migration more generally. Secondly, possible theoretical explanations for the phenomena of forced migration are sought in order to present a clearer exposition of the Somali experience.

Forced migration is defined as ‘a general term that refers to the movements of refugees and Internally Displaced People (those displaced by conflicts) as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters (FMO, 2010). It refers to the movements of refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs). Forced migration is seen as a complicated, far-reaching and all-encompassing collection of events (ibid). The ‘force’ element refers to the involuntary movement central to the concept (leading to displacement primarily caused by socio political unrest, civil wars and reprisals of oppressive states, and to some extent natural disasters (Torres, 2010) such as famine) as opposed to voluntary migration (Van Hear 1998). The latter, as generally assumed, is underpinned by the pursuit of economic prospects, such as (decent) jobs, (adequate) education, etc., whereby people

⁸ Forced Migration Online

exercise their choice to move. In addition, voluntary migration is selective in essence as one has (certain) options to determine where to go, while forced migration is dictated by the urgent search for a safe and secure environment (Turton, 2003). The multi-faceted interaction of socio-economic, political, cultural, and environmental factors, which can often trigger forced migration, affects those concerned in different ways. Consequently, this impacts on the settling process due to the negative experience of being uprooted from one's own environment (ibid). The perceived threat has different interpretations for different people; while some wait until conflict manifests itself clearly others move by hearsay. Furthermore, the effects of forced migration also differ according to class, age, race, or ethnicity (Torres, 2010).

More thoroughly, Forced Migration Online⁹ (FMO) website identifies three different but much broader types of forced migration (transcending the generally narrow definitions of refugee migration), which are at times simultaneous and interconnected types of forced migration, 'categorised according to their causal factors' (ibid): 1) Conflict-Induced Displacement; 2) Development-Induced Displacement; and 3) Disaster-Induced Displacement (FMO, 2010).

In line with the above, forced migration produces different types of groups affected by forced migration. According to *the 1951 United Nations Convention regarding the Status of refugees*, refugees are defined as people who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality" (UNHCR, 2010). This definition is still adhered to despite some amendments in Africa and Latin America. Similarly, an Internally Displaced Person (IDP) is a refugee except that he or she does not go to another country. An asylum seeker is a person that has left his or her country of origin waiting for recognition after applying for a refugee status (FMO 2010, UNHCR 2010). As stipulated above, those displaced could further be categorised as developmental and environmental and disaster displacees. Finally, smuggled people are those moved illegally for profit purposes

⁹ Part of the University of Oxford based Refugee Studies Centre

and trafficked people are moved either by coercion or deception (ibid). These definitions are important since the protection of those affected depend on them.

The Somali experience in forced migration is one that has produced different types of refugees and asylum seekers. But that is not the main point here. The focus should rather be on the *effects* of these types of forced migration in order to have an adequate response – by those who are tasked with their protection, such as the UN. Both causes and consequences of forced migration could produce political as well as economic migration. For example the long-term effects of conflict-, development- or disaster-induced migration on economic prospects continue to uproot people from their own environment (Rwamatwara, 2005). This shall be discussed further below.

Context

Somali people often move under difficult circumstances. This is relevant for the thesis in order to get an adequate account of their experiences. However, putting this into context presents some challenges. The conceptual and practical complexities of asylum (i.e. how to distinguish genuine asylum cases from the so-called ‘bogus’ applicants) are described by the catch-all phrase ‘migration-asylum nexus’ (Koser, 2007; Castels, 2003). Various scholars including Koser and Castles argue that distinguishing these two has become a real concern since it has proven difficult to identify bogus applicants, which has undermined the case of genuine asylum seekers (ibid). Thus, forced migration, or migration in general, is often viewed as a problem which needs to be dealt with, controlled, and contained. It is conceptualized through metaphoric attributes. Turton (2003), who draws heavily on Stuart Hall’s *Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices* (2009), points out the systematic use of the metaphor of liquid to frame migrants. He argues that ‘we speak of flows, streams, waves and trickles of migrants. We speak of ‘asylum capacity’. We speak of dams and of sluice gates, we speak of being flooded, inundated and swamped’ (Turton, 2003, p. 10). Turton goes on to point out that such language is not innocent and explains that this is how *we* talk about *them*, – ‘even if we, or our ancestor, were migrants’ – which is state-centric (ibid). Further, such metaphorical language obliges us to imagine migration as a natural event, which is beyond our control that cannot be easily prevented but one that we must defend ourselves against with barriers and keep as far away from us as possible. Moreover,

migrants are homogenized, which tends to misrepresent their lived reality - whatever this may be. This ‘de-personalizes, even dehumanizes people we are referring to’, which justifies seeing them as a threat, even as enemies (ibid). Osorio¹⁰ (2007) stresses the policy related implications associated with the construction of immigration matters, which are projected as a duality while the focus has been on just one side of that duality. Accordingly, this is not to suggest that immigration is not taking place, “but by framing the discussion in solely immigration terms, the understanding of social reality becomes so partial that it promotes a mental scenario of fear, lending itself nicely to demarcate a starker bordering of ‘the other’” (ibid). Matters should, therefore, be viewed within the context of migration to understand what is really at stake: “the reasonable expectation of human beings to live a life that they have reason to value” (ibid).

It is apparent that coercion, as a principle factor, often lies at the heart of forced migration, which highlights the main difference between forced migrants and the wider category of migrants. Making this distinction is important Turton (2003) offers three ways to explain this crucial difference. First, “forced migrants have a distinctive experience and distinctive needs” (Stein 1981, quoted in Turton 2003, p.6) that initially formed the rationale for establishing the field of refugee studies. The danger here is to consider forced migrants ‘as a homogenous mass of needy and passive victims’ (ibid) with a common experience – ‘the Refugee Experience’. Hence, Turton argues ‘there is no such thing as the ‘Refugee Experience’: there are only the experiences and voices of refugees’ (ibid). It is worth noting that despite the fact that those who have been forced to migrate are called refugees, not all forced migrants are refugees, as I shall discuss later in this chapter. Secondly, forced migration is characterised by the large number of forced migrants, that is estimated to be between 100 and 200 million (Castles, 2003), indicating why a matter with such a global significance is worthy of study while ensuring it gets the attention it deserves, and enabling agencies – such as the UN and alike, tasked with the protection of those caught up in the process – to respond adequately. As a result of globalisation there is “an ever increasing North-South divide in living standards, human security, and access to justice and human rights protections” (Turton, 2003, p. 6). Thirdly, looking beyond the needs and numbers, forced migrants “make a special claim on

¹⁰ Kirwan Institute Blog for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, Ohio State University

our concern” (2003, p.8) since they want us to think about important matters such as “membership, citizenship and democratic liberalism” (ibid). They challenge our moral judgment and society, and “what it means to be human” (ibid). Our moral judgment is important as it pushes us to consider the context in which people who are displaced are forced to move, a context that has the widening gap between the haves and have nots at its heart (ibid).

Contesting types and definitions

Accepting that forced migration can be a useful conceptual model for research it should also be acknowledged that it could possibly present a major conceptual challenge. The main question here remains, how does one (i.e. those mainly responsible for the protection of refugees, such as the UN, and countries that provide assistance) adequately respond to the needs of people in difficult situations? Since adequate protection of forced migrants could literally mean the difference between life and death it is worth focusing on the series of laws that define them and determine their rights and responsibilities (Lynch, 2004). The critical 1951 UN Convention was written to protect state prosecutions during the Nazi and Communist regimes. Sixty years on, many critics argue that these views are dated and suggest that they no longer address current refugee matters or insecurities of conflict (Koser, 2007). Furthermore, the Convention does not clearly protect people persecuted for their sex or sexuality, or those fleeing mainly for environmental reasons (i.e. in response to an earthquake), nor does it cover people who are internally displaced (ibid). Having said that, the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), responsible for implementing the Convention, extends the definition of a refugee, which includes IDPs and those fleeing from natural disasters¹¹ (Koser 2007) except those affected by development or man-made disaster, since these are technically still under the protection of their own governments and therefore not in a “refugee like situation” (Turton, 2003, p. 15).

Finally, I argue that the distinction between economic and political forced migrants is misplaced, dated, and unnecessary, and seems to be a desperate attempt by policy makers to respond to an ever-increasing global phenomenon – of forced migration. Nevertheless, since

¹¹ Koser further highlights other laws that govern state responses, which derive from the Convention, the 1948 Universal Declaration Human Rights, or in non-binding but widely applied customary law or agreement.

these policies are in place they have practical implications, often fostering negative assumptions about migrant communities shaped by forced migration, and that is where the relevance for this thesis lies. The impact on migrants is particularly significant in a post 7/7 and 9/11 era accompanied by the current economic downturn. Anti-immigration advocates and right-wing British media frequently use these events to argue for greater control on immigration while attributing the economic slump – job shortages, strains on social services, etc. – to this ‘problematic’ notion of immigration, resulting in stringent laws on immigration. For example, recently Migration Watch UK¹² (2010) launched an:

e-petition to the Government calling for the population of the UK to be stabilised at below 70 million (and it) has achieved 100,000 signatures in just seven days – one of the fastest to achieve this goal since the initiative was launched (ibid).

This indicates the importance of such matters and the wider perceptions of the British public on the issue.

Forced migration cannot be disconnected from current debates on migration and its wider impact then. Castles (2003, p. 5) argues that:

understanding that forced migration is not the result of a string of unconnected emergencies but rather an integral part of North–South relationships makes it necessary to theorize forced migration and link it to economic migration. They are closely related (and indeed often indistinguishable) forms of expression of global inequalities and societal crises, which have gained in volume and importance since the superseding of the bipolar world order.

More specifically for this thesis, it is about understanding the evolution of forced migration and how this impacts on the current status of the Somali diaspora in the UK, which is explored in the next section.

Diaspora

It is worth noting that the evolution and formation of Somali diasporas in recent times is somehow rooted in forced migration experiences as demonstrated in the previous section. It

¹² Migration Watch UK is a think tank that advocates for a ‘substantial reduction in immigration’.

is, thus, important to pay close attention to these experiences and processes of forced migration as they help us to understand the Somali diasporas' existence and current conditions in the UK. As noted by Castles (2003, p. 15):

the key argument is that sociologists should be concerned with forced migration because it is a central aspect of social transformation in the contemporary world. The old understanding of refugee situations as a string of unrelated and specific humanitarian emergencies does not stand up to the reality of the early 21st century, in which forced migrations have become an integral part of North–South relationships.

I stress that the discussion on forced migration mainly serves to highlight the importance of these (past) experiences in making sense of the Somali diasporas in the UK. Thus, the thesis draws on forced migration theories for the purpose of understanding their broader effects on the Somali diasporas, but finds its roots in the diaspora and transnational frameworks that follow.

The global Somali diasporas are estimated to be around one million out of a total Somali population of approximately nine million (Sheikh and Healy, 2009; Hassan and Chalmers, 2008). In the UK the Somali community is one of the oldest African communities. It is also home to one of the largest Somali diasporas. A detailed analysis of the Somali diasporas in the UK will be further discussed in Chapter Two. The purpose of this section is to get a clear understanding of what constitutes a diaspora and identify its origins, while addressing critical and relevant assumptions for the thesis project. Research on young Somali people is scarce in diaspora studies. Thus, this thesis aims to address this knowledge gap by addressing young Somalis' experiences through the influence of the following key themes: dispersion, migration, formation and settlements, belonging, host and homeland, as well as connections and engagements.

With the following analysis I would like to clarify the notion of diaspora and highlight the key issues. The aim here is to identify the key themes and concepts the thesis is engaging with. The term diaspora has become widely used in the academic arena and beyond (Brubaker, 2005). Etymologically, diaspora has its roots in the Greek language (Brazier and Mannur, 2003). The Greek compound word *diaspieren*, has two parts, *dia* – which means 'across' – and *spieren* – that is 'to sow', 'to disperse' or 'to scatter' (Brazier and Mannur,

2003; Cohen, 2008). Historically the term has been used to describe Jewish experiences of dispersal and separation mainly focusing on their plight as a community that has been dislocated from their homeland. Another historical account describes and analyses the African diasporas that emerged following the slave trade in the sixteenth century, focusing on the forceful removal of West Africans from their native territories “and dispersing them into the ‘New World’” (Brazier and Mannur, 2003, p. 2). For the Greeks, diaspora was a way to understand migration and colonisation (Cohen, 2008). Displacement, therefore, appears to be at the heart of diaspora as a conceptual framework. Thus, there is a general understanding, which seems to resonate with the thought that a diaspora emerges as a result of an enforced expulsion and dislocation from a location referred to as ‘home’ that becomes an important collective consciousness for a diaspora community. Hence, major theorists in the field have attempted to contextualise the formation processes of diasporas while drawing on the interrelated critical concepts such as historical memory, notions of dispersion, migration, identities, transnationalism and ethnicity, as well as the dialectic relationship between them (Cohen 2008; Safran 2005; Clifford 1997; Gilroy 1993; Sheffer 1986).

Diaspora: a catch-all phrase?

The term diaspora has its own conceptual problems and could be far from straightforward. I would like to highlight these contested issues in an attempt to identify the key themes for the thesis while ensuring it is grounded in concepts specific to the Somali diasporic experience. While diaspora is a useful analytical tool to unravel notions of collective memory, homeland, and diaspora communities’ (Palestinians, Iraqis, Jews, Armenians, Somalis, Kurds, Sikhs, etc.) experiences (shared expulsion, torture or identities, etc.) the term has become a ‘catch-all phrase’ (Brazier and Mannur, 2003) or what Van Hear termed as ‘inclusive and extensive catch-alls’ (1998) aimed at uniting the multiple presence of multiple communities in multiple locations or “to speak of and for all movements, however privileged, and for all dislocations, even symbolic ones” (Brazier and Mannur, 2003, p. 3). Similarly, Tölölyan (1996, p. 8) points out the possible risks associated with such an expansive description of diaspora and argues the term has become:

a promiscuously captious category that is taken to include all the adjacent phenomena to which it is linked but from which it actually differs in ways that are constitutive, that in fact make a viable of diaspora is possible.

Further, it encompasses the experiences of those who do not fall into the categories of the ‘classical’¹³ diasporas – people with no experience of expulsion, torture or colonisation (Cohen, 2008). With this “let-a-thousand-diasporas-bloom” approach (Satori 1970, quoted in Brubaker 2005, p.3) the category became stretched to the point of uselessness. Clifford (1997, p. 266) argues that “diaspora cannot become a master trope or ‘figure’ for modern, complex, or positional identities” and, thus, cautions against its all-inclusive tendencies. Another critical assumption is the homogeneous character often carried with the term (diaspora), which adds to its vagueness. The question is, then, how meaningful is this framework if ‘everyone’ is considered as being part of a diaspora? To gain more understanding of diaspora as a conceptual and theoretical framework while paying attention to the critical concepts that should inform this thesis one ought to look beyond diaspora and move away from the homogenizing and somewhat limiting universal description of the term. In other words, it should be located within the social context in which it operates while exploring ways to clearly articulate this phenomenon. Despite the various conceptual challenges associated with the term diaspora it is fair to argue that it helps to understand how diasporas function, form, and engage. In the following section, the theoretical and conceptual views and descriptions of the most established scholars in the field are discussed.

Theoretical approaches

There are two main theoretical approaches when engaging with the notion of diaspora. One takes a more descriptive form analysed through typologies (Safran 1991; Cohen 2008; Dufoix 2008; Sheffer 1986). The second one adopts a more analytical approach explaining diaspora as a social process (See Hall 2003; Clifford 1997; Gilroy 1993). In a diverse but interrelated manner these approaches are both rooted in history, homeland consciousness, and host land experiences. Among the pioneers of the concept of diaspora is William Safran (2005) who asserts that the term was first coined by the prominent Jewish scholar of history,

¹³ The Greeks, Africans, Armenians, and Jews are often referred to as the classical diasporas.

Simon Dubnow¹⁴, which explains why “for many generations, the phenomenon of diaspora was dealt with only in connection with the Jews” (2005, p. 37), a case considered unique: “that of the exile of the Jews from the Holy Land and their dispersal throughout several parts of the globe” (ibid). Brubaker (2005) cites the survey of library catalogues that confirmed this dispersion¹⁵. Taking the Jewish prototype as a critical base, Safran applies some of its characteristics to other diaspora communities such as the “Armenian, Chinese, Greek, Indian, Kurdish, Palestinian, Parsi, and Sikh, whose experiences of expatriation, institution-building, cultural continuity, and refusal to relinquish their collective identities have demarcated them from mere immigrants” (ibid). Following from this, Safran proposes a number of criteria that a diaspora community should meet before it can be considered one:

1) They, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original ‘center’ to two or more peripheral, or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland—its physical location, history, achievements, and, often enough, sufferings; 3) their relationship with the dominant element of society in the hostland is complicated and often uneasy. They believe that they are not, and perhaps cannot be, fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return—if and when conditions are appropriate; 5) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethno communal consciousness and solidarity, which reach across political boundaries, are importantly defined in terms of the existence of such a relationship. That relationship may include a collective commitment to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its independence, safety, and prosperity. The absence of such a relationship makes it difficult to speak of transnationalism (1991, pp. 83–4).

There has been some critique of these categories of classifications. While relying on a certain level of force (i.e. expulsion, collective experiences of banishment, torture and/or trauma, and broken homeland) Safran (1991) states that the above criteria will dictate what can be

¹⁴ In this entry, Dubnow, after referring briefly to the Greek diaspora (*Magna Graecia*) during the Roman Empire and to the Armenians, devoted his entire discussion to the Jews.

¹⁵ A search of the WorldCat union catalogue for the keyword ‘diasp?’ revealed that nearly all (17 of 18) books published on diasporas between 1900 and 1910 addressed the Jewish case; as late as the 1960s, this remained true of 15 of 20 books sampled (out of a total of 78 books matching the keyword published between 1960 and 1970). In 2002, by contrast, the top 20 books sampled (of 253 published that year) addressed 8 different cases; only two of the twenty addressed the Jewish case.

considered a diaspora, semi-diaspora, and non-diaspora while, concurrently, confessing that none of the above ‘fully conforms with the ‘ideal type’ of the Jewish diaspora (1991, p. 84). Arguably, the looming danger here remains the rigid typology used as a critical reference – the Jewish diaspora – that Safran relies on. This has the tendency to ground the concepts in an identity, ‘defining them once and for all and making it very hard to move them from one category to another’ or as Clifford puts it:

perhaps a hesitation is expressed by the quotes surrounding ‘ideal type’, a sense of the danger in constructing, here the outset of an important comparative project, a definition that identifies the diasporic phenomena too closely with one group¹⁶ (1997, p. 248).

This has significant implications when it comes to exploring the experiences of Somali communities in Britain. I argue that the Somalis have often been constructed as a single diaspora whereas in reality various Somali diaspora groups exist. This thesis highlights this neglected area through exploring their diasporic and transnational orientations and engagements.

Cohen (2008) argues that a diaspora should also include voluntary migration and the process of host country incorporation should be taken into account. While relying on Weber’s notions of ‘ideal types’ Cohen (2008) proposes five forms of diaspora, 1) ‘victim’ diaspora, including the Jews, Africans, and Armenians; 2) ‘labour’ diaspora, for example indentured Indians; 3) ‘Imperial’ diaspora, including the British, Russian, and other colonial powers; 4) ‘Trade’ diaspora, mainly drawing on the Chinese and Lebanese experience; and 5) ‘Deterritorialised’ diaspora, such as the Caribbean peoples, Sindhis Parsis, and Muslims.

While I acknowledge the limitations of the above typology framework, Cohen’s approach remains relevant in understanding how diaspora communities form and function. Diasporas have histories and are far from being static. As such my thesis considers the historical implications Somali migration has on young Somali people. During their development Somali diasporas have undergone several migration phases, formations, and settlement

¹⁶ Clifford further discusses the Jewish anti-Zionist critiques, which, he notes, are excluded from Safran’s definition of diaspora.

processes. The Somali diasporas mostly fit the characteristics of the ‘victim diaspora’ description as an ideal type. To articulate these ideal types (and include all other cases which could be considered as diaspora while moving beyond strict traditional normative accounts)¹⁷ Cohen provides nine points frequently associated with diaspora communities.¹⁸

Cohen cautions against the strict use of these features and offers ‘two healthy warnings’. The term *common* is intentionally used to highlight that not all diasporas “will exhibit every feature listed, nor will they be present to the same degree over time and in all settings” (2008, p.16). Secondly, the adjective ‘ideal’ is not to counter imperfection or inferiority in relation to something good or excellent but is “meant to contrast with ‘real’” (2008, p.17). In other words, ideal types do not exist in ‘pure’ form but should be considered useful analytical tools to examine causes and effects of diaspora formation transcending the descriptive typologies of various diaspora groups (Wahlbeck 2002). Hall, who adopts an analytical perspective, supports this idea and states that diaspora should not be defined as a type of purity. Instead, it should be used in a generic sense located within an approach that understands notions of heterogeneity and diversity, rather than making use of an ideal critical reference: ‘the scattered tribes, whose identity can only be established based on the vision of a holy homeland to which they must return at all costs, even if it means pushing other people into the sea’ (2003, p. 235). This also resonates with Dufoix’s formulation of a framework (that enhances the four ‘modes’ of ‘ideal types’ discussed below), which addresses some of the limitations of the typology framework: 1) Regardless of whether people living abroad are united by nationality or otherwise, they do not have to share a reference point of origin; 2) the four modes do not exist in pure form, they are often combined in practice to allow maximum effect; and 3) they offer some level of flexibility (unlike the rigid criteria offered by Safran and others) ‘to move (from) one structuring mode to another and back again’ (2008, p. 66).

Dufoix offers some analytical and conceptual ‘modes’ to define and understand diaspora and the interrelated concepts such as migration and transnationalism. In other words, transnationalism is a consequence of diaspora formation, which in turn stems from (forced)

¹⁷ See Clifford (1997) who argues that diaspora does not have to have a base or a focal point, and return to a place called ‘home’ is not required, in fact not everyone wants to go back.

¹⁸ Cohen simplifies Safran’s ideas suggesting that a diaspora is defined by nine common features.

migration trajectories. At the heart of Dufoix's (2008, p.79) formulation lies the link to a 'homeland' that is imagined. Dufoix proposes four 'ideal types' including: 1) 'centroperipheral', which suggests that the diaspora community is closely linked to the home country; 2) 'enclaved', a diaspora community based on the host society; 3) 'atopic', a deterritorialised identity rooted in dispersion. It is a transtate that does not require a physical territory but is built around a common origin, ethnicity, or religion without being reduced to a subject of a host country; and 4) 'antagonistic', an 'exile polity' whereby political space becomes a disputed area. The diaspora community does not acknowledge the legitimacy of the regime in their home country, which leads to a 'state of war' between the two.

Due to the focus on non-territorial networks that undermine original points of reference Dufoix's formulation arguably cannot address the significant customs and constitutions that – a section of – a diaspora relies upon. For example, there are young Somali people who have either rejected or lost some critical traditions or constitutions that their parents rely upon and stay committed to maintain. Having said that, and despite its limitations, Dufoix's framework, in conjunction with others (i.e. Cohen, 2008; Hall, 2003; Clifford, 1997 etc.) appear capable of being appropriated to analyse diaspora groups such as the Somalis and its youth. Another option, however, is to redefine and reconceptualise existing frameworks to transcend the original reference of dispersal, which comes into play through a painful history and forceful expulsion. These options are considered further in the analysis chapters that follow.

Context

The Somali diaspora fits most descriptions and proposed ideal types. Having said that, the aim is to locate this diaspora within the specific social context of young Somalis and their lived experiences, while paying attention to the historical context and shifting identities, the influences of migration, formation, settlement, and adaptation. As Hall (1990) asserts, "cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything else, which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to continuous 'play' of history, culture and power" (Hall, 2003, p. 236, 1990, p. 224) . The historical reference made by Hall is important as it helps explain the multi-faceted and contested notions of diaspora, i.e. collective memory or the lack of it,

belonging, identities, home, host-land, alienation, and isolation etc., which are critical themes for this thesis. Hence, diaspora as an analytical lens is well placed to deconstruct the on-going shifting political narratives and social transformations of the Somali experience. Further, Clifford (1997) makes a clear distinction between migrancy, immigration, exiles, and immigrants. Thus, he argues that diasporas cannot be equated with immigrant communities. Accordingly, “the latter could be seen as temporary, a site where the canonical three generations struggled through a hard transition to ethnic American status” (1997, p255). For example, ethnic Italians in America are not diasporic since they are less likely to organise themselves to establish a common political, social, or economic agenda (Tölölyan 1996, 2007; Clifford 1997). On the contrary, diasporas transcend beyond the ethnic positioning of minority migrants. The transnational and globalised character of diasporas, which supports the free-flow of capital, ideas, and supplies, but not the movement of people, is another important distinction that strengthens the difference between immigrant and diaspora communities. Tölölyan (1996, p. 4) asserts, “diasporas are the exemplary communities of the transnational moment”. Thus:

an ethnic community differs by the extent to which the latter’s commitment to maintain connections with its homeland and its kin communities in other states is absent, weak, or at best intermittent, and manifested by the community rather than the community as whole’ (1996, p.16).

To put it differently, what characteristics differentiate diasporas from immigrants more generally are the on-going links and allegiances to a place called home and a previous culture (Kearney 1995).

In essence then, there are specific themes and concepts in the diaspora literature that this thesis will engage with, which are discussed below.

Citizen suspects, misrepresentation and marginalisation: Various authorities on diaspora (see Cohen, 2008; Safran 1991, 2005; Sheffer 2003) refer to the complex relationship that migrants have with the host-country. Diasporas often feel somewhat alienated from the mainstream society and, hence, are sceptical about being fully accepted as fellow citizens (ibid). Thus, citizenship features significantly throughout the thesis. A fuller description of

theories and approaches are discussed in the final paragraph of this chapter. It figures as a relevant lens by which to address the challenges that young Somali men face locally and transnationally. It challenges the narrow understanding of (diaspora) citizenship and demonstrates active citizenship through increased responses to securitization (i.e. MI5 allegedly harassing young Somali men in Camden) and the possible infringement of human rights (i.e. revoked citizenship rights for alleged extremism). Despite the fragmentation within the Somali diasporas in the UK they seem to share an obligation for a common purpose in their struggle for more grounded and improved citizenship rights that often cuts across geographical boundaries. This thesis investigates these matters while considering the experiences of young Somali males in London.

Shared recollection or lack of memory: Following Cohen's (2008) descriptions of diasporas, I argue that the Somali parents in particular maintain a shared recollection of dislocation and trauma as the data from this thesis revealed. Consequently, young Somalis often form an imagined and/or mental picture of the homeland from their (parents') shared recollections or memories. I argue that the Somali case produces multiple diasporas with diverse experiences. This thesis shows how Somali parents' accounts of storytelling and sharing, allow their children to imagine 'home' and make sense of ancestral ties. Also return visits provided some more grounded understanding and experiences of home and belonging. However, because of the vast differences between young people and their parents in terms of experiences in the diasporas, generational gaps and clashes (of orientation) persist: parents often want to return and young people aim to build their lives here in the UK. These attitudes influence their sense of belonging (Schiller & Levitt 2004) and further impact on where they call 'home' (Dufoix, 2008; Cohen 2008; Clifford 2007; Hall 2003; Gilroy, 1997). Equally, unpleasant experiences in the mainstream UK society could encourage reorientations of focus possibly to result in detachment from host-land participation. Thus, focus will be on how these gaps and clashes, as well as attitudes and feelings about notions of belonging and home, are shaping the experiences of the young generation and how they are coping with these. Various acculturation models are observed and drawn upon to understand and measure the generational process (see Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Portes and Zhou, 1993). More detailed discussions on intergenerational and acculturation theories are addressed in chapter four.

Contested notions of nationhood and diaspora consciousness: the idea of deterritorialisation (Dufoix 2008; Basch et al. 1994) – discussed in more detail in the following section – comes to mind here, whereby the bounded and often localised character usually associated with a nation state is challenged due to the development and formation of diasporas. With regards to the Somali diasporas, I argue that the notion of deterritorialisation is a complex matter in which not only the unique standing of a state is challenged locally but also transnationally, often defying the boundaries entertained by nation states (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). For example, young Somalis connect with Palestinians, Pakistanis, Bosnians, etc. in an effort to fundraise for a common goal mainly underpinned by their religious connections and duties (Werbner, 2002). Another example – that emphasises the transnational character of this concept – is the emergence of the breakaway region of Somaliland and the autonomous State of Puntland that have had a great influence in the development of their respective diasporas. This thesis draws on practical examples of how these attachments and associations – of diaspora consciousness – figure in the UK Somali diasporas and how specific boundaries are maintained (Brubaker, 2005).

Transnationalism

Context

Following the debate on diaspora the closely associated theoretical framework of transnationalism will be discussed in this section. Transnationalism or transnational practices commonly develop as a result of diaspora formations.

Given the global presence of Somali diasporas (and their growing mobility) transnationalism has become a significant facet of their migration experiences. Increasing instabilities and insecurities oblige the Somali diasporas to assist and maintain ties with loved ones, families, and friends, signifying the importance of transnational engagements. Against this background, the aim of this section is underlined by the following two key objectives: 1) to highlight the key themes and concepts in the field of transnationalism; and 2) to identify critical and relevant subject matters to engage with in order to reflect upon and ground the transnational engagements of young Somalis in London. I argue that understanding these engagements is important as they provide relevant answers for the potential growth of

international migration and wider transnational engagements, including economic, political, social (sense of belonging and citizenship), and religious engagements, both in the host and home countries.

There is sufficient evidence on the transnational engagements of the Somali diasporas in the Horn of Africa (Al-Sharmani, 2010; Hassan and Chalmers, 2008; Horst and Gaas, 2008; Menkhaus, 2008). In her thorough analysis on Somali remittances, Lindley (2007) stresses the importance of transnational engagements and “the quality of the *relationships* (original emphasis) which these transactions create, express, sustain, and modify” (Firth quoted in Lindley, 2010, p. 14). From these actions and relationships occur multi-faceted, social, material, cultural, and symbolic meanings (Horst, 2006; Levitt and Schiller, 2004; Lindley, 2010). However, these actions seemed to be viewed either in a positive or negative light. Thus, diaspora engagements could be considered as vehicles for conflict or alternatively for peace (Abdile et al., 2011; Bamyeh, 2007; Fair, 2007; Hoehne, 2010; Orjuela, 2008; Pirkkalainen and Abdile, 2009; Warnecke, 2010). Subsequent chapters illustrate both perceptions, in relation to the experiences of young Somalis in the UK and in Somaliland.

Until now little has been known about the specific transnational engagements of young Somalis in the UK (although there have been widely expressed fears about possible links with terrorist activities). However, there are alternative approaches to be considered. Young Somalis’ attitudes are deemed crucial as they may play a potential role in the future of the Somali region in more effective ways. As Sheikh and Healy (2009, p. 14) indicate, their role could be instrumental ‘in the post-conflict transition to peace and development’, suggesting the need for more thorough research on their attitudes and potential engagements.

Theoretical frameworks for understanding transnationalism

Transnationalism is focused on examining the ‘multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states’ (Vertovec, 1999, p. 447). The concept concentrates on the growing connections between people, cultures, and regions while it supports the flow of supplies, skills, ideas, and capital between various social spaces spanning one or more borders between nations (Levitt and Schiller, 2004; Wahlbeck, 1998). It is argued that transnational migration is an ‘old’ phenomenon (Levitt 2004). The

interrelated concept of transnationalism offers a new conceptual and theoretical framework to articulate the context in which migration trajectories have been shaped by new technologies, which 'have virtually created new patterns of social relations, or at least strongly reinforced pre-existing tendencies' (Remennick, 2003, p. 371). Drawing on the work of Held *et al.* (1999) *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics, and Culture*, Vertovec supports this notion and asserts that due to 'improved transportation, technology and communications, globalisation has entailed the increasing extent, intensity, velocity and impact of global interconnectedness across a broad range of human domains' (2009, p. 2). Castells (2009) stresses that these new technologies are at the centre of current day transnational engagements, which have practically made their process easier, faster, and more accessible (Vertovec, 2004). Levitt (2004) provides some examples, including the relative ease of access to means of transportation and communication, various ways in which migrants are incorporated into the employment industry, increasing reliance on remittances on the receiving end, and policies of host states to promote 'migrants' enduring long-distance nationalism.

The concept of transnationalism has become contested and complex in its application. There are conflicting definitions attributed to the term which contribute to its lack of conceptual and theoretical distinction and clarity (Portes et al., 1999). Some scholars argue transnationalism to be a fragmented area of study, which fails to define the form of 'transnationality' and thoroughness of interrelated practices (Yeoh et al., 2003) while others highlight its haziness and attempts to be all encompassing (Ebaugh and Chafetz, 2002) that undermine its usefulness. The fragmentation of transnationalism has resulted in a battlefield of critiques that has led to the deconstruction of existing and the formalization of 'new' concepts, which can be used as analytical tools. In the following section, a thorough analysis of transnationalism is offered in order to address its usefulness and shortcomings and determine a clear conceptual map for the thesis.

Considering the fact that different fields of study apply different theories and various methodological approaches while also having a distinct topical focus, the broad character of the concept of transnationalism and its complexity can make it unclear. The all-encompassing nature and various perspectives have constructed different definitions while assuming various

directions across several disciplines. This begets the questions: how do we make sense of transnational migration, and how do we apply its concepts and give meaningful interpretation to relevant experiences, narratives, and specific areas of concern? Perhaps one way of surmounting this perceived obstacle (in addition to the brief analysis above) is to look at the main scholarly discourses on commonalities and disparities that have engaged and unraveled the concept hitherto.

Possibly one of the most referenced works on transnationalism is that of Basch and her colleagues (Basch et al., 1994, p. 7) who define the concept as:

the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasise that many immigrants today build social fields that span across geographic, cultural, and political borders.

In their book, *Nations Unbound*, the authors – Basch *et al.* – offer two much welcomed theoretical concepts: 1) *transnationalism* that focuses on ‘the process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement’ (Basch et al., 1994, p. 27); and 2) *transmigrants* which looks at the ‘immigrants who build such social fields’ (ibid).

Though well embraced as a conceptual framework, Kivisto (2001) criticises its lack of historical reference. He further takes issue with their claim that ‘new times and new socio-historical circumstances demand a new theoretical paradigm’ (2001, p. 554) and suggests that they (Basch *et al.*) fail to put a realistic case forward and appreciate the value ‘of transnationalism as an alternative to assimilation or cultural pluralism’ (2001, p.556). Thus, the distinction between immigrants and transmigrants is contested as it lacks substance and only seems to provide a dichotomy of ‘immigrants from the past and transmigrants of the present’ (ibid). Accordingly, Kivisto states that transnationalism should be viewed as a variant of ‘assimilation’ theory, as ‘at the moment that transnational immigrants are working to maintain homeland connections, they are also engaged in the process of acculturating to the host society’ (2007, p.571). Nagel (2001) agrees with this assertion and challenges the

notion that historical studies on immigrants and migrants are no longer sufficient (see Schiller et al. 1992) and argues that such a view appears rather overstated (Nagel, 2001).

Likewise, Waldinger and Fitzgerald (Waldinger and Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 1187) argue that ‘the insistence on a qualitative distinction between an ill-defined and un-periodised ‘now’ and ‘then’ contribute to the shortcomings and confusion to the concept of transnationalism. To address this gap they ‘reject the conventional views’, which undermine the connection “between immigrant transnationalism and receiving states and civil society actors” (2004, p.1179) and propose “an alternative approach that emphasises the interaction of migrants with states and civil society actors in both sending and receiving countries” (ibid) with a methodological approach that goes beyond the container society. In addition, they argue that transnationalism should only be concerned with the connection between immigrants and nation-states and should not try to be too broad and, hence, misleading. To support their argument, they offer that transnational migration should be limited to the field of politics within the context of the nation-state (ibid). However, some scholars in the field prefer to focus on social, economic, and cultural aspects rather than political ones (Wald & Williams 2006).

Responding to the critique, Schiller and Levitt (2006) acknowledge the conceptual arguments made by Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2003) but dismiss the claim to ‘ownership’ while viewing as narrow an approach that mainly concentrates on “American sociologists and a few anthropologists (Schiller and Levitt, 2006, p. 3), largely ignoring American historians and geographers and most of the international scholarship that represents important contributions to the field”¹⁹. Furthermore, they argue that transnational migration goes beyond the political field of study and includes broader themes such as ‘economic, social, religious, as well as political practices’ (Schiller and Levitt, 2006, p. 6). In particular, their notions of ‘*ways of being*’ – that ‘refers to the actual social relations and practices that individuals engage in rather than to the identities associated with their actions’ and ‘*ways of belonging*’ which ‘refers to practices that signal or enact an identity which demonstrates a conscious connection

¹⁹ The authors offer the main literature Waldinger and Fitzgerald to argue their case and provide a list showing the wider literature that contributed to the field of Transnationalism but mainly overlooked by Waldinger and Fitzgerald.

to a particular group' (Levitt and Schiller, 2004, p. 11) – are relevant concepts to employ. Acknowledging their usefulness these are relevant concepts this thesis will engage with.

Appreciating the diverse nature of transnationalism, Vertovec (1999, pp. 3–13) proposes six distinct but related conceptual frameworks upon which the concept is based: transnationalism; 1) as 'social morphology' looking at the forms and interactions of emerging social relations best known as networks; 2) as 'type of consciousness' focusing on the simultaneous multiple orientation and identities of migrants; 3) as 'model of cultural reproduction' 'associated with a fluidity of constructed styles, social institutions and everyday practices' which 'are often described in terms of syncretism, creolization, bricolage, cultural translation, and hybridity'; 4) as 'avenue of capital' operating at multiple levels including the role of transnational corporations 'with their systems of supply, production, marketing, investment, information of transfer and management' (see also Castells 1996) as well as community engagement practices such as remittances; 5) as 'site of political engagement' again with multiple orientations facilitated by a 'global public space or forum' involving political activity through conventional forms such as the international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) as well as engagements in the 'politics of homeland'; and, 6) '(re)construction of 'place' or locality' by transforming its relationships through 'social fields' or 'social space' with multiple connections spanning various nation-states. These six conceptual premises are different but not exclusive and rely on each other (Vertovec, 2009) and perhaps on other frameworks. These help us understand the level of transnational engagements among transnational communities and explain why some are more involved than others. For example, in order to highlight the broader transnational connections and engagements the thesis draws on specific case studies such as the football tournament to Somaliland, which enabled young Somali men to travel back to their ancestral home.

Other authorities engage with conceptual frameworks that transcend local territories. For example, Faist et al. (2004, p. 4) refer to 'transnational social spaces' as a framework that goes beyond the conventional geographical view of a restricted set of physical attributes. In general, space represents notions of 'cultural, economic and political practices of individual and collective actors within territories or places' (ibid), which create cross border links through persistent symbolic and social interactions that are relatively dense and stable. Their

key dimensions are grounded in a ‘time-space compression’ of networks that facilitate them – social spaces. They are examined by their ‘extensity’ (activity site, actors and relevant social fields) and ‘intensity’ (rate and speed of connections). Within the context of social spaces three main groups are identified: 1) ‘kinship groups’ that operate on mutual links which are informal; 2) ‘transnational circuits’, which are exchange networks capitalizing on insiders’ knowledge; and 3) ‘transnational communities’ who share a collective identity and ethnicity with local rather than transnational focus (ibid). However, what is not made very clear and remains under-theorized is the boundary between formal and informal links (Kivisto, 2001). For example, transnational trading networks (where profit plays an instrumental role) and kinship groups (that are emotionally embedded) do not enjoy the same level of trust (ibid). The assumption here is that more established relationships enjoy a higher level of trust that enhances possible transnational engagements. This important distinction is blurred. It is relevant for this thesis to gain a better understanding of the level of extensity and intensity of young people’s transnational engagement and what role these play in their overall experiences through their transnational practices.

‘Transnational village’ (Levitt 2001; 2005) concentrates on the dynamics of continued political, economic, and social interactions between people and networks spanning across nation-states. The developed transnational village does not operate in a vacuum and power and change, in both family and political hierarchies, are at its heart. Levitt argues that, due to their marginal political and economic positions in the host countries, immigrants start to invest and advance their social standing in their ‘home’ country, which results in shifting political, economic, and social dynamics (the lives of those left behind transform even if they do not move as they now become part of a wider transnational network that transcends various nation borders) (2001). As a result, a modest rise in social status and more respect is gained by the émigrés in the country of origin. However, this experience is not bi-directional and the émigrés in their host countries usually do not benefit from it. Nevertheless, this “simultaneously invokes a sense of space, common experience and intimacy of social relationships” (Vertovec, 2001a, p. 26). Levitt further engages with what Smith and Guarnizo (1998) termed as ‘transnationalism from below’ and ‘transnationalism from above’, respectively, dealing with daily community practices at both individual and group level and global political and economic structures. Smith and Guarnizo assert that transnationalism

should go beyond the international migration construction, which tends to ignore “multiple exchanges of monetary and non-monetary resources, material and symbolic objects, commodities and cultural values” (1998, p.19). Vertovec (2009, p. 3), however, questions whether or not such conceptual binaries are heuristic in value while claiming that they “are ultimately not very satisfactory” due to “the scales, spaces and mechanisms of globalisation and transnationalism” which are “just too entangled to allow such clear abstractions”.

‘Translocality’, a term coined by Appadurai (2006) denotes a transformation from what is deemed strictly a national space to a *translocality* that in part belongs to a particular nation-state due to the space it occupies, but transcends this same space because of the broader connections it embodies (Mirón and John, 2003). More specifically, this is a contested space in which a nation-state lacks the full control that serves as a meeting point for people with multiple forms of ‘locals’ (ibid) in search of authenticity and place as they move from one area to another to create their own sort of translocality (Appadurai, in Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003). Appadurai challenges the lack of multivocality and multilocality in (anthropological) ethnography and the assertion of subjects being constructed as occupants of one ‘place’ with one ‘voice’, which this research equally contends.

The two opposing concepts of ‘core’ and ‘expanded’ transnationalism focus on the intensity dimension of engagements (Guarnizo 2000, quoted in Levitt 2001). Core transnationalism looks at the ‘activities that (a) form an integral part of the individual’s habitual life, (b) are undertaken on a regular basis, and thus (c) are patterned and, hence, more or less predictable in their occurrence’, while expanded transnationalism, on the other hand, ‘incorporates migrants’ occasional transnational engagement (which tends to occur at particular historical junctures such as political crises or devastating disasters)’ (Levitt 2001, p.198).

In general, it is argued that regardless of how someone defines transnationalism, reference is always made to maintained human connections with different levels of engagements that include networks and institutions – both large and small – spanning multiple borders and nation-states that present (Faist and Özveren, 2004) “a wider, even more complex set of conditions that affect the construction, negotiation and reproduction of social identities” (Vertovec, 2001b, p. 578).

Despite its broad nature and sometimes confusing and conflicting statements, transnationalism has proved to be a useful conceptual tool to deconstruct the engagements of transnational communities that span across nation-states, and will be used to frame this study. Portes (2003, p. 874) offers a constructive outline of several empirical and conceptual areas upon which scholars with very diverse views have “reached a measure of consensus” and provides representative indicators of progress that have gradually led ‘to agree on the tenability of certain arguments and the weakness of others’ (ibid). Portes suggests that: 1) ‘transnationalism represents a novel perspective, not a novel phenomenon’ analysed through a transnational lens focused on emerging engagements aided by new technology; 2) ‘transnationalism is a grassroots phenomenon’ whereby private actors, including immigrants, engage in cross-border activities, which need to be disconnected ‘from those of large bureaucracies and other institutions that have long been part of the global scene’; 3) ‘not all immigrants are transnationals’ and, therefore, the theoretical lens is grounded on the engagements of a minority of them; 4) ‘immigrant transnationalism has macro-social consequences’ facilitated by the multiple (which are increasingly considered as the norm rather the exception (Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007a)) activities that can modify fortunes and cultures; and 5) the extent and forms of transnational activism vary with ‘contexts of exit and reception’ highlighting the heterogeneous character and diversity across immigrant communities’ (see Portes, 2003, pp. 874–79).

Intergenerational approaches

Intergenerational approaches are a fairly new domain in the UK (Pain, 2005) and deserve additional attention. The concept that is often referred to as *intergenerational practice*, due to its practical and project focussed approach, became an area of concern in the early 1990s and has witnessed increasing growth from 2000 onwards (see Davis 2004; Granville 2002). Some commentators (Granville 2002) have focused on addressing intergenerational cultural understanding to foster wider social inclusion through the creation of better intergenerational understanding. Examples include *Sound it Out*, a Chinese cross-generational project and the *Magic Me* project in East London to learn more about the needs of young people and elders from the local Bengali and Somali communities (ibid). With regards to existing work on intergenerational relations Pain (2005) suggests four interrelated areas. I have revised these

areas, where necessary, to provide a clearer and perhaps more comprehensive list of categories: 1) *transfer and transmission between generations* – i.e. on wealth, risk of social exclusion, health, and educational attainment (see Litwin, 2004; Moore et al., 2001; Sekhon, 2007), 2) *inter-personal relationships* – focussing on personal relations whereby the frequency, reason, impact and implications are highlighted, particularly at the family level (see Brannen, 2003; Luescher and Pillemer, 1998), 3) *social identity at micro/macro levels* – which tends to be more theoretically centred (Edmunds and Turner, 2005, see 2002), 4) and finally work on *evaluation of policy and practice* on intergenerational relations (see Kaplan et al., 2002). This research will particularly draw on transfer and transmission between generations where the risks of marginality in social and educational settings are addressed. Additionally, the inter-personal relationships between parents and their children are continuously addressed in this chapter.

More recent studies have focussed on addressing the generational gaps in the Somali community in the UK. Research conducted among young Somali people in Cardiff highlighted major generational challenges with regards to culture and language barriers often resulting in widening communication problems between generations and parents' inability to support their children more effectively (Somali Integration Society, 2008). Our work with the Somali youth in London (see Hassan and Samater, 2009) discussed some relevant aspects in relation to religion and the increased significance it has for young people perhaps, with some exploring new trends and orientations. Young people seemed more focused in settling in the UK while parents constantly referred to the homeland and a desire to return to the Somali territories – emphasising the complexities of growing up in two different cultures. Paskell's (2007) *Generational Gap* account among young Somalis in Camden further emphasises the widening communication gap that stems from the different levels of orientations and the possible effects on integration. Harding et al's (2007) report focuses on the changing family dynamics and pressures on the parent-child relationship and the emotional needs of both young people and their parents. Particularly, challenges were identified amongst lone mothers trying to cope with the diverse emotional needs of their children – daughters have different needs than sons (ibid). For example, Adfam (2009) conducted a comprehensive research study, looking into '*the Somali community and substance use in London*'. This identified the problematic use of drugs as widespread and complicated by the lack of knowledge about or

inaccurate information on substance (mis)use. The report noted that mothers were particularly likely to act on 'second-hand' information about drugs, thus being ill-equipped to deal with drug-related challenges within the family. In parallel, Mohamoud's (2011) research (in progress) on young Somali people in the UK offers some interesting insights on educational attainment and employment engagement and the challenges they face to adapt in a new society.

Besides its scarcity, intergenerational research within the Somali community has often focused on addressing the practical challenges of intergenerational relations. Much of the research conducted has been through focus groups often missing the necessary detailed and personal accounts of the lived experiences of young Somali people: gaps which this research aims to address. This research starts from the view that, in general, there is little research in the UK on intergenerational relations with regards to community, neighbourhood and public space, despite this being a recognised topic across the social sciences (Pain 2005). For example, young people who took part in this research said that voluntary organisations are mostly run by elder Somalis who do not necessarily understand the challenges that young people often face. This raises important questions about representation and voice, which are important themes of this thesis. Primarily, the focus has been on 'intra-family relations, often with weak conceptualization of 'age' and 'generation', or on macro level process of welfare and economic exchange without empirical grounding in the everyday lives of older and young people' (Pain, 2005, p. 9). I therefore draw on the relevant and more comprehensive work of Rumbaut and Portes (2005, 2001, 2001) and Protes and Zhou (1993) among immigrant young adults and their families in the USA, particularly referring to their recent work on acculturation and the related segmented assimilation among second generation migrants.

Critical challenges of diasporic acculturation: generational similarities and differences

Refugees may be forced to leave their country of origin in the search for safety and better lives. They often end up in countries with different cultures, religions and languages. Once in the new host society they go through the process of acculturation in various forms and at different levels, which are usually known as assimilation, integration, adaptation, coping and adjustment. Many have battled with questions in relation to the process of acculturation.

Acculturation theories are often used to understand and articulate the interaction between the dominant culture and immigrant communities (Berry, 2003; Redfield et al., 1936). These theories commonly suggest different and/or multi-faceted outcomes for immigrant communities attempting to find their way in a new society. The concept of acculturation often figures as a lens to illuminate the inter-social actions between different people from diverse backgrounds.

Assessing acculturation

The notion of acculturation is rooted in American social anthropology. It was used as a conceptual framework to understand social transformations and cultural interactions between various communities toward the end of the 19th century – for example peasant and native communities (see Redfield et al. 1936; quoted in Navas et al. 2007). Redfield et al. defined acculturation as a process of interaction between various cultures (ibid).

Historically acculturation was commonly associated with a uni-dimensional approach, which relied on assimilation on the migrants' part. Much of the focus was on the examination of Westernization and modernization processes that different communities were undergoing (Marin et al., 2003). Immigrants were expected to drop their own culture, language and heritage in exchange for those of the host society. In fact some recent scholars hold on to these traditional views and argue that the best way to acculturate in a new society is to unlearn almost everything that relates to your home culture and heritage – language, religion, association etc. – and go 'native' (Gudykunst and Kim, 2005). The emphasis on one-dimensional-principal-culture as a prerequisite for migrants and refugees appears over simplistic, however, and lacks conceptual rigor (Castro, 2003). The move toward a global village and the growth of political conflicts in many parts of the world require more in-depth understanding of ethnic and minorities' cultures to assist the formation of multicultural societies (Marin et al., 2003). Therefore, bi-dimensional, -directional and interactive approaches are being embraced to counter the over reliance on the assimilationist approach (Waters et al., 2010; Navas et al., 2007; Bowskill et al. 2007; Castro, 2003; Berry, 2003, 1990).

The psychologist John Berry (2003) introduced a conceptual framework with four possible results: 1) integration – also known as biculturalism occurs when there is cultural harmony between diverse communities; 2) assimilation – takes place when one exchanges own/home culture and language to the host culture and language; 3) separation/rejection – is characterised by the rejection of the dominant culture; and 4) marginalisation/deculturation – appears when both home and host cultures and heritage are rejected. The latter has received some level of criticism for its assumption that marginalisation is a choice that migrants make (Ward et al., 2006). This view is said to overstate the ability of migrants and refugees alike to take such options, as they may not be in the position to make such informed choices (ibid). On the contrary, coercion to embrace the outcome is more common (ibid). In other words, there is little choice here and those concerned are often compelled to face the consequences, whatever these may be. Acculturation mainly derives from two different angles from which the above acculturation processes occur: 1) maintaining one's own culture and 2) connecting with the host/new culture. Bi-dimensional theories focus on the acculturative experiences of the migrants in the dominant culture. The following paragraph discusses an alternative model with various interactions.

Building on Berry's acculturation model while addressing the shortcomings of the bi-dimensional approach Bourhis et al. (1997) proposed the *Interactive Acculturation Model* (IAM), which:

seeks to integrate within a common theoretical framework the following components of immigrants and host community relations in multicultural settings: (1) acculturation orientations adopted by immigrant groups in the host community; (2) acculturation orientations adopted by the host community towards specific groups of immigrants; (3) inter- personal and intergroup relational outcomes that are the product of combinations of immigrant and host community acculturation orientations (1997, p.379).

The main purpose of the model is to eventually 'present a non-determinist, more dynamic account of migrants and host community acculturation in multicultural settings' (ibid).

Bourhis and his colleagues made an attempt to address the flaws of the bi-dimensional concept with regards to its approach to marginalisation. They introduced two critical

concepts: 1) *anomaly* and 2) *individualism* to account for the outcomes of immigrants and host community relations. Particularly, their focus is on the accounts of those who hold on to their cultural and ethnic identities and belonging but feel marginalised as well as those who discard group belonging and want to identify themselves as individuals. Here the immigrant can adopt one of the five outcomes – integration, assimilation, separation, anomie, and individualism – depending on the strength of their desire to hold on to their cultural values and heritage and their aspiration to embrace the dominant culture. Also Bourhis et al. altered the acculturative process based on the preference of the host society. In doing so they formulate two dimensions: 1) *Do you find it acceptable that immigrants maintain their cultural heritage?* (2) *Do you accept that immigrants adopt the culture of your host community?* The results at this level could be: Integration, *assimilation*, *segregation*, *exclusion* and *individualism*. The outcome of the interaction between the host community and the immigrants could be *consensual* – predicting effective outcomes in the circumstances it occurs –, *conflicting* – host and migrant communities want two different things with separate orientations – or *problematic* – host and migrant community partly agree and partly disagree on ways of acculturation – (see model below). Figure 4.1 below indicates the possible combination of community and immigrant acculturation orientations within a single conceptual framework. “The five immigrant orientations are presented on the horizontal axis while the five host community orientations are presented on the vertical axis” (Bourhis et al., 1997, p. 381).

Host Community: Low-Medium High vitality group	Immigrant Community: Low, medium vitality groups				
	Integration	Assimilation	Separation	Anomie	Individualism
Integration	Consensual	Problematic	Conflictual	Problematic	Problematic
Assimilation	Problematic	Consensual	Conflictual	Problematic	Problematic
Segregation	Conflictual	Conflictual	Conflictual	Conflictual	Conflictual
Exclusion	Conflictual	Conflictual	Conflictual	Conflictual	Conflictual
Individualism	Problematic	Problematic	Problematic	Problematic	Consensual

Table 4.1 Relational outcomes of host community and immigrant acculturation orientations: the Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM) (Bourhis et al., 1997, p. 382)

Acculturation is, however, not confined to family, group or community relations but also affects critical areas such as emotion, cognition, beliefs, values, perception and languages as well as other relevant human action and functioning (Cuéllar and Paniagua, 2000). (Successful) acculturation does not function in isolation and is dynamic rather than static, which allows space to choose and switch between strategies (Navas et al., 2005; Ward et al., 2006). Also, it is very much dependent on the enabling environment into which one acculturates. As noted by Berry (1990) some contexts are more receptive than others making it easier to integrate and build bicultural identities whereas others are less receptive often promoting separation or rejection instead of the desired integration. As shown in the Interactive Acculturation Model immigration policies and media portrayals have great impact on the perception and attitudes of the host population and diaspora communities.

Berry's taxonomy of acculturation model and Bourhis et al.'s Interactive Acculturation Model were further expanded through the Concordance Model of Acculturation (CMA), which offers "four levels of concordance that represent different possibilities of (mis)matched attitudes: consensual, culture-problematic, contact-problematic, and conflictual" (see Piontkowski et al., 2002, p. 221). This model assumes that the greater the mismatch between host and immigrant population "the more threatening and less enriching the intergroup situation will be perceived to be" (ibid). Taking the above three models as references Navas et al. (2005) presented the Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM). This model assumes that different preferences exist for both host and migrant communities to acculturate and interact²⁰ (Ibid).

There are, in addition, several theories dedicated to measure the stress levels that immigrant communities encounter. Families of immigrants and those with refugee backgrounds generally undergo extremely stressful experiences as they leave their familiar surroundings, extended families and friends behind while they get disconnected from their communities (Rothe et al., 2011) not to mention the emotional loss and impact involved.

²⁰ Navas et al. suggest that the RAEM made two contributions that are also relevant for the thesis including: (1) 'The model differentiates between acculturation strategies and attitudes. (2) The RAEM postulates that there is no single or general acculturation attitude as inferred from some of the traditional models.

Barry and Sam (1997) suggest that migrants with refugee backgrounds suffer from acute emotional stress. They seem to argue that refugees during the acculturation process are at the highest risk in comparison to ordinary migrants who generally arrive voluntarily. Given their compelling circumstances refugees have already been through pre-acculturation experiences including experiences such as violence, (civil) war, famine, dispossession, degradation, cruelty etc. In the Somali experience I argue that these have been repetitive prolonged experiences for many. In addition, elderly and as well as young people are identified as being most at risk within the refugee group during acculturation. Although stated with some caution evidence suggests however that young people particularly suffer from the disruption in one's life due to involuntary migration that exacerbates this problem and the 'double transition' – of adolescent and acculturation – (Berry & Sam 1997), 'double developmental challenge' (Rothe et al., 2011) or how to 'cope with two crises' (Rumbaut, 1991) that reinforce one another, constructing increased risk for youth (Berry & Sam 1997). These challenges are summed up by Rumbaut (1991) who suggests that in order to manage both psychological and cultural transitions and acculturation the refugee child should:

cope with two crisis producing and identity defining transitions: 1) adolescence and the task of managing transition from childhood to adulthood, and 2) acculturation and the task of managing the transition from one sociocultural environment to another (1991, p. 61)

Segmented acculturation

As we note from the discussion above, given the complex nature of our society that consists of different segments with specific characteristics and dynamics it is difficult to view acculturation as a one-dimensional entity. More specifically for the purposes of this thesis the idea of intergenerational acculturation should not be viewed in this light. Rather the approach should be one that charts the differences between young Somali people and their parents on the one hand and their relations with the dominant British culture in London on the other hand. In other words, the approach should be flexible enough to embrace multi-dimensional and multidirectional acculturation outcomes. It is also relevant to note the factors that are inherent to the Somali community, as well as those that are inherent to the three research sites

– Camden, Hayes, and Tottenham – and the wider society that determines these differences (Rothe et al., 2011).

Segmented assimilation theory suggests three likely results: upward assimilation, downward assimilation, and upward mobility ‘combined with persistent mobility that corresponds to three processes – dissonant, consonant and selective acculturation – that summarize the relations between immigrant children, their parents, and the wider ethnic community’ (see also Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Waters et al., 2010). According to Portes and Rumbaut (2001) the three types of intergenerational acculturation are as follows: 1) *dissonant* – occurs when children get accustomed to the host culture’s values, norms, beliefs and language while losing their own, perhaps with different and prompter speed in comparison to their parents; 2) *consonant* – takes place when parents and their offspring adapt to the dominant culture more or less at the same speed and time; and 3) *selective* – manifests when both parents and their offspring generally acclimatise to the dominant culture while also holding on to their cultural values and traditions. The latter is often said to have tendencies to encourage the maintenance of the ethnic culture’s norms, values and language while slowing down the acculturative process to the dominant culture.

Evidence suggests that, in particular, immigrant parents in the new dominant culture often want to safeguard their ethnic cultural values and norms (Shapiro et al., 1999). In contrast, their offspring generally want to engage with the dominant culture and are more inclined to embrace its norms and values (ibid). Consequently, generational acculturation gaps are established and potential conflicts and related stresses may arise. This creates what is termed as *dissonant acculturation* (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001) or *dissonant disparity* (Tardif and Geva, 2006). Parental styles and levels of control matter a great deal in the parent-child relationship. This chapter will analyse this relationship while drawing on the empirical data.

Discussion, critique and clarification

Although it is commonly agreed that acculturation is an important construct that offers useful tools to measure the generational processes of immigrant communities, it contains several flaws while lacking clarity in the way it employs some of its concepts. For example, the bi-dimensional approach seems to suggest that a two-way process of cultural harmony is in

progress, which deserves some clarity. Bi-dimensionality in this case derives from the interaction with the dominant culture and how migrants experience that process. In other words, the changes that migrants undergo in relation to their ethnic culture as well as the dominant culture are addressed here. Hence, the interaction with the dominant culture that is intrinsic in the bi-dimensional model is not so from the migrants' point of view. In addition, it lacks dimensional depth as critical factors are undermined – such as ethnicity and (ethnic) identities, gender etc. Therefore, much of the criticism of this particular concept comes from its inability to capture the multi-faceted factors that affect migrants' experiences during the acculturation process and the assumption of parallel power relations between migrant communities and the dominant culture (Reitz and Banerjee, 2007).

Assimilation and acculturation, although two different concepts, are often used interchangeably which is rather confusing. For example Portes and Rumbaut engage with the concept of segmented *assimilation* – which this study heavily draws on – while what they appear to promote is cultural *integration*. The reason for this could be two fold: 1) through their work Rumbaut and Portes and their colleagues (2001; 1993) challenge the inherent racism that underpinned the classic interpretation of the concept of assimilation, which is rooted in the Chicago school of sociology (in Depalo et al., 2006; see Park, 1930; Warner and Srole, 1945) and 2) the contested notion of the American melting pot. In their deconstruction they kept the concept of assimilation 'alive' as a construct perhaps to overcome further conceptual confusion. I suggest that assimilation is part of or is one of the possible options of acculturation. To ensure conceptual clarity this study refers to the notion of *segmented acculturation* while examining the acculturation (gaps) between parents and young people through language and culture as well as the effects of parenting style on the parent-child relationship.

This study further challenges the assumption that exposure to a new culture is only to be understood through migration from the country of origin in relation to the host-land. In fact many Somalis have gone through various countries before settling in the UK. It is important to take note of the acculturation experiences that preceded their arrival in the UK as these may have important consequences for the process of acculturation. The study aims to explain these factors.

Also, it is worth clarifying the distinction between *dimensional* and *directional* approaches, which is not clear from the literature with regard to acculturation. *Dimensional* (or multi-dimensional) acculturation processes describe various factors, which are independent from one another but yet related; for example, ethnicity and language and the transition of changes, which occur as part of the acculturation process. *Directional* acculturation processes describe the route and the outcome of acculturation. For example, the classical model of acculturation in which the migrant was required to adopt the dominant culture follows a uni-directional approach whereas a multi-directional approach is assumed when both migrants and host community adapt to the emerging changes.

Masculinity: negotiating a British, black, Muslim and Somali ways of belonging

Given the focus of this research and its emphasis on young Somali males, issues of masculinity run throughout the thesis. It is commonly understood that Somali culture or immigrant communities from a Muslim background are perceived as being more patriarchal in nature than the British mainstream culture. General discourses and academic literature in the field of gender studies (Archer, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999; Westwood, 1995) explores how females (women and girls) in Western societies enjoy 'better' life chances and economic prospects as a result of greater equality as opposed to the traditional customs, which are generally preserved at home. Valenzuela (1999) suggests that more often in immigrant family household structures girls are usually tasked with care for younger siblings, cleaning, cooking etc. frequently forcing young people to continuously negotiate their social positions between these various social spaces. However, and despite their suggested 'marginal' home situation evidence strongly indicates that girls are outstripping boys at school (Hassan, 2012). Unlike the girls, boys are said to be in a state of 'crisis' and are often perceived as problematic and facing some serious educational challenges (Archer, 2001). Wide-ranging discourses suggest that young Caribbean Black, Bengali (ibid) and Somali men are among the lowest achievers with record expulsions from schools (Adfam, 2009; Demie et al., 2006; Lambeth Children and Young People's Service, 2007). The notion of the 'problematic minority male' seems to be "located inherently within their 'race' and culture, and the young men themselves have been positioned as part of 'the problem'", unlike their white male counterparts whose identity 'crisis' is articulated through social class (Archer, 2001, p. 80). That said, regardless of

cultural and racial or class articulation, masculinity has been more specifically defined in terms of violent and aggressive behaviour (see Krienert, 2003; Segal, 1990). According to Krienert (2003) “it is taken for granted that males are more criminogenic; theories of crime use this as an underlying assumption and rarely attempt to explain the phenomenon”. Segal (1990) suggests that we normally tend to have a relaxed attitude about women’s relationship to violence. As a result, important characteristics such as ‘power’, ‘force’ and ‘aggression’ (1990, p. 261) are not well defined. For example, Segal looks at domestic violence in the traditional institution of marriage and argues that because of men’s position as the main breadwinner women’s domestic roles were sustained which suited men’s wishes. However, given that such institution is continuously shifting “the most significant common characteristic of women who are battered today is not their gender as such, but their lack of resources to escape marriages which are violent” (1990, p. 262).

Events such as the Salman Rushdie affair in terms of the British context seemed to have underpinned the ‘problematic’ picture of the Muslim man; and more so the extensive focus on fundamentalism. In this light, it is been suggested that “Muslim young men are increasingly being constructed as militant and aggressive, intrinsically fundamentalist ‘ultimate Others’” (quoted in Archer, 2001, p. 81; Phoenix, 1997). The media and mainstream UK political discourses seem to have further exacerbated such constructions of the Muslim man. Furthermore, ‘the problematic young Muslim man’ seems to fit with the popular image of young Somali men who have been commonly constructed as rebellious disloyal dangerous radicals that need to be watched stopped and searched and interrogated.

The literature on Somali masculinity is scarce as research on migration and gender is generally focused on women (Hansen, 2008). Additionally, existing literature seems to explore predominantly first generation gender dynamics and references to subsequent generations (1.5G, 2G etc.) and age are poorly articulated (Hansen, 2008; see Kleist, 2010). For example, it is not clear whose masculinity is referred to in various social contexts both here in the Somali diaspora and there back home. In this research masculinity should be understood in the context of London, UK, whereby attitudes and positions of young Somali males are observed. Throughout the thesis more attention is given to racialised hegemonic masculinities among young Somali men within the broader context of belonging and how

these various masculinities are negotiated. It draws on media representation and mainstream political discourses, experiences in school settings and expectations of hegemonic masculine attitudes in the Somali community and household. Among other concepts the thesis aims to draw out the multiple notions of masculinity that exist among young Somali men in London. I argue that this is relevant since they are a part of various cultures that affect their construction of masculinity over time. This raises important questions about how they cope with such diversity. Secondly, I assess the dynamics of masculinity on the premise that notions of masculinities are embedded in historical context, which one (parents in particular) aspires to return to, in order to instill desired masculine attitudes among young males.

Approaches to citizenship

More recently there have been great concerns about young people's political, social and ethical attitudes towards active citizenship (Wood, 2010). Although there has been a concerted effort to educate young people about active citizenship in schools evidence suggested growing alarm about young people's wider integration and participation in their host and transnational communities (ibid). The thesis explored how individuals and groups alike showcase various forms of social responsibilities in an area where some serious questions have been raised about their broader engagement in society. It is often argued that rights, privileges and responsibilities constitute citizenship (Gaventa and Barrett, 2010; Institute for Citizenship, 2010; Bloemraad et al., 2008; Fangen, 2007; Banting et al., 2007; Dwyer, 2004). While this indicates the dynamic nature of the concept of citizenship it also highlights its fluidity. Likewise, the transnational dimension critical to understanding the focus group of this study – young Somali males – coupled with their active participation in the mainstream UK society further complicate and challenge the notion of citizenship. Hence, how, when and at what level – economic, social and/or political, both in host in and home countries – these rights and responsibilities are exercised become crucial. Given the make-up of the Somali diasporas, and their young people more specifically, the thesis pays further attention to the transnational levels of active participation and citizenship.

Citizenship is commonly understood within a nation state and usually defined by membership, belonging to nationhood and civic participation, as it has already been suggested. However, more current critical voices have argued against such narrow state

centric definition of citizenship (Yuval-Davis, 2011b). Yuval-Davis introduced a more extended definitions of citizenship that embraces the broader dynamics and dimensions of citizenship participation (ibid). For Yuval-Davis citizenship should be viewed as “membership in all political community” (2011b, p. 20). In other words a citizen’s membership cuts across various communities’ sections that goes beyond the belonging of a state (ibid). Additionally, for this thesis the notion of transnational citizenship is hugely relevant and has great significance for young Somali men in London. In general, notions of citizenship can be divided into four theoretical approaches including liberal (focused on individual rights i.e. the right to property ownership etc.), communitarian (a model that is primarily associated with Charles Taylor (Abbey and Taylor, 1996) is centered on mutual responsibilities and shared belonging; a community to which the political subject is loyal and committed to. Thus, the emphasis in on the common good rather than the individual rights and responsibilities), republican (pioneering work credited with Hannah Arendt²¹ (d’ Entreves, 2008) concentrates on civic rights and active citizenship) and global, transnational or *expansion* (as an extension of communitarian citizenship and is, therefore, concerned with the advocacy of common global humanitarian action such as poverty, injustice etc. The notion of dual citizenship plays an important role here (Fryer, 2010; see Phillips, 2010).

In the British context, citizenship in its contemporary form draws heavily on T.H. Marshall’s description of democratic citizenship (Bellamy, 2008; Kivisto and Faist, 2007a). Kivisto and Faist suggest that Marshall’s contribution in the 1950s concentrated on three important fronts including civil, political and most importantly social citizenship (ibid see also Marshall, 2006) which fits well with the liberal conception of citizenship (although Marshall’s contributions have potentially wider implications too). The authors point out that social citizenship focused on the rights of citizens to obtain (social) welfare while addressing the effects of capitalism. Marshall’s concept of (social) citizenship in essence rests with the idea that the development of citizenship has been critical to address the (economic) disparities and inequalities of the capitalist system. As Marshall argues ‘by the social element I meant the

²¹ Arendt's political thought cannot, in this sense, be identified either with the liberal tradition or with the claims advanced by a number of its critics. Arendt did not conceive of politics as a means for the satisfaction of individual preferences, nor as a way to integrate individuals around a shared conception of the good. Her conception of politics is based instead on the idea of active citizenship, that is, on the value and importance of civic engagement and collective deliberation about all matters affecting the political community.

whole range, from the right to a modicum social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the lives prevailing in the society' (Marshall, 2006, p. 30). Accordingly, Marshall suggests that these are rooted in the institutions of social services and education (ibid). According to Fry, Marshall's theory can be summed up in three areas, 'civil, political and social' (2010, p. 27), which this thesis makes some reference to albeit in a more extended fashion and in conjunction with cotemporary active citizenship approaches (see for example Isin and Nielsen, 2008; Yuval-Davis, 2007, 2006).

Despite Marshall's great influence and attempt to articulate critical concepts that dealt with social inequalities his approach was heavily criticized by feminist theorists who attacked his ideas on two critical fronts: the separation of private and public/political spaces, whereby the first is viewed as a space where inequality is deemed necessary and the procreation of the *polis* is safeguarded, in this case women are equated with the 'nature' of procreation and, hence, confined in the household with no citizenship rights – as these were considered informal arenas removed from citizenship practice (Leydet, 2011). Secondly, as a result, by implication, women are believed to have become the sole 'property' of males (ibid). Therefore, it is noteworthy that feminist critique has been particularly aimed at the devaluation of informal citizenship activities. As argued by various authorities (see Hobson and Lister, 2002; Bubeck, 1995) the recognition of informal community practices such as care (and associated qualities, values, skills etc) have extended our understanding of citizenship practice including political participation. This has further helped to redefine and challenge notions of formal citizenship practice as a consequence of increased feminists' participation in formal political arenas (ibid). Hobson and Lister (2002) cite the Scottish Parliament and Nordic feminists political representations (44 percent) in formal politics as good examples of institutional reform mainly as a result of recognizing the values and importance of informal community practices.

It is clear that, as a subject matter, citizenship is ridden with confusion and embodies problems with grounding, which appear to expand by the day as more and more theorists attempt to make sense of it, then (Beiner 1995). Hence, citizenship as a concept is contested and there is lack of clarity on a definition (Institute for Citizenship, 2010). The Institute for Citizenship (2010) suggests that citizenship in general, and despite its broad character, draws

on two main themes: 1) 'Nationality' which indicates one's place of birth and the environment in which one is raised as well as the type of passport one holds and where one can engage in labour legally; and 2) 'Active Citizenship' concerned with one's position as an active member of a community(ties) with a certain level of awareness and comprehension of rights and duties. Leydet (2011) suggests that citizenship can be divided into three main areas: citizenship as a legal status usually including civil, political and social dimensions. The individual is considered a legal citizen here who is protected by and abides the law. Secondly, here comes the active and participative character of the citizen, alive in the political sense. Thirdly, citizens are required to gain political membership, which offers a distinct identity. Confusion arises when the dimensions of the three main areas are considered, particularly when critical differences of groups are undermined. For example the allocation of rights could be altered when and if a group's identity is incompatible with that of a political community (Carens, 2000; quoted in Leydet, 2011). It is suggested that the main disagreements with regards to citizenship conceptions are centered around four main areas: "over the precise definition of each element (legal, political and identity); over their relative importance; over the causal and/or conceptual relations between them; over appropriate normative standards" (Leydet, 2011, p. 3).

Active citizenship

It is worth clarifying that, akin to citizenship, active citizenship can also take various different forms and perspectives. For example liberalism where formal individual rights are addressed such as voting, obeying the law and the right to a passport or a property (Schuck 2002). In contrast, active citizenship can also take the form of civic republican that considers notions of citizenship as evolving and claiming rights while actively engaging in formal/informal politics (Isin and Turner, 2007). However, a liberal take on citizenship tends to present some difficulties to young people unable to vote or own properties (Schuck, 2002).

Given the broad yet contested character of citizenship and for purpose and direction of this thesis, I shall confine myself to stress some of the appropriate themes and the apparent challenges they carry from various theoretical perspectives. Following from this I want to consider the relevance of active citizenship as a legal framework for young Somalis in Britain highlighting issues in relation to belonging and loyalty (Banting et al., 2007; Kivisto and

Faist, 2007a). Further, the cultural underpinning of citizenship is discussed, focusing on the significance of individual and collective acts of engagement (Siu, 2001). Notions of active and passive citizens are addressed and their possible implications for citizenship rights and responsibilities in the UK from a nation state perspective. Furthermore, in this expansive approach the intersectionality (Yuval-Davis, 2011b, 2007) of active citizenship as well as Isin's (2008) 'acts of citizenship' will be considered among other relevant themes and frameworks.

Summary

This chapter focused on various theoretical frameworks, used to explain forced migration, diaspora, transnationalism, citizenship, generational acculturation and masculinity, which I use as analytical lenses to inform this study. The enquiry aims at improving knowledge and understanding of the sense of belonging of young Somali men in London. I must stress that the forced migration framework serves to highlight the impact of historical experiences of Somali migration hitherto, and how these have impacted on the current status of the Somali diasporas in the UK in general and young Somalis in particular. It will certainly not be used to ground this thesis. For example, this thesis will not draw on issues usually taken up by forced migration studies such as mass migration or displacement. Rather, it focuses on the impact of forced migration on diaspora communities. Thus, critical concepts in the diaspora, transnationalism, citizenship, generational acculturation and masculinity frameworks will figure as theoretical lenses throughout this thesis. The social spaces that young Somalis operate within are often contested and confused, as young Somalis are surrounded by a society that to some extent appears unwelcoming, as illustrated by some of the critical views of their faith and customs that have been already referred to. The mainstream secular Western society that young black Muslim Somalis live in often obliges them to continuously reconsider and renegotiate their sense of self and belonging to their position and (social) spaces: taking account of social, political, religious, and economic aspects. The main objective of this thesis is to give meaningful interpretation to the lived experiences of young British Somalis in London, which are partly produced due to engagements that are transnational in context, linked by the overarching theme of belonging.

In particular the following concepts will be used as lenses to shed light on the diasporic experiences of young Somali males in London: 1) *Suspect citizens and marginalization*, 2) *Shared recollection or lack of memory*, and 3) *Contested notions of nationhood and diaspora consciousness*.

While aiming to gather a clear picture of meaningful diasporic experiences of young Somali men in London, this thesis inquires further into their transnational influences and engagements that cross several nation states. The relationship between diaspora and homeland is addressed through transnational engagements, which at the same time alter the behaviour and participation of young Somalis in the diaspora. There seems to be little agreement about the evidence on the extent of transnational engagements of young (Somali) people. While some authorities point out the insignificance and declining transnational engagement of young people, others argue that there is substantial evidence indicating their strong influences on the transnational social fields. To clarify these views this study refers to Levitt and Glick-Schiller's (2004) notions of 'ways of being' and 'ways of belonging'. Whether the transnational engagements of young Somalis are inconsequential or strong will be addressed in the conclusion.

Chapter 2 Patterns of Somali migration to the UK: diasporic experiences and processes of settlement

Introduction

In the previous chapter key theoretical concepts underpinning this thesis were discussed. This chapter aims to provide a relevant context in which the history of Somali migration to the UK can be better understood and a framework for the critical matters of inquiry in which this research is grounded. To begin with the history of Somali migration is discussed as well as more recent movements to the UK, which are divided into five distinct phases. In doing so relevant migration routes and accounts are covered stressing their diverse characteristics and complexities. Particularly, the chapter focuses on the critical aspects that contributed to their decision to move to UK. Further, the general migration experiences of the Somali diasporas in the UK are explored in order to highlight their accounts in settling and adapting in the host-land as well as engagements with the country of origin. Thus, these experiences and narratives are linked to the relevant thesis themes and topics including intergenerational matters, active citizenship, transnational engagements and representation.

Somali migration

In this section both historical and contemporary Somali migrations are discussed to make sense of Somali migratory behaviour. For the purpose of the study emphasis is put on Somali migration to the UK. This section seeks to answer the following questions: how do we account for the processes of Somali migration and make sense of their – Somali people – diverse characteristics and complex experiences? Against this background Somali migration to the UK can be divided into five distinct phases (Nielsen, 2004; Griffiths, 2002), which highlight the historical connections between Britain and Somali people since the colonial period. Phase one looks at early Somali migration that was underpinned by colonisation in the nineteenth century, phase two was marked by reemployment from Merchant Navy to industry, phase three by family reunification. Phases two and three are combined as they almost occurred simultaneously. The Civil War resulted in phase four and phase five is a product of the so-called ‘onward migration’ movements of, particularly EU nationals of Somali origin (Nielsen 2004). A point worth noting is the parallel occurrences of migration

movements. While onward migration takes place in for example Europe, the Civil War, famine, poverty – particularly in South-Central Somalia – and other related challenges continue to uproot Somali people from their territories producing more waves of forced migration in the region – of Horn of Africa – and further afield. Following on from this, I focus on how these phases are produced and influence the Somali diasporas' experiences in the UK.

Early Somali migration – from colonisation to independence

Early Somali migration was characterised by the vast but intense labour opportunities in the British Empire. In this regard there are some significant events that deserve close scrutiny, which will be discussed as part of this early stage. Somalis have a long tradition of migrating to the United Kingdom (see Harris, 2004). Records show that Britain's first encounter with Somalis dates back to the early 1800s (Port Cities 2009). A trade treaty was signed between Britain and the port city of Berbera, Somaliland²², in 1827 (Internet Archive). According to Drysdale (2000) the Imperial British East African Company was the first European organisation to be formed in what is today Kenya, with a mandate to advance the British sphere of influence in this area of East Africa. The British Protectorate's tasks was to secure fresh Somali mutton for her occupying force in Aden and gaining control over the region before others did, which indicated the apparent strategic values this particular region offered and, hence, the British interest (ibid, Lewis 1980). Prior to the First World War, many Somalis came to the UK to work as seamen during the British Empire (Griffiths, 2002). During the war many were recruited to fight who then settled in the port cities (BBC, 2004). Consequently the first Somali diaspora in the UK emerged which makes them one of the oldest African communities in the UK (ibid). This initial migration was characterised as young-male-migration predominantly from the British protectorate of Somaliland who were automatically entitled to British citizenship (Bloch and Atfield, 2002).

Western interest intensified after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 (Kleist, 2004) while demands of both mail and passengers services increased. Hence, a shift took place from sail

²² People in the Somalilands during the colonial period (as far back as 1827) were engaged in treaty relations with British Empire. For example various separate peace treaties were signed with the British For further reading see the 'Internet Archive' that offers more general information on collection and treaties during the British Empire.

to steam shipping, which required immense manpower. Britons were less keen on the job, which involved nearly unbearable weather conditions, hard labour and dirty stoke-holes (PortCities, 2013). This offered new opportunities as demand for Somali seamen increased as they were identified as one of the few ethnic groups that could resist the heat of the Red Sea and do the hard labour (PortCities, 2013; Farah, 2000). Moreover, the Somali seamen offered an economic advantage since they were cheaper than the Britons, and were hired on *coolie wages*, which were 25% cheaper than that paid to the Britons (Farah 2000). Consequently, a further intensification of Somali migration to the UK occurred adding to the relatively new but small community that began to settle across the ports of Britain.

Britain's connection with Somalis and the evolution and formation of Somali diasporas in the UK are closely linked to the colonial period and the British presence in East Africa. Boundary drawing in African territories was a major event with many effects. Despite the great significance in these events it still remains a rather neglected area of research (D. J. Griffiths 2002). Drawing on the work of Acemoglu et al. (2008) and Nunn (2008) Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2011, p. 1) suggest that:

the predominant explanations on the deep roots of contemporary African underdevelopment are centered around the influence of Europeans during the colonial period but also in the centuries before colonisation when close to 20 million slaves were exported from Africa. Yet in the period between the ending of the slave trades and the commencement of the colonial period, another major event took place in the European capitals that according to the African historiography had malicious long-lasting consequences.

During the Berlin-Congo-Conference in Berlin, Germany in 1884-85, Africa as whole (with the exception of Ethiopia, being a majority Christian country not in need of civilization; and Liberia, a place where freed slaves from America returned to (Heleta, 2004)) was divided between seven European countries (Kleist 2004) and the process known as the 'scramble for Africa' emerged. As argued by Michalopoulos and Papaioannou:

In this brief period, Europeans partitioned Africa into spheres of influence, protectorates, colonies, and free-trade-areas. The borders designed in European capitals at a time when Europeans had barely settled in Africa and had little knowledge of the geography and ethnic composition of the areas whose

borders were designing. These borders endured after the African independence in the 1960's leading to the partitioning of numerous ethnic groups across the newly created African states (2011, p.1).

The spatial distribution was affected by the imperial system that would divide the Somali-speaking region into five different states with different political structures, law and policies and currencies. The five territories are known as Northern Frontier District, Italian Somaliland, British Somaliland, Ethiopian Somaliland (Ogaden) and French Somaliland (Djibouti). Nevertheless, this did not affect the Somali pastoral nomadic way of life that continued its free flow and trade activities crossing colonial international borders within the Somali territories. To prevent tribes mixing and/or avoid potential conflict while safeguarding itself the British Empire attempted to restrict movements of mobile Somalis, which was a great challenge (Kleist 2004). All territories were initially under the same imperial basic rules (Bryden and Steiner, 1998). Traditional/clan chiefs, known as *Aqils*, were appointed to fulfill political and administrative tasks. Chiefs were required to hold fast to the rules of central authority. Moreover, there was unequal access to advantages of imperial rule, such as the allocation of food, whereby some clans were preferred over others and the emergence of small but fairly privileged educated urban elites that were well provided for (ibid). They benefited from education in Italy, Britain, Soviet Union, Cuba etc but were also offered jobs as seamen in both the British and Italian Navies (Griffiths 2002). It is further argued that migration in this initial period was mixed in nature. While some joined their family members in the Somali regions others went back and forth as sailors or traders and later joined relatively small but established communities in the UK who settled in places such as Tower Hamlets, Cardiff, Hull and Liverpool (ibid). They were among the first Somalis to migrate to Britain. This labour migration period was further characterised by the aspiration of return. Many young migrant Somalis had a work-hard-and-return attitude and saw their settlement in the UK as temporary.

In essence, this early migration phase offered labour and education opportunities, particularly, for young men from the British protectorate of Somaliland. It also created settlements across the ports of Britain forming important reference points for subsequent Somali migration waves and new arrivals to the UK. This – phase – is further important as it highlights the longstanding connections between Britain and Somalis. However, this should

be understood within the larger colonial interest of the British Empire. In order to protect British interests and increase its influence in the region apparent draconian measures were put in place such as the installations of boundaries in the Somali territories – seemingly with very little understanding of local customs and traditions. Moreover, Imperialism was, in part, sustained by the use of the divide-and-rule-strategy whereby some Somalis were privileged over others. As argued by Donkor:

When they encouraged Africans to engage in primary production, they stifled industrial development. And when they imposed their modes of governance on African systems, they created political systems that Africans have not completely absorbed. From this perspective, it is clear that European colonisation of Africa set the stage for Africa's global marginality and the reason many Africans have turned to migration as an alternative to living difficult lives in the countries of their birth (2005, p. 42).

I argue that it is vital to acknowledge that present sociopolitical and economic challenges and instabilities in the Somali regions, which have largely caused the mass migration of Somalis across the globe are to a great extent linked to colonisation, without undermining the impact of famine, natural disasters and sociopolitical reforms.

Industrial employment and family reunification

Phases two and three of Somali migration were characterised by industrial employment and family reunification respectively, which further expanded the Somali diasporas in the UK. This is due in part to changes in immigration policies in the 60s and the run down of the Merchant Navy, which meant that Somali seamen could no longer migrate to the UK (PortCities 2013; Griffiths, 2002). However, the rise of the steel industry in Britain also offered new opportunities and changed the migration dynamics. As a result of the labour shortage in the steel industry in the late 60s the Somali community in Britain expanded in the Midlands and Greater Manchester (Griffiths 2002). Communities, which were previously characterised by males, were now extended and expanded by wives and children (Harris, 2004; Griffiths, 2002). Soon the need arose to establish community-based organisations, which were mainly taken up by Somali women (Harris 2004). Those who followed later joined relatively small but well-established Somali communities across Britain. Robinson (2004) stresses that historical connections with Britain play an essential part as to why people come to the UK. He highlights the key factors why they – if given a choice by their channeling agents – opt for the UK rather than other destinations (ibid). He further points out

that historical ties and being part of the British Empire form the basis for the main reasons why people want to come to the UK (ibid). Existing (family) networks, familiarity with the English language, culture, literature etc. play all a part in the decision-making (Ibid; see also Nielsen, 2004). Phase three occurred in part to fill up the labor shortage in the Merchant Navy.

Phase four: Civil War and state collapse

Phase four is significant in the sense that it has produced the largest Somali outward migration in a given period beyond the Somali territories in East Africa following the fall of the Somali state. Consequently, Western Europe and Britain in particular received a large number of Somali refugees after Barre was ousted out. Because of its enormous impact on Somali migration this phase and the events that led to it deserve a closer look. The collapse of the Somali state in 1991 created a power vacuum in which armed clan militias emerged, battling one another to fill the void (Quaranto, 2008). As a result a process of inter-clan ‘cleansing’ went in full swing dividing the capital city into two, each run by a warlord – Ali Mahdi and Mohamed Farah Aidid (Bradbury, 2008). Concurrently and as a result of the conflict and violence, the region was hit by famine and the call for humanitarian assistance became urgent. International efforts developed gradually to aid around 1.5 million Somalis from looming starvation but, as it appeared, not without difficulties (Sahnoun, 1994). Meanwhile, minority communities became a target as resources increasingly became scarce (Besteman and Cassanelli, 1996). Particularly, the agricultural communities in Brava and Marca were said to be heavily assaulted (ibid).

At this point the international community under the banner of the UN intervened but rather misjudged the volatility of situation apparently contributing to the challenges by causing more chaos on the ground and further displacement of Somali refugees. Responding to a relapsing situation the ‘United Nations Operation in Somalia I’ (UNOSOM I) was formed in March 1992, with the US controlled ‘Unified Task Force’ (UNITAF)²³ (Bradbury, 2008). UNITAF consisted of 30 000 troops from around twenty countries across the world (UNOSOM I, 1997). Its main aim was to assist the effective distribution of humanitarian aid

²³ Also know as Operation Restore Hope

to those most in need (Sahnoun, 1994). The mission was sold as a humanitarian intervention that initially seemed fruitful as, in the midst of a civil war in progress, many were said to be aided and a ceasefire was achieved between the key fourteen-'clan' factions in the capital, Mogadishu (Sahnoun 1994). But soon UNOSOM learned how volatile the situation was after twenty four Pakistani troops were killed while checking an arms depot owned by Farah Aidid, a powerful warlord (ibid, Bradbury 2008) who accused the UN of supplying weapons to his enemies and hindering potential peace talks.

Mr. Sahnoun, Somalia special representative to United Nations at the time, reports that armed militia began to harass the relief efforts, which affected the flow and distribution of feed assistance (Sahnoun, 1994). Hence, UNITAF's mission expanded to counter the militias. The UN Security Council recommended a 'transition from UNITAF to UNOSOM II to complete, through disarmament and reconciliation, the task begun by UNITAF for the restoration of peace, stability, law and order' (UNOSOM I, 1997). A warrant was issued to arrest Aided, which apparently escalated matters (Sahnoun, 1994). The situation rapidly deteriorated as public trust in UNOSOM was apparently lost soon after its operation caused massive civilian casualties in search for Aided, the faction leader who in turn retaliated also causing numerous civilian casualties and deaths of 18 soldiers (Bradbury 2008, Sahnoun 1994). Apparently, UNOSOM had underestimated the state of affairs and whom it was dealing with: a mixed collection of 'clan-based'²⁴ factions and 'sub-clan' alliances, based on cultural rather than political or state-based loyalty. It was estimated that around 300 000 people died, including children with a further two million people displaced (UNOSOM I, 1997). An estimated 200 000 became refugees in neighbouring Kenya while another 800 000 escaped to Ethiopia (USCR 2002). As a result of bad press and growing (American) public concern the US decided to withdraw quickly.

The intention of this apparent failed humanitarian intervention is one that raised many questions at the time. Grigg quotes an article in the *Village Voice*, analysing photographs

²⁴ Clan, clan allegiance or tribalism played an important role (and remain to do so) during time of anarchy and despair. It remains a powerful tool for mobilisation. However, one ought to be cautious not to warrant all challenges and in-fighting to clans to avoid the risk of oversimplification. Broader power struggles and dynamics (i.e. geographical, political, social, economical etc.) should not be overlooked as they hold more important clues to the longstanding Somali predicament.

depicting two Belgians of 'the new world order' playfully holding a Somali child over an open flame. Other series of photographs depict UN soldiers kicking and stabbing a Somali, and another soldier apparently urinating on the Somali's dead body; yet another shows a Somali child being forced to drink salt water, vomit, and eat worms (Girgg, 1997). Moreover, further doubts were raised by Kretzman who argued:

Just before pro-U.S. President Mohamed Siad Barre was overthrown in 1991, nearly two-thirds of the country's territory had been granted as oil concessions to Conoco, Amoco, Chevron, and Phillips. Conoco even lent its Mogadishu corporate compound to the U.S. embassy a few days before the Marines landed, with the first Bush administration's special envoy using it as his temporary headquarters (1997).

Such pictures and treatment often create great animosity and mistrust among Somali people. These events might be taking place in the Somalia but their effects are very much felt in the Somali diasporas. I argue that mistreatment and disrespect of any kind contribute to various forms of isolation whether here (in the UK) or there (in the Somali regions). Representation of young Somali people is an important theme running through the thesis. Young informants mentioned various instances and examples of ill-representation and, as a result, feeling of disrespect. Distrust seemed to persist following the interventions in the early 1990s and more so as a result of current events i.e. the so-called-war on terror, Prevent and (UK) foreign policy. These raise important questions: what are the specific events that lead to such distrust? How are young Somali people dealing with these as British citizens? And, if any, how is the UK government is responding to these areas of concern? I discuss these matters in the analysis chapters (Chapter Four onwards).

Onward movement to the UK

The onward movement phenomena recently received some attention in policy circles and academia (van Liempt, 2011; Lindley and Van Hear, 2007; Nielsen, 2004). This form of migration includes Somalis from other EU countries who hold refugee status or citizenship from their respective EU countries. Hence, it needs to be noted that these people are not seeking asylum but are freely and legally moving within the EU and, as such drawing on their right to move and settle wherever they wish. There is further evidence of Canadian Somalis who migrate to the UK (see Lindley and Van Hear, 2007, Kleist, 2004). For the purpose of

the thesis attention will be given to the Netherlands and Denmark – two countries where there is a relatively significant onward movement – to the UK. Here below I explore the main reasons as result of these movements.

For over a decade the Netherlands has enjoyed a relatively increasing number of Somalis mainly fleeing the conflict. However, that steady increase has recently been disrupted and in more recent years there has been a progressive decline²⁵. With 21,733 people, Somalis were the fourth largest refugee groups that resided in the Netherlands: after Iraqis (43,708), Afghans (37,021), and Iranians (28.691) (CBS Statline, 2005). Most refugee groups increase in numbers due to the unstable situation in the countries of origin, family reunification and network migration. This is evident with Iraqis, Afghans and Iranians. An interesting point worth mentioning is the substantial decrease of Somalis in The Netherlands since 2001, as the following CBS²⁶ (Central Bureau for Statistics) table shows.

Table 2.1 Somalis in The Netherlands between 1996 and 2007

1996	23 864
1999	27 421
2001	29 631
2003	27 567
2005	21 733
2006	20 000
2007	19 549

Table 2.1: Source: CBS

However, academic studies estimate 20,000 Dutch Somalis have left the Netherlands for Britain in the past few years (van den Reek and Hussein, 2003). Van Reek's (2001) research concludes that Somalis migrated from the Netherlands to the United Kingdom in a strong degree due to limiting socio-economic conditions. Another report titled 'European Conference on Integration and Migration *'The Somali Community in Focus'*' highlights the

²⁵See CBS results in table 2.1

²⁶Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek: Central Bureau for Statistics (CBS)

driving push-pull factors behind this onward movement. Conference participants talked about apparent lack of equal opportunities in relation to employment and education. It states that entrepreneurship and self-initiative through i.e. community organisation – or otherwise – is less encouraged as the “Dutch economy is very focused on services, where the Dutch language and education are vital for those who want to succeed” while pointing out that successful integration remains a two way process (Hassan et al., 2004, p. 53). Other commentators emphasise the importance of social spaces (Lindley and Van Hear 2007, Nielsen, 2004). Onward migration occurs also in other African groups, for example: Nigerians, Ghanaians and Egyptians, but with these groups net migration rate remained positive in the Netherlands (Bijl et al., 2005) as more people entered the country rather than leaving it.

Danish Somalis show similar trends. A Danish paper, questioning Danish citizenship, states, ‘one third of all second generation immigrants are still citizens of another country even though they were born in Denmark and have lived here all their life’ (Berlingske Tidende, 2005)²⁷. In an interview Sükru Ertosun, who heads the Council for Ethnic Minorities, stresses ‘it’s become far more difficult to achieve Danish citizenship but at the same time many immigrants don’t feel welcome here so they have no wish to become citizens’ (Ibid). It is reported that around 1 000 well-educated Somalis have left the Aarhus region for the UK (Lindley and Van Hear cf. Grønvald, 2005). Other sources state an exodus of Somalis, with as many as 4,000 (Evans-Prichard, 2004) ‘leaving for Britain from Aarhus over two years’ because of poor integration, unemployment and the ever-present heated debate about refugees and asylum seekers.

Nielsen (2004), further, captures the experiences of Danish Somalis. Considering their social and economic prospects grim. Danish Somalis make use of their transnational networks in the UK to obtain informed options regarding opportunities. However, it appears refugees and asylum seekers are viewed as passive characters while their agency is undermined in dealing with critical situations and accessing informed options. While Nielsen rightly argues that nomadism does not explain the onward movement phenomena she argues that movement in

²⁷ Having initially found this article on the Berlinkse website I could not trace it after revisiting the site around two years later.

general is, however, “a natural part of life” (2004, p. 2). This resonates with Horst’s notion of ‘transnational nomads’ (2006), which assesses the economic and social costs of movement in a given period drawing on the nomadic pastoral character of traditional pastoral Somalis who defy borders in the search for green pastures for their livestock. While Horst’ assertions have been generally helpful in understanding Somali migration through the prisms of Somali customs such assumptions could be tricky for two reasons. Firstly, it has the tendency to essentialise a diverse community with different experiences and generations. Secondly, while migration root causes are often well articulated such assumptions could overshadow them. It needs to be noted that mobility is important to Somalis but does not work in isolation. The context of social change – including political and economical factors and the need for security that are imbedded in gender, generations, clan, status and extended migration trajectories – matters a great deal (Lindley and Van Hear, 2007). With that in mind ‘Somali mobility’ could be seen as means to an end but not the end itself.

Longstanding connections between Somalis and Britain are identified in the – five – phases discussed in this chapter. Due to these historical connections a general assumption has surfaced suggesting that British Somalis are relatively better-established communities in comparison to other Somali diasporas. Hence, UK is generally viewed as a familiar place where one can easily live and integrate. Furthermore, the size of the Somali diaspora in the UK, which is considered to be the largest in the West, offers economic, cultural and religious benefits (Lindley and Van Hear 2007; Harris 2004). Extending this further, UK Somali diasporas contribute the most – in comparison to other Somali diasporas – to the Somali territories and have more productive transnational connections (Hassan and Chalmers, 2008). The following sections assess the UK based Somali diasporas and their connections and engagements with the Somali regions.

UK Somali diasporas and transnational engagements

The United Nations estimated over one million Somalis (out of a population of an estimated five to seven million) (Zane, 2011) were refugees, scattered in refugee camps in Kenya and Ethiopia, but also in Western Europe (United Kingdom, Holland, Italy, Norway and Sweden), the United States and Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (McGown, 1999). This makes Somalis one of the most scattered people across the world making them a ‘truly globalised

nation’ (Menkhaus, 2008). The Migration Policy Institute’s online sources show more updated data in relation to the migration flow of Somalis. In Europe, the distribution of Somalis by country is outlined in table 2:

Country	Number of Somalis
UK	180,000
The Netherlands	21,733 (2005)
Norway	16,765 (2005)
Denmark	15,294 (2004)

Table 2.2 distribution of Somalis by country. *Source: Migration Policy Institute*

Following the assessment of recent Somali migration to the UK I argue that war and conflict, which have affected the Somali regions for many years, have been the main causes (Gundel, 2002). The Change Institute (2009, p. 25) reports that “between 1985 and the end of 2006, Somalia was consistently one of the top ten asylum applicant producing countries in the UK”. It shows “growth in asylum applications by Somalis to the UK rising from 305 in 1988 to a peak of 7,495 in 1999 and then dropping to 1,845 in 2006” (ibid).

More recently there have been some serious cases of drought and famine across the Somali regions resulting in infections, diseases and some levels of starvation leading many to flee their habitual areas. In general the crisis in the Somali regions, such as insurgency, terrorism and warlordism, has also contributed to the deaths of around one million people²⁸. This has further created the exodus of hundreds of thousand of Somalis escaping the atrocities to neighboring countries and further afield, UK included (Raleigh and Jordan, 2010; Sheikh and Healy, 2009; Leighton, 2006). Even in the less volatile Somaliland there is evidence that ‘many young Somalilanders leave the region for jobs in Europe’ (Onylego, 2010). This indicates the steady migration to the UK over two centuries, which keeps reforming (the characteristics of) the Somali diasporas.

²⁸ BBC World Service report: Somalia, Million Dead And Millions Displaced, gives a clear picture of this.

Due to this continual process of Somali migration to the UK accompanied by the onward movements of other European Somalis to Britain there is generally uncertainty about the actual size of the community. Consequently, due to lack of adequate and reliable data an assumption is created that there is very little known about this community leaving Somalis to call themselves the ‘invisible community’ despite its longstanding presence (Harris, 2004; ICAR, 2004). More serious effects stemming from the notion of invisibility include the exclusion of Somalis from relevant local and national debates, which affects their daily lives and increases their marginality in the UK (Harris, 2004). ICAR suggests that the inadequate data, which is often conflicting, contributes to the confusion about the size of the Somalis in the UK. For example the 2001 census estimates 44, 000 Somali-born residence in the UK and 34, 000 in London while other sources indicate a UK Somali population between 250, 000 and 95, 000 and 70, 000 in London (BBC and ICAR surveys quoted in IOM 2006). More recent sources indicate a higher estimate. *The Times Newspaper* (Hamilton and O’Neill, 2009a) estimates the London Somali population at 160, 000 while others put their estimates at around 200, 000²⁹.

Why is there so much uncertainty about the data and why is important to get this right? Because the sources from which different studies draw on differ that leads to some of the misunderstanding about sizes (Harris, 2004; ICAR, 2004). The term ‘Somali’ is not very well defined which undermines any meaningful assessment. Drawing on the 2001 census ICAR stresses that only Somali-born residents are recorded and other people who were born in the UK but who may still define themselves as Somali are not included – e.g. second or third generation immigrants. Also “the census only offers general categories such as ‘Black African’ or ‘Other’ when recording data on ethnicity” (ICAR, 2004, p.2). Further, another point worth mentioning is that the 2001 census did not include the number of asylum seekers of Somali origin while further anecdotal evidence indicates a low number of Somali-born respondents in the questionnaire (ibid).

²⁹ Conversations with a senior Met officer

Complex formations segments and identities

The migration phases discussed in the previous part not only inform us of numbers but highlight their root causes, namely the devastating cycles of social, political and economic, struggles as well as the effects of natural disasters such as drought and famine, which had profound consequences for migration and subsequent formation of the Somali 'diaspora'. The notion of Somali diaspora is, however, contested. The general assumption is that there is only one Somali diaspora (Griffiths et al., 2005) but the reality on the ground tells us different. Hence, it is more accurate to speak of two, at least, Somali diasporas when addressing UK Somalis. Having articulated the migration trajectories and their specific motives we can identify two main global Somali diasporas: that of Somaliland and that of Somalia which hold two separate and distinct identities. A third emerging Somali diaspora group with specific regional focus is that of Puntland State of Somalia. A further diversification of Somali diasporas appears imminent giving the rise to local autonomies in the Somali regions. Jubaland is a relevant case in hand.

These forms of identities and geographical segmentations developed – and in part were strongly reinforced – after the collapse of the Somali Democratic Republic. These are arguably rooted in the collapse of the Somali Republic and the subsequent declaration for an independent Somaliland state in 1991. The quest for independence has become a globally unifying mission for all Somalilanders wherever they reside, while simultaneously rejecting the unity and the notion of Greater Somalia. Siad Barre's era seem still fresh in many people's minds, which has left apparent devastating impact. Somalilanders tend to distinguish themselves through their flag and geographical existence. Thus, the Somaliland identity has become more feasible and significant. Having said that, this diversity receives less public support in academia and official policy circles largely due to the unrecognised status of Somaliland, which is officially considered as part of what is formerly known as the Somali Democratic Republic. Hence, often an all-inclusive approach is assumed, which homogenizes the Somalis. This is probably viewed as a safer option as one perhaps wants to avoid contributing to the current 'Somali division'. A further strongly emerging Somali diaspora is that of Puntland. Unlike Somaliland, which seeks international recognition, Puntland considers itself an autonomous region that is part and parcel of the Somali Republic. Puntland State of Somalia has assumed its autonomous status 1998 in an attempt to circumvent the

continuous problems in South-Central Somalia. These political developments have significant influences in the Somali diasporas. These are briefly highlighted below.

Unraveling these emerging social constructions highlight the complexity and fluidity of Somali diasporas and challenges the notion that they (Somalis) are homogeneous. It also shows and articulates the wider consequences for current transnational engagements, which are discussed further in this chapter. In particular their specific orientations will be addressed.

Geographical orientation

There are clear distinctions and orientations between the Somali diasporas in the UK. For example although actual sizes are often difficult to find, as noted above the Somaliland diaspora is to be found across the UK with predominant and feasible presences in the docks of Britain and surrounding areas including Cardiff, Tower Hamlets, Liverpool, Hull, Sheffield etc. The later arrivals, which is mixed group with a slightly higher proportion of Somalis from South-Central Somalia, are to be found in places such Ealing, Camden, Birmingham, Brent, Haringey, Enfield etc.

Charities, socio-political and media networks

In my own research (see Hassan & Chalmers 2008) I found evidence of various Somali diaspora networks with specific orientations and associations with Somaliland and Somalia. Our research shows that the majority of the 42 charity organisations that we have interviewed had a clear geographical focus. These organisations run small to medium size projects in Somaliland and Somalia and often support people from their region or town. Many respondents spoke of the relevance of ‘emotional connections’ (Brubaker, 2005) as one of the main reasons to stay in touch with their people.

There are various social networks that can be attributed to the Somali diasporas in the UK. For example, the Somaliland government has a representative in the UK, which deals with government affairs. There is also an office in Cardiff, which represents the Somaliland Chamber of Commerce that aims to promote and provide assistance in developing business opportunities between the UK and Somaliland. Moreover the chamber primarily deals with

email enquires ranging from people interested in the shipment of goods from or to the UK, how to obtain visas and also about general regulations (Hassan and Chalmers, 2008).

To promote their activities and enhance their distinctiveness these networks use various media sources, which they are often associated with. There are several media outlets with specific focus and regional affiliations. For example Somalia National Television, Universal Television, Somali Channel and Royal Television, Kalsan TV, are all owned by people from Somalia and Puntland and have as their primary target Somalia and Puntland and its diaspora. In contrast, Horn Cable Television and Somaliland National Television target the Somaliland audience in Somaliland and the wider diaspora. Star TV tries to appeal to all Somalis including the younger generation in the diaspora and across the all Somali regions. All these channels have representation in the UK with offices and studios in London. The content is also mainly regionally oriented for the majority of channels.

Political orientation

There are further a number of Somali pressure, lobby, interest and/or protest groups in the UK that seek to influence government policy or legislation in Somalia and Somaliland (Hassan and Chalmers, 2008) in an attempt to find answers to the increasing violence and the human rights violations throughout the Somali regions. These include Hawiye Action Group (HAG)³⁰, Somali Concern Group³¹ and Somaliland Freedom of Expression Fund³². These groups:

..main aim is to influence those who actually have the power to make decisions. They do not appear to be interested in power of political office for their members, but look for a way to influence the decisions made by those who are in power by collaborating with others and making use of their wider network in the UK (Hassan and Chalmers, 2008, p. 36).

There are further a number of Somaliland political parties present and active in the UK including UDUB³³, Kulmiye³⁴ and UCID³⁵, are all strongly represented in the UK as well

³⁰ <http://www.banadir.com/HAG1.html>

³¹ <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=50489887817>

³² <http://www.somalilandfreedom.org>

³³ <http://www.xisbigaudub.com/>

³⁴ www.kulmiye.com

others that have recently emerged Wadani³⁶ and Xaqsoor³⁷. Their presence in the UK and elsewhere had a profound impact in shaping the national and local politics of Somaliland. There are continuous engagements between diaspora members and political elites. With the aim for a greater transnational expansion of Somaliland identity and its contextualised nationality, Somaliland officials often organise trips to meet with their diaspora to encourage their engagements and maintain links. These often transpire through the use of symbolic actions transmitted through political rituals (Basch et al. 1994). This stresses the will to further build Somaliland as a nation through the concept of deterritorialised nation-state (ibid) with great emphasis on transnational connections. Hammond (2008, p. 4) termed the Somaliland diaspora as the “the Absent but Active constituency” and noted that:

In the run-up to the elections, Somalilanders both inside the de facto independent state and in the far-flung Diaspora are busy raising funds, solidifying political platforms, nominating candidates, and discussing issues that will influence their vote. Perhaps more than any other country, the Diaspora’s involvement in politics is crucial.

Somalilanders in diaspora are not able to participate in elections (ibid) due to registration barriers. However they cast symbolic votes and call to urge their families to get involved in the electoral process.

Young Somalis in London

In this section I discuss how young Somali people in Britain are generally contextualised, defined and represented. More specifically, there are three broad relevant areas I want to focus on including notions of diaspora youth, transnational engagements and activism.

Intergenerational clash and challenges in London

There are various intergenerational concepts and frameworks each with its own description and theoretical underpinning. For example Bidisha (2009) engages with *intergenerational mobility and intergenerational transmission*, which refers to the socio-economic status of parent’s income and the status of their children in their adulthood (ibid). There is an

³⁵ <http://www.ucidparty.com>

³⁶ <http://www.wadaniparty.org/>

³⁷ <http://www.xaqsoor.com/>

indication of a highly mobile economy “if a child’s income is determined primarily by his/her own endowments rather than by his/her parent’s earnings and social status” (2009, p. 1). Further, there are a number of challenges immigrants are more likely to face including parents’ inability ‘to transfer their education received in their home countries, might face discrimination, lack good networking, suffer from language difficulty in the labour market and this could transmit to the next generation as well’ (Ibid) and inhibit their upward mobility. The increasing inequality is best to be understood by a long-term analysis of immigrants’ intergenerational transmission of income. Existing literature bases its findings on the performance of recent immigrants in a specific time and space (ibid). Bisdisha argues that only two authors (2010, 2006) adopt a cross-generational analysis of immigrants’ performance. These authors concluded that the “2nd generation immigrants were more educated than 1st generation immigrants and their white peers. However in terms of employment both generations of immigrants were lagging behind the white natives” (2009, p.2).

A study among Somali families in Tower Hamlets refers to a concept of *intergenerational conflict* (Harding et al., 2007) exploring intergenerational matters among this community. The respondents in the study highlighted:

changes in family structure and dynamics, and potential loss of culture, family values, language and religion, as a result of enforced migration. Most described shifts in male/ female and parent/child relations, and reconstructions of ‘motherhood’ and ‘fatherhood’ in London. There was a strong focus on the circumstances of family breakdown and the issues facing single parent families headed by women. Along with talk of preserving and protecting Somali cultural values, there was a current of concern about young people’s emotional needs (2007, p.4).

Another research study commissioned by the London Borough of Camden refers to notions of *intergenerational tensions* (Paskell, 2007). This study identified serious challenges considered to be a threat to the Somali community posing a real risk to its internal structure (ibid). Concerned about their children, Somali parents in Camden indicated in various gatherings what pushes young people to be part of violent ‘gangs’ (ibid). The results from consecutive gatherings and discussions highlighted the fact that young people were

increasingly becoming distant from their parents and visa versa, hindering their general communication and challenging ‘older Somalis’ sense of control (ibid)

My own exploratory study³⁸ resonates with many of the issues raised but highlighted four main areas that the Somali community in Camden is concerned about:

Sense of exclusion: Somali people in Camden expressed strong views over being excluded from mainstream society (Heath et al., 2013). In general they felt that service providers do not adequately address their specific needs. Issues such as overcrowding, unemployment and crime – particularly among youth – were highlighted as major problem areas (Degni et al., 2006; see also Harris, 2004; Hassan et al., 2010).

Intergenerational clash: Given the extent of the challenges between Somali parents and their children, I introduce the notion of *intergenerational clash* to emphasise the problematic nature of the issue. During discussions at the London Somali Youth Forum (LSYF) and Somali Youth Development Resource Centre (SYDRC) Somali parents expressed concerns about the growing gap between them and their children, which appears to have led to the loss of control and respect as parents indicated. Thus, I explore what the impact is on the parent-child relationship. Evidence suggests, that family breakdowns and lone mothers are perceived to destroy community fabric (Heitritter, 1999; Rutter, 2004). As part of this thesis I examine how Somali youth perceive intergenerational clash in relation to community, ethnicity, culture, religion, education etc.? For example, if any, have differences in these areas contributed to the widening gap between them and their parents on one the hand and the mainstream society on the other hand? (Degni et al., 2006). Young Somali men appeared to have developed a third culture, or different lifestyle, which differs both from their parents’ culture as well as that from the host community, in this case the UK. This fits well with patterns of other migrant communalities including the Pakistani (Goodey, 2001; Hussain and Bagguley, 2005; Modood, 2005) and the Bangladeshi 1990 (Eade and Garbin, 2006; Eade, 1990; Kibria, 2008; Summerfield, 1993) in the UK.

³⁸ These include focus groups, workshops and conference facilitation – as well as a report publication of the conference report – which I undertook between March 2008 and January 2009

The youth and the link to Al Shabaab

Xarakada Mujahidiinta Al Shabaab (Mujahideen Youth Movement) or as it is better known Al Shabaab is a jihadist organisation with bases across Somalia. Al Shabaab declared its association with Al Qaeda in 2012 and has since been proscribed in the UK and rest of the Western world. It appeared that the West³⁹ and other more secular entities had concerns that Islamist movements such as Al Shabaab may be elected and undermine the process of democracy. The question here remains: why were there such great concerns about the development of Islamic states? What sustained this fear? This section attempts to address these questions and offers some (historical) context underpinning the involvement of young Somali men with the Al Shabaab movement while highlighting the power struggles as part of the broader conflict in the Somali regions.

When the Somali government collapsed in 1991, chaos underpinned by a power vacuum followed. The struggle for power created many warlords who all wanted to rule to compel obedience. Subsequently, a phenomenon known as “warlordism” emerged in the midst of the disorder in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia. Various rival warlords controlled different parts of the city. Such self-proclaimed ‘businessmen’ were ruthless in their conduct. They tortured and killed anyone who stood in their way. A long period of turmoil was sustained. This prompted a network of scattered Islamist organisations based on established Sharia courts to form an alliance in Mogadishu under a banner commonly known as the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) (Barnes and Hassan, 2007). Their aim was to address the stalemate, which had plagued the city for over 15 years. The UIC managed to achieve what the US backed but weak Transitional Federal Government (TFG) could not. *The BBC’s Profile* (2006) reported that the UIC ‘has emerged into Somalia’s strongest fighting force - forcing the warlords who have controlled the capital for the past 15 years into retreat’. It is understood that the courts managed to bring much-needed stability in the northern part of the capital. They provided health and educational services and clamped down on petty crime and robberies with severe punishments for perpetrators (see Harper, 2012). They further ‘oversaw

³⁹ Generally speaking, Western interventions, however well meant, seemed to have had detrimental effects in the Islamic world (i.e. regime change and instability in Iraq and Libya). Somalia has been a poignant example of interventionist policies that have greatly undermined effective indigenous grass root developments. There appear to be genuine concerns about the more radical elements and movements in the Muslim world, including Somalia. Ironically, the rise of these movements and radical ideologist, I would argue, are, to a great extent, reinforced by the same interventionist policies that were meant to stabilize them.

weddings and divorces and expanded their authority across most of the capital, while staying out of politics' (BBC Profile, 2006). The UIC's role took a slight backseat following the developments of the Transitional National Government during the Arta conference (one of many convened in an attempt to find a lasting solution with the help of the International Community) held in Djibouti. However, the Arta government's hype and influence quickly diminished only to enhance the UIC's structure and its impact was taking further root to the delight of many including members of the Somali diaspora, particularly the youth. Suddenly there appeared to be a glimpse of hope and sustained stability, prosperity and even prospects to possible return were in sight.

According to Barnes and Hassan (2007, p. 3) members of the UIC suggested that they were targeted by 'covert US government operations in a wave of unexplained assassinations and disappearances' that led to the emergence of the military power known as Harakaat Al Shabaab al Mujahidiin (the Youth). Al Shabaab was understood to be the military wing of the UIC although it operated independently as an organisation. Al Shabaab was accused of eliminating security officials of the TFG and warlords it believed to be aiding the US intelligence service in their targeted killing of influential religious leaders, both Somali and foreign (Barnes and Hassan, 2007).

Al Shabaab's power within the UIC continued to grow. Unlike the UIC, which embraced both moderate and radical figures, Al Shabaab's leadership was constituted mainly of radical thinkers. Given their influence and to the dismay of the moderate elements within the UIC, Al Shabaab opted for a more grounded political stance⁴⁰. In response the warlords formed the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter Terrorism. According to Lacey from the New York Times (2006) 'the United States has been widely reported to have secretly financed the capital's warlords, who fashioned themselves into a counterterrorism alliance to track down and apprehend Al Qaeda elements in Mogadishu'. In an Al Jazeera report Abdi Samatar (2011) stated that under the leadership of the UIC the alliance was defeated and peace was restored in Mogadishu. Thus, 'many in Mogadishu said that the common belief that the United States was taking sides only strengthened the Islamists, who accused the warlords of

⁴⁰ Al Shabaab seemed to have become a political organisation that stands in its own right with its own hierarchy and chain of command

being puppets of Washington’ (Lacey, 2006). Al Shabaab has been consistent in its message that it will not tolerate any foreign influence or presence in Somalia, particularly those it views as the enemies of the country and Islam more specifically. Worried about Al Shabaab’s growing influence, anti-Western rhetoric and further suspicion about Al Qaida elements within the ranks of the organisation the ‘US-supported Ethiopian invasion begun in December 2006 and displaced more than a million people and killed close to 15,000 civilians’ (Samatar, 2011).

Al Shabaab appeared unable to cater for the masses and its draconian approach, seemingly unnecessary involvement in international political arenas and lack of diplomacy skills appeared to have fractured the organisation and lessened its influence and role in Somali affairs. Despite Al Shabaab’s unsuccessful later reign its ‘anti-foreign forces’ (and nationalist) stance seemed to strike a chord with most Somali people as it fed into the wider discourse around the occupation of Muslim countries and other factors that hold imperialist tendencies and dichotomies i.e. whites ruling over blacks, Christians over Muslims; and the common narrative often entertained by extremist movements that the west is at war with Islam. Nonetheless, as the organisation that was standing for liberating the Somali people from the ‘foreign yoke’ Al Shabaab appeared to manage to position itself quite effectively. Young men in particular seemed to be furious about the invasion by the American-backed Ethiopian invasion. This has a complex history to which I shall return later in this chapter. As a result, some, albeit a very small minority, decided to join Al Shabaab. Others ventured through various other peaceful means to make themselves heard. A relevant example is the ‘Operation Restore Home’ project initiated by Worldwide Somali Students and Professionals. The organisation embarked on an ambitious undertaking attempting to marshal 1000 young Somali people from the diaspora to go back to Somalia to contribute in various priority areas such as education, agriculture and health. However, Co-founder Mohamed Gacal Mohamoud indicated that *“first that was the aim, but we realised logistically it is impossible to deal with such numbers, especially given the security measures and the enormity of the task”*⁴¹. Other usefull initiatives mainly led by young Somalis include the Somali Relief Development

⁴¹ Converstiaon with Mohamed, 27 2013

Forum (SRDF), collective efforts to ban Khat in the UK and the Somali Remittances campaign to avoid closures of the bank accounts of Money Transfer Companies.

As it seemed, it is not the first time that the West, in particular, has been confronted with a force eager to create an Islamist state in the Somali territories. Generally the development of Islamist states or so-called ‘extremist movements’ such as Al Shabaab seemed to be underpinned by historical Western interventions that have contributed to high levels of distrust among Somalis and non-Somalis with tendencies to enhance young people’s belonging to such entities more generally.

Representation

Bad press and poor representation and lack of a united voice: The Somali community, including the young generation who are often linked to crime or terrorism receive negative publicity in the UK media. More recently, particularly during the past elections, the *Sun Newspaper* ran a series of what often was perceived as provocative headlines including:

‘We must be rental: A FORMER asylum seeker is living in a luxurious £1.8million home fitted out with the latest mod-cons — all paid for by housing benefit’ (Crick, 2009).

‘Somalis plot suicide blitz on UK target: SECURITY chiefs fear British-based Somalis are planning a terrorist atrocity here like the one foiled in Australia’ (Crick, 2009).

Jail won't stop Somali criminals coming to the UK... the choice is stay there and be killed’ (Francis, 2010).

‘A third of youth prisoners are foreign: A THIRD of criminals entering Britain's top youth jail last year were foreign, it was revealed yesterday. A total of 632 were not born in the UK. Somalia was the birthplace of one in ten of the foreigners — the highest of any nationality’ (Heighton and Kay, 2011).

For migrant communities, such as the Somali, the impact of such depiction appears to be great. Often a hostile environment has been created where the Somali community is caricatured by the mainstream media as criminals (Heighton and Kay, 2011; Francis, 2010), benefit fraudsters (Crick, 2009), terrorists (Hamilton and O’Neill, 2009b) etc. I argue that

British citizens' perception – of the Somali – matters a great deal and has important consequences in their – young Somalis' – degree of (civic) participation.

Many young people seemed to be alienated because of negative headlines such as the ones mentioned above. Further, the absence of a cohesive social network with a united voice (or one that can at least balance and mediate between the vast and often competing voices) is regarded as a great barrier to effective integration, which has 'two faces'. First, the continuing internal conflict along clan, gender, class and/or regional lines appears to underpin the fragmentations within the Somali community (Heitritter, 1999). Hence, community representation - and who should engage in it - becomes a contested space. On the other hand, it is agreed that the lack of representation and voice in key areas such as policing, politics, education and so forth, is having detrimental impact on the overall progress of the community and underlines the lack of role models in society at large⁴². New initiatives such as the London Somali Youth seemed well placed to deal with the multilayered and often complex issues of the Somali community and its youth in particular remains to be seen.

Summary

This chapter aimed at identifying various factors and events that have led to the mass migration from the Somali regions and other European destination to the UK. The chapter highlighted five significant migration phases including the colonial migration, reemployment from the Merchant Navy to industry, family reunification, Civil War, and onward migration from other EU countries. All phases gave rise to the formation and expansion of the Somali diasporas in the UK continuously refining their make up and characteristics.

The purpose for highlighting these historical migration trajectories is to support my general argument that there is no such thing as Somali diaspora – in its singular form. Instead it is fitting to refer to Somali diasporas to capture the dynamics and the diverse characteristics Somali migration more effectively. In the absence of such recognition I argue that any attempt to construct or analyse the Somali experience in the diaspora risks oversimplifications and, therefore, (becomes) meaningless. In this regard and as a

⁴² Common discussions in various focus groups and several interviews

consequence of such (re)construction I also take issue with the notion of collective traumas as in the classical understanding of (the Jewish) diaspora (Cohen, 2008; Safran, 2005; Van Hear, 1998). For example in a time of conflict and as in the Somali case actions that might have been a traumatic experience for some might be regarded as necessary by others. Thus, instead I suggest various often regionalized and personal traumas co-exists. The notion of collective trauma is merely an abstraction in need of rigorous deconstruction.

The different historical migrations as well as the diverse entry routes should be viewed as processes, which are linked that redefined and shaped the makeup of past and current day Somali diasporas. Even though it is generally recognised that asylum routes formed the largest Somali migration to the UK as discussed in this chapter there have been other access paths including family reunification, resettlement from other European countries and to a lesser extent access through student or work permit visa. These developments further challenge the historical distinction between voluntary and involuntary migration. As I highlighted in Chapter One this distinction is rather blurred since the need to migrate often encompasses both voluntary and involuntarily aspects. Thus, Somali migration should be understood through compulsion as well as by choice (Castles, 2003; Van Hear, 1998).

In this Chapter Two critical themes were identified including the relevance of the diversity of the Somali diasporas and the fact that these are continuously shifting through time and space. The chapter has also discussed the actual relationship with the home and host countries and how these in their own right further contribute to the development of Somali diasporas. Diasporas' host and homeland engagements have been a salient often unmissable feature of the diaspora studies.

Transnationalism has become as catchphrase to describe homeland engagements (Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007b; Basch et al., 1992). This chapter provided various relevant examples of enacted transnational engagements (Levitt and Schiller, 2004) through political, social and economic platforms and networks. It is worth highlighting that these networks are active, sophisticated and practical intended to drive and promote such links. Finally, the chapter focused on Somali youth and discussed the contested and challenging relationship with host country (Cohen, 2008; Safran, 2005). In Chapter One, the theoretical understanding of the

relationship between diaspora communities and host country was discussed. Young Somali people seem to suffer from bad press often depicting them as the ‘other’ (Sheffer, 2003). As a result many young Somalis feel alienated. Also, there are intergenerational challenges that complicate the parent-child relationship. Both parents and young people believe there is an ever-growing gap between them. Somali parents seem to be concerned about the apparent lack of control they have over their children. Young Somali people, on the other hand argue that they are not well understood. Young people seem to view their world in a different perspective compared to their parents, which has apparent consequences for their relationship.

There are various factors identified in this chapter, which require further scrutiny. There is a clear need for a better theoretical understanding and application capturing the dynamics and nuances of Somalis diasporas and their transnational engagements. In particular, attention is given to the diasporic and transnational engagements of young Somalis males. Also through the concepts of intergenerational clash the relationship between parents and their children will be more thoroughly assessed in attempt to provide meaningful answers to this seemingly challenging phenomenon. Moreover, the apparent problematic relationship with the hostland is evaluated purposely drawing on forms of (ill)representation and other kinds of social exclusions. Thus, the thesis investigates active citizenship practices more thoroughly analysed through the various possible options open to young Somali people and how they tend to employ them in order to address the situation and perhaps redefine their places in society. More specifically, focus is given to youth platforms and voices. These matters are thoroughly discussed, examined and concluded in the following chapters.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The previous two chapters focused on the general literature review highlighting key theoretical concepts critical for the analysis of the Somali diasporas and its youth. Having identified the gaps in the existing literature the research focus and its objectives have become more transparent. This chapter briefly discusses the general theoretical assumptions and foundations of qualitative and quantitative research methods, the research design and its core methods. Further, the thesis objectives and questions are discussed followed by discussion of the data collection methods. The final two sections focus on my position as a researcher and assess the ethical considerations involved. The chapter concludes with a summary that highlights the research approach.

Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches: a brief introduction

The thesis adopts a mixed methods approach in three different sites across London with the aim of capturing the experiences of young Somali males. I must stress that my thesis is primarily rooted in qualitative research but draws, where appropriately, on quantitative approaches in order to highlight the broader nuances and diversities of young people's day to day experiences. The following sections highlight the assumptions more commonly associated with mixed methods approach and methods used to examine the thesis more thoroughly. According to Creswell et al. (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011; Creswell, 2009), the meaning or how mixed methods approach is defined is dependent on and often evolves during the research process. In this regard Creswell et al. define mixed methods approach as follows:

Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (2011, p. 5)

How I came to adopt such methods and why will be addressed in this section. Before I embark on my research design and preferred research tools for data collection, I would like to start with a brief discussion on the broader research approaches. I regard this discussion as necessary to set out the foundations of research methods and justify the choices for data collection research tools. Social research can be divided into two large schools of thoughts: qualitative and quantitative research methods. Both methods operate within diverse assumptions, which are explored in this chapter, and signify logical approaches to examine a certain phenomenon (Bernard, 2006). Two clear differences that set the context of their major assumptions include ‘inquiry from the outside’ – that is rooted in quantitative research – and ‘inquiry from the inside’ – which is embedded in the qualitative approach (Evered and Louis, 1981, p. 385). Put differently, the two approaches differ in the level of engagement through participation and degree of contact (ibid). Unlike quantitative studies, which mainly focus on results, the primary objective of qualitative research is rooted in a process that gives meaning to how people make sense of their day to day lived experiences and relevant structures and is, thus, narrative descriptive in nature (Bernard, 2006; Ritchie and Rigano, 2001; Miller and Dingwall, 1997; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; Evered and Louis, 1981). Further, the researcher has a prominent role in the collection and examination of data since this is negotiated through him or her, instead of via questionnaires and/or the use of technology⁴³.

Accordingly, researchers in a qualitative setting become the eyewitness reporters concerned with the collection of primary data (Bryman, 2001). Often, researchers engage with the critical process of fieldwork, which physically situates them to the research informants, spaces, and associations that allow close and critical observations of actions and attitudes (ibid). Likewise, qualitative research relies on a small sample and adopts an inductive approach – with a degree of uncertainty – that moves from specific observations to broader generalisations with theory as the result of research (ibid). In contrast, quantitative studies assume a deductive approach that relies on theories as the basis for this in order to produce specific facts and conclusions, while typically drawing on a large sample (Bernard, 2006; Bryman, 2001; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). However, Bryman (Bryman, 2012, p. 37) suggest that the difference is “not a hard-and-soft one’ and goes on to argue that ‘studies that have the

⁴³ CATI (Computer Aided/Assisted Telephone Interviewing) is used by research institutions that undertake large-scale quantitative surveys.

broad characteristics of one research strategy may have a characteristic of the other”. A combination of qualitative and quantitative research is employed as part of this thesis to ensure valuable insights are provided where possible. Thus, the reason to employ a mixed methods approach. Creswell et al. (2011) suggest that a potential bias to data may be immanent in mixed methods approach, which needs careful consideration.

Theoretical assumptions

Besides the differences in both methods discussed above it is widely acknowledged that each is embedded in ontology – a conceptual framework, rooted in a patterned set of assumptions referred to as objectivism and constructivism with regard to the production of certain knowledge –, epistemology – how we acquire knowledge at the most general level which relies on positivism and interpretivism –, strategic methods – strategic choices we use to acquire knowledge at a general level, i.e. fieldwork etc. – and choice of technique employed by researchers in the process of data collection and interpretation about social settings i.e. phone or face to face interview etc. (Bernard, 2006; Bryman, 2001; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Miller and Dingwall, 1997).

Carrying out case study research in multiple localities – for example the research sites including the London boroughs of Hayes and Hillingdon, Haringey and Camden – that focuses on the lived experiences of young Somali men in London implies a qualitative approach. Therefore, this thesis draws on interpretive and participatory theoretical perspectives. The study employs various techniques to collect and analyse data – methods – including in-depth interviews, participant observation and focus groups and, thus, assumes mixed methods approach. Furthermore, the research draws on ethnographic skills as part of the broader mixed methods. Such skills are particularly useful when using a case study approach. That said the research refers also to quantitative methods. For example young people’s length of residence in London as well as their age, level of civic, political or social participation are examined. In the following paragraph the preferred research methods will be discussed and how these will figure in the research sites.

Research design, objectives and thesis questions

My research questions were as follows:

1. How do young Somalis think about the concepts of 'belonging' (Schiller & Levitt 2004)? and 'home' (Cohen, 2009; Dufoix, 2008; Clifford, 2007) How do these, if at all, alter their attitudes towards political, social, economic and religious participation?

2. How are young Somali men positioned and how do they perceive themselves in London? To what extent do they think they are valued as British citizens or unwanted strangers? If the latter is true, to what extent do they feel marginalised, stigmatised, and/or excluded; and what options do they have to deal with this? How do they ensure that their voices are heard (Heath et al., 2013; Isin and Nielsen, 2008; Yuval-Davis, 2007)?

3. How are generational matters, if any, addressed? What role do young Somali men play in addressing these matters? What role and influence, if any, do parents have on young Somali men? Are there cultural differences between young Somali men and their parents? How do young Somali men establish adequate representation to make their voices heard and facilitate their rights and responsibilities (King and Christou, 2010; Rumbaut, 2004; Portes and Zhou, 1993)?

4. How do young Somali men build social spaces in London? How and at what level are these – transnational – social spaces sustained (Vertovec, 2009; Faist, 2004; Guarnizo, 2000)? Are these formal or informal (Kivisto, 2001)? To what extent do these enhance their social mobility and engagements and practices across national borders?

Case study perspectives

This thesis is focused on a specific case, namely that of young Somali men in London in multiple sites. These sites are used as sources of information that allow for a broader research scope to enhance the research process. Scholars attach different interpretations to case study research and, hence, differ in their application. Some call it a method, others a strategy or an approach (Simons, 2009). I refer to this as a multi-sited (case study) approach. Generally, there are three common case study design types to consider. Yin and Winston (quoted in Berg 2004) suggest exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive case studies, which should be understood as part of the mixed methods approach (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Exploratory case studies usually provide data through fieldwork and data collection prior to

the formulation of research questions. Also, this may be regarded as an introduction to further research.

Explanatory case studies are more suitable for research in complex community or organisational settings. With this approach one might prefer to adopt multi-faceted cases to investigate various influences using Yin and Moore's (quoted in Berg 2004) 'pattern-matching' in a setting 'in which several pieces of information from the same case may be related to some theoretical propositions. Descriptive case studies ask for a well-defined and described theoretical framework prior to the start of the study as well as the precise components of investigation. Yin (ibid) suggests the following: 1) study questions; 2) theoretical framework; 3) identifying components of investigation; 4) logical connection between data and theory; and 5) the criteria for interpreting the findings. Further, there are multi case studies, which investigate differences within and between cases. The main purpose is to duplicate results across cases. To allow for useful comparisons and predict similar or contrasting findings across cases based on a theory, it is important that cases are selected with great care (ibid).

Stake (2000; see also Baxter & Jack 2008) provides an additional three dimensional typology approach for case studies, which are: 1) 'Intrinsic' whereby the researcher indicates specific interest in the particularity of study without aiming to produce theory although it is an option; 2) 'Instrumental' looks beyond the obvious, which catches the eye of the researcher whereby the case itself becomes secondary but helps to uncover complex issues; 3) and 'Collective' case studies are very similar to multiple case studies and are used to study groups of cases. In anticipation I consider the thesis as a collective set of case studies. With such an approach there is an opportunity for generalising outcome as well as establishing enhanced practices. As Stake (2000) argues, the thesis can also lead to improved understanding and theorizing of what is deemed a comprehensive set of cases. The next section will set out the data collection methods within the context of the specific case studies of the thesis.

Data collection research methods

This thesis uses a multi-sited and mixed methods approach including participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups to collect data, which are discussed below. In order to

achieve an depth understanding of the key research objectives, the methods are directly linked to the thesis questions.

Research sites were selected in such a way as to highlight the diversity of the Somali community in general and that of young Somali men in particular with the main purpose of getting a better understanding of their sense of belonging in these different sites. Here I set out my rationale for engaging with participant observation to collect data, highlighting the access I have had to my research sites, which allowed me to opt for participant observation as a research method.

The sites of choice were almost either directly linked or associated to one another through a network called the London Somali Youth Forum. This network enabled me to identify some of the sites. Others were selected through personal relationships with key members in the respective organisations. I have been involved with the forum from its inception. In fact I have played a key role in its strategic direction and introduced some of the key elements that form its foundation. In its short existence the forum has built an extensive network across London. Although it initially embarked on an ambitious plan to cover sixteen London boroughs only five including the London Boroughs of Camden, Tower Hamlets, Islington, Wandsworth and Lambeth, had become involved at that time. I will return to the development stages of the forum to discuss some ethical issues that need to be taken into consideration in Chapter Seven.

For the research the selected sites of interest include the Kentish Town based Somali London Somali Youth Forum⁴⁴ (LSYF), which is a youth-led organisation, Assunnah Islamic Centre that provides religious and cultural education, which is located in Tottenham and West London Somaliland Community that promotes Somaliland identity, which is based in Hayes. Given the rich diversity of the Somali community in London several issues were considered during the selection of sites. The Somali community has different migration experiences that put the social, religious, political and economic context into perspective. For example while

⁴⁴ LSYF was founded by members of SYDRC and others more closely linked to the organisation. Both organisations share the same office space and their activities have run in parallel, particularly at the beginning when LSYF was its infant stages. LYSF is now a fully independent organisation.

LSYF takes a neutral position in terms of young people's engagement in positive activities and education, the West London Somaliland Community encourages members of the Somaliland diaspora to be aware of their apparent 'distinct' Somaliland identity, whereas Assunna Mosque provides a space for culture underpinned by religion and religious education. These sites were central to answer the key questions covering the following major areas including: young Somali males understanding of the concepts of 'belonging' and 'home', how they perceive themselves: strangers or valued citizens, generational matters and engagements in transnational activities. Considering the time constraints of the study only the above mentioned three sites were selected as research sites.

The participatory character of this thesis is not only relevant as a data collection method but it is significant as it is well suited to understand its multi-site perspective. May (2001) points out that participant observation is a challenging, analytically speaking and complex research approach. May (ibid) also highlights the lengthy time required of the researcher to spend in almost unfamiliar places where relationships need to be made and maintained. Making use of my personal relationships and the knowledge I had developed of the research sites during the last four years and prior to this research I was able to overcome this initial challenge. Further, this enabled me to draw on participant observation as a data gathering method. I have engaged in the selection of the relevant research sites while paying attention to the research questions. As DeWalt and DeWalt (2002, p. 1) argue, participant observation is a tool

in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, intersections, and events of a groups of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture.

As argued by Fetterman (1998) participant observation is about showing interest and willing(ness) to engage in a culture requiring the researcher to spend anything from six months to a year and perhaps longer that enables him or her to get a real sense of the feelings and experiences of the research informants. Being aware of the multi-sited character of the research, emphasis is put on the connections between such sites (Marcus, 1995). Making these connections has been an important task of this research.

In depth interviews

I undertook 32 semi-structured in-depth interviews using a topic guide, which focused on the thesis objectives. Commentators agree that interviews produce data and “insights into people’s biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings” (May, 2001, p. 120). Paying attention to the possible historical affinity to the broader concept of belonging, interviews were particularly helpful with young Somali men with crucial historical information where direct observation was not possible to evaluate (Creswell 2009). Further, interviews allowed me as the researcher a greater sense of control over the line of questioning. Interviews have also their limitations however. For example, the information obtained is ‘filtered’ through the perspectives of participants (ibid).

The focus was on young males aged between the ages of 16-25, evenly spread across the three main research sites. The interviews were conducted in English and, where necessary, in Somali to allow respondents to fully and freely express themselves. A tape-recorder was used to record these interviews. Being aware of the sensitive nature of recorded interviews a careful introduction was considered wherein respondents were met prior to the interviews, in a casual manner. Interviews took place at LSYF, Assunnah Mosque and in Hargeisa, Somaliland during the fieldtrip. The duration of interviews was anything between one and two hours more generally.

As explained above a topic guide was used in these interviews. This covered the themes and objectives of the study, focusing upon the following: intergenerational matters, home and belonging, representation and voice, transnationalism and activism, expectations and ambitions, migration roots, patterns and settlements as well as the challenges of integration.

Focus groups

I conducted three focus groups in each site including a focus group with young males, one with their parents and one mixed group. Our understanding of the interview is often an interviewer that asks an individual a series of questions (Bryman, 2001). In contrast, according to Krueger and Casey, “the purpose of conducting focus groups is to listen and gather information by way of better understanding about how people feel or think about an

issue” (2009, p. 253). Bryman suggests that the focus group is a method of interviewing, which involves at least four people, which he calls ‘group interview’ (2001). A focus group method creates the opportunity to develop a bottom-up approach to gathering data where respondents feel empowered and valued in the process. Such a method provides a space that enables respondents to set the agenda and freely express themselves. Many authorities frequently reflect on the questions of how many groups are needed and what their size should be (see Krueger & Casey 2009; Denzin & Lincoln 2005; May 2001). For example Bryman, who draws on several studies – by Deacon, Peckering, Golding, and Murdock (1999) – suggests that the size of groups needed tends to be between twelve and fifteen while the size recommended by others appears to be typically between six and ten (2001). For May (2001) a typical size of a focus group involves between eight and twelve with a duration of between one hour and two and half hours and anything in between. Against this background I conducted a total of nine focus groups, which were sensitive to the research objectives and the comparative elements of the multi-sited ethnography. As outlined above focus groups were as follows: Focus group one: males aged between 16–25 and Focus group two: parents. The third and final focus group was originally planned to include both groups in order to create an opportunity to observe the dynamics and relations between these same groups. In the event this was not possible, however, due to time constraints and logistics problems (it was simply very difficult to get all the groups together). Instead separate focus groups were conducted with mothers and fathers although these did actually yield very valuable outcomes.

Formal and informal settings

I was aware that my presence as a researcher might possibly bias the results, particularly during interviews. I was conscious that not all participants were equally articulate or perceptive for that matter. It was further noticeable that the use of digital recorded during the interviews occasionally limited conversations. Some young men seemingly chose their words carefully often avoiding sensitive topical issues such as radicalization among young Somali men. Similar attitudes were observed during various focus group and general workshop sessions with parents despite the absence of a digital recorded. Ultimately, the size and the dynamics of the group determined the outcome (see Kreuger & Casey 2009; Bryman 2001; May 2001). I noted that both young people and parents were keen to know what I was going to do with the information and data I collected. I sensed that respondents in certain occasions

wanted reassurance that data would be used appropriately, which gave me the chance to refer to the ethical procedures of the thesis.

An open dialogue was encouraged and a self-reflective platform was provided whereby individuals were able to share their experiences and views (of the study focus) usually through casual discussions after the 'formal' interview settings and throughout the research process more generally. Often young people will ask further questions about the research after the completion of the interview taking a real interest in the process of research and its outcome. There have been occasions that such casual discussions lasted for around two hours often bringing up various issues that could not be addressed during the formal interview setting, such as 'what I am planning to do with the outcome', giving sometimes deeper accounts of their relationships with their families and/or friends as well as being more open about their likes and dislikes about being in Britain. For example some young people said they understood why groups like Al Shabaab existed commonly citing US and UK foreign policies in Somalia and the Muslim world more generally to justify their response. Some young people believed Al Shabaab had the right to defend Somalia against what they usually refer to as "foreign invaders". On the other hand parents both, fathers and mothers, generally showed concerns about their young people. After a formal meeting between Somali fathers and members from a statutory agency around issues of criminality and extremism among young Somalis, fathers admitted they did not have the full confidence to talk to the representatives of the agency who came to visit them at a local community organisation. One of the fathers remarked that he did not like their line of questioning, which he thought was patronizing and generalizing. Another said he did not know them and, therefore, could not trust them and wondered how he could possibly share his concerns about young people even if they were troubled. However, fathers appeared confident among each other and they were freely discussing the problems some young Somali men were causing in the neighborhood such as drug dealing, petty crime and the impact of radicalization. A father gave specific examples of the criminal activities his son was involved in and admitted that he was struggling to cope with how to discipline him.

Unlike fathers mothers were less forthcoming with the problems that they were facing with their own children. However, critical issues ranging from khat use and abuse, poor school

performance and radical tendencies were discussed in general terms. They agreed that Somali mothers needed help in order to cope with the various challenges that they were having with their children. Even though discussions around important matters affecting the Somali community were tackled during various group discussions such platforms remained too formal to share specific challenges mothers were facing. Having conducted several focus groups and workshops I observed that at the end of each session at least one or two mothers, on their own or together, would come up to me to share more personal challenges they were having with their children. They wanted to talk and were often looking for a discreet space to share their stories. In fact often they would make a point of that through their body language, and the way they spoke to me almost whispering in my ears or pulling me aside to a more private space. I asked one of the mothers: “why didn’t you bring this up during the group discussion”? Her answer was straightforward: “I don’t want other people to know about my business”.

Trust is important here and can be viewed in two ways: trust within the Somali community and trust towards authority in general. Mothers appear to be sensitive when it comes to their reputation as parents and, therefore, less likely to share their difficulties in a wider group. They seemed often concerned about the stigma attached to and perception of poor parenting. On the other hand they do not seem to be too trusting of agencies in authority such as the police and other relevant authorities. As one mother who was concerned about her son’s criminal activities and feared for his safety remarked “I would not know what they would do to my son if I tell them about him”. Mostly, they are more likely to talk to trusted members in community organizations or credible individuals who they know. These selected discussions and more are continued in the analyses chapters. In this short analyses I wanted to point out the various ways of data gathering, in this case the difference between formal and informal engagements. It also highlights the importance of continuous analyses and underlines that research remains a long process, whereby interactions formal or informal all matter. In fact it is noticeable how important and revealing informal occasions can be allowing more depth to the research as a whole. Finally, it is noteworthy that both formal and informal engagements included difficult discussions around issues often perceived as taboos in the Somali community such as radicalisation, FGM, knife and gang crime etc.

Ethnographic skills in a multi-sited setting

In Chapter One and two there has been an emphasis on highlighting the macro dimensions in the history of international migration and Somali migration to the UK including the impact of colonialism and imperialism as well as the effects of the Cold War and (local) civil wars. These dimensions were further evident in the analysis of Somali diasporas' experiences and transnational engagements. Unlike Chapter One and two, in contrast, the focus in the following sections will be on emphasising the micro dimensions particularly highlighting the specific experiences of young British Somali men in London. My approach was centered on a multi-sited case study approach that was applied in three sites.

Given the importance of multi-sited research approach I discuss its application during fieldwork while I also justify its use. This leads into the discussion of the methods I identified for the multi-sited case study, including participant observation, focus groups and in depth interviews, underpinned by the use of ethnographic skills in the following paragraphs each research method will be discussed and linked to the relevant research sites. The application of ethnographic skills are discussed more thoroughly in the following paragraphs.

London Somali Youth Forum

My previous involvement with LSYF dates back prior its official launch on January 2009. An active community member who runs a youth organisation called Somali Youth Development Resource Centre based in Kentish Town, Camden, approached me early in 2008 and said *'Somali people always talk about the invisibility and the lack of collective voice of our community but they do not do anything about it'*. He continued, *we have been approached by the police and several government departments who have raised concerns about the lack of integration and self-representation of the Somali community in mainstream UK society*. He explained, *we want to organise a conference and bring young Somali people together to talk about issues relevant to them and want you to help us*. Cautiously enthused by the prospects of the conference I asked him *what the specific aims of the conference were, what he wanted to get out of it and more importantly whether he thought about ways of capturing the essence of the conference and publishing its findings*. In response to his comments on invisibility and lack of voice I explained that *one of the main reasons that Somali people remain invisible is*

mainly due to the lack of adequate reporting and effective publication on issues that affect the community and young Somali people. These became my criteria to volunteer. I suggested making the most out of the conference and introduced a focus group approach in the form of workshops to give young Somali people the platform they required to articulate their views. I took the task upon myself to coordinate this part of the conference. I presented the ideas to likeminded fellow research students with keen interests in the Somali community and its youth to help out with the workshops and compile data.

The conference was well attended and attracted many young Somali people through social media sites such as Facebook. National and local government representatives, police, community members and researchers also attended the conference, and they were given opportunities to address the attendees. Young people actively participated in the conference and this yielded interesting results. Shortly after the conference we published a report titled *Conference Report and Conclusions on the London Somali Youth. In search for a united voice: establishing a Somali Youth Forum* (Hassan & Samater et. al. 2009). The outcome of the conference indicated a great need for a united platform for young Somali people. With national and local government support the forum was quickly formed and launched at the Greater London Authority (GLA) assembly hall in May 2009. Together with seven other members I was appointed as a board member with media and research coordinating roles. Since I was conducting my research on the same organisation I have been volunteering for I have found myself every now and then in conflicting situations getting too immersed in the organisation's state of affairs. Giving myself some space and reflecting on issues has been very helpful.

While working on the report and organising activities for LSYF I also started volunteering for SYDRC who conveniently shared the same building space. I became familiar with their projects and general activities while also working on the structure and formalization of the forum, which was a challenging but immensely resourceful and rewarding experience. While participating in general meetings and activities to get LSYF going I have observed great difficulties in structuring the organisation. There were identity, trust and communication issues, confusion, power struggles, and gender dynamics. These issues often became barriers for the effective progression of the organisation. There were also issues in relation to aims

and objectives of the forum. Questions were raised as to whether the forum should deal with issues in relation to terrorism and radicalisation. Since core funding from the Metropolitan Police was to counter radicalisation and prevent terrorism it was a struggle for the leadership to find ways of justifying the focus and reasoning to get involved in what has appeared to be a controversial engagement.

Despite all the difficulties and challenges LSYF made a few good headlines. The LSYF model of ambassadorship was selected by the GLA as an effective model to represent London as part of the IV Integrating Cities conference in London on the 22nd of February 2010. I presented at the conference and talked about ‘cities and the integration of children and young migrants’ with the support of a film talking about the Somali migration experience. Also on Thursday 24 September 2009 the London Somali Youth Forum was awarded the prestigious Community Engaging Award at the London Week of Peace⁴⁵. This was a well-timed achievement and one that highlighted and celebrated the work that LSYF has engaged across the capital; particularly in its work with helping to socially engage marginalised Somali communities and an equally well-timed article was published by *The Times* newspaper on 17 July 2009 entitled ‘Somalis in Britain find their voice at last’.

My general experience with SYDRC differed than that of LSYF. SYDRC is sort of the mother of LYSF as they were trusted with the initial coordination and setup of the organisation. My work with SYDRC enabled me to build trust with the youth workers, volunteers and young people who make use of its activities and resources. I quickly came to realise that SYDRC is not only a youth organisation but its whole workforce comprises of young people, with the exception of the director who is in his thirties. I became accustomed to their structure and work ethics and realised the uniqueness of the setting in the Somali community.

Capitalizing on my interest in research, members of SYDRC asked me to coordinate their research projects, which I welcomed. I conducted a focus group on intergenerational issues since this was an area continuously identified as a challenge. This opened further doors to get

⁴⁵ Some members dismissed the award as ‘gesture politics’ given the relatively short existence of LSYF

to know young Somali people and their parents in such a context. I started to help with the planning of the annual achievement awards, which is a yearly event that celebrates young people's achievement and rewards them for doing so. The event usually attracts many people and is attended not only by students and their families but also by community leaders, local authority representatives, police, academics, MPs and Ministers. I have attended a number of achievement award events and observed one thoroughly,

Focus groups

I conducted several focus groups and attended several gatherings that took the form of focus groups as outlined in the previous section. Some focus groups focused upon how young Somalis felt that they were positioned within the mainstream society, with a particular focus on how they were being positioned in the UK media. Given the negative press young Somalis often get, ideas were exchanged as to how to tackle what young people described as 'the spread of ill perceptions of young Somalis', issues that will be explored in more detail in chapters 6.

Consultations with Somali fathers provided further opportunities for participant observation in this research site. The Young Offenders Team (YOT) met with Somali fathers to raise issues on the challenges of young Somali men in crime in the borough of Camden. SYDRC invited local fathers to participate. I observed this consultation, noting several critical issues to be considered further in subsequent chapters.

Further workshops included the SYDRC/LSYF Somali Europeans youth exchange in Camden. Around forty young people participated in the workshop from four different countries including Norway, Holland, Sweden and the UK. I helped plan the workshops and identified them with the help of SYDRC/LSYF members. These workshops were as follows: 1) Multiculturalism and active citizenship, 2) Intergenerational matters and gender dimensions, 3) Somali youth in Europe and Islam in global perspective. The event set out to offer practical tools and techniques to explore and discuss the meaning of European citizenship. Further, it encouraged participants to understand causes and effects of social exclusion and what steps they could take to attain their goals and aspirations and overcome

social barriers as well as to explore commonalities and understanding of each others' cultural heritage.

Finally, in this research site, a focus group with mothers was conducted mainly focussing on intergenerational matters and the possible links with language and education. Issues related to lone mothers came up too, issues that were perceived to complicate the triadic relationship (that of schools, children and parents) that they (mothers) needed to manage.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews

In addition to the focus groups and participant observation, I conducted nine interviews at the LSYF/SYDRC. Each interview took an average of one and half hour. Interviews were conducted at the LSYF/SYDRC office mainly after office hours.

West London Somaliland Community

Participant observation

My second case study focused around the West London Somaliland Community. This was another community organisation I had witnessed from its birth. I have known its coordinator for about fifteen years. Both of us lived in Holland and used to be part of a youth association called Nomad. I was invited to the first meeting of West London Somaliland Community in Hayes on 24 March 2007.⁴⁶ The defining character of the organisation has been rooted in the promotion of a distinct Somaliland identity. To enhance this identity, which was intrinsic in its foundation, the organisation has been guided by six principles including representation, accountability, participation, equality, dialogue and respect.

The most recent fieldwork with the organisation included participation in a football tournament throughout Somaliland. I had the opportunity to travel with the organisation to Somaliland with twenty young Somalilanders, four coaches, a cameraman (to document the trip) and a community worker. Prior to the trip I asked young people what their expectations were, what each brought to the group and what they hoped they would gain from the trip, to

⁴⁶ See minutes of the purpose of establishment of West London Somaliland Community held on 24 March, 2007, at 6:30pm in Hayes, Middlesex

get an understanding of why they wanted to take this journey and what their expectations were.

In Somaliland I spent about three weeks with the group travelling through self-declared autonomous *country*⁴⁷ from one city to another. I observed young people playing football, interacting with each other and with the locals. The group received warm welcomes everywhere they went. They were invited to many events and places including hotels and restaurants and government offices including the presidential palace. They had the opportunity to meet with the president of Somaliland and his staff and received further invitations from traditional leaders across the country who showed their appreciations and were said to have enjoyed the company of the young people from the diaspora. They visited charity organisations including orphanages, which seemed to have had a tremendous impact on many of the young men on the trip. Hence, many said they would help these orphanages when they returned back to London.

Workshops and focus groups

Several opportunities arose during the research process, offering spaces for group discussion to tackle the major research themes. WLSC had jointly organised a dynamic conference in Ealing, West London, with the Somaliland based Office for Development and Humanitarian Affairs (ODHA). I was offered the opportunity to organise the workshops, which enabled me to explore the important themes of my thesis. There were five group discussions. I planned these workshops and helped facilitate them. The workshops included issues young Somalis face in London, issues in relation to identity and belonging and how young people deal with them, the reasons for underachievement among young Somalis, the intergenerational gap and the seriousness of extremism. I have invited the same young people that took part in the football tour to Somaliland. Around ten of them turned up each participating in a workshop of his choice. Furthermore, I conducted a focus group at the West London Somaliland Community (WLSC) to evaluate the experiences of the trip to Somaliland. The outcomes of these focus groups emerge in subsequent chapters.

⁴⁷ I use the word *country* in italics given the fact that Somaliland is not officially recognized by the international community and as a mark of respect to the achievements and will of the people of Somaliland. I do not tend to take a political view as far as my research is concerned although I am originally from the region and sympathetic to what Somaliland has achieved (politically, socially etc).

Semi-structured in-depth interviews

Further, I conducted thirteen in-depth interviews while in Somaliland. These interviews were conducted at the hotel we stayed at, in Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland. All interviews were carried out after the tournament ended. The young men had more space to reflect on their journey during these more relaxing occasions.

Finally an evaluation group discussion was conducted to assess whether or not expectations were met and what, if any, possible follow up actions the young men would take since there were consistent expressions of interest in supporting fellow peers in Somaliland.

Assunnah Islamic Centre – Tottenham

Participant observation

Assunnah Islamic Centre is my third and final case study. I occasionally attended this mosque for about three years mainly for Friday prayers, when possible, and during Ramadan. I had also briefly attended a course at the mosque on the interpretation of the Quran. After a while I became acquainted with a number of staff members at the mosque and I became interested in their line of the work. It was here where I discovered that mosques have become more than just a religious space. As the name of the mosque indicates the Islamic *centre* is what it indeed is, given the wide range of projects it runs including the Assunnah Primary School, plus youth and after school clubs, career workshops etc. all committed to ‘offer a holistic Islamic tarbiyah⁴⁸ based on educational experiences to students, nurturing their spiritual, intellectual, social, physical and emotional spheres’. I became interested in how a religious based centre could accommodate young Somali men in need of guidance and structure in their lives in a time when Islam and Muslims in general are viewed with suspicion and distrust.

I participated in a career day on 25 April 2011 giving a talk on the existing gaps between young Somalis and their parents and suggesting possible solutions. Other topics addressed during the event included the importance of education from an Islamic perspective, how

⁴⁸ Arabic word for discipline/ to raise

Somali children were adapting to education in Britain, educational barriers and alternatives in the Somali community and new tuition fees, graduate life and employment. The event attracted around seven hundred people, which clearly indicated the need for such activities. The mosque further organised regular workshops and meetings with external agencies.

Focus groups

There were three focus groups carried out at Assunnah mosque covering various themes including belonging, education, and (UK) foreign policy. Young people were quite eager to discuss these topics during their regular Friday evening meetings – usually running for one hour from 9pm to 10pm. This was a convenient moment since many young males come to the mosque to learn more about Islam particularly focusing on the interpretation of the *Qur'an*. I often sat with these young men to benefit from the classes and use the opportunity to talk to them after the class. This was not an issue for most young men since they spent most of their weekend evenings at the mosque as part of the Assunnah Youth intervention. This was generally a large group consisting of anything between fifteen and twenty young men. The atmosphere was very relaxed, providing a conducive setting for the research.

Semi-structured in depth interviews

I conducted ten interviews at the mosque, using various office spaces. Whilst this was convenient, there were some practical challenges however. The mosque is a very busy centre and at times it was almost impossible to conduct the interviews as result of the continuous movements of worshippers and others seeking enquiries about the mosque. Having said that, the mosque remained the only place where I repeatedly easily exceeded the one hour interview length, interviews lasting anything between one and half to two hours. This was an atmosphere in which young people seemed to find it easy to speak freely. Informal conversations often continued after the interview itself had been concluded. Young participants would ask questions about the research in general, for instance or talk about their experiences in greater depth. I sensed that young people wanted to use such spaces to express their views and interest more generally. Many had ambitions to go university and asked me about my experiences in higher education and I was pleased to talk them as a token of appreciation for their time.

Discussion

This thesis examined the Somali communities through multiple sites across London. Since the study was engaged in multiple sites it was anticipated that each site would provide a different context in order to understand the differences as well as the similarities between these various sites (Baxter and Jack, 2008). Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001) suggest that researching a case is a complex undertaking due to the vast amount of data embedded in qualitative research.

Following Ragin's (1992) conceptual framework I suggest the thesis was 'specific' in the sense that it is focused on the lived experiences of young Somali men in London. Furthermore, I argue that this research is both empirically real and bounded as well as a theoretical construct. Thus, since a multi-sited ethnography that enhances the case study was assumed and identified during the process of this study, it was fitting to suggest that the cases were (the stories of young Somali men across multiple sites) 'found' and 'made' in Ragin's terms (ibid). In my case studies this distinction is blurred. Assunnah Islamic Centre is a case in hand. I have always been interested in the role of religion in young people's lives. Here the argument can be made that my case is *made* since I used mixed methods research approach as a theoretical construct to shed light on the experiences of young Somalis in London. Likewise, the same argument can be made that my case is *found* since I developed my interest in the specific application of a religious space as one of my case studies. I developed such interest and knowledge during my time at the Islamic centre, which became an integral part of my thesis. The emphasis here remains on the empirical evidence (ibid). This has further helped me to rationalize the specificity of the case study and allowed space for a more nuanced analysis with regards to the connections between the various research sites. These relevant case study factors were taken into account and appropriated alongside the mixed methods discussed below.

Multi-sited ethnography and transnational diaspora

My thesis is engaged with various sites in different geographical locations. It is, therefore, fitting to assume a multi-sited ethnography and take up the conceptual and methodological difficulties presented by the method. Marcus, who introduced the concept of multi-sited ethnography, argues that it:

moves from its conventional single-site location, contextualised by macro-constructions of a larger social order, such as the capitalist world system, to multiple sites of observation and participation that cross-cut dichotomies such as the 'local' and the 'global,' the 'lifeworld' and the 'system' (see also Marcus, 1998, 1995, p. 95).

As Hine (2007) suggests, the multi-sited ethnography has the potential to create innovative ideas of engagement while it explores different ways to enhance the progress of theory and practice, which was evident in my experience. Further, critical insight is not gained by simply moving around different sites – as appropriated by the multi-sited ethnography – but being mobile also allowed me to see the practice encountered in new lights. This made the formulation of new theoretical interventions possible (ibid). Added to this, the notion of 'multiplicity became a common theme in my multi-sited' approach, which is the distinctive feature of the concept. Generally, I noted that diversity and differences between the various research sites were found through practical engagements and by examining the different experiences in these sites.

It is generally assumed that the localised nature of various research methods (i.e. ethnography) is less suited to get an across-the-board view of a transnational community such as the Somali (Peltonen, 2007; Burawoy, 2000; Marcus, 1998). However, it would be appropriate to provide meaningful accounts of communities confronted with the intensification of time and space compression typical of globalising transnational communities (Burawoy, 2000). The focus, instead, should be on gaining modest representations and descriptions of young Somali men in broader transnational contexts. Echoing this, Marcus (1997; 1995) argues, multi-sited ethnography should be viewed as a process – or processes –, which takes place in different settings. As the researcher, I needed to be aware of these differences by (continuously) evaluating and (re)negotiating my own position and adapting appropriately in order to make sound links between sites and undertake the possible comparisons produced by the various research them (sites). Transcending the multi-local strategy advocated by Marcus (1995), Hannerz suggests that research should also be trans-local (1998) ensuring that links of activities – including social, political and

economic – that are kept intact through transnational engagement are adequately explored. The West London Somaliland Community was such a useful case in hand.

But the multi-sited ethnography raises methodological as well as practical challenges. It was important to be aware of these challenges and shortcomings in order to avoid them where possible. Hage (2005), is one commentator that sharply articulates the shortcomings the multi-sited ethnography. He argues that multi-sitedness is not very helpful and dismisses its existence. He states that the approach is impractical and an ordinary matter, such as jetlag for example, and other difficulties that come with long-haul flights are underlined. He takes issues with the lack of consideration for how such long-haul flights could possibly affect people with family and teaching commitments that often need to cover multiple transnational sites in limited time. He goes on to argue that the concept is an untenable proposition since the setting in which one operates automatically requires a thick ethnographer, which, accordingly, is impossible to maintain within the given time and space and despite many contacts and return visits. I take Hage's point but as far as my research is concerned the issues raised are less applicable to my own situation. Hage further draws on Friedman's critique on transnational movements who argues that 'less than two per cent of the world's population is on the move, internationally' and that "the discourse (on the primacy of movement in the world) assumes, without any research to support it, that the whole world is on the move" (2005, p. 469). However, although Hage takes notice of this, he suggests that Friedman's critique does not help us understand the significance of movement in the way it shapes people's lives.

To some extent Marcus (1995, pp. 105–110) deals with this by proposing to 'follow people', 'the thing', 'the metaphor', 'the plot, story or allegory', 'the life or biography' and 'the conflict' (through modes of constructions and techniques) . For Comaroff and Comaroff (2003, p. 169) researchers and ethnographers alike need to look beyond the multi-sited ethnography to ensure that once a research project is "orientated to particular sites and grounded issues, it is pursued on multiple dimensions and scales". This is clearly something that I have been aware of during my fieldwork and data collection exercise. To articulate their thought Comaroff and Comaroff suggest three methodological operations. First a researcher needs "to map the *substance of the phenomenal landscape* on which any

discursive flow is grounded” (2003, p. 168), wherein the essence of research and its scope are highlighted. Secondly, a further mapping exercise of the *extensions of the phenomenal landscape* (2003, p. 169) – taking account of the four critical dimensions⁴⁹ – is necessary, stressing “its various signs and images, tracking the migration of the latter from their densest intersections to wherever else they may lead” (2003, p.168). And thirdly, one needs ‘to trace the passage of a discursive flow over time, which can illuminate “what, precisely, is new about it and what is not, what are the relative proportions of rupture and continuity to which it speaks, what is unique and what is merely a local instance of a wider phenomenon” (2003, p.170). Having said that, this must be accompanied by criteria that ground the choice of research sites to prevent the focus becoming constrained and limited to fixed problems and partial assessment.

Data Analysis

My analysis reflected the mixed methods approach, which guided my choice of research methods. Given the extent of my fieldwork my thesis has produced large amounts of data which ‘include verbatim notes and transcribed recordings of interviews and focus groups, jotted notes and more detailed “fieldnotes’ of observational research, a diary or chronological account, and (my own)... reflective notes made during the research” (Pope et al., 2000, pp. 14–16) all providing detailed descriptions of the experiences of young Somali men in London at the three different research sites. Also, the thesis included a fieldtrip to Somaliland. This was an opportunity that developed during the fieldwork that was not planned in the initial thesis proposal.

The idea is not to assume or (pre)judge the outcomes. These sites needed rigorous analysis. For Miles and Huberman (2002, p. 309), data analysis is a hands-on approach to the progress, testing, and use of thorough qualitative data analysis methods, which is “essentially about detection, and tasks of defining, categorizing, theorizing, explaining, exploring and mapping are fundamental analyst’s role”. To put this in perspective they discuss various approaches to qualitative data analysis including *Interpretivism* (ibid), which my thesis has employed to

⁴⁹ Comaroff and Comaroff suggest the fourth dimension – the conventional three, of course, being length, breadth, and depth – is located in the virtual reaches of cyberspace, in which the constitutive connections between the local and the global are constantly remapped.

address the meaning of layers of data collection as well as the capturing of the mundane day-to-day experiences of a community that further allowed the unexpected to be evaluated through the mixed methods research approach. It is noteworthy that the inherently multidisciplinary character of my research did not fit tidily with any singular academic framework. Thus, it is important to employ multiple data gathering and data analysis approaches. This is also my main reason for using a mixed methods approach.

The analysis of my study assumed a thematic approach to the three research sites wherein different relevant themes were identified and linked to patterns which have emerged from the in depth interviews, focus groups, participant observations etc. As part of the mixed methods approach I have also employed ethnographic skills to determine ‘thick’ descriptions from the research sites. Thus, the text emerging from such exercises is what Emerson et al. called (1995, p. 202) ‘thematic narrative’. They suggest that the researcher creates and elaborates clear analytical themes during the coding and memo-writing process (ibid). In doing so the researcher:

organises some of these themes into a coherent ‘story’ about life and events in the setting studied. Such a narrative requires selecting only some small portion of the total set of fieldnotes and then linking them into a coherent text representing some aspect or slice of the word studied (ibid).

The application of ethnographic skills as part of the mixed methods approach was instrumental for the content analysis of data. Thus, the thematic analysis I made reference to was Altheida’s ‘ethnographic content analysis’ (ECA) that represents a codification of certain procedures which differs ‘from traditional quantitative content analysis in that the researcher is constantly revising the themes or categories that are distilled from the examination of the documents’ (quoted in Bryman, 2001, p. 381). According to Altheida, ethnographic content analysis follows:

a recursive and reflexive movement between concept development-sampling-data, collection-data, coding-data, and analysis-interpretation. The aim is to be systematic and analytic but not rigid. Categories and variables initially guide the study, but others are allowed and expected to emerge during the study, including an orientation to constant discovery and constant comparison of relevant situations, settings, styles, images, meanings and nuances (Altheide, 1996, p. 16).

Thus, by adopting this approach I allowed myself a greater sense of flexibility that enabled me to move freely back and forth between the actual outline and (research) design and ideas (Bryman, 2012).

Following this approach simplified the process of data collection procedures. I created relevant themes and sub-themes through this process. These themes became the focus in the three different research sites and were useful to address the objectives of the thesis. Following from this, a framework for analysis was established and particular narratives surfacing from the data collection (interviews, fieldnotes, focus groups, observations etc) were included in the framework. As part of the thematic analysis I used the qualitative data analysis software Nvivo⁵⁰ (Bryman, 2008; Richards, 2009). Nvivo is purely there to assist with organising and managing data more effectively (Welsh 2002). Nvivo has essential tools that simplify and speed up coding activities, applying memos, syncing data employed in various sections of the data management software etc. As carefully argued by Pope et al. (2000, pp.114-116), it is worth noting that “software packages can help with analysis but should not be viewed as short cuts to rigorous and systematic analysis”. Other helpful research and data storage tools I used included zotero (a good tool that enabled me to manage the literature and references) and Dropbox (a cloud based, free to use, data storage system). Because both zotero and Dropbox are online based I was able to access them fully when and wherever I wanted. This was very useful for someone like myself who has broader family commitments and highly benefits from flexible workspaces.

Role of researcher

As a researcher the mixed methods research approach I adopted was important because of my significant role in the collection of primary data. The process of data collection requires the recognition of personal values (essential guides for living and general behaviour often costumed by deep beliefs i.e. religion), principles (partly underpinned by values as in a moral and ethical sense but also by knowledge through experiences or scientific knowledge that forms the basis of our world views and deeds), and assumptions (matters we normally take for granted (Bryman, 2008; May, 2001). Acceptable attitudes based on preconceived

⁵⁰ NVivo is a software package to aid qualitative data analysis designed by QSR (Welsh, 2002).

principles, values etc) at the outset of the study (May 2001). Thus, unreflexive researchers can end up in an unnecessarily precarious situation. As Maykut and Morehouse suggest:

The qualitative researcher's perspective is perhaps a paradoxical one: it is to be acutely tuned-in to the experiences and meaning systems of others—to indwell—and at the same time to be aware of how one's own biases and preconceptions may be influencing what one is trying to understand (1994, p. 123).

Lock et al. state that the researcher's input should be effective and practical rather than harmful (see May 2001).

A personal journey

My interest in the generational gap between young Somalis and their parents stems from very personal, direct and indirect experiences at various levels spanning over more than two and half decades in Europe where I have been residing. From very early on I was confronted with the complexities and necessities that characterise generational matters and realised how these affect the parent-child relationship. From a personal perspective it is important to understand the differences, realities and social outcomes that emerge from the research processes (both those from the field as well as my own experiences) while recognising their significance to research. It is the reflection on these experiences that has shaped my interest and approach to this research, which became my point of departure. Davies noted that although it is unthinkable to exclusively obtain the knowledge we acquire simply through self-examination “we cannot research something with which we have no contact, from which we are completely isolated” (1999, p. 3). She goes on to argue that, “all researchers are to some degree connected to, a part of, the object of their research” (ibid), which I aim to highlight below by charting my own historical experience.

As the eldest son of a family of ten – father, mother, five sisters and three brothers – I was often tasked to attend school progress meetings of my younger siblings and accompanied my parents as a translator at important meetings including social housing and doctor appointments. Despite my father being highly educated and well versed in the English language my parents often relied on me to assist them during these meetings. The Dutch

language and culture were the two main obstacles for them. Seeing my parents struggle in an unfamiliar Dutch society and a rather complex education system had a profound impact on me and despite my parents' high expectations, I soon came to terms with the fact that I was on my own when it came to my (educational) achievements and any future directions I may take. I had to often navigate through the system and consider the options available from a young age. Coming from Saudi Arabia to Holland aged eleven and without any formal education further complicated matters for me as a young child but made me certainly appreciate the free education and socialising with children from school. At the beginning I received special Dutch language classes for most of the day with few other migrant children in the primary school. This was a frustrating experience as I was unable to speak, read or write Dutch and join my peers in the class. However, I would find this experience encouraging rather than limiting, particularly after arriving from Saudi Arabia where I had spent most of my time at home. Further adding to my educational challenges, I experienced racial prejudice for the first time in my life in the small village where we were homed⁵¹. Ethnic insults, which I managed to understand with rapidity, made me painfully aware I was different from others – e.g. being told to 'go back to your own country, you do not belong here' etc.

I managed to complete my school and college education with success, which paved the way for four years of higher education at INHolland⁵², University of Professional Education in Diemen, Amsterdam. It was during this time that I started to engage with voluntary and community work with a particular focus on education. With a few friends I started a project to raise awareness about the Dutch education system wherein we shared our experiences while creating a network for young Somalis to come together. Our shared aim was to give something back to the community.

After completing university in Holland I moved to London in December 2001 after receiving a small award to undertake an MBA course at the American Intercontinental University London (AIU). Despite good progress and high grades I was unable to finance the remainder of the course and had to abandon it. I found a job as a multilingual researcher to sustain

⁵¹ In 1987 we were among the few Somali families and refugees in the village: Emmeloord

⁵² This is the current name of the University formerly known as Hogeschool Holland

myself and pay the bills. At around the same time I also started voluntary work in Hounslow, West London. I got involved in a project run by a Somali organisation that worked with the local council in order to improve the educational standards and achievement of young Somalis, who showed significantly low levels of grades at the time.

Further, I got involved in a mentoring programme run by the Hounslow Local Education Authority (LEA). After completing the course I was placed with an eight-year-old Somali boy in a local school. The boy, who was in care, needed a male role model for a short period of time before relocating to the USA to join his uncle. I was informed that his father had died in the civil war in Somalia and his mother was in such poor health condition that she was unable to look after him. I was intrigued by the ability and intelligence of this little boy but I was equally moved by the adversities he faced in his young life, which seemed to have had a great impact on him. He was unsettled, had problems with attention and showed episodes of aggression during my one-to-one sessions. This experience left me with more questions than answers, which my humble mentoring training did not provide. However, I started to understand some of the broader complexities, which have determined this young boy's life and began to realise the significance of parents' historical journeys and the possible impact these may have on their children.

I then pursued a job as a Group and Family Worker with a company called Pupil Parent Partnership Project (PPPP), based in Acton, London Borough of Ealing where I looked after young new arrivals mostly with refugee backgrounds (some were migrants from Eastern Europe) from diverse countries including Somalia, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Poland, Iraq and Palestine, amongst others. Their personal journeys and experiences were familiar to me but unique in their own right at the same time. The longer I worked with these young people the more I wanted to know more about their situations and backgrounds.

After three years with the PPPP, I moved on to enroll on a part-time MA course in Migration and Diaspora Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). I was also fortunate enough to acquire a part-time job to combine the new course with. During my MA studies I started to make more sense of the migration experiences of young people. I started to engage with relevant themes and topics including migration, diaspora, transnationalism,

citizenship and refugee-hood, which have become critical topics in my current PhD project. Meanwhile, my voluntary work encountered a massive surge as I became entangled in multiple youth projects with various organisations across London. Through the voluntary work I also started to liaise with statutory agencies such as the Home Office, Metropolitan (MET) Police and local authorities, as well as external agencies including local and national service providers.

An insider/outsider perspective

I am considered as an insider because I undertook research on young Somali men in London. Since I belong to the Somali community my insider perspective gives me an advantage over someone (outsider) who is not from the Somali community and does not have that bonding and belonging as I do (Rubin, 2012; Kanuha, 2000).

What makes me an insider? My migration experiences have shaped the way I view my life in general and the community and the wider society that I am part of. I share many similarities with my research subjects. For example I was born outside my country of origin, faced several adaptation challenges in most countries where I lived and engage in transnational activism more frequently. I am concerned about the situation back 'home', and question the veracity of the way certain media outlets portray the Somali community in general and young Somali people in particular. I feel also somewhat uneasy about the negative impact of intergenerational matters and the position of young people, which I believe is being undermined. Also there are certain identity dynamics I carry. I am sympathetic to the progress of Somaliland – the breakaway region of the 'former' Somali Republic. However, I am quite confident with my Somali, Dutch and British identity and see no conflict between these forms of identifications. I have Dutch nationality since I lived in Holland for over thirteen years and London feels like 'home' after being here for almost 13 years. In addition I consider myself black and Muslim and subject to the 'suspicion' of being radicalised that also affects the community, especially young people. Further, being an active community member I often take on a range of roles and sit on the boards of several community and charitable organisations.

These are all critical engagements and the fact that I share so many aspects with my research informants has helped me a great deal allowing to “gain more intimate insights in their opinion” (Rubin, 2012, p. 304). I did find myself writing in the ‘we’ and ‘us’ as well as ‘they’ and ‘them’ from time to time. But I also understand that although experiences might have similar patterns they are not exactly the same. There was nothing implicitly monolithic about the experiences of the young men I researched. Also, as a researcher I prefer not to think in binary opposites as in ‘effective researcher’ or ‘bad researcher’ when considering issues in relation to insider/outsider perspectives. Regardless of the advantages or disadvantages gained from such positions I appreciate that it is paramount to keep myself in check and reflect on situations whether this is filtered through my thinking or my writing. Thus, I ought to be aware of the importance of taking care because of my (similar) background that research authenticity and matters of reflexivity are not undermined (Kanuha, 2000)

The insider/outsider dichotomy is often complex or rather risks oversimplification when contrasted along gender, ethnic and languages lines (Rubin, 2012). Matters about power and elitism may affect the process (Alvesson, 2011). I am aware that without considerable distance and continuous reflection, impartiality may be hard to ensure. Creswell (2009) argues that the researcher needs to be conscious of the idea that past experiences bring some biases into the research and have the tendency to influence the data collection procedure and the analysis of their findings. Further, awareness and understanding of the critical research context advances the researcher’s consciousness, understanding and sensitivity, which will help to engage with the research participants (ibid). Alvesson stresses that it’s crucial to ask the right questions and have the right attitude and style to ensure “the context, frame and content of study” (2011, p. 28) are well shaped. As a researcher I need to be open about my investigation to ensure that engagement is possible and academic voyeurism is avoided. I have to further consider my own political, social and personal repercussions regarding the thesis. Further, considering the marginal position of young Somalis and the Somali community in general I need to ensure that power dynamics between myself and the young Somalis I engage with follows a clear ethical practice in the field to take account of safety and confidentiality aspects (Skelton et al., 1998).

Ethical considerations

When I started thinking about the ethics of my research the first question that came to mind was related to my multiple roles and how I should be dealing with that without undermining or harming the research process; my role as volunteer and my relationships with the people I work with – some who have become friends – and the young people I work with. Having completed the fieldwork I have to confess that at times I was tempted to become too involved with what was going on within the organisation (LSYF) because I tend to care and understand the issues, which were sometimes so personal that ignoring them was extremely difficult. I would see myself at risk of slipping away from my role as a researcher from time to time while becoming more immersed with the organisation and its matters. Having said this I realise that engaging in a number of roles related to my research interests has not ultimately been detrimental in my case. For my own analysis I had to make sure that I separated emotion from reality and reflected on the purpose of my engagements and the rationale of my actions. I understood that I could not disconnect myself from my research sites completely; in fact I believed that I was part of them as I worked with them and participated in their general activities and meetings. What I needed to make certain, as a researcher, was to be at a place where I could critically assess what was at stake. This is highlighted by Alvesson (2011) who argues that the “overall ‘ethical principle’” (p.149) should be a more ‘realistic’ appreciation of the situation and an increased ability and interest in critically examining what goes on are in the interests of most people’ (ibid). Alvesson believes that informed consent, confidentiality and truthful reporting are often key topics (2011) when considering research ethics. There are sound research (organisations) and good guidance to keep the researcher grounded and focused, which are discussed in the next paragraph.

In relation to educational research there are two relevant associations that provide guidelines that underpin the ‘ethical principle’ of research. The Economic and Social Research Council (E.S.R.C, 2011), which funded this CASE studentship, provides a framework wherein these ethical principles are addressed, how to implement them and what procedures to follow⁵³. Besides its main focus on research perspectives on education, the British Educational

Other relevant professional associations that formulated the codes of ethics include the British Sociological Association (BSA) and the Social Research Association

Research Association (BERA 2004) also provides useful guidelines on ethics and ‘considers that all educational research should be conducted within an ethic of respect for: the person, knowledge, democratic values, the quality of educational research and academic freedom’. The association focuses on critical areas including the research context, participants’ perspectives, the researcher’s responsibility and the regulation of research. For Wellington:

an ‘ethic’ is a moral principle or a code of conduct which ... governs what people do. It is concerned with the way people act or behave. The term ‘ethics’ usually refers to the moral principles, guiding conduct, which are held by a group or even a profession (though there is no logical reason why individuals should not have their own ethical code)’ (2000, p. 54)

I realise that ethical issues always arise as these are imbedded in the research process and never static. Bryman (2012) raises an interesting point and states that the discussions about ethics matter due to the role of values in the research process that evolve around ‘how do we treat the people on whom we conduct research’ and ... “are there activities in social research we should not engage in our relations with them”? (2012, p. 130). He further draws on Dinner and Crandall and offers four relevant areas about ethical principles concerning “whether there is harm to the participants, a lack of informed consent, an invasion of privacy and whether deception is involved” (ibid) As argued by Wellington (2000) ethics should be seen as continuous processes that should be considered throughout the research. These are questions that I needed to keep in mind constantly for each interview, focus group and observation.

Summary

This chapter offered definitions and clarifies various research approaches. It further discussed the rationale for choosing a mixed methods approach and follows Creswell et al.’s assumption that when qualitative and quantitative research approaches are combined research problems are better understood “than either approach alone” (2011, p. 18). Given the fact that young Somali men form integral parts of different diaspora communities the mixed methods approach was well-suited in the sense that it provided various relevant tools to consider the connections, patterns and relationships that occur from the research sites. Despite the limitations and further conceptual challenges (i.e. potential bias to data when combined)

associated with mixed methods approach (the multi-sited case study approach, the use of ethnographic skills as well as the quantification of relevant data) was a relevant approach to articulate the research and its outcomes more thoroughly. I have stressed that the thesis is primarily rooted in qualitative research and clarified where quantitative approaches were applicable.

In terms of data collections and analyses various outcomes were measured. As far as participant observation is concerned three research sites were selected including LSYF, West London Somaliland Community and Assunnah Mosque whereby different Somali migration experiences (including social, religious, political and economic) were put into perspective. The participatory nature of the research was not only relevant as a data collection method but it was significant as it is well suited to understand its multi-site perspective. 32 in-depth interviews with young men aged between 16-25 were undertaken across the three sites, which produced valuable insights and (quantitative) data into people's biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings' (May, 2001, p. 120). The chapter further highlighted that three focus groups were conducted in each research site including young males only groups, parents groups and mixed groups. The purpose of conducting focus groups was to listen and gather information by way of "better understanding about how people feel or think about an issue" (Krueger and Casey, 2009, p. 253). There have further been discussions with statutory agencies and government departments (i.e. with Home Office, MET Police, Youth Offending Team, FCO) to look at the broader integration issues in relation to the Somali community in the UK as well other engagements with various Somali voluntary community organisations. Finally there have been various data collections, which were quantified to measure various engagements and practices of young people such as the *percentage self-reference of young Somali males* (see table 5.1), *percentage belonging reference of young Somali males* (see table 5.2) *measuring voting dynamics* (see table 6.2), *educational and employment participation* (see table 6.3) etc.

The mixed methods approach produced vast amount of data across the three research sites in need of critical analysis. This was a hands-on approach which is "essentially about detection, and tasks of defining, categorizing, theorizing, explaining, exploring and mapping are fundamental analyst's role" (Huberman and Miles, 2002, p. 309). The thesis employed

interpretivism through thematic narrative building to articulate the day-to-day experiences of young Somali males across the sites in a coherent manner. The application of ethnographic skills were helpful to represent and codify procedures and allow flexibility to constantly and continuously (re)evaluate data, research outline and ideas (Bryman, 2012).

Despite the limitations commonly associated with insiders, my position as a Somali researcher and personal relationships have helped me enormously with access and conduct of my research as a whole. For example site selection, a process otherwise perceived as daunting, was relatively straightforward and less time consuming.

In terms of ethics following Wellington's suggestion (2000) my approach was straightforward: do not harm yourself and do no harm others. My various positions (i.e. community activist, researcher, volunteer, friend etc.) often needed careful considerations and a great deal of sensitivity. Wearing various hats as such can complicate the practical conduct of research, particularly when research task and community volunteering encounter. This has the tendencies to affect sound judgments. I was able to remove myself from situations to effectively reflect on situations more thoroughly. Also supervisions have also played a critical role in ensuring that I kept a certain distance from the field when and where necessary. Having said that, keeping distance and adhering to 'objective' stances sometimes became noble ambitions when confronted with the reality on the ground, specially when dealing with marginalised communities that are perceived with suspicion and associated with disloyalty.

Chapter 4. Intergenerational clash: the dynamics among young Somalis and their parents

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to unravel the complexities of parent-child relationships focussing on intergenerational value commonalities and differences among Somali parents and their male offspring. Language is used as a conceptual lens to articulate important gaps that exist between the generations. Along with other themes of the thesis the analysis was based on three main groups following Rumbaut's (2004) typology of distinct generational cohorts: Somali parents, 1.5 and second generation Somali males. There were also some cases of 1.75 and 1.25 generations identified and analysed. Particular interest is paid to the continuous changing processes that influence the parent-child relationship and the unremitting (re)negotiations to maintain and enhance that same relationship. Drawing on the research data – interviews, focus groups and participant observations – from three different sites further highlights the research contributions. Notions of hegemonic masculinity run through the chapter and are addressed accordingly (Hansen, 2008; Relond, 2001).

The chapter starts to articulate the role of language in the child parent relationship. In doing so a critical assessment of the dimensions and barriers of language usage is provided (Navas et al., 2007) while identifying the commonalities and differences between parents and their children. More specifically, the critical challenges generally related to diaspora acculturation are briefly emphasised (Berry and Sam, 1997; Bourhis et al., 1997). The chapter continues with the empirical analysis and draws on the work of Ruban Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes (2005, 2001; see also Rumbaut, 2004). It captures the changing characteristics commonly associated with generational matters and the impact these have on the actual parent-child relationship through the role of language, cultural and intergenerational dimensions. Here the chapter engages with Presnky's concepts of "digital natives" and "digital immigrant accent" (Prensky, 2001a, 2001b) to articulate specific aspects beyond the intergenerational language barrier . The final paragraph discusses the possible impact that institutional relations and socio-economic factors may have on the development and achievements of young people. This section highlights how parent-child communication gaps also spill over into

communication gaps with key agencies such as schools. The chapter concludes with a brief summary highlighting the main areas of the discussion.

Role of languages in the parent-child relationship

*What are the main difference between yourself and your parents/elders?
... how many pages have you got? I a mean language is different, the lifestyle, the way of thinking, how they (parents as well as their young adults) act (Mahad 25)⁵⁴*

Mahad's response to my question on what he considered as the main differences between his parents' and himself is a good representation of the data collected. Additionally, it is worth noting that language was also a frequent feature in the question of what young Somalis and their parents have in common. Language often plays a critical role in the parent-child relationship. It becomes even more important for diaspora families who want to preserve their connection to their country of origin while keeping hold of their traditions and culture. Often there is a tension between parents' desires that their children should speak the host country's language fluently while also maintaining the mother tongue and its potential benefits. These are common expectations on the parents' part who have generally high expectations for their children to do well academically. But reality frequently differs as this dual aim is seldom realised - to the dissatisfaction of both generations. As a result, this created what is generally termed as dissonant disparity (Tardif and Geva, 2006) or dissonant acculturation (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001).

Some studies in the US show a rather positive correlation between adaption and length of stay in the host country (Waters et al., 2010; Navas et al., 2007; Rumbaut, 2004; Portes and Zhou, 1993). In other words the longer a person resides in a country the more likely that person is to be successful. In some instances, one is required to drop their ethnic culture in order to address the disadvantages of language and culture as well as the inter-social conflicts between home and school environment (see Navas et al., 2005; Berry and Sam, 1997;

⁵⁴ All interview accounts are clearly defined with pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants and all interviewee quotes are in italics and not in quotation marks.

Bourhis et al., 1997). Such an approach might not be well placed to address the complexity of Somali intergenerational experiences in the UK and seems rather unrealistic considering the intrinsic value given and the attachment to cultural norms, however different, changing or progressive across the different generations. Generational matters commonly influence young Somalis in complex and significant ways, as this research will show in subsequent paragraphs.

Since the research focuses on Somali males a clear definition of what constitutes these young participants deserves some attention. The study draws on Rumbaut's "typology of distinct generational cohorts defined by age and life stage at migration for the foreign-born, and by parental nativity for the host country" (Rumbaut, 2004, p. 1160), in this case the United Kingdom as highlighted in Figure 4.2. Following Rumbaut's typology the study refers to the following generational cohorts: first generation – include those who are born in their country of origin and arrived in the UK as adults. In this case these will be the Somali parents –, 1.25G – young Somalis who were born abroad and arrived in the UK with their parents between the age of 13 and 17 years old –, 1.5 generation (also referred to as the 'classic 1.5G') – include those born outside the UK but arrived in the UK between 6 to 12 –, 1.75G – consist of those who are born outside the UK but arrived with the parents when they were 5 or younger – and the second generation – Somali youth who are born in the UK but with parents born outside the UK. None of the young people's parents were born in the UK. Rumbaut's typology has some limitations to adequately analyse the empirical data through the application of the generational cohorts. Thus, to articulate and appropriate these cohorts more thoroughly they are carefully redefined to fit the current conditions of young Somalis.

Critical dimensions and barriers of language usage

The language gap between young Somalis and their parents is significant and most respondents identified it as a common barrier. 20 years old Garaad Jama said: *the biggest problem is language barrier* encountered in the parent-child relationship. The results indicate that the use and ability of languages vary among and between generations. For example Somali is the preferred language of communication for parents whereas young people were generally more comfortable with speaking English. Somali language ability among the various youth generations – 1.25, 1.5, 1.75 and 2 generations – reduces by each subsequent

generation though (see figure 4.1). The 1.25 generations youth were often conversant in both English and Somali whereas down the generational line the ability to hold adequate conversations in the Somali language decreased and proficiency in English increased. We can speak here of an *inverted effect of language application* across generations. As figure 4.1 shows more than half of young research participant indicated English as their first language, whereas around 40 per cent stated Somali to be their first language. Over 60 per cent of young people interviewed said that Somali is their second language whereas over a quarter stated English as their second language.

Language	1st language		2nd language		3rd language	
Somali	12	38%	21	66%	2	6%
English	17	53%	9	28%	1	3%
Dutch	2	6%	1	3%	2	6%
Danish	1	3%	Na	0%	Na	0%
Arabic	Na	0%	1	3%	1	3%
Total	32	100%	32	100%	6	19%*

Table 4.2 language use, ability and fluency among Somali youth (*Source: Empirical data*)

It was clear during discussions that most of those who said that Somali was their first language accepted that when it comes to fluency their proficiency in English was far more superior to their spoken Somali. In this instance the first choice for the Somali language was equated with the notion of the mother tongue. Further, beyond these two most common languages, Dutch, Danish and Arabic were three other languages spoken by 19 per cent of respondents. While all respondents are bilingual a further 19 per cent are trilingual. Specially, this applies to young Somalis who have recently migrated from mainland Europe who speak an additional language. The notion of *inverted language application* is further applicable to young Somali people who have acquired a third language – Dutch or Danish – in the past but this was slowly diminishing the longer they stayed in the UK. For example 9 per cent of respondents lost their ability or became fairly poor at best to speak Dutch fluently while

demonstrating fluency in spoken English⁵⁵. A general observation made in all three research sites – the mosque in Tottenham, the youth organisation in Kentish Town and the community association in Hayes – was the common use of English as a communication medium among young Somali people across all youth generational cohorts. For example, the usage of English was evident in the meetings, passing conversations in corridors and during formal and informal group discussions. The recognition that English is the most effective communication tool to get through to young Somali people was apparent at the Assunna Mosque for instance, where formal weekly Friday classes on Islamic theology were held in English. So it was not surprising to see Somali Sheikhs who are multilingual themselves – and are often fluent in Somali and Arabic and to a lesser extent English – generally lecturing young people in English. The use of English as the dominant language in Somali corridors, such as Somali run communities and mosques, is interesting given the frustrations of Somali parents and some older young people on the insufficient use of Somali and the perceived negative impact on the relationship as a result.

Most parents consider Somali language as key to understanding and relating to their children. The language gap does not only exist but it is growing. A father explains *I asked my son ‘why are you still in bed?’ He told me ‘I am knackered’. I got a dictionary and understood that he meant he is tired.* Another anxious father said *‘my children and I have not got the same language’* perhaps coming to terms with the inevitable declining application of Somali between him and his children and the growing shift to English as length of residence in the UK increases. This evidence is supported by existing research on linguistic retention among immigrants. Rumbaut and his colleagues who carried out extensive research among children of immigrants suggest ‘a quick shift to English fluency, if not outright dominance, between first and second generations’ (Rumbaut et al., 2006, p. 447). Even though this is a commonly shared fact it appears not to appease everyone, particularly when politics gets muddled with notions of Britishness and citizenship – aspects addressed in subsequent chapters. More recently, *The Guardian* reported the UK Prime Minister, David Cameron saying “when there have been significant numbers of new people arriving in neighbourhoods ... perhaps not able

⁵⁵ By ‘English’ is meant oral/spoken language. Writing and reading abilities are not examined. However, their educational attainment indicates that they have acquired a certain level of English standard. This is tested in the chapter on citizenship.

to speak the same language as those living there ... on occasions not really wanting or even willing to integrate ... that has created a kind of discomfort and disjointedness in some neighbourhoods” (Watt, 2011).

The continuous question of national identity and the role of language in the UK has a cross Atlantic resonance. Rumbaut et al. in dialogue with Huntington’s book *Who are we? The Challenge to America’s National Identity and Culture* (see Huntington, 2005) test his assertion that the large concentration of Latin American immigrants in South California ‘during the last three decades of the twenty first century threatens the core of American identity and culture in the twenty first century’ (2006). Huntington’s main argument is that Latin Americans – Mexicans in particular – are segregated from the mainstream American society, are bilingual and not interested in linguistic assimilation. For that reason, Huntington suggests, “there is no Americano dream. There is only the American dream created by an Anglo-Protestant Society. Mexican-Americans will share in that dream and that society only if they dream in English” (quoted in Rumbaut et al., 2006, p. 448).

Huntington’s claim is contested by Rumbaut et al. (2006) who argue that even in California, with the biggest concentration of Spanish speakers in the USA, Spanish will almost disappear by the third generation and will not threaten English in any shape or form. According to Portes and Schauffler (1994) the first generation acquires sufficient English to participate in the labor market, the second generation is more likely to employ their ethnic language at home when communicating with parents but uses English outside and in school and for the third generation the English language becomes the dominant language both in and outside the house. Hence, Spanish will follow a familiar trend in the USA “described as a *graveyard* for languages because of its ability to absorb immigrants by the millions and extinguish their mother tongues within few generations” (Rumbaut et al., 2006, p. 458).

What is, however, interesting is the relatively positive attitude of young Somali people to retain their ethnic language. Some young respondents shared their frustrations and inability to express themselves fully in Somali while showing concerns for the subsequent younger generations. Garaad said:

I love Somali [language], you know, I want to give it a go. I want to learn Somali. You see there's nowhere you can go and learn Somali. So I think the best thing is (that) Somali communities should, you know, provide ... classes where a kid can go and learn Somali and the parents, like, should teach their kids Somali as soon as (possible)... They should not be brought up in English. (It) should be Somali in the house ... and now technology is pretty good so there is Somali cartoons and everything. So I think it's (about) the parents willing to do it. The child has been brought up in the UK and obviously, his first language is going to be English and his mother is Somali. So, if that child does not get enough attention from the mother or the father, like the mother is not willing to teach the child in Somali, obviously the child is not going to pick up Somali straightaway. You are just going straight into English because that is what everyone speaks. English... (becomes your) first language. So the problem is English ...(because) ..most young Somali kids (around) the age of 5 to 6, it's pure English (what they speak). They wouldn't know Somali. The only word they know is 'Somali', 'I'm Somali'. It is a language problem and parents don't really care if their son speaks Somali. I think parents prefer English than Somali. They (parents) don't take ... enough care to give them (the) attention (they need and) ... teach them Somali. (Garaad 20).

Language and ethnic belonging

Why is there a need for ethnic language retention? This is indeed an interesting issue: finding the reasons why young Somalis assume that retaining their ethnic language are important and vary. In this respect I suggest three different dimensions: ethnic, cultural, and environmental dimensions. An example of the ethnic dimension is reflected in Hashim's assertion on Somali language retention:

They are Somalis, so even if the young people think 'I'm born here I'm not Somali' or all that, I see them as Somalis or the society will see them as Somalis. They will be labeled Somalis so you can't get away from it. (Hashim, 24)

Another and perhaps more important reason is the need to communicate, understand and relate to each other. The application of a bidirectional approach was a helpful measure across various arenas including language, ethnic belonging and attitudes, in this instance in delineating particular challenging types of acculturation. Consequently, given that a language gap is often cited as a critical factor in the parent-child relationship, Somali generations are said to *have a big problem in understanding each other and that needs to be rectified (Hashim, 24)*. There exist clear tensions here. One way of lessening these tensions is *I would say the parents need to learn English, and the kids need to learn Somali (ibid)*. Hence, the

general consensus is that those who hold a sufficient language ability have better relationships and are, therefore, less prone to conflict or disagreement (Tardif and Geva, 2006; Phinney, 1990). 16-year-old Shahid pointed out that he has a good relationship with his parents:

...because my Somali is good. But you see some kids whose Somali is not that good, and their parents' English is not that good either. So you see that communication is hard to establish. But my Somali is kind of good and my family's Somali and my family's English is kind of good. (Shahid 16)

It is worth noting that the above reflections on the importance of language retention are through the observations of the young respondents who, while considering their own experiences, share their concerns about the younger generation often advocating a balanced language acquisition for parents (to have command of English) and young people (to learn Somali).

However, Mahad Ismail who mentors young Somalis has observed different trends within the generational cohorts. For example the 1.5G:

Will attempt at least to learn a little bit (about) their culture, but the second generation is actually ashamed of it. They actually, don't even categorize themselves as being Somali. They are actually belittling you if you are Somali. So with the 1.5G he's actually envious he can't speak Somali, but (with) the second generation he is distancing himself away from it. So that's a big difference. (Mahad 25⁵⁶)

We can clearly observe the shift between the 1.5 and the 2G regarding their attitudes to language retention and the associated cultural identity, which resonates with Portes and his colleagues' assertion that language dies as the length of residence in the host country increases (see Portes and Rumbaut, 2006; Portes and Schauffler, 1994). This is also an example of how language can serve to highlight socio-economic and cultural differences that can divide peers from the same ethnic group from one another (Rothe et al., 2011). As argued by Portes et al., "immigrant children growing up in impoverished communities receive no encouragement to retain their parents' native language, since the native language is

⁵⁶ Mahad is one of the youth mentors I interviewed for my research

stigmatised as a symbol of lower status” (quoted from Rothe et al., 2011, p. 78). These two contrasting cases – desire to retain or distancing from native language – address a common outcome in impoverished ethnic enclaves (Rothe et al. 2011). Other reasons to retain or distance from one’s ethnic language could be linked to the (mis)representation of immigrant communities in the host country as well as global narratives including the War on Terror and Islamophobia (see Yuval-Davis 2011).

Language during interviews

It is worth noting that the use of language and terminologies are important aspects in need of careful consideration when operating in highly politicized circumstances. A relevant case in point is Mette Berg’s research on Cuban diasporic generations in Spain wherein she talks about her discomfort “about my language when interviewing exiles because they were so sensitive to certain terms and expressions” (2011, p. 73). I also encountered the occasional challenge of balancing and bridging language barriers during the research process without losing focus and direction. For example, there were words/terms that were perceived by some young Somali men as hostile to Islam and Islamic values. Terms such as ‘Muslim terrorists’ or ‘Islamism’ had negative connotations attached to them. I often gave the necessary context within which I used such terminologies, citing the actual references. Young people generally appeared to understand my position as a researcher but felt that they needed to ‘defend’ Islam. As Akram (17) said *we Muslims should not be using these words, as these are what non-believers use to attack the fundamentals of our belief. But you are a Muslim and you understand what I am saying*. Unlike Berg, who is not Cuban and conducts research in non native languages (Spanish and English) I am a native Somali (although almost all my research with young people was conducted in English) and a Muslim and respondents seemed to take some comfort from that, which allowed them to express their views without thinking about offending me. However, even though I was generally treated as a member of the community they wanted to make it clear that even between Muslims and community members there are boundaries as to how we refer to one another. They often made a point of that. Most people I spoke with wanted me to make sure that I was representing their views clearly and that I was advocating on their behalf.

Contested narratives: generational cohorts revised

The relationship among the various diasporic generations can be ambiguous where boundary maintenance and socially constructed positions are at play. Berg's (2006) study of Cuban exiles in Spain stated similar findings despite the difference in context and location. The greater the generational gap, in terms of age and length of residence in the UK, the greater the ambiguity between the generations. In this respect, there are some social terms formulated, maintained and communicated to identify certain groups within the Somali community. This includes *Farax*⁵⁷ – mostly used by the younger generation to describe the first generation Somali man who is generally unemployed, faces some difficulties with integrating to the mainstream society, usually speaks (little) English with a strong accent and chews Khat⁵⁸. *Xalimo*⁵⁹ - is *Farax's* female counterpart – apart from the association with chewing khat. Although their origins are difficult to substantiate both *Farax* and *Xalimo* are considered (old) typical traditional Somali names and, hence, used to distinguish the older generation from the young. Accordingly, the younger generation refers to *Farax* and *Xalimo* when they observe attitudes and behaviours that fit their descriptions, e.g. chewing khat, not attuned with popular youth culture etc.

Another term that has become more widely used by the younger generation is *freshly* to describe new comers among the young generation. *Freshies* have strong accents, are often very interested in learning and education, face some challenges with accustoming to youth trends and are looking for a sense of belonging while seeking acceptance among their peers. *Fish and chips* is the term used by the older generation to refer to young Somalis who have, accordingly, accustomed to 'the British way of life' and have more in common with British culture rather than their Somali traditions. The *Fish and Chips* generation is generally considered to be culturally ignorant and less informed about the Somali situation in the country of origin, which occupies many on a daily basis. *Euro trash* is a derogatory phrase to refer to the more recent young Somali arrivals from mainland Europe to the UK. Often young British Somalis view them with a critical eye and consider them to lack Somali manners, challenging the more conservative character of Somali customs. In particular, the more

⁵⁷ Pronounced as Farah

⁵⁸ Khat (*Catha edulis*) is a leafy green plant containing two main stimulants. Their main effects are similar to, but less powerful than, amphetamine (Speed).

⁵⁹ Pronounced as Halimo

religious observant and the traditionally conscious young British Somalis appear to take issues with the more liberal views and behaviours of young Somalis from mainland Europe. Finally, there are other more politically motivated terms including *Mali* (generally shortened term stemming from the word Somali that is used by young Somalis to describe themselves) and *Lander* (a term used by young Somalilanders – as they refer to themselves – who pledge their allegiance to Somaliland as a token of support for political recognition). Most of these forms of identifications are not free from prejudice and negative judgments and have become common terms to describe the less integrated and newcomers within the Somali communities in the diaspora as well as those who are were born or brought up in the UK and mainland Europe.

These categories clearly epitomise the generational differences and tensions between and among generations and give us more reasons to understand the nuances of such diverse dynamics. Furthermore, it allows us to look beyond the narrow understanding of identifications and belonging to or in communities, societies and nations (Yuval-Davis, 2006). In other words, various channels of boundary maintenance, resistance and identification are at play not only between the Somali and the British cultures but these are also to be found among the various Somali generations. We can find similar experiences in Desia's PhD (2000) thesis on young Bangladeshi men in Camden in a context termed as “a deeply ingrained local culture of conflict... based around aggressive and exclusive notions of territoriality...and power...linked to particular notions of masculine identity” (2000, p.2). Desai suggested that in order to resist “racist aggression Bangladeshi young men drew upon these same resources and developed their own assertive territorial identifications and forms of masculinity” (ibid). In similar ways young Somali men transmit the various social forms of identifications to demarcate their own territorial boundaries within as well outside their ethnic community.

Redefining the cohorts

Before delving into the analyses of this section it is important to note that the tables below (4.3, 4.4. and 4.5) do not only redefine the generational cohorts but also further determine the dates of arrival and births of young people while correlating that with the dates of arrival of their parents. Hence, the tables are best to be understood as a collective in order to ascertain

how they mutually influence and reinforce one another. Such an approach provides critical clues to important questions surrounding the necessity to distinguish the various generations and possible gaps that exist between them.

According to table 4.3 there are three main generational cohorts that can be distinguished: young Somali men born in the UK, those born outside the country of origin but not in the UK and those born in the country of origin. The table also indicates that over a quarter of respondents were born in the UK and fall under the second generation cohort according to Rumbaut's (2004) definition. A similar number was born outside the country of origin with over half of them born in mainland Europe and the rest in the Middle East. At the moment of conducting this research all participants were living in London. The final group, consisting of almost a quarter of respondents and by large the biggest group, was born in Somalia or Somaliland with mixed generational cohorts. These diverse migration trajectories play a significant role in the acculturation process of young Somalis and their families.

Place of birth*	UK	SW	NL	ME	SOM/SLND
NO of respondents	11	1	5	5	10
Generational cohort	2G	1.5G-E	1.5G-E	1.5GME & 1.75GME	1.25, 1.5G & 1.75

Table 4.3 Distribution of generational cohorts and birthplaces of participants (N = 32)

*UK = United Kingdom; SW = Switzerland; NL = Netherlands; ME = Middle East; SOM/SLND = Somalia/Somaliland (*Source: Empirical data*)

NO of years in the UK	23	19	17	15	14	12	11	9	8	5	DK
When you arrived	1989	1993	1995	1997	1998	2000	2001	2003	2004	2007	DK
NO of respondents	1	3	1	3	1	1	2	1	2	2	4

Table 4.4 Arrival of young Somalis born outside the UK (*Source: Empirical data*)

Table 4.4 shows the arrival of young people born outside the UK from Europe, the Middle East, Somalia and Somaliland. On average these young people have been in the UK for approximately 13 years.

The below figure 4.5 presents the arrival date of the parents of the second-generation youth born in the UK. Their average residency in the UK is 22 years. They arrived between 1987 and 1993 with a peak in 1989.

Parents arrival in the UK	1987	1988	1989	1991	1993	DK
NO of respondents	1	1	3	2	2	2
Number of years in the UK	25	24	23	21	19	DK

Table 4.5. Parents of second-generation youth arrival date and length of residence in UK (*Source: Empirical data*)

Following the strict definition in Rumbaut’s typology around 20 per cent of research participants constitute the group that was born in mainland Europe. These young people often share similar experiences with the second-generation youth in the UK – born outside their country of birth, poor ethnic language skills, great communication barriers with parents, already speaking more than one language, and have by now experienced a different culture in a non-Islamic dominant culture in a Western country etc. The age threshold according to Rumbaut’s generational cohorts and the length of residence in a new country do not adequately address their specific and somewhat unique experiences. Consequently, neither can the equally important social context as part of the acculturation process be adequately addressed (Rumbaut, 2004). For example, as indicated in figure 4.2 their arrival dates and length of residence is equated with that of new arrivals – Somalis arriving straight from Somalia or Somaliland – an equation that obscures more than it elucidates. Therefore, I have termed this group as GE – the second-generation immigrants born in mainland European - to account for their specific experiences in London. This group would be categorized as 1.5GE and 1.75GE generation in the UK to recognise that they have some adaptation to undergo. Similarly, those who are born in the Middle East but arrived in the UK at a young age are perceived to have dissimilar experiences from other cohorts and, thus, are termed as 1.5ME and 1.75ME. Ismail’s account below articulates the diversity and nuances in the various generational cohorts.

Ismail Bashir is an 18-year-old male recently migrated from Denmark with his mother and three younger siblings to the UK. Ismail speaks fluent English and without any accent despite

having been residing in London for a relatively short period of time. Ismail shares his experiences as a young Somali who was born in Switzerland, brought up in Denmark and now in the UK for the last five years:

Both my parents moved from Somalia to Switzerland during the civil war in 1991⁶⁰. My parents were young and had a tough time moving from their home country and found it very difficult to cope with the fact that they are not part of the East African culture anymore. I was born in the city of Lucerne in Switzerland in 1993. Six months later we moved to Copenhagen, Denmark. I was a typical kid growing up. I was into playing sports, hanging out with my friends but I also had a strong relationship with my dad, you could say my dad was my best friend. He would always help me with my homework, take me to school and teach me Islamic studies, usual things most dads do. A few years later I noticed my dad wasn't around much anymore. I just thought he was working extra hours. I remember one night when I couldn't sleep and heard my parents arguing that led to my dad leaving the house for the night. I didn't see him for a couple of days and got really worried. He came back on a weekend and started to pack his bags. He told me he was going away to England to work and I was really devastated that my dad was leaving me. Growing up without my dad was really tough. I wasn't talking to anyone. I spent most of my time at home. In July 2007 we moved to West London in the hope of a fresh start with my family, easier said than done. I had many responsibilities, as I am the eldest child. I was a role model to my younger siblings. I had to take my younger siblings to school and pick them up, translate for my mum because she wasn't good at English. I needed to get used to going back to school let alone getting to know people. In the beginning it was tough. I was scared to go out based on what we saw on TV such as the crime and the killings of young Somali people. Not knowing anyone was unpleasant. First week of high school was a good experience as I received support from the teachers and got extra work to get me up to speed. I got to know a few Somali boys in my year that seemed quite friendly, it got to a point where everyone in my year started to call me 'freshly' due to the accent I had when I first arrived in London and where I came from. According to them (young people), I spoke American English, which they said was 'funny', that I picked up from watching American movies and TV series. It never bothered me because I was proud that I am a Danish-Somalilander and Danish culture will always be with me. The one thing I always remind myself of regarding who I am and where I am from is 'If you want to understand today, you have to search yesterday'. So when people start to judge me without knowing my history I always think back and remember what I and my family went through to get here. I would gladly say that based on what I have achieved throughout this year I will always consider myself as Danish-British Somalilander and that is what counts for me and I will accept it.

⁶⁰ Ismail spoke for about 20 minutes non-stop in an interview that lasted almost two hours. I decided not to stop him apart from moments when I needed to check and clarify something. Given his body language and expressive energy Ismail made it clear to me that he had a story to share and wanted to be listened to. I felt that he almost demanded the space to tell his story in his own words. As Rapley suggests, where possible silence can work to promote an elaborated answer

Academically, it went really well and soon after I was placed in higher levels. I am doing my exams now and I am predicted to gain overall merit of distinction. I want to go to university to undertake a course in forensics and criminology. Some of the subjects were really easy and below my level at school. For example, in Denmark I did more difficult levels in maths and science (Ismail, 18).

This above case demonstrates that it is difficult to employ the generational cohorts in the way Rumbaut and his colleagues present them since each type of cohort is generally related to age, arrival dates and broader socio-cultural package. Ismail talks about the initial struggle he faced and how anxious he was to leave the house, which tends to be a common experience related to acculturation and migration, particularly in new settings. What is, however, evident is the speed with which he adapted to his new environment including his school. Although it is common practice among young new arrivals to engage in some translation activities since they acquire the language relatively faster than their parents, what is uncommon is Ismail's immediate acting as the word-broker (Buriel et al., 1998) or as Morales and Hanson put it taking up the role of 'language brokering' (2005). Ismail had already good command of English and more importantly he was familiar with how the system and its related services function. Despite the pressure and the emotional vacuum experienced due to his father's absence and the lack of contact, Ismail seems to be coping quite well given the circumstances.

In such a situation as Ismail's it is common practice that "the eldest child, regardless of gender, often (takes) the lead role in assisting and caring for younger siblings (and) surrogate parents, when children undertake nanny or parent-like activities" (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 720). Some research suggests that "some Somali parents occasionally keep children out of school to help with interpreting in housing and social security issues as this issue is of great importance and survival for them" (Lambeth Children and Young People's Service, 2007, p. 27). Impacts on power dynamics between child translators and their parents vary. However, there is a clear consensus on the relevance of the language-brokering context, which is culturally, economically and socially sensitive (Morales and Hanson, 2005, 2005; Buriel et al., 1998).

Generational attitudes: communication beyond language

In line with generational acculturation theories there was a general consensus among all generations that limitations in languages, both English and Somali formed significant communication barriers between parents and their young adults. As indicated above many young people might understand but often struggle to articulate themselves in the Somali language. Likewise, parents often have limited English, which affects the way they communicate with their young adults. Both young people and parents believe that the inability to effectively communicate with each other is not simply limited to language barriers but also involves having a good understanding of the dynamics of the multicultural environment they live in. In line with other research among immigrant communities in the USA (see Phinney, 1990) Somali parents find it difficult to understand the urban youth culture wherein their children are growing up: *Parents are less in touch with the Western style of life than I am. They have not been to certain places I have been to. It's like they are out of their comfort zone* (Garaad, 20), which fits the generational gap theory's assumption that the greater the gaps as a result of cultural disorientation, the weaker the relationships and the greater the conflict between parents and children (Wang, 2008; Harding et al., 2007; Portes and Rumbaut, 2005).

Adding to the language and communication split is the gap in the use of technology or digital media. Prensky (2001a, 2001b) studied this gap using the native speakers and immigrants as metaphors to explain the generational gap between students (parents) and their teachers respectively, which adds another dimension in the complex parent-child relationship. He coins the term 'digital natives' to describe how technology savvy young people who are born into and immersed in the advanced digital world of today:

Digital Natives are used to receiving information really fast. They like to parallel process and multi-task. They prefer their graphics *before* their text rather than the opposite. They prefer random access (like hypertext). They function best when networked. They thrive on instant gratification and frequent rewards. They prefer games to 'serious' work (Prensky, 2001b, p. 1).

Dirie Muhumad, a 16-year-old from West London articulates his experience and shares some of the challenges he faced with his parents when using his BB (BlackBerry):

The difference that we have between our parents and us (is) that it's a new generation (with) new technology (and) new things. So basically my mum and dad didn't know about what a Blackberry is... Now you can get a Blackberry and BB chat with someone... some girls... (and) some other people you don't even know, so they (parents) don't really understand if you know what I'm saying..and... if someone does something, that whole generation wants to do the same thing, ... lot of people do this, a lot of people want to do the same thing.. So at first if you say to your parents 'buy me a Blackberry that costs about a hundred and something pounds,' they'll be like 'why do you need that phone you can buy this phone', and you tell them, 'cause of BB chat (with) internet' and... they will be like 'why do you need these things we have internet at home', they wouldn't understand as we understand it. I don't know, it's been going on for centuries...it's been going on with every parent (Dirie, 16).

Dirie's case is an example of how using digital media can stress some interesting differences between generations. Dirie seems to understand that his parents are not very well versed with the new digital age. They fit the description of the 'Digital Immigrant accent' (Prensky, 2001b) highlighting their lack of understanding with digital technology. Dirie further highlights the societal pressure to conform to what is trendy and hip to fit in and be part of the crowd and parents financial inability to (always) respond to the highly priced smart-phone for example.

The use of digital media goes beyond the smart-phones however. For many young people that enjoy regular access, internet offers a gateway to acquire a broad knowledge on various social, political, cultural and religious issues. Mumin explains:

It is now easier, for example, if you want to go (and) learn religion everything is on the Internet, you can download it on the Internet. Instead of travelling miles to buy an expensive book you can download it, put it on your phone on a tablet, and you can have 1000 books on you, quite easy. (Mumin 23)

Due to the lack of effective communication there was a strong indication that parents and their children know little about each other. Both generations accepted that lack of effective communication affects their relationships. Parents do not normally talk about their past experiences with their children but seem equally concerned about how much they know or understand about what they (parents) have been through and the sacrifices that they had to make to make their children safe. A mother's frustration is reflected in the following account:

My children do not understand what we have been through and cannot appreciate our suffering. We had to leave some of our family members behind, including their father, and take massive risks to make sure they are safe. They do not know much and take all of this for granted. (A mother, focus group).

On the other hand young people tend to keep their issues and struggles to themselves, which otherwise are deemed important, shared and discussed. For example it appears that young people (males in particular) normally do not disclose information about who they hang around with or what they do and where they go. Young people often base their decisions on the assumption that parents do not understand or listen to them and, hence, do not see the point of talking to their parents, which has obvious ramifications on the parent-child relationship. Some young people tend to exploit the parents' knowledge gap:

I have done that (sneaking out) so many times to be honest with you yeah, so my mum gets worried. (When she asks) 'where did you go?' (I tell her I went to) friends' house but then I have been out with girls. There was one time I went out and my (mobile) phone was off. (When) I came back my mum was crying, I felt really sorry (Ismail, 18)

By focusing on both parents and young people to determine the extent of generational gaps and the potential disagreements that exist as a result, I argue, when evaluating the attitudes toward mainstream British society and technological advances, that it is due to the parents inability to understand British mainstream culture and not young people's participation in the same culture. The opposite is true when attitudes towards Somali culture were evaluated.

Constrained relations: school, parents, children and communities.

There are various factors that impact on the general development and achievements of young people. As part of this thesis there are two critical areas to consider: the institutions (families, communities and schools) and the socio-economic impact (effects of migration and challenges in host-land integration). It is important to also consider the symbiotic relationship between these two important areas as they mutually reinforce one another. In this section I draw on specific case studies addressing some of the challenges that arise as a result of ineffective and sustained disengagements and general communication constraints.

Dealing with schools

My son has been bullied for years in school. When I found out I went to the school to try to speak to those responsible, I felt uncomfortable by how I was treated at the reception and left (mother)

School wants to sue us for neglect (father, focus group)

The above two situations in school circumstances represent a common challenge between Somali parents, their children and the schools they attend. There appears to be constant misunderstanding between parents, children and schools, which presents a *triple challenge* for parents to manage. Existing research indicated that Somali parents faced difficulties with understanding the school system in the UK (Lambeth Children and Young People's Service, 2007). For example "most parents do not understand levels (1-8) as measures of their child's progress" (2007, p. 6). The report draws on various studies (Demie et al., 2006; see Diriye, 2006; Rutter, 2004) that highlight various root causes of underachievement among young Somali people such as 'racism, language barrier, single parent families, overcrowding, trauma relating the effects of civil war, and various other factors including poverty, poor attendance, negative teacher perceptions, poor school to home liaison, lack of exposure to written language and lack of role models' (Lambeth Children and Young People's Service, 2007, p. 6). The following extended case study describes various challenges that underpin these constrained relationships between various institutions.

Sahra is a 40-year-old single mother with a 13-year-old child, Yusuf. Sahra separated from her husband after *eleven years of mostly turbulent marriage experience*. Sahra came to the UK in 2004 from Germany – where she had lived for seventeen years – following her family who had arrived a year earlier in London. She works part time as a cleaner. Both Sahra and her son were staying with her parents. Her oral English would probably meet intermediate standards. She said to be more conscious about her '*ability to speak (English) during formal gatherings. Less common situations could make me nervous*'.

More recently Sahra noticed her son's increasingly odd behaviour who has been *relatively quiet not eating much and spent most of his time in his room. I ignored him for few days hoping he will come to speak to me soon when he is ready*. Sahra said she tried to understand

what was going on with him but he seemed unwilling to communicate with his mother. *I knew then something was not right but did not want to push him too hard, as he was clearly distressed*, Sahra said. It appeared that Sahra's son has been bullied for two years by two Asian boys from his school. After several further bullying incidents Yusuf started talking to his mother and uncle who became aware of the situation. Sahra said *Yusuf informed us that he is having constant problems with two Asian boys from his school who constantly insult him and call him names: 'they want to fight me and call me dirty Somali, big forehead'*. Yusuf's family realised that he did not only kept things away from them but the school was also unaware of the bullying since he chose not to mention anything. It appeared that Yusuf believed that his teacher would not listen to him. The family decided to address the situation and Sahra started to liaise with the school:

to pursue the case.... I arrived at the reception and told them 'I am Yusuf's mother and want to speak to his teacher'. The lady at the reception asked, 'what year is Yusuf?' I told her 'he is in Year 9'. She then asked, 'do you have an appointment?' I said 'no, but I tried to call and there was no answer'. Suddenly, the lady's voice changed and she started to raise her voice saying 'you should make an appointment, do you understand, you cannot just come in and speak to people, they are working.' I felt embarrassed and told her 'I am sorry but I tried to call'. 'No, no, that is not good enough, you should make sure you speak to someone' she said. She continued, 'I have to go back to work and you must call back and make an appointment'. I tried to explain that it was important that I speak to his teacher even if it is very short but the lady will not listen. I felt very awkward and upset. She did not even try to find out why I came in but started to dismiss me straightaway.

Sahra shared her experience with the school with her brother. Meanwhile, the bullying of her son seemed to continue. Yusuf informed his family that one of the boys attacked him again. When he decided to defend himself the boy went to the Head of Year 9, *Mr. Bradbun and accused Yusuf of racially abusing him*, said Sahra. It appeared that *'Mr Bradbun pulled me out of my science class and, verbally abused me.'* Yusuf said that *Mr Bradbun called him 'a racist and a coward' and continued 'no wonder you get bullied'*. The family got worried and Yusuf's uncle started to write to the school expressing their great concerns about the bullying situation and Yusuf's safety. In the letter Yusuf's uncle also made a request to meet with his teacher and the boys' (the alleged bullies) parents to resolve the situation. After several attempts of emailing and calling Yusuf's uncle received the following response from the

Head Teacher. These are extracts of the email exchanges between the head teacher and Sahara's brother Ali:

In accordance with our complaints procedure, Mr Peters, my Assistant Head teacher is the person who I have appointed to investigate your complaint. We are always keen to resolve issues raised by parents/carers. However, while I note in your letter that you are Yusuf's uncle and acting on behalf of his mother, you are not named on our system as the parent/carer and therefore not someone with whom we would normally deal. Given this and the fact that we have received no communication from Yusuf's mother, it is therefore important that we verify that you are in fact acting on her behalf.

Sahra contacted the school to inform them that it was ok for her brother Ali to act on her behalf. Sahra further noted some progress after her brother's correspondence. She was asked to come in and meet with the Assistant Head Teacher, Mr. Peters. Sahra was accompanied by her younger brother, Hussein. Although Sahra was clearly pleased to learn that her son has been approaching Mr. Peters lately, she was disappointed that she was unable to speak with Mr Bradbun and the boys' parents who have been bullying Yusuf. Mr Peters made it clear that meeting with both Yusuf's teacher and the boys' parents was not possible. According to Mr. Peters, Sahra said *'as far as this issue is concerned Yusuf is in a secure environment... Therefore, the matter is closed'*. She also felt that Mr. Peters rushed her through the meeting and said she was unable to express herself clearly. I refer to the email Mr Peters sent to Ali, Sahara's brother, to get a clear account of what the school's response was:

Also as the Head Teacher had written you before about not being a named parent/carer on our school records we are communicating with you because we want to work with you and the family. However we really should be dealing with Yusuf's mother. You have requested to come in and have a meeting with Mr. Bradbun over the matter and to have Yusuf present. I have considered it and feel it would be inappropriate having discussed the matter with the Head Teacher.

Mr. Peters outlined the reasons why he believes it is unnecessary to meet with Yusuf's teacher and the parents' of the boys who bullied him:

The terms used in the letter that Mr. Bradbun apparently said to Yusuf were that he was a 'racist and a coward' and that he also said 'no wonder you get bullied'. Mr. Bradbun has

explained that he used the words but they have been taken out of context. He said it was 'cowardly' behaviour to not tell the truth and that Yusuf was indeed being 'racist' as he was using racial language against another student and that if he continued to behave in this manner then he would be a target for 'bullying' and that ironically Yusuf was complaining of being bullied himself. There is no evidence to suggest anything else was said and having looked at the context of the investigation and the build up to the events where Mr. Bradburn allegedly used that language it seems that this is the truest version of events. Yusuf had been the victim of racism by other students but also was an aggressor towards other students and engaging in racist behaviour himself.

Young Somali males are usually taught to toughen up and be strong. There is often little room for emotional display due to its disassociation with notions of manhood. In this respect Hansen's (2008, p. 1112) use of "ragganimmo" is helpful to understand general hegemonic masculine attitudes of Somali men. *Ragganimmo* denotes from the word *rag*, which means men in Somali. Hansen suggests that *ragganimmo* is associated with certain qualities such "geesi (being tough and brave), *deeqsi* (being helpful) and *aftahan* (having oratorical skills)" (ibid). Someone who lacks the crucial attributes of *ragganimmo* is referred to as *doqon* (loosely translated as useless), *fulay* (coward). Somali parents usually expect from their sons that they toughen up and indeed show greater levels of *ragganimmo*. I shared this case with some professionals in the field of education and extended supplementary educational support including a Somali teacher who works in a mainstream public school and a youth worker who works closely with schools, parents and pupils. Their immediate reaction to the case seems to suggest that this demonstrates a common phenomenon. The youth worker said *from my experience with working with young people in the community and more so in schools nowadays I have come across similar stories* or as the teacher put it *unfortunately I have come across similar cases before*. The youth worker further remarked that *young people will always find it hard to open up and discuss issues of bullying etc. because of the lack of emotional attachment shown by parents. Also the Somali viewpoint on males is you have to be a macho, and show no sign of weakness, so imagine telling your parent 'I am being bullied.'*

Yusuf appears to be concerned about his reputation at school and doesn't want to be seen as a 'snitch' despite being bullied and beaten by his schoolmates. As Renold claims snitching

carries some serious risks for the production of masculinity in the school playground (2001). As way of dealing with the bullying and being aware of the potential risks of telling someone Yusuf chose to ignore the taunts and put up with the fights (ibid). As it appeared and given that the bullying was going for two years discounting the taunts and detachment was not a viable option for Yusuf (ibid). The situation appears to be further complicated by the strained relationship with and the lack of faith in his teacher who, he feels, does not listen, which both the youth worker and the Somali teacher said they were only too familiar with. The youth worker observed that *households with a lack father figure around tend to have some ramifications on a child's development, i.e. attitude problems, anger, behavioural issues and lastly low self-esteem and this reflects on their attainment levels.*

Clearly the mother remains worried about the situation of her son and wants to ensure that he is safe at school. However, Sahra is sceptical that he would approach his teacher to discuss the matter. Therefore, she phoned the school to make an appointment but got no response and decided to pay a visit. As a result, the mother got told off and felt disrespected, an experience that appeared to have added to her distress. Apparently, she did not only feel upset but, and perhaps more importantly, felt she was not heard. In such circumstances, the receptionist was correct to point out that the normal procedure is to make an appointment first. However, her approach, according to Sahra, was very dismissive in nature and seemed to put her in an awkward position. It appeared that this has contributed to her reluctance to pay another visit to the school. Thus, given the importance of the matter, Sahra asked her brother to accompany her to see Mr. Bradbun. The meeting seemed far from effective though as Sahra felt somewhat dismissed. This seemed to be a reoccurring event. Sahra felt that Mr. Peters looked to be more concerned with Mr. Bradbun's position and feelings while neglecting the mother's great concerns about her son Yusuf. Responding to this particular event the Somali teacher pointed out that:

The school will do everything they can to protect the teacher, despite (allegedly) being racist to the boy. Generally schools deal with Somali parents as second-class citizens violating their rights, due to the fact that they do not know their rights and therefore can be manipulated. Schools only look after the children who have parents who are aware of the system and keep the school in check.

The youth worker seems to agree and suggests *a lack of knowing your rights and entitlement is our downfall*. He further notes, *even when we do know our rights, going about it the right way is again a major obstacle for us i.e. raising our voice, being rude, coming across as hostile are a few points which come to mind*.

The youth worker also points out that young people of Somali origin are easily branded as troublesome. He goes on to argue that there seems to be *a great lack of understanding between young Somalis and their teachers that is evident in many schools*. More often *teachers demonstrate impatience and young people tend to wind them up usually showing no respect*. Therefore, *the response replayed by certain teachers is more problematic rather than trying to resolve the situation*. Many young Somali people seem to often lack the understanding and consequences of their problematic behaviour and are usually unable to adequately respond to an argument. Generally, *they feel singled out and believe that most people have got something against them while all they often want is to be heard and listen to*. There is a need to understand that *teachers are also human beings with feelings*, said the youth worker. Society generally requires them to possess a *thicker skin than most adults because they choose to be teachers, but I always ask myself how I (would) respond when young people effectively 'take the piss'*. *I would probably do the same i.e. ban them from youth activities, teach them a lesson, a bit of respect etc*. Given that young people will always demonstrate some sort of *challenging behaviour one should avoid paying too much (unnecessary) attention to them and remember why we have opted to become educators*, said Hashim, the youth worker.

It is reported (see Diriye 2006; Demie et al. 2006; Rutter 2004) a positive correlation between student-teacher relationships and academic practice and engagement. It seems further clear that the wider community needs (such as overcrowding, poverty, health etc.) generally affect school performance. For example inadequate housing or overcrowding impacts on the space needed to focus and do homework. Viewing this with the broader thesis focus on belonging I argue that interpersonal relationships between pupils, parents and teachers are paramount to foster a conducive academic learning environment. Other key factors that deserve attention are to do with aspects drawing on the rich diversity of classrooms reflecting the culture and

background of students to stimulate students' performance and achievement (Faircloth and Hamm, 2005).

Summary

This chapter has engaged with acculturation and masculinity theories and highlighted various factors that influence the child-parent relationship. It provided an analysis of existing literature in relation to acculturation theories with an emphasis on intergenerational matters. I have engaged with Rumbaut and Portes' (see 2005, 2001) theories of acculturation, which offered useful conceptual frameworks. Their typology approach of distinct generational cohorts is used to clearly define the young Somali participants this research has focused on. Through the empirical analysis three main distinct generational cohorts were identified including 1.5G and 2G. There were further two less common but equally important cohorts involving 1.25G and 1.75G. These definitions were valuable as they helped to articulate and give meaning to the experiences of young Somali men. However, there were some limitations in their application. The chapter stressed that it was inappropriate to directly employ Rumbaut's generational typology in its current and strict definition. In doing so important acculturation accounts and relevant (migration) trajectories instrumental to the diversity and specific experiences of young Somali people would have been simply ignored. For example the diverse experiences of those who were born in Europe and the Middle East (which was a fairly common phenomenon among Somali people given their highly diverse migration trajectories) but now reside in the UK have possibly dissimilar experiences from those who are either born in the UK or arrived directly from the Somali territories. In order to ensure that such nuances are captured the generational cohorts were redefined as follows: 1.5GE for those who were born in (mainland) Europe and now reside in the UK, and 1.5ME and 1.75ME for those who were born in the Middle East but now reside in the UK. Also, the chapter highlighted how young Somali men in precarious marginal situations position themselves in relation to forms of hegemonic masculinity. In this regard, hegemonic masculinity refers to normalised common beliefs of ideals constituted by desired characteristics of *Raganimo* or what it means to be a "real man" (see Hansen, 2008; Reland, 2001; Desia, 2000).

The chapter further explored numerous factors that affected the parent-child relationship including the role of language, institutional relations and socio-economic circumstances (of families) as well as the interplay between these various aspects. The chapter clarified the significant role that language plays in the prevalent generational clashes that have been identified as part of this research. Although they remain bi- or multilingual young Somali men are threatened by what I termed as the *inverted effect of language application* across the generations whereby their ability to hold adequate conversations in the Somali language decreases and proficiency in the English language increases down the generational line. This is more likely to widen the generational gap. The relevance and importance attached to (Somali) language retention differs among and across generations. For example, some parents believe that if their child does not speak English adequately he/she might lose out, possibly thereby contributing to children underachieving in schools. Others realise the importance of Somali language retention and consider it key to relate to their children. Unlike in other studies in the US where “there is a clear tendency for children of better-educated and higher-status parents to prefer English” (Portes and Schauffler, 1994, p. 652) there was no correlation with either parents’ education or status in this regard.

Likewise, views on ethnic language retentions also differ among the young generations. Some expressed their frustrations due to their inability to hold sound conversations in Somali. Others, particularly 2G, tend to distance themselves from their native language and more often appear to disassociate from ‘their culture’ and community too. Portes et al. (quoted from Rothe et al., 2011, p. 78) argue the reason that “young people in deprived areas behave as such might be related to the lack of encouragement to preserve their ethnic language”. There is no incentive or desire to retain one’s own language. For example, due to for misrepresentation (in the media) the “native language is stigmatised as symbol of low status” (ibid).

This chapter provided further evidence on how language dynamics possibly alter the parent-child relationship and the roles between them. As shown in Ismail’s case it appears to be a common practice for young people with parents who do not speak English fluently to adopt parent like activities (Valenzuela 1999). Research suggested that in some instances parents keep their children out of school to assist with translation at i.e. hospitals or local councils

(see Lambeth Children and Young People's Service, 2007). They become language- (Morales and Hanson, 2005) or word-brokers (Buriel et al., 1998) which seemed bound to affect and upset the power dynamics between child translators and their parents. However, researchers have suggested the relevance of language brokering should be viewed within a context that is sensitive to the cultural, economic and social circumstances of those affected (Martinez et al., 2009; Morales and Hanson, 2005; Buriel et al., 1998).

Finally, parents' inability to have sufficient command of the English language not only tends to affect the relationship with their children but, as suggested above, has also huge social consequences. In Sahra's case it was apparent that her poor understanding of the English language affected her confidence to address the bullying of her son in school. Equally, as it also became clear, the school, as a formal educational institution, did not seem to acknowledge the mother's arguments about her son's safety concerns and, instead, resorted to protecting the school and its staff. The interaction with the school's staff, teachers and director was presented as a case study to a Somali teacher and a youth worker in educational settings, thereby enabling more depth to be added to the findings of the thesis.

This chapter explored various critical factors in relation to intergenerational issues. It assessed the parent-child relationships through acculturation theories. The next chapter examines the notions of home and belonging largely rooted in broader transnational and diaspora practices. The chapter aims to explore how young Somali males articulate their diverse ways of belonging, how they refer to themselves and where or what they call home.

Chapter 5. Constructing notions of belonging: young males coping with diverse territorial affiliations

Introduction

Given the topicality of the subject, studies on (generational) belonging in the context of transnationalism and diaspora and in relation to Somalis in Britain are relatively scarce leaving important gaps unaddressed. This chapter tackles some of these gaps, addressing the following questions: How do young Somali males think about the concepts of ‘belonging’ and ‘home’ (Cohen, 2008; Dufoix, 2008b; Glick Schiller, 2006; Levitt and Schiller, 2004; Glick Schiller, 2003; Clifford, 1997). And how do these perceptions (of home and belonging), if at all, inflect their attitudes towards political, social, economic and religious participation? These questions suggest that emphasis is put on the processes of belonging and how these affect the attitudes of young people. This study is less interested in the product of identification or identity formations per se, more on the processes of identifications as a consequence of the engagements of young people in their wider social milieu whether local (in the host/receiving countries) or in the transnational sense (Schiller & Levitt 2004). This chapter will therefore highlight how various ways of belonging are manifested in the practical sense and how young people interpret them as part of their *being and belonging* to numerous social spaces (Vertovec, 2009; Levitt and Schiller, 2004; Vertovec, 1999; Portes et al., 1999; Portes, 1997b).

This chapter focuses on ideas of belonging viewed within a larger context (rooted in international migration) that goes beyond the more obvious notions of the concept whereby its complex dynamics and relations are highlighted. These notions of belonging were explored in my research permitting young males of Somali origin to reflect on their experiences in three urban locations in London. Drawing on empirical data belonging can, for example, relate to ethnicity or ethnic background (Somali, black), nationality (Somali, British, Dutch, Danish) religion (Muslim, global Ummah, Allah, the Prophet), country (Somalia/Somaliland, Britain), places (home, London, Hargeisa, Mogadishu, Tottenham, Camden, Hayes), community (organisation, youth club, mosque) and/or kinship (clan). Further, less obvious but perhaps strongly associated concepts relating to the notion of home

and belonging were also evaluated including music and/or Nasheeds as well as language. The latter two should be seen as ways of expression enhancing the more concrete notions of belonging discussed above. For example the more religious oriented young Somali males are, the less they tend to listen to any kind of music. If any, they listen to Nasheeds⁶¹, mostly in English mixed with Arabic instead of the traditional pop music (Rap, Hip Hop, Garage, Rock etc). Considering themes in international migration (such as diaspora and transnationalism), this research highlighted how young Somali males manage multiple notions of belonging to various social places based on their experiences, strength and quality of their wider social connections.

Multidimensionality of belonging

My field observations indicate that the sense of belonging in social settings is often strengthened by a desire to be respected, valued and “accepted as such by a wider community” (Sporton and Valentine, 2007, p. 7). Also, as remarked by one focus group participant:

Belonging depends on the willingness of the host nation in accepting you. If the host nation vilifies your community by either attacking your religion or where you come from then you are likely to be apprehensive of such society and would not want to be associated with them. Whereas if the host nation is very accepting and tolerant towards you and your culture then you will be attracted to them and would have no problem in being regarded as one of them. (Male 22, focus group)

For example, a receptive environment that acknowledges and embraces cultural differences tends to contribute to the retention and potential success of young people in social and educational settings. This is supported by Goodenow (Cashmore et al., 2007, pp. 11–12; 1993 quoted in) who defined belonging in educational setting as:

Students’ sense of being accepted, valued, included, and encouraged by others (teacher and peers) in the academic classroom setting and of feeling oneself to be an important part of the life and activity of the class. More than simple perceived liking or warmth, it also involves support and respect for personal autonomy and for the student as an individual.

⁶¹ Nasheeds are Islamic songs often without any instrument apart from the duff instrument which is used occasionally

Belonging can also be characterised by differences that could manifest themselves as a result of marginalisation or isolation (Heath et al. 2013). Motivational factors often referred to by young people during meetings, events and interviews to connect with one's own community tended to be reactive in nature mainly responding to how they are treated in the mainstream (Yuval-Davis 2013). Yuval Davis draws an interesting link between intensified migrant isolation in and increased tendencies of ethnic belonging (ibid). This is in line with Faircloth and Hamm's (2005) assertion that 'research specific to ethnic minority youth raises the likelihood that students' perceptions of respect for their ethnic group membership may also be related to students' attachment or alienation from school' (see Phelan et al. 1994; Stanlaw & Peshkin 1988; Steele 1997; Fordham & Ogbu 1986). For example, attending the mosque or coming to the local youth club is not just simply about learning about the *Deen*⁶² or to have fun with your peers. It is also about creating your own spaces of comfort free from racial and cultural prejudices.

Various focus group discussions highlighted the need for mutual acceptance and balanced integration approaches that lead to better understanding, contact and relationship. Thus, given the relevance of social contact and interpersonal relationship my observations suggest that our existence is very much regulated by our dynamic and continuous interactions in multiple social fields. This is well articulated by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who stated that existence cannot *be* without the social (Furrer and Skinner, 2003). In other words, to exist one has to be socially engaged and interact with others (effectively). As noted during site observations, these social fields have tendencies to impact upon our emotions and how we feel about ourselves, how we perceive and are perceived by the world around us and how this affects our attitudes and the social reality that manifests as a result. Young Somali males belong to these social fields and participate in them on a daily basis. For example, they have families and friends (in the host nation and/or country of origin), whom they have daily chats with, they volunteer in their community organisations, they discuss work related matters with their colleagues and occasionally engage in sports activities with each other. Beyond these immediate interactions they also relate to the larger society they form part of. For example,

⁶² Deen means religion in Arabic

they feel part of the global *Ummah* to preserve their Islamic belief and are part of a larger transnational field or network(s) that enables them to articulate their thoughts as citizens as well as engage in further sustained social, cultural and economic activities, which are enacted through their daily practices. As argued by Smith “the human drives for meaning and belonging are satisfied primarily by locating human selves within social groups that sustain distinctive, *morally orienting* collective identities” (A. M. Smith, 1998 quoted in; Vaisey, 2007, p. 854).

Drawing on the experiences of young Somali males in London it is useful to note that the interactions and relationships between various social fields are important to provide a more holistic view of the society at large. Moving away from economic Marxist notions of social interactions based on economic classes Bourdieu states:

First, a break with the tendency to privilege substances - here, the real groups, whose number, limits, members, etc., one claims to define - at the expense of *relationships*; and with the intellectualist illusion that leads one to consider the theoretical class, constructed by the sociologist, as a real class, an effectively mobilised group. Secondly, there has to be a break with the economism that leads one to reduce the social field, a multi-dimensional space, solely to the economic field, to the relations of economic production, which are thus constituted as co-ordinates of social position. Finally, there has to be a break with the objectivism that goes hand-in-hand with intellectualism, and that leads one to ignore the symbolic struggles of which the different fields are the site, where what is at stake is the very representation of the social world and, in particular, the hierarchy within each of the fields and among the different fields. (1985, p. 723)

In brief, central to Bourdieu’s theoretical assertion are three significant social interactions (emphasis added): relationships (power relations), multidimensionality (of social fields) and the dynamics of social fields (the actual social interactions between fields) (ibid).

Levitt, Glick Schiller and their colleagues (Smith 1983; Wimmer & Schiller 2003; see Levitt & Schiller 2004) draw on Bourdieu’s conceptual framework of field and similarly challenge the bounded character of social dynamics. They argue that:

Because much of social science theory equates society with the boundaries of a particular nation- state, researchers often take rootedness and incorporation in the nation-state as the norm and social identities

and practices enacted across state boundaries as out of the ordinary. But if we remove the blinders of methodological nationalism, we see that while nation-states *are still extremely important*, social life is not confined by nation-state boundaries. Social and religious movements, criminal and professional networks, and governance regimes as well as flows of capital also operate across borders (Levitt and Schiller, 2004, p. 7).

Stretching the idea of belonging beyond London where this research is grounded or as Bourdieu calls it the *multi-dimensional space* is relevant given the orientation and focus on young Somali men. For example young Somali males were able to unlock their affinities with the country of origin during a football tournament that took place in Somaliland in the summer of 2011 (Mason 2004). A place that was imagined as home for many has turned into a reality, often with complex and shocking as well as encouraging realisations. The experiences of the journey will be more thoroughly discussed in Chapter 7. For this chapter, however, it is useful to be mindful of the transnational character of the study, in an attempt to disentangle the broader understanding of belonging.

In the literature review I pointed out that the notion of belonging is strongly featured in the thesis. I also clarified that the thesis is not about identity and neither would it figure as a theoretical lens. I argued that, instead, following Glick Schiller's notions of '*ways of being and ways of belonging*' more emphasis will be given to the activities and practices of engagement and how these shape young people's experiences, and help them understand their position in the mainstream UK society (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). Here actions are more visible and concrete often underpinned by a combination of active participation and consciousness (Ibid. see also Vertovec and Cohen, 1999). It is important to consider the *account work*, (see Rapley 2001) for such active participation and consciousness beyond this research to adequately delineate the essence and depth of multidimensional belonging (of self-reference, belonging and home). In order to analyse the data more thorough I employ Rapley's (p.304) approach that focuses on the following three relevant areas:

1. That sensitivity to the *accounting work* of interviewees should remain a central concern in the analysis of interview data.
2. That this accounting work should be understood in direct relation to the *context* of its production.
3. Most importantly, that an awareness *and analysis of interviewers' talk* in producing both the form and content of the interview should become a central concern for *all researchers* when analysing interview data, whatever analytic stance they take on the data.

Living in London: Self-reference and construction of home

What would you call yourself? A young male raised this question during a three-day residential group in Cornwall in 2004, which baffled a number of adults who were running the sessions as part of a programme to help integrate new arrivals. What was further notable about most young people was how straightforward and articulate they were in describing who they were, offering interesting discussions on the topic. These young new arrivals were from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. They did not hesitate to identify with their specific ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. For example on ethnicity they would just give one answer as in Somali, Afghani, Sri Lankan, Iraqi, Polish etc. I hung on to this question realising its potential benefits to my own multiple yet complex ways of belonging. Also, it became a useful question to engage young Somali research participants in an attempt to make sense of their broader ways of belonging. The question is so relevant in an era in which young Somali males' loyalty to the British nation State is being questioned and in which they are often associated with dysfunction, cultural conflict and alienation, underachieving, violence and terrorism (see also Vertovec and Cohen, 1999)- negative associations that seem compelling and continuous along religious, ethnic, geographies, age, and gender lines.

Unlike the newly arrived young migrants at the residential group session the more established young Somali males, who had either arrived at a young age or were born in the UK, were predominantly less than straightforward in their articulation of self-reference. For example on the question *what would you call yourself* many would often give multiple answers – Muslim, Somali, British Somali, Somalilander, Londoner etc. Therefore, not only was data collected on what they would call themselves but also considered prompts were made to disentangle the multiplicity, fluidity and hierarchy of their descriptions during field interviews, which were subsequently used to build clear personal narratives.

Interview analyses

It is important to consider the various backgrounds and positions of interviewer and interviewees to account for the social reality that constructs the interview data. As Rapley claims (2001, p. 307) “central to this analytic perspective is an awareness of the *accounting work* of interview ‘talk’, that speech-acts are *performative*” to adequately account for the

underpinning data beyond the interview setting. This is not to suggest that ‘talk’ should just be based on experiences beyond the interview but should rather be seen as “a product of a specific interaction” (p.308) between actors (researcher and participants). Lets returning to the main question of this section: *what do you call yourself*. As indicated above the construction of this question is clearly embedded in a historical narrative. The question is *specifically* formulated and directly targets the respondent as an individual (*yourself*) and not a group. Hence, there is no ambiguity about its formulation (see Watson 1987; Sacks 1992 in Rapley 2001). Asking this questions about the *self* first further set the tone for the other two questions (where do you belong an where do you call home) and the focus on the individual. Being mindful of such construction mattes to determine the *accounting work* and *context* in order to analyse the interview ‘talk’ (ibid). There are three important factors in this case. First, my position and background as a researcher and interaction with the new arrivals that helped predetermined or prefigured the question. Secondly, the accounts of the new arrivals during the Cornwall residential that was contrasted with the young research participants. Finally, the actual accounts of the research participants are considered, including their background and identities and my interaction with them during the interview. The question is meant to determine or invoke such identities and categories of belonging and lay the foundation for the production of ‘talk’ (ibid). Adopting the position of “facilitative and neural interviewer” (p.310) I made an attempt to demonstrate “how a methodological ‘ideal’ about interview practice is locally produced...” (ibid).

	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Somali(an)	31	28	3	
British Somali	16	9	9	
Muslim	28	3		
Londoner		3		3
African			3	
Black/Black British	3	9	13	
Somalilander	13	3	3	
Other	6			

Table 5.1. Percentage self-reference of young Somali males

Source: Data (collected during fieldwork interviews) in percentages from the total. N: 32

Table 5.1 indicates these complex multi-faceted experiences in percentages from the total number of 32 participants who were interviewed. One of the main questions asked during fieldwork interviews – ‘what would you call yourself’ – was meant to highlight the fluidity, complexity and multiplicity of young Somali males self reference. Hence, in most cases young Somali men would *first* call themselves either Somali(an) (32 percent), or Muslim (28 percent) clearly making references to their ethnic and Islamic heritage. Further identification with Somali(an) reoccurred strongly (28 percent) as a *second* choice unlike the relatively small reference made toward Muslim (only one respondent) indicating the importance of how numerous young men would identify themselves as Muslim *first*, which is less likely to reoccur as a *second* or subsequent choice. In lesser frequency, but still fairly significant, follows the recognition of British-Somali identification (16 percent). It is further worth noting that the British-Somali identification fairly frequently featured as *second* (9 percent) and *third* (9 percent) choices. A sizeable number called themselves Somalilanders (13) while reference to being black was significantly low and occurred as a *third* choice only. Following on from this, I will now highlight the reasons for these forms of identifications.

Defining the categories of self-reference

Table 5.1 highlights the multiple ways of being and belonging which is determined by the contexts of the fields in which one operates (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). On the question *what do you call yourself?* the table clearly reveals how young Somali men enact various ways of being and belonging through ethnicity, nationality, religion and locality (ibid). Mubarik Dahir, who is aged 18 and born in London but with foreign-born parents, reflects on these ideas:

A Muslim, that is what I call myself first. I would go with Somali (second). It just that, it is my life, my way of life. Being British or being Somali is just, as it said in the Quran ‘just to know one another’. Identity is being part of the ‘Muslim brotherhood’. Not the party just the Umma. Islam does not really mind where, what country you (are) part of, the world you are from or what tribe you are. It is your connection with Allah (that matters). I am not comfortable saying I am British. Uncomfortable. It is a long way before we can start saying we are British Somali where people may jump to the conclusion we are British but still it is premature (Mubarik, 18).

Mubarak was not only persuaded to share and reflect on his personal thoughts on the question (Rapley 2001) but he was also probed to determine the multidimensionality of his self-reference, which is a critical component of this thesis. Mubarik gave straightforward answers and showed greater awareness of his social conditions. Taking the outcome of the first question as a base to further elaborate on Mubraik's thoughts and experiences to attain a *detailed comprehensive talk* (315). I wondered about what would make a young person who was born and brought in London feel uncomfortable to call himself British. I asked him to explain 'what has led to that feeling':

I have not had bad experience. I have lived in this country, you know, quite decent life. I have socialised with the public, British or non British. I have no problems with them. ...It is not like I am against British values or whatever, it just that my identity is much more stronger on the Somali side. As I grown older I much more socialise with my Somali side than the British side. No, allegiance with Britain is just that. The Somali side of me is quite powerful, overpowering (Mubarik, 18).

While describing himself as a Muslim first and Somali second Mubarik points to the shift in his self-reference. Despite being born and brought up in London, he clearly states that his connection to his 'Somali side' developed as he has grown older and got stronger due to increased socialisation with his Somali peers. He further stated that he is uncomfortable saying he is British and believes that it is perhaps too soon to say so. Mubarik's increasing attachment to his Somali side could possibly be explained by the increasing social contact with his peers as well as the social context in which the confidence to embrace 'Britishness' is developed or not.

Similarly, 22-year-old Ilyas who was born in Somalia but raised in London reveals that he is:

A Muslim first, Somali second and British citizen third because you can be a Somali and a Muslim at the same time (but) I think the main one is religion and anyone can be a Muslim. And the next one is where I was born, where my family and my parents are from. And the next one is British because I've been here for the last 16/17 years, so I will consider my third (choice) probably as (being) a British citizen. It's been my environment for that long. I got to understand more about British culture and the way they do stuff. I think Somali people are more open to families (being) together, but in British culture it's mainly just the parents and the kids in the house, there is not that wider family and

integration and stuff like that. But I wouldn't say I feel British, I feel like I'm from Somalia, if people ask me where I'm from I say Somalia (Ilyas, 22).

In both Mubarik and Ilyas's case there seem to be some level of apprehension to select a distinct point of self-reference. The general consensus is one that draws on multiple self-reference points often transcending multiple social, national and religious spaces. A further apprehension is demonstrated in both cases with regards to the British connection.

Rashid Faysal who was born and raised in London, mainly explains the apprehension expressed by both Mubarik and Ilyas with regards to their British reference. Rashid argued:

(It is) cause number one I am Somali, originally Somali, so everybody is gonna view me as a Somali, not black British. I'm black British as well because I was born here, not necessarily everybody's gonna know that so they're gonna say I'm Somalian (Rashid, 18).

Rashid's assertion operates on the premise of how existing judgments and knowledge about social groups impact upon how these young males refer to themselves. This clearly shows that how they perceive themselves does not work isolation and is somehow dependent upon how the wider society views them. Rashid believes that who he is and where he is from – originally – is already a given and, hence, thinks there is no point of pretending otherwise despite London being his birthplace.

Drawing on these three cases what seems to be developing is a narrative, which suggests that indeed how young Somali men refer to themselves is to a great extent influenced by how the mainstream UK society views them. This has further bearing on the extent to which they remain in contact with their Somali peers, wider ethnic community and the *Ummah*. These critical matters figure prominently throughout this chapter, particularly in the sections that address the important themes of the study such home, belonging, self-reference as well as representation in Chapter Six.

The idea of the global *Ummah*, which is collective and unbounded that, as Mubarik put it, transcends *tribes, country and world* can be seen as a way of circumventing the isolationist tendencies that diasporas are commonly faced with (Vásquez, 2012) or as Smith argues

“locating human selves within social groups that sustain distinctive, *morally orienting* collective identities” (1998 quoted in; Vaisey, 2007, p. 854). There are, however, broader factors that influence how young males refer to themselves. In the following section the discussion on self-referencing is extended. Thus, ideas of home and belonging are taken up as part of the discussion and their wider implications on young Somali males are considered.

Deconstructing home and belonging

This section highlights the underpinning factors, which re-enforce or allow these multiple ways of self-referencing and extends how we understand them within a larger context of being and belonging. Through the idea of triangulation in diaspora and transnational studies – often used to articulate their intrinsic complex interactions – the extended socio-cultural relationships between host and homeland are addressed (see also King and Christou, 2008; Cohen, 2008; Safran, 1991). In academic research the emphasis is often to address and articulate the complex relationships and patterns that normally disrupt the bounded characters of migrants’ experiences wherein notions of home, belonging and self-referencing are usually addressed (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). Relevant accounts include Valentine et al. (2009a), Van Liempt (2011) and Somerville (2008).

In most cases, these accounts are articulated under a single banner, commonly through transnational engagements and formations. Hence, little attention appears to be given to the specific characteristics of the ideas of home, belonging and self-reference as issues in their own right while at the same time paying greater attention to how these inform, reinforce and influence one another, gaps which this section aims to address. Further, this research shows that these notions – of home, belonging and self-reference – are best viewed as shifting processes often underpinned by personal, group or community experiences in relation to the host society (Braxton et al., 2011; Tinto, 1997; Bell et al., 1994) and their wider transnational networks (Levitt and Schiller, 2004; Safran, 1991). Therefore, the following two critical questions are asked: *where do you call home?* And *where do you belong?*. Again, as in previous sections and more generally throughout the thesis, these questions are used as guidelines to allow for broader depth and enhanced understanding of notions of home and belonging. As tables 5.2 and 5.3 indicate, the results of daily practices of home and belonging and their impact on self-reference challenge the narrowly defined notions of citizenship,

locality, cultural, national and nationhood boundaries (Vertovec, 2009; Levitt and Schiller, 2004).

Belonging

Following the outcome of Table 5.1 whereby the complexities in relation to self-reference were highlighted, Tables 5.2 and 5.3 aim to unlock the multiple ways young Somali males relate to the ideas of home and belonging while drawing attention to their mutual relationship. The assessment indicates various answers, akin to Table 5.1, whereby young males were able and encouraged to articulate and prioritize the possible outcomes in relation to their choices (Rapley 2001).

Belonging	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Somalia	9	6	
Somaliland	6		
London	3		
Mosque	6		
My House	3		
Britain	13		
Muslim Umma	28		
My clan	3		
Allah	13	3	
Family	3	3	
Local area/ community	6		3
Somali culture		3	
Hargeisa	6		

Table 5.2. Percentage belonging reference of young Somali males
Source: Data (collected during fieldwork interviews) in percentages from the total. N: 32

In table 5.2 broader attachments of the idea of *belonging* were addressed. For example on the question of *where do you belong?* the majority (28 percent), said that they belonged to the Muslim Umma *first*, whereas a fair number of those interviewed (13 percent) indicated belonging to Allah *first* with a relatively small group stressing their belonging to Allah as a *second* choice. Other more common choices include Somalia (9 per cent *first* and 6 per cent *second*), my local area or community (6 per cent *first*), Hargeisa – capital of Somaliland (6 per cent *first*) and the Mosque (6 per cent *first*).

As argued by King and Christou (2010) “amongst the second generation, the search for ‘belonging’ and ‘home’ is often an extremely powerful, emotional, and even life-changing experience: an enactment of family heritage across time and space” (King and Christou, 2010, p. 7). This is also true for young Somali males in London. Mubarik demonstrates this through his search for meaningful belonging, which he found through Islam and connection to Allah. I asked him ‘how would you describe that sense of belonging to Allah?’:

Well you know, by belonging to Allah you have something power than belonging to something manmade by human beings, drawn out by human being, some material good or even some real form maybe a land. However, this land cannot do nothing for you. It can't assist you with your day-to-day life. It can't you know, it is just an idle there. Practically, it can be emotional, you know, it can deceive you, psychologically you may say I am feeling good because this is the land or this person Istakhfurullah, but you know, at the end of the day Allah, Subhaanahu wa ta'alah, he is the provider, you know, you can say anything you want but you can't run away from it (Mubarik, 18).

Mubarik seemed quite philosophical in the way he articulated his belonging to Allah. The transformation from the material to the spiritual world of Islam is something that captivates many young people in search for a world that is meaningful to their existence. Often, sustained connection to Allah is at the heart of that meaningful search. 18-year-old Liban Hakim suggested, ‘*we are his (Allah's) servants and we will go back to him when we die. Basically, he put us here on this earth so we have no choice but to return to him as we are his servants*’. During fieldwork I observed that indeed many young people have a great interest in Islam. Islam seems to offer a direction with more clarity and appears less confused unlike the ‘manmade world’ that Mubarik was trying to come to terms with.

As these cases reveal the complexity of belonging is indeed underpinned by a contentious search for meaningful contact and connections that instigate the kind of “enactment of family heritage across time and space” as asserted by King et al. (2010, p. 7). Heritage, in particular, appears to be a powerful reference point for many young Somali males in search for meaningful ways of belonging. Shahid describes how he has multiple ways of belonging and further emphasises the critical role of ancestors:

I belong to (the) Somali. I belong to (the) Somaliland community. I belong to Hargeisa it's my home. It is where I was brought up from a young age. It is where since a young age I have called my home. It (is) where my mother, my grand mother, my whole family grew up. It's a big part of my family. So yeah....coz my mum, she has always been there for me, and my mum, and my nan, when you see how proud they are of their country, how they feel like they belong their, I feel that sense as well (Shahid, 16).

An unexpected and generally less common way for young Somali men to express themselves – certainly during the fieldwork – was when Yaqub Mukhtar referred to his clan and said:

Tribes can really come into this section. Coz I think I am an ⁶³Arab, coz when you say to whom do I belong to, I'm from a sect or Arabs. (I am) from that tribe. Really like, who your parents are, and what your ancestors were.... So basically that's where you should be belonging (Yaqub, 19).

Clan matters surfaced more frequently during focus group discussions whereby debates about the disparity between clan loyalty and Somali unity are usually addressed. As argued by some participants the idea of Somaliness (or belonging to the ethnic Somali group) is considered key to (Somali) unity. The challenges of tribal segregation were carefully tackled as it often constructs how Somali people think, possibly affecting their attitudes toward notions of belonging. As noted by a focus group participant:

You need to be cautious in your discussion when talking about tribes. Tribes have become suspicious of each other therefore they avoid one another. ...We see lack of tribal intermarriages. Expectation is that

⁶³ One of the sub clans of the main Isaaq clan

you need to be loyal to your tribe.Tribes have therefore become secluded and a good example of this is the collection of funeral payments to (help) bury the deceased⁶⁴.

The two cases above appear to offer two contrasting views toward clan and tribal belonging. However, they address two common issues here. For Harun belonging to his clan is an acknowledgment of his roots, which has a historical significance representing the link to his ancestors. The focus group participants, on the other hand, touch on the challenges of clanism or tribalism. Clan can indeed become a powerful tool to divide and rule and could have serious consequences for the social fabric and cohesion of the Somali people.

Belonging is perhaps also about being valued and welcomed. It is about being part of and contributing to your (local) community (Pattie et al., 2003; Yuval-Davis, 2011a). 18-year-old Ismail who was born in mainland Europe and recently moved to West London illustrates how important it is to be meaningful to others and to your (local) community:

I think being part of the West London Somaliland Community is great, because I've been part of that community since I came to the country.... in 2007. (I) was brought into that community by (the) coordinator, who has been a great supporter. I would say (my belonging to the local community is) strong because I've done everything for Somaliland football to be honest. (I participated in) games, training (and) events. I've hosted ..football (events for) West London Somaliland Community. I've spread the name. I've been around countries such as Holland. We went to Amsterdam (on a) football tournament... (Ismail, 18)

Or as Rashid put it *'I belong here (Britain) for many reasons. First... I got a passport... that gives me the right to stay ...obviously. Yeah I belong here because I think like I bring a positive contribution... in many ways'*.

⁶⁴ It is common practice for clan members to organise themselves and reach out to one another in good times and more particularly when crises occur i.e. contributing to funeral costs or paying towards a charitable project in one's hometown. Structures of support are commonly rooted in Somali culture through Islamic Sharia and the traditional *Diya*-payments (also known as *Mag*-contributions. *Mag* is paid when a clan member commits a serious crime including murder or life-threatening injury. Also, Clan or clanism as it is known can be divisive tool used to alienate certain clans, which are regarded as inferior in relation to others. For further reading on Somali clans and their structure see Issa-Salwe and Lewis.

Home

Young Somali males have various ways in which they articulate their ideas of *Home*. Table 5.3 highlights the multiple and complex outcomes with regards to the idea of *Home*.

Home	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Somalia	25	6	3
Somaliland	19	13	
London/ My local area	34		
Mosque	3	6	
My House	9		
Britain	9	6	

Table 5.3. Percentage home reference of young Somali males

Source: Data (collected during fieldwork interviews) in percentages from the total. N: 32

A significant number of young Somali men appear to place great importance on their local areas (in London) (34 per cent *first* choice) as well as their country of origin (Somalia 25 per cent *first*, 6 *second*; and Somaliland 19 per cent *first* and 13 *second*). Other forms include My House (9 per cent *first*), Britain (9 per cent *first*, 6 *second*), and Mosque (significantly low *first* and 6 *second*). Many seemed to view their local areas, where they grew up and are familiar with as their home.

Ideas about *Home* vary among young Somali males then. However, what their responses have in common is indeed the fluidity and complexity of the idea of ‘home’: the places they call home, the sense of home and home creation in the metaphorical sense, as well as home in the physical sense i.e. a house. During focus group discussions some described home as a place where *you feel comfort*. Others argued that it is more closely related to one’s own *cultural heritage*. Some stated that it is about having a place with (social, economical and political) stability. Most participants agreed that ideas of home are not static and undergo continuous shifts whereby the above factors come together. Furthermore, it was suggested that home is more closely linked to notions of origins often referring to ancestral ties, leaving some to define Somalia as their ‘home’ given the associated heritage with the country regardless of whether someone is born there or not. The idea was further stretched: ‘*Home is a place you feel attached to*’ or it could be a ‘*youth club, a school*’ or simply about ‘*being part of your own community*’. (Focus group)

Ideas about home and home making are usually strengthened by social factors (Stock, 2012). Iimi Jaylani’s local area seems to offer him familiarity and a sense of community, which are critical factors for creating ‘homey’ places:

(In) Tottenham I feel like I'm at home... Not like back home or anything... I feel like I'm at home because that is where I've been brought up. I've lived there for a long time. I belong here. It's my normal community, mostly the Mosque because this is where I come. If I just wake up, the first thing that comes to mind is the Mosque. All my friends are here...(Ilmi, 20)

Religious places such as a mosque could also expand, satisfy and (re)create the greater need for home or home like environment (Blunt et al., 2012) as described below by Mubarik:

I like it. It is friendly, certainly safe. It is my second home. Safe: it is a place where you can relax; listen to hadeeth⁶⁵ without anyone moving on you (telling you to leave). It is also second home as it feels comfortable here. It is open and I can meet my friends. Main purpose for attending the mosque: it is encouraged in the hadeeth to pray in Jama'a, so I have to come to the mosque Also attain knowledge and I like mosques. When I come to a mosque I feel a sense of calm (Mubarik, 18).

Home is further created and shaped by negative diasporic consciousness through the experiences of exclusion (Stock, 2012) or as Clifford (1997, p. 251) put it “racial exclusivism” with tendencies to reinforce nationalistic sentiments. For example when I asked Mubarik ‘where or what do you call home’ he answered: *The motherland. That is my first thought. Greater Somalia! Somalia proper! Being a bit nationalistic there.* Similarly, Dahir Fuad’s account reveals how globalisation and Britain’s active participation in wars had a profound impact in the way he articulates his place in England (Yuval-Davis 2011):

I call home Somalia because I am not English. In England it feels like I am an indirect slave. If I work in this country taxes will be used in war in Africa and Afghanistan. I do not agree with war. It is an excuse to get oil. My main purpose here (in England) is to get education and go back home where I belong (Dahir, 17).

On the other hand more pleasant memories of homeland could compensate for the inability to (re)create a sense of place and home in the host society (Stock, 2012) as in Amin’s account that follows:

⁶⁵ It means ‘something new’ or a ‘talk’. In Islam, Hadith refers to that which is attributed to the Prophet (SAW) as in regards to words, actions or approvals, physical features and characteristics. See the Islamic Dictionary online.

I call home Somalia because mainly when I was young I still had friends around (whom) I could keep in touch (with). That is the place (Somalia) I grew up basically. What do you call it? My childhood I spent mostly there. ...I came here seven years ago. I would call Somalia my home....(Amin, 23)

Fundamental underpinnings of self-reference, home and belonging

What underpins what young Somalis call themselves, the way they belong and/or where or what they call home? Through the following cases I analysed the experiences of young Somali males in London and provided processual accounts wherein the relationships between time, place and space were continuously (re)negotiated (King and Christou, 2008).

In the following account, Mubarik unpacks earlier revelations wherein he considered himself nationalistic, belonging to the *Ummah* as well as feeling uncomfortable to call himself British:

I am from a part that is currently under occupation. You may, people may differ but history books don't. I am from the Ogaden region. I was brought up to be hostile to our archenemy (Ethiopia). ...I have been to the region in 2007 and I know how difficult life must have been. Major event that changed my perspective was the 2006 Ethiopian invasion of Somalia. It did not directly hit my family but the suffering of the Somali people made me want to make a difference. ... (When) I went to Addis Ababa and saw how they (Ethiopia) invaded Somalia. They live on American handouts, floating sewage. And I just wondered how people who cannot even manage their sewage invade Somalia. Somalia has a strategic location and people such as the superpowers including America and China are trying to take advantage. After I came from there I had a new perspective of my life and how I have a chance of making a difference and wiping out our archenemy or nemesis as they say.... I was a young kid before. I was (a) bit lofty, you know. Just playing around. After, Masha Allah⁶⁶, I understood you know, specially (that) my mother's side (of my family), do not have the same opportunities as me, it really touched my heart and (it) was quite emotional for me, but that was then. That brought out my nationalistic side of me. Just like, less than a year ago I came back from the Middle East. I was (there) for... just a year and half or two years and then Masha Allah spiritually it helps me giving me the balance not being too attached to the homeland and giving some weight in the Deen and stuff like that (Mubarik, 18).

⁶⁶ Masha Allah means God bless

Mubarik deconstructs the complexities and struggles of his experiences. As a young man who is growing up in London he is confronted with the situation of the Ogaden region, which appears to have a rather emotional impact on him leading to have nationalistic tendencies and perhaps an urge for Somali unity as a way of dealing with what he considers to be an 'Ethiopian occupation'. Mubarik's claimed that his trip to Yemen enhanced his religiosity and further understanding of Islam. This journey seemed to have been significant in Mubarik's shift from being nationalistically oriented in Somali unity to embracing Islam and the global *Ummah*, which precisely challenges nationalism and other more bounded attitudes such as ethnicity or tribal belonging. Either way or whatever his ideological stance – nationalistic or religious – Mubarik's (political) stance should be understood as practices of resistance of a young person in a relatively weak position (Clifford, 1997).

Hashim's account below demonstrated how further contested and shifting narratives reflected on his experiences as a young man who was growing up in London:

If you ask every Somali in the World Cup 'what football team you support'? They would say, 'Italy or Brazil' and all these other countries. And if you ask them 'why, why (are) you not supporting England'? They would say, 'that this is not my country'. And if you look at it, it is not like England is a bad team, as a football team. I remember, when it was Euro 96..I was making British flags. It was British flags as it was primary school, innit... for the team, to support them. ... At that stage I was maybe thinking that this is actually my country. ...But throughout the years, obviously I have gone to learn that I actually have a country. It is called Somalia and maybe one day I can live there. So I have become pro-Somalia over the years. But not necessarily because I wanted to, but because, I was forced to. That's the difference. And because we are very distinctive, anywhere I go, oh, are you Somali. That is the first question you are asked. You know, I speak to a lot of Jamaican colleagues of mine where I could just call them Jamaican, but when I ask them where they are originally from they will say their grandparents are Jamaican. So I thought what does that make you then? So that's where the confusion lies. Just recently I am studying Arabic and one of the questions they ask you is 'where are you from'? So obviously I say, 'I am from Somalia'. And then there is another question 'what is your nationality'? So obviously a lot of the class (mates) surprised me. A lot of the class (mates) are Somali. What surprised me is that a lot said Britannia and they would see themselves as being from Somalia. Their nationality is from Britain. That's where this identity is from. Yeah, we are British citizens. You are a British citizen until they revoke your British citizenship. So somebody is deciding whether you are a British citizen or not, but what does that actually mean? What rights do you have? Do you have the

same rights as everybody else? I don't see British people being stopped at the airport(s). I see Somali British people being stopped. I see Pakistani British people being stopped (Hashim 24).

After the formal interview setting Hashim informed me how he was stopped at airports and 'interrogated numerous times for no apparent reason'. Hashim seems to take issues with what he called the 'specific targeting of Somali people' as part of post 9/11 security measures. These appear to be the kind of politics and State behaviour where young Somali men tend to become "the victims of ongoing, structural prejudice" (Clifford, 1997, p. 251). Thus, these young men end up in a precarious situation where they tend to question who they really are or whether they belong to Britain and can call it their home (Cohen, 2008; Safran, 1991). Hashim's account equally reveals that experiences are entirely not the same. To his astonishment he also witnessed other young Somalis who seemed content with being British.

Levitt (2001; see also Ip, 2012) argues that young people are mainly influenced by the social factors in their host country. However, Ip suggests examining whether transnational forces simultaneously influence young people. In more recent years ties between diaspora communities and (their) countries of origin have significantly changed as a result of enhanced communication and technological development (Castells, 2009; Vertovec, 2009). These have become increasingly accessible 'making it important to consider the transnational social space as being molded by intertwining economic, social, and religious networks linking both the countries of origin and destination' (Ip, 2012).

My field research, and the journey to Somaliland in particular (more thoroughly discussed in Chapter Seven), could provide useful clues to explain shifting attitudes relating to young Somalis' sense of self-reference, home and belonging as such a journey offers first hand experiences of a place (of origin) or a locality. In the following account Garaad describes how his journey to Hargeisa (Somaliland) has allowed him to reflect on his sense of home:

I would call Hargeisa my home because there is where I was born. It is the motherland. It is where my parents come from and where their parents come from. Before, I would have said possible here (London) is (my) home but when I went back in 2004 I reassessed and thought that (I) was wrong. It is just that feeling...that you feel comfortable around your own people because I have been back there.... You are not as comfortable (in London) as you are when you go back. That is what I thought. It is like I

am here (London) right now, I have my family, I got my friends, I got everyone here. But at the same time it is like in general everyday life there are certain struggles that you have to overcome. Like if I was in Somaliland there wouldn't be racial discrimination that I would have to overcome. You feel like they look different at you but you still would feel part of them. It was not sinister. It is like they perceive everyone that comes from Europe in that way... (Garaad, 20).

Summary

Because of the great significance attached to the overriding conceptual frameworks of belonging and home it was important to get a broader understanding of what these terms entailed and more importantly how young Somali men interpreted and understood them in their own terms. In the identification process the chapter accommodated three important processes: 1) the theoretical understanding of such frameworks; 2) the way young Somali men interpreted these frameworks, drawing on the outcomes of field data; and 3) analyses and interpretation of the theory and the data.

Following this approach the chapter started with an introduction outlining its key parts and themes. Theoretical concepts were then introduced and the gaps highlighted which indicated the necessity for more grounded and nuanced understanding of the factors underpinning the intergenerational belonging of young Somali males in London within the context of diaspora and transnational studies. In this light the chapter explored three important areas: self-reference, belonging and home respectively underpinned by three different questions 'what do you call yourself', 'where do you belong' and 'where do you call home'? Thus, various forms of self-referencing were identified and explored. What has become clear is that these notions are far from fixed and are highly prone to variation according to local and transnational circumstances (Yuval-Davis 2011).

This chapter laid the foundation for subsequent chapters wherein the broader applications of self-reference, home and belonging will be more thoroughly discussed. The next chapter engages with the critical concept of citizenship with the aim of exploring how young Somali men interpret it through the analysis of the empirical data.

Chapter 6. Citizen Suspects: representations of young Somali males in London

Introduction

This chapter highlights how young Somali males live and interpret the concept of citizenship. It engages with critical active citizenship theories and draws on the work of Engin Isin (2008), Nira Yuval-Davis (2011b, 2007), Gaventa and Cornwall (2001), Heat et al. and Pattie et al. (2003). While such acts of citizenship are considered, the important components of what constitutes citizenship will be addressed drawing on the broader reflections of young Somalis. As this chapter reveals that, for many young people, citizenship is about aspirations and how to accomplish them, educational needs and how to address them, change and how to do it, as well as being about feeling safe in your local area. It is about such challenges and how to overcome them individually or collectively through voting or (re)grouping or otherwise. For others citizenship is further about being active and engaged (socially, politically and economically) not only locally but also transnationally in meaningful ways and being valued, respected, recognised and appreciated. This chapter further reveals that matters in relation to ethics and values are subjective and not necessarily seen in the same light. For example young Somali men maybe opposed to Western involvement in Islamic countries whereas leaders in the West may see this as necessary protective measure to both the West as well as Muslims. Yuval-Davies argues that it is within such contestations that the politics of belonging is defined (2011b, 2007). For Yuval-Davis participatory character of citizenship should be viewed as diverse and broad in terms of membership and not limited to state citizenship (ibid). This chapter assesses these important issues more thoroughly.

The chapter is divided into three main parts: Part one briefly addresses the various approaches to active citizenship. It starts with the introduction of acts of citizenship as a conceptual framework to shed light on how young Somali men engage with the concept of citizenship and how the later conditions that same engagement (Isin, 2008). It looks at the notions of rights and responsibilities, which are central to citizenship. In particular the wider and active participation of young Somali males is discussed, highlighting their civic, political

and social engagements. The second part focuses on how young Somali males are represented in mainstream society, centered on media depiction and political rhetoric. Part three offers a discussion on the position of young Somalis as minorities in UK mainstream society by drawing on the way they are represented and how they access citizenship. This part further investigates whether and how diversity and integration can be managed in a social, political and economic climate with increasing hostility toward immigration and migration. More broadly, the chapter explores how young Somali men view themselves as British citizens in a climate with increased media hostility and the foreign policy promoted by the Bush Doctrine stating 'you are either with us or against us'.

Acts of citizenship

Peter Nyers makes a compelling argument by offering contrasting views of citizenship as “most celebrated and most problematic” (2008, p. 1). He argues that it is celebrated as it offers clear forms of political identification that embraces progressive assertions about “liberty, equality, rights, determinations, individualism and human agency” often recognized for its impressive historical accomplishments (ibid). In contrast, it continues to be problematic as such accomplishments have almost always occurred in hugely unequal exclusionary ways (ibid). This distinction is critically demonstrated in this chapter. In this light it draws on more current citizenship discourses including liberal, political, social and civic engagements where rights and obligations are the generally underpinning features (see Leydet, 2011). It further extends the discussion beyond the current and common narratives of citizenship with key emphasis on active citizenship. Engin Isin et al.’s (2008) framework of “acts of citizenship” is relevant here, which he describes as ““moments” when beings, who claim, assert and impose such rights and obligations, enact themselves as citizens and, in the process, differentiate others as those who are not (strangers, outsiders, aliens)” and focuses on their “performance, enactment, making and unmaking..” (2005, p. 1). This explanation is helpful and underscores the processes of progress, change and challenge. The emphasis is put on the active, productive and original acts of individuals as well as groups. Furthermore, such acts are articulated within a broader view of everyday acts of citizenship, which upset the norm and test the existing socio-political order within nation states as well as in the transnational sense (ibid).

The chapter offers clear examples of young Somali males who use democratic processes to make themselves heard and listen to as well as those who challenge the status quo often provoking mainstream media dialogue and political discourse on an array of social, political and religious matters. By focusing on acts of citizenship it becomes clear that citizenship cannot be looked at merely from what appears to be a static statecentric position (Isin and Nielsen, 2008; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Rather, as demonstrated in this chapter, through the acts of citizenship a diverse and multilayered type of citizenship is proposed. Furthermore, through the experiences of young Somalis the chapter discusses how such acts of citizenship can become empowering on the one hand but also oppressive and exclusionary on the other hand. Acts of citizenship are helpful in highlighting these contrasting yet relevant engagements. As part of this chapter I offer empirically underlined acts of citizenship stressing the actual day-to-day experiences of young Somalis men in London. Therefore, while considering such acts of citizenship I want to interrogate the major themes that run through this chapter such as *representation* dealing with important questions as to who should do it, major societal *challenges* that young Somali men face and how they deal these and *perceptions* focusing on young peoples' narratives, mainstream political discourses as well as media constructions offering diverse and contrasting accounts of young people's broader social, political and religious milieu. Before I expand the major themes of this chapter I like to offer a brief context capturing the mainstream narrative of young Somali men in London.

Multilayered acts of citizenship among young Somali men

One of the focus groups I held as part of the research focussed on the notion of citizenship and how young people interpret it. Accordingly, it was suggested that citizenship is about *opportunities, connections, barriers and how to overcome them*. In terms of participation it is also about *how young people can become active or portray a united front regardless of our differences....* and how to use these *differences to strengthen and unite ourselves*. Citizenship is *a passport or a place where you belong, are recognised and accepted*. The notion of citizenship is, as it appears, diverse and multilayered (Yuval-Davis, 2011a; Isin and Nielsen, 2008). Participation and being or becoming active occurs at different and often at many levels (ibid). Beyond the legal connotations often associated with citizenship as a protective entity of rights and champion of responsibilities it further figures as a field where ideas about

inclusion and exclusion are played out (see Gaventa and Cornwall, 2001; Heath et al., 2013). Understanding that complexity is relevant to make sound judgments about what (active) citizenship means (Isin & Nielsen 2008). Furthermore, as Yuval Davis argues it is important to understand the links and interjectionally between the various levels and acts of citizenship participation (Yuval-Davis 2001a). This section provides narratives and reflections of young people’s understanding of the concept of citizenship rooted in their daily life experiences, culture and religiosity (Siu, 2001; Yuval-Davis, 2011a). Table 6.1 measures the participation of young Somali males in London and provides interesting accounts of their experiences.

An important facet of (active) citizenship is participation in society in the wider sense of the word. Participation figures further, as an important tool to measure how active a (young) person is as a citizen i.e. whether he works, studies, votes, volunteers etc. (Siu, 2001). Table 6.1 measures the wider participation of young Somali males in London through the analysis of three strands namely their *civic*, *political* and *social* engagements.

Civic engagement				Political engagement				Social engagement				
Volunteering & membership school/community organization		Volunteering & membership Religious organisation		Voting		Politically active		Work		Education		
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	*NEET
56	44	44	56	37	63	3	97	44	56	75	25	16

Table 6.1 measuring active citizenship (data collected during fieldwork) N: 32

*NEET (Not in education, employment or training)

As table 6.1 reveals civic participation can be divided into two main strands characterised by voluntarism in schools and community organisations as well as in religious organisations. The participation level in the first group is 56 per cent and 44 per cent in the second group as the table indicates. Those not taking part, respectively 44 and 56 percent, are equally important for the overall evaluation. I should point out that these outcomes are based on a one-off analysis and, therefore, will not cover the extent of active voluntary work undertaken by young Somali men. It is worth noting that most young people who are currently inactive have done some voluntary work in the past or are planning to do so in the near future. The table further reveals two important forms of political engagement: voting and being

politically active. The study reveals that 37 per cent of young Somali males vote during elections while 63 per cent refrains from doing so. In relation to political activism only one respondent took an interest while the rest showed a significant lack of attention. Finally social engagement was measured through two critical factors: work and education. Those in full or part time employment compared to those unemployed were 44 and 56 per cent respectively. The table indicates fairly high levels of educational participation. Overall educational participation comprised of 75 percent. It is important to note the link that exists between educational and employment participation. For example, young males who are working are often in education and vice versa. However, there is a significant group, 16 percent, which is termed as NEET – not in education, employment or training. In the following paragraphs I shall deconstruct the various factors that underpin these findings more thoroughly.

Civic engagement

Following from this, the study clearly revealed that volunteering requires time, money, knowledge and effort and involves a process of constant weighing and balancing of interests and prioritizing between these critical factors. 19-year-old Liban Hakim said *I used to coach youngsters. Basically it was this program called Chelsea Kids and... it was set up to... stop kids from getting (into) trouble and have them to come play football and keep them off the streets.* Hakim suggested that he enjoyed volunteering and teaching young people to play football and keep them out of trouble. In fact Liban took the initiative and went to club to ask if he could volunteer to coach the young people from *schools and primary schools. I was there for like a year and I got all of my coaching badges and first aid.... so I'm a coach now. I'm still involved partially but with studying and stuff like that it gets more important.*

Participation by young Somali men was generally underpinned by not only what they put in and/or get out but also by a greater sense of being obliged to giving back, which resonates with what Whitely and Seyd termed as 'general incentives' model (see Pattie et al., 2003). In the following case Akram shares his main justification to be involved in the charity and explains:

I was working for the Ummah Welfare Trust.... It's a charity organisation for the Muslim countries that are in poverty or have been struck with difficulties, and it's 100 per cent like, money straight to

them. And it's all charity. (I am involved) because Allah has chosen us to live in these sorts of environments (and) with these many things that we should be grateful for (and) although they should be grateful for the life Allah has given them, we have more than them, so it's a form of like showing Allah that we're grateful, and you're helping the Ummah as well. And also it's one of them things that Allah loves to see. In a lot of these countries there are a lot of orphans, so Allah loves people who help and feed the orphans (Akram, 17)

The attachment to the global Muslim Ummah underpinned by the religious sense of duty (also known as 'system of benefits' (Pattie et al., 2003)) that Akram referred to seems to be quite common among young (practising) Muslims. The benefits for Akram are twofold: pleasing Allah and helping the Ummah.

Given the sense of apparent alienation young Somali males often experience in mainstream society – i.e. often depicted as troublesome or 'un-British' etc. (see for example Francis, 2010; "How Muslims took over the British underworld | The Sun |Features," n.d.; Sullivan, 2009) – community and voluntary organisation seem to offer some level of comfort by creating a place where they can discuss, learn and contribute in their local communities (Isin and Nielsen, 2008). Sahir's case is a relevant account in point:

Basically (I am) here to improve myself, get some skills and you know, help out, volunteer, get (involved in) little projects that improve your skills. You get to do different projects, it's all like in your free time, so you're helping for the sake of Allah, you don't get paid or anything.... you get to express your views, and you know, make sure that you're heard, your point of view... if you have something to say then you say it, and they can take it into account at the advisory board meeting, so you have a say basically. I put in my views, my time, and what I get in return is, because you see there's a lot of people that have more experience than me, and I get to learn from them as well, take advice and learn, you know. It makes a lot of difference because we contribute a lot. We use our own free time to set up events, you know, (for example) the achievement event...for them: young people. Like the achievement event we put a lot of hard work (and) planning (in it). ...it's very organised. It's the level of, what do you call it, the unity. We are close in our unity (Sahir, 23).

Political participation

In the UK context political participation and the right to vote seem to go hand in hand (Bellamy, 2008). Voting is hence cherished and is considered an extremely important (democratic right) by many. However, voting and political representation must also appeal to

eligible voters (Heath et al., 2013). Professor Michael Saward (2009) suggests the use of themes or what he calls the ‘zones of contestations’ rather than questions and answers to conceptualize notions of citizenship in relation to voting. Yuval Davis (2011a) makes a similar argument. She claims that the political project of belonging should be understood through the contesting narratives of citizenship participation. The following section highlights the contested notions of voting. It draws on the reflections from the fieldwork to uncover and enhance our understanding of the complexities of political participation. This is far from being straightforward. Table 6.2 below highlights these complexities and their broader effects on voting dynamics.

Stand	Percentage
Consider voting important and will vote but not allowed to vote yet	22
Consider voting important but will not vote	31
Consider voting unimportant, able to vote but will not vote	9
Consider voting unimportant, unable to vote and will not vote	3
Consider voting important able to vote and will vote	13
Consider voting a man-made law but will vote	3
Not sure voting would change anything	22

Table 6.2 measuring voting dynamics (data collected during fieldwork) N: 32

This research revealed various factors that affect why and how young people vote. It was apparent that some young people think voting is important and will vote if given the opportunity but cannot do so because they are either under aged, unaware of their right to vote or simply not in possession of the right legal documents. As 25-year-old Mursal Igeh argued *it wasn't because I didn't want to (vote). I didn't do it out of choice or anything. It's to do with the papers* or as Heat el al. (2013) put it, citizenship and eligibility to vote matter a great deal. While the majority recognises the relevance of voting as a vehicle for change they will not actively take part. They do not see the benefits (of voting) and are often skeptical about the political process (ibid). A ‘rational choice’ (Pattie et al., 2003) is made to abstain from voting on the basis that politicians would not take notice.

Furthermore, the political participation of ethnic minorities in British politics remains disproportionately low. According to Heath et al. (2013) while there is eight per cent of ethnic minorities in the electorate, the number of MPs in the House of Commons is estimated to be around four percent. Despite such disproportionality this is the highest number ever elected (twenty-seven MPs) (ibid). This is perhaps possible due to the growing ethnic minority population in Britain who are increasingly becoming aware of their social, economic and political situation and the importance of political participation to circumvent challenges they face in these areas. Moreover, as we witnessed in the 2010 General Election we have not only seen an increased ethnic minority representation in British politics but also a change of the profile of minority candidates and MPs (Sobolewska, 2013). Differences and diversity along class and ethnic lines appear further common among minorities' political participation. Both the Conservative and Labour parties nominated ethnic minority candidates in safe seats in usually lesser diverse white locations (ibid). Also, for the first time in British politics Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, an Asian Muslim woman was nominated as the Conservative Party co-chair although she no longer occupies this position. Despite her humble background the Equality and Human Rights Commission have named Warsi Britain's most powerful Muslim woman (Hattenstone, 2009).

However, as Studlar and Layton-Henry (in Heath et al., 2013) claim greater forms of exclusion may persist among ethnic minorities since the main British political parties may dismiss their social and political interests, as a result, ignored in national political. As remarked by 16-year-old Qasim Abdibari:

I think it is important but I wouldn't be bothered to vote. For me all of them (politicians) are they same.... Normally people are trying to do something or change something and at the moment I do not want anything from them (Qasim, 16).

Wondering what would help young people develop an active interest in political participation I asked Rageh Khalid. 'what would make you vote?':

Nothing really...because everything they tell you is a lie, because once you vote for them and they actually do win the elections they're just going to do their own thing. You can't change (that), we don't have that power. Probably (the way to assume power is) by forming an organisation and going into

politics yourself and looking to be PM. But that's not going to happen, that's not an option (Rageh, 16).

Heat et al. (ibid) coined the term “paradox of voting” to articulate the measured approach certain voters take wherein they consider the costs (taking the initiative to actively vote) against the benefits (making a change) of voting. Accordingly, if the costs outweigh the benefits then one is unlikely to vote and adopts an egoistic stance (ibid). In line with most young men who abstain from voting what seemed apparent from the above cases is that both Qasim and Rageh showed strong negative feelings about politicians and distrust in the general political process. Both of them would not vote despite not meeting the minimum voting age of 18 in accordance to section 17 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 in the UK. Given their responses their attitudes towards voting cannot be merely dismissed, as “rational egoist” as in Heath et al.’s (2013, p.133) understanding centered solely on one’s beneficial gain neither can be assumed that these assertions are simply strategic voting. In fact, Qasim clearly indicates that he does not want to change anything to justify his stance toward voting. Young men’s disengagement in political participation and skepticism towards party policies seem to be further affected by global factors and events such as the War on Terror. Reflecting on these matters Hashim explained that in:

this current campaign I didn't vote. Previously I used to.... I made a conscious decision of not voting. I felt that it would not make any difference to what was happening both internationally and nationally. I felt that it would have been a different face but they have the same objectives so why waste my time in voting. Usually you are meant to vote for real change. I didn't feel that a real change was to occur. I think that voting is important, a very important concept. I felt that the British society is being deceived in thinking that the political parties are different ...(and) have different objectives. Actually they are the same. I felt that it doesn't matter who I have voted (for). It would have been the same result. They...the people who run the country, the powers above... not just politicians, the people above politicians... decide what happens, what countries are invaded, what resources are used, what are cut and who is focus. Politicians are just used as pawns really. There are people above them... like Illuminati for example, the banks, people with wealth, people who dictate things, the lobbyist ...They are the ones who control the country. I give you a brief example, like banks, a lot of tax payers' money was used to bail out banks. You know, the British government says, 'oh they are privatized' but (they are) not privatized because the government had to intervene to support them. So that is the kind of things that we know really that the people that control the politics are really above them. So I thought that there was no point in voting (Hashim, 24).

A clear distinction was made between voting and voter registration. Voting is associated with casting your vote for a particular (member of a) party while registration is considered more of a strategic move to mobilise, a physiological advantage if you like where politicians who think in numbers may become interested in for example the Somali community (Heath et al. 2003). This is reflected in Hashim's case below:

I think it is important for people to be registered to vote. For example, if the Somali community was like a hundred thousand living in the UK, regardless if they vote or not, they are still powerful because the politicians would believe that they would need to appease what the Somali people would want in order to get their vote. ...So if you register to vote and you can come to some sort of agreement where politicians say 'you know what I can guarantee that I will do this for you'. However, if you feel that it will not make a big impact towards having a society then you should refrain from it. With the census the idea was not just voting, ...there is the whole issue with counting people, letting the local authorities know how many people there are, how many unemployed Somalis there are, how many Somali people are uneducated or haven't received any sort type of training. There is a whole break down in terms of the census. It was not just voting. If it was just voting I would not have got involved with it. It wasn't a canvassing campaign, getting people to sign to vote. That was just one element of it but the wider scope is actually, you know, as a British citizen we should be counted and we should be visible (Hashim, 24).

In the same way that politicians adapt their policies to address public opinion so do young Somali people when casting their votes. In the case below Mubarik reveals that following his belief he considers himself as a Conservative but given his social position in British society he opts for Labour. He said:

Well probably I do understand conservative ideas even in this government. ...the problem is that I wouldn't vote Conservative. It's just that it directly opposes my socio-economic class.... even though they have a better social mobility programme.... It really won't benefit me straight out, because I already have that social structure embedded in my background, even though, what they stand for, it could be much more conservative (Mubarik, 18)

Given that conservative ideology covers a large array of social, economic and political strands I asked Mubarik to elaborate on his thinking about conservatism and the attraction to safeguard his interests. He argued, what attracts him is the:

...emphasis on the family. These other parties may not have such emphasis on the nuclear family. You know what I mean, less partnership, much more (focus) on marriage. I am a conservative, even though the Conservatives may be directly against Islam and whatever, however what they stand for (as) part of their manifesto, it does you know draw me in. However, because I am an immigrant and my parents are immigrants it's quite normal for me to vote Labour, even though I might not agree with most of their manifesto. After all they did bring me in, or did they, maybe it was in Thatcher's day, so maybe I am a Thatcherite.... As for Conservatives it was a draw out, its much more on the surface, even though, I understand that if I was a white British person, I would vote for Conservatives, without a doubt, its just that I am a different colour that I have to vote Labour (Mubarik, 18).

Mubarik's social and economic status as well as ethnic background seemed to play a significant role in how he votes. Mubarik indicated that he has a clear understanding of what these political parties stand for and tries to negotiate his position and ideas through (their) political parties' manifestos. As it appears it is not a simple choice between various parties as many may (or may not) relate to one's beliefs in different ways. In what Heath et al. (2013) termed as strategic or tactical voting Mubarik informs us that voting involves a process of balancing and negotiating of personal and collective priorities in a particular social circumstance.

Less surprising and perhaps somewhat predictable, there was a significantly low level of engagement in actual political activism, which is clearly affected by fairly high levels of skepticism as demonstrated in the paragraphs above. Consequently, only one respondent was a member of a political party and showed a keen interest in further political career. Kimberlee (2002) observed similar trends among young British people. He argued that besides political parties' systematic failure to encourage young people to engage in the political process, the growing lack of participation "of young people at general elections may have something more to do with young people's changing journey to 'adult statuses', which is different to the journey undertaken by their own parents" (Kimberlee, 2002, p. 96) in the past. Accordingly, increasing social changes appear to have altered existing social structures and young people seem no longer able to make the necessary transition required to engage with modern politics and ease the transition to citizenship route (ibid). More relevant for this thesis, the lack of interest can further be explained with the widespread focus and targeting of young males,

particularly those often deemed at risk (Kelly, 2003) and from an ethnic minority background. In what Kelly (ibid) termed as ‘preferred futures’ young people are often targeted to become active and responsible adults. In contrast however ‘institutionalized mistrust’ (ibid) is at play whereby young people are further viewed as suspects and with mistrust in their ability to develop, and this tends to create challenges and apparent gaps between policy, politics and young people more generally. There seems to be a clear need for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between young people and policy makers in order to address these challenges and gaps and increase the interaction between various relevant parties (Gaventa and Cornwall, 2001). The link between and impact of the different variables are important to highlight the significance of disengagement.

Social engagement

Education and employment are two factors that hold great significance for social engagement. Not only do they help explain the level of inclusion and exclusion of young people in society, they also tend to form the basis of their place as active citizens. However, although the importance of these two critical factors is recognised this thesis shows that inclusion/exclusion is often underpinned by social phenomena that better explain their wider participation more thoroughly (Smith et al., 2005). This particular section highlights some specific cases that explored employment and educational participation and aspirations. The following section on representation widens the parameters for citizenship beyond education and employment.

Participation levels	Percentage
GCSE	3
A levels	13
Vocational course/college	13
Arabic	3
Undergrad (completed or in the process of completing)	28
Post-grad	6
Fulltime or part-time employment	37
NEET (not in education, employment or training)	16

Table 6.3 measuring educational and employment participation (data collected during fieldwork) N: 32

With regards to young people both employment and educational aspirations are better viewed as processes. In the following case Fowzi Omar describes how his employment aspirations changed through time, underpinned by greater religious consciousness:

When I was younger I wanted to be a technician or a cameraman, something to do with media. I loved media because you had all these things to do. ...I went to... Umrah⁶⁷, and then my whole mind got changed because I saw the holy wall. I saw all these different jobs. You can still become a lawyer. People used to tell me a lawyer is haram⁶⁸. You can't do this you can't do that. You can do it in a halal⁶⁹ way. Basically you can become a lawyer in a halal way (Fowzi, 20).

It is noteworthy that Fowzi was going through a double developmental challenge (Rothe et al., 2011) in this respect. On the one hand, he is a young man coming to terms with his professional aspirations and on other hand his religious consciousness develops allowing him to make more informed choices.

In Mubarik's case, following his parents' aspirations (for their children to do well) - often discouraging them from seeking employment in order to avoid any distraction from their education - played a great role, impacting on his focus in school, despite the lack of job opportunities that could manifest from time to time.

There is no work and I am in education. (These) two things that try to stop me from work. ...Also, you know parents saying, 'we'll do everything for you, just do education, I will feed you'. When you reach (certain) age you know, feeding is 'we will cloth you'. I take that (as) patronising sometimes. ...It is no good to rely on your parents' pocket; always have something to move back on. I'm not working, but I am happy with how things are working (Mubarik, 18).

Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

Schools and educational settings have their own challenges as discussed in Chapter Four more explicitly, which I do not intend to repeat here. Instead I would like to briefly discuss

⁶⁷ Umrah, also known as small Haj, is a nonobligatory but highly recommend pilgrimage believed to have great reward

⁶⁸ Impermissible

⁶⁹ Permissible

the so-called NEETs – not in education, employment or training (Mascherini et al., 2012) – phenomenon that affected 16 per cent of my respondents. Within the NEET group are young people between the ages of 16-25. There were various factors that have led these young men to become NEET. Most indicated that they became inactive after leaving school at the age of 16. For a few (wrong) course choices had played a big factor in their inactivity. Some briefly attended various academic courses but soon discovered that it was not what they wanted and decided to leave. Some had personal problems or financial challenges while a few said they had to support sick family members in the house. Some had led a troubled life which involved gangs and gang related activities but were unsure about how to go about finding the right information and get the adequate support they needed to move on and become socially mobile. NEET are, as it appears, a high-risk group in need of great attention. I argue that this was the group that showed the most vulnerability as they faced and had to deal with various rejections as part of their troubled backgrounds. A useful case in hand was Akram Khalif's account who was trying to leave the gang life he was involved in (what he called 'deluded life'). The difficulty that he faced when trying to do so is discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Seven. For the purposes of this particular chapter, the point to stress is simply that it was this group, characterized by Akram Khalif's experience that seemed to be most in need for belonging and attachment. Community organisations sometimes become overwhelmed with the level of need required by young people (NEETs in particular) as demonstrated in Akram's case. In a time of fiscal austerity and reduced central and local government spending the capacity to deal with such serious cases becomes even more limited. This is indeed an area in need of serious attention and evaluation. Having said that, drawing on the various discussions for this research, it was clear that, for the majority, education (as well as employment) had great value and as a result the young people were considering re-engaging soon.

Representation

Who represents us?

The question of representation directly raises further questions about critical issues of equality, justice and democracy, and the ways in which individuals are affected by media representations, addressed in the context of the focus group. The impact of media and other

representations can compound young people's senses of alienation, as outlined above in relation to widespread suspicion about politicians – with young people questioning the plotical classes motivation to do good, and doubting their intentions to represent young people adequately. Such scepticism seems to be underpinned – and exacerbated – by a marked shift in mainstream attitudes toward young Muslims in the West generally and more specifically in Britain, given the focus of this research. Academic research in Britain and Germany (see Hilbert, 2011) revealed how Muslims are constructed as 'dangerous' and 'othered' by the mainstream society (Ibid 2011, p. 3). The study highlights two important events that underline these social constructions including the Rushdie affair and 9/11, unlocking powerful sentiments that resulted in debates about the supposed 'clash of civilizations' between the Muslim and Western worlds (ibid). More specifically in London, where this research is grounded, a report titled *The impact of 7 July 2005 London bombings attack on Muslim communities in the EU*, focuses on another event that altered and contributed to more negative attitudes towards Muslim communities in Britain and Europe (EUMC, 2005). Islam has become synonymous with disorder and hostility, posing a potential risk to national securities in Western countries. These security concerns have transnational dimensions and, as this thesis shows, have been linked to sustained (British) foreign policy promoting engagements in global events such as the interventions and wars in Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq, the treatment of Palestinians considered to be unjust by many. Against this background, young Somalis often express concerns about what is happening to the Umma – the global Muslim community – and feel obliged to empathise with them.

Unlike the 9/11 terrorist attacks that were linked to Al Qaeda, the 7/7 bombings were executed by home grown young British Muslims - with devastating impact that had profound consequences on how young Muslims are perceived by society in Europe and Britain (Ali, 2008). Two weeks later further attempts were made to cause large-scale devastation but the bombs fail to explode (Hugh Muir, 2012). *The Telegraph* (Rayment and Freeman, 2012) reports that two young members of the Somali community, Ramzi Mohamed and Yassin Omar were involved in these failed bombings on July 21. Also, Ahmed Hussein Ahmed, a 21-year-old British Oxford Brookes University student, blew himself up in a suicide mission 'at a checkpoint manned by Ethiopian Army Troops, killing 20 Soldiers' (Ibid). Ahmed is said to have left a video message behind encouraging (young) British Somalis 'to migrate to

Somalia and wage war against your enemies,’ while, ‘speaking against a backdrop of a black and white Al Shabaab banner’ (Ibid), an alleged terrorist group said to be linked to Al Qaeda (*BBC News*, 2012).

As a result, young Somalis have become a focal point and a topical concern for authorities being portrayed as marred with suspicion and disloyalty to the British nation state. Such focus on Muslims seems to contextualise young Somalis “in terms of faith and culture, rather than race and ethnicity” (Hilbert, 2011, p. 3). Accompanying such scrutiny, there has been persistently negative media coverage on (young) Somalis, often depicted as violent and aggressive with disregard for law and order (Rayment and Freeman, 2012; Townsend, 2010; Francis, 2010; Fletcher, 2009). Consequently, such negative perceptions appear to have contributed to a sense of ‘negative self-perception’ (Hugh Muir, 2012).

As this research shows, the situation is rather more complex. Young Muslims are not only struggling with a society that appears to stereotype them as Islamic fundamentalists or radicals but have to also cope with cultural and generational factors (see Chapter Four). They also have aspirations and seem to want to contribute to society but often feel misrepresented. Partly as a result of serious but very few events the relationship between the Somali community and the British state and society has in fact become increasingly somewhat hostile.

Forms of representation and acts of citizenship

The focus groups offered useful platforms to explore ideas of representation and acts of citizenship. The interactive nature of group discussions proved to be a valuable tool to deconstruct some of young people’s broader understanding of representation and its relationship with active citizenship. The following accounts are based on a workshop held by SYDRC and the LSYF during a conference for young European Somalis that took place in Camden, London.

The workshop started with the following question: *what is representation and do you feel adequately represented in your respective European countries?* The group agreed that representation is about equal treatment. In order to feel represented one needs to *have strong*

connection to the society where you live with the same rights and responsibilities similar to those of the natives without compromising on your beliefs and customs. A further consensus was that host nations should actively promote more inclusive integration policies in relation to employment, education and political participation bearing in mind that a clear distinction should be made between active integration and the more assimilationist-grounded approaches. The vast majority rejected the idea of assimilation for the reason that it could undermine who they are and their beliefs that might confine them in systems, which could be counter to their traditions and beliefs.

Following this, workshop participants were requested to reflect on the idea of active citizenship and what it means to them. This created a lively discussion and various concepts of the idea – of citizenship – were shared. According to the group active citizenship is about *opportunities, connections, barriers and how to overcome them. It is also about how young people can become active or portray a united front regardless of our differences such as wearing scarfs or choosing not to and how to use these differences to strengthen and unite ourselves. Citizenship was also seen in terms of having a passport or a place where you belong, are recognised and accepted.*

What constitutes active citizenship was the question that followed, allowing participants to explore what it actually means to be a British citizen from a Somali background, for example. Further, the idea of citizenship being a social contract and notions about what it is to be an active citizen were shared. Participants were critically assessing their situation by calling their attitudes and positions as a consequence of their actions into question (Crotty, 1998). For example, the group wondered *are Somali Muslims in European States taking far more than they are giving? What can a Somali European offer? How far do Somalis need to integrate into the realms of British society?* It was suggested that in order to decide what an active citizen is one *must look at what the host nation interprets as active.* There was some level of confusion about the expectations of the British state on the part of its Somali citizens. As remarked by a participant *as Somali Muslims maybe there is only so much we can do in order to prove we are active citizens.* However, there was a general consensus among participants that *as a citizen there are rules and obligations you have to follow and there is also a social responsibility to contribute to society.* The group looked beyond the general

obligations and responsibilities, which they thought are important components to be active members of society. Furthermore, it was agreed that in order to become an active citizen one must be given the opportunity to do so:

To discuss active citizenship what must be looked at is opportunity. How flexible is the UK government in accommodating somebody from a Somali background who has the potential to become a UK Prime Minister (focus group)

Following on from the above discussion the next section aims to highlight the challenges that young Somali people face and aims to address the underlining factors which fuel such discontent beyond the immediate and apparent isolation from society.

Challenges

As it has become apparent the challenges faced by young Somali people are having critical consequences on the way they view themselves. The negative self-perception that seems to have become pertinent in these young people's lives is often fueled by negative media depictions contributing to a wider yet obscured discourse about young Somali people. These challenges have a wide scope. In this section I intend to briefly highlight some of the various challenges that young Somali people face while drawing parallels with the mainstream challenges faced by similar youth in their generational cohorts.

Young people often indicate that most '*challenges are with education, crime, perception, high expectation from parents versus (low) expectations from society* etc. These pressures are reflected in Hamud's account. He said:

*Meeting parents' criteria. That is a main one, ... parents' pressure... I'm telling you ...because obviously every Somali parents either want their son to be a doctor, or engineer, or a lawyer. They (parents) value things so high. If you don't get your A*s English in A level or GCSEs, you don't get a first class degree (and) they are not happy parents. Well I didn't get my A*s or As but, well, that is one of the criteria. Another could be fitting in socially, trying to make friends. ...A lot of people find it hard to socialise. Personally I don't like to see someone on the outside looking in. I like to make people feel welcome. So socialising, when people find it hard to fit in, people getting along with each other. That's what I like. (Hamud, 19)*

Extending the discussion Hamud adds that among other challenges faced by young Somali men in particular include *robberies, (getting into) fights, (using) weapons, ...different minor things as well, and drugs. ...Every area you get some good Somalis, some bad Somalis, that is everywhere. Some places are worst than other areas* (Hamud, 19). Reflecting on his experience Hamud identifies new comers as a group that is more vulnerable to such crimes as they often want to belong and be part of the crowd if you like (see also Ahmed, 2009):

I've seen it. When young Somalis come from abroad they get sucked into it as well, (particularly) the new ones and when (they are) typically young. When they come into school, because they're not used to the area, they adapt to it. I used to know one boy; everyday he used to say he would come to the mosque to pray. When he got to year eleven, I saw him smoking...and I remember... he used to roll his trousers up. Everyone used to laugh at him. His pants are underneath his bottom. The gang culture that is how it starts. Most of young Somalis I come across are smart, not dumb so you have to take advantage of it. Some (young) people are stupid... not intellectually but they do stupid things...such as screaming around, chucking things at the teacher. I don't know what it is, being school clown or trying to prove something or why. And some others that just need.... extra help. They are only doing it because they are peer pressured (Hamud, 19).

As my research indicates, belonging has a significant impact on both the sociological and the psychological being of young people. A great sense of belonging seems to offer a safety net of friendship and communal attachment, which in turn tend to aid their confidence and self-esteem. However, as Fowzi suggested in the following account, the need to belong can also lead to undesirable associations often forcing young people to conform to 'the code of the streets' (Centre for Social Justice, 2009, pp. 88–89) and constructed notions of masculinity (Desai, 2000), gangsterism and violence (see also Brookman et al., 2011; Goldson, 2011; Jimerson and Oware, 2006) or worst being recruited by so-called radical preachers:

...They (young Somalis) see these people putting their trousers down, look high. They walk in groups, they want to become like these people. To become like these people you have to act like them. And what happens is they try to catch up, because maybe they think this person started selling drugs aged nine, so they start selling big drugs aged 15, in order to become like them 'I want to become like him'. That's how it is. Most (young) people that get into this kind of businesses are the ones that come from abroad like Somalia, at the age of 15, 16, or 17. The ones that are born and raised here, their parents

have them under control. They know the society as they were born in it. They know the good, the bad, the people (Fowzi, 20).

Education seems to be a recurring theme reflected upon by many young people. This is not surprising given their age and focus in education, which plays a significant role. It is, hence, foreseeable that their experiences would be based on this significant period of their lives – their time in education. It was evident during research that many young men wanted to understand the value of a good education. These young men acknowledge the significance that desired family relations and role models have on them. Further, there seemed to be a great awareness about the potential danger of low expectations, poverty and elements of popular culture such as certain lyrics of rap music.

I argue that these are factors that transcend race, ethnic or religious backgrounds. Furthermore, most of these factors occur in most communities despite having disproportional impact on them and, at times, with unexpected outcomes. For example the Joseph Rowntree Foundation published a report in 2007 titled *Tackling low educational achievement* suggesting that “nearly half of all low achievers are white British males... and that white British students on average – boys and girls – are more likely than other ethnic groups to persist in low achievement” (Cassen and Kingdon, 2007, p. 1). Moreover, Ahmed (2009) informs us that some young British Muslims show relatively higher levels of vulnerability with regards to general civic participation and educational achievement, which is often low. Ahmed identifies care-leavers and recent arrivals among the vulnerable groups including:

a more complex group of Muslims who are in a cycle of poverty passed from one generation to the next (similar to economic deprivation in sections of wider British society). All share similar challenges, which undermine their engagement with education (Ahmed, 2009, pp. 38–39).

In addition to these pressures many young people are also susceptible to government policy changes, particularly when economic power and religion are implicated. A current topical subject that was regularly drawn upon by young research participants was the changes in the fee structure of higher education in England. Qasim believes one of the great challenges facing young Somalis is:

Tuition fees. Because now, it is going to cost £ 9,000 (a year to go to University) and the interest rate is haram⁷⁰, well I see it as haram. You might do good in this life but what about your Akhira⁷¹. Not a good look. Tuition fees are the biggest threat. It is not just Somalis, but all Muslims. ...They see they cannot go (to) university. It is a waste of time. They are not going to do anything good... (They) might as well just start selling drugs or... get a nine to five job, and that's it (Qasim, 16)

Not everyone believes that there are huge problems that specifically affect young Somali people, however. In causal discussions in the bus during a fieldtrip in Somaliland, I asked Idris Aziz ‘what are the main challenges facing young Somali males in London?’:

To be honest, that's a question I couldn't answer. I mean, I have gone through what any other lads (have) gone through and I still feel like I am fulfilling my potential. I mean that sort of all goes down to the individual and maybe they are just sort of not as aspirational as others. ...I think there are a few obstacles they go over but I do not think they are as big as what some people would have thought. I mean, they are still entitled to education; they still are given all the other chances that other kids are given in the UK. So for obstacles I do not feel they have to overstep a lot of them. I mean maybe with the whole police issue and the stop and search and that which is not only a problem with Somalis but also every other ethnic minority. I thought, other than these (issues), maybe obstacles are not really a big issue in London (Idris 19).

Idris' account above seems to suggest that young people are somewhat responsible for their actions and, therefore, in control of their own destiny. This is a refreshing thought but Idris' experience is not widely shared as most accounts from this research suggested. For example Qasim thinks that:

...young Somalis cannot get work because they are instantly stereotyped. Because of all the bad publicity that Somalis got, I think they just put it into perspective that every Somali person is like that: pirates etc. They think that we are all just the same... Somali boys may be bullied because of this bad publicity and stuff – the way the media portrays it: violent people. ...The media I believe goes over the top (Qasim, 16).

How the media and the mainstream British society perceive young Somali people has been a topical recurring discussion, which is discussed more thoroughly in the following sections.

⁷⁰ Haram: impermissible

⁷¹ Akhira: life after death

Perceptions

In this section the aim is to highlight some of the areas that underpin the main challenges discussed in the previous section. This section will, therefore, highlight what has become a significant part of this research underpinning the way young Somali people see themselves as well the way they believe they are perceived by the broader mainstream British society. This section will emphasise the impact that this perception has on young Somali people's confidence. With that in mind the following two questions are addressed: 1) how are young Somali men perceived by others?⁷² and, 2) how do young Somali men perceive themselves? Such perceptions in this regard are best viewed as fluid processes that mutually and continuously interact with each other. For example ill-perceived perceptions from the mainstream British community towards young Somalis are likely to impact on their self-perception. The following section discusses these processes in detail.

Mainstream perceptions and media constructions

In more recent years the general images of young Somalis, particularly that of young males, has been under great scrutiny. Despite some success stories about young Somali people – i.e. Mo Farah's success as a British athlete – information flowing in the public domain has been broadly negative. Important local and global events have contributed to this apparent negativity including various terrorist acts and attempts of criminal activities committed by young Somali men (Rayment and Freeman, 2012; Sullivan and Dunn, 2010; BBC News, 2005).

Viewing young Somalis in such a light tend to have impacted on how they see themselves often questioning their place in British society. There appears to be a real frustration with regards to how they were perceived by the wider society, as reflected in Garaad and Sami's cases below:

I just do not like how the media portrays us. When a young Somali misbehaves we are all branded as Somali criminals and when Mo Farah wins a medal he is British. Everything that is bad belongs to the

⁷² 'Others' in this case refers to the various communities within the mainstream British society.

Somalis and suddenly when we achieve we become accepted and British as of being British safes someone from becoming a criminal, I just don't get it (Garaad, 20).

...There is a negative vibe around us I think. They think we are a bunch of troublemakers and stuff like that. They don't really see the good section of the young Somali community where the religious one who come out and go to the mosque... They really see the ones who hangout on the street, the corners and stuff like that and they get a negative vibe (Sami, 17).

The mainstream media was frequently mentioned as a medium that often portrays the Somali community in a bad light, particular young people. As a result many young Somalis (interviewed) adopted a stance to avoid the media, particular rightwing oriented media such as *The Sun*, *Daily Mail* and *The Times*. ...'the other time I was reading an article about young Somalis and it was bad, writing awful things,... which are not even true. It was *The Sun*' (Qasim, 16). As Mubarik put *I do not read this rubbish (newspapers) anymore. It is biased and only talks about bad stuff*. Many young people believe that this gives an obscured and often unfair picture of Somali people but realise that, as Qasim said '*one bad fish can spoil the whole pond*'. Mursal suggested that since there are no apparent links between the Somali community and the British public:

The general feeling of the public comes from the media. So it would be pirates, terrorists, ...people that are backward, people that have been fighting for too long with no apparent reason. Some points they have (are right) but the media misleads some. So it is not totally true. On the other hand it's not 100 per cent wrong, so we have to clarify the message (Mursal, 25).

Many of those who participated in this research feel quite apprehensive about the continuous targeted bad press and seem frustrated about the wide negative coverage about the Somali community in general. Rageh Khalid said:

To be perfectly honest, it happens in every community. And Somalis are like any other... We do have our drug dealers we do have our people that get into gang wars...but you find a lot of other people getting into that kind of stuff... We do (also) have a lot of successful young Somalis (Rageh, 16).

Citezens, suspects and the politics of deprivation

The War on Terror and the fight against radicalisation that have dominated both domestic and foreign policies in many Western countries, including the UK, seemed to have become justifiable reasons for high levels of scrutiny on young Muslim men in more recent years (see Kundnani, 2009; Samad and Sen, 2007). It is believed that between 50 and 60 young British Somalis have left the UK to join al Shabaab (Arabic word for ‘the Youth’)⁷³. The Director of MI5, Jonathan Evans, adds ‘a ‘significant number’ of British residents are training in camps run by the al-Qaeda-linked group al-Shabaab’ (Gardham, 2010). He suggested that ‘as many as 100 Britons of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and West African backgrounds are said to have travelled to Somalia’ (ibid). However, authorities concerned with security issues are unable to confirm the specific whereabouts of these young people⁷⁴. Hence, UK authorities have become concerned about these relatively small but worrying developments. “They can come back (trained i.e. by Al Shabaab) and cause serious damage in the UK” (ibid). MI5 Director said “I am concerned that it is only a matter of time before we see terrorism on our streets inspired by those fighting alongside al-Shabaab” (Gardham, 2010). This seems to be at the heart of the concern with scrutiny.

In this section I would like to highlight two prominent cases that have occupied and affected the London Somali Youth Forum (LSYF) and the Somali Youth Development Resource Centre (SYDRC) in Camden: The five young Somali males who “have accused MI5 of waging a campaign of blackmail and harassment in an attempt to recruit them as informants” (Verkaik, 2009) and the case of Mahdi Hashi whose British citizenship was ‘revoked for extremism’ (Kermani, 2012; Verkaik, 2012). Particular attention is given to the retraction of citizenship analysed through what I termed as the ‘politics of deprivation’ when persons are deemed not “conducive to the public good”⁷⁵ (Rozenberg, 2013).

As argued by Turner (1993) it is possible for citizenship to embrace a diverse approach that is inclusive and includes differences and differentiations as well as forms of pluralism. In this light, only then will it become possible for a particular state to engage in none oppressive

⁷³ Figures mentioned by the Met during a visit at Scotland Yard.

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ See immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act that was introduced by the Labour Party in 2006 in the wake of the 7/7 terror attack.

mode of citizenship (ibid). That said the social conditions within which (some) young Somali men find themselves seemed different and, thus, in need of assessment. Here my aim is to contextualize the contested spaces that young Somali men belong to. By drawing on Yuval-Davis' (Yuval-Davis, 2011b; Yuval-Davis et al., 2006) conceptualization of 'politics of belonging' within the context of state citizenship I would like to offer 'politics of deprivation' as an analytical concept to shed light on the Mahdi Hashi's case in relation to the right to citizenship. The 'politics of deprivation' proposes a reconstructing of state, citizen(ship) and geographical relations where global security has become intensified to protect 'home' and 'belonging'. It imagines home as a place of affection, purity and innocent in need of protection and care in a global context that has become increasingly volatile, violent and ready to be attacked by terrorists with British passports returning from conflict zones. Home and belonging are strongly correlated (as we all belong to a place called home). Our homes and belongings are not necessarily limited to the domestic and often tend to be transnationally oriented. One is usually protective of his belongings and homes and entry and participation are limited. (And) those who are allowed to enter and participate should realize that they are privileged and should understand their position in society and their citizenship status in this context. However, they should also note that if they are deemed not 'conducive to the public good' they could lose their privilege to stay even if this means that one becomes stateless.

Mahdi Hashi

As *The Independent's* headline – 'How MI5 blackmails British Muslims: 'work for us or we will say you are a terrorist'' (Verkaik, 2009) – suggests, a number of young Somali males have been subjected to continuous blackmail and harassment from officers of the UK Security Service MI5. In what appeared to be a persistent campaign to recruit informants, MI5 officers seemed to have adopted draconian tactics to force young Somali males to collaborate. Ismail⁷⁶, a youth worker from Camden said:

When The Independent broke the news it did two things for the Somali community in Camden and the young men that were subjected to the ordeal: it broke the silence on a serious matter and provided a voice and a platform for the young people to tell their stories (Ismail, youth worker).

⁷⁶ Casual corridor discussions at the LSYF/SYDRC centre in Camden in June 2009

The issue was not hidden from the community and local Somali and Muslim leaders were aware of it but unsure about how to approach and deal with the matter more effectively. The young men made official complaints to various institutions including the police, the Investigatory Powers Tribunal that oversees Security Services' activities and local MP Frank Dobson but to no avail and the harassments apparently continued⁷⁷. As a result, the young men agreed to go public and talked about their experiences. Following various meetings between community leaders in Camden a considered decision was made to approach the matter from a broader perspective since it had wider implications for the local and wider Muslim communities in Britain. As Isin and Nielsen (2008) argued these acts of citizenship are essential means of being solidaristic towards one another. Such an approach was believed to gather a more strategic support for the case beyond the Somali community. The Kentish Town Community Organisation (KTCO), with whom the young men volunteered, wrote a letter to and contacted *The Independent* highlighting the alleged ordeal and harassment by MI5's officers. *The Independent* followed up the stories and ran a prominent article on the issue on 21 May 2009, detailing the experiences of the young Somali men:

Mahdi Hashi: 'I told him: this is blackmail'

Last month, 19-year-old Mahdi Hashi arrived at Gatwick airport to take a plane to visit his sick grandmother in Djibouti, but as he was checking in he was stopped by two plain-clothes officers. One of the officers identified himself as Richard and said he was working for MI5. Mr Hashi said: 'He warned me not to get on the flight. He said 'Whatever happens to you outside the UK is not our responsibility'. I was absolutely shocked.' The agent handed Mr Hashi a piece of paper with his name and telephone contact details and asked him to call him. 'The whole time he tried to make it seem like he was looking after me. And just before I left them at my boarding gate I remember 'Richard' telling me 'It's your choice, mate, to get on that flight but I advise you not to,' and then he winked at me.' When Mr Hashi arrived at Djibouti airport he was stopped at passport control. He was then held in a room for 16 hours before being deported back to the UK. He claims the Somali security officers told him that their orders came from London. More than 24 hours after he first left the UK he arrived back at Heathrow and was detained again. 'I was taken to pick up my luggage and then into a very discreet room. 'Richard' walked in with a Costa bag with food which he said was for me, my breakfast. He said it was them who sent me back because I was a terror suspect.' Mr Hashi, a volunteer youth leader at

⁷⁷ I have attended one of the consultation meetings between various local organisations and leaders wherein thorough discussion took place to address the issues. The meeting I attended took place at the London Somali Forum and SYDRC office in Camden.

Kentish Town Community Organisation in north London, alleges that the officer made it clear that his 'suspect' status and travel restrictions would only be lifted if he agreed to co-operate with MI5. 'I told him 'This is blatant blackmail'; he said 'No, it's just proving your innocence. By co-operating with us we know you're not guilty.' 'He said I could go and that he'd like to meet me another time, preferably after (May 2009) Monday Bank Holiday. I looked at him and said 'I don't ever want to see you or hear from you again. You've ruined my holiday, upset my family, and you nearly gave my sick grandmother in Somalia a heart attack.

In the summer of 2012 Mahdi Hashi was allegedly taken to prison in neighboring Djibouti while visiting his wife and newborn child in Somalia. Robert Verkaik, who wrote the initial story about MI5's blackmail in *The Independent*, broke the news in the *Daily Mail* (2012; see also Kermani, 2012) in an article titled: 'Teresa May (the Home Office Secretary) strips British passport from Muslim care worker who refused to join MI5 and may now be in African prison'. Besides the serious concerns about Mahdi's whereabouts the deprivation of citizenship has caused an outrage and great anxiety among the Somali community in London and beyond. It has also provoked a debate in relation to the right to citizenship. Citizenship is said to be a privilege, not a right (Rozenberg, 2013). This seems to suggest that one's behaviour determines whether or not he can be granted citizenship and remain a British citizen.

Joshua Rozenberg (2013) covered Mahdi's story in the Radio 4 programme 'Law in Action'. Further highlighting this new but growing practice he draws on "Home Office figures, released to Law in Action in response to a Freedom of Information Act request", which indicate that "16 people have been stripped of their British citizenship in the past three years". Home Office argued citizenship is 'a privilege not a right'. The programme revealed that:

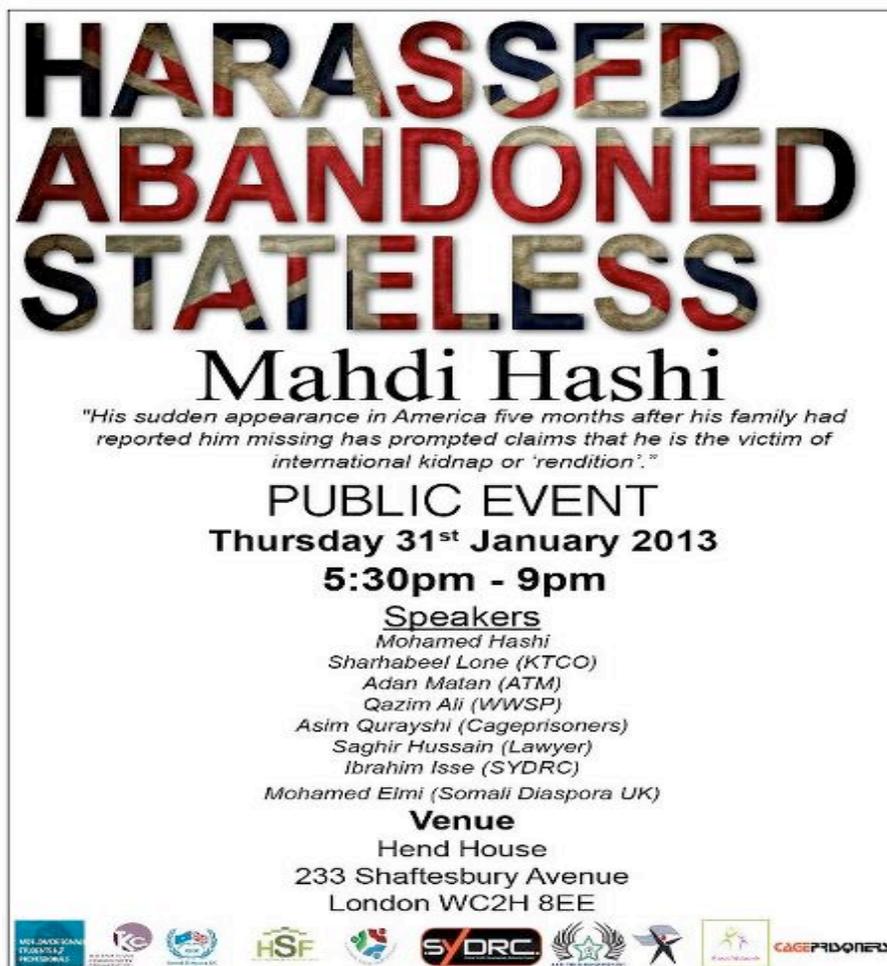
Under section 40 of the British Nationality Act 1981, as amended in 2006, the Home Secretary may make an order depriving a person of citizenship status if they are 'satisfied that deprivation is conducive to the public good'. No reasons need be given and no court approval is required (ibid).

It further featured a barrister, Amanda Weston, who specialised in immigration law who said "the Home Office often waited until individuals were outside the UK before depriving them

of their citizenship. Challenging the decision from abroad could be difficult, especially if issues of national security were involved” (ibid).

The *Daily Mail* informs (Verkaik, 2012) that ‘the deprivation of citizenship order signed by Mrs May says Mr Hashi has lost his rights to live in the UK because of the ‘public good’. The document further explains that ‘the Security Service assess that you have been involved in Islamist extremism and present a risk to the national security of the United Kingdom due to your extremist activities.’

A campaign was launched by SYDRC and LSYF meant to raise awareness about Mahdi’s case. Many considered Mahdi’s citizenship deprivation unjust and decided to collectively act against it (Isin and Nielsen, 2008; Yuval-Davis, 2011a). His mother, Kaltun, spoke about the distress the situation has caused her and her family.



**HARASSED
ABANDONED
STATELESS**

Mahdi Hashi

"His sudden appearance in America five months after his family had reported him missing has prompted claims that he is the victim of international kidnap or 'rendition'."

PUBLIC EVENT
Thursday 31st January 2013
5:30pm - 9pm

Speakers
Mohamed Hashi
Sharhabeel Lone (KTCO)
Adan Matan (ATM)
Qazim Ali (WWSP)
Asim Qurayshi (Cageprisoners)
Saghir Hussain (Lawyer)
Ibrahim Isse (SYDRC)
Mohamed Elmi (Somali Diaspora UK)

Venue
Hend House
233 Shaftesbury Avenue
London WC2H 8EE

Logos at the bottom: MELAKH, KTCO, HSF, SYDRC, CAGEPRISONERS, and others.

Figure 6.1 Mahdi Hashi’s Campaign poster

In a speech Mahdi's mother expressed her disappointment with the British politicians who 'left him abandoned'. She spoke highly of her son and said:

Mahdi was a good boy. We raised him with dignity, love and respect. It looks like he lost his freedom because of what he is, someone who is faithful to his Deen (religion). For us he is a winner and he will always be with us. No one can take that away from us (Kaltun, Mahdi's mother).

As it appeared, it took more than five months for the family to find out about his whereabouts before "US prosecutors said Mahdi Hashi had been flown to New York by the FBI and charged with providing material support to al-Qaeda-linked militant group al-Shabaab" (Rozenberg, 2013). Mahdi's lawyer, Mr Hussain said:

It seems his imprisonment in Djibouti is the execution of a threat made in 2009 by MI5. What sort of country is this when you are spirited away to another state and your own Government's response is to take away your citizenship? (Verkaik, 2012)

When the *Daily Mail* published the article about Mahdi I contacted the Home Office with whom I regularly talked about matters in relation to the Somali community. I told my colleague at the Home Office that I wanted to know more about the case given the high level of concerns it has caused in the Somali community. I was informed the case would be looked at and someone would get back to me. Two days later I received a phone call. I was informed that no comments could be made about this specific case⁷⁸. Similarly, Mahdi's lawyers got the same response after asking for more information to support the family and offer adequate legal presentation: "It has been the policy of successive governments neither to confirm or deny speculation, allegations or assertion in respect of intelligence matters" (Verkaik, 2012). There seems to be a connection between citizenship deprivation and security measures. Therefore, the government is not obliged to comment and remains silent on the matter. Hashim put the question forward that seemed to sum up the feeling of many Somalis during a focus the group discussion on citizenship. He said: *is it fair to have your (British) citizenship revoked even if you commit serious crimes?*

⁷⁸ Telephone conversations with the Home Office

While we are let to believe that liberalism considers citizenship rights as an essential and emancipatory factor of human freedom, it fails to consider societal and global power irregularities hindering the capacity of citizenship rights to protect the interests of the weak and excluded (Heath et al., 2013; Isin and Nielsen, 2008; see Yuval-Davis, 2011a). If citizenship rights create freedom, progress and prosperity, they do so very selectively, at least this is the case for Mahdi Hashi.

Two other interesting cases covered by *The Independent* (Verkaik, 2009) include that of 25-year-old Aydarus Elmi and 23-year-old Mahdi Nur who seemed to be subjected to the same ordeal as that of Mahdi Hashi's. Similar tactics were used against these two men. In Aydarus's case the gender of his unborn child was revealed to him despite indicated to the hospital that he and his wife did not want to know about the sex of their yet to be born child. As the paper revealed he received a phone call from an agent congratulating "him on the birth of his baby girl". In Mohamed Nur's case it was stated that a policeman and an MI5 agent came disguised as postmen knocking on his door. Once he opened the door they revealed their identities. "The agent told Mr Nur that they suspected him of being an Islamic extremist". As it appeared, in both cases threats were made against these men. Aydarus was allegedly told by the agent that he should "'remember, this won't be the last time we ever meet', and then during our last conversation explained: "if you do not want anything to happen to your family you will co-operate" (ibid). The MI5 agent told Mohamed, "if you do not work for us we will tell any foreign country you try to travel to that you are a suspected terrorist".

Self-perception, voices and aspirations

How then has the continued and usually negative coverage of some British media sources, particularly rightwing oriented media, impacted on how young Somali people perceive themselves? What was the impact, if any, of bad press and negative stereotypes about young Somalis? Some young interviewees seemed to shy away from the question. Attempting to answer Rageh said:

I don't know really...I've never been asked these questions, I don't know how I see myself. I don't know how I'm going to be when I grow up. I'm a young Somali, who's seen trouble, been in trouble, done a lot of stuff trying to change (Rageh, 16).

Given the provision of the self-reflective space some young people were able to articulate what they would like to change about the ill perceptions in relation to the Somali community in general. Most young men clearly believe that there was an ill-perceived image about them, which they almost consider as a given in mainstream society. They seemed to realize that this is not in their best interest. Most think of themselves as *a very productive young person, living in the UK, who (is) playing a positive role in changing people's perceptions of young people*, as Hashim (24) suggested. Therefore, one wants to change people's perceptions through consistent engagement whether at the work place or on social occasions. As Hashim said many none Somalis think *that the Somali community is very disenfranchised... who don't speak English, (for example) 80% of them are very illiterate, ... very backward people*. Hashim disagrees and suggested that *we need to breakdown these barriers*. He proposed that one needs to be proactive as *the only way to change the perception is to talk with people they work with. So you see yourself as a young productive person*.

Summary

This chapter has explored various approaches to citizenship (liberal, communitarian, republican and transnational or expansion (Fryer, 2010; Kivisto and Faist, 2007a)). More specifically the chapter highlighted how young Somali men interpreted citizenship in Britain. It analysed their broader engagements in three areas including: civic, political and social participations. Through Isin's (2008; 2005) acts of citizenship and Yuval Davis (2011a) politics of belonging various multilayered and intersectional levels of engagements were highlighted across the three different areas. For example, whereas there were high levels of civic and social participation (both at the local and transnational level) there were low levels of political engagements, particularly around actual political activism (only one research participant indicated to be involved in actual party politics and membership).

It is further worth noting that activism in general was constrained within the Somali and Muslim communities. For example volunteering was largely through the Somali voluntary

organisation and Muslim charities. Most young men who were actively volunteering said they felt obliged to give back to their own community and often suggested that what motivates them is their religious solidarity and duty: Helping the Ummah in order to please Allah. Such acts are perhaps not surprising given that citizenship in its broader remit is rooted in the daily experiences, culture and religiosity of citizens (Siu 2001). Having said that, issues in relation to the orientation and perceptions of young Somali men were identified as part the discussions in this chapter raising further (definitional) questions about the notion of citizenship. For example, what are the implications of citizenship commonly understood within the boundaries of the British nation state for the Somali diasporas that are broadly transnationally oriented? To answer this question it is worth looking at the decline of the idea of multiculturalism, which, as Modood suggests operates at two different levels including: “creating new forms of belonging to citizenship and country, and helping sustain origins and diasporas” (2010, p.53) that fits well with the idea of transnational citizenship. Likewise, besides the common challenges that young people in London face, such as intergenerational matters, gang, gun and knife crime, more specifically, young Somali men suffer from the impact of the War on Terror, where they appear to be viewed as ‘un-British’ suspects prone to radicalisation and, thus, posing a threat to UK national security.

As a result of increased security measures there has been evidence of consistent harassments on the part of the British Intelligence Services to coerce young Somali people to collaborate or risk impunity. Mahdi Hashi’s case is a useful account in point whose British citizenship was revoked⁷⁹. Mahdi’s case was analysed through what I called ‘the politics of deprivation’. I argue in this context of citizenship deprivation, further exclusion and alienation can only intensify contemporary problems of marginalisation and isolation.

This chapter highlighted some cases where young Somali men have committed serious crimes, here in the UK (and abroad) in the name of Islam. Despite the fact that many Somali communities’ leaders whole-heartedly condemned these crimes that were committed in their

⁷⁹ In relation to Mahdi Hashi’s case I am not to make judgments here about what he did or did not, neither is my aim to confirm or deny whether he committed a crime or not. The point that I am trying to highlight is giving the fact that he was among the five young people that were allegedly harassed by MI5 for a considerable period of time and his subsequent disappearance (now in US custody and after being stripped off his British citizenship) raises questions about what it means to be a British citizen, a case that caused apparent great concerns among the Somali community in Britain.

name and in the name of Islam more generally they often also face the consequences of such actions. Such contestations are what Yuval Davis (2011a) claims to divine the politics of belonging. This has added to the commonly ill-perceived notions about and bad press on Somalis in Britain. Partly as a result of these serious but very few events the relationship between the Somali community and the British State and society have become increasingly strained. Consequently, I argue that this has contributed to young people withdrawing from active life in the British mainstream (i.e. lack of interest in political activism and voting etc.). They feel alienated and, thus, seem to seek council within their own Somali and wider Muslim community. As the argument goes, ethnic, cultural and or religious belonging intensify when the feeling of threat to one's community increases (Yuval-Davis 2011a). Hence, in order to circumvent such feelings of exclusion many young people resorted to Islam, which has become a way to make sense of their experiences here in London.

There is also the transnational factor that plays an important part in the construction of young Somali males in London. The following chapter considers various critical aspects that challenge the narrow bounded understanding of citizenship and the role of transnational engagements. More specifically, the following chapter highlights the experiences of young Somali men in the three different sites and challenges some of the misconceptions about transnational activism, Islam and young Somalis in general.

Chapter 7. Transnational diasporas: sites and insights of communities and organisations

Introduction

In Chapter One the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism were discussed focusing on definitions, broader descriptions, directions and usefulness as well as their lack of clarity. Little is known about the actual diasporic and transnational engagements among Somali young people. This chapter sheds light on these engagements by way of answering the following questions: How do young Somali males build social spaces in London? How and at what level are these – transnational and diaspora – social spaces sustained (Vertovec, 2009; Faist and Özveren, 2004)? Are these spaces formal or informal (Kivisto, 2001)? To what extent do these enhance their social mobility and engagements and practices across national borders?

This chapter continues discussion in previous chapters but identifies the level of (diasporic and transnational) engagements and the manner within which they take place as well as creating a comprehensive conceptual framework to articulate these engagements more thoroughly. This in turn is to build a clear narrative whereby the experiences and lived realities of young members of the Somali diaspora are highlighted through the three different (ethnographic) sites. This chapter further stresses the levels and types of diaspora and transnational engagements by scrutinising the various reasons that impact on young people's participation. It addresses the conceptual challenges in relation to diaspora and transnational engagements by way of identifying gaps in the literature. A conceptual framework is introduced to examine transnational diaspora youth participation in order to articulate the reasons underpinning their involvement or lack of it. The chapter proceeds to discuss the different sites through detailed ethnographies underpinned by the multi-sited approach. The focus here is to stress the formation and construction of transnational diaspora youth belonging. Comparing and contrasting the three different sites through the narratives of young people's daily experiences highlight factors and circumstances that impact on their attitudes in relation to diaspora and transnational engagements.

Transnational diaspora engagements

As discussed in the literature review there is sufficient evidence on the transnational engagements of Somali diasporas (Al- Sharmani, 2010; 2007; 2006; Lindley, 2009; Sheikh & Healy, 2009; Menkhous, 2008; Hassan and Chalmers, 2008; Kleist, 2008; Hammond, 2007; Horst, 2006; Omer & El Koury, 2004). From these actions and relationships occur multi-faceted, social, material, cultural, and symbolic meanings (Massey 1994). Furthermore, some commentators have highlighted that diasporas also engage in conflict (Hassan and Chalmers, 2008; Horst and Gaas, 2008; The Senlis Council, 2008). Evidence suggests cases wherein remittances are used to support the recently proscribed alleged terrorist group Al-Shabaab (Horst and Gaas, 2008; The Senlis Council, 2008). Also there have been instances where young Somali men from the diaspora – from Europe and USA in particular – joined Al-Shabaab, some becoming involved in terrorist missions (Norton-Taylor, 2011) losing their lives and devastating others. As the empirical evidence of this thesis suggests, this has created an obscured image that has largely overshadowed what respondents have described as ‘good community spirit’ creating a sense of marginalisation and anxiety in relation to the discussion of transnational engagements more generally.

Therefore, there is little known about the broader transnational engagements and activities of young British Somalis. Various types of transnational engagements were considered whereby young people engaged in i.e. charitable often underpinned by religiosity, contact maintenance, financial assistance, economic and political practices. More importantly effort was made to demonstrate how these engagements manifest themselves in order to make them meaningful and context sensitive. As a result, this research provides rare insights and valuable primary data.

Critical gaps and the need for conceptual clarity

The diasporic experience and transnational engagements of the Somali should, I argue, be viewed within the context of colonialism, post-colonialism and forced migration as well as considering its hugely diverse migration trajectories. Why? These factors, in their own right, have greatly impacted on the evolution and shaped the formation of current day Somali diaspora. Diasporic processes and transformations are historically underpinned (Hall, 2003, 1990). Given these (contested) historical and original points of references numerous Somali

diasporas have come to the fore with their different and specific geo-political and social orientations. Eventually, Somali diasporas have become diverse and arguably highly fragmented, as a consequence of these important developments. Hence, it is fitting to speak of more than one Somali diaspora. In the literature on Somali diasporas, however, often the conventional convenient all-encompassing ideal type of the ‘Somali diaspora’ (in its singular form) is adopted. Such rigidity in conceptual typology – referring to the Jewish diaspora as the ideal type – are problematised in diasporas literature as this tends to ground the concepts in an identity paradigm, “defining them once and for all and making it very hard to move them from one category to another” (Dufoix, 2008b, p. 66). Sheffer makes a similar point and suggests that it is important to view diaspora belonging as “virtual boundaries” (Sheffer, 2003, p. 12), which are flexible allowing simultaneous belonging and membership of various groups or localities. As Clifford reminds us, one should be wary of an ‘ideal type’ that constructs and defines the diasporic experiences on the basis of a single group (Clifford, 1997). As far as this research is concerned a single group can be Somali parents or the focus can be on one single Somali diaspora. There are indeed clear differences between these various diaspora groups. Therefore, the thesis makes an important departure from this fixed disposition of diaspora and transnational literature. This chapter tries to overcome this essentialist nature by highlighting the diversity within the Somali diasporas through the creation of social spaces and transitional engagements. I must clarify that diaspora remains a useful conceptual framework to help us understand how diasporic communities function. My argument rests with the idea that diasporic Somalis are best understood through their plurality and diversity. To obtain a clear understanding of the broader engagements of young Somali males in London a critical conceptual map is offered to articulate their day-to-day experiences and transnational orientations. While accounting for the gaps and challenges in the literature, the conceptual framework is underpinned by the empirical evidence of the thesis.

As stressed in the thesis objectives, the key areas this chapter aims to address are how young Somali males go about creating their own transnational social spaces, how these spaces are sustained and to what extent these spaces enhance and impact on their social mobility and transnational practices? On the basis of these analytical, empirical and theoretical approaches an attempt is made to engage with these various questions and other relevant areas of

enquiry. Given that the focus is on the practices of young Somali males in a diaspora and transnational context the concepts of *transnationalism* or as Basch et al. assert ‘the process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement’ and *transmigrants* which looks at the “immigrants who build such social fields” (1992, p. 1) become important general considerations underpinning this chapter. Various activities and engagements are discussed including charitable activities, contact with family and friends, financial support, economic engagement and political engagement. Furthermore, the levels of return visits as part of the wider transnational engagements are measured as well as the modes and levels of contact young diaspora members engage with and maintain.

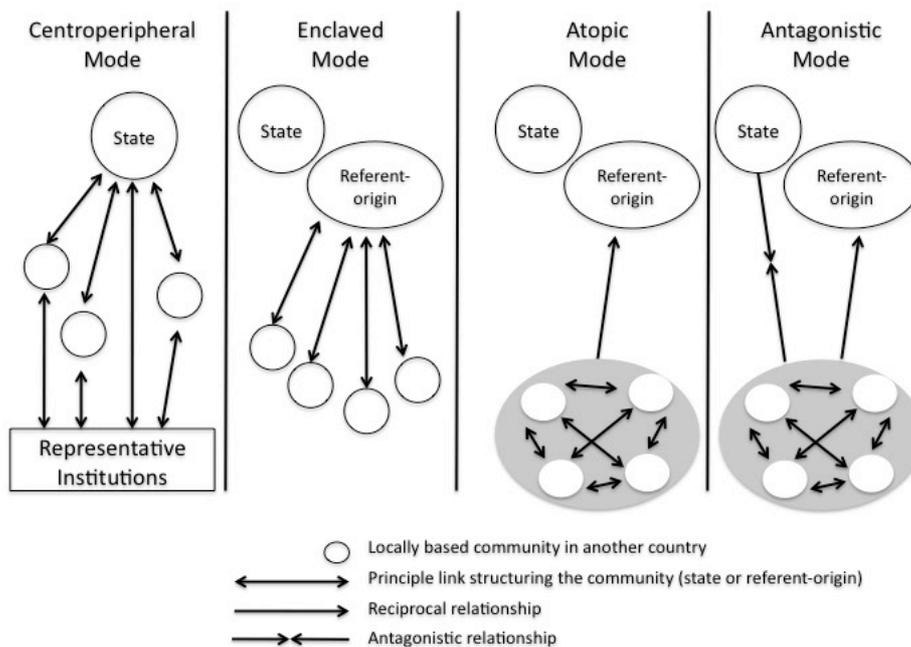
To articulate these interconnected numerous levels and processes of engagements the thesis considers the extent to which these social spaces – that allow for a greater production, exchange and transformation of ideas (Levitt & Schiller 2004) – are exercised by young Somali males. Following, Levitt and Schiller’s (ibid) notions of ‘*ways of being and ways of belonging*’ are considered as conceptual lenses. Two key criticisms are held against Schiller et al.’s conceptual framework: its lack of historical consideration and disregard for host-land incorporation processes, which occur in parallel with transnational engagements (Kivisto, 2001). Waldinger and Fitzgerald make a similar assertion and point out that diaspora communities are not solely responsible for their makeup and formation. Accordingly, this is often affected by state and broader state politics that condition their choices and social actions (Waldinger and Fitzgerald, 2003).

In order to deal with these shortcomings and in addition to the above analytical lenses I offer a further conceptual lens to articulate the actual engagements of young Somali males by using four concepts I borrowed from Dufoix (2008, p. 62) including 1) ‘Centrop peripheral’, which suggests that the diaspora community is closely linked to the home country; 2) ‘Enclaved’, a diaspora community based on the host society; 3) ‘Atopic’, a deterritorialised identity rooted in dispersion; and 4) ‘Antagonisite’, a diaspora community that refuses to recognise the legitimacy of the government in their own country. It is a trans-state that does not require a physical territory but built around a common origin, ethnicity, or religion without being reduced to a subject of a host country. Dufoix explores how diaspora

communities relate to what he terms as ‘referent-origin’, which can be a nation, state or place of origin and the connection(s) between these various communities.

According to Dufoix few of the main flaws of many frameworks conceptualizing diasporas and transnationalism include: the static nature that roots these phenomena into fixed identities and typologies and the inflexibilities that these create to make diaspora engagements meaningful. Therefore, this static way of thinking creates unhelpful assumptions that anchor the vast array of diaspora experiences to that of the traditional diaspora communities (i.e. the Jewish archetype), which inherently occur(ed) in different, time, space and context. He suggests “a typology tends to freeze phenomena in an identity, defining them once and for all and making it very hard to move them from one category to another” (Dufoix, 2008b, p. 64). In other words, Dufoix takes issue with the homogenisation and essentialisation of diasporic and transnational experiences. More importantly, scholars should consider how and why diaspora processes manifest (ibid). These are the main factors that underpin Dufoix’ main criticism. In the following paragraphs we shall see that also Dufoix’ conceptual framework does not go far enough to articulate extent and dynamics of transnational youth engagements.

One can appreciate Dufoix’ attempt to limit potential conceptual murkiness by restricting his conceptual framework to four ideal types to articulate the collective experiences of diaspora communities within a transnational context. His four structuring modes – ‘Centroperipheral’, ‘Enclaved’, ‘Atopic’ and ‘Antagonistic’ – fluctuate between three axes including 1) ‘the relationship to the existing regime; 2) the relationship to a referent origin that is separate from the state or from an identity; and 3) the inter-polarity of individuals, groups, and communities’. The axes offer ways of considering spatial, autonomy, territorial links and deterritorialised networking’ (2008, p. 64).



Dufoix's four modes of structuring the collective experience abroad

Figure 7.1 Dufoix four modes of structuring collective experiences abroad

Ironically, Dufoix's structure contains certain inflexibilities itself. While he makes the point that transition between the various modes are continuously at play, his framework seems to suggest that any (diaspora) relationship with the homeland state, if any, can only exist if the state is the organising and directing entity of a diaspora community. Power relations are top down if you like whereby the homeland state dictates how its diaspora members are organised in representative institutions (as in the Centroperipheral mode). Secondly, Dufoix's approach appears to indicate that the relationship to the state is either nonexistent or hostile (toward the homeland state). This is not necessarily the case and it is indeed these arguments that limit the scope of his framework. This thesis, therefore, suggests a refined conceptual framework. The Antagonistic mode is replaced with a Dynamic mode in Dufoix's conceptual framework to capture the complex yet active and diverse nature of diasporas. Akin to the Antagonistic mode, the Dynamic mode is also a transstate. However, the main difference is that it does not limit its scope to attitudes meant to oppose its regime or adopting aggressive attitudes towards it. Rather, the Dynamic mode has a broader compass and further accompanies diaspora engagements and activities, which favor the state without being controlled by it. For example, the Antagonistic mode suggests that diasporas engage in warfare or intend to topple the regime in their country of origin, which they oppose. The Dynamic mode accommodates such attitudes but also recognises the vast contributions initiated and made by diasporas. Hence, power relations between state and diaspora communities are much more nuanced and

continuously changing. I argue that through the introduction of the Dynamic mode the various diverse diaspora experiences of the Somali are better articulated. How do the Somali diasporas fit in these constructions and how are young Somalis implicated? In the following paragraphs this and various other questions will be addressed using the empirical findings, theoretical and the conceptual approaches highlighted in this chapter.

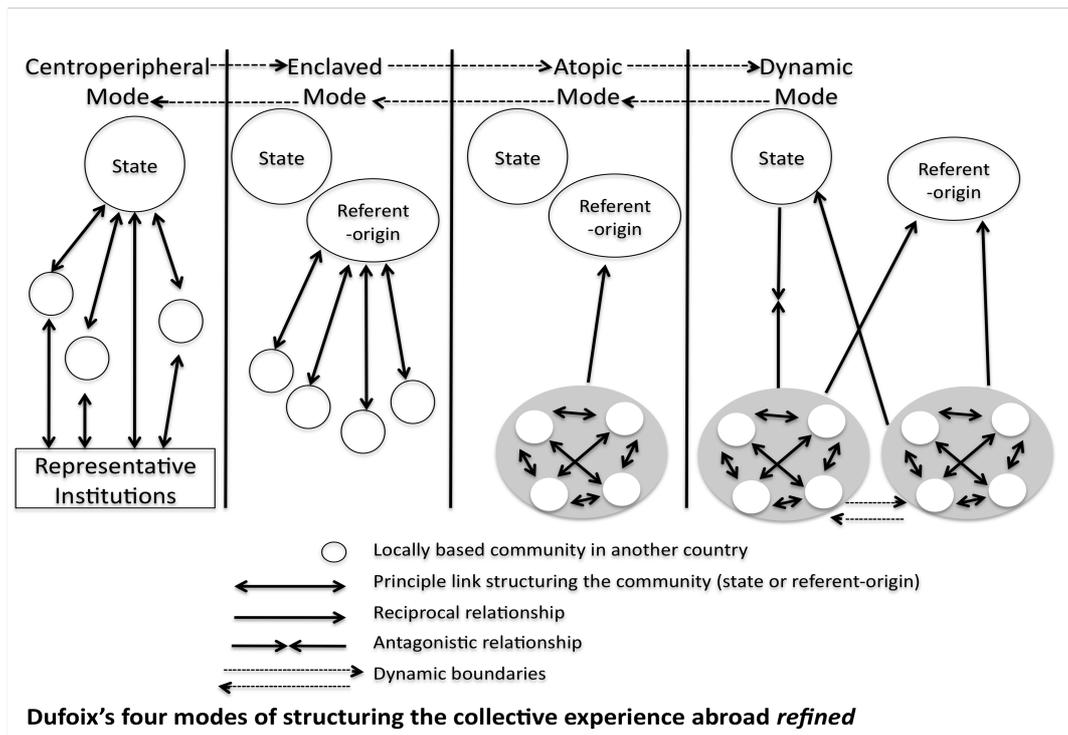


Figure 7.2 Dufoix four modes of structuring collective experiences abroad refined

The revised structuring modes are employed to articulate the broader collective and diverse Somali diasporic experiences. Particularly, attention is paid to the level of active engagements across various social spaces – i.e. social, political or economic – while reasons for not engaging are equally addressed. Dufoix’s three axes that determine the level and type of relationships that exist between country of origin, homeland state and diaspora are considered. Here I find that such connections tend to be constrained in his framework. Hence, movements otherwise common among diaspora communities (Sheffer 2003), are unclear between the various structuring modes. The structuring model does not indicate this either in its current approach. Therefore, I propose ‘Dynamic boundaries’ – see revised model – to capture the essence of diaspora movements across communities more comprehensively. Due

to the dynamic nature of diaspora communities one can be aligned to various modes. For example a member can be part of a local community in the Centroperipheral mode while also having links with members in the Enclaved, Atopic or Dynamic mode. Therefore, the notion of Dynamic boundaries allows for a greater flexibility of movement, association and belonging not only through the various structuring modes but also through the communities within them. Considering the makeup, social and political nature of Somali diasporas it is fair to suggest that belonging to the various structuring modes is often underpinned by interest. Therefore, loyalty to groups, state, 'here' or 'there' tends to shift too. This is particularly the case in politicized and highly fragmented diasporas such as the Somali. The following paragraphs address how belonging is influenced and articulated through various transnational orientations.

Transnational diaspora and youth engagement

The thesis identified five main areas where transnational activities are enacted. Such transnational engagements include 1) charitable activities; 2) contact with families and friends; 3) financial support; 4) economic engagement; and 5) political engagement. Table 7.1, below, reveals a relatively small number of young people, 13 per cent (N:32) that were engaged in actual charitable activities, whereas the number of young people that remained in contact with their families or friends was 75 percent. 13 per cent offered some level of financial assistance to families back home and a small number, one participant, was engaged in economic activities while none directly engaged politically. Frequently, transnational engagements among the Somali have been more likely to be geographically oriented whereas some have a strong clan basis commonly justified with the 'charity starts at home' principle.

There are, however, transnational practices that aim for a broader and more inclusive Somali orientation by way of articulating their *ways of belonging* (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). Anyhow, the transnational practices of the Somali appear to be political and highly contested. These areas will be further analysed in the following paragraphs.

Transnational engagements									
Charitable activities		Contact with family and friends		Financial support		Economic engagement		Political engagement	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
13	87	75	25	13	87	3	97	0	100

Table 7.1 measuring active actual transnational engagements (data collected during fieldwork) N: 32

Charitable activities

Transnational engagements among young Somalis I worked with and interviewed seemed to be often unstructured and sporadic. Moreover, those who were active were hardly engaged in actual social relations (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). So when measuring the levels of such engagements it is fair to suggest that particular events which warrant young people's attention, spark greater mobilisation. Akram's account below provides an example of responses to particular events that require immediate attention:

I help out with charity because Somalia is going through a drought right now so we collect money to help out the poor in Somalia. Sometimes we go around London to different places we ask them to donate money that will benefit Somalis back home (Akram, 17)

There is a greater level of consciousness regarding the reasons why individuals engage in such a transnational social field to use a phrase from Glick Schiller and Levitt's (2004). However limited or sporadic with these transnational engagements young Somalis recognised that their support could make a difference to fellow Somalis as reflected in Akram Khalif's account:

They needed someone to help them. Just realise that one little thing can make a difference to someone's life in Somalia. There are people dying and they need medicine; just (with) that little bit of money you can help them get that medicine or that treatment to survive and just keep living. If that person dies you just think 'I could have made a difference to this persons life' (Akram, 17)

Evidence further suggests that transnational belonging can be aided through various cross border practices (Vertovec, 2009; Al-Sharmani, 2006; Levitt and Schiller, 2004). The thesis reveals that (return) visits for example enhanced more grounded transnational engagements at various levels as knowledge about, familiarity and connection with the homeland increase.

As table 7.2 shows 56 per cent had made (return) visits to the homeland. In what Gonzalez et al. (2005) termed as transnational ‘funds of knowledge’ through the practice of (return) visits young people are able to evaluate, compare and contrast their multiple worlds more thoroughly in order to better understand and articulate their various ways of being and belonging.

Variable	Yes	No	Frequency of visits			
			Once	Twice	Trice	More
(Return) visits	56	44	28	3	16	9

Table 7.2 measuring levels of (return) visits to Somalia/Somaliland (data collected during fieldwork) N: 32

Maintaining contacts

Other ways young Somalis were maintaining these actual transnational contacts were through social media. Empirical data from the thesis shows that 46 per cent (N: 24) of those who maintain contacts with their families and friends do so mainly through Facebook and mail exchanges. The remaining, 54 per cent use the traditional phone to stay in touch. Such contacts are created and maintained in different ways. The levels of contact are dictated by the intensity and quality of social relations, which make transnational belonging meaningful. For example parents play a significant role in the creation of such relations among young people: the relaying of (personal) stories about the homeland to children, encouraging them to speak to family members during phone conversations to affirm their identification with the homeland ‘through memory, nostalgia or imagination’ (Levitt and Schiller, 2004, p. 12). Data collected during the fieldtrip to Somaliland reveals how contacts and relationship are established through (return) visits (this is more thoroughly discussed in the paragraphs to follow).

Political engagements

Actual political activism in the practical sense is uncommon among young Somali males whether it’s here in the UK or further afield in the home country. Given the political history of Somalia such attitudes toward political activism are not highly surprising. Intentionally or

not, political engagements proved to be divisive, occasionally breaking up families. Akram Khalif reveals that:

My uncle used to do that. He was a freedom fighter. He was between here (UK) and over there (Somalia). He would go there and try (to) sort everything out. He would... run out (there) and come back here. The last time he went, he was going (to) give it one last try. His wife didn't want him to go but he said 'no I have to do it'. So he went and a couple of months down the line we saw pictures of his dead body on the Internet. Ethiopians got him and tortured him (Akram, 17).

Preference is usually given instead to support educational programmes. Sponsoring students and charitable projects linked to Somalia are therefore common among young Somalis. They often argue that more education has the potential to stabilise their country and commonly consider this as an important way forward to address the challenges it faces. Mursal said that *I see education as a way that we can get out of the problems we have at the moment... (and) as a tool to take Somalia out of darkness into prosperity, or darkness to light (Mursal, 25)*. Drawing on Mursal's account, and given that stability is one of Somalia's main concerns, it is not entirely surprising to observe that educational projects may be supported with the aim of stabilising Somalia. Therefore, educational assistance is not necessarily seen as being totally free from politics. This is reflected in the following account:

At the moment... the educated people have jumped ... straight into the political arena. I'm saying if you empower the people, the local people, then they will not see a sense in fighting for life for future generations, but if you bring people who are educated in the west to lead them then they see that as invasion... So if you empower the local people, they will come out of the mentality that they have to keep fighting... and ...they are more likely to stop fighting, not 100 per cent but more likely... to come to an agreement between themselves, whereas people educated in the west, if they go back to lead the country, they will be seen as stooges, puppets or spies, whatever you want to call them. Even if they might not be Somali people will see that as the west manipulating their affairs and the fighting will continue. People should be empowered to decide what they want rather than imposing a rule over them, it would never work in Somalia (Mursal, 25).

As Mursal's account informs us, the idea of transnational engagement is quite complex in this context and the boundaries between political activism and charitable engagements are unclear.

Sharif's account below has more overtly grounded political motives as he supports the recognition of Somaliland:

Also like, my mum is involved in a lot of events that help recognise Somaliland that I also like to take part in. Because like, I think it's very important to support your own country, not only... when you're in it but when you are abroad. Because it recognises the country, which could involve people from other countries to get involved and help build up this (Mursal, 25)

As my observations as well as the statistics reveal however, not everybody engages in transnational activities. Ilmi said *my mind is here as well my friends* or as Naleeye Ayah (18) simply put it *'I am not interested at the moment; maybe in the future.*

Research sites: interactions, features and interpretations of young people's experiences

How do diasporas interact? What are the major forces that influence their experiences, behaviour, makeup and (diverse) characters? These are important questions this section will attempt to address through participant observations based on young people's experiences in the three research sites: West London Somaliland Community, Assunna mosque and the London Somali Youth Forum.

Assunna Islamic Centre

Brief background

In the last few years the Somali community in the UK has witnessed a surge of new mosque developments and ownership across England. According to Sheikh Said Mohamed⁸⁰ there are currently around 'fifteen Somali owned mosques across the UK. Around ten are in London and its surroundings'. According to the Sheikh, the development started with Quba mosque in Hayes, (West London), which was bought and completed for £500 000, with money raised from the Somali community in 2007. A few miles further, in Southall, local members of the Somali community followed Quba's example and raised £1.7 million to buy and complete Darrulsalaam mosque. Whereas Quba raised funds through its vast volunteers and mainly from the local Somali community, with the leadership of Sheikh Said Mohamed,

⁸⁰ I have known Sheikh Said Mohamed for over four years. I have witnessed his successful fundraising bid for Darrulsalaam Mosque on Universal TV, a Somali satellite based television with a global coverage. Given his knowledge of the Somali community and about the new mosque ownership project in which he was instrumental it was fitting to interview him about the need and process of the initiative.

Darraulsalaam mosque adopted a different approach capitalizing on and taking advantage of the presence of Somali TVs,⁸¹ which simplified the logistics and process of fundraising as a whole. Other Somali community leaders soon adopted similar methods and successfully managed to raise the funds required to acquire the necessary space and build the mosques in their respective areas, towns and cities.

This sudden surge is not totally surprising. Given the growing numbers of Somalis in London (and across England) there appears to be a need for more culturally appropriate spaces. This provides also a clear example of what Bowens termed as transnational Islam, more specifically relating to “the field of Islamic debate and reference” (2004, p. 880). I shall return to the broader discussion on transnational Islam highlighting its various categories further in this chapter. The following makes reference to Bowens’ ‘field of Islamic debate and reference.

Sheik Said Mohamed suggests that, *Somalis follow the Shafi’i ‘Madhab’*⁸² (Islamic school of thought) and are accustomed to Saudi Arabia’s leadership in terms of important Islamic events such as the moonlighting that determines i.e. the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan as well as other important events including Eid al Adha⁸³. Previously, all local mosques were managed and run by the Pakistani community given their longstanding presence in the areas. Most Pakistanis follow the Hanafi *Madhad* and are linked to the religious establishment in Pakistan, which impacts on important festivals such as Eid that, compared to Saudi Arabia, is usually celebrated a day later in Pakistan and among the Pakistani Muslim community in the UK. Also, as noted by Sheik Said Mohamed *Somalis pray ‘Salaatul Leyl’ (night prayers that are voluntary but highly regarded) during the last ten days of Ramadan whereas fellow Pakistani Muslims do not usually perform such prayers.* These slight differences as well as the inability to effectively influence the traditionally run hierarchical management structures of established Pakistanis have caused some ‘*practical*

⁸¹ For example, London is home to nine different Somali speaking and globally orientated satellite television channels.

⁸² There are four major *Madhabs* (or Islamic schools of thought) including Hanafi, Shafi’i, Malaki and Hanbali comprising of equally four methodological approaches of religious judgments and rulings (better known as *fiqh*: jurisprudence). These *Madhabs* are all based on the Quran and *Sunnah* (the teaching of Prophet Mohamed, pbuh). For further readings on the different *Madhabs* see Murad’s ‘Understanding the four *Madhabs*’.

⁸³ Eid al Adha is an important Islamic event that marks the end of the pilgrimage known as Hajj. It is also known as the festival of sacrifice, to remember Abraham’s belief and devotion to Allah.

inconveniences for the Somali community who are quite keen to perform i.e. the night prayers and follow the moonlightings according to the Saudi religious establishment. This has (in large part) been the basis for mosques development and ownership among the Somali community, explains Sheikh Said Mohamed.

The vast investments in mosques signal considered long-term settlements among Somalis in the UK and supports Badr Dahya's notion of "myth of return" (Dahya, 1973, p. 24) that often occupies the older Somali generation. Such a myth of return among first generation Somalis has been sustained by the idea that once the civil war is over and peace and stability are achieved, returning home would be the obvious way forward. Hence, Britain was considered a safety net, a shield if you like, that provided stability and progress away from the conflict-ridden homeland. The intention, as it seems, was never to settle permanently and returning to a place called 'home' was the goal (see Safran, 1991). It is fair to argue that the 'myth of return' might not be practical in the physical sense but the psychological attachment to the homeland and the wish to return to it might never fade away. Over the years, older generations have come to terms with the fact that their children are growing up in a totally different environment with their own customs and traditions (see chapter five on the broader construction of belonging among young Somali males). As Clifford puts it, not everybody wants to go back (1997). Hence, an ideal critical reference once deemed crucial to establish a vision of homeland to which one can return does not suffice (Hall, 2003, 1990). Equally the younger generations have come to terms with the fact that they are also different from their parents. Their migration experiences and trajectories are different. Some did not even migrate themselves. They appear to view citizenship in a different light. They are not white and are also different from the natives and other (minority) races they live with (Somerville, 2008). The creation and ownership of culturally appropriate religious spaces, such as mosques, should be understood as a way of balancing these differences and the generational challenges that manifest as a consequence. Thus, this space creation is underpinned by social, economic, political and/or religious necessities. The three various sites are discussed in the following paragraphs including Assunah Mosque, the London Somali Youth Forum and West London Somaliland Community.

Experiences at the mosque and Assuna Youth

This section discussed the experiences of young males at the mosques as a site of religious and cultural engagements while it considers the broader effects of transnational Islam. More specifically the section addresses the fundamental difference between transnational engagements in the form of activities and networks and transnational Islam and the role that the concept of *Ummah* plays in young people's daily experiences.

Assunnah Islamic Centre is a place where local members of the Somali community as well as various other Muslim communities gather to worship and perform their obligatory five times daily prayers. Looking at its activities and purpose Assunnah is more than just a prayer area. For example Assunnah Primary School is a fully functioning school providing fulltime education to 105 children. It has also a Madrassa that runs three separate classes for 900 children aged six and above for three days a week.

Assunnah Youth, which is the department in the mosque where I spent most of my time, has fifty members. The youth club is run by young volunteers. Ilyas Musa who is a young man in his mid-twenties and has been attending the mosque since the age of seven heads the youth club. According to Ilyas the youth club was established in February 2009 to address various problems affecting young Muslims in the London Borough of Haringey. Ilyas points out that the main purpose for the youth club *is to promote active recreation among the Somali youths and tackle many of the problems which have risen including; anti-social behaviour, gang violence, drugs misuse and radicalisation*. Understandably, religious education is at the heart of Assunnah's approach: *Teaching the correct teachings of Islam through various Islamic lectures and classes* explained Ilyas. Further Assunnah is part of a wider network around London and across the UK that aims to combat violent extremism.

As part of the weekly youth activities the centre runs various programmes to engage young Somalis. These activities include weekly Islamic lectures covering many diverse topics, which have been running since February 2009. A weekly activity called 'Friday Night Programme' aims to engage young males aged 16-25 in dialogue with each other. This activity attracts around 25 young people. It has a relaxing atmosphere that provides young people with a space to socialise with each other and engage in discussions around various

relevant topics such as education, employment and other social matters. The youth centre further organises weekly football sessions allowing young males to keep fit and learn new skills including teamwork. Finally, the youth centre organises weekly ‘Sister’s Circle’ to enable young women aged 16-20 to gather. This activity was introduced following young females’ need to have their own space to meet each other on a weekly basis. Around 20 young females attend the Sister’s Circle activity a week to engage in dialogue, share experiences and talk about matters, which they believe is important to their own circumstances.

Ilyas explains that Assunnah was renting a place before it was shut down after its tenancy ended in 2000. Three years later, in 2003, Assunnah moved to its current location in Tottenham. Ilyas said *in those 3 years they (management) stayed in contact with the parents. There was a (fundraising) campaign for a new location. People donated a lot of money, so we deposited the money... (to buy) this place.* The local Somali community seemed to see the benefits to invest in Assunnah. According to Ilyas *the parents probably wanted a place for the kids, and for Islamic studies, so they did donate money. ...They (management) started renting it in 2003. So by 2010 they actually bought the place for just off one million pounds.*

The role that young people play at the mosque is quite visible. Ilyas explained at the beginning there were no youth activities at the mosque, just classes focussed memorising of the Qur’an. In 2008 this changed. Older members recognised the gap and approached young people like Ilyas to undertake youth activities at the mosque. They proposed to the younger people to lead the youth department at the mosque. The elders appeared to recognise that they did not have the time to effectively engage young people neither the cultural understanding to fully appreciate their daily circumstances. Ilyas said that many of the people who were initially involved have moved on. They are now:

... successful (and have)... their own families, but they did not want things to be happening to them. They want a community where they can still offer something. But at the same time they cannot always be here, so they approached five or six of us who were local and talked to us (about getting involved). We liked the idea and after two or three months we took control, and they trained us (Ilyas, 22).

Ilyas suggested it is important *the elders recognise that our input can have a practical impact. We understand the younger people better, particularly boys who are facing some problems with education, crime, employment, identity etc.* Ilyas has currently a fulltime paid position at the mosque. I have observed that Ilyas spends substantial numbers of hours at the mosque besides his fulltime post as the coordinator of Assunnah Youth. I wondered why and he explained:

There are many reasons. I work here during the day, and during the evenings I take part in the classes. Some of the Islamic classes. It's also a way for the brothers to come and sit down, to talk, to eat together, just to socialise. You can come here eight in the morning to nine pm and you will be doing something. Mondays to Fridays I come here ten (in the morning) till nine o'clock (in the evening). And in the weekends probably 4 hours...from about four till eight (in the evening). So you can say I spend most of my time here (Ilyas. 22)

Beyond what seems to be a fun and engaging atmosphere some serious learning takes place on Ilyas's part:

I have improved my religious understanding of different aspects of Islamic law, what you can and cannot do. Also I'm coming from a career where I've improved my organisational skills. I have got a lot of things to do, so the most important thing for us is to prioritize my tasks. I've got a lot more responsibility so that makes you mature quicker. Also talking to a lot of people, meeting a lot of people has improved my ability to talk to a lot of different people from different background and different colours (and) meeting local governments (Ilyas, 22).

Ilyas appears to enjoy himself at the mosque. The mosque in turn has accommodated Ilyas in various ways. The youth centre seems to welcome a wide range of young people: those who work, attend university, school or college as well as those who are neither in education nor in employment or training (NEET). My general observation was that those who were attached to the mosque were fairly engaged and active in society. Further, there was a fairly strong connection among the regular attendees of the mosque. *People at the mosque are like a family* was a comment I regularly heard.

However, not everyone feels the same. The mosque might well be a place of harmony for many but some feel left out, particularly those who are excluded from society or on the

margins of exclusion, mostly fitting the NEET category. I will return to the personal experiences at the mosque later. In the following paragraph I want to briefly focus on the wider attitudes and views toward Islam and Muslims that to a great extent contribute to how young Muslims feel.

The general perceptions about mosques, Muslims and Islam appear to be at an all-time low currently in the UK. The consensus among various media outlets and experts is that the attacks on September 11 2001 have changed the world and, hence, contributed to a negative view about Muslim and Islam in general. Cynthia Haven (2011) poses an interesting question to a panel of Stanford experts: 'How has the world changed as a result of 9/11?'. Below are selected comments:

The most striking change has been the emergence in the United States of a garrison mentality. In the name of security, Washington embarked in 2001 on a course of open-ended war. Politicians have called intervention in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen and Libya essential to America's safety... A perpetual state of chaos reigns. (Robert Crews)⁸⁴

My 3-year-old is on a Department of Homeland Security blacklist. The problem is his blessing of a name: Kabir. Kabir is Arabic for 'great,'... It is difficult to judge which aspects of our changed world – for instance, the unanticipated flowering of political protest from Egypt to Israel to India... For us, 9/11 might be everything, but as so many of these protestors have shown, the real story is at once more local and more global – those old demons of economic inequality and political exclusion. (Priya Satia)⁸⁵

The years 2009 and 2010 have seen a spike in plots against the U.S. homeland. Nearly all of them have come from radicalised homegrown terrorists or 'franchise' groups with loose and murky ties to the core al-Qaeda organisation.... In addition, WMD terrorism remains a haunting future possibility. And the FBI has not made the leap from crime-fighting to intelligence. (Amy Zegart)⁸⁶

What the above three experts seem to agree upon is as a consequence of 9/11 security concerns have intensified to unprecedented levels – some even suggesting further increases might be inevitable. But many contend these arguments on global change as a result of 9/11.

⁸⁴ Robert Crews, director of Stanford's Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies

⁸⁵ Priya Satia, an assistant professor of history of Modern British History, Stanford University

⁸⁶ Amy Zegart is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and an affiliated faculty member at the Center for International Security and Cooperation

In an article titled ‘Was 9/11 the day that really changed the world for ever?’ *Guardian* journalist Jon Henley of *The Guardian* (2011) argues ‘many believe that many of the geopolitical events seen as consequences of the attack may have happened regardless’.

He cites the *New York Magazine* among other sources indicating that ‘there really are ideological-cum-religious zealots out there intent on slaughtering us in large numbers, now looks exaggerated – albeit understandably. 11 September 2001 didn't change the world forever’. He goes on to point out that ‘if the al-Qaida plotters had not pulled off 9/11, many security and foreign policy experts believe it would only have been a matter of time before they managed something else’. In other words US provocation could/would have happened through other means of assault. As a result, Jon Henley suggests that regardless of 9/11 attacks on ‘Iraq and Afghanistan (with all its disastrous consequences for neighbouring Pakistan, and hence, arguably, for the choices made by the 7/7 London bombers) was more or less on the cards’.

Whether 9/11, 7/7 or Madrid atrocities were major global game changers or not the attacks have most likely increased interest in Islam and Muslims around the world. Britain is such a country with vested and arguably intensified interest in Muslims and Islam in general. Here in the UK there are 1.6 million Muslims accounting for 46 per cent British born including second and third generation and, therefore, “have the youngest age profile of all the faith communities in Britain” (Ali, 2008, p. 3). Muslims have a long historical connection with the UK and, hence, “are the largest religious minorities in Europe. Most of these Muslims are migrants, who have come to settle in Europe during the last 50-70 years” (ibid).

In relation to the Somali community evidence suggests that initial contact with Britain dates back to 1827 (Colonial Office, 1960). Griffiths (2002) informs us that Somali seamen came to the UK for work prior to the First World War and, therefore, have a long established tradition of migrating to Britain (Besteman 1999; I. M. Lewis 1994). This makes Somalis one of the oldest African communities in Britain. According to *The Times*, Somalis are:

... one of Britain's largest African communities. ...There are up to 160,000 Somalis in London alone, and tens of thousands more in cities including Birmingham, Leicester and Cardiff... (Hamilton & O'Neill 2009)

The Ummah

One of the fundamental features of transnationalism is that it encourages the deterritorialisation of ideas, cultures and peoples who cut through various nation states. Having said that, transnationality in Islam goes beyond the obvious migration trajectories 'in that it is dependent neither on specific migration patterns nor on the activities of particularistic transnational movements' (Bowen, 2004, p. 891). Transnational Islam can be explored when transnational communities with (strong) Islamic backgrounds form some sense of belonging that cannot be contained within a certain nation-state (Basch et al., 1994; Cohen, 2008). Similarly, Bowen argues, "that transnational Islam creates and implies the existence and legitimacy of a global public space of normative reference and debate, and that this public space cannot be reduced to a dimension of migration or of transnational religious movements" (Bowen, 2004, p. 880). Bowen refers here to *the field of Islamic debate and reference* (among his three categories of transnational Islam; the other two being *demographic movements* and *transnational religious organisations* (ibid)). Bowen explains that the focus on the latter two phenomena and the related migration and movement has undermined the relevance of the third.

Transnational Islam is inherently deterritorialised and timeless, which strikes at the heart of the ancient religion. Its references and surrounding debates, which keep them alive, are instrumental in the practice of the religion of Islam. A good example of the measure of transnational Islam is the global *Ummah* phenomenon that many young people that who took part in this research often made reference to. In various group sessions the term *Ummah* would be raised, which provided the opportunity to explore the matter further. There were many ideas expressed about what *Ummah* means and its function. For example the *Ummah* is considered as a global 'community' of believers who share a strong sense of solidarity and shared identity: Universal Muslims. This idea appears to be quite appealing to many young Muslims in Britain. Universal Islam tends to revive a feeling of solidarity through shared beliefs and values. To (re)live this, young members of the Muslim community referred to

traditional methods of clothing, growing a beard etc. which is further highlighted in the account below.

Seventeen-year-old Akram Khalif is one of the young people that made a lasting impression on me. He is tall, over six feet, and well built. He currently leads a moderate religious life: has grown his beard, often wears a *thobe*⁸⁷ and spends most of his free time at the Assunna mosque. I was rather intrigued by the level of maturity, relatively speaking, that he has reached at the age of seventeen. He seemed to have ‘become’⁸⁸ a respected member of Assunnah Youth and regularly attends the mosque. He is also focusing on his education and expressed plans to go to university in September 2013. Considering his youth, he has endured through various difficult experiences and transitions that were often far from smooth. Akram’s account below fits well with the Atopic Mode of the revised structuring mode given that his experience is mainly constrained in London. Akram is further involved in charitable fundraising to aid the *poor people in Somalia* determining some level of active engagement with a referent origin, to use Dufoix term (2008).

According to Akram there are three types of young males: 1) the *deluded*, who *act tough, are on roads, listen to rap, do and sell drugs and are involved in various criminal activities*; 2) the *sweet boys*, are the *romantic* ones who *think about and run after girls and want to look good*; and 3) the *religious* ones, are those who *are committed and practice Islam*. Akram suggests that there are tensions between these three groups. In particular, he emphasised how territorialised social spaces and boundary maintenance make possible movements between them quite difficult despite the willingness to do so. He described how he was caught between gang membership (or what he calls ‘deluded life’) and religiosity. He was practically inactive fitting the NEET⁸⁹ description quite precisely. In an attempt to come to terms with his drugs involvement and (petty) offending Akram tried to move away from the deluded life to become more religious. He said *I have been coming to the mosque for the last twelve years, since I was five*. However, Akram had felt detached from the mosque at the beginning.

⁸⁷ Thobe, also known as Khamees, is a traditionally white (nowadays found in various styles and colors) loose, long-sleeved, ankle length garment commonly made from cotton. This was the dress of Prophet Mohamed, which promotes modesty and symbolizes morality.

⁸⁸ I put the word *become* in inverted commas deliberately as Ahmed was not always welcome at the mosque as this account showed.

⁸⁹ NEET: Not in Education, Employment or Training

He said *before I hated coming to the mosque to a point that I came to belong to the place and came to see friends; belonging makes you want (to) come more*. The transition between the deluded and religious life, to use Akram's terminology, has not been a straightforward manner. Akram would go back and forth between the two social spaces – the deluded and religious life. The transition, which he described as *trying to jump into cold water after heat* was a very challenging experience, suggests Akram. He said

the process from deluded life to religious road was most challenging: people not believing I wanted to change and wanted to leave the bad friends. (I) was rejected by the so-called good friends. I will then say (to myself) 'I do not need these people' and go back to my old ways and come back again and so on and so on. I felt most vulnerable when I was rejected by the people⁹⁰ I thought I could rely on. I almost gave up on coming to the mosque but see myself keep coming back. I had to proof myself and show that I was serious about leaving the gang culture behind. I had most difficulties with my peers who knew me and did not trust that I was serious about changing (Akram, 17).

Even though Akram's experience might suggest otherwise, the boundaries between the various social spaces in his local area seem flexible enough or at least provide room to roam between them. These remain flexible 'virtual boundaries' to borrow a phrase from Sheffer (2003) given that belonging to various spaces is possible event if such attachment is undesired, temporary and to serve a certain need or interest.

Leaving the gang culture was a tough choice considering Akram's experience. There seems to be a fine balance between reception and rejection. One is not only leaving the criminal life behind, which can be life threatening, but also a *family* if you like, which is *difficult when you have close friends*. Akram described how *I cried after a close friend told me 'hold to me I gave up on God'* only to hear of his death after being stabbed in gang attack.

The question here remains what was the attraction about the mosque? What made Akram's transition successful and his friends not? At the mosque Akram said he *met the right kind of friends you should have* as well as understanding *what kind of life you want to pursue. At the mosque you see people getting degrees, passing driving license. This gives you a sense of direction*. Akram suggests that he also found a greater sense of belonging at the mosque

⁹⁰ People at the mosque who he turned to, to come to terms with his gang life

beyond the immediate Somali community. As he put it *I belong to the Muslim Ummah. This is what I live for. They are part of me. I am them and they are me. It feels like we are one.* What does this all mean? Akram explained that *after going to Umrah⁹¹ I found something greater, I felt peace of mind.*

I observed that many young people were pleased with their space provision at the mosque. As Mubarik explains:

It gave us a platform.... to express ourselves.... a platform, where we can learn (and)... study. Where we can raise controversial subjects. Or shall I say sensitive, it depends (such as the) issues of terrorist, the issues of women's right, jihad, stuff like that, those types, the rights of a Muslim to a non-Muslim. Things that are maybe portrayed in the media very negatively, we come to a conclusion, a better conclusion (Mubarik, 18).

Mosque members differed in various ways from members in my other research sites. The mosque as a social space seemed much more cohesive and interactive. For example young people had unlimited access to the mosque. They had their own keys and were able to stay as long as they wanted in the mosque. I further observed more extended engagements and connections between mosque members. For example members will help organise the *Nikah*⁹² celebration's event on behalf of their fellow members.

As in Ilyas and Akram's cases the majority of young mosque members spend most of their (free) time often together at the mosque, which might explain the strength of their relationships. Young people will often say they *want to be good Muslims and seek Islamic teaching, which is pure.* A good Muslim in the eyes of many young men constitutes *a person that lives his life by the will of Allah. One that rises above and beyond clanism, racism, etc.* In the following analysis of the London Somali Youth Forum (LSYF) different kind of relationships and engagements are demonstrated.

⁹¹ Voluntary but highly rewarding practice among Muslims that includes a trip to the holly mosque of Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

⁹² Muslim marriage ceremony

London Somali Youth Forum (LSYF)

This section explores the practical community work that LSYF does through networking and by way of engaging young people in positive activities. Furthermore, it seeks to understand the broader impact of past and present interventions (i.e. in the colonial period and more recent British and US foreign policy) have had on the attitudes of young Somali men in Britain in terms self-reference/identification. The section, particularly, draws attention to the so-called War on Terror and the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) programme. It evaluates how a reputable voluntary organisation such as LSYF balances issues of trust as one the few Somali led organisations that engage with senior politicians and MET officers on such controversial issues (such as Prevent and terrorism).

LSYF is appeared to be unique in London given that it is the only youth-led Somali umbrella voluntary organisation in the capital. It is understood that this uniqueness has enabled LSYF to develop effective working relationships with key agencies and working to tackle key social issues affecting young Somali people, including educational underachievement, anti-social behaviour, gang-related activities and knife crime, and extremism. Against this background the forum has developed the following mission statement:

To empower and inspire young Somali people in London through working in partnership, providing leadership and acting as a strategic voice for promoting equality, representation, good leadership and effective decision-making (LSYF Business Plan).

To fulfill its mission the forum has devised the following key strategic aims: 1) To collectively represent young Somali people and Somali youth groups and organisations in London at a strategic level; 2) To support local and London borough based organisations and groups to meet the needs of young Somali people; 3) To provide a focal point and voice for Somali organisations and groups working with young Somali people; 4) To work in partnership to increase and improve the provision of activities and services for young Somali people.

Following this brief background on LSYF it is worth looking at how and why it came into existence. The forum was established following concerns about young Somali people in

Greater London. UK authorities including the Metropolitan Police and senior officials in central government decided to address the matter through established youth networks. They approached a voluntary organisation called Somali Youth Development Resource Centre (SYDRC) that is based in Kentish Town, which was identified following the progress they made with local youths. SYDRC organised a conference in 2008 bringing many people from various backgrounds together, including government officials, police, voluntary sector workers, community leaders and most importantly young Somali people. I was not only able to observe the interactions between various conference attendees but was also part of the organisation that made the event possible.

There were speeches, workshops and discussion about many relevant aspects that concerned young Somali people. We produced a report outlining the findings of the conference. In this report my colleagues and I highlighted that given the growing nature of the Somali community and the fact that they were currently “the second largest ethnic minority groups” (Hassan and Samater, 2008, p. 6) in various parts of London creating a platform that brought active young Somali people across London together was perhaps a fitting initiative as:

...Somalis face numerous challenges including cohesive integration into the British system. Police and social services have raised concerns that the Somali community has been slow to organise and effectively represent themselves. Strong suspicion exists amongst the Somali community of police and social service agencies, commonly viewed as authoritative arms of government, and this has led to poor communication and understanding of each other’s role and needs (ibid).

However, the process of creating such a platform has been far from smooth. Despite the initial success and interest, the forum faced some critical challenges to the point of near collapse. There were disagreements about the forum’s purpose – and about the level of engagement Somali youth should have with the authorities. Many felt the forum was just focusing on tackling extremism while there are other equally important issues such as social exclusion, racism, Islamophobia, stop and search etc. Further, there was a clear power struggle involving various associates. Key forum members were accused of working for the Police and aiding the secret services due to the authorities’ interest to have a point of contact for Somali youth. Some accused members of the founding organisation, SYDRC, of using the forum for their own purposes and for not being transparent not realising that SYDRC had the

legal obligation to ensure the forum and its (financial) assets were properly managed before it could stand on its own feet. The phrase *blurring of organisational roles* was often used by extended forum members to describe the situation. A sifting process followed whereby those who did not buy into the aims and objectives of the forum gave way and left the organisation. This was followed by a period of intensive networking and promoting of the forum. The management was able to turn it around and make it a functional organisation. Through its various networking events the forum was able to expand its geographical orientation covering members in sixteen London Boroughs.

In diaspora and transnational literature considered attention is given to the creation of social spaces. It is recognised that host-land incorporation processes do not function in isolation. Thus, the formation of organisational spaces could also be influenced by state policies (Waldinger and Fitzgerald, 2003) as it is the case with the forum. While there is a great need for a platform to unite young members of the Somali community across London the creation of the forum should also be viewed as a space that has the potential to aid the relevant authorities in the fight against crime and violent extremism. In particular, UK authorities are greatly concerned about young British Somali men who fall into the hands of so-called violent extremist preachers. According to *the BBC* (Casciani, 2012) a small number of individuals, around 50 are currently missing from the UK are believed to be fighting with the proscribed insurgency group Al Shabaab in Somalia. Security officials appeared to be deeply worried about what they term as the ‘blowback’ effect:

...fear that the young British people who go to Somalia to join al-Shabaab's jihad will return with the skills and the mindset to launch attacks on British streets - just like Sidiq Khan (leader of 7/7 bombers) before them (ibid).

On the surface, and without offering much context on the direction and ownership of the London Somali Youth Forum, the critique from the sceptics might not be entirely misplaced after all.

It goes without saying that some young Somali people face critical challenges in UK mainstream life in general such as underachievement, gang and knife crime as well as

generational issues and other matters to do with representation. Through its members, LSYF often deals with serious cases of crime related issues and commonly provides support to families. The forum further raises awareness about social and economic matters, which have consequences for the Somali community such as tuition fees or ways to raise educational standards and achievements. One such initiative includes the Annual Achievement Awards organised by SYDRC, which is now celebrated across the capital and other parts of the UK through the LSYF network. The award ceremony often attracts many people including young people, parents, senior government officials and local councillors as well as relevant agencies. 'The awards honour the most gifted and promising students from various schools across (the London Borough of) Camden' (Hassan, 2012).

In order to fulfill its duties the forum has drawn on various funding streams. One such state funding has been Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE). The funding was meant to reach out to young Somali people who were deemed at risk of radicalisation or extremism with the aim of finding alternative ways of engagement. However, the PVE raised various issues for organisations and communities who took the funding (Jones, 2011; Kundnani, 2009). In relation to LSYF its members became suspicious about the authorities' intentions validating existing concerns of those with skeptical views. Secondly, PVE's scope proved to be too narrow. The authorities were mainly focusing on extremism and less attention was paid to other social challenges, which isolated many members of the Muslim community. As argued by Thomas (2010, p. 442) "the government's 'hearts and minds' response to the threat of domestic Islamist terrorism within the wider CONTEST⁹³ strategy, has been exposed as both failed and friendless by growing political and academic scrutiny". One fundamental difficulty that PVE faced was its lack of consultation. The decision lay solely with the government and organisations that wanted to apply for PVE funding had no say in the way they spend the funding (Kundnani, 2009). In fact "...local authorities have been pressured to accept Prevent funding in direct proportion to the numbers of Muslims in their area – in effect, constructing the Muslim population as a 'suspect community' (2009, p.6), which appeared to be inherently racist. Another major problem of the PVE agenda was the expectations on community

⁹³ CONTEST: counter-terrorism strategy. Is the work that is undertaken by 'the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism, in the Home Office, works to counter the threat from terrorism. Their work is covered in the government's counter-terrorism strategy'

leaders, teachers, youth workers etc. to gather intelligence on the same people that they catered for, which undermined the crucial relationship and trust necessary to engage more effectively (ibid). Jones' (2011) detailed ethnography on PVE strategy and conduct in the London Borough of Hackney clearly demonstrated accounts of discomfort and ambivalence in accepting funding of a programme perceived to be targeting and demonising Muslim communities.

Following my own interventions with LSYF and the MET police, I can say that the conduct and engagement between the two appeared genuine, generally speaking. All parties wanted to focus on the common good and add value to the services that they provided for the society and its communities as a whole. The overall relationship between the MET police and LSYF was relatively good. This was due to the fact that some senior and experienced officers who seemed to know and understand the community and its dynamics were involved. Unlike various other accounts of community engagement whereby they faced some pressure to conform to government PVE policies that lacked clarity the MET police engaged and asked questions. I argue that it is this engagement that enhanced the relationship between the MET police and LSYF at various stages. I was regularly answering questions and mediating between the MET police and LSYF. However, at one point communication suddenly seized up and the MET police initially adhering to consultative approach turned somewhat authoritarian as detailed in the following paragraphs.

LSYF received a request as to whether they wanted to hold a meeting between senior MET police and the Somali community. LSYF accepted the invitation but insisted on receiving a brief indicating the purpose of the meeting in advance. The MET sent an email containing an attachment with 19 questions that they wanted to explore. Following this email LSYF organised a meeting and its members felt that some of these questions were totally out of context and others at least inappropriately phrased. Following a team meeting with LSYF members I started to liaise with the MET police on behalf of the organisation. But before I discuss the details of these engagements let's briefly glance over some of the questions the MET police wanted to pursue:

- 14. Do you feel that there are Somalis within your community who want to attack the UK?
- 15. Are you aware of people within the community being radicalised, or people attempting to radicalise others? If so which members of the community are being targeted?
- 16. Are you aware of anyone wanting, or planning to go and fight in Somalia?
- 18. Have you seen any evidence to suggest that Somalis are being radicalised in prison?

The following account is based on my personal experiences during the mediation between LSYF and the MET police. Here is my response to the email sent to the MET following the consultation with LSYF members:

We have carefully looked at them (questions) and made an attempt to rephrase some of them and commented on others, please see attachment. We think questions 14, 15, 16 and 18 need to be rephrased... Although they appear to be very important and timely questions the way they are formulated might put many Somalis off and lead to suspicion, which we don't want. We think they are too confrontational at this early stage. We believe the more sensitive the approach the better the results (My own response to the MET).

During the actual meeting LSYF discovered that the MET had kept in the questions LSYF had suggested rephrasing/removing. A few moments before the meeting commenced the Detective Superintendent and head of Communities Together Strategic Engagement Team (CTSET) who came to the gathering, approached LSYF members including me at the youth centre with the questions they wanted to ask. He revealed that the questions were being kept in their original format. When asked why he had decided to carry on with the questions as originally phrased, his response was “let’s see what we can get”. This was somewhat odd given that initial correspondence with the MET was ‘clear’ and some level of understanding was established as to how best to approach the issue during the meeting with around 30 members of the Somali community. It was a vague, rushed, results driven and profoundly insensitive approach losing sight of the requirements of good community relations. It was clear that LSYF did not want these questioned addressed. LSYF members seemed unhappy and felt their relationship with the community might be compromised as a consequence of

this development. At that moment LSYF management team decided to speak to the people they had invited and advised them not to comment on any questions they did not feel comfortable with. One LSYF member said, *we have invited our people and we need to keep them safe*. For LSYF it was important that they were seen to be facilitating a debate that served the interest of the Somali community to maintain the important grassroots work that they carry out on behalf of young Somali people while preserving their role as a bridge between the authorities and the community.

During the meeting, however, the superintendent quickly sensed the vibe of the group and adapted his approach. Soon it became apparent that those present at the meeting were not in the mood to hear any assumptions about the Somali community being ridden with radicalisation and other judgements, which tend to generalise the community as a whole. As one woman remarked *every community has its own problems and it is up to all of us to work together to address such problems*. A young man in his mid twenties added *approaching the community with assumptions about what they are or do is counter productive and does not help solve anything*. In the end the officer avoided most of the questions.

What appeared to be developing was that PVE lacked thought and thoroughness in its approach. Other academic work on PVE found similar trends (see Jones 2011). What further seemed to be emerging was that it was inherently reactive. For example following the terrorist attacks in the UK (i.e. 7/7 and 21/7/05) the situation became tense and security measures were raised in search for what Lowndes and Thorp (2012, p. 123) call the 'unknown enemy' within. They argue that such tensions led to various incidents including the shooting and killing of the young Brazilian Jean Charles de Menezes in south London (ibid). Further, local communities felt scrutinised and as result a number of young Somalis faced continued interrogations and stop and search at airports at the hand of the security services (see Chapter Six) fuelling further alienation and perhaps detachment from mainstream society. However, LSYF members have a different take on the issue. In the following account Mursal Igeh describes how the outreach work he undertakes for LSYF is somewhat influenced by foreign policy:

The outreach workers will try to make sure these young people do not get involved in activities that are seen as radicalising. What I am saying is, they do all this work, and the Prime Minister decides next minute 'we are going into this country to save these people'. I use Libya as an example. I could understand the concept of saving civilians but firing over 100 missiles a night, it makes no sense. Young people are able to think. They are not idiots. So you cannot say it is because Gaddafi we are killing. The UN (said) it was going to be a no fly zone, then why are they bombing the country? No answer. What can you say to that? Nothing. So the foreign policy does make a huge impact in (what) the young people think. Actually the government blames mosques and other areas (where) young people (are) being radicalised, but I would say that the government radicalised the young people with the foreign policy. So instead of paying too much money on de-radicalisation, look at your foreign policy first. Libya is the latest one. I would say for example Somalia, in terms of involvement of different governments, if they say to you 'Somalis are pirates', they never talk about what caused the piracy. I see the cause with the problem in Somalia. I would go to say the problems over the last 20 years, even the civil war, come from international intervention (Musal, 25).

Such thinking is fairly widespread. In the following account Hashi Ibrahim argues a similar point and suggests that the way UK foreign policy is formulated has consequences for how young people feel:

There is that connection, that religious connection between a person who lives anywhere in any region of the world⁹⁴. So, because their sense of identity is so powerful, it does not matter what projects you are making available to this person, because he is always going to look back to his brothers in a different part of the country. To be honest it's non-productive (Prevent projects). You know, I see a lot of these projects as a waste of time. Because you engage with this young person but what you cannot change is foreign policy. We can work on a local level but we cannot (influence) what is happening internationally. That has a knock on effect on what happens here in the UK. You take one step forward, an international incident happens, and then we will go three back. Also we are always at a disadvantage. So we will always try to promote, even from an Islamic point of view. We live in a society where regardless where someone is from we show them mutual respect, mutual understanding and co-existence and tolerance. That is one of the major things that Islam preaches. However we cannot deny that there's oppression all over the world by the same people who want tolerance, who want cohesion and who want people to live together in a multicultural society. So it contradicts, there is big a contradiction. I feel that one of the biggest hindrances is UK

⁹⁴ Presumably meant to say 'between people who live anywhere and/or in any region of the world'

foreign policy and if it was to change maybe we would see a big change in the UK (Hashim, 25).

There are various critical factors that influence the way young people behave, think and act in general. Connections, whether cultural or religious, values and beliefs are deterritorialised. It seems further clear that such factors cut across seemingly bounded geographies operating at various levels. Some are local and more manageable others are external structures that are beyond their remit such as foreign and other government policies i.e. raising tuition fees etc.

West London Somaliland Community: Football tournament in Somaliland

West London Somaliland Community (WLSC) is a community organisation that promotes the Somaliland's identity. The centre accommodates many of its local Hayes community in West London and often organises events that attract the wider Somaliland community in the UK. After the collapse of the Somali state in the early 1990s, Somaliland declared itself independent allowing new forms of identities to flourish. WLSC has made its task to encourage the development of Somaliland.

As part of its activities WLSC facilitated a football tournament throughout Somaliland. This gave me as a researcher an excellent opportunity to travel with the organisers and a group of young males. This was unplanned and unexpected in terms of my research schedule. Nevertheless, I was pleased given the potential prospects it offered to enhance the broader themes of my thesis. Prior to the trip I met with the young people and asked what they were expecting from the trip. In general they were very animated about the tournament and journey to Somaliland. Given the mixed character of the group – some were going for the first time, some for the second or third time – their expectations varied. Some wanted to go out, play football and have fun. Others wanted to explore Somaliland. For a few, following up stories that were told by their parents was key. For example Idris Azis said, *I want to go and see the school my mother went to*. In diaspora and transnational literature the topic of 'imagined' homeland or communities is well figured as many who have no physical connection to or memory of their homeland often rely on stories told by their relatives as in Idris's case. As Bruneau (2010, p. 35) argues "intergenerational transmission of identities is also at work". The journey to Somaliland allowed Idris to make sense of the narratives that he grew up with.

Stories that were relayed to him and allowed him to imagine spaces of his native homeland have now become real and tangible through his physical presence. As Madar Suber recounts *like certain stuff I have known already but now I understand it clearly and see it.*

The trip to Somaliland was the first of its kind to be organised by a voluntary organisation based in the Somali diasporas. It was well planned and Somaliland was expecting these young people's arrival. In fact there was some hype created around the trip through the media before the group had even left London. Somaliland authorities helped with the organisation and logistics of the tournament. For example the government covered the transport throughout Somaliland while local authorities organised lunch and dinner receptions. This seemed to have a considerable impact. Many spoke of the warm welcome and receptive environment:

Seeing the label saying 'welcome to Hargeisa', it just brought a big smile on my face, it is beautiful... the love that they showed us was just emotion. I've learnt that this place is just a beautiful place; they are all very nice people. (Abas, 19)

The young men understood this clearly. As Aabi Dualeh informs us the trip was a *once in a lifetime experience I'll tell you that, not a lot of people get to go to the president's house.*

Having said that the experiences led to apparent changes in the way these young men viewed their lives in general. In other words the trip and the manner it was arranged might have been one off but its impact has created a journey that allowed space for some critical reflection.

After witnessing some of the challenges and hardships many people in Somaliland face on a daily basis most young people thought and talked about their lives in London and were able to appreciate what they have i.e. access to free education, health care and other basic necessities in life, often taken for granted.

The country needs us more than we need them. The more you put in it will help, economy wise. I lived all my life in the UK, when you are in Somaliland there are not enough organisations to help. You see some people on the streets with no legs asking for money. We came to matches with full kits and tracksuits, and then they came with not even shin pads. Goalkeeper did not have clothes. I came in with

my headphones one time and this guy said, 'you are privileged to have these headphones. Some people are not, so try not to bring it'. That is what I realised they need me more than I need them. I now know that I have it good in London. I just want to help these people (Hamud, 16)

The high level of poverty that is prevalent in Somaliland troubled most of the young men. They appeared equally surprised by how most people were going about their business seemingly content with what they had. The notion that you cannot always get what you want was quickly established. Many were able to understand this reality and reflect upon it through the lenses of what they usually have in London but have not got access to in Somaliland. Iid Hawadleh, describes this briefly in his account below:

Being from, coming from London, eating whatnot, fish and chips, chicken and chips... Coming here (Somaliland), asking for the same thing. You will not get it because they do not have it. So you need to bear in mind that you will not always get what you want. You know, I will take this experience; it will be with me for a long period of time (Iid, 18) .

In the following description Mumin Salah shares an account that gives meaning to more grounded connections:

... when I see a kid and I think this could have been your brother. I have always known that there are people like me who are less privileged than I am. But when you see it for yourself than and then you see a little kid in complete deprivation and he is still smiling and I am moaning about one exam... I had one exam this year and then I was moaning and stressed and angry and taking my anger out on everyone because of one exam and you see a kid and he barely has the necessities of life and he's smiling and he's walking daily and I'm moaning daily. Is my exam that big when he is worrying about what he should put in his mouth today and he's still smiling? It's the amount of thoughts that go through your head, it's like wow (Mumin, 19)

These reflections and the experiences gained during the trip to Somaliland as a whole, seemed to have helped young individuals appreciate their lives in London. Most young men appeared to realise that having continuous access to good education, clear water and food is a privilege; issues, which they normally take for granted.

Summary

This chapter explored multi-faceted ways young Somali men engage transnationally as members of diverse UK Somali diasporas. It highlighted how their social, political, economic and religious practices occur and are sustained beyond the boundaries of the UK. Their broader transnational practices were both formal (through organised structures such as charities) and informal (maintaining contact with family and friends, sending them money etc.). Furthermore, the chapter has warned against essentialisation of Somali diasporas and by way of overcoming this offered various conceptual maps to explore the daily experiences of young Somali men in more meaningful ways.

The experiences, diasporic engagements and transitional practices of young Somali men should be understood through the history and diversity of Somali migration trajectories. The chapter linked other important thesis themes (such as home, belonging, as well as self-reference and representation) with actual daily practices and activities of young Somali men in the three different sites. It became apparent that critical questions such as what do you call yourself, where do you call home and where do you belong appear to be shaped by these complex mobility trajectories and sustained transnationalism and the broader Western interventions (whether in the past or present) and (UK) foreign policy. The chapter highlighted how community led organisations with clear objectives to serve their community often need to balance their engagements on controversial issues such Prevent and the so-called War on Terror. Particularly, LSYF faced difficulties with their engagement with the UK government on such challenging aspects. Many of its members were unhappy with what they understood to be an overemphasis focus on matters in relation to violent extremism and argued that other important matters such as social exclusion, underachievement, racism, knife and gang crime and the effects of poverty were ignored or at least did not receive the attention they deserved. Such settings appeared extremely fragile and were prone to affect important community relations and trust. There appeared to be sustained distrust between the Somali community and the UK government. The suspicion seemed mutual. Young Somali people raised concerns about becoming suspected targets (MI5 targeting young Somali men in Camden and stop and search at airports). Such institutional scrutiny seemed to fuel the kind of distrust that tend alienate young people and exacerbate their vulnerabilities.

Contrary to the overly negative portrayal and perceptions about young Somali men's engagements, whether in the host-country or transnationally, this chapter has showed various cases of positive engagements and transnational activism. Relevant examples included: the football tournament to Somaliland and students' 'Operation Restore Home' project.

Unlike other transnational practices, religion and the ties to the global Muslim Ummah was not necessarily linked to the Somali regions in this regard. For example, a number of young men were engaged in charitable work and fundraising activities for Iraq and Palestine.

The fact that young Somali males' ways of belonging spans across various identities i.e. Somali, Muslim, British, black etc. means that in the midst of such common transitions sometimes difficult changes should be made and dealt with. Most importantly, it is a process and there is no simple way to determine the effects that live changing experiences can have on someone. Some succeed in managing these transitions effectively other are not so successful as in the case of Akram's friend.

The mosque seemed to be a safe place to tackle many difficult social and religious issues. However, judging from Akram's experience is not a place where young people with troubled background can access easily, something that Akram wants to see changed.

In the midst of the various challenges that young Somali men face in the UK and in spite of increased Islamophobia there seemed to be a growing trend to embrace Islam. "Often migrants denied citizenship and excluded from mainstream economic institutions, look to their religious communities as sites for establishing alternative identities" (Guest, 2002 in Levitt and Schiller, 2004, p. 32). Islam seemed to have become a significant part of young people's lives and as a way of coping with the various marginalities that exist.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

The main objective of the thesis was to advance our understanding of how young Somali males articulate broader ways of belonging through their day-to-day experiences in London. The thesis drew on diaspora and transnational theories and accommodated multi-sited research approaches to explore how these experiences were impacting on the way these young people belonged to the various social spaces in which they operate. Forced migration theories were deployed to contextualise the research. The research showed an in-depth understanding of Somali migration movements accommodating significant historical, political, economic and social trends and events that led to the formation of current day UK diasporas. Among other theoretical concepts and frameworks including diaspora, transnationalism, generational acculturation, masculinity and citizenship, forced migration was instrumental in defining the major themes of the thesis. These include: intergenerational clashes between young Somali males and their parents with specific attention to the challenges of acculturation processes; the constructions of home and belonging addressing the various factors that enhance or undermine such notions (of home and belonging); interpretations of (active) citizenship and the search for adequate representation and unifying voice and the deconstruction of participation in diaspora and transnational activities. The findings of my thesis broadly encompass these themes. In terms of theoretical contributions the thesis refined and built on existing theoretical themes and concepts by way of capturing the dynamics of Somali diasporas. In this concluding chapter based on the empirical evidence I draw these findings together while highlighting the research contributions.

Intergenerational dimensions and acculturation structures

Assessing the intergeneration dimensions and the closely related acculturation processes were vital in understanding the broader and often crucial relationship between Somali parents/caretakers/elders and their children. As in any framework used to analyse the outcomes of this thesis a process of (re)defining and adjustment of any given concept was adopted to ensure that the examination remained relevant and meaningful. Acculturation as a theoretical construct had several assumptions, which underwent such refining and adjustment processes whereby its flaws were addressed. Acculturation theories often assume that the

current host society is the first time migrants are exposed to a new environment and culture (see Rumbaut, 2005; Portes, 2005; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Bourhis et al., 1997; Berry, 1990). This may be true for many communities who have arrived directly from their countries of origin; but this need not be the case for the Somali communities in the UK given their somewhat complex migration trajectories, which have often involved many transits and transitions. Many members of Somali diasporas came to the UK via different routes often with long settlements. A case in point is the onward migration of Somalis from mainland Europe – Holland, Sweden, Denmark etc. – to the UK from the late 1990s (see Lindley and Van Hear, 2007). Academic literature accommodates various Somali experiences in the aforementioned geographical areas. However it is not clear how these impact on the wider Somali diasporas in general and Somali youth in particular. Hence, this thesis recognises the importance of such possible transitions and the impact of acculturations that have taken place in those countries. This had clear implications for the critical age of migration and the generational threshold (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Rumbaut, 2004). For example, how does one account for the 1.5 and second generation Somali Europeans who arrived in the UK after the age of 12? This is not to argue that young Somalis who were born or grew up in other parts of Europe, for example, underwent the same experiences as those growing up in the UK, although there might be great similarities. It is to acknowledge that they have already been exposed to Western cultures, speak relatively good English, have difficulties with speaking in the native (Somali) language etc.

As part of the broader intergenerational and acculturation assessments, the thesis examined the role that language plays in the parent-child relationship. As the empirical evidence suggests language had a great influence in the parent-child relationship beyond the (in)ability to comprehend or speak it. Interviews with young males and focus groups with Somali parents revealed that parents were often unfamiliar with the urban youth culture that plays an important part in their lives. The thesis makes an important link between the age and length of residence of young Somali males and their parents' length of residence in the UK as well as their broader historical migration trajectories and transitions.

An added dimension for migrant communities with refugee backgrounds such as the Somali is their often-compelling pre-acculturation experiences varying from violence, civil wars,

dispossessions, various forms of cruelty etc. Thus, it is commonly understood that young migrants (as well as elderly migrants) were affected by these pre-acculturation experiences (often suffered by their parents) and were identified as being at risk. Authorities cautiously argued that young people in particular seemed to suffer from ‘double transition’ (Berry & Sam 1997), and ‘double developmental challenge’ (Rothe et al., 2011) or how to ‘cope with two crises’ (Rumbaut, 1991) that reinforce one another, constructing increased risk for youth (Berry & Sam 1997). The thesis indicated that generational, cultural and religious expectations often exacerbated such transitions, commonly complicating such processes, as in the case of Jamal who was told that it was *haram* (impermissible) to become a lawyer without offering him much explanation as to why he cannot practice law in the UK. Ultimately Jamal seemed to have managed to navigate through his options and acquired enough knowledge to decide for himself.

The tensions that these outcomes create and sustain between parents, young people and the mainstream society as part of the acculturation processes were further highlighted. Exploring and accompanying these various critical areas proved important to contextualise the experiences of young Somalis more accurately. As Rumbaut (2004, p. 1199) argues “generational cohorts and their socio-developmental contexts matter in processes of adaptation and social mobility; they are not epiphenomena”.

Given the diverse nature of young Somali males in London, and accommodating the significant discussion above, the thesis redefined the generational cohorts involved. First, the thesis highlighted that applying the strict definition of Rumbaut’s (ibid) generational typology did not entirely suffice to examine the experiences of young Somali men, particularly those who have had previous migration experiences elsewhere. In order to make their experiences more meaningful the following adjustments were made. The thesis termed the young Somalis who were born in mainland Europe and the Middle East as GE and GME respectively. In order to accommodate their experiences in London more accurately four additional categories were developed. 1.5GE and 1.5GME included those born in mainland Europe and the Middle East respectively but arrived in the UK between the ages of six and twelve years old. The second group termed as 1.75G and 1.75GME included those who arrived in UK at the age of five or younger. It was important to recognise the acculturation

that has taken place before, in Europe and the Middle East as well as acknowledging that some acculturation was needed in comparison to their peers who were born and/or brought up in the UK.

Determining these generational cohorts as such was important for further analyses of the study. For example the thesis used language as a lens to determine various generational gaps. It was, therefore, possible to validate that language usage and ability varied among and between generations. Numerous abilities were assessed given that respondents were conversant in different languages including Somali, English, Dutch, Danish and Arabic. All (100%) respondents were able to speak Somali and English while a sizeable number (19%) had the ability to speak a third language. In line with existing academic research (Rumbaut et al., 2006) this study highlighted that down the generational lines the ability to hold adequate conversations in Somali among the youth decreased while proficiency in English increased. I termed this process as *inverted effect of language application*. Further, the thesis drew on extensive observations that indicated the common dominant usage of the English language in the three main research sites. Consequently, such developments are more likely to increase the intergenerational gaps between parents (with less ability to speak English) and their children (who are usually fluent in the host language) possibly affecting the parent-child relationship.

The mainstream society represents a third dimension – besides young people and parents – which implicates the increased preference to speak English. In broad terms the above findings are consistent with other academics' research:

The typology of language dominance is based on the youths' varying levels of proficiency in both English and the parental language. The data show that as the youth's level of acculturation increases—and by implication, as acculturative gaps widen and the degree of intergenerational dissonance increases – the level of parent-child conflict and of embarrassment over parents' ways increases, while that of family cohesion and of familistic attitudes decreases. Conversely, greater family cohesion and familism are associated with lesser acculturative preferences for English and American ways—and by implication, with consonant acculturation in intergenerational relations (Rumbaut, 2005).

More explicitly there seemed to be more grounded tensions between parents, their children and the host society in general including schools, government institutions, external agencies as well as other relevant external social spaces and networks that play important roles in young people's lives such as youth clubs etc. All appear to have their various expectations of one another. For example, parents vary in their language preference. Most prefer to speak Somali to enhance their relationship with their children; others want their children to speak English as a way of addressing possible disadvantages in mainstream settings, particularly in schools. Furthermore, Somali parents expect their sons to be tough and demonstrate greater levels of bravery (*geesinimo*), manhood (*ragganimo*), or lion (*libaax*) (see Hansen, 2008)

Mainstream society expects nothing short of fluency in the English language. The thesis cited various relevant examples that indicated UK government's intentions and preference for migrants to speak English. For example, the former Home Secretary David Blunkett (Brogan, 2002) saying 'Immigrants should speak English' and Prime Minister Cameron insisting the inability or at times unwillingness to speak English promotes lack of cohesion and integration (Watt, 2011). On the surface these appear to be valid points and all well intentioned. There is no question about the added value that a good command of the English language can have on broader community cohesion and general integration. However, somewhat troublesome is the context, timing, and language that is used by people in power and the message that it sends out to the general public, which tends to demonise and stigmatise immigrants generally. Further, it gives the impression that the English language is superior to the native language. This is particularly relevant in an era where the UK government faces various domestic challenges in relation to immigration and wants to be seen as being tough on the matter.

A relevant case in hand was the recent Home Office publicity stunt whereby vans were roaming around London where alleged illegal immigrants were said to be present bearing signs 'In the UK illegally? Go home or face arrest. Text HOME to 78070 for free advice, and help with travel documents. We can help you return home voluntarily without fear of arrest or detention' (Moseley, 2013). I saw the van in Wembley where I work part time. I was surprised but did not make much of it in the first instance. When I arrived at my workplace one of my colleagues joked 'you better carry your ID with you before you are deported by the Home Office'. It is precisely this kind of judgment such rhetoric promotes, regardless of how

well intentioned or targeted it may seem. Being dubbed the ‘racist van’ (Moseley, 2013) for its apparently controversial message, the pilot project faced a huge backlash and lasted just a week before it was removed from the roads. This demonstrates how such government policies seem to be out of touch and highly insensitive. Such attitudes towards communities and the resulting policies seem to be at the heart of what complicates the desired integration that many aspire to.

The thesis continuously navigated through such relevant multiple social factors that impact on how people negotiate their position in society. Moreover, parallels were sought with broader socio-developmental contexts to articulate such processes as integration (Rumbaut, 2004). What seems to be clear is that the debate about language is not confined to families, their children or the immediate social environment. It can also become a useful political tool. Additionally, what makes such debates about language more interesting is that, as research showed, large English speaking societies including the USA and UK have a ‘historical reputation as a ‘graveyard’ for languages’ (Rumbaut et al., 2006, p. 453) because of their ability to absorb millions of immigrants and eradicate their native languages down the generational line (ibid), which undermines the political debate about language and contested connotations that it carries.

A further important finding of the research was the positive attitudes towards ethnic language retention among a cohort of young Somali men. The 1.5G (one-and-half-generation) in particular shared their frustrations for not being able to fully express themselves in the Somali language. Young people cited various reasons why they believed retention of their ethnic language mattered to them. Some suggested that it enhanced their Somali identity. Others thought it was relevant because it allowed them to communicate more effectively with their parents and fellow Somalis.

An equally significant finding is that the 2G (second generation), unlike the 1.5G, seemed less interested in retaining their native language, marking a clear distinction between the two generational cohorts. Lack of parental encouragement can be explained as one of various possible factors that discourage young people from retaining their ethnic language (see Rothe et al., 2011). Ill-informed political rhetoric and tendencies to stigmatise the native language

as a symbol of low status as well as forms of ill-representation and stereotyping of immigrants (terrorists, pirates, radicals, troublesome etc.) could further have discouraging effects on ethnic language retention (see also Portes and Schauffler, 1994). Such a tendency to reject belonging to or distancing from one's own community, as young people felt ashamed due to wider societal pressure, remains an issue of concern (Kahin, 1997).

During the research process I regularly observed that some members of the Somali community attributed various stigmatising social forms to various groups within the Somali community. This is a clear indication that marginalisation is not simply limited to the interaction between the mainstream society and the (Somali) community but often manifests itself also within the (Somali) community. Some of these forms included terms such as *Farah* – less educated mature Somali man facing challenges with integration –, *Fish and chips* – young members of the Somali community often deemed to be more in tune with the British dominant culture rather than the Somali traditions, *Freshly* – young new migrants with strong accents, facing some challenges with urban popular youth culture, relatively better connected to the Somali regions and often with strong interests in education – and *Euro trash* – an offensive term usually used by the more established British Somali youth to describe young Somalis from mainland Europe who are viewed to be less accustomed to the strict (religious) traditions of the Somali. This is further an indication that generational diversity has a broader remit in the sense that there are clearly identifiable differences between the old and the young generations as well as tangible distinctions among the young generations.

Constructions of home and belonging: Nuanced multiplicities and affiliations

The research revealed that ideas about home and belonging are greatly shaped by local and global events, often underpinned by historical and current social, political, economic and religious factors. It is also clear that home and belonging are broad multiple dynamic terms, which should be viewed and understood as processes that are prone to continuous change that alter the attitudes of young people in relation to the above factors. Given the broad remit of home and belonging the thesis made a clear departure from the identity paradigm that is commonly associated with both terms. Instead the study focussed on the attitudes, perceptions, changes and engagements and how these impact on the processes of

identifications, which underpin the way we interpret our experiences and being (Bourdieu, 1985; Levitt and Schiller, 2004).

Critical factors such as acceptance, respect, approaches to integration (policies), all tend to impact upon general social engagements such as interpersonal relationships and contact. Therefore, in order to satisfy the greater need for belonging, one is obliged to seek some level of association with social groups that maintain unique morally grounded forms of collectiveness (Smith, 1998).

Following a dynamic holistic approach to meaningfully articulate the concepts of home and belonging the thesis considered various theoretical frameworks including three Bourdieusian (1985) assertions such as relationships (power relations), multidimensionality (of social fields) and the dynamics of social fields (the actual social interactions between fields). The thesis made a relevant link between Bourdieu's assertions and Glick Schiller and Levitt's (2004) conceptual framework of *ways of being and ways of belonging* to articulate and give meaning to the broader practical engagements of young Somali males and how these shape their attitudes and experiences more thoroughly. *Ways of being* do not denote strong affiliations socially, politically or otherwise but are simply based on practical social relations whereas *ways of belonging* are more grounded engagements that require greater enactment, commonly underpinned by greater social, political, cultural and religious consciousness. The thesis employed these conceptual frameworks as critical lenses to map the broader understanding, attitudes and experiences of young Somali males.

Multidimensionality of selves

The question 'what do you call yourself?' allowed the research to disentangle the multidimensionality, complexity and hierarchy regarding how young Somali men refer to themselves and made it possible to construct more nuanced yet grounded narratives. The thesis revealed that affiliation with being Somali was the most common form of association for young Somali men. Religion has also a significant place in the hierarchy as the second highest construct. A further sizeable number identified themselves as British Somalis or more specifically as Somalilanders denoting a distinct reference to the breakaway region of Somaliland. The ethnic and religious associations are perhaps not a complete surprise neither

is the lack of reference made to the black association given the background of the research participants. The study showed that the social context within which such associations and attachments manifest matter greatly and are far from being static. These associations are very much underpinned by the level of interpersonal relationships and contact with social groups (related to ethnicity, nationality, religion or locality) that facilitate and encourage environments where such attachments are able to foster. Frequently, these associations appeared to be strengthened by preconceived judgements. Many young Somali men argued that their ethnic and/or religious background is a given. In other words, there is the conviction that the wider society is all too well informed about who these young men are and where they are from. Thus, for many, as the argument goes, there is no reason to pretend otherwise even if one was born in London. Such thinking conditioned the way they perceived and (re)presented themselves. What has developed as a result of these processes of attachments and more grounded associations were narratives that suggested that such multidimensional references appear to be more reactive in character, that function as shields, if you like, to circumvent isolationist tendencies that diasporas commonly have with mainstream societies (C. Smith, 1998).

Notions of *home*, *belonging* and *self-referencing* are not mutually exclusive constructs as this thesis demonstrated. In light of this, the thesis challenged a narrow approach to these constructs and discussed each in its own right. In doing so two critical questions were posed including *where do you belong?*, and *where do you call home?* to articulate these nuances and allow more grounded constructions. Unlike ideas about *self-reference* and *home*, young Somali men interpreted *belonging* quite broadly. Following fieldwork discussions thirteen possible outcomes were identified in relation to *belonging* varying from the country of origin, local areas and communities, culture, religion, kinship and family. What appeared was that in contrast to *self-referencing* or *home*, for young Somali men notions of *belonging* were not only broadly interpreted but seemed to offer different meanings and context too. For example in response to the question *where do you belong?* there was a great affinity with religiosity encompassing the Muslim Ummah, Allah and the mosque as a place of spiritual practice. Almost half of all respondents seemed to value their association with their Islamic faith. This is not a surprise given that Somalis are practically universally Muslim (Valentine et al., 2009b). This was in great contrast with ideas about *home* (relating to the question *where do*

you call home?) where only the mosque featured as the only possible choice on religiosity. On the religious affiliations *self-reference* too scored relatively high while also showing contrasting outcomes with notions of *home*. However, following the analysis of the same questions *home* had 'London/my local area' as the highest outcome, whereas Somalia and Somaliland followed in second and third places respectively. Despite their depth (as analytical constructs) both *self-reference* and *home are* relatively narrowly defined compared to *belonging*. *Home* offered five possible choices covering spaces and places where respondents called home (see table 5.3). Geographical attachments and cultural heritage seemed to play a significant role in the broader interpretation of *home*. Home can be understood in the physical sense as in a house or a place offering shelter but also in the metaphorical or imagined sense. What commonly differentiates *home* from the other two concepts (of *self-reference* and *belonging*) is its ability to be physical and real rather than abstract. In this regard young people were able to cast attachments, in the literal sense, to places viewed as home, such as country, community space, school, youth club etc.

What these three conceptual lenses have in common is that they are dependent upon and greatly shaped by the degree of social interactions and reception. For example greater memories of the country of origin, whether imagined or real, tended to enhance further attachments to it. Also such memories could compensate for the possible inability to (recreate) a sense of grounded attachments in the adopted country. A sense of home or belonging or the way young Somali men refer to themselves is often shaped by the strength of the relationship that they have with the host country. Negative attachments shape and affect diasporic consciousness through exclusion (Stock, 2012) which may encourage transnationally underpinned ethnic, nationalistic or religious tendencies as a way coping with such isolations.

Citizen suspects: coping with structural marginality

Following on from the above foundational processes (of self-identification, belonging and home) the thesis critically engaged with the practical implications that impacted upon their active participation in society. In this particular instance active citizenship became an engaging concept well suited for the analysis and discussions to follow (relevant references

include: Heath et al., 2013; Yuval-Davis 2011a; Isin & Nielsen 2008; Kivisto and Faist's , 2007; Pattie et al., 2003). Given the significance of active citizenship in this section the familiar process of exploring, clarifying, highlighting, challenging and scope narrowing was once again employed. The thesis took issue with the conception of citizenship as only to be functional in a Western democracy (Bellamy, 2008). It is true that democracy often promotes and sustains citizenship participation at the local and national spheres. Bellamy's assertion further stands if we were to accept this territorial localisation of citizenship understanding. However, this needn't be the case. As the thesis demonstrated, citizenship participation has a broader remit and, therefore, argued the case for viewing active citizenship in a global context without limiting its local or national significance (see also Yuval-Davis 2011a; 2011b). In this light the thesis engaged with the tenants of citizenship through the civic, political and social activities of young Somali men. To articulate these citizenship practices Kivisto and Faist's (2007) concept of *expansion* was considered to consolidate ideas about local and global or transnational citizenship (while acknowledging its dual character). It is worth highlighting that this kind of expansionism or dualism of citizenship did not always involve actual practical transnational activities. Rather these referred to the implications of broader global connections (i.e. solidarity to the *Ummah* and ethnic group, UK foreign policy, representation etc.) and how these affect local citizenship participation.

By drawing on the empirical evidence the thesis revealed various forms of civic, political and social engagements. With regards to civic participation young Somali men are more likely to be engaged in voluntary activities in schools, community and/or religious organisations in their local areas. Most feel obliged to give back to their own community, which adheres with Whitely and Seyd's (see Pattie et al., 2003) notion of *general incentives*. Volunteering often requires intensive participation requiring time, commitment and money. General activities vary from helping out with administrative work, attending meetings or assisting in running workshops. Occasionally young men were involved in activities requiring high levels of responsibilities as in Yasin's case who volunteered fulltime to coach young people as part football project called Chelsea Kids. Religious factors to assist others in need seemed great motivating factors to engage in voluntary work as in Ahmed Nur's account who insisted that he was operating from a privileged position not to be taken for granted but as a test from Allah to show solidarity with the Muslim *Ummah* and assist those in need in what Pattie et al.

(2003) termed as *system of benefits*. Active civic participation levels were 50 percent. Those who refrained gave time as the most impeding factor not to participate. Given that many had educational responsibilities time was often the deciding factor whether or not to participate. Others were simply just not interested in voluntary work and would rather spend time with their friends and families.

At all levels of participation, be it civic, political or social there were varying degrees of activity and inactivity observed, which deserve some closer attention. As indicated earlier some of this inactivity was caused by time constraints whereby young people were making considered choices between volunteering and studying, for example. It was also clear that young people did not always feel appreciated, welcomed or simply understood, which tended to contribute to their lack of interest. I argue that most young men were interested in being active as citizens but often felt misunderstood. For example at the civic level various young people pointed to a certain lack of acceptance.

Particularly, political engagement showed significantly lower participation levels compared to civic or social engagements (see Heath et al. 2013). Empirical evidence from the thesis suggested that 63 per cent abstained from voting and only one participant showed keen interest in political participation. At such levels most young people indicated that it was difficult to buy into what politics and politicians in general had to offer. These findings revealed that politicians seemed to show a lack of interest in how young people felt politics in general. Studies on political participation show a steady decline in political participation among the young (see Pattie et al. 2003). Young people are generally viewed as a subset of the adult population (ibid). This is indeed inaccurate. As demonstrated in this thesis young people had their own specific needs and issues of concern. Hence, those who were politically inactive were not completely detached from the political process and showed clear interest. In fact frequently such inactivity is a political statement itself, a right 'not to vote, if you like, exercising that right as a protest not to engage. As Pattie et al. put it, a 'rational choice' is made to abstain from voting on the basis that politicians would not take notice (ibid).

Additionally many young Somalis cited foreign policy as one of the key factors affecting their broader (political) engagement and belonging to the mainstream UK society, besides

their more general feelings of alienation and ill-representation. Perhaps a greater considered effort is needed to engage young people across the spectrum in politics and to make them feel included so that they can become part of the process of social and political engagement.

Social engagements were measured through education and employment participation, which were further underpinned by forms of inclusion and exclusion to determine their wider social activism. Although employment had lower participation levels (44 percent) compared to UK employment rate (79 percent⁹⁵) (Mirza-Davies, 2013) it was often being undertaken in conjunction with studying. Therefore, I should stress that the majority of my respondents were students who would in normal circumstances be classified as being unemployed or inactive in the labour force.

Educational participation showed fairly high varying levels (including GSCE, A levels, college, undergrad and post-grad education). Empirical data indicates a linear progression between these various levels of education. By this I mean those who are in their intermediate or secondary stages of their education (i.e. GCSE, six form, college etc.) often pursue higher educational aspirations. These findings challenge what is generally known about the Somali community and their children. They also provide a clear distinction between those who are engaged and those who are inactive, addressing an important gap in the literature that tends to generalise about the Somali community in this respect, re-enforcing the argument that young Somali men are far from being a homogenous group. For example Griffiths (2002), Rutter (2004) and to some extent Harris (2004) report various forms of disengagement and underachievement at times predicting gloomy prospects for the Somali community and their children. However, as a result of my own findings I argue that young Somal's show greater signs of hope at least and more grounded active integration at best. That said they will also need to come to terms with the structural challenges they face, such as racism in the job market as well as other factors that tend to limit their chances of employment such as the current economic downturn.

⁹⁵ 504,000 men aged 16-24 were unemployed in January to March 2013, down 31,000 on the previous quarter. The unemployment rate for men in this age group was 21 per cent

Having said that, I do not tend to ignore the broader structural problems and challenges of disengagement in relation to young Somali men in London. In this research I demonstrated that sixteen per cent of my total respondent fall into the so-called NEET category – not in education, employment or training (Mascherini et al., 2012): a term usually used to describe those who are either excluded or on the verge of exclusion from mainstream society. School leavers (from the age of 16) were most affected. Reasons for their inactivity ranged from making the wrong course choices when leaving school, sustained family problems which strained their ability to focus, financial challenges or being involved in gang related activities. The latter group tends to be most vulnerable among these high-risk NEET groups given their great need for belonging and acceptance. NEET is again a cohort that is far from being homogenous, however, with varying needs and issues for attention. Austerity measures meant that community organisations were faced with increasingly limited capacities to deal with some serious cases in need of great attention. What seems to be clear is that (re)engaging young people in general is a long term effort requiring a holistic approach cutting across national and local government departments, service providers, schools and community organisations.

Following the broader findings of the thesis what seems to be developing is enhanced awareness of structural marginalities with increasing tendencies to isolate a large cohort of young people. The thesis focused attention on trying to understand and shed light on two critical factors that contribute to the reasons why young people end up on the margins of society and, as a result, experience (further) isolation (Heath et al., 2013; Isin, 2005). These are media representations and government policies, particularly their role and impact in influencing and shaping public opinion. Both factors have histories and are further underpinned by various important events. Therefore, a starting point has been to contextualise the isolation and alienation of young Somali men taking account of various but highly relevant globalising events. The thesis argued that there are possible links between alienated young men and relevant current as well as historical events including (de)colonisation and (post) Cold War as well as more recent insecurities such as the prolonged civil wars in Somalia and their impact, the War on Terror as well as the general perception among various young Muslims that Islam is under attack - which has created a

situation whereby they became somewhat anxious and defensive. For example London-born Fowzi Omar's account revealed how globalisation and Britain's active participation in wars had a profound impact on the way he articulated his place in Britain:

I call home Somalia because I am not English. In England it feels like I am an indirect slave. If I work in this country taxes will be used in war in Africa and Afghanistan. I do not agree with war. It is an excuse to get oil. My main purpose here (in England) is to get education and go back home where I belong (Fowzi, 20).

Fowzi represents a view that is common among young Somali men who are disconnected from the British mainstream society and seek various alternative but peaceful ways to cope with their positions. However, evidence suggested that a minority few take other routes involving serious criminal activities and terrorism offences including the murder of PC Sharon Beschenivsky (Sullivan and Dunn, 2010) and 21-year-old student, to name but a few (Rayment and Freeman, 2012). Despite wide community condemnations of these abhorrent events media reporting remained predominantly negative about the community overall.

A recent report analysing the representation of Islam and Muslims in the UK press between 1998 and 2009 concluded that reports on Islam and Muslims in the UK were primarily focused on conflict, those implicated, its logistics and impact, extensively focusing on issues in relation to Muslim women and those who hold radical or extreme thoughts (Baker et al., 2012). Such reporting intensified after 9/11 (ibid). Saeed (2007) asserts that Muslims in the British media are often depicted as the 'alien other' and makes a relevant link to racism and Islamophobia both of which are embedded in cultural representations of the 'other'. Such sweep generalisations are not only counterproductive but seem to undermine Muslims who are doing rather well and contributing positively to society. Overemphasis on negative reporting of Muslims and Islam in general tends to disrupt the necessary cohesion between communities, so being likely to create more tensions. The potential impact of such gap was articulated in Mursal's account, who said:

The general feeling of the public comes from the media. So it would be pirates, terrorists, ...people that are backward, people that have been fighting for too long with no apparent reason. Some points they

have (are right) but the media misleads some. So it is not totally true. On the other hand it's not 100 per cent wrong, so we have to clarify the message (Mursal 25).

Given the wide distribution and authoritative positions of various British media sources such as overemphasised negative reporting may affect the minds of many people (including that of the likes of the English Defense League) and therefore has, consciously or unconsciously, potential to confirm the underlying racist beliefs that sustain the practice of racism itself. A more balanced yet wider coverage of Muslims and Islam in general, representing their daily life experiences, would indeed be more beneficial and adequate.

9/11 and the so-called War on Terror (both inherently contested terms), my second major factor underpinning the alienation of young Somali men, seemed to have made it acceptable to scrutinise and target young Somali men more recently. Such events have undeniably influenced the way young Somali men view themselves and their relevant surroundings. A senior Met official suggested that between 50 and 60 young British Somalis are fighting alongside Al Shabaab⁹⁶. UK authorities were therefore highly concerned about such developments and adopted what appeared to be highly controversial tactics. This thesis highlighted two critical cases. First, five young Somali men from the London Borough of Camden were allegedly harassed and interrogated continuously by MI5 forcing them to 'work for us or we will say you are a terrorist' (Verkaik, 2009). The second case involved Mahdi Hashi, one of the five young men apparently harassed by MI5 previously (ibid). It was reported that Mahdi was said to be taken to prison in Djibouti while visiting his newborn child and wife in Somalia and that his British citizenship was revoked by Theresa May, the Home Office Secretary (Kermani, 2012; Verkaik, 2012).

Inspired by Yuval Davis' *Politics of Belonging: Intersectional Contestations* (2011b), I coined the phrase "politics of deprivation" to shed light on how local and global terrorism, and government policies in the UK deepened the various forms of exclusions experienced by young Somali men. I have also argued that their daily experiences can best be understood by paying serious attention to the important links between global and the local events to

⁹⁶ Figures mentioned by the Met during a visit at Scotland Yard.

delineate how such varied yet complex social circumstances shape young people's engagements and ultimately define their belonging

Voices and voicing grievances

Both cases created an outrage within the Somali community as well as the larger Muslim community in Camden and beyond, prompting a debate about the legality and credibility of such decisions and about the notion of and the right to citizenship. Mahdi Hashi's family was left in bewilderment not understanding what was happening to their son with a great feeling of helplessness only to discover after five months that he was charged with providing support material to Al Shabaab and flown to New York by the FBI (Rozenberg, 2013). This has created the need to adequately respond or as often argued by the young people I interviewed, there is a *need to have a united voice*. Local organisations collaborated and voiced their concerns about these events. They lobbied their local MPs and organised various gatherings to raise awareness about the matter. Hashim's question during the focus group discussion on citizenship: *is it fair to have your (British) citizenship revoked even if you commit serious crimes?* remained unresolved as far as the Somali community was concerned.

The traditional tension between diasporas and host nations (Cohen, 2008; Safran, 2005) seems to have been taken to another level where, in some critical cases such as Mahdi Hashi's, it becomes acceptable to revoke someone's British citizenship. Such a case raised many questions and no matter the rational it remains highly divisive. It seems to be sending a message that communities are different and unequal, which clearly undermines the principles of citizenship: the protection of rights, champion of responsibilities and promotion of equality and justice (Gaventa and Cornwall, 2001). Such heightened tensions appear to be sustained by confining citizenship understanding within the boundaries of nation state (Bellamy, 2008) and the need to preserve the host nation's cultural values (Sardar, 2008). This fostered a negative diasporic consciousness through the experiences of exclusion (Stock, 2012) or as Clifford (1997) put it 'racial exclusivism' with tendencies to reinforce nationalistic sentiments as demonstrated in Mubarik's answers when asked where he called home: *The motherland. That is my first thought. Greater Somalia! Somalia proper! Being a bit nationalistic there.* This not only highlights the possible distance that young Somali men

adopt in the events of social exclusion but their transnational consciousness is clearly demonstrated too.

Transnational engagements

In Chapter Seven the thesis continued by offering a broader context and understanding of the daily lived experiences of young Somali men beyond that of London. In order to make sense of the connections of the research themes, more generally, throughout the thesis and with Chapter Six in particular, Chapter Seven started to briefly recap the tensions between the Somali diasporas and UK mainstream society including its state. Also the history, migration trajectories, formations, diversity and fragmentations of the Somali diasporas were explained. Consequently, the thesis challenged the narrow definition of Somali diaspora departing from the 'ideal type' that constructs and defines the diasporic experiences on the basis of a single group (Clifford, 1997). The thesis deliberately used the plural form of the concept (as in diasporas) to denote the existence of more than one Somali diaspora. I stressed that an inflexible conception of diaspora is counter to the thesis narrative as a whole (Dufoix, 2008; Sheffer, 2003). Rather I considered (young) Somali diasporas' belonging as 'virtual boundaries' (see Sheffer 2003, p.12) allowing simultaneous engagements and membership of several groups and localities. Such assertions further addressed the assumption that Somali diasporas are homogenous groups, which is clearly not the case, given their diverse historical migration experiences, trajectories and fractions. This thesis identified obvious differences of various Somali diasporas through the evaluation of their daily diasporic experiences and transnational orientations. To articulate these collective diasporic and transnational experiences and engagements Dufoix's (2008) four structuring modes 'Centroperipheral', 'Enclaved', 'Atopic' and 'Antagonistic' were used. Such modes usually fluctuate across three axes such as 1) 'the relationship to the existing regime; 2) the relationship to a referent origin that is separate from the state or from an identity; and 3) the interpolarity of individuals, groups, and communities... offering ways of considering spatial, autonomy, territorial links and deterritorialised networking' (2008, p. 64). These modes were revised and adapted as necessary to make sense of the actual daily experiences of Somali diasporas as well as those of young Somali men more specifically. The thesis introduced a Dynamic mode – and used it instead of the Antagonistic mode – to capture the complex yet active and diverse nature of diasporas. Similar to the Antagonistic mode, the Dynamic mode is also a

trans-state but does not limit its scope to attitudes meant to oppose its regime or adopting aggressive attitudes towards it. Instead, the Dynamic mode has a broader scope and further accompanies diaspora engagements and activities, which favor the state without being controlled by it. The Dynamic mode accommodates both desired as well as less desired diaspora attitudes. Also it suggested that power relation between states and diasporas are much more nuanced and constantly shifting. Along side the Dynamic mode, 'Dynamic boundaries' were introduced to capture the actual connections and movements between the different communities active in the various structuring modes. This was to address the static character of Dufoix's modes and acknowledge the fluid and complex relationships between various communities. The thesis suggested that boundaries are not necessarily contained within communities but rather dictated mainly by interest while acknowledging the possible constraints that can be at play. For example, often members of an organisation may have opposing political views and, therefore, be affiliated to various differing groups that sustain their interest. Particularly charities and nonprofit organisations with strong communal character tend to have people with differing (political) views as members (more likely to be young). Such fractions are not surprising neither are such forms of collaborations across differences. These assertions were tested through the transnational engagements of young Somali men.

With regards to the actual transnational youth engagements, the thesis identified five areas where such activities were commonly enacted including charity, contact with family and friends, financial support, economic and political engagements. The analysis of the empirical findings yielded highly interesting outcomes underscoring the complexities and nuances of being and belonging (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). For example while 13 per cent engaged in charitable activities, 75 per cent remained in contact with their families and friends in the Somali regions. Such relatively highly sustained contacts do not necessarily translate into more grounded financial support (a mere 13 per cent sent money), economic engagement (only one participant engaged) and/or political participation (no participation at all) though, at least not at similar levels. Such relatively high levels of contacts could also be explained by the (growing) intensity of return visits (56 per cent returned at least once while 16 per cent returned three times and 9 per cent more than three times). While most (54 percent) used the phone to stay in touch with relatives and friends back home, social media (46 percent) in

general and Facebook in particular, have become important ways of connecting (Castells, 2009; Vertovec, 2009). New technologies are at the centre of current day transnational engagements (2009), which have practically made their process easier, faster and more accessible (see also Peggy Levitt, 2004; Vertovec, 2004). Having said that, boundaries between the various levels of engagements, whether political or social, are blurred and often overlap. For example these may include supporting an educational project in Somalia to ensure that locals become agents of their own destiny or selling tickets and wearing t-shirts to support orphans while commemorating Somaliland Independence Day.

Despite the low levels of involvement, through their social engagements young Somali diaspora men demonstrated the willingness and ability to transfer their skills in the Somali regions with the potential not only to contribute socially, politically as well as economically but also to help shape these important areas. One relevant example in hand was the football tournament trip to Somaliland. This enabled young Somali men from London to (re)connect with their country of origin beyond imagined notions of home (Michel Bruneau, 2010). They showed compassion, care and empathized with the situation and conditions of their peers in Somaliland while seemingly gaining deeper understanding and appreciation of their own living conditions and opportunities in London. I argue that such meaningful activities, engagements and reflections have the potential to enhance host-land incorporation too. Many seemed encouraged to do their best, focus and aim high to achieve in London. Parents made some financial contributions to the trip to allow their sons to make the journey and take part. The current construction and production of masculinity in transnational diaspora is done through a hybrid of the customary and masculine performances, beliefs and representations, which are usually anchored in a nostalgic past of how a 'real' Somali man should be and the role of society in reconstructing these characteristics (Renold, 2001). Thus, return to Somaliland can be viewed as a way of reinforcing existing or alternative desired masculinities (Hansen, 2008).

As this study showed, young Somali men had various reasons to engage. Such engagements were not necessarily violent, as it has been demonstrated throughout this thesis. In fact they were effective. Among other transnational engagements the trip to Somaliland and the Students' Operation Restore Home initiative are examples where young Somali people

demonstrated a keen interest in rebuilding and positively contributing to their country of origin. Some young men did indeed have violent and troubled histories but were able to turn these negative experiences around, as in Akram's case, who had become an important member of Al Sunnah Youth, Tottenham mosque.

There was further evidence of serious detachment (instead or in the absence of grounded belonging) in the broader sense of the word, however. I argue that this is the critical factor contributing to young people's vulnerabilities, exposing them to all sorts of violence, extremist attitudes or radical thoughts. I stress that detachment is not necessarily correlated to poverty neither should an assumption be made that lack of knowledge or education are significant factors. In fact evidence from the 7/7 bombers suggests the opposite. I argue that detachment is indeed often underpinned by grievances, resentment and more importantly alienation - with possible social and/or political ramifications. Detachment can become apparent at various levels. Akram's case informed us that one could be both alienated from the wider social structure as well as one's own group. Detachment should be taken seriously and tackled at all possible levels both in the community and the wider society.

Furthermore, young research participants have broadly argued that the so-called War on Terror and (UK) foreign policy have greatly contributed to their attitudes towards citizenship and their position within the British society. As Mohamed Ibrahim, the chair of LSYF, recalls:

In the wake of the recent awful terror incident in Kenya on September 2013, a young university student was asked the following question: 'What drives a young educated man with enormous future ahead of [him] to engage in terrorism and radicalisation? The young man replied: 'Foreign policy and double standards'. When he was asked to elaborate on that - he replied: 'At the moment we have a situation in Egypt where a democratically elected president is under a house arrest and the Western countries cannot even bring themselves to say officially what happened in Egypt is a military coup let alone help restore an elected president or release him' - he continued to say - 'you compare Western reactions Anng San Suu Kyi who was in house a rest in Burma'. He further stated that 'to young intelligent people who are somewhat confused about world politics, these double standards are dangerous strong tool for recruitment'. He further stated that 'the Muslim Brotherhood party has come out from underground to participate in mainstream politics peacefully. With the coup, it will not surprise me if they now go back underground and engaged in terrorism or illegal criminal activities to seek

justice'. The young man finished with the following question and possible answer 'who will be directly or indirectly responsible for such eventually? We all. Societies, communities and governments have to listen to each other and learn lessons from our actions and history to fully eradicate the root causes of terrorism.

These are indeed critical matters in need of greater dialogue and understanding. There are no simple answers but what is sure is that current (military) interventions are not working and are in need of serious reevaluation.

Further research work

Further research on the varying characteristics of inactivity and disengagement particularly highlighting those who are showing long-term disengagements and the physiological consequences that come with it is needed. Drawing on data gathered during meetings with mainstream services providers (such as Youth Offending Team [YOT] and the MET) the need to reach out to parents normally considered hard to reach was often mentioned. It would further be useful to follow up on the engagements of the young men who showed a keen interest in returning to Somaliland to establish businesses or undertake charitable projects either on a temporary or a long-term basis. Perhaps establishing a link between host-land incorporation and homeland engagements would be helpful in understanding the broader effects of grounded belonging. Hence, it would be appropriate to draw on specific but thoroughly defined cases that highlight such engagements. Further research in other sites, perhaps in different geographical locations (other cities or countries), would be relevant too, in order to investigate and gain broader extended understanding and insight about the lives of young Somali people.

Limitations and lessons

I must stress that due to time, theoretical and analytical limitations, it was not always possible to dig as deeply as I would have liked, risking simplification of thoughts and analysis in general. For example, although I have addressed and challenged the all encompassing character of diasporic experiences by arguing these are best understood in their plurality, it remains difficult to avoid grand narratives of diasporic conceptualisation. Having said that, as Max Horkheimer put it, I have been mindful not to enforce a 'taboo against all thinking' by

simply following the accepted stances or norms and what is deemed qualified (quoted in Dandaneau, 2001, p. 69). Of course as a student of sociology I ought to guard against thoughts with tendencies to isolate or victimise a minority. I have made my sceptical views clear. I must also admit that having undertaken this research my empathy for young Somali men has grown, without undermining my understanding of the difficulties or the risks of patronising their existence more generally.

My choice of working with young Somali men was dictated by various factors including access and networks, which I was familiar with and had good relationships with. I was further confronted with the realities of fieldwork research and the fact that one has a good relationship with an organisation does not necessarily mean that your access is always granted. I had various refusals from young men I knew well. They were not interested in taking part. Others did not show up for their appointments and a number of young people complained about the length of the interviews. I had to reschedule a number of interviews as a consequence. Also, enquiring about young people's ideas about self-reference, belonging, home, (media) representation etc. affected their willingness to take part of the research and the prospects of gaining insightful detailed data. Furthermore, although working with young females would have offered valuable contribution it was clearly beyond the scope of this research.

Finally, given my position as an insider and role as an activist with various Somali community organisations, I was aware that without extensive distance when necessary, neutrality was difficult to achieve. However, 'distance' in this sense does not mean a complete abandonment of the communities and young people that I have worked with. Neither does it imply that critical impartiality should undermine safety of my research participants. Distance for me represented useful moments of reflections wherein I enabled myself to separate the noise from the facts, reality from fictions and (personal) opinions from empirical outcomes and narratives. These are lessons about the research process that I value, lessons that I will be able to take with me for research in the future.

Appendix I Nvivo Nodes: Analytical themes and topics

Challenges

- Main challenges
- Young people's solutions

Citizenship

- Change
- Educational needs and improvement
- Employment
- Objectives
- Political representation and participation
- Roles and responsibilities
- Volunteering
- Voting
- Voices

Diasporic experiences and transnational connections

- Activities
- Journey to Somaliland
- Socio-political links

Generational matters

- Commonalities
- Differences
- Language barriers
- Socio-cultural barriers

Home and Belonging

- Britishness
- Clan
- Community

Language
London
Mosque
Music or Nasheeds
Muslim Ummah
Organisation
Somalia
Somaliland
Tottenham

Perceptions

Bad reputation
Challenges
Looked down upon
No belonging but rather neutral
Polarized - good-bad

Site experiences

Assunnah Mosque
SYDRC-LSYF
West London Somaliland Community

Appendix II. Interview guidelines

Name respondent:

Date:

Time:

Place/Site:

Q1. Background information:

Q1.a How old are you?

Q1.b Are you born or brought up in London?

Q1.c If born in London what year did your parents or grandparents arrive?

Q1.d. If brought up in London what year did you arrive?

Q1e. What is your level of education?

*Q1f. What type of profession will you like to do? What would you like to become?
(Aspirations and goals)*

Q1g. Are you involved in voluntary work?

Q1h. Are you working (or just studying)?

Q1i. Are you married or single?

Q2. Belonging, home and transnationalism (transnational activities) and their wider social implications for citizenship participation: (If not clear, reassure respondent by saying that the sub questions to follow will clarify the above concepts) (*Probe: dynamics are essential here!*)

Q2.a What would you call yourself? (Somali/Somalilander/British/Muslim/black etc)?

Q2.b Where do you call 'home' and why?

Q2.c Where or what do you think you 'belong' to and why? How would you describe this sense of belonging?

Q2.c What is your first language?

*Q2.d If, any, what type of Music (**Don't mention!** Western/Somali/Arabic/Nasheeds) do you listen to? Why not?*

Q2.e Are you part of a group, organization, community, mosque or forum? If so, what type and why? If not, why not?

Q2.f Do you vote during elections?

If so, why (do you think voting is important)? If not, why not?

Q2.i Do you work? If so, what type of work do you do? If not, why not?

Q2.f What type voluntary work are involved in? (Follow on from Q1.g)

Q3 Positioning of young Somalis:

Q3.a How do you think none Somali people see you in London and why?

Q3.b How do you see/perceive yourself and why?(issues about self esteem/image and confidence)

Q3.c How well are young Somalis appreciated and valued as fellow British citizens?

Q3.d What are the main challenges facing young Somalis in London? How can this be addressed?

Q3.e Do you feel safe in London? If so, what makes you feel safe? If not, why, what make you feel unsafe?

Q3.f What about safety about values and traditions? (Clarify if necessary! Do you think your beliefs or views 'clash' with that of the mainstream British society?)

Q4 Intergenerational matters

Q4.a How would you describe your general communication with your parents/caretakers/elders?

Q4.b What do you think are the main commonalities and differences between young Somalis and their parents/caretakers/elders?

Q4.c Do you believe there are communication gaps between yourself and your parents/caretakers/elders? If so, can you explain what these gaps are?

Q4.d What steps are you taking to address these gaps?

Q4.e What options/opportunities do you believe young Somalis have/need to represent their views, make sure their voices are heard and become young responsible adults?

Q4.f How best are community-based organization supporting young Somalis to ease these processes?

Q5 Diasporic experience and transnational connections

Q5.a Do you have any links (political, social, economic or religious) with your country of origin? If, so what type of links do you have?

Q5.b Are you actively involved in any movement (political, social, economic or religious) that has an influence in your country of origin (Somalia/Somaliland)?

Q5.c Have you ever been back to your 'country of origin'? If, so how many times and why? If not, why not?

Q5.d Are you in touch with your relatives in your 'country of origin'? If so, how often and for what purposes? If not, why not? If so, what are these and what is there main purpose?

Q5.e Are you involved in any activities linked to your country of origin? If so, can you give examples and how often you do this? If not, why not?

Site-specific questions

Q6 Experiences at the Mosque.

Q6.a What are your experiences in the mosque?

Q6.b What is your main purpose for attending the mosque?

Q6.c What have you learned?

Q6.e Can you name any challenges you have had in the mosque? (Knowledge gap and perception of others, acceptance/reception/rejection, progression and personal development etc. probe as and when necessary!!)

Q6.f What would you take from things experience?

Q6.g How would this experience help you in the future?

Q6.h Are there any specific issues that you would like to focus on?

Q6.i If so, what are these?

Q6.j Improvements at the mosque: voices, activities, opportunities, private spaces etc.

General questions about community involvement

Q6.k How best are community-based organization supporting young Somalis to make their voices heard?

Q6.l What is it in the organization that keeps you involved?

Q6.m What do you put in the organization and what do you take from it?

Q6.n If any, how much difference does your involvement make despite all the challenges that you may face?

Q6 Experiences at LSYF/SYDRC and WLSC

Q6.a What are your experiences in the LSYF/SYDRC?

Q6.b What is your main purpose coming to the LSYF/SYDRC?

Q6.c What have you learned?

Q6.e Can you name any challenges you have had in the LSYF/SYDRC? (Knowledge gap and perception of others, acceptance/reception/rejection, progression and personal development etc. probe as and when necessary!!)

Q6.f What would you take from things experience?

Q6.g How would this experience help you in the future?

Q6.h Are there any specific issues that you would like to focus on?

Q6.i If so, what are these?

Q6.j Improvements at the mosque: voices, activities, opportunities, private spaces etc.

General questions about community involvement

Q6.k How best are community-based organization supporting young Somalis to make their voices heard?

Q6.l What is it in the organization that keeps you involved?

Q6.m What do you put in the organization and what do you take from it?

Q6.n If any, how much difference does your involvement make despite all the challenges that you may face?

Questions in relation to the trip to Somaliland ONLY

Q6.o How was this trip for you?

Q6.p Did it meet your expectations? If so, how? If not, why not?

Q6.q Were there any surprises? If so, what?

Q6.r Have you encountered any challenges? If so, what were they? Would you be willing to help address these challenges? If so, how?

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